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INTO ALL THE WORLD

PAPERS ON WORLD MISSION TODAY

understanding it
practising it
teaching it

Edited by Harold H Rowdon



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INTRODUCTION

Harold Rowdon

The papers in this review were given at a consultation on world mission convened by the Study/Action Group of Partnership (an initiative of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship) and held at London Bible College in July 1987. After minimal revision they have been arranged in four parts and four appendices.

The four parts deal with some aspects of the global situation today; biblical teaching on mission; the practice of mission; and teaching mission to others. The four appendices glance at the response of Brethren churches in several European countries to the challenge of world mission.

The reader should not be misled by the arrangement of these papers into separate sections. The second part, on 'The Bible and Mission' does not include the whole of the biblical teaching contained in the review (which, in any case, does not claim to be exhaustive). A good deal of biblical teaching underlies—and may even be found on the surface of—the other papers. The appendices are quite obviously selective, singling out one aspect *only*—and that the most recent—of British Brethren involvement in world mission, and including material on the few other western European countries for which information happened to be readily available.

The aim of these pages is to help Brethren involvement in world mission to become more biblical, more relevant to the closing decade of the twentieth century and more closely related to what God is doing through other agencies around the world. No one is more aware than the writers, of the immense contribution that Brethren missionaries have made to world mission—a contribution that is out of all proportion to their size and the length of their history. Nor are they unaware of the major importance of Brethren missionary thinking. Some at least of us would have reservations about the blanket advocacy of the 'faith' principle; but that does not affect the fact that it first appeared in Brethren thinking and practice and has had immense influence during the last century. The emphasis on local churches as both the primary sending agent and a vital goal of mission is another example of Brethren thinking that has become widely influential. So is the use of non professional missionaries. But all this does not mean that the Brethren have got it all right—for all time. Scripture has yet more things to

teach us about world mission. And we have not been uniformly successful in adapting biblically and positively to the changes that have taken place in the world since Anthony Norris Groves set out for Baghdad in 1829.

This review is sent forth with the earnest prayer that it will be appreciated by the reading public at least as much as the papers it contains were evidently appreciated by those who attended the consultation in 1987. It is also our prayer that it will materially contribute towards a quickening of interest and involvement in world mission in the days to come.

PART ONE

THE WORLD SITUATION

1 THE RESPONSE OF CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD TO THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD MISSION

Ernest Oliver

THE WORLD IN WHICH WE SERVE

The subject of world evangelisation grows more complex as the years pass. Our Lord's commission to his disciples was 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation' (Mark 16:15), but because of the absence of 'global consciousness' those disciples could not have known what that commission meant in demographical and logistical terms. By working backwards from today a fairly reliable estimate of world population at the beginning of the Christian era is put at 170 million. Such figures would probably have had little meaning for that first band of disciples, whose immediate problem after Pentecost was the discipling of 3000 converts. The Lord gave them some hint of the vastness of the task when he spoke of their being his witnesses first in Jerusalem, then in all Judea, on into Samaria and then out into the wide unknown expanses of the inhabited earth. The fact that when Britain cedes Hong Kong to China in 1997 the population of the world will be about 6000 million, thirty-five times the size it was in the first century, may be equally beyond the comprehension of the church today.

It does serve to give us some idea of the size of the task, but the complexity is not confined to size. The world in which the church's movement for world evangelisation presses forward in a very different world in the number and variety of ideological, political and religious options being increasingly and attractively offered to the world. The multiplicity of 'Christian' cults alone is confusing. The resurgence of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam is no longer confined within the countries

of their origin. They are making headway in those countries from which the modern Christian missionary movement began. There are over 1500 Islamic mosques in Britain today. Atheistic Communism and Humanism present themselves over against any form of theistic religion as the only intelligent way out of universally accepted materialism.

Along with that great numerical, sociological and religious difference between the first and twentieth centuries is the phenomenally different means and speed of communication. We must thank God for the world-girdling, massive and instantaneous methods and means of communicating the gospel. The almost insurmountable problems of time, distance and comprehension that beset the evangelist and teacher in the first century and indeed which prevailed well into the nineteenth century, have now been overcome. The communication revolution continues to accelerate and deepen as we approach the end of the age. We have perhaps ceased to wonder at the marvels of communication satellites floating in space, bouncing off millions of signals to millions of peoples every minute, but it should serve to remind us of the revelation given to John, one of the original band to whom the Lord Jesus gave his worldwide commission, 'Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him' (Rev 1:7).

While it is good and right that every believer should be striving through the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit to buy up every opportunity afforded him or her, it is high time for the church to awake to the challenge of available facilities for world evangelisation on a scale consonant with the general speed, intensity and penetration of news and information around the world today.

The most significant difference between the centuries, however, lies in the existence of the church worldwide. Today the nominal Christian church is put at 1,563,000,000, 32.4% of the world's population. According to *Operation World*¹ those who could be defined as evangelicals number 245,451,000 or 5.1% of the world's population. That is an arbitrary figure and, as the editor of *Operation World* notes, 'The Lamb's book of life would make fascinating reading!'. When it is estimated that about 20% of that arbitrary figure of evangelicals live in Africa, it will be seen that the strength of the church and, therefore, the worldwide potential for 'mission' is vastly different from what it was at the end of the eighteenth century when the modern missionary movement began. Thanks to the courage and faith of the great pioneers the past two centuries have witnessed the building of 'bridgeheads for mission' through and from the church in every land, and it is only a very blinkered view of the missionary task which considers its own particular denominational missionary effort in isolation from that being carried on by other churches, missionary societies and individuals. Having said that, however, I know of only one missionary society which includes

workers of other churches and organisations in its prayer diary because those workers are in the same physical area.

THE TOTAL 'MISSIONARY' STRENGTH

This is a misleading heading. The distinction between those sent out by churches and missionary societies to engage all their time in evangelistic and teaching ministries, and those who, while engaged in a 'secular' occupation are active members of a local church overseas witnessing alongside their fellow members, is now much less clear. In fact it would probably be true to say that it was always an unrealistic distinction. William Carey was truly a missionary of the Baptist Missionary Society, but so infrequent was the financial and pastoral support of that society, that he was compelled to seek employment in such roles as plantation manager and college professor. We thank God for those Christians who are qualified to take up useful and salaried appointments in Government, commercial or international service agency but at the same time, because of their calling from the Lord to engage in the church's ministry of evangelism and teaching, play an important part in that ministry in many parts of the world. We do not have statistics for such 'missionaries', but it is hoped that a survey will be made shortly to measure their contribution.

For the sake of this paper, however, we must measure the force available to the churches facing this new day of challenge in 'mission' in terms of the statistics of 'full-time' workers available from churches and Christian agencies concerning work outside their own countries. Had I been writing this paper prior to the end of the First World War the statistics would almost certainly have related exclusively to the 'Western' countries, and the figures would probably have shown that between 75% and 80% of missionaries came from Europe, South Africa and Australasia and between 20% and 25% from North America. The figures now are very different and complex, although it is the complexity which is their most encouraging feature. *Operation World* gives as accurate a table as is possible, and reports the present world total of Protestant missionaries to be 81,008. It divides that figure into Westerners and Non-Westerners by area (see table on p 10).

The increase of Westerners by about 13,000 is encouraging, but over the past ten years the number of missionaries from Britain, including those on the *Echoes* list, has declined from 5861 to 5263 according to the *UK Christian Handbook* (1987/88 edition).² That in itself is discouraging, but when it is realised that 5% of the 5861 in 1976 were short term workers, but in 1986 25% of the 5263 were on short term assignments, we see that there was a decline of 30% in the number of long term missionaries from Britain in the course of ten years. This surely reflects among other things, a growing lack of the presentation of the worldwide 'mission' to our local churches.

| Area | Westerners | | Non-Westerners | |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| | Number | % of Total | Number | % of Total |
| N America | 49,000 | 60.5% | | |
| Europe | 16,047 | 19.8% | | |
| Pacific (inc. Australasia) | 4,250 | 5.3% | 343 | 0.4% |
| Africa | 960 | 1.2% | 1,755 | 2.2% |
| Asia | | | 7,107 | 8.8% |
| Latin America | | | 1,314 | 1.6% |
| Caribbean | | | 121 | 0.1% |
| Middle East | | | 111 | 0.1% |
| Totals | 70,257 | 86.7% | 10,751 | 13.3% |
| Comparable Totals in 1978 | 56,600 | 90.0% | 6,600 | 10.0% |

Political factors have also contributed to the decline. The modern missionary movement from Britain throughout the 19th century³ was clearly forwarded by the growth of the British Empire in Africa and in Asia, and it may well be argued that the break-up of that empire after the Second World War and the change from colonies to independent nations has resulted in a growing resistance to the entrance and continuing residence of 'foreign' missionaries. Should that scale of the decline of 'full-time' British missionaries continue for another decade it will not be long before we have to confess that long term overseas missionary service is no longer an option seriously considered by the young Christian in Britain.

By contrast the North American response, so far as evangelical mission boards are concerned, is accelerating to an extent that attracts national attention. The 16 February 1987 issue of *TIME* magazine includes an article entitled 'Protestantism's Foreign Legion'. This gives statistics exceeding those given in *Operation World*. It states that, including short term workers, the missionary total for North America is 67,242 sent out by 764 mission boards, whose combined annual income is \$1,300,000,000. Response from students attending the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship's missionary conference at the University of Illinois in 1984 was, 4,683 students filed written pledges that they would go overseas and 10,153 more vowed to pray about taking the step. On the other hand the mainline denominations in North America have 'consciously decided to send more cash and fewer people . . . "American missionaries overseas cost a lot of money", and it is far better to send support to workers in indigenous churches.'

Related to the growing response of the African, Asian and Latin American

churches to worldwide 'mission' (now reckoned at 13.3% of the world's total missionary force) is the *Operation World's* table on the harvest which has come from the modern missionary movement which began at the end of the 18th century. It gives the comparable percentages of 'evangelicals' in, on the one hand, the West (including Eastern Europe) and the Third World:

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1800 | 1900 | 1960 | 1970 | 1980 | 1985 |
| The West | 99% | 91% | 68% | 64% | 50% | 34% |
| The Third World | 1% | 9% | 32% | 36% | 50% | 66% |

The rapid increase from 1960 reflects the Church Growth movement in the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, but it also indicates the potential for 'mission' throughout the world, which waits to be tapped and trained in the churches of those countries. The growth of the churches among Chinese people in 38 countries of the world, including Europe, is evidence of the evangelistic zeal and teaching ability of Chinese workers who have come from Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan. Indian and Pakistani missionaries are at work in the Middle East and in Europe. Korean workers are in the Middle East, North Africa and the United States of America, while Brazilians are in Portugal and Angola.

There can be no doubt that the ability to send increasing numbers of Christian workers out from North America is related to the financial resources of their churches. Churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America do not have such wealth, and this raises the whole issue of the principle of 'self support' that has been such an important pillar of the policies of most evangelical missionary societies. The belief that 'giving money' robs churches of their independence certainly has validity. It has in the past been used as the main reason for keeping missionary societies from integrating into overseas churches. But with the growing together of evangelicals around the world with a common commitment to world evangelisation under the direction of the Holy Spirit, it is surely time to subject such a policy to much prayerful and careful scrutiny. I believe that the opportunities for the use of all the facilities of communication in a world of increasing depravity and deprivation, calls for the subjection and, possibly, sacrifice of our preconceived ideas and plans to the overwhelming need and potential of cooperation. We should take great encouragement from the undoubted fact of the Holy Spirit's being at work to bring men and women everywhere to faith in Christ, as evidenced in the phenomenal growth of the

church in China during the past thirty years of the direst possible persecution. The church worldwide should cooperate to ensure that teaching materials through radio and literature are available to the thousands of evangelists, pastors and teachers involved in this movement in China.

THE CALL FOR COOPERATION

The vital role of the churches

There are still areas of the world where the expatriate missionary is able to carry out an overt evangelistic ministry without prohibition or limitation set by the Government of such areas, but they are certainly diminishing in number. Where such areas exist, as many helpers from other countries as possible should take advantage of the freedom to assist local churches in their ministries. The openness of the Western European nations in the European Economic Community is an example right on our own doorstep. The unprecedented response to the Billy Graham Crusade in France should challenge evangelists and teachers from Germany, Holland, Denmark and Britain to assist the churches in France to further the momentum of the crusade. Such cooperation with the churches contributes to their lasting witness within the country concerned. It is the church that is the permanent factor in witness, not the expatriate missionary or missionary society. The key to the growth and effectiveness of the church in those areas, as indeed in all areas of the world, is not the number of expatriate missionaries, but the quality of life of the Christians and their corporate service and witness to the communities from which they have been drawn.

There are parts of India which yielded a big harvest from the outcastes in the 1930s, but because expatriate and national Christian leaders failed to cooperate in the discipling of the converts, the resulting churches did not become a vital Christian influence upon society. Tragically they became in some cases a cause of reproach. As director of TEAR Fund's Overseas Evangelism and Christian Education Department, one of my greatest encouragements was the increasing number of requests from churches in underdeveloped countries for funds to set up and maintain Bible training courses at all levels for leaders and lay people. Kenneth Latourette, the American historian of missions, said that the greatest question for missions now is 'What will most contribute to an ongoing Christian community?' To me that can only mean the teaching and discipling of those Christian communities in the Word of God. That fits in with Paul's recognition of what the church in Ephesus needed: 'I commit you to God and the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.' (Acts 20:32) It is sad, and a mistake, that so little of many missionary societies' resources are being applied to the upbuilding

of the churches founded by them. The churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America, which are growing rapidly and, as we have seen, now represent 66% of the total number of evangelical believers in the world, are so often unable to provide adequate Christian literature and teaching materials for their potential leaders. Let us all remember that many of them are situated in areas of dreadful physical need, which they could help to alleviate. We can cite the example of the Kale Heywat Church in Ethiopia, the largest evangelical church in the country. Throughout the dreadful famine affecting millions of their compatriots, and in spite of bitter persecution by the Marxist Government, that church has shown the compassion of Christ and became deeply involved in emergency relief and development projects. In view of this, Western relief and development agencies have been able confidently to entrust large sums of money and supportive personnel to them.

The challenge of unreached peoples

A recently issued brochure by the Interdenominational Foreign Missions Association in the United States is entitled 'Reaching the World for Christ' and serves to underline the movement started among missionary societies in the late 1970s to plan ways and means of reaching those great ethnic and religious groupings of people who, for various reasons, have been out of reach of the gospel. These are in lands where either the Government forbids Christian witness or are too remote to be reached by a Christian church, or simply have been neglected. Studies have been made of these peoples and some missionary societies have assumed the responsibility of reaching one or more of them before the end of the century. They include millions of nominal Christians (Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants) over a billion Chinese living under Communism, 300 million Buddhists, 700 million Hindus, 800 million Muslims and 300 million animists. Plans are also afoot for what is called 'Strategic Evangelism Initiatives'. This is the selection of certain areas which have been neglected or have shown little response. A coordinated programme involves the nearest church on the ground, assisted by projects focused on that area by radio and literature organisations and by relief and development projects supported by Christian missions and aid agencies. Provided this is worked out in Holy Spirit acknowledging prayer and intelligence, it could prove to be a serious and fruitful way of reaching those who have never before given thought to the gospel message.

Patterns of cooperation

We have already considered the fact that the areas where the expatriate

missionary is able to carry out an overt evangelistic ministry without prohibition or limitation set by the Government are diminishing. We can rejoice that in some of those areas the churches are proving themselves able and effective in forwarding the witness to the gospel and seeing unprecedented growth. In India there are two examples of cooperation across denominational and territorial lines. The Friends Missionary Prayer Band and the Indian Evangelical Mission, both members of the Indian Missions' Association, a still wider body of cooperation, are recruiting increasing numbers of Indian evangelists and teachers, supported by Indian churches, with activities spread across the second largest nation in the world. The Indian branch of TransWorld Radio, now well on the way to being supported by Indian churches, has stated that their broadcasts are resulting in one new church being planted every other day of the year in India.

As we consider advance in areas where the overt evangelistic ministry of both national and expatriate worker is either discouraged or disallowed, the insistence of the Spirit's call for Christians to reach those who live in the areas cannot, indeed must not, be denied. We praise God for the cooperative efforts to reach tribes in Central Asia, like the Uzbeks, by radio, for those who are encouraging teachers of English to enter parts of China, like the largely Muslim province of Xinjiang, under contract to the Government of China, and for the plans already made by the missionary churches of South Korea to establish and revive churches in North Korea as soon as restrictions are relaxed.

The pattern of the international, interdenominational united mission set up and sustained during the past thirty years provides an outstanding example of modern missionary method. It has been my privilege to be involved in all five of the current united efforts, three in Asia and two in Africa. The United Mission to Nepal, HEED in Bangladesh, ACROSS in Southern Sudan, the International Assistance Mission in Central Asia and the most recent, the ACT organisation in North Africa. In all five cases they are in countries traditionally opposed on religious and, more recently, on political grounds to the spread of Christianity. They vary in size, but they all have the one common feature of being a group of Christian professionals in medicine, education, agriculture, engineering etc, covenanted together under an agreed biblical statement of faith, providing under a well defined and documented contract with Governments to give assistance to those Governments in their medical, educational and development programmes. The spread of nationalities working together is broadest in the United Mission to Nepal, the oldest and largest of the five. The 350-plus expatriate workers include evangelicals from China, Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany, Holland, Nigeria, The United Kingdom, Ireland, The United States and Canada. There appears to

be no limit to what the Governments will ask these groups to do, and while the liberty of expatriates to engage in any form of overt evangelism varies from complete prohibition to a very limited freedom, they are all free to worship and bear personal testimony. In Nepal, I believe their presence has encouraged Nepali believers who entered the land in the early 1950s. There was no church in Nepal in 1952, but now there are over 230 congregations across the land, some of which are growing very rapidly.

The Holy Spirit will provide the means of access and utterance to those who are called by him, and we have a ministry to the churches of our land to provide the information from which the Spirit can stimulate interest and the deepest involvement along with those of churches in other lands for the evangelisation of the world.

- 1 *Operation World*, edited by Patrick Johnstone, published by STL and WEC (1986).
- 2 *UK Christian Handbook* (1987/88 Edition), edited by Peter Brierley, published by MARC, Evangelical Alliance and Bible Society.
- 3 Max Warren, *The Missionary Movement from Britain in Modern History* published by SCM (1965).

PART TWO

THE BIBLE AND MISSION

2 THE CHURCH AND MISSION

Ray Cawston

This subject is of deep personal interest to me although I sense the danger of going over familiar ground, rather like the writer of a recent book who begins with the words: 'This is *another* book about the church and its mission.'¹ I want to touch first on the basic biblical ground work and then refer specifically to the situation among the churches with which we are particularly concerned.

The biblical relationship

Around the year 48 AD a meeting took place which we might be so bold as to describe as a consultation on world mission even more crucial to the history of the church than the one at which this paper was originally given! The words of two participants put us on course as far as this subject is concerned. James said: 'God has visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his name.'² Peter later wrote: 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people; that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.'³ The church, then, is the new people of God called, as Israel was, to declare God's glory among the nations. We as part of God's church today repeat with increased fervour the longing of Psalm 67: 'Let the peoples praise thee, oh God; let all the peoples praise thee! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy.' At the birth of the people of God in the Old Testament God's promise to Abraham linked their whole existence to mission, for through them all the nations of the earth would be blessed. More than many of us used to realize, the history of Israel was full of foretastes of the way in which that promise would eventually be fulfilled. Whether through

willing prophets who declared their oracles to the nations, or involuntary messengers like Joseph or Naaman's servant girl, or downright unwilling missionaries like Jonah, the nation of Israel, to a limited degree, acted as God's witness to the Gentiles. 'Israel is called to be a channel, not a storehouse of blessings.'⁴

What may be under-emphasized is the fact that the Christian church, the new people of God, is God's special agent of mission, with 'a new urgency and a new universality'.⁵ The very existence of the nations is linked in biblical history with the confusion of tongues at Babel, with language being to this day the symbol of cross-cultural barriers. It must be profoundly significant that Pentecost saw the reversal of that act of God when the Christian church was launched primarily as a corporate messenger to the world, of God's grace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Pentecost is to Christian mission what the Big Bang theory claims for astronomy, and the expanding church around the world is the evidence that mission is central to its existence.

We should not think that worship is somehow primary or that it is competing with the missionary task for the attention of the church. In true worship we learn more about God, and as we express our love to him our hearts beat more in time with his. Because mission is based on the very nature of God, the more we know him, the more the church will reach out as God reached out to us. If our worship makes us introverted and withdrawn then we must conclude that it is faulty. If our meetings as local churches make us introverted and withdrawn, then they too are faulty. Unnecessary barriers of language and dress, too rigid an adherence to traditional forms, too inhibited an expression of joy and even friendliness turns our church worship into an esoteric activity and hinders mission not because it prevents us from reaching out but because it discourages converted people from coming in to our fellowship.

Without detracting from the personal impact of the Great Commission there is no doubt that the full responsibility for its fulfilment is to be borne corporately. Luke, in his history of the church's beginnings, tells us first about 'all that Jesus began to do and teach'⁶ through his physical, human body and then goes on to tell us about what Jesus did through his body the church. A notable feature of the Brethren missionary movement has been the way in which thousands have taken seriously the personal implications of the missionary mandate of the Lord Jesus. There has been, however, a tradition of strong individualism in this movement that does not coincide with a corporate view of mission. We need one another and should seek ways of so working together that we express our strong view of the church in our missionary activities, not only by emphasizing church-planting but also through missionary team-work. W E Vine, at one time an editor of *Echoes of Service*, devotes a chapter to this subject in his book, *The Divine*

Plan of Missions. He concludes with the words: 'The labours of those who are truly "fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God" are radiant with the smile of the Lord's favour.'⁷

When Jesus sent out the 12, symbolically and actually in mission to Israel, and later the 70, symbolically but not actually in mission to the Gentiles,⁸ he instructed them to preach the message of the kingdom. The preachers of the early church continued to proclaim that same message.⁹ 'This gospel of the kingdom', Jesus foretold, 'will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations.'¹⁰ All authority is given to the king and the central task of the church is to glorify the king and become a means by which his authority is recognized among men. 'The kingdom creates the church, works through the church, and is proclaimed in the world by the church.'¹¹ The spiritual reality of the gospel of the kingdom needs to be taught today, otherwise many will be unprepared to resist an almost exclusively political view of the kingdom.

Differing views of church and mission

The local church is meant to be a reflection of the wonderful, worldwide, international, transformed community of the universal church. The same figures are used in the New Testament about the local church as are used about the universal church.¹² To speak of world mission is to speak of establishing such communities. As Michael Griffiths says: 'Surely the aim of the whole operation must be the planting and perfecting of new colonies of heaven, new congregations of beautiful people.'¹³ As soon as we speak about evangelization we must speak about churches. Decisions have to be taken about spiritual life in such churches, about church structures and government. During January 1987 I was able to revisit the area of the Andes where my wife and I worked for a while. There are 30 churches in that area which have come into being over the past 25 years. Some of their structures and practices may be unnecessary importations, but other features of their church life seem to be eminently suitable for new churches. The emphasis on full participation, on government by elders from the congregation itself, on the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper and on the supremacy of the scriptures as our source of authority all appear to be healthy features of a missionary ecclesiology. At the same time the use of Andean music with local percussion, wind and string instruments is symbolic of the freedom that also should exist.

One of the outstanding writers today on missions is Dr Ralph D Winter. People like him have helped us all through their insights and through their insistence on current world missionary needs. One of his concepts however is that there are 'two structures of God's redemptive mission' in the New Testament and on through history. The churches and

their associated structures he calls 'modalities' while the structures associated with mission partnership he calls 'sodalities'. He recommends that both types of structure should feature not only in mission planning but also in church planting.¹⁴ Without detracting at all from the need for structures, to suggest that there is some other body in the New Testament almost on a par with the church and running parallel to it in mission activity is, I believe, quite unacceptable. It is a reaction to the 'ecumenical' emphasis on the church which tended to devalue mission and by which the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches were united in New Delhi in 1961.¹⁵ Both this and its reaction seem to be based on the concept of the church as an institution. Surely we would want to emphasize the local church and that primarily as community, a reflection of the thrilling spiritual community of the universal church. It is through the church that the multi-faceted wisdom of God is made known to earthly and even to heavenly beings.¹⁶ While partnership in Christian work is a thoroughly New Testament concept, any structures that are needed are temporary and act as servants of the church. It is the church of Jesus Christ that is the only permanent body. If the missionary structure gets in the way of full local church involvement in the sending of missionary workers, or weakens that local church's concern to pray for, care for, support and counsel then it is at fault. On the other hand sending missionary workers without any partnership arrangement at all does not guarantee local church involvement.

A church movement characterized by mission

When Anthony Norris Groves and his party set sail for St Petersburg on 12 June 1829, the Brethren movement had hardly begun but not only did he associate the movement with concern for world mission right from the beginning, he also introduced a fresh understanding of how such work should proceed. Groves emphasized that missionaries should go as messengers of the local church, and felt that missionary societies at that time weakened such a situation.¹⁷ He also wanted to strengthen the direct dependence of workers on the Lord for their financial provision, a feature since that day of 'faith missions'.

The growth of foreign mission concern within the movement was quite extraordinary. After the launching of the magazine, *Missionary Echo*, in 1872, increasing numbers of workers went abroad. During the ten years from 1885 to 1895 the numbers trebled. From 1895 to 1925 the numbers trebled again. By 1945 there were 1,000 overseas missionaries¹⁸ apart from those who were undoubtedly serving within missionary societies. If we put the number at 1,200 in that year we arrive at the astounding conclusion that in 1945 this tiny church movement was supporting over 5% of the

whole world force of Protestant foreign missionary personnel, put at 22,000.¹⁹

At the end of 1985 the number of missionary personnel listed by the different Brethren missionary service groups was nearly 1,200. It would be relevant to ask whether this is an ageing group of workers, whether interest in world mission has declined. The following figures indicate the proportion of men and women who entered such work in recent years.²⁰ They demonstrate clearly that, as far as the English-speaking world is concerned, there is not only a maintained interest, but even a remarkably renewed interest.

| <i>Country of Origin</i> | <i>Total No at end 1985</i> | <i>Began work:</i> | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| | | <i>1980-1985</i> | <i>1970s</i> | <i>1960s</i> | <i>pre 1960</i> |
| USA | 567 | 34% | 28% | 16% | 22% |
| NZ | 181 | 34% | 33% | 17% | 16% |
| AUSTRALIA | 76 | 39% | 29% | 16% | 16% |
| UK | 368 | 13% | 20% | 22% | 45% |
| TOTAL | 1192 | 28% | 26% | 46% | |

The difference between the figures for the UK and for the rest of the world probably indicate two things. One is that the more uniform, rather more dynamic and also more conservative churches of the USA, New Zealand and Australia possibly send fewer of their overseas workers out with inter-denominational societies. Another factor may be that UK workers spend longer on the field. We should not pass this over as a valuable feature of worthwhile missionary effort. The situation in Gospel Literature Outreach, which has developed into a fellowship of full time workers from Brethren assemblies, concerned to promote teamwork, is a further illustration of continued vigour. Since 1965 the movement has grown to 120 full time workers, in 12 countries, with over 15 new workers in 1986.

Are there recognizable reasons for this mission orientation?

It would be completely out of place to draw triumphalistic conclusions from these facts. The only purpose is to persuade ourselves to look for possible reasons in order to cherish valuable features at the same time as we recognize weaknesses. The following are, therefore, suggestions as to why this church movement has been characterized by mission:

1 The emphasis on trust in God and dependence on the leading of the Holy Spirit have been a source of personal courage in launching out, as thousands of men and women have discovered. This is not a monopoly of

the movement but a definite characteristic of it over the years. Such courage is undoubtedly to be sought after as a quality extolled in both Old and New Testaments.

2 The emphasis on the autonomous local church with plurality of leadership, basically drawn from within the church, lends itself to church planting and church survival.

3 The absence of heavy organizational structures has freed energies among church leadership to turn their attention to mission at home and abroad.

4 A factor of a different nature, but very real, is that the traditional reluctance to recognize full time church workers, almost total in the case of women, has meant that those with aspirations to devote their life to Christian service have often turned their attention elsewhere than the home country. This is illustrated by the following statistics:²¹ (1982. All percentages expressed as a proportion of estimated membership)

| | <i>Ministers and full time workers in UK</i> | <i>Missionary Personnel</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Proportion of full time workers in missionary service</i> |
|---------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Methodists | 0.72 | 0.06 | 0.78 | 8% |
| Presbyterians | 0.28 | 0.03 | 0.31 | 10% |
| Anglicans | 0.73 | 0.11 | 0.84 | 13% |
| Brethren | 0.29 | 0.88 | 1.17 | 75% |
| Pentecostal | 1.09 | 0.36 | 1.45 | 25% |
| Baptist | 1.06 | 0.61 | 1.67 | 37% |

This situation is both a weakness and a strength. The reluctance to recognize full time workers within a church has fostered full participation by church members and freed funds for evangelism and mission. It has at the same time led to weakened churches in a number of cases and for this reason the situation is changing rapidly.

5 The emphasis on participation and activity by all men and to a certain extent by all women, has produced a high proportion of those who discover their spiritual gifts and wish to use them for God. Some interdenominational agencies in the UK have an unexpectedly high proportion of their personnel drawn from Brethren churches for this reason. This concern for 'full employment' is a feature of the Church Growth movement today.

6 The weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper is perhaps more

significant than we sometimes recognise. In a young church the fact that this can take place without ordained leadership adds a dignity to what is often a small, struggling congregation and provides a moment of devotion and reflection that is entirely as our Lord intended.

Conclusion

1 While the church exists to glorify God, for worship, for the edification of its members and for fellowship and mutual care, it is God's agent of mission to win the nations and declare among them his glory and the good news of reconciliation in Christ. An out-going spirit within the local community as well as a sacrificial concern for world mission should characterize every local church. The more we truly know God in our churches, the more this will happen.

2 In order to see this happening, practical steps can be taken:

2.1 Events where world mission is the exclusive concern and a bewildering range of information is presented may be self-defeating and give the impression that the subject is a specialist one. Where biblical teaching and a devotional emphasis are the context, then the subject will be seen as an integral part of church life.

2.2 Opportunities for brief missionary exposure at home and in a cross-cultural situation are often life-changing. Many are moving into full time Christian work by this route. Local churches should encourage this for their younger people as well as for those in leadership.

2.3 If the local church is the principal sending agency for those moving into world mission, then every effort must be made to keep the church fully informed and fully involved in prayer and in financial support. Pastoral care must be exercised before, during and after missionary service. The local church will also want to ensure that its missionary members are forming part of some partnership structure by which they relate to fellow workers.

3 We do need to reflect about possible reasons for the unusual contribution to world mission that churches associated with the Brethren movement have made. This will not only take into account the volume of work and the number of workers but also the quality of work done. Have some churches around the world been established as much according to the pattern of 19th century Britain as according to the frequently mentioned New Testament pattern?

In spite of these reservations it would be a great mistake to imply that today the only route to first class missionary service is by conforming in every way possible to the approach made by other evangelical churches.

Each church movement has something precious to give to God's work. What is it that God wants to give to his church worldwide through the churches within the Brethren movement? Let us repent of our failings but at the same time thank God for our blessings and treasure them in a mission context at home and abroad.

- 1 Darrell L Guder, *Be My Witnesses* (Eerdmans 1985) vii.
- 2 Acts 15:14.
- 3 1 Pet 2:9.
- 4 G W Peters, *A Biblical Theology of Missions* (1972) 94.
- 5 P. Cotterell, *The Eleventh Commandment* (IVP 1981) 29.
- 6 Acts 1:1.
- 7 W E Vine, *The Divine Plan of Missions* (Christian Missions Press) 39.
- 8 The Jews held that there were seventy nations and that the law was proclaimed in seventy languages.
- 9 Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:24–25; 28:3.
- 10 Matt 24:14.
- 11 G E Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Lutterworth 1974) 119.
- 12 Cor 3:16 and Eph 2:21; 1 Cor 12:27 and Eph 4:8–16.
- 13 M Griffiths, *Cinderella with Amnesia* (IVP 1975) 136.
- 14 R D Winter, in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (William Carey 1981) 178–189.
- 15 R D Winter, *The Twenty-five Unbelievable Years* (William Carey 1980) 67–73.
- 16 Eph 3:10.
- 17 H. H. Rowdon, *The Origins of the Brethren* (P & I 1967) 199.
- 18 F A Tatford, *That the World May Know* Vol 6 (Echoes 1984) 498.
- 19 R D Winter, *The Twenty-five Unbelievable Years* (William Carey 1980) 54.
- 20 An analysis of: *Commended Missionaries* Vol 14 (Everyday Pub 1986).
- 21 P Brierley (ed) *UK Christian Handbook* (1982) 35 and elsewhere.

3 THE HOLY SPIRIT AND MISSION

Michael C Griffiths

We will start by establishing some biblical parameters which will raise certain questions. These we will attempt to answer by further biblical study, and by reference to some concrete instances from missionary work.

Each significant advance in Acts is initiated by the Spirit

We should not be too pedantic in looking only for references to the Holy Spirit himself at work in Acts. There are less obvious expressions like 'The hand of the Lord' was with them (Acts 11:21) and then the references to the Lord appearing to Saul on the Damascus Road and subsequently, when it is the Lord Jesus himself who is at work. The implication is that the first book of Luke is about all that Jesus began to do and to teach (Acts 1:1), that Acts is about all that Jesus continued to do and to teach, and not only up to the point of his ascension. See Acts 9:5: 'Who are you Lord? I am Jesus . . .' Again, it is 'the Lord' who appears to Ananias and then tells him to go to Saul. Ananias explains, 'Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' (Acts 9:17)

So we should see that in mission God may be at work not only through his Spirit, but through the risen-ascended Son, and sometimes also through angels. This is the experience of the New Testament church. So let us look at these several advances.

1:8 This is the general statement that the power of the Spirit which will be given at Pentecost is a centrifugal force that will fling the apostles out to the ends of the earth. It happens to provide a useful outline of the progress of outreach throughout Acts, but it also reminds us that skulking defensively in the safety of our assembly halls or other bunkers does not mark what professes to be a Spirit-filled church. The Spirit leads you out.

2:17ff The day of Pentecost saw the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy, and as Calvary fulfilled and superseded Passover so the coming of the Spirit fulfilled giving of the Law, celebrated at Pentecost each year. This was the

birthday of the new covenant church; the baptising of the church into one body. The prophecy also reminds us that the Spirit is poured out on all flesh, or all kinds of people without distinction, old men and young men, men slaves and women slaves, and sons and daughters. This last truth seemed to have remarkably overlooked by generations of Brethren, who in many other ways were quite biblical, yet had this blindspot!

6:1ff *The setting aside of the Seven* was at first sight a practical measure to reassure the Hellenistic Jews that they were not being discriminated against. In the event they appointed two men who exercised quasi-apostolic ministries. They were selected by the whole church, and the apostles then laid hands on them. We are left in no doubt: they were known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom (v 3), while Stephen was full of faith and of the Holy Spirit (v 5), full of grace and power (v 8), and critics could not stand up against his wisdom or the Spirit by which he spoke (v 10). He 'did great wonders and miraculous signs among the people' as also later did Philip in Samaria ('the miraculous signs he did', v 8 and 8:6). These signs had up till then been exclusively signs performed by apostles (2:43; 5:12 cf 2 Cor 12:12).

Stephen's enduement by the Spirit enabled him in debate and apologetic argument with Hellenistic Jews which must have included Saul of Tarsus (6:9, Jews from the province of Cilicia). It also empowered him for a theological advance in the theory of mission: God is not limited to Israel, Jerusalem or its temple: he spoke to the founding patriarchs and to Moses *outside of Israel*. The persecution then caused the church, which so far had shown little evidence of concern even for Judea and Samaria, to be scattered from Jerusalem. Though it appears to have been circumstances that drove them out, the repeated underlining of Stephen's enduement by the Holy Spirit forces us to recognize that God was at work. We see that advance in mission may be the Spirit gifting an individual to give clear biblical teaching.

8:4 *The mission to Samaria* was marked with miraculous signs (8:5) including healing, and many people were baptized on confession of faith. Mysteriously they did not receive the Holy Spirit themselves, until the apostles arrived and laid hands on them. This was not a paradigm for a two-stage Pentecostal experience, but authentication of Samaritans being sanctified by the Holy Spirit in spite of all the Jewish prejudice against them. 1:8 had earlier told us that it would be the power of the Holy Spirit which would make them witnesses in Samaria.

9:1ff *Saul's conversion and call to the Gentile nations*. We have already seen that Jesus himself appeared in a theophany to Saul on the Damascus Road, and then in a vision to Ananias. The three separate accounts of

Saul's conversion in Acts all underline his call to evangelize the Gentile nations (9:15; 22:21 and 26:17, 23). Advance in mission may be the calling of a gifted individual to go out to preach Christ.

10:1ff The conversion of the Roman Cornelius. God uses an angel (10:3), the vision given by God to Peter as he prayed (10:9) and the prompting of the Spirit to get Peter into the home of an uncircumcised Gentile, a soldier, symbolic of the oppressing power. 'The Spirit said' (v 19). The Holy Spirit is mentioned four times (vv 38, 44, 45, 47) in the narrative, and when Peter is replying to his critics back in Jerusalem, he mentions the Holy Spirit three times. (11:12, 15, 16). The Lord is so eager that he does not wait for Peter to finish his sermon before revealing his enthusiastic involvement. Mission advance here is conversion of a relatively small group through the prompting of the Spirit.

11:19ff The Gentile breakthrough in Antioch. This exciting development in the third largest city of the ancient world, with its reiterated 'large numbers' (vv 21, 24, 26) was because 'the Lord's hand was with them' (11:21). Whereas in the Old Testament 'the arm of the Lord' (eg Isa 53:1) is Messiah, this expression would seem to point to the work of 'The Lord the Spirit' (2 Cor 3:18).

13:2 The missionary sending from Antioch. This sending out of two of their own prophets and teachers to become missionary apostles (14:4, 14), is specifically said to be as a result of the Spirit saying, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them' (v 2). The Holy Spirit was behind this advance in mission, too: the call to the leaders to send out two men to evangelize the nations.

COMMENT: It is clear that God was active, as Lord of the Harvest in thrusting out labourers. His sovereignty is clear, especially in situations where churches or individuals seem reluctant and slow to become involved.

What if the churches are passive and lacking in vision?

There seems to be an intentional contrast in scripture between the eagerness of the Lord, and the reluctance of men: in the Old Testament, Moses is a remarkable example of this. In Acts the reluctance of Ananias to stick his neck out is an almost ludicrous example: when asked to go to Saul his immediate response seems to be that the Lord must be very ill-informed to propose such a dangerous notion, and is told 'Go' (Acts 9:15).

The Jerusalem church seems to have been passive and lacking in vision. Though they were 'the church' to begin with, and also had the apostles resident among them, they seemed in no hurry to go to Samaria, let alone the ends of the earth. It was the Lord who so overruled events that the persecution that arose over Stephen actually forced most of them out of

Jerusalem to Samaria, and as far as Antioch. When Peter baptized Cornelius, it was Christians in Jerusalem who criticised Peter for having anything to do with uncircumcised Gentiles (11:2). The people who started the problem in Antioch were described in Galatians as 'certain men . . . from James' (Gal 2:12) even though James later repudiated them (Acts 15:24, 27). When Paul returned to Jerusalem after his third journey, the Jerusalem leaders enlisted him in a scheme to conciliate the thousands of Jews zealous for the Law, and who had heard (quite correctly as it turned out, and as the council had earlier agreed) that Paul was teaching that neither the Law nor circumcision are necessary to salvation. One wonders whether the original purpose of sending Barnabas to Antioch was to check up on dubious matters like Gentiles becoming Christians, or even whether Peter and John were sent to Samaria in the first place to stop it all!

Even Peter, who in the gospels seems anything but cautious, had to be carefully encouraged to go to visit Cornelius. Philip needed the prompting of the Spirit (8:29) before he could be nudged forward to witness to the Ethiopian.

The later church may have been even more reluctant to take on fresh responsibilities, but the early church did not seem in any hurry to claim the promises of Acts 1:8. The breakthrough at Antioch was initiated, not by officially appointed church delegates, but by Cypriot and Cyrenian Hellenistic Jewish refugees. They provide a prototype of the parachurch missionary group: not started by the churches, but none the less blessed by the Lord. The history of mission is that it has rarely been helped by church leaders, as such, and far more often by pressure groups of eager, committed individual believers. The tendency of some in the Brethren movement to look down on these parachurch agencies as unscriptural and a secondbest, because Brethren ought to support their own 'society' (I almost called it 'denominational society') needs some rethinking. Corporate or small group exercise in breaking fresh ground seems to have been the means which the Holy Spirit has used repeatedly throughout the history of the churches, when the churches themselves seem to be stick-in-the-mud and failing to advance.

The whole notion of 'individual exercise' which led to a kind of spiritual individualism, was perhaps, in part, what has been called 'a cop-out' for the assembly as a whole. Instead of whole churches being concerned to lay hands on workers and send them out, it has been left to superkeen individuals to volunteer themselves. An unfortunate side effect of that approach is that it then became unspiritual to screen out unsuitable candidates. The passive church is a terrible problem, but it is not a new one and I have not been convinced that assemblies of Brethren have entirely escaped this passivity and reluctance to get involved. The serious fall off in the numbers of Brethren missionaries over recent years suggests that they have not.

fellow workers. Though they were outstanding as leaders, they were still fallible, sinful people.

2 Corinthians, especially, seems to focus upon the real humanity of the apostles: they could be 'distressed' (1:6); they could 'despair' of life itself (1:8). As they waited in Macedonia for news of the Corinthians they were comforted through the coming of Titus, by God who comforts the 'down-cast' (7:6 NIV; NASB says God comforts 'the depressed'). In chapter 4 human bodies are described as scruffy old earthenware pots, and in chapter 5 as tatty, ragged old tents about to be taken down. The picture of the man of God, in 4:7–12 or 11:23–30, destroys for ever the notion of some kind of apostolic superman, for whom life is one long joyous experience of constant triumph.

All of this should mean that we do not put missionaries on pedestals. Even though greatly used of God and anointed with the Spirit in their ministry, they are still fallible, sinful human beings: they need spiritual direction and pastoral care as much as any other believer. The Brethren approach to missions is very weak in providing leadership and pastoral care. Some might wish to argue that it is the elders of the sending assembly who are in authority. But it is difficult to exercise realistic care, leadership and discipline from several thousand miles away; it is very expensive to send elders out very often; and such elders may have no grasp at all of cultural problems. More, when workers are from different assemblies, different countries and even different language groups, no elders have authority over those sent out by other churches. There needs to be some recognized authority and exercise of pastoral care on the field. Otherwise we have an 'every man did that which was right in his own eyes' situation. Frankly, decency and order is needed just as much in another country as it is in any local assembly. The fear of 'organization' is out of place. It is clear in the New Testament that leadership was exercised by more experienced workers like Paul and Barnabas over Timothy, Titus, and others.

The principle of 'living by faith' is a principle for the recipients of support. It is not a cop-out for local churches who are unwilling to accept financial responsibility for those on whom they have laid hands and sent out as churchplanters. There has to be careful, responsible and realistic giving for support, and this must be planned for prayerfully under the guidance of the Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit in the practice of mission

While it is true in a general sense that those engaged in mission, like every other believer, know the help of the Holy Spirit in their weaknesses (Rom 8:26) and flooding love into their hearts (Rom 5:5), they also experience the work of the Spirit in a special sense. In the same letter, Paul speaks of

the power of the Spirit authenticating the message, and sanctifying the unclean Gentiles (Rom 15:19, 16). To the Thessalonians, Paul says that the Spirit not only empowered the missionaries but also worked in the hearts of the hearers (1 Thess 1:5–6). The writer to the Hebrews also speaks of the confirming work of the Spirit: God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Heb 2:4). Peter also describes the first preachers in Asia Minor as ‘those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven’ (1 Pet 1:12). Thus the testimony of scripture would encourage us to believe that just as at the first in Acts, the Holy Spirit will continue to spearhead the progress of the gospel. An overemphasis by some on ‘signs and wonders’ should not cause us to throw out biblical verses with charismatic bathwater! Romans 15, Hebrews 2 and Galatians 3:5 all link signs and wonders with the work of the Holy Spirit: and all those of us who have been missionaries know that we can do nothing apart from the sovereign intervention of God in helping us, and leading us to a breakthrough at the start of a new work. This is how missionaries, their sending churches and prayer supporters (Rom 15:30) need to pray.

Conclusion

Many of our problems with congregations which seem to have little or no missionary vision, arise from the human nature of the church. Its carnality is not eager for increased giving and the necessary sacrifice involved. It is always easier to do nothing than to take time screening people and preparing them for overseas service by giving them opportunities in the sending church first. The enemy has a deep interest in promoting indifference to mission.

Thank God, the church is his church, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit. We can therefore pray that he will stir us up today as he stirred up the church then. Just as our hope as individuals is the work of the indwelling Spirit, so our hope for the church and its mission is the work of the Spirit in us as congregations corporately.

4 HOLISTIC MISSION

Harold H Rowdon

INTRODUCTION

However confusing the concept of holistic mission may be, it is much simpler than the term! The concept is in fact nothing more—nor less—than one which does full justice to every aspect of God’s mission to the world. It seeks to omit nothing, neglect nothing and include everything that is contained within it. From another point of view, holistic mission brings ministry to the whole of human need—not just one aspect singled out for special attention because of its perceived priority, but the full range. *Holistic* mission, then, is concerned with *wholes*—the *whole* of God’s mission to the *whole* world, the *whole* of the church’s God-given task, and the *whole* of human need.

WHY THE PROBLEM?

It all sounds very innocuous, obvious and straightforward, until you begin to explore the meaning and implications more carefully. What precisely are the component parts of holistic mission? Are any of them more important than others? Is there a scale of priorities? Here the difficulties begin. For instinctively, because of our history, our culture and our spiritual terminology, we begin to draw invidious distinctions between things like word and deed, evangelism and social action, preaching the gospel and healing the sick, and so on.

It is a thousand pities that the distinctions should have been made. That there is a difference between them cannot be denied. But that the *difference* warrants being treated as a *distinction* is far from obvious. In the course of his ministry, Jesus went about teaching, preaching, healing, casting out demons, with sublime indifference to any distinction between these aspects of his work. His ‘manifesto’, recorded in Luke 4:16ff, cites Isaiah 61:1–2 with its total disregard of any distinction between word and deed. We shall examine presently the biblical evidence for the concept of holistic mission. Here we must pause to ask why it is that the concept has come to be questioned.

One underlying reason may well be the Greek roots of our modern culture. Greek thought drew a sharp contrast between thought and word on the one hand, and deed and action on the other. The former was seen as superior to the latter, an activity characteristic of man, civilized man, cultured man. The latter was appropriate only for slaves—men hardly fit to be regarded as men. Behind this distinction lay the more profound—but equally perverse—one between the spiritual and the material. The world of the spirit is ‘real’, pure and noble: the world of matter is transient, degrading and ignoble.

All of this was entirely foreign to the Hebrew approach to reality which colours not only the Old Testament but also the New. The God who is spirit is perfectly prepared to soil his hands (if I may slip for a moment into the Greek way of thinking by using such a phrase) by creating a material world. More of this anon, but the point to be made now is the extra-biblical source of the distinction between word and deed.

Then there is the influence of the dreaded ‘social gospel’. This late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century phenomenon began by realistically facing up to the social and economic needs of victims of modern industrialization and urbanization in the name of Christ. Some of its exponents ended up, however, by giving the impression that the *sole* mission of the church is to relieve human need at the physical and material level. Not surprisingly—human nature being what it is—this gross overstatement was countered by another: that the relief of human needs of this kind has nothing whatever to do with the mission entrusted by God to the church. More recently, we have seen a recrudescence of the social gospel emphasis in the form of views to the effect that God is at work today simply and solely in the advance of social justice—the so-called political theology which takes a variety of forms and has been widely influential. So, if you want to discredit some social activity in the church or its ministry, all you have to do is to declare that it smacks of the social gospel!

Mention must also be made in this connection of dispensational theology as a generator of the distinction between gospel preaching and social action. The dispensationalist interpretation of scripture which was virtually originated and widely disseminated by Darby and other Brethren came into vogue as a reaction not only against social gospel theories but also the developments in biblical criticism during the nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries which so seriously undermined the authority of scripture and the credibility of the gospel. Darby consciously worked from the basis not of the Greek distinction but of the (supposed) distinction between Israel as God’s *earthly* people and the church as God’s *heavenly* people. The result, however, was the same. The church’s task is to proclaim the gospel of redemption from a world that is already under sentence and is hastening to judgement. Salvation is seen in spiritual terms

only. There is a happy inconsistency in that material and physical needs are not in practice totally ignored, but they are regarded as secondary, incidental and relatively unimportant.

MATTER AND SPIRIT

When we address the question to the Bible: 'Is it proper for Christians to serve God and their fellow men at the level of ministry to physical, emotional, psychological, social and economic needs?', the answer amounts to an overwhelming 'Yes'. The evidence is to be found in the biblical doctrines of God as creator, the nature of his providential care of his creation, the fact and implications of the Incarnation, the nature of the ministry of Jesus, the wide scope of salvation and the nature of Christian mission as displayed in the 'Great Commission' and the apostolic practice of it.

Creation and providence

As creator, God made everything that was made (Gen 2:1; Psa 104:24; John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2). He is the source of all life, all being, all things. The Bible knows nothing of a creator like the Gnostic *demiurge* (workman) who brought the material world into existence illadvisedly. The one true God brought into existence the whole earth and everything in it and pronounced his creation 'very good'.

It is true that the fall brought imperfection, defect and perversion into that perfect creation. But, though Satan may be described as 'the god of this age' (2 Cor 4:4), that does not mean that God has forsaken his world. He maintains it in being, retaining his sovereignty over it and caring for it in all its complexity. Psalm after psalm celebrates this fact, and Jesus restated it in oft-quoted words. Paul affirmed to the superstitious crowd at Lystra that the God who created all things had continued to provide for the material needs of his creatures (Acts 14:16–17) and to the more sophisticated audience that he addressed at Athens that in God we 'live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28).

The point need not be laboured. God is not just a speaking God (though he *does* speak to men). He is also a creating, sustaining, ministering God who reveals his love and care in essentially practical and material ways (as well as in other ways, too).

Incarnation

Another theological pointer of which we should take note is the Incarnation. The Incarnation is not the focal point of evangelical theology

in general and Brethren theology in particular. For us it is the Cross that is crucial. But we firmly believe in it, we stoutly defend it when it is under attack, and, whether we realize it or not, it is of fundamental importance to our faith. Without a real Incarnation, the Cross would have been of no avail. And the Incarnation points to a holistic view. If God had lost all interest in the material dimension of creation, then—as the second-century Gnostics believed—he would not have taken real humanity to himself. A phantom version would have been sufficient. But he *did* become man—for us men, and for our salvation. Whether his conception by the Holy Spirit preserved him from involvement in *fallen* humanity, or, as some would have us believe, he partook of *fallen* humanity (without at any time or in any way falling into sin himself), the point of the Incarnation is God's assumption of humanity—real, physical, material humanity—in order to redeem it.

The ministry of Jesus

Of immense importance to our theme is the nature of the earthly ministry of Jesus. We have already alluded to this, but a little more must be said about it here. That it included deeds of mercy and acts of kindness is perfectly obvious. The gospels frequently record these acts of humble service, and it may well be significant that, when Peter summarized the ministry of Jesus to Cornelius and his household, he referred *only* to the things Jesus *did*. (Acts 10:38–39) It certainly ties in perfectly with our Lord's own summary of his mission in terms of (1) service and (2) giving his life as 'a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45).

Just as there would have been no need of a real Incarnation if God was interested only in redeeming the *spiritual* element in man (as is almost implied when we speak about 'souls' being 'saved'), so there would have been no need of a ministry devoted to meeting the human needs of men and women (or, for that matter, of teaching and preaching). After a sinless life lived in complete seclusion from the world, the atoning death which was all that mattered could have been made. *But it didn't happen that way.*

The scope of salvation

We move on to the large and difficult matter of the scope of salvation. As always, there are pitfalls to be avoided. Scripture does not allow us to affirm, with some 'ecumenical' theologians, that salvation is little or no more than a this-worldly activity designed to usher in the experience of material and social wellbeing (*shalom* is the jargon word). Neither, I believe, does it allow us to say with voices coming from the opposite end of the spectrum that physical healing and material prosperity are included in

the salvation that comes from the Atonement (at least without careful qualification).

But neither does it permit us to say that salvation is purely *spiritual*. Scripture teaches so clearly that the believer is promised a (future) experience of salvation that will 'transform our lowly bodies'. (Phil 3:21; cf 1 Cor: 12ff, 1 John 3:2) Nor should we overlook the very broad scriptural hints about a cosmic transformation. (Eph 1:10; Col 1:20) Salvation is vastly more than the rescue of 'souls' from a material environment which is beyond redemption. The last Adam is head of a new creation—new, not in the sense of being a different kind of thing from the old, but in the sense of being rejuvenated, renewed, re-created. True, the consummation is still future, and it is vitally important that this point should be made. But the 'firstfruits' are already present (2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:14). The firstfruits (foretaste, down-payment) are not to be identified with the spiritual as distinct from the material aspects of salvation. Who can claim to have received all that God has to give in the first of these realms? No doubt it is the area in which they are most marked. But the effects of spiritual rebirth cannot but affect the whole of life. We must all have seen—and perhaps experienced—the effects of new birth on a person's emotional, intellectual and even physical experience. The interaction between the manifold aspects of the psychosomatic unity that is a human being can hardly fail to ensure that this happens to some extent.

This point should not be over-stated, but neither should it be omitted.

The commission given to the church

Finally, we turn to the most directly relevant of the arguments I have been marshalling in favour of a holistic view of world mission—the concept of mission given to the church in the persons of the apostles, and their practice in carrying it out. The key passages here are not only the 'Great Commission' (Matt 28:18–20) but also the parallel passage in John 20:19–23 and the commissions given to the 12 and the 70 (Matt 10:1ff; Luke 10:1ff; and parallel passages), together with passages in Acts.

In the commissions given to the 12 and the 70 it is noteworthy not only that healings and exorcisms are included, as well as preaching, but also that they loom larger. John 20:21 contains the words: 'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' I confess that, when preaching from this text, I *used* to relate it exclusively to the preaching of forgiveness and reconciliation which is the subject of verse 23. I trust I am wiser now, having realized that the key to the meaning of verse 21 is Mark 10:45 where Jesus sums up the terms of his commission as not only redemption but also *service*.

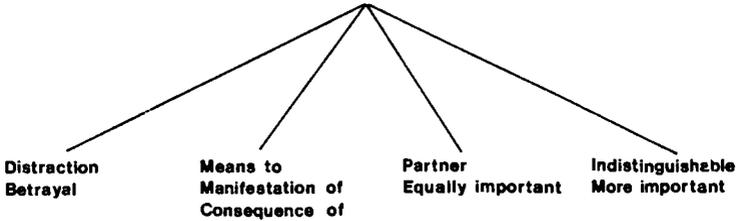
The apostles certainly understood it that way. They went out ready to act as well as to speak. Peter and John brought physical healing to a crippled man (Acts 3:6–7). The apostles as a whole healed and exorcised (Acts 5:12–16). Beyond the apostles, Philip ministered to human need as well as preaching the gospel (Acts 8:6–7). This kind of ministry was not confined to the context of preaching and evangelism. For example, Peter healed Aeneas and raised Dorcas from death. (Acts 9:32–41), Paul, as well as Peter, brought healing to a lame man (Acts 14:8–10), and exorcised a slave girl at Philippi (Acts 16:16–18). It has been alleged that the emphasis in Paul's ministry was increasingly on verbal proclamation, but there is clear evidence that this was not so. It was during his *third* missionary journey and his longest stay in one place—the crucially important city of Ephesus—that we read of unusual healings and exorcisms taking place (Acts 19:11–12).

WORD AND DEED

I could cheerfully omit the next section of this paper, for it may serve to underline the distinction which I am convinced is unreal and misleading, but for anything like a clear understanding of the concept of holistic mission it is a necessity. We must tackle the question, 'How do the two sides of the mission entrusted to the church—the spiritual and the material, word and deed, evangelism and social action—relate to each other?'

There are plenty of 'models' to choose from. A dozen or more have been distinguished, ranging from the one that places them in opposition to each other on the one hand, to the one that identifies them, and the one that sees social action as more important than evangelism on the other side! For the sake of clarity, I shall reduce them to a mere nine positions on the subject, ranging from one extreme to the other. Social action can be seen as:

- 1 A betrayal of evangelism.
- 2 A distraction from evangelism.
- 3 A means to evangelism.
- 4 A manifestation of evangelism.
- 5 A consequence of evangelism.
- 6 A partner of evangelism.
- 7 Social action and evangelism are equally important but distinct aspects of the total mission of the church.
- 8 Social action and evangelism are indistinguishable.
- 9 Social action is more important than evangelism.



The accompanying diagram groups them into four and attempts to show their 'spread'. I shall here do no more than comment on a few, and suggest a personal preference.

We are probably all familiar with the first on the list. We may have met it head-on when we suggested, years ago, introducing recreational activities for young people into our church activities, or, more recently, activities of a similar kind for adults.

The view that social action serves as a bridge across which the gospel can be taken to unconverted people is often advanced as justification for medical or educational work abroad. The fact that it is also a generous expression of Christian love for the underprivileged can be overlooked.

The same is true of the idea that it authenticates the gospel. In fact, all the views on the left side of the diagram are based on the premise that the verbal proclamation of the gospel is of paramount, if not unique, importance.

Not so the notions on the extreme right. Here the opposite is the case. It is the social side that is paramount. Since this idea is not likely to have any appeal for the audience I am addressing, I will say no more about it.

Most of us, I suspect, would want to take up a position somewhere in the middle, viewing the two alternatives as partners. Some might want to say, with the Lausanne Covenant, that the two are not equal partners, and that, in the last analysis, the *spiritual* dimension must take precedence over the *material*. Others might hesitate, and prefer to go with the exponents of what is often called 'radical discipleship' and refuse to put the two into an absolute order of preference.

I would like to develop the idea that the question of the relative importance of the two things we are discussing is one that ought not to be asked in an absolute generalized, way. If, as I firmly believe, mission includes everything which God has sent the church into the world to do in his name, then everything—yes, *everything*—is important, *equally* important since it is included in our marching orders. If the whole church were involved in *either* verbal proclamation *or* social action to the total exclusion of the other, then alarm bells should be ringing. The same applies to a local church, if it is to achieve a balanced witness. For the individual, it is

slightly different. If the biblical concept of the body, with its multiplicity of members, each with its distinctive—and partial—function to perform for the effective operation of the whole, means anything at all, then the individual may well have to decide between one and the other and know which is more important *for him or her*. In some cases, of course, it may be both. But the missionary doctor, for example, does not need to justify his medical work by drawing attention to the spiritual work he is able to do 'on the side'. You may well ask if there is any direct biblical evidence for such an assertion. To answer this very proper question, we must address ourselves to the crucial issue: is there any biblical warrant for Christian involvement in activities which are not narrowly evangelistic, proclamatory or 'spiritual'. To ask the question in these terms is almost to answer it, since many of those who are reading these lines spend most of their waking hours in such activities! (ie they earn their living this way!) So, presumably, the question should be narrowed to apply to those who are engaged in such activities under the guise of full-time Christian service. But this raises the spectre of a distinction between Christians which has never been congenial to those known as Christian Brethren!

CONCLUSION

The time has come to draw the threads together. Care of the sick, the afflicted, the hungry and the oppressed is more than an accompaniment to the preaching of the gospel as the *real* task of mission. It is more than a bridge, leading people to open their eyes to the message. It is more than authentication of the message (though it is all of these). It is *part of the message*. The distinction between word and deed is artificial. How do you know that someone really loves you? Not merely because they say so *verbally*, but also because their *actions* say so. 'God so loved that he gave.' Medical care, educational attention, the provision of food for the hungry and the imparting of technological skills—not to mention 'supernatural' acts—speak loud and clear, provided they are done clearly and unequivocally in the name of Jesus. In any case, they are inherently good things. I am aware that giving can be ill-advised and even done in such a way as to create more harm than good, but I am talking about actions done with due regard to the dignity and sensitivities of fellow human beings.

In short, there is no need to apologise for being medics, educationalists, or relief workers as if we were second-class servants of Christ whose role is merely to pave the way for the bearers of the good news or to authenticate what they have already said. (Actually, there are no such beings as 'second-class' servants of Christ if we are fulfilling the role that we have been given us by Christ.)

This is the real crunch. Are we in our appointed place?

Something would be radically wrong if *all* Christians were involved in various forms of social service, just as it would almost certainly be wrong if they were *all* occupied with the business of verbal communication. But how are we to know our role? A number of criteria may be suggested:

1 Our perceived gift (or gifts) and training. This is not as simple a matter as might appear at first sight. I think of the medical doctor who realized that he also possessed linguistic gifts and that these were of more strategic value *in the situation in which he found himself* than his medical gifts and training.

2 The strategic needs of a situation should therefore be taken into account. This does not mean, for example that someone without any ability as a teacher should be misled by the crying need for basic education into trying his hand at something for which he was manifestly unfitted. But it does mean, for instance, that the need for a balance in Christian ministry should be taken into account whenever possible. This applies just as much in a local church situation in the 'home country' as in a situation overseas. For that matter, it applies regionally or nationally.

3 Some reference should also be made to the *overall* strategic situation. Supposing the majority of evangelical Christians in a country, or worse still worldwide, were to be involved in *one* aspect of mission, it would be high time for someone to draw attention to the imbalance. This sort of situation was a reality not too many years ago when it was comparatively rare for evangelicals to be involved in any but the verbal aspects of world mission. The imbalance may one day be seen on the other side, but this does not seem to be the case today—particularly in the circles we move in!

Holistic mission. Let us not worry too much about the ugly term. Let us make sure it is being practised. And the last word must be given to a British missionary who is engaged in social work in Peru. She writes:

Sometimes my time is spent visiting hospitals, schools, lawyers and different organizations in an attempt to get help; sometimes I might sit with an anxious mother in a hospital waiting room and help her fill in forms; sometimes I might sit a child on my knee, wipe away his tears and give him a cuddle. Whatever I might do, concrete 'results' are rarely seen. I've not seen anyone converted, and my attempts to sort out people's problems are often thwarted. I do not feel that this is necessarily the most important factor. These children and their families need to know that someone is willing to take their part, that someone cares. After all, how else will they ever know that God cares?

For further reading on this subject, see B J Nicholls, *In Word and Deed* (Paternoster Press); John R W Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Falcon Press, London).

PART THREE

THE PRACTICE OF MISSION

5 MISSION AND CULTURE

Bill Cotton

The greatest task of the missionary is to become an effective *communicator*. Poor man, he proceeds from his own monocultural situation and seeks to cross into another culture in which he is expected to communicate the gospel powerfully, so as to convince the locals of the truth of his message.

I was in an art gallery in the city of La Paz, Bolivia. Explaining some aspects of the pictures to a friend, a Bolivian lady approached me and said: 'I wish I could speak English half as well as you speak Spanish.' I replied, perhaps a little smugly, 'I have to speak Spanish well, for my business is to communicate the greatest News.'

Little did I realise then that communicating the gospel in another culture is infinitely more than speaking the language. Yet I suppose most of us who went out to foreign fields twenty-five years ago from Brethren assemblies had not the slightest awareness of the difficulties and dangers of cross-cultural communication. As far as I can recall no-one ever warned me of the nature of cultural disparity.

The baggage we take with us

Culture is a complex of beliefs, feelings and values which characterize a particular group of people. We are soaked in these values from childhood, and are hardly aware that we have them, they have become so much a part of our essential being. The beliefs common to our culture, many of them in Britain influenced to some extent by the gospel, provide life's foundations and help to give us a sense of security. We control our feelings in a certain way common to our culture, and we have certain moral and cultural values dictated by it.

We take this way of looking at life, of emotional reactions, of value-judgements with us to the mission field. We cannot do otherwise. What we often don't realize is that we also take with us an often unarticulated idea that our culture is the best of all cultures. Ours is a superior culture.

Two examples. When an Amazonian Indian asked a Wycliffe translator: 'If your God is so great, how come he doesn't speak our language?' he was simply expressing the view that the world revolves around his tribe. That's where any true God would logically have begun his work. At the other extreme I met two American Peace Corps youth returning from the Bolivian tin mines. What did they do up there? 'We taught them how to play baseball.' They thus expressed their beliefs in their cultural superiority on the playing field.

The Christian missionary takes another element of baggage with him—his theological system. He takes a Bible in one hand and a volume of theology (Berkhof, Strong, Hodge) in the other. He may have learnt it in his local church or at Bible College, but it is essentially 'Made in Britain, USA, etc'. He has learnt this painstakingly and expects when he gets off the plane to be communicating it within as short a time as possible. Little does he realize that his message sounds foreign, at best paternalistic, at worst imperialistic.

We must examine the baggage we take with us to the mission field. How far is it British, and how far is it essentially Christian? This was the question which caused me a considerable amount of mental distress after seeing our first conversions in Bolivia. We must strip our message of any element which does not belong to the essence of the gospel. Paul realized that the attempt of the Judaizers to impose circumcision on the infant churches would strangle his work, and he fought tenaciously against it.

Learning from another culture

Deep humility is essential to the missionary task. The missionary must listen and learn. The people to whom he goes love their own culture. They believe it to be superior to all others. This may at times cause him frustration or even anger, but he will have to bite his lip and accept it.

Hernán was a 13-year-old school boy who did some gardening for me during my first year in Bolivia. He would fairly frequently remind me of Bolivian superiority. His logic worked like this: 'When a Yankee's car breaks down he buys a new part to replace the old. In Bolivia we can't afford a new part, so we invent something makeshift to replace it. So we are more ingenious than they are. Q.E.D.' One day I had occasion to open the back of one of the old reel-to-reel tape recorders. He stared at the mass of coloured wires, resistances, etc, gave a long, low whistle and muttered: 'Qué gringos!' For once he confessed himself beaten.

What an immense amount of differences the new missionary is

confronted with. Food, houses, language, even greeting patterns. The North American says 'Hi!', rarely a handshake. The Englishman gives you a cold handshake, assuming he hasn't seen you for some time. The Bolivian salutes you with a handshake followed by a bear-hug, followed by another handshake. The Argentine prefers the kiss, even among men. Kissing rarely-washed, oily-skinned adolescents is not the most pleasant of experiences. What a difference in the concept of time.

On the way to the flat in which we first held meetings my path took me through a public plaza. There I found Carlos, a new Christian from the University, sitting on a park bench. Lacking only five minutes for the beginning of the service, I suggested we walk down together. 'Oh no', he said, 'I never go anywhere on time.' He was clearly flustered by my suggestion, and for the first time I realized that the habit of arriving late was not due to carelessness, but to principle'. To arrive somewhere on time would be positively rude. Carlos is now the president of Scripture Union in Bolivia.

Our addiction to time may be positively offensive in the culture to which we go. So may our addiction to the automobile. Some missionaries cannot imagine life without the wheel. They plead efficiency and will do everything possible to obtain a car or jeep. In some cases this might be justified, but I suspect less often than we imagine. In 13 years in Bolivia I did not own private transport, so was thrown into the public transport system which is used by 95%+ of the people. How many excellent opportunities this gave me for conversation and for being thrown into personal contact with ordinary people.

Becoming a bicultural person means coming to love the culture to which one goes. Obviously learning the language will be the first necessity and the native will see this as the primary symbol of identification. But loving the culture is much more than learning the language. How can this be achieved? Perhaps by adapting Paul's words to this situation:

*Whatever is true, whatever is noble,
whatever is right, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—
—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—
—think about such things. Phil 4:8*

In any culture there is that which is commendable, and we should dwell upon it; make much of it; commend it to others.

One of the most delightful touches in Bolivian culture was one practised in the restaurant. As one passed between the tables to reach one's seat, you would slightly incline the head at each table and say, 'Buen provecho', which means something like, 'Good eating', or, 'May it do you good'. The people at the table will reply, 'Gracias'. The same ritual is performed as you leave the restaurant. On more than one occasion I have been asked, 'How do you say "buen provecho" in English?' On replying that we have no such custom, a negative reaction is inevitable!

Pity the poor new missionary. His reactions during the first few months are crucial. *Culture shock* is primarily negative reaction to a new culture and almost always occurs during these first crucial months. He is thrown off his guard by the most unsuspected factors. He is disorientated. I well remember wandering around a market looking for gravy powder and custard powder. I was shocked to find none. How can one live, possibly the rest of one's life, without gravy and custard?

When culture shock is compounded with the inevitable disparity between expectations (he was going to evangelize the country within six months!) and performance (long years of earlier missionary work have produced little results) he may well experience a rejection of the culture. The fact is that finding fault with the culture is simply a symptom of our own inability to understand it, to come to terms with it. The missionary will then either resign, return home, or remain on the field by settling in to a minimal routine. He will develop an instinctive distrust of the nationals, and will either ignore or denigrate his receptor culture.

We were visiting a fellow missionary. It was a national festival day, so we were going out to the country for the day. As we were leaving the house we pointed out to the missionary that he had not put out the national flag as custom requires. He hurried back in, returned with the flag, and said as he hung it up over the front of the house, 'I always believe in respecting their silly festivals.' The adjective said it all! On another occasion we received a visit from a missionary in Chile. They were having a tough time of raising national churches, but then, 'The Chileans are a very lazy people. It really was impossible to get them to do anything of their own initiative. They always needed to be spoonfed by the missionaries.' Some hours later we were talking about the phenomenal growth of Pentecostal groups in Chile. Yes, they were to be found in every town and village, and worked hard at proclaiming the gospel. Were they led by missionaries? No, they were entirely led by Chileans.

As Eugene Nida has pointed out, the missionary bears with him a paramessage. Alongside his spoken word goes a message expressed in looks, gestures, and reactions, by which the national senses his attitude toward their culture. 'I never did like that [black] girl to touch me', says the social worker, Miss Ophelia, in Uncle Tom's Cabin, 'but I never realised that she knew it.' How many missionaries suffer from the Miss Ophelia syndrome! The trouble is that they do know it, and they resent it.

We must by all means possible strive to eradicate from ourselves and from those we send out to the field all vestiges of cultural superiority. We must inculcate a spirit of humility and a willingness to learn from other cultures.

The gospel in cultural terms

Contextualisation is a word widely used in mission studies today. In a sense

every Bible-loving Christian is already a bicultural person. He has imbibed something of that culture which greets us in the pages of the Bible. It is different from his own and he has learnt, to some extent, to be a bridge between these two cultures. If he has been honest in his understanding of the biblical gospel, he will have become critical of some aspects of his own culture.

Conversion brings with it a fairly radical shift in world view. It is experienced to some extent by every Christian in every culture. If the outgoing missionary has developed this faculty he will be more able to restate the gospel in terms beyond those of his own culture.

As he immerses himself into the receptor culture, he will begin to look for thought-forms and sentiments which are acceptable among these people, which will become vehicles for sharing his faith and the biblical revelation. Again I must confess that on going to the mission field 24 years ago, one was not made aware of this. For the first few years one's teaching and preaching were clothed, unconsciously perhaps, in an entirely European, not to say British, dress.

How then may one avoid this? Is it not demanding a Herculean task, before which most prospective missionaries will draw back? I do not think so. There are, I think, two ways in which the missionary can contextualise his thinking and his preaching: social intercourse and reading. The first of these is available to all, though some will find it easier than others. By constant conversation with the people, by asking questions, by probing into the meaning of customs, by sharing in the things that the people do, the missionary will become sensitive to what moves his receptor culture.

Reading, assuming that there is a fairly high standard of literacy in the culture, will introduce him to the mind of the people as expressed by those who are most able to know it at first hand. I know of nothing which has given me as good an understanding of the typical Spanish village as Miguel de Unamuno's short story, 'San Miguel Bueno, Mártir'.

The gospel as a critique of all cultures

'It must be noted that Christianity, if it is not hopelessly denatured, never becomes fully at home in any culture. Always, when it is true to its genius, it creates a tension.' (Latourette) There are demonic and dehumanizing forces present in all cultures.

How will the missionary be able to recognize these? Only if his own mind is steeped in the truth of scripture. Constant personal encounter with God's Word therein, guided by the impulse of the Spirit, will enable him to discover what is truly right and righteous in his own culture, and what on the other hand is devilish or carnal. When he has got through with his own culture he might be able to do the same with the receptor culture.

Probably a more direct route is for him to ensure that the mind of his fellow Christians in this receptor culture are steeped in scripture by their own first-hand encounter with it. Who better able to discern what is good and godly in their society, and what is not? Let him develop his theology direct from a personal and continuous encounter with God's Word written, and through that with God's Word living. The results may sometimes be surprising, but if his theology is truly biblical he will come up with something very like it, though perhaps robed in a garb which may seem strange to him at first sight.

Finally the key to all this discussion of 'Mission and Culture' is *Incarnation*. As the Son of God became truly incarnate in the receptor culture to which he went—a Jewish carpenter's home in disreputable Nazareth, occupied by Roman imperialism—so we are called to incarnate ourselves and our gospel in that culture to which God's Spirit calls us.

6 CHURCH PLANTING

Olive Rogers

The term 'church planting' is in popular use at present. We must be careful in its use, for church planting is not within the ability of the missionary. It is the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ said, 'I will build my church.' We cannot say, 'X mission needs to plant 30 churches in Y area in the next year,' or 'I am going out to do church planting.' But, having said that, there are a few things to be considered concerning the planting of self propagating churches.

Planting a self propagating church

Church planting is not done in a vacuum. The term itself suggests growth; ie a 'supra-natural' new life has to take root in the soil of a totally alien culture. This is true of the individual convert, and of a new church. Paul used another agricultural metaphor—that of a 'graft'. There has to be a new plant growth within the medium of the old natural tree.

Before starting this work, then, the church planter must have convictions about the pagan religious beliefs and customs of the people he is working among. Religion and culture are inextricably joined, and cannot be separated. Therefore, should anything of the old culture be carried over into the new? If so, how much? How far can concepts within the religion be used as a vehicle through which to convey spiritual truths concerning Christ and the way of salvation? This requires a thorough study of the religion and its customs. The church planter will have to form convictions on these matters which will influence his approach. He must ask:

1 Is it a totally Satanic religion in all its concepts and therefore unredeemable, with the result that converts must be taught to carry nothing over into their new life in Christ? H Kraemer is among those who would answer 'Yes'.

2 Is it a pre-Christian religion in which there is some element of self-disclosure of God which may somehow have prepared the people to receive

the truth? If so, where is the bridge over which to cross? Don Richardson argues the case for a positive answer in *Eternity in their Hearts*.

3 Is it the outcome of human efforts to find God and resolve the basic issues of life? If so, there must be some good in it, but it is inadequate since Christ is the only answer. Some Indian Christian theologians argue this line in respect of Hinduism, notably Dhanjibai Fakirbhai.

4 Or is it a mixture of all these in differing degrees, but made more complex by the inherent sinfulness and depravity of man?

Whether the missionary works among primitive animistic tribals in Africa, in a superstitious continental RC setting or a spiritist South American RC culture, in a predominantly Hindu area, a cosmopolitan urban twentieth-century non-religious society or an inner-city, multi-cultural population, the problem is basically the same. Where does he start? With what convictions does he work? He is a co-worker with God, but if a church is to take root and grow it must be culturally acceptable. If the religion and culture are inextricably joined, should any of the culture remain? If so, what can be preserved and transformed? Should believers be de-culturalized? If so, to what extent? Virtually all customs perform important functions within the culture, therefore if they are removed it is necessary to replace them with something equally meaningful in the Christian context. To leave a void means that in time the people will revert to their old ways. Moreover, how can the message be contextualized so that communication of the gospel reaches their friends of other faiths with a clear message of the truth?

Having preached the gospel with clarity, as a result of which converts are made and a small church is beginning to take root, the church planter must expect opposition. This will come on two levels:

1 Sociological. The converts will become social outcastes, perhaps the target of physical attacks and persecution.

2 Spiritual. If the new convert or church is planted in a hitherto unchallenged 'spiritual realm', attacks of evil spirits must be anticipated. Their hold on that person or persons has been broken, and oppression—spiritual and social—will combine in an effort to regain possession of him or destroy the effectiveness of the new church. I have experienced both these things in India. The spiritual powers of darkness are not to be taken lightly.

After the initial outright attacks have subsided, more subtle opposition will emerge in two ways: syncretistic culture and subtle forms of diluting spiritual truth.

The new church walks a tight-rope. It must not be de-culturalized to the extent that it is unable to identify with the local people. Nor should it be so adapted that any distinctive quality of life is hard to be found and

therefore it fails to be 'salt and light' and a source of attraction to the spiritually dissatisfied.

The Jews of the Diaspora seem to have got it just about right. They were absorbed into the mainstream of society wherever they lived, yet they maintained a distinctive life of their own with their synagogues and rituals and this provided an attraction for those who were disillusioned with their pagan religion. These became 'God-fearers' and were taught the scriptures which had been translated into Greek, initially for the non-Hebrew-speaking Jews. They were a 'prepared people' who were ripe for 'harvest' when the Christian gospel eventually came. The Jewish Diaspora with their scriptures became the 'bridge' over which many of them crossed into new life in Christ.

This leads to another question. Is McGavran's idea of a 'people movement' good? The Western world is individualistic in outlook, and this has influenced theology and evangelism in this century. But is there something in the concept expressed in Acts 16:31 ('you and all your household')? Tribal society worldwide knows nothing of individualism. Nor does Eastern or Asian society. When, therefore, individuals are converted they find themselves isolated and thus vulnerable. They need a new society into which to go for emotional, physical and spiritual stability. McGavran suggested that people movements operating on the homogeneous unit principle (HUP) may create 'baptized pagans', as he calls them, but out of them a living church can be formed. He maintains that two-thirds of today's churches in Asia grew this way. Examples are the mass movements in Indonesia and Korea. Such mass conversions can be platforms for the true church planting, but in my experience they create enormous problems after two or three generations. It should be noted, however, that Paul did not delay in forming small churches wherever the word had taken root. He saw the need for a new society in which the converts could find a new identity, and realized that the church, the Body of Christ, is the answer to this need.

The Brethren interpret biblical ecclesiology in terms of autonomous but interdependent churches with multiple leadership. This structure is adaptable to all cultures, and political and religious climates, but we have to beware of what Stanley Jones calls 'the imprisonment of previous patterns' of either local or Western origin. The Holy Spirit must be allowed to develop the church as he guides and the missionary must be willing to be taught by him, and also learn from the national believers.

We agree that church planting is the work of the Spirit of God, but that does not preclude the need for strategy or goals, which must be clear. Paul had both. His goal was 'to preach where Christ is not known' (Rom 15:9). His strategy (always under the guidance of the Spirit) was to plant a church in each large city and use it as a stepping stone to go further,

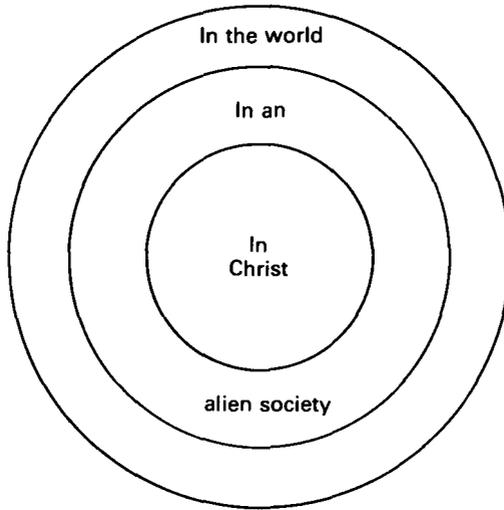
leaving the local believers to evangelize the immediate district in the vernacular language (Rom 15 etc). The Godavari Delta Mission missionaries in the Godavari district of India had a well-planned strategy. It worked. Today there are over 350 churches. This is perhaps one of the clearest examples of the value of HUP church planting with true converts. In much of the Third World there are many converts with overflowing enthusiasm, and there is what is called 'spontaneous evangelism'. In South India this is exciting. But this movement of the Holy Spirit must be built upon. These pockets of witness must be formed into churches, which can plant house groups, which in turn can become new churches. This has been the main source of church growth in South America. The missionary, together with the national believers, works out a strategy with realistic goals, being open to the movement of the Spirit of God. [See appendix for note on GDM strategy.]

Nurturing the self-propagating church

The need for teaching basic Christian doctrines may still include—in backward areas—the need to teach reading skills, or even to reduce the language to writing. Such activities are usually pre-evangelistic. Once there are converts there is the need to teach the scriptures.

The non-Western method of learning is most often by rote. That introduces a danger. New believers learn facts, but find it hard to elicit principles. They can follow rules, but need a thinking mind to adapt principles to their own situation. The church in a culturally backward area will slavishly follow the teaching of their 'guru'—be he a missionary or a national pastor. The church in a cosmopolitan city will include nationals who have trained minds. It is good that a church constitution be worked out, for there is usually a fast moving population in the city and the first clear vision may soon be blurred. It is here in urban situations that the distinction between abiding principles for church life and changing patterns should be clearly defined. Nothing can replace the need for corporate prayer, witness and worship, and for sound Bible teaching. But socio-economic conditions will change and the methods will have to be revised from time to time.

Adult baptism is the cut-off point for the believer. Its meaning must be taught clearly to the new believer. Its cost will be real to him. He is leaving one society and entering another. The church must be ready to welcome him into their family, for from now on his life becomes more complicated. A diagram may help:



In Christ: A fellowship with God and his people; a relationship of sonship; a place of renewal and support; a refuge.

In an alien society: A community which could be hostile and will certainly be alien, but among which he must live.

In the world: A place of evil, sinful practices to be avoided, but with a mission to reach out to those in the world.

Since the new believer has to live in the world he has to learn how to live out his Christian principles in a pagan society. The Old Testament has much to teach us about this. The people of God in the New Testament are described in Old Testament terminology (see 1 Pet 2:9). God's calling is always with a special purpose. Abraham received at his call a two-tier blessing. He was to be blessed and to be a means of blessing to all nations. The same is true of all believers. There is no injustice or partiality about election. God is not choosing one and rejecting another. He chooses those whom he has called to bear responsibility for others. This precludes any sense of pride. Just as Abraham had to be progressively de-culturalized so that he could relate increasingly to God and show his nature to those around, so the new believer has to be taught how to live Christianly among those whose culture is now alien to him. Similarly church gatherings must be culturally acceptable and the lives of believers attractive to unbelievers. David Burnett describes three types of Jews living about the time of Christ from which we may draw lessons:

1 Essenes: withdrawal from the social structures of life.

- 2 Zealots: political activists (today's liberation theologians!).
- 3 Pharisees: traditional legalists with an intense proselytizing programme.

The Brethren church-nurturing programme has tended to follow 1 and 3 in varying degrees. Jesus, however, rejected all three modes of life. He chose the way of the Suffering Servant, and this is the way that all believers should be taught. Only the Spirit of God can actualize this in their lives, but the church planter has to be their example. This is the only viable option for Christian living in this world. It is the mindset of Philippians 2, and it is costly in the extreme.

It calls for *incarnational service*. Churches don't just happen. They have to be worked at, and churches must learn that it is their responsibility to see other churches born from them. For this to happen, the believers must realize the purpose of their call—the privilege and responsibility of it. To fulfil this function the elders must continually be on the lookout for potential gift among the believers, and must maintain a steady training programme, as well as continuous outreach. Training is needed for evangelism, leadership and missionary, ie cross-cultural and even overseas, service. (There are some 15,000 non-Western overseas missionaries today.)

Alongside this, there must be teaching on giving, for the church should bear the responsibility of its own outreach and the support during training as well as actual service, of their missionaries.

Finally, the church is called 'to declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvellous light'. Praise and worship is the main calling of the church, and this should not just be left to happen. Worship is the natural expression of adoration arising from the realization of the believer's new position in Christ. It is the highest form of corporate activity in the church. But it is also a special act of witness. This, therefore, must not only be acceptable to God, but it should also be culturally acceptable to the people for whom it is a witness. The teaching of the New Testament leaves it possible for corporate worship in the church to be carried out in ways which are devoid of ritual—simple enough for the youngest of believers and the most primitive of societies, yet with depths of understanding that can satisfy the profoundest intellect. No other religion contains such simple yet meaningful symbolism in corporate worship.

Relating to the self propagating church

If Christ became our example in incarnational service it is clear that this is the responsibility of the church planter insofar as it is possible. This involves not only an in-depth study of the language and culture as well as

the religion, but also identifying as far as possible with the people to whom he has been sent. Christ not only became man; he became a first-century Galilean Jew living in Palestine under Roman rule. He became an example of God-like living among an ungodly people under a harsh, foreign rule. He became a servant of all, for the sake of bringing the gospel to them. It cost him everything. It will be the same for the true church planter.

But there are physical and cultural limits. There is what has been called 'cultural fatigue'. This is particularly true for one who works in isolated conditions. He needs refreshment—spiritual, physical and emotional. There may be no place to find this. Nowhere to be alone, without people around everywhere. Nothing different to refresh the mind. What to do about the constant physical needs of the people surrounding him and the incessant spiritual demands of the church? Practical means must be found for necessary renewal.

How to balance the needs of his own family with those of the church? How to be an example of consistent Christian living at all times? What level should he and his family adopt? I found that a mission compound mitigated against identifying with the people. They accepted my right to be there, but I could not. But how far can, or should, an expatriate identify? I found a college lecturer or headmaster's standard of living seemed about right.

How to make the home available to all—Christians and non-Christians—without creating too much of a strain on family or self? How to preserve some modicum of privacy? How far to share material goods without being taken advantage of? The church planter must face all these and other occupational hazards as he seeks to establish churches for the Lord.

In some countries today there is a kind of reverse apartheid. No expatriate may hold office or be in any position of responsibility within the church. All must be done by nationals, for is it not a national church? This situation obtains in culturally advanced areas in the city. While the missionary can hardly resist this trend for himself he must seek to ensure that the church is truly cross-cultural. Expatriates and nationals should work together in a unique relationship, with the missionary not *under* national leadership, certainly not *above* it, but *within* it, as a member of the Body of Christ in a newly formed church.

There is no easy answer to any of these questions. Each individual needs to work out what is best and what he understands to be the way of the Lord for him in each situation. And as he seeks for tolerance and patience to bear with the failings of those who are newly the Lord's, let him remember that he too is a failing child of God, as they are.

APPENDIX

The Godaverī Delta Mission: a case study

1 After many years of intensive evangelistic activity it was noted that the response came largely from one people group. Geographically, the area had been previously divided on comity lines with the Canadian Baptists who found the same response. Converts were outcasted, and so land was found for them to enable them to start life afresh in small groups further out from the village, even from the existing outcaste section. The small communities which thus arose are still called Christian *pettahs*. A new physical and cultural environment was created into which new converts could be assimilated.

2 The GDM concentrated their efforts on building up the few converts while continuing in evangelism among all sections of the Hindu community, but with little response. Another people group which was responding was the other section of the outcaste people. The American Lutheran church came right through the whole district and worked among these people with a good response. But since casteism is strong between sections of outcastes, these two groups would never mix. Thus Lutherans and Brethren worked side by side in the same villages and developed HUP churches.

3 The strategy used by GDM from the '20s to the early '50s was as follows:

3.1 Spiritually responsive and intelligent boys were spotted, educated and sent for teacher training. They were then sent to villages which showed interest and where a small Christian group was developing. Often being the only literate person, they became the sociological elder of the community and the potential church. Converted older people were taught to read the Bible and schools provided basic education for the children—all who would come, either Christian or Hindu. All converts came from the same section of outcaste families. After the time-honoured pattern of Hindu village life, a *panchayat* was formed of older Christian men who became both church elders and elders for the new community. The teacher was the pastor, responsible for teaching in the church.

3.2 Finance for the school work came from within the community, with the missionary organizing it. Women did lace work at home and were paid for this work. This was initiated by an early lady missionary who saw the need for the women to earn but realized the danger of children being left with heathen grandmothers if the mother was out working in the fields. This alternative work gave both income and the chance to train children

'Christianly' from their early days. The women were the most spiritually responsive. Income from this work was channelled back into the building of simple mud and wattle school rooms which became church buildings on Sundays, and also provided funds for the building of similarly simple homes for the schoolmaster sent to live, work and evangelize there.

3.3 Teachers gathered each month in a given village to receive pay cheques (mostly government, once the schools were recognized, but with extra mission pay added—a government rule). At this gathering, problems in the communities and churches were discussed, and advice was given. Twice a year during school holidays, teachers gathered for 4–10 day Bible schools. Much regular Bible teaching was given by gifted teachers over the years. What was taught was preached to the growing HUP churches. Women teachers were added to the staff and contributed a lot to the work among women and children. Regular Sunday schools with graduated lessons worked out centrally and inter-church competitions meant a steady flow of young converts into the church.

Field elders, paid by the missionaries, acted as 'trouble-shooters' to assist teachers in problems or disciplinary situations. Their authority was accepted by all, and they were without exception believers of high spiritual calibre. They both supported and corrected the teachers. Where there was a dedicated, faithful, high-principled teacher backed up by a competent and godly wife, there, even today, a strong church remains.

3.4 Field conventions for Bible teaching were held annually and were times of great encouragement and indeed excitement for scattered, small HUP groups. Since Hindu caste infrastructure was never broken, marriages were arranged at such times. Evangelistic meetings were held, for the need for personal conversion was the basis of all teaching. All arrangements were made and expenses paid by the self propagating church which sent one collection per month to the missionary centre for use in payment of field elders' salaries, repairs to buildings and convention expenses. A sense of distinct identity had grown up over the years. 5,000 or more people attended the conventions, camping in palmyra leaf shelters erected for the occasion.

3.5 From the beginning, indigenous hymns with Indian lyric music was used in hymnology. New hymns were written for most conventions. In the very early days, high caste converts wrote many fine hymns with great depth of meaning, but the language was too 'high' for the average believer. Today, simpler but effective Telegu lyrics are used. At gatherings, the Indian custom of women sitting on one side and men on the other was followed. Local dress for men continued to be used, and no Western overtones came into the church. Women Bible teachers and elders' wives

were encouraged and Bible schools were held specially for them. Some very fine Bible teachers—both men and women—arose. Evangelistic outreach has always been a great feature of the church, and Hindu converts have been made, though not too many have been absorbed into the churches. Just a few churches have risen above the HUP status. One church, run by caste convert widows, is a very fine church today, fully transcaste, run by those women who call the preachers for Sundays, pay their expenses and annually run a women's Bible school. For this school, the women bring in all the food required and pay for all expenses, including gifts for missionary speakers. Other areas have followed the same pattern.

4 The strategy used by GDM from 1958.

4.1 In 1958 all the schools had to be handed over to the government and the teachers were subsequently moved from place to place. This was partly a move designed to break down the fast growing Christian community. Some churches did suffer through lost leadership, but by this time most had well taught and experienced elders and leaders. New methods were devised. From time to time, conventions for the whole mission were held and are still being held. Up to 20,000 may attend.

4.2 Villages are now declining. Young people, now often graduates, go to the city for work. No longer are there missionaries, field elders or mission schools. Today, some 150 evangelists with their wives (often simple couples) faithfully carry on the care of the churches and evangelistic outreach, planting still more churches. All are supported from a fund centrally operated (and, I fear, very poorly supported).

4.3 Four couples have gone to the Koyya tribes people, an illiterate people group. Today there are many converts and a number of schools. Telegu is being taught in government schools, a Bible school is run for young people, and they have their own elders and evangelists. This is a fine example of cross-cultural evangelism which has taken root after many years of outreach.

4.4 Young people in the cities are involved in 'spontaneous evangelism' and small house churches are to be found everywhere in a city like Hyderabad. They are tireless and enthusiastic in witnessing, and cross-cultural churches of Telegu speakers are gradually being formed, often under the leadership of one outstanding person. This self propagating movement is very widespread and very exciting. Today in these city house churches the two sections of the outcaste are worshipping and fellowshipping together and even intermarrying—at last!

7 SHORT TERM AND NON PROFESSIONAL MISSIONARIES

Andrew Dymond

INTRODUCTION

This kind of 'missionary' is the problem child of the UK missionary movement. More so because the child is now well into adolescence—in terms of age, well past adolescence—and should be approaching maturity, but the churches and missionary societies, and the assemblies in particular, have been unable or unwilling to face seriously the task of parenting the child. The short term mission concept has been with us since the 1960s, and the self supporting model has been a subject of discussion and renewed interest for almost as long. However, our attitude is basically to wish we could recruit a 'more superior' force of long term professional missionaries. We probably need to do that also, but in this paper I am arguing that important strategic opportunities and biblical principles are going unheeded, while we resist the task of developing the newer forms of mission activity. Inevitably, in the minds of many, the arguments presented herein will themselves fall into the adolescent category. It is therefore at the risk of overstatement that the voice is raised. However, the time allotted to this important matter, even in this conference, is small. Perhaps a little shouting may be justified!

Background

The Brethren movement has traditionally stressed that its 'ministers' are its membership, and that biblically all believers are priests. Furthermore, our members in the UK, though well less than 100,000, are to be found in all grades of society and all walks of life.¹ Our missionaries, together with colleagues from North America and Australasia, helped to turn the world upside down for Christ between the 1830s and the second world war. That was a fair heritage from which to face the challenge of the social, political and technological changes which arrived with the post war era. As a movement, however, we have fossilized, and in so doing, we have also made the mistake of labelling as 'New Testament' an approach to mission

and mission support which has become increasingly impractical as a general principle for the kind of expansion required to meet the challenges of the latter half of the twentieth century. Our forebears indeed spearheaded a radical New Testament response to the Great Commission in their age: they used the relatively limited physical means at their disposal, creatively and sacrificially, to great effect in spreading the gospel. Today we have far greater means, but live in a more complex world. We have wide open opportunities even in countries now frequently referred to as 'closed', whilst some previously impregnable ideological fortresses opposed to the gospel are showing signs of strain under the pressure of modernism. But are we moving ahead as energetically, innovatively and committedly as we should be?

Following the Spirit's direction: two views of the future

While I have the highest regard for our band of professional long term UK missionaries, they have declined in numbers from 575 in 1909 to under 350 today. This would hardly be a creditable response to the challenges and opportunities of the modern world if it represented our only option. There are, of course, a good number of Brethren people serving in other ways, for example with mission societies. However, although the *Echoes* list still represents a larger missionary force than virtually any of the major UK societies, we must face the fact that more than 40% of our missionaries have now been on the field for 30 years or more. Recruitment of younger people into fully supported service is at an insufficient pace to provide real hope for the future. We must either accept that our faith has become smaller and that we have lost the vision, or ask the fundamental question of whether God's Spirit is telling us to explore other models more seriously in order to meet today's challenge. Our heritage is one of innovation, our prime distinctive is of being 'open to the Spirit'; both of these have, for some time now, been in mortal danger of being replaced by a more recent item of baggage which our forebears knew little of—tradition! One missionary recently wrote:

Many seem to be losing interest in assembly distinctives and almost look on our traditions as something to be ashamed of or perhaps to be laughed at. But listening to missionaries from other groups they too bemoan the lack of interest in long haul missionary work. People seem to go more for the social needs and what are good aids—radio, team visits, tracting missions, etc.—but this cannot substitute for 'hard slogging, face to face' missionary work.

We can agree with this view to an extent. In many parts of the worlds, including an estimated 3,000–4,000 tribes and people groups still unreached with the gospel or without scriptures, there may be few options

but the traditional hard slogging approach. 'Professionals' are still required for pioneer work, especially in translation and literature and in other specialist ministries where spiritual gifts are most effective when the worker is in full time service. But what really is our distinctive? If it is defined in terms of full time service, are we not denying our own biblical understanding of the responsibility of all Christians to be priests and witnesses to the gospel? That is hardly our position at home, so why should we believe differently when thinking of the foreign field? Another view, developed from strategic and financial perspectives, but which also claims to be biblical, has been stated thus:

To finish the job of world evangelization, we must have a massive force of bivocational missionaries—Christians who support themselves through secular salaried employment or study, and make Jesus Christ known in that context. They may be called 'tentmakers' after the Apostle Paul, who chose to make tents for his support. Three billion have not heard the Good News in a clear form, and over 2 billion represent cultural groups where there is no viable church, or where the church is numerically very weak. To have just one couple or two single workers for each 10,000 among the unreached peoples would require some 500,000 new missionaries, seven or eight times our current world force.

At the present rate, through all mission agencies, and subtracting workers who retire or resign, it would take at least five hundred years to send enough personnel for this present generation. Besides, it would cost close to £5,000 million every year in contributions to support that many. The increased cost of living in many countries and the difficulty of raising support are two factors that keep the process slow.

But even if we could quickly recruit the people and raise their support on a worldwide basis, they would not be able to serve in the spiritually neediest 60% of the world because it is legally off-limits to conventional missionaries. Yet, Christians with marketable secular skills can enter those countries and make Jesus Christ known, at no financial cost to the church. (In fact they could be turning a portion of their income over to the support of local people God raises up through their witness and ministry.) They earn salaries, supporting themselves as engineers, teachers, doctors, secretaries and in almost any other kind of vocation. Closed countries provide tens of thousands of secular job openings, with salaries, benefits, and round trip travel. God has provided the secular job as the key to open doors so that millions of people can hear the Gospel.²

Clearly, the solution lies with neither view exclusively. God will doubtless fill the earth with his glory without 500,000 self-supporting missionaries or an income of £5,000 million from the Western world. We can rejoice in some of the facts presented in Ernest Oliver's paper—particularly the wonderful numerical growth of the church in the Third World, and the inevitable increase of Third World missionaries, including

many tentmakers. The new patterns of cooperation he describes and envisages are undoubtedly part of God's plan. His identification of the need for Western churches and missionary societies to channel more financial and other resources towards Third World initiatives and needy areas, where this is appropriate in lieu of sending more expatriate personnel, is also clearly an issue for us to consider. Nevertheless, the mission statistics available to us have another interesting message illustrated in the accompanying table.

| | <i>Popu- lation (millions)</i> | <i>Active Protestant Church Members (millions)</i> | <i>Protestant Missionaries</i> | | | <i>Ratios (%)</i> | | |
|------------------|--|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|
| | | | <i>Long Term</i> | <i>Short Term</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>E/A</i> | <i>C/B</i> | <i>D/B</i> |
| | | | <i>C</i> | <i>D</i> | <i>E</i> | | | |
| North America | 264 | 57.8 | 22,000 | 27,000 | 49,000 ₃ | .02 | .04 | .05 |
| UK | 56 | 4.9 | 3,950 | 1,400 | 5,350 ₄ | 01 | 08 | 03 |

The most important points to note are the following:

- 1 Approximately 55% of the total North American missionary force is made up of short termers. It is believed that over 90% of these serve in three relatively recent and 'youth oriented' missions, namely Campus Crusade for Christ, Youth With a Mission (YWAM), and Operation Mobilization (OM). However, an increasing number are serving with Christian relief and development agencies.
- 2 The UK is often unfavourably compared with North America. However, we still have over twice as many long term missionaries per active Protestant member than North America.
- 3 If we had recruited the same proportion of short termers in the UK as in North America to match our long term missionaries, our total 'missionary force' would today have grown to over 9,000. We would then perhaps be happier with the comparative figures, though of course many would argue this to be a false satisfaction.

These figures tell only half the story, however. An additional 217 UK nationals are listed as 'associates'; these are mainly self supported tentmakers serving Christ overseas in fellowship with missionary colleagues and sharing the same vision and calling. The equivalent figures for North America and elsewhere are not available at the current time, but we do know that many tens of thousands of Christians currently live overseas in strategic locations. Their effectiveness as cross-cultural messengers of the gospel or

as ministers in the local churches varies greatly: on the whole, unless they commenced their overseas assignment with a 'tentmaker calling' and undertook some considerable preparation, and unless they have strong prayer support from the home base and fellowship with like minded individuals in the field, their effectiveness can be severely limited. They often seem to have little opportunity to learn local languages or to mix with nationals, their type of job may allow them only minimal free time, or they may be constrained socially by their lifestyle and circle of expatriate friends. Nevertheless, the potential could be enormous.

The main questions to ask from the foregoing are:

- 1 Would we be justified in seeking to recruit and send more people on short term overseas assignments, and on what basis?
- 2 Is it really practical to think in terms of a larger number of tentmakers being effective ministers of the gospel, particularly in areas where conventional missionary activity is difficult or impossible, such as the Muslim world?

The short term option

The proportion of short termers in the total UK missionary force reached a peak in the early 1980s; the figure was 31% in 1982, with a good proportion of these serving with established mission agencies, who have recently retreated from the short term option on practical grounds. Valuable mission agency resources, including the time and attention of established missionaries on the field, had been diverted to the orientation, administration and oversight of short term personnel. The returns were considered to be questionable, since proper cultural adaptation and language learning were impractical for people serving for only one to three years. Thus faced with the choice of compromising their mission focus or expanding to meet the needs of short termers, several of the major societies felt it wise to back-track a little.

Nevertheless, a significant number of short termers had entered their service for the purpose of seeking out the Lord's guidance for a longer term commitment; they have remained in the field. This conversion rate is, in fact, a significant argument in support of short term service; however the proportion is now contained to more practical limits. Most societies consider short termers to be effective only in English speaking or 'less sensitive' areas, and in areas with few visa difficulties, for obvious reasons. Many also use short termers primarily for 'indirect' ministry, providing logistics and support (eg secretarial, building, accounting and mechanical skills), although there are also more direct ministry opportunities on special programmes or in relieving long term missionaries (eg in medical and educational ministries) on furlough.

Considering the financial and organisational constraints most mission agencies face then, the potential for any significant increase in the proportion of short term workers with the main societies, supported in the traditional way through donations, is limited. However, Christian relief and development presents one particular area of opportunity and need. Tear Fund, the prime UK agency in this field, currently has approximately 90 field workers; most of these can be classed as short term skilled specialists, though many have remained for longer than one tour of duty. We in the brethren movement have begun to see the potential of this kind of work, through recent experience in Ethiopia.

The most potential for growth must rest either with the tentmaking model, with individual churches involving themselves in more short term projects, or with an expansion in the UK of the evangelistic agencies specialising in short term ministry, such as Campus Crusade, YWAM and OM. These agencies are, in fact, expanding and provide more and more opportunities for participation in 'summer campaigns' as well as for longer term service (eg 1 and 2 year programmes). It is estimated that these three agencies alone recruit well over 1,000 young people from the UK each summer for up to one month in European evangelistic ministries; this is in addition to their combined longer term membership of 350 or so (which are included in the UK missionary force figures in the UK Christian handbook). They offer an invaluable first experience in missions for many young people and therefore provide a vital service to the churches. OM in particular has provided a first taste of missions for many hundreds of young people from UK assemblies, whom God has called into longer term service. The first experience was often gained in European summer teams or in our own inner city environment, leading on (for example) to a special interest in the muslim world or in communist lands, followed by joining a one or two year programme overseas, and finally to full time service with one of the major agencies, or into longer term tentmaking employment in a 'closed country'.

We must, as a movement and as individual churches, see the value of these and other short term programmes, in the spiritual and vocational pilgrimage of many serious minded people. The agencies, with increasing maturity, are also accepting their portion of the responsibility for the spiritual development of participants and for initial training in cultural sensitivity and language. They also represent an increasingly significant and lively force locally, often drawing a solid base of national believers into their activities, including at the leadership level. As for our churches at home, promotion of short term service alongside the longer term option increases our total exposure to missions. More opportunities for involvement lead to greater global interest and concern, to more informed and earnest prayer, and to greater movement out into the world. Ultimately,

more people take up the longer term challenge if church mission programmes offer more opportunities, with prayers asking the Lord to put his hand on those members who are most suited and gifted for cross-cultural service.

However, there is a broader strategic dimension to short term service. We should not fail to appreciate that in a mission environment where Christians from the Third World play an increasing part, the experience of short term cross-cultural contact and cooperation in mission will be valuable to both the Western Church and to Third World Christians in its own right. In many countries, long haul missionaries will in future be less required than those who are willing to offer their gifts in love and sincerity, for shorter periods of time, and thus to rub shoulders as equals with national brothers and sisters in the cause of Christ. We will of course be less able to dominate the development of the national churches, but we will contribute vitally for finite periods as ministers of the Word, as teachers of teachers, and as skilled servants in counselling, family education, and special programmes (eg camps, retreat centres, building projects and development). In future, we can also expect increasingly to be serving under national and Third World mission leaders and elders. Even in lands which are relatively unevangelized and closed to open forms of mission activity, mission teams will be multi-national. Finally, increasing numbers of career missionaries from the West will, for strategic reasons, be required to operate more flexibly and think in terms of shorter assignments than previously. They may find themselves having to re-enter secular employment, or to move more often from one field to another. Many have, of course, already been forced to do this for political reasons which are beyond their control; however, the future will demand a far greater mobility for strategic reasons.

Tentmaking: more than just a necessity . . .

Although the self-supporting missionary has been around, in one form or another, as long as modern missions, tentmaking has traditionally been viewed as second best—a practical necessity in some economic circumstances (ie where costs are particularly high), or to gain entry into 'closed' lands. The reason the work of the foreign missionary was considered to be ideally full time was because of the effort required to learn a language and adapt culturally if the gospel is to be communicated effectively and the needs of churches and mission stations attended to properly. It was therefore presumed that the individual called by God to serve overseas should normally aim to become fully supported through a mission agency or through home churches if either of the above conditions is a factor. This view neglects one of our fundamental biblical principles, limits the

numerical strength and cultural impact of missionary work, and may well reflect the resistance of the English speaking world to the learning of foreign languages. These points are now dealt with separately.

The biblical imperative

Self-supporting ministry has a rich heritage in scripture; God accomplished his kingdom purposes through pilgrims, exiles, public servants and shepherds such as Abraham, Joseph, Daniel, Nehemiah, Amos and many others. They were individuals and families whose secular and spiritual vocations were integrated. In the New Testament, Paul develops a theology around his preference of earning a living in the world of business as a tentmaker craftsman.⁵ We would do well to consider this seriously, for it should strike a familiar chord in our Assembly practices and principles. Paul clearly felt that he needed to set an example to the churches he established (2 Thess 3:6–9). He chose to work night and day if necessary in his secular occupation, because he believed his ministry was enhanced, not hindered, by so doing. His objective was to model a life of discipline, service, endurance and holiness in which a secular occupation was integrated with spiritual service and was considered to be an asset to the gospel. This principle is taught throughout his letters. Christians, such as the Thessalonians, who imitated his example were commended. In every church those individuals who best modelled an integrated and responsible spirituality were set apart as elders of the flock (examples and overseers), thus tying Church growth and discipline to the economic and social as well as moral implications of the gospel.

As noted earlier, we have accepted this principle of self-supporting ministry at home—perhaps we have even gone to the extremes—but not so on the mission field. I wonder if there are weaknesses in the national leadership of our churches overseas, and in the general quality of spirituality, which could be traced to a deficiency in the degree to which our largely full time missionaries have been able to present a credible Pauline example. There is no denying that our missionaries have worked hard, but their almost universal modelling of a kind of employment directly associated with their church planting activities (ie evangelism, Bible teaching, literature, medicine and education) has presented an unbalanced picture. Have they been examples which most local believers could practically follow? Have they been able to transfer a biblical understanding of the dignity of secular work, of Christian service and stewardship integrated with responsible citizenship? The presence of an increasing number of ministering servants who are also employed in the secular world would provide a necessary corrective in the future at least.

The cultural argument

A further consequence of the imbalance of past missionary activity is that in many countries, the world of business and industry is largely unevangelised. The bazaars, markets and industries of the developing world—the muslim world in particular—represent an arena which has seen few businessmen and craftsmen carrying the gospel since the first few centuries when the Spirit of God moved believers of all backgrounds and professional out into the known world. Today's tentmakers—Westerners, Indians, Pakistanis, Koreans, and many others—have the opportunity to be pioneers in areas where the full time missionary can never be accepted as an equal. They have natural contact with the family heads, the bread-winners, the educated, and with those in responsible positions. They have the advantage of working in the mainstream of cultural life where people make their living and develop their ulcers. Women in agricultural and rural development programmes are working alongside the rural women-folk who represent the backbone of the rural economy. The opportunities are incredible, so long as the tentmaker is called by God, spiritually able, prepared for the cultural adjustments, and willing to take language learning seriously.

Preparation and language

We have already noted that these pre-conditions have perhaps been the prime factor holding back the effectiveness of tentmakers. Mission societies have been slow to develop effective solutions for those who face heavy secular responsibilities, or employment guidelines for those who wish to be self-supported. However, the same problems of how to adapt and learn languages face non-Christian businessmen, professionals, and development and relief workers in secular employment; the most successful are those who have taken the trouble to acquire the local skills. Real cultural adaptation and language learning is, in practice, far more a matter of commitment, discipline and personal skills than of one's actual job. While UK and American businessmen are not known for their achievements in this area, we in the UK are beginning to wake up to the need for language skills through having to compete in the EEC. Tentmakers can also learn, but they must be taught to make the effort—perhaps through taking prior time off, by one means or other, to attend special courses. Here mission agencies and churches could help by providing short term financial assistance for those genuinely called to serve the Lord through overseas secular employment. Even the bank manager is not always averse to provision of a loan, given the right guarantees! The numbers of tentmakers who have to-date broken through the expatriate

social barrier and the linguistic-cultural barrier are indeed small, but not insignificant. Personal experience has demonstrated that, given the conviction that God has called, and provided that the job has been carefully selected for its suitability to the spiritual objective, and with a disciplined approach, tentmaking can be effective in almost any occupation.

Conclusion

This paper has argued for a serious commitment to a more complete and multi-faceted mission strategy—not a replacement of one mode of operation by another (we still need full timers). The justifications for a broader approach have a biblical foundation and we have responsibility to fulfill our Lord's commission by using every means at our disposal—faith characterized by creative thinking, and by intelligent and adventurous use of resources. Our approach to overseas missions should therefore be no less diverse than our understanding of scripture demands.

Elders should encourage gifted individuals to seek God's guidance for employment in strategic locations where their spiritual gifts and vision could be used in fellowship with mission societies, national churches and others sharing similar vision. Those whom we are convinced God has led into such overseas service should be formally commended and supported in prayer as other missionaries are. Along the way, they should be helped and counselled to assist with their spiritual, emotional and cultural preparations. We should also consider offering short term financial help or support where this would assist with the necessary preparation. Every church of reasonable size needs a mission director whose job it is to stimulate, help and counsel potential candidates, in liaison with the elders, as well as to organise the prayer and other support on a church-wide and house group basis.

Alongside this, we would do well to encourage short term commitment on special missions or secular job assignments as a means to increase the strategy to present the need for longer term service, particularly in areas of the world where penetration of the gospel remains low.

There are several ways in which we as individual churches might achieve these ends, which fit with the principles discussed earlier. For example we could be in better contact with elders of national churches through missionaries on the field and ask for their specific proposals for joint projects and opportunities. Perhaps more of our correspondence with the field could be 'two way' in this fashion. A further step towards real partnership in mission could be through twinning of home churches with churches in Europe and the Third World. Short term visits and cooperative ventures would become more commonplace, including projects requiring our secular skills such as the recent water project in

Ethiopia. How would we ensure that our participants are prepared in the basics of cultural adaptation? Perhaps by bringing missionaries home more often on short visits when they could be used as part of the planning process and for training programmes. This would not necessarily be wasteful of financial resources; it would be money well spent in helping us to sharpen our focus and vision and do a more effective job of responding to our world calling as stewards and disciples.

1 *Turning the World Upside Down* (Echoes of Service 1973).

2 Ruth Siemens, Global Opportunities, Pasadena, California (with some minor editing and updating of figures).

3 Patrick Johnstone *Operation World* (STL/WEC 1986).

4 *UK Christian Handbook* (1987/88 Edition). (UK figures have been increased slightly to include Tear Fund in the missionary force.)

5 'Tentmaking in Missions—A Closer Look', Andrew Dymond, *Harvester* (Jan/Feb 1986). (This article provides a detailed development of Paul's 'tentmaking theology' and traces its historical development and cultural importance in the mission field.)

PART FOUR

TEACHING MISSION

8 TEACHING MISSION TO CHURCHES

Don Ford

INTRODUCTION

Understanding mission today implies a study of both the scriptures and of the church across the world. Any attempt to teach mission in our churches must begin here. But more than this, to be effective such teaching must bridge the gap from knowledge to application, involvement and action. A true vision for world mission underlines the purpose of the church, and emphasises the urgency of the task and our part in it.

On the world scene this century has witnessed unprecedented growth in the worldwide church of Christ. A truly amazing transformation has taken place. William Temple referred to the existence of the worldwide church as 'the great new fact of our time'. The growth of the church in Latin America illustrates this. At the turn of the century there were very few evangelicals; but by 1936 there were about 1.7 million and today the evangelical community numbers over 30 millions. The same pattern has been repeated in other areas of the world. Ralph Winter refers to the '25 unbelievable years' following World War 2, when the church expanded on every continent. David Barrett believes that by AD 2000 out of a total African population of 800 millions, 300 millions will be Christians.

Yet in spite of this evident growth worldwide, interest in and support of world mission in UK churches generally has shown a marked decrease. A survey of evangelical churches in the UK (1969) revealed that 23% regarded involvement in world mission as an optional extra for those who have time; 21% considered such involvement a duty, though rather a nuisance; and 16% stated that it was no longer the concern of the Western church. Evidently 60% of evangelical churches at that time held a

defective view of world mission. Additionally only 16% of evangelical churches mentioned a missionary topic each Sunday, and no teaching on world mission had ever been given in 78% of those churches.¹

Current statistics of missionaries from the UK serving overseas illustrate our diminishing involvement. In 1972 there were 7,000 UK Protestant missionaries serving overseas. By 1986 this had diminished to 5,724. In 1972 none of the overseas personnel were registered as 'short termers', whereas today 25% come within this category.

Were a survey to be taken of the average age of the congregations attending the missionary conferences and missionary meetings organized in our churches, it would certainly underline the faithfulness of the older generation and probably the comparative lack of interest among the young in world mission as it is currently presented. While this may say more to use about the methods we use and the image we project, it also underlines the declining interest and commitment already referred to, which, if not reversed will become critical in tomorrow's church.

However, it is encouraging that the number of books being published in the UK on world mission has increased, as if in recognition of the need to highlight a subject in danger of vanishing from the church's agenda. While they stimulate us to consider teaching it in the local church, the titles also illustrate the tensions being experienced: *Missions in Crisis, Myths about Missions, Odd Man Out, Cinderella with Amnesia, Shaking the Sleeping Beauty, We Believe in Mission, Rough Edges of His Ways, Don't Just Stand There, The Eleventh Commandment, What on Earth are You Doing?, Turning the Church Inside Out, Love Your Local Missionary*. But there is something artificially strident about this appeal: they demand our attention lest we fail to take notice of them.

While much has been accomplished in the last 15 years and many fellowships have a greater awareness of the world scene, not much progress appears to have been made in teaching mission in any systematic way. In 1971 The Evangelical Alliance report stressed that 'A massive re-education job has to be done' at the home end. It still needs doing, but with even greater urgency today.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MISSION TO THE CHURCH

There was no doubt in the minds of the early church: 'The Gospel must first be preached to all nations'. (Mark 13:10) It was an essential part of the apostolic doctrine and practice. The early church was conscious that it existed to expand. And where it forgot this truth the Lord forcibly squeezed it until it moved out (Acts 8:1, 4). The worldwide outreach that began at Pentecost moved like waves of blessing spreading ever outwards to reach new generations in every corner of the world's society. Max

Warren saw those Christians as 'men rushed off their feet with hearts aflame, all consumed with a tremendous certainty of a transforming power'.²

That description could scarcely be applicable in our churches today, for we no longer regard world mission with the same priority. It has become marginalized, watched over by a ginger group of committed enthusiasts. Most common is the false perspective that missionary work is some kind of appendix, an optional extra, rather than being at the hub of the church's life. Harold Rowdon has expressed it thus: 'For too long mission has been regarded as the province of individual enthusiasts . . . the church has become institutionalized, with very limited goals, often consisting of little more than maintaining the machinery of worship, largely unchanged; providing something in the way of teaching, fellowship and local evangelism, but little else.'³

World mission as a less important activity can be seen at different levels. Theological colleges artificially divide training programmes: the pastoral and the missiological are often mutually exclusive. University and college Christian unions often relegate world mission in the agenda to a minute corner of the programme. Not long ago a senior UCCF staff worker admitted that very few of the 500 college CUs even have a missionary/international secretary on their committee. Many local churches follow a similar pathway, concentrating their missionary interest over a special weekend conference once or twice a year, or the occasional visitor from abroad who is on leave.

Michael Griffiths warns us to look again at the importance of teaching mission to the church: 'Any church which relegates Mission to being the peripheral activity of a lunatic fringe of enthusiasts is doomed to self-destruction. Emil Brunner had it right when he said that "The church exists by Mission as a fire exists by burning" . . . The church which has lost its concern for Mission is down to its ember days amid the institutional ashes. It needs the fresh breath of the Spirit of God to fan its dying embers back into life.'⁴

FUNDAMENTAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT IS MISSION?

If we are adequately to teach mission in the church we must define what we mean by it.

The nature of mission

The problem is its different usage and meanings. What is mission? An evangelistic crusade (eg Mission England; Mission to London) or a series of meetings held in a university or church for a few weeks? Is it a Christian

organization specializing in a type of outreach at home (eg LCM, SGM) or abroad (eg BEM or OMF)?

Mission in the New Testament is amply displayed in the Acts of the Apostles. It is the Holy Spirit empowering the church to go out and make disciples of all peoples. Strictly speaking it is not used of an organization but an activity; it is God on the move spreading the good news through his people to all peoples. The early church was a missionary church. Moreover the activity of mission does not have a time limit but continues 'to the very end of the age' (Matt 28:20).

The first missionaries were the ordinary church members, the unnamed believers scattered by persecution (Acts 8:1, 4) who spread the message wherever they went. Some started the Antioch church which became the launch-pad of the early church's missionary activity (Acts 11:19–21). Later on, the work of mission was taken up by gifted church leaders like Paul and Barnabas who responded to God's call by making it their life's work to plant churches and nurture them across the Roman empire.

The focus of mission

Mission as evangelism

The more traditional view equates mission with proclaiming the gospel (and not much else!) as virtually the only priority of the church. In 1888 R N Cush argued that 'missionary money was collected for the purpose of converting a soul, not sharpening an intellect'.⁵ But this is clearly inadequate: Christ died for whole people not simply for 'souls'. Mission does involve evangelism but as Matthew 28:18–20 emphasises it is much more than that. Conversion is not all that is involved; mission must also include making disciples, planting and nurturing churches across the world.

Mission and social renewal

Ecumenical churches linked with the WCC often adopt this interpretation. The 'missio dei' is the establishment of peace and social harmony: 'shalom'. For them it includes opposing apartheid, improving industrial relations, promoting rural development and Christian ethics in business. In short, the world provides the agenda for the church. So mission becomes everything the church does!

But this definition of mission is far too vague; too man-centred. It has little to do with evangelistic concern, with spreading a message of personal sin and disobedience before God, of salvation by faith in Christ and his death alone. While it is true that God does work in society through his providence and common grace, Jesus' mission went far beyond that.

Mission: both spiritual and social

In the New Testament it is clear that mission includes both a spiritual and a social dimension. It involves evangelism and discipleship, planting churches, teaching and pastoring them, and seeing them become springboards for world mission. But it also involves a social dimension in its care for the sick, poor and the widows. 'Mission describes everything the church is sent into the world to do. It embraces the double vocation of service, to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world".'⁶ Mission therefore involves us in the Great Commission (making disciples of all nations) plus the Great Commandment (loving our neighbour as ourselves—Lev 19:18). It is the sharing of the good news plus the out-working of Jesus' compassion through his people in a world divided by sin.

Such a definition implies that God's plans are for a worldwide church and a worldwide proclamation, a love that is to reach across cultures and languages to all peoples. It implies that all churches are to be sending churches and receiving churches, for the whole body of Christ is to be 'joined and held together by every supporting ligament, growing and building itself up in love as each part does its work.' (Eph 4:16)

The location of mission

If mission is the church in action throughout the world then its location must be here and there simultaneously. Jesus' command to his disciples to be 'my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8) was never meant to be a multiple choice exam! Rather it presented them with the challenge of a worldwide vision. Interestingly Jesus' words answered their parochial question about restoring the kingdom to their little nation of Israel. Of course Jesus wanted the Jews to be converted, as many thousands were at Pentecost and afterwards. But the whole point of mission is that it is to be carried forward in a multiplicity of locations at the same time. A Christianity that does not cross cultural and linguistic frontiers as well as social barriers here and abroad denies the worldwide scope and effect of the cross (1 John 2:2).

WORLD MISSION IN THE LOCAL CHURCHES

Historically Brethren churches have always had a strong international commitment. George Müller is almost as famous for his vision and financial support for overseas mission as he is for the orphanage ministry. For many years *Echoes* has been at the top of the list of Christian agencies with the largest number of missionaries from the UK serving abroad.⁷

The Missionary Study Class Movement

The formation of the Missionary Study Class Movement in Brethren churches was an important step in developing interest and support. Its roots go back to Dublin in 1889 where a group of young people began to pray for missionaries abroad. The return in 1903 of Mrs Walter Fisher from Kalene to Bristol encouraged the formation of a similar group for prayer and study. By 1905 a note in *Echoes of Service* indicated that two more classes had started in Liverpool. After Dr Rendle Short's return from a visit to Naples, he was even more convinced of the need to encourage groups of young people to meet regularly to study the world missionary scene and to promote effective prayer support. His article in *Echoes of Service* for January 1909 brought together the existing groups giving impetus, direction and cohesion to the growing MSC movement. A missionary information bulletin '*Links of Help*' was started in 1911 for a greater sharing of information among MSCs.⁸

In 1912 Rendle Short began the first joint MSC Conference bringing together members from all over the country. It was initially held at Ellersley School, Malvern, later moving to Monkton Combe where it became an important annual event, continuing until the final Conference in 1985, its 74th year.

Rendle Short's book *A Modern Experiment in Apostolic Missions*, published in 1920, included an appendix containing guidelines for MSC leaders, based on each chapter. It is important to notice that the emergence and growth of the MSC Movement occurred at a time of amazing increase in the number of missionaries being supported through *Echoes*, which had grown from 40 (in 1885) to 320 (in 1900) and reached 700 by 1915, an increase of 1650% in 30 years.⁹

Missionary conferences

During this period other regional missionary conferences sprang up, some independent of the MSC Movement but similar in aims; many of them still continue today. Assemblies in the Liverpool area obtained Plas Menai, Llanfairfechan, as an MSC holiday home for houseparties and conferences. Annual missionary conferences are still held at Cardiff (where as many as 500 attend), Exeter and Bristol. Others are held at Newport, Swansea, Dublin (Eire), Tyne & Wear, Glasgow and Dundee. Smaller conferences are held at Birmingham, South Staffordshire and Cork (Eire). The Hamilton Missionary Fellowship started through young people from different churches meeting for missionary study and prayer out of which developed the youth centre with a ministry of study, support and outreach. Although the high point of the MSC movement occurred between the

World Wars, a resurgence began in the 1950s, encouraged by Alex Pulleng. The London MSC Conference restarted at the initiative of assemblies in Walthamstow, Ilford and Wimbledon and was held at Easter in Sunbury until the mid-1960s. Another important missionary conference is held for young people biennially in March, and has continued for some 25 years. Held at Boys Village, Rhoose, 12 miles from Cardiff, it is supported by around 120 from assemblies in the Cardiff, Swansea and Bridgend areas.

During the 1950s and 60s the London Missionary Meetings have continued to provide the principal focus for Brethren churches in the south of England. They are important not only because of the information reported but also because issues of missionary principles and strategy are frequently discussed. Moreover the 'October Meetings' have provided the opportunity for Christians from Brethren churches to be together expressing their common roots and identity, and their unity of purpose in world mission. The huge gatherings of 25 years ago had about them an atmosphere of celebration that attracted the crowds. Sadly declining support in recent years, especially among the younger generation, has led to a shorter programme being introduced from 1987.

Missionary workshops

An important contribution to teaching world mission among Brethren churches was made by Hugh Mackay and Don Boak who coordinated missionary workshops as part of the centenary celebrations of *Echoes of Service* in 1972. The workshop held at Cardiff in January launched a series of 26 in regional centres throughout the country that continued until 1974.¹⁰ Young people from up to 20 assemblies in each area came together for a weekend of conference. Numbers varied from 75 to as many as 500 in Stafford and Liverpool. The main Saturday programme included two morning sessions on biblical principles of mission and problems arising from indigenous church situations; two further afternoon sessions dealt with the missionary call and training for missionary work. These were organized as seminars and audience participation was an important feature. The evening session was more practical, eg an experiment reducing an unwritten language to phonetic script, plus a missionary challenge.

In preparation, each church group had chosen either a country or a specialized type of missionary work (eg literature, radio, medicine, Bible translation etc), was supplied with a pack of relevant information, and had prepared a project/display for presentation during the workshop. Hugh Mackay believes that the involvement of each group during the preparing of projects was a key factor. Many learned important lessons they wanted to pass on. Each project was examined and each group interviewed giving the opportunity to share their insights. So successful were the workshops

that they continued to be held in some areas (eg Ipswich and Norwich) for some 5 years. Without doubt these workshops effectively taught world mission and made it come alive to a great many; they promoted real commitment and support, and were the means of calling some to overseas work.¹¹

Missionary visits to local churches

Another traditional pattern promoting world mission in local churches is through the visit of missionary personnel on UK leave when a more personal contact can be made, and a more in-depth knowledge communicated, especially if the missionary can stay for some days. Manvers Hall, Bath, has visits from 12–14 missionaries per year; Worcester 6 per year and Ebenezer, Cardiff, receives a visiting missionary every 6 weeks. Such a programme is recognized in these churches as contributing significantly to a continued interest in world mission. Furthermore, where regular local missionary prayer meetings are held (eg Merrion Hall, Dublin; Belmont Chapel, Exeter; Cranleigh Chapel, Bournemouth) and where missionary information can be shared regularly with the fellowship through church newsletters/magazines (eg Manvers Hall, Bath; Worple Road, Wimbledon), a greater exposure to and involvement in world mission is possible. It must be admitted however, that in most instances the support reflected through these programmes usually stems from the middle-aged and elderly, and only rarely involves a higher proportion of younger people.

TEACHING WORLD MISSION

In the past, most local churches were in regular contact with missionaries, attending conferences and receiving visitors. In an era when communications were more difficult and foreign travel comparatively rare, someone with a personal knowledge of a strange land was a considerable attraction to the Christian public. There was thus a teaching of mission through such events that imparted information and stimulated prayer and support.

The aim was 'to see that [believers] are informed of the facts of the missionary situation in various lands', wrote Alex Pulleng. But there was also another more fundamental objective: 'to teach believers the principles governing missionary enterprise, . . . to educate them . . . inspire many to action'.¹² If missionary support in the past was in many ways encouraging there has certainly grown up an indifference and ignorance about direct teaching of the biblical principles of mission. The new reality shows plainly that something has gone wrong. The inspiration that formerly impelled to

action has evidently run out of steam; a new approach is needed to raise the profile of world mission in Brethren churches.

The question needs to be asked: how is world mission being taught today in the churches?

Teaching by exposure

Still, missionary visits, prayer meetings and conferences come and go, although they generate less enthusiasm than in the past. Presenting information about any country or type of work, to be successful, has to be done with greater care. Today, church members are likely to know much more about the political and economic situation in that country through TV news bulletins and documentaries. The traditional presentation of slides that have sometimes been poorly taken, and by a speaker whose communication skills are unsophisticated by comparison with the harsh competition of the UK media scene, explains in part that diminished enthusiasm.

What more can be done? Duke Street Chapel, Sutton Coldfield, frequently gives a missionary emphasis in the Sunday morning family service. Similarly at Belmont Chapel, Exeter, during the Sunday morning teaching sessions there is regular news about one of the missionaries it has sent out. Some fellowships link their missionaries with a mid-week house group (eg Cranleigh Chapel, Bournemouth; Belmont Chapel, Exeter etc). This has worked particularly well in Sutton Coldfield where the 10 house groups receive direct information from and make contact with their 18 overseas missionaries, sending letters, tapes, parcels and magazines and receiving up-to-date news.

Churches need to devise creative ways of giving exposure to missionary personnel on leave, especially those they have commended, over a more extended period of time. In this way the advantages of personal contact can be enjoyed, in an environment where they cannot seem to be competing at communication levels with the professionalism of the modern media. Some churches invite their missionaries to visit each house group in turn; others arrange a rota of afternoon visits to elderly members, and evening visits to families when the personal touch is so appreciated. Moreover, in the informal atmosphere of the home, slides of poorer quality are not so unacceptable! If missionaries can assist in the church's pastoral work for some time, even more in-depth contact can be achieved as they minister to genuine needs in the fellowship.

Where necessary or appropriate, churches can supplement an evening's programme by using good quality audio-visuals. Some missionary organizations have produced films; others are now offering missionary videos for

hire or sale, which can effectively contribute to the teaching of world mission (see appendix 1 for a list of missionary videos currently available).

Teaching by involvement

Teaching about world mission by deliberately exposing the fellowship to people or information from those involved in world mission, may be accepted by the hearer purely passively, so there is a risk that it will be partially forgotten. Some have moved to another dimension of teaching by involvement in a missionary situation, and this has resulted in a much deeper understanding, and in many cases has radically affected the life of the church.

In the home church

Occasionally some missionaries enliven their presentation by sharing a problem situation, a 'case study', in which sufficient basic information is presented, the problem explained and an attempt made to discover a solution that is both biblical and culturally appropriate. The success of such a presentation relies on people's willingness to participate in small group activity.

Other churches are alert to the presence of overseas students studying in their area, and offer social activities, informal language-learning practice and friendship.

At conferences

The missionary challenge presented at large conferences like Spring Harvest or Mission '87 in Utrecht, Holland, with around 10,000 present, has led to increased involvement. A group of about 10 attended Utrecht from Cranleigh Chapel, Bournemouth. As a result 2 are going into short term projects and 1 is seriously considering longer term involvement. 'The young people have caught the vision', commented one of the elders.

Moving out

Tile Kiln Chapel, Chelmsford, has experienced wider missionary involvement and a tremendous increase in giving as a result of 7 years of 'twinning' with the Culte Evangelique in Arras, France. The Billy Graham crusade, Mission France, in 1986 also led to a greater involvement. The fellowship at Wimbledon established contact with churches in the Lille area of France and are making regular visits to learn more about the situation and help where possible. (A French-speaking elder helped by coordinating the Billy Graham relay meetings in the Lille area.)

Still others are becoming involved in short-term visits. A number of summer visits to Senegal coordinated by Brethren from the Dublin and

London areas helped missionaries man a stand at a book fair in Dakar. Other avenues of personal involvement include offers of practical help over short periods being promoted by 'Brass Tacks'.

Training programme

Perhaps the most significant development comes from organizations specializing in coordinating short term summer visits, especially to Europe, placing people in evangelistic situations. Pre-visit orientation with some training is required as essential preparation. Gospel Literature Outreach, based in Motherwell, focuses especially on Brethren churches; Operation Mobilisation and Youth with a Mission are interdenominational. Nearer home, Youth for Christ and London City Mission offer year programmes of evangelistic training for young people, and more from our fellowships are becoming involved.

Teaching from the scriptures

Almost all the teaching on world mission in Brethren churches is given at the level of *exposure* and to a lesser extent by *involvement*. Very few churches offer any Bible teaching on world mission. The principles of our engagement in mission are therefore largely assumed to be assimilated, mostly through the normal programme of missionary visits, conferences, prayer letters and meetings. Magazines like *Echoes of Service*, *Harvester* and the 'Aware Bulletin' which it contains, and books (*Operation World*; *That the World May Know*) also inform of situations of need in the world. The process, however, is largely one of exposure, leading to motivation and some level of involvement.

If, by chance, missionary principles are taught, then they tend to be limited in scope to those which emphasize our Brethren distinctives (eg the missionary's independence from outside control; the duty of sending—churches to give regular support; the lack of guarantees about support levels; the missionary's direct dependence upon God for financial needs etc). Otherwise, the most frequent missionary theme taught concerns guidance and the call of God. But apart from these subjects there is a vast area of scriptural teaching about world mission that is rarely touched upon. Laudably the missionary workshops of the early '70s did offer the right kind of balance between biblical principles and missionary information. But the most that can be said about some missionary conferences is that Bible teaching on world mission is relegated to a corner of the programme, while the major proportion of time available is dedicated to teaching through exposure. It is as if the place of scripture were almost incidental.

How strange, then, that Brethren churches, which have always revered the Word of God and maintained uncompromised loyalty to its inspiration

and infallibility, should (albeit unconsciously) now pass by the very main-spring of world mission revealed in Holy Writ. With a few well-used exceptions (eg Genesis 12; Isaiah 6 and Jonah) how rarely is the Old Testament consulted about world mission! (See appendix 2 for abbreviated biblical outline studies on world mission.)

However, there is light on the horizon. Recently at Cranleigh Chapel, Bournemouth, on 4 consecutive Sundays a series was dedicated to world mission. At Belmont Chapel, Exeter, a conscious effort is being made to include once more the teaching of world mission at the heart of the church's programme, with a series of 8 studies. These have covered God's purpose for the nation; God's sending the Son, the Spirit and us; the selecting and sending of missionaries in the New Testament; Jesus at the centre of world mission. Furthermore, the fellowship has produced a missions booklet for the congregation which includes these Bible themes as well as information about its own missionaries.

Without doubt, wherever a missionary presentation is closely linked to scripture or is a biblical exposition with missionary illustration, not only is the mind inspired and the heart warmed, but the soul is fed. It is this element of the opening-up of the scriptures that provides deep spiritual nourishment and true heart motivation for a lost world. It is time that we in Brethren churches took God's Word more seriously in its teaching on mission. It is time once more to place world mission at the heart of our church's teaching programme. (See appendix 3 for a suggested outline syllabus that can form the basis for teaching world mission in our churches, together with references from helpful books on each theme.)

CONCLUSION

How to counteract the downward trend in world mission? By placing the teaching of mission once more at the heart of the church's programme. Wrote J R Mott: 'Systematic instruction as to world-wide missions will do much to overcome such faults to church life and efficiency as selfishness, narrowness of view, contracted sympathies, and indifference and apathy concerning the Kingdom of Christ.'¹³

That is surely what we long to see in our local churches.

- 1 *One World, One Task*. Report by Evangelical Alliance's Commission on World Mission (Scripture Union 1971) 88.
- 2 Max Warren, *I Believe in the Great Commission* (Hodder & Stoughton 1976) 26.
- 3 Harold Rowdon, *Turning the Church Inside Out* (BMMF Interserve 1982) 17.
- 4 Michael Griffiths *Shaking the Sleeping Beauty* (IVP 1980) 12.
- 5 J R W Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Falcon 1975) 15.

- 6 Ibid, 30.
 7 *UK Christian Handbook 1987/88* (MARC Europe/EA/Bible Society) 336, 353, gives the following statistics: *Echoes* 359; CMS 335; OM 282; OMF 282; WEC 270; USPG 228; BMS 211; Salvation Army 205; Methodist Church 180; WBT 165; YWAM 153.
 8 From historical material from Donald Boak.
 9 A Rendle Short *A Modern Experiment in Apostolic Missions* (W B Harris 1920) 20.
 10 16 were held in 1972; 8 in 1973 and 2 in 1974—information from Mary Boak.
 11 From information provided by Hugh Mackay and Don Boak.
 12 A Pulleng *Go Ye therefore*, (Paternoster 1958) 32.
 13 Ibid.

APPENDIX 1

WORLD MISSION – A SELECTION OF CHRISTIAN VIDEOS

| TITLE | SUBJECT/SPEAKER | TIME/ TEXT SOURCE |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 ABROAD | | |
| Assignment Gola | Liberia | 0:22 SIM |
| Between Two Worlds | Colombia | 0:25 Wycliffe |
| Bringers of Happiness | Lesotho | 0:30 Leprosy |
| But I'll be Eaten Up by Lions | Interviews with missionaries | 0:23 Wycliffe/ SIM |
| Called to Serve | Gospel Barge Ministry in Flanders/Leslie Message | 0:40 BEM |
| Cinderella Comes of Age, A | Australian Aborigines | 0:09 Wycliffe |
| Cliff in Kenya/India/Water, Water | Tear Fund Projects/Cliff Richard | 0:54 Tear Fund |
| Come by Here | Papua New Guinea | 0:33 Wycliffe |
| Eye of the Storm, The | Tear Fund Projects | n/a Tear Fund |
| Faces of India: | | |
| 1 Northern India | OMS International in India | 0:50 CTA |
| 2 Southern India | OMS International in India | 0:37 CTA |
| Focus—On Africa/It's natural for me/Doing what God wants | Bible translation in Africa | 0:45 Wycliffe |
| Focus on Spain | OMS International in Spain | 0:30 CTA |
| Forbidden lifestyle | The suffering church | 0:35 Open Doors |
| It makes a team | Papua New Guinea | 0:25 Bible TA |
| It's a small world | Tear Fund in Haiti/Cliff Richard | 0:32 Tear Fund |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------|------------|
| It's a wider world | The meaning of mission | 0:10 | BCMS |
| More than conquerors | Guatemala | 0:25 | Wycliffe |
| More than meets the eye | The suffering church | 0:25 | Open Doors |
| More than pigs and fish | Papua New Guinea | 0:07 | Wycliffe |
| Nagaland in focus | Nagaland/Chuba Ao | 0:30 | Impact |
| New hope in the Middle East | Christianity in the Middle East/John Anscombe | 0:21 | BMMF |
| No unreachables | Africa & South America | 0:26 | SIM |
| People, like us | Argentina/Bishop Leak | 0:17 | SAMS |
| Question of Lebanon, A | 'Where is Jesus' project | 0:22 | CMS |
| Trained to serve | Zaire | 0:22 | Leprosy M |
| Turn of the tide | Irian Jaya | 0:20 | Leprosy M |
| Unsheathed | Guatemala | 0:29 | Wycliffe |
| What it takes | West Africa | 0:26 | SIM |
| What to do when the flood comes | Nigeria | 0:28 | SIM |

2 WORLD RELIGIONS

| | | | |
|---|---------------|------|--------|
| Islam—Unlocking the door | — | n/a | OM |
| Islam: | | | |
| 1 Introduction | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| 2 Allah, is he the same as God | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM/STL |
| 3 Trinity, son of God and virgin birth | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| 4 A brief survey: Adam to Judgement | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| 5 Scripture, wine, prayer and fasting | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| 6 How to witness to a Muslim woman | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| 7 Through the centuries and the challenge of today | Jack Budd | 1.30 | OM |
| 8 Deity of Christ | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| 9 Death & resurrection of Christ | Jack Budd | 1.00 | OM |
| Islam: | | | |
| Communicating the truth about Jesus Christ, part I | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Communicating the truth about Jesus Christ, part II | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| The power of the occult in Islam | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Understanding Islamic beliefs | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Understanding Muslim practices | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |

| | | | |
|--|---|----------------|-----------|
| Understanding Muslim women | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Understanding the Muslim | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Understanding the Muslim view of Jesus | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Understanding the basis of Islam | Charles Marsh | 1.00 | OM |
| Understanding the convert Muslim awareness (6 tapes) | Charles Marsh Ron George | 1.00 6×0.55 | OM OM |
| 3. BIOGRAPHIES | | | |
| Bitterman, Charles | Chester Bitterman | n/a | Wycliffe |
| Luther, Martin | This is my body? | 0.40 | LBC |
| 4. MISSIONARY ORGANIZATIONS | | | |
| Climb every mountain | Leprosy Mission | 0.25 | Leprosy M |
| Fivefold vision of OM | Operation Mobilisation/ George Verwer | 1.00 | OM |
| JAARS | Jungle Aviation and Radio Service | 0.24 | Wycliffe |
| Johan Lukasse | Belgian Evangelical Mission/ Johan Lukasse | 0.30 | BEM |
| Life in all its fullness | Tear Fund/George Hoffman | 0.26 | Tear Fund |
| Logos and Doulos Story | Logos & Doulos | 0.35 | OM |
| The Net | CARE | 0.24 | Leprosy M |
| People like you—I | Wycliffe Bible translators/ Peter Kingston | 0.40 | Wycliffe |
| People like you—II | Wycliffe Bible Translators | 0.15 | Wycliffe |
| Send the Light Tour | Send the Light/Dave Armstrong | 1.00 | OM |
| The Uniqueness of OM's work (4 sessions) | Operation Mobilisation/ George Verwer | 1.20 | OM |

GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN VIDEO, SECOND EDITION
 Published by Jay Books, 1986. Available from The Evangelical Alliance.

APPENDIX 2

BIBLE STUDY OUTLINES ON WORLD MISSION

[Abbreviated from BIBLE THEMES published by Scripture Union, in 1978, 'The Mission of the Church' by the Rev Colin A Grant]

The missionary purposes of God in the Old Testament*Boundaries of blessing (Gen 12.1-3; 22:15-1)*

Why did God choose so small a tribe as Israel? Because God has chosen men to reach men. In Abram he chose Israel. 'Election is for service' (H H Rowley); 'All the families of the earth' and 'All the nations of the earth' symbolise everything else in the OT relating to mission, and foreshadow the great 'alls' of the NT.

Consequences of election (Deut 10:12-19; 1 Kings 8.33-43)

Israel was proud of being 'the chosen people of God' but they had to learn that there was a clear 'requirement' (Deut 10:12) built into this privilege. It demanded whole-hearted devotion to God in reverence, obedience and loving service. But godliness was to be accompanied by a concern for others, particularly 'the sojourner' (Deut 10:19), especially as they has been 'sojourners' in Egypt for 400 years. The world into which God sends us begins with 'the sojourner', the person living, studying, working, shopping, spending his leisure alongside us.

Conquests of kingship (Psa 2)

After the angry turbulence of the nations in rebellion against God (vv 1-3) we are pointed to God's vindication through the resurrection (Acts 13:33) and the enthronement (Heb 1:5; 5.5) of his son (vv 4-7). God's king is enthroned for his people (Eph 1:22 and Matt 28:18 f). The appeal on grounds of impending or future judgement is not unusual (eg Luke 3:7; Acts 17.30 f). Our presentation of the gospel to the world will only be effective as it presents Christ as the saviour of believers and judge of all men.

Patterns of righteousness (Isa 2: 1-4; 11:1-10)

The Lord, represented by the elevating of his dwelling place over the lesser peaks of human achievement and pride (2:12-16) is a precursor of the 'flowing' of the nations to him (v 2) that they may submit to him (v 3). In Isaiah 11 the promised one of David's line will be equipped for his ministry by the enduing of the Spirit, and relationships within the natural order will be transformed by him (v 6 f—Rom 8:19-23).

Purposes of grace (Isa 10)

Israel's deceitful and undependable neighbour is scheduled for judgement on its religion, unity, confidence, independence, natural resources and rural industry (vv 1-9). Yet a more glorious day is envisaged for Egypt, when there will be a

community there who honour and serve the Lord (v 18). That God would reveal himself to Egypt must have been startling for Israelite ears. Nothing could be clearer regarding God's purpose to reach the Gentiles; in the NT through Christ they become 'fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise' (Eph 3:6).

Characteristics of Christ (Isa 42:1-13; 49:1-7)

These first two Servant Songs prophetically feature the coming messiah (Matt 11:3). 'My servant' applies elsewhere to the whole nation (cf 41:8 f; 44:1 f). Here is someone who not only fulfilled but far exceeded all that the nation of Israel was meant to be and do. The ministry of the servant was to be unique in character (42:1; 49:1 f), global in extent (42:1, 4; 49:1, 6), exemplary in quality (42:2 f; 49:2 f), tenacious in purpose (42:4; 49:4), and enlightening in results (42:5 f; 49:6). Little wonder that the peoples of the earth sing for joy (42:10-12; cf Psa. 96:11 f).

Dissatisfactions of idolatry (Jer 16:14-21; Zeph 3:8-10)

Idolatry is a human tragedy. Jeremiah reminds Judah that God sees it (v 17) but that it is a 'sham' (v 19 NEB). There is no comparison between what idols offer and the security God gives to those who 'from the ends of the earth' turn to him (v 19). Zephaniah warns of God's judgement on Judah and her neighbours, then focuses on his final judgement of the nations (v 8). Yet he who judges promises renewing power in men's hearts (v 9). Ethiopia, so distant for Israelites, symbolises the worship the Gentiles would bring (v 10).

Patterns of discipleship (Jonah 1 and 2)

Nineveh, the Assyrian capital, was the concentrated expression of heathenism and evil to the people of Israel. God commissioned Jonah for mission against it (1:1) but Jonah was unwilling for God to show them his message. But God does not allow Jonah to escape, but humbles him and brings him to the place of thanksgiving (1:12; 2:9). This reminds us of the problem of Christian disobedience to the fulfilling of the Great Commission. (Rom 2:4).

Principles of mercy (Jonah 3 and 4)

Persistently God spoke a second time. While Jonah's outward actions indicated obedience his reactions afterwards (eg 4:1 f) showed a grudging spirit. Jonah's failing was 'the sin of pretending to be more careful of God's glory and more qualified to advance it than God himself' (Hugh Martin), and it led him to offer a confused prayer (4:2 f) and to slink away embittered (4:5). God finally spoke through an acted parable.

Mission and the Son of God

Focus of the prophets (Luke 4:16-30)

Our Lord responds to the invitation usually given to a travelling rabbi (cf Acts 13:15 f and read from Isaiah 61:1-4). He left his hearers in no doubt as to the one of whom Isaiah wrote (v 21). Jesus would bring in the long-awaited New Age of deliverance. No wonder the audience was 'infuriated' (v 28 NEB) and took

measures to kill him (v 29 f). Whatever the consequences, Jesus would uniquely fulfil God's purposes, refusing to be party to false parochialism.

Seeker of the lost (Luke 15)

Jesus here ministered to those who misunderstood and criticized. The first two parables (vv 4–10) show God's patient seeking for the lost, and point to the redemptive joy of God. It is this joy that the Pharisees ought to have been sharing. Our traditional focus on the prodigal son (vv 11–32) tends to overlook its main teaching about the loving father, such a contrast to the stand-offishness of the Pharisees. Their hard hearts are contrasted with the father's mercy, even reaching out to the elder son (v 28).

Saviour of the world (John 4:1–42)

Jesus set aside Jewish prejudices of sex and race to reach a Samaritan, foreshadowing the bringing of the gospel to them by the early Christians (Acts 8:1 f). The woman recognized something of Jesus' stature through his exposure of her life, preferring to turn the conversation away (v 20). But true worship is not a matter of geography but of spiritual understanding (vv 21–23). Such will focus their faith on the Lord (John 14:6; Mal 1:11; Acts 10:35; John 6:37) and never be cast out. Jesus used this incident to urge the disciples to use every opportunity, rather than remaining inactive 'because the time is not yet ripe' (v 35 f).

Friend of the needy (Matt 15:21–28)

The Phoenician towns of Tyre and Sidon (v 21) 'were not places where Messianic works were destined to be performed' (R V G Tasker; cf 11:21). Yet Jesus once more ministers to another Gentile woman whose people were outside the Jewish tradition. Jesus' initial reluctance (vv 23, 26) expressed his prior sense of purpose to the Jews, who should have been prepared for his coming (cf 10:5 f; Rom 15:8 f). He was unwilling to become caught up during his early life in a large-scale mission among Gentiles. His statement of intent (v 24) caused her open-hearted plea unmoved by Jesus' apparent rejection. Once more Jesus marvelled at a Gentile's great faith (v 28; cf 8:5–13). God's Spirit moves in the most unexpected of places and the most surprising of people.

Shepherd of the sheep (John 10:11; 11:47–53)

Jesus the Good Shepherd proves the genuineness of his credentials not only by faithfulness and personal sacrifice for them (vv 10, 11–15) but by his compelling purpose to gather those 'sheep' still outside of his fold (vv 10–16). 'The sheep not of this fold are non-Jewish Christians. Only when all have responded to the Gospel will the ideal of one flock under one shepherd be a reality' (R V G Tasker). Christ's mission drove him to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10) but, more, to offer his life in a substitutionary death, that would form the basis for the worldwide 'gathering' that was to follow in which both Jews and Gentiles would both come to God (11:52, cf 1:12; Gal 3:26 f).

Victor of the cross (John 12:20–36)

'The world has gone after him,' scoffed the Pharisees (v 19), but Jesus' universal appeal was more effectively illustrated by the enquiry of the Greeks (v 20 f). The

Lord was aware that 'His hour' was upon him (vv 23–27; cf 2:4; 7:30 etc) and part of the glory would be the 'rich harvest' (v 24 NEB) following his death. Those Greeks symbolized a greater turning to Christ from the Gentile world of which he had already spoken (cf 10:16). Jesus' earlier victories (Matt 4:8 f; 16:22 f) were portents of that greater victory over Satan gained on the cross itself, which gave our Lord the right and power to 'draw all men' to himself (v 32, cf 6:44). The 'all' means 'all without distinction', men from every nation.

Mission and the Holy Spirit

Empowering for Mission (John 5:22–16:11; 20:19–23)

The translation 'Comforter' (15:26) goes back to Wycliff when it meant the giving of strength and courage. Jesus was speaking of the Spirit as enabler and empowering companion (cf Eph 3:16). All true power in mission is to be found in the working of the Spirit in men's hearts (16:8). Later Jesus appointed his disciples for service in the Spirit's power (20:21 f). He breathed on them, probably in symbolic anticipation of Pentecost (Acts 2:2 f).

Categories of salvation (Luke 24:44–53)

The Jewish mind was closed to a suffering messiah, so the frightened disciples (v 37) needed thoroughly opening up (v 45). Not only was Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection predicted but also the world-wide proclamation of the good news (v 46). The message centres on two truths. First repentance, *metanoia*, that turning from self to God through sorrow at our rebellion, so prominent in the message of Jesus and the early church (Matt 4:17 etc; Acts 2:38 etc). Second forgiveness, *aphesis hamartiōn*,—God stops reckoning a man's misdeeds against him and counts him guiltless. Jesus emphasized it (Matt 6:12 etc), as also the early church (Acts 5:31 etc). The disciples would now be sent forth (v 49), an act of obedience (v 52) later rewarded (Acts 5:32).

Enduement for service (Acts 1:1–11)

Jesus ministered through the Holy Spirit (v 2; Luke 4:1, 14), through the Spirit offered up his life (Heb 9:14) and was vindicated as Son of God through resurrection (Rom 1:4; 1 Tim 3:16). So his promises to them (v 4) match the pattern of his own life. 'To baptize' means figuratively 'to overwhelm, to plunge into a new realm of experience'. This described the disciples' impending encounter with the Spirit (cf Luke 24:49—to clothe). Only the Spirit can enable the church to reach the geographical limits of its task. We can grieve and quench the Spirit (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19) in mission as well as other aspects of Christian living.

Experience of promise (Acts 2)

Pentecost was one of three great Jewish festivals to which every Jew within 20 miles was bound to come. The supernatural signs of wind and fire were those frequently linked with the power and presence of God (cf Psa 104:4; Exod 19:18). The Spirit's 'filling' was not a static 'topping-up' but a dynamic taking-possession-of (cf 3:10; 5:3, 17; 19:29). The main purpose of the Spirit's coming was to inaugurate an era when men could call on the Lord and be saved (v 21). So is he available today to those who are 'afar off' (v 39).

Crossing of boundaries (Acts 8)

Persecution spread their witness (vv 1, 4) and Philip enters Samaritan territory with the gospel (v 5, cf John 4:4 f). Evidently those who are baptized (vv 6, 8, 14) were truly born again by the Spirit and indwelt by him. (Rom 8:9–11; 1 Cor 3:16). What Simon saw (v 18) and wanted to reproduce himself (v 19) was a Samaritan pentecost. The Spirit then directed Philip to an individual need (v 26, 29). The Ethiopian's conversion (v 36 f) 'marks a further advance towards the evangelization of the Gentiles' (F F Bruce).

Fulfilling of prophecy (Acts 10)

The great moment! Peter had already preached to semi-Gentiles (vv 8, 14 f). Now came the major break-through to the wholly Gentile world. While the Spirit is only mentioned selectively (vv 19 f, 38, 44 f, 47) he is evidently at work throughout the narrative. God had to show Peter (v 9 f) that wherever he is at work men must not disdain (v 15). Peter pointed his hearers to Christ and his forgiveness (v 43). Cornelius was not saved through religious sincerity (vv 2, 35) but personal trust in Christ (v 47). The Spirit's coming on them before water baptism showed God's approval lest Peter hesitate any further. Now Jew and Gentile become 'fellow citizens . . . of the household of God', members of the same body, 'all one in Christ Jesus' (Eph 2:19; 3:6; 3:6; Gal 3:28). So from the ruins of Jewish traditionalism there arose the new church of Christ.

Establishing the principles (Rom 15:7–21)

Paul delights to present Christ as the inaugurator of God's blessings to Jew and Gentile alike (v 8 f) and shows how his Spirit can make the believer 'overflow with hope' (v 13, NEB). To describe his service 'to the Gentiles' (v 16), he describes himself as a priest, his ministry as priestly service and the Gentiles as the priestly offering he presents (v 16). Yet Paul's only glory continues to be in Christ. Only through the Spirit's power could he have demonstrated the divine origin of the gospel (cf Acts 19:11) preaching in every major centre in the Eastern Mediterranean (v 19).

Mission and the church*Men needed (Luke 9:1–6; 10:1–20)*

Being with Christ means personal commitment to his purposes, being available for mission. NB the sequence of call: empowering and sending out (vv 1, 2). This is the biblical pattern for Moses (Exod 3:4, 10 f) and the prophets (Jer 1:5–9) as well as the early church (Luke 24:48 f) and Paul (Acts 26:16 f). They were appointed to herald triumphantly that God's kingly rule had begun on earth (v 2), demonstrated in the defeat of Satan's power (vv 1, 6, cf 10–17). The commissioning of seventy (10:1) could well have had a wider ministry in view, yet they could only touch part of the need. So Jesus urges prayer (Matt 9:37 f; John 4:35).

Men transformed (Matt 16:13–28)

The conviction to which Peter came concerning the person of Christ (v 16) was divinely inspired (v 17). The confession of Christ as Son of God would be the material on which he would build the spiritual edifice he called 'his church'.

Ekklesia, translated 'church', literally means 'that which is called out', and was used to describe a local assembly of Romans. It was clearly suitable to denote the new community that Jesus was forming (1 Cor 1:2; 1 Thess 1:1), as well as the wider, all-inclusive fellowship of believers (eg Acts 20:28; 1 Cor 10:32). God's salvation is not only to be experienced personally but corporately.

Men invited (Matt 22:1–14)

Some critics consider this parable to be a duplicate of Luke 14:16–24, but why should our Lord not have used the same theme with variations on different occasions? Luke emphasizes the gracious inviter; Matthew the solemn responsibility of the one invited. The invitation went on to be offered to others without regard to status or manner of life (v 9 f) and such invitees responded readily and in ample numbers (v 10). Few Jews would have misunderstood the message! In spite of the wide invitation and the appropriate robe one man disregarded the high honour of the occasion (v 11 f). Evangelism involves persuasion and proclamation. Those who reject, especially through rejection as here, will be held responsible.

Men challenged (John 21:1–19)

A weary night's fishing was transformed by miracle at daybreak and ended with a lakeside breakfast (vv 1–14). Peter's brave promises of loyalty (13:37; Matt 26:33) had been shattered by a serving maid in the temple courtyard (Matt 26:69 f). Our Lord gently probes Peter about the comparative nature (v 15), genuineness (v 16) and basic quality (v 17) of his love. Jesus had already spoken as the Good Shepherd (10:1–30), and now disclosed the responsibility of the under-shepherds (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2). The church's mission today needs more genuine pastoral care for those both within and without its fellowship (Eph 4:11; Phil 2:1 f).

Men commissioned (Matt 28:16–20; Mark 16:14–20)

Our Lord's life was an expression of divine authority (Matt 11:27; John 3:35; 13:3; 17:2) including forgiving sins (Matt 9:6) and complete control over his earthly life (John 10:18). The sovereignty that had once been subtly but only partially offered by Satan (Matt 4:8 f) had now been given to him by the Father (Matt 28:18). This universal authority is the basis for the church's universal mission (28:19). The Great Commission has strongly motivated the missionary movement. True motivation can never consist of mere obedience to a command; it must spring from the energies of the Spirit who writes God's law on the believer's heart (Jer 31:33; John 16:14 f). This is what lay behind Peter's 'we cannot but speak' (Acts 4:20).

Men responsible (1 Cor 2:1–23)

The cult of personality in Corinth evidenced spiritual immaturity and carnality (vv 1–4). Paul then moves away from human workers to the true worker (v 5) the one who caused spiritual life to grow (v 6). Christians are to be junior partners with God in his work (v 9). His servants then are 'site-building supervisors' (v 10), *architectōn*. The NT emphasizes this prospect of the final accounting day when our service will be tested (cf 1 Cor 9:27).

Men converted (1 Thess 1)

The gospel was presented not with customary oratory (cf 1 Cor 1:17; 2:4) but with

spiritual power and exemplary conduct (v 5; cf 2:10). By the Holy Spirit's ministry (John 16:8 f) the Thessalonians accepted the gospel with joy (Gal 5:22; Rom 14:17) in spite of persecution (v 6). Such a birth led to outstanding growth. This could not happen without there being an overflow from Greece (Macedonia and Achaia) to a variety of other places (v 8). We discern Paul's strategy: 'a church in every community and thereby the gospel to every creature'. Unless we nurture local churches with greater seriousness worldwide evangelism will be outweighed with 'professional' missionary endeavour and lose its momentum.

Paul the missionary

Called by the Spirit (Acts 13:1–12)

Paul had received early notice of his life's mission (22:15, 21; 26:16 f; Gal 1:16). Barnabas recognized his spiritual potential and brought him to Antioch (11:23–26) where they taught the new believers. During worship and fasting (14:23) the Spirit selected them. 'The world ministry which thus began was destined to change the history of Europe and the world' (E M Blaiklock). God calls his servants in different ways. Sometimes through persecution (8:1, 4; 11:19 f); at other times individually (8:5, 26, 29 f). Beware of individualizing guidance and not relating it to the local church!

Emboldened with the word (Acts 13:42–14:7)

Three major features of Paul's ministry emerge: 1 Forthright proclamation (13:44, 46, 48, 49; 14:3; 14:7). 2 Fierce opposition, especially from the Jews (13:45) and later the community at large (13:50; 14:2, 5). It came in different ways—open contradiction (13:45), poisoning personal attitudes (14:2) and hostile active rejection (13:50; 14:5). NB how God uses persecution against his people to become a means for spreading the gospel (14:6 f; cf 8:4, 11, 19). 3 Fruitful consequences in conversions (13:42, 44, 48) in a worldwide ministry (13:47; Isa 49:6).

Caring for the churches (Acts 15:36–16:10)

Paul not only planted churches but continued to nurture them (v 36), bringing new strength to the congregations (15:41, 16:5), through teaching and sharing the guidelines from Jerusalem (15:23; 16:4). Overseas missionaries involved today in such nurturing among younger churches are just as strategically engaged as those in pioneer church planting. Paul needed colleagues (he had been chosen by Barnabas—11:25). While his first choice was not instantly successful, Paul's second choice of Silas was wise (15:22, 23). It was good to read of Paul's subsequent esteem of Mark (2 Tim 4:11). Paul's selection of Timothy (16:1 f) was more straightforward, and encouraged him daily in caring for all the churches (2 Cor 11:28).

Preaching to the Greeks (Acts 17:16–34)

Note the sequence of Paul's actions at Athens: the spiritual impact of what he saw (v 16) which prompted positive action (v 17 f). This was 'Paul's first major exposition of the Gospel to an audience without a background of OT theology or Jewish thought' (E M Blaiklock). It is important to see that Paul did not set out to identify their unknown God but declared his intention of announcing God's truth

to them in view of their confessed ignorance about it. He spoke of God as creator (v 24), self-sufficient (v 25), and sovereign so that all should respond to him in worship (v 26 f). He openly challenges them to put aside all their pretensions, to repent and believe in the risen Son of God (v 30 f). No worship outside biblical Christian worship could possibly satisfy men or be acceptable to God. Only in Christ is the true meeting point to be found.

Engaging the conflict (2 Cor 10)

Relationships between Christian workers and the churches where they work are of great importance. Paul had his problems! He was accused of a divided approach (v 1), worldly motives (v 2) and of a lack of authority to teach (v 8). Paul could only overcome by modelling himself on the Lord. There had to be his gentleness and magnanimity (John 8:1–11) with firmness and consistency (vv 2, 11; cf Matt 21:12 f; 23:13 f). There were also other external battles against the entrenched strongholds of evil in men's hearts (v 4 f). Victory could only be gained by spiritual means (Ps 20:7; Eph 6:12 f). In the conflict Paul knew he was being directed by the Lord (v 13) and was ever challenged to reach the 'land beyond' (v 16; cf Rom 15:20). But he knew he must first build up the faith of the newly born church (vv 8, 15).

Protesting for the truth (2 Cor 11)

As the founder of the Corinthian church Paul was burdened for its healthy growth and doctrinal purity. He had to face false apostles (v 13), preaching a different gospel (v 4; Gal 1:6 f). So he urges the Corinthians to consider two aspects of his ministry: first the sources of his financial support (vv 7–11) showed he was not seeking mercenary gain. Second he mentioned the suffering and risk to life itself (vv 22–33) and the inward burden of love on his heart (v 28). In world mission a servant's ministry stands or falls by the quality of his or her life.

Captured by the gospel (Phil 1:1–18)

Paul had started the Philippian church (Acts 16:12 f) and nourished it (Acts 20:1 f) under its own leadership (v 1) and to be partner with him (v 5). He longed that they might aim for and attain the highest in holy living (v 10) as evidence of Christ within them (v 11, cf John 15:4 f; Col 1:10). It is remarkable that he wrote thus from a Roman prison (v 12) chained to the leg of one of his captors. If love was not bound in such circumstances neither could the gospel be. It can break out of every circumstance and when it does, is thus a measure of the Christian's spiritual maturity and effectiveness in service.

Setting out the standard (1 Thess 2:1–16)

Here some of the leading characteristics of Paul's ministry shine forth. In all that he had suffered (Acts 16:19–24), he showed a divinely given courage (v 2); his preaching was with integrity (vv 3, 5); he presented the gospel responsibly (vv 2, 8 & 9); he showed a spirit of selflessness (v 6) and compassion (v 7) as well as hard work (v 9) and godliness (v 10). The demands of the ministry are great; only Christ can give the strength (2 Cor 3:5 f).

Building up the faith (1 Thess 2:17–3:13)

Paul's longing was that they should be healthy and grow: his primary concern—their faith (mentioned 5 times). News of their firm stand in the gospel encouraged him greatly (v 8). If he feared for them (3:5) it was lest they become discouraged by opposition. In any case suffering for Christ was an essential accompaniment to following him. The chief means of nourishment for faith is a ministry of establishing and exhortation (John 14:16, 26), in the light of Christ's return (2:19; 3:13). Wise parental care and a balanced spiritual diet are essential to good growth.

Motive for mission*Sharing Good News (2 Kings 6:24–7:20)*

Because of starvation conditions in beleaguered Samaria (6:25) the four lepers' only hope of survival was an unlikely show of mercy from the enemy Syrians (7:3, 4). So, leaving the forlorn Israelites shut up to despair, they enter an unbelievable experience of deliverance and abundance (7:7 f). Suddenly shame and guilt overtook them for their selfishness (7:9). 'Come let us go and tell . . .'. A personal experience of Christ and the inescapable sense of obligation blend to form a dominant motive for Christian witness (1 John 1:1). This desire should be irrepressible (Acts 4:20). If some do not believe (7:12 f) but wish to remain imprisoned, they only have themselves to blame (John 3:36).

Indebted to men (Rom 1:1–17)

Paul's apostleship was by divine choice (v 1; cf 1 Cor 1:1; 9:17), to reach all nations (v 5). So he ministered under a sense of obligation (v 14). Only through the gospel was the power of God available (v 16 f) for the educated Greeks and rough-hewn Barbarians. The Jews met the gospel with hostility because it identified Jesus as the Messiah; the Gentiles reacted with contempt because to vaunt death on a cross as triumph was stupid (1 Cor 1:23). Yet Paul gloried in the cross (Gal 6:14) and preached it everywhere (v 16; 2 Cor 10:16).

Proclaiming salvation (Rom 10)

In spite of much personal suffering Paul's concern for their salvation was irresistible (v 1). It sprang from his grasp of God's great grace forgiving believers through faith (vv 4, 9 f). Paul grieved that the Jews' zeal could never bring them to a right relationship with God (vv 2 f). From the principle of salvation in Christ alone, clearly messengers were needed to proclaim it (v 14). So Paul was gripped with urgency; his feet moved swiftly to preach the good news (v 15; Isa 52:7). The responsibility of 'the watchman' is unaffected by their response (Ezek 33:1 f).

Stewarding responsibly (1 Cor 9:13–27)

Paul's motivation lay not in expecting financial reward for a job he had personally chosen (v 17) but because of an inner compulsion (v 16). As God's man he was committed to responsible stewardship (v 17). At that time a steward had to use rightly what another had entrusted to him (1 Cor 4:1 f) and this meant sharing God's grace with them (Eph 3:2, 7 f). The responsibility was two-way: towards

God (1 Tim 1:11) and towards men (Acts 26:17). So deep was the motivation, Paul would go to any lengths (v 19) without compromising the gospel (Gal 2:11 f). Such dedication demanded single-mindedness (v 24). This passage is about service rather than salvation; he feared being set aside in preference for others more usable.

By love constrained (2 Cor 5:10–21)

Christian mission cannot be pursued by a 'take or leave it' attitude, hence Paul's appeal (v 11; Acts 18:4; 28:23). His inner motivation was the love of Christ (v 14) which left him no choice (cf same Greek verb in Luke 8:45; 12:50 and Acts 18:5). Paul saw that God's love embraced 'all', 'that innumerable company of those who would enjoy the benefits of redemption', (R V G Tasker). This passage clearly blends experience with theology in healthy balance. When we try to divorce them mission becomes distorted and troubles multiply!

Completing the course (Acts 20:17–38)

Because of the divine commission Paul's passion was to witness to God's grace (v 24). This required humility (v 19), perseverance (v 31) and involved suffering (vv 19, 23), hard physical effort (v 34) and costly self-giving (v 31). Christ's ministry was similarly characterized (Matt 4:8–10; Luke 9:51; Heb 12:2) and embodied tenacity of purpose (Isa 42:4). Those who make their lives count for God press forward with singleness of purpose despite discouragement. C T Studd: 'If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.'

Anticipating the finale (Rev 5:1–14; 7:9–27)

Revelation speaks of anticipated glory, the culmination of God's redeeming purposes affecting his church. Through the acclamation of the Lamb by the living creatures and elders (5:8) then the vast crowd before the heavenly throne (7:11), John is given a vision of the redeemed from all ages and segments of human settlement on earth. This throng is dressed in white (v 9), symbolizing Christ's imputed righteousness. No turn of history can ever change God's good purposes for his church (Matt 16:18; Rom 8:28–30). In the knowledge that Christ's church is built among 'all nations' God's servants can face their worldwide task with much expectation (Luke 10:20, 12:36), knowing that by God's grace they too will share in it.

APPENDIX 3

A SUGGESTED SYLLABUS WITH BIBLIOGRAPHY

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9 TEACHING MISSION TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Peter Lowman

The culture we live in is one full of clamorous voices demanding attention: Watch! Listen! Buy! Many of those voices are basically narcissistic, encouraging us to sit back, to consume. Even within the Christian world, there are all too many forces that promote a self-centred Christianity, where we are following Jesus for what we can get out of it.

Effective presentation of the challenge to world evangelism is an essential task of any church leadership or youth group leadership; because all of us are recipients of the Great Commission, and all of us need to be reminded of the task God has entrusted to us. But to present that challenge is to set our faces against those forces in 20th century culture that call us to be self centred and look only to our own concerns.

So the starting point for stimulating global vision must be the deliberate attempt to cultivate a kind of discipleship that is not selfish; a discipleship that is outward going rather than inward looking, and that is oriented primarily to the glorifying of God and the service of the world. That must be fundamental to everything else we do; because people who have learned to see their lives as something God has given them to make use of for his glory and for the needs of the world will naturally be asking, 'Well, where, and how, should I be using my time and possessions and future?'; and, to such people, the needs of the world will speak a clear message. In contrast, someone whose Christianity is fundamentally selfish is not really in a position to respond to information they receive about the world's needs.

Teaching

The question then is, How do we create this outward oriented discipleship? Obviously, thorough *Bible teaching* is a basic answer. We can ask ourselves what Bible passages first helped us to catch this vision of the need to invest our lives in bringing the gospel to a lost world. Primarily, though, the need is surely to get across to people that the God who 'is Love' is an *outward going* God, a God who so loved the world that he gave what was most precious to him for the sake of the lost world (John 3:16); and if we are truly children of God, then a similar concern to give ourselves unstintingly for that lost world must characterize us. Likewise,

our teaching must draw out something of what was involved in Jesus' far reaching prayer 'As You sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world' (John 17:18). A top priority, then, must be to ensure that our youth teaching programme includes presenting God as this kind of God.

There are other areas of teaching that we shall want to ensure are included in the teaching programme of our youth work. Presumably any youth group teaching programme will include a missions oriented component every now and then; and over a period we will want to cover things like Christ's command to world mission, and also the needs of the world that we live in. Oftentimes missionary concerns seem boring because people have never been given an adequate overview of the titanic struggle in which the church is engaged.

So, for example, we may want to try to give something of a geographic overview, arranging for our group to hear a speaker who is able to draw a basic picture of the overall 'state of play' in world mission. (Or, alternatively, some group members can put together a presentation themselves, drawing on sources like *Operation World*.) This will provide a context in which people can see the place of what they're doing in supporting a specific missionary in a specific situation. It may (for example) be a lot easier to pray for what 'our missionary' is doing in an obscure Indonesian village if we've learnt to see that in the light of the global interplay of the rival claims of Christianity and Islam.

It might also be worth experimenting with presenting the challenge to mission in terms of a cultural overview of what is happening in the West and elsewhere since Europe's 'loss of faith'. It is plain enough that such striking features of European society as rising street violence, industrial strife, AIDS, or the search for and loss of values evidenced in much 'high art' and also in popular culture (eg punk rock) relate directly to our loss of God. The missionary challenge in Europe in particular can be presented in terms of this disastrous spiritual void in our continent, where dechristianization has left us with 'every man for himself', with all the consequences we see around us. And in that situation, God has placed his church as the people who have the answers, in his Word and his Spirit; the 'rivers of living water' in what is, increasingly clearly, a spiritual desert; the 'lights of the world' in a continent where it is rapidly getting dark. Sometimes presenting the need in this way may help people catch the missionary challenge by relating it to other areas that have gripped and concerned them. It may help particularly if—as often happens—their vision of world mission has been too small.

Modelling

But the verbal teaching is only one side of our presentation of the missionary challenge that follows from the outward going nature of the

God we worship. Equally important is the *modelling* of our own lives. As younger members of our fellowship or youth group look at us, do they see a Christianity that is primarily for what we get out of it (eg we get a ticket to heaven and give God some of Sunday as a repayment), or do they see a little of what it means to *live* 'for the Kingdom'? Do they see in us a commitment to material security or to spiritual warfare as primary? In conversation with us, do they get infected by a consuming passion for how the gospel is going forward? When we are discussing events of importance in the world, do they see in us a concern that the all-important dimension is how these events affect the church and the gospel? And when they discuss with us their developing career plans (*and* our own), are they encouraged to put as a primary concern the way one's life is to be invested in God's mission—or to make the kind of career plans that are standard with the 'man of the world'?

Modelling also operates in the way we run our church activities. We know that one of the things that kills world vision is the tendency to docket 'missionary matters' as something separate, pigeonholed away in activities and publications for the specialists who are 'that way inclined'. We know that world mission is rather the context in which *all* our discipleship takes place; that we are all of us missionaries, some called abroad and some called to stay in our homeland, but all missionaries nonetheless; and that all our local church activities are just the local manifestation of God reaching out through his people to the world as a whole. But do our church activities model this realization that world mission is the context for all we do?

Do we build in a 'missionary dimension' to all our activities—our prayer meetings, for example, or our home Bible studies? There are so many ways in which—without using more than a few minutes—we can build in a 'world mission component': a prayer item from *Echoes*, or from *Operation World*, or an Operation Mobilisation prayer card. Or we can write to one of the missionaries we support and ask for (say) eight specific areas of prayer concern that could be used in brief 'spots' in our Sunday evening service or youth group event. A leadership that deliberately builds a 'window on the world' into the majority of the fellowship's activities is modelling clearly to all its members the faith that world mission is the essential context of all our local discipleship.

Exposure

Another question we will want to look at is *exposure*. People growing up in Britain today are bombarded by all kinds of forces that make them have a vision that is too small, a vision that is self centred and narcissistic. What

can they be exposed to, so as to open their eyes to the huge world outside and the huge conflict that is going on in it?

What *people* can they be exposed to? Obviously we will want to think about what speakers we can invite to our youth group that will serve to open people's eyes a little. They don't necessarily have to speak on 'missionary' subjects, either. A man who has spent 20 years serving God in the Third World may be just as much an 'eye-opener' to the realities of the 'wider world' if he's talking on a topic like prayer. (This is particularly true if we can find good speakers who are not themselves British.) And if we invite people like that, we will want to work out how to set up 'exposure' in other ways besides just 'speaking from the front'. Which of our youth group should be invited for a meal with them? Which of our group could come over and spend the afternoon with them?

What *events* can our youth group be exposed to? What are the things we should be going to 'as a group'? We will want to check what good missionary conferences etc are happening in our area—for example the London Missionary Meetings for those who live in the southeast of England—and ensure that we build these into our group calendar. And can we take a group off to a residential missionary conference—events like MISSION '88, or like the conferences run by Operation Mobilisation? The important point here is that we don't just advertise these things, but rather examine the possibility of going as a group. That way, people will go along 'with the group' who might otherwise not be exposed to such things—instead of just the 'keenies' attending.

Or we can arrange this exposure by arranging our own missionary weekend. (Or why not do it with some other youth groups in the area?) It can include things like: a speaker who can give an interesting, realistic picture of what it means to be a missionary (both in talks and over the meal table!); some sort of overview of the world, for those to whom it's all new; perhaps a missionary film like *Yoneko*; and some times of world prayer (getting down to business!) Again, this may be a good time to involve any non-British Christians you know—Christian students from overseas, for example, or believers from abroad working with a group like In Contact.

What *books* can we expose our group to? If we are in leadership, part of our job is enthusing about and passing on literature that will help people 'catch the vision': the classic biographies (Hudson Taylor, C T Studd, *Shadow of the Almighty*, etc); books like those by Michael Griffiths, or George Verwer's *Hunger for Reality*, or Ada Lum's *Hitchhiker's Guide To Mission*. Or missionary magazines like *Echoes* etc. Enthusiasm for a book or magazine that has meant something to us can be infectious; and we can set up a personal library of missions books, and ask the Lord who in our group might be interested in them.

Planning for commitment

In all this we will want to pray that God will lead the members of our youth group to find a *commitment* to some specific areas of missions concern. Having an overview of what is happening in the world as a whole is important, but we need that in order to get down to business with a few places in particular. ('Know a little of everywhere; know in depth about one people/nation/region/ministry', urges Ellie Lau of Hong Kong.) So, if we are in leadership, one of our goals will be to present some specific aspects of mission in which people can become involved prayerfully (Open Doors? Missionary Aviation Fellowship? Far Eastern Broadcasting Associates? Christian student work through the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students or Scripture Union?).

As we present these things, we're aiming to expose people to a broader range of what's going on, to expand their vision. And that's important; one feature of our present cultural situation seems to be that we function as experiential people rather than just on a linear, logical level; and if you want to get people committed to something, you must both present the facts of the situation to their mind and their reason, *and* also help their heart and imagination 'catch the vision' too. However, we aren't aiming only to expand people's awareness, but to lead them into active involvement; so as we present these ministries, we will want to spell out the specific ways in which our members can get involved.

Many of our group members will only get involved in what we do as a group; to begin with, at any rate. And so, as a group, we will want to have some definite commitment(s) to supporting work elsewhere in the world. These commitments don't all have to be permanent; in a youth group, it can sometimes be good to see if we can 'ride the wave' of areas of mission concern that have gripped the imagination of that particular generation of our members. So if we are committing ourselves to something, it may sometimes be good to adopt it for a specific period (eg three years); we can always renew our commitment subsequently. That can help to prevent staleness.

And then let's be creative in the ways we support our missionary. What things would (s)he like, besides the prayers and money we're sending? Maybe they're the sort of person who misses the English newspapers; well, the *Guardian* does an excellent weekly airmail summary of the week's news—what about sending it periodically? Is there any magazine our missionary might enjoy? Or a cassette—either music or Bible teaching (but there are some countries where you need to be careful what Bible teaching cassettes you send in—it wouldn't be at all helpful to send something on new developments in Muslim evangelism to a Middle

Eastern country, for example)? Or a book—Christian, or maybe a mind-stretching secular book—or maybe something just plain humorous? Is there any little luxury you can send your missionary—or your missionary’s children—on her/his birthday?—any luxury food, for example—so long as it won’t either spoil *en route* or create problems or bills at customs? (One missionary family told how they appreciated gifts of Marmite!) Are there any practical things that might be useful—tupperware, for example, or a supply of water filters? And if your missionary has ageing parents, is there any way you could show love to them? (Some of these ideas come from the Evangelical Missionary Alliance book *Love Your Local Missionary*, which has lots of other good suggestions besides.)

There are other ways we can build up our link too. It may be that our missionary works in a fellowship where there are young people of the age of our youth group; and maybe some of these could become penfriends with some of our group, and learn to pray for each other.

As we challenge our group to be creative and imaginative in these ways, it is not just our missionary who benefits. Our group members themselves are being helped to realise that ‘missionaries are people too’, and that missionary concern is not something boring after all.

Dreaming big dreams

Finally, we shall be asking ourselves how we can expose our group to *opportunities* for further service. The Lord has told us to pray that he will send out labourers into his harvest; and if we have responsibility for a youth group, we should be ‘dreaming big dreams’ about where they could be serving God ten years later. As we think like that, we shall begin to present our church and our youth fellowship as being a ‘training centre’: a place where we learn together about God and his Word, and where we develop our abilities to serve him and learn to work with him in evangelism and making disciples; so that in the years that follow we can use our lives to make a real impact for him in a lost world. So, as church leaders or youth leaders, we will be thinking what opportunities to present to our group. How can they use their summer? Could a number of our group go together on a Gospel Literature Outreach summer team, or with Operation Mobilisation? And how do we intend helping with any financial hassles they may encounter?

But we won’t just think short-term. Part of our task will be to present, over a period of time, a range of areas of need that exist in our world, so that people can hear about some of the areas or ministries to which God may want to call them long-term.

And we shall pray that it will all bear fruit. And the Lord will answer

that prayer, because it is one he himself taught us to pray. And from among the youth group in our fellowship he will call out labourers into his harvest.

10 TEACHING MISSION TO CHILDREN

Barbara Morris

'Coming, coming, yes they are . . .' and as the kitchen table was reached my father had landed on Afric's shore! Missionary hymns, *Echoes* and *Echoes Prayer List* were part of our breakfast and from earliest days I can remember places like Chitokoloki and Narsapur; even our house was called Kawama. I was one who absorbed mission by the simple process of osmosis and thank God for this. If this process cannot be employed then we are thrown back essentially on the Junior Church/Sunday School or other institutionalized means as a way of teaching mission to children. This being so, we need to have regard to certain generalized principles and to face the need for careful planning if we are to make the most of preparation and production, for what may be at most a weekly slot of five minutes in an overall programme of one hour, or fifteen minutes in a Daily Vacation Bible School situation.

PRINCIPLES

Children have varied likes and dislikes. If we can discover these we can, like the Blue Peter programmes, major on the likes, avoid the dislikes and thus capture the interest of children.

We must ask ourselves whether we have an infectious enthusiasm for mission. Enthusiasm is a necessary factor in overriding the lack of interest and imagination in the attitude of others. It should infect not only children but also teachers and parents.

We must be willing to persevere in the teaching of mission to children despite the knowledge that our commitment will involve a hard regular slog and that it can be devastatingly costly in genuine preparation time.

In all our planning and teaching we will have to reckon with the arch enemy who has a particular interest in preventing young children from learning about mission; after all they are potential missionaries, potential pray-ers, potential givers.

What we do in childhood is often vividly remembered in later life. We should therefore aim to fill the minds of children with beautiful memories

that feature triumph, answered prayers and exciting progress in winning people for Jesus Christ.

PLANNING

Just as the gardening manual sets out a programme of work to cover all the months and seasons of the year so it can be useful to have in mind a long term plan for setting out the work to be accomplished in teaching mission. Such a plan encourages an orderly approach: there will be motivation to keep going, controlled changes to sustain interest, a gradual building up of knowledge and a pride in achievement. Just as the builder follows a prepared plan in putting together a house that is made up of many constituents ranging from hardened bricks to delicate tiles so the plan for teaching mission will involve a whole range of varying constituents that come together to provide a building 'fitly framed'.

If children begin at Junior Church when they are 4 and leave when they are 10 we may need to think in terms of a 6-year plan. The programme set out is merely an attempt to give some idea of the way in which our thinking could develop. Although the long term nature of such a plan may appear to be over-structured and even forbidding it has definite advantages: the teacher is given time to glean material from distant parts and acquire a knowledge of the needs and problems of different countries on an ordered and progressive basis. It is of course important that such a plan does not become a bondage of formal rigidity. Every opportunity for flexibility and topicality of approach should be taken, eg the substitution of whatever country is in the news over a particular 'happening' or of a 'live' missionary or national who happens to be on tap.

PREPARATION AND PRODUCTION

A 5-minute slot for teaching mission is very short. Material must therefore be well presented if an impression is to be made, and this demands much preparation time. Some ideas that have proved helpful over the years include:

The provision of a missionary table

Contents can include photos of an ongoing project, a doll from the country, maps, newspaper cuttings, stamps, missionary magazine pictures and cuttings, curios, examples of the language and other bits and bobs. Further interest can be engendered by attaching informative labels to each object. A picture of the missionary or a national with the name and name of country clearly displayed or attached to a map with a piece of coloured

string is also helpful. Children can be issued with a questionnaire about the missionary table. Early birds can complete this before Sunday School or it can be completed whilst parents are chatting at the end of the morning or evening service.

A simulated visit to a particular country

Passports can be made and a colourful national costume of the month can be worn by one of the children. Simulated customs, practices and attitudes can give additional flavour and interest can be heightened by helping the children to prepare a meal in the home of the teacher or at the church, using recipes from the country itself.

A signature chorus and/or a signature verse

This can preface the mission slot: it will help the children to orientate themselves to the new activity and provide a sense of continuity in the 5-minute slot.

Action

Children love action and we need to imagine all sorts of actions in which the children can involve themselves. The project for the month can be shown and read each week: eg all the children hold up their Bible and say 'Bibles for A.F.R.I.C.A, Africa' (cf EVERTON). Simple scenes from missionary stories can be dramatised or mimed.

Competitions

Simple crosswords, deciphering a code, unjumbling letters, colouring, free story, free drawing, filling in the gaps, collecting information, guessing the number of caterpillars Kahemba caught in her tin for the family dinner, will all encourage the interest of the children.

Variety

It is helpful to change the channel of getting the matter across; ie use a few slides one week, a poster the next, a drama the next, a recording the next, a puzzle the next . . . and so on, preferably finishing at a point where the children would prefer to go on listening. Toy monkeys, rubber snakes etc can be used to attract the children's attention and help them to remember a certain point.

INTEREST AND ACHIEVEMENT

Opportunity should be taken over the years to introduce as many different personalities as possible to the children so that their interest is sustained. They need to know that a missionary is not just a preacher but that he can also be a doctor, nurse, teacher, pilot, dentist etc. Children may well respond to adopting a child, sponsoring a radio programme, financing the digging of a well, paying for the printing of a scripture syllabus, saving for Scripture Gift Mission booklets to be sent out to Indonesia or to Christians who visit prisons. Children enjoy collecting, so they could collect toy cars for the London City Mission, safety pins for a hospital, pencils for a school etc. In modern times a missionary extension ministry for children can be organized by the enthusiast using videos, magazines and books especially geared to children.

A sense of achievement can be inculcated if the teacher is able and prepared to go to greater lengths by offering missionary knowledge certificates and badges for special detailed effort. The following notes may be of help in developing ideas along these lines.

MISSIONARY KNOWLEDGE CERTIFICATE AND BADGES

First Step

- 1 Write out Matthew 28:19–20.
- 2 Send a postcard to a missionary in Zambia.
- 3 Learn John 3:16 by heart so that you can use it to tell others about the Lord Jesus.
- 4 Draw the sort of houses a missionary would visit if he worked amongst eskimos or people in Hong Kong.
- 5 Ask your teacher what SGM means. Ask him for one of the booklets printed by the SGM for boys and girls. Read it and then give it to one of your friends praying that your friend will become a friend of the Lord Jesus too.

Second Step

- 1 Write out Romans 10:12–13.
- 2 Send a postcard to a missionary in India.
- 3 Learn Romans 10:9 by heart.
- 4 A missionary is going to Japan. How long will it take to fly from UK to Japan? (A travel agent will give you the answer.) Draw the sort of aeroplane in which he would travel.
- 5 Ask your teacher the name of the girl whose story moved the Bible

SAMPLE SIX YEAR PLAN for teaching mission to children

| Year | January | February | March | April | May | June | July | August | September | October | November | December |
|------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------|------------------------|---|----------|---------------------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | France | Zambia | Nepal | Israel | Mexico | SGM | Poland | Bible Society | New Guinea | FEBA | Thailand | Leprosy Mission |
| 2 | Italy | Zaire | N India | S Africa | Guatemala Honduras | Portugal | Roumania | Japan | Fiji | Tear Fund | Malaysia | London City Mission |
| 3 | Norway Sweden Finland | Nigeria | Central India | Botswana Mozambique | Jamaica Puerto Rico St Kitts Virgin Is | SGM | Czechoslovakia Hungary | TWR | New Caledonia | HCJB | Philippines | In Contact |
| 4 | Germany Austria | Angola Chad | S India | Ecuador | Trinidad Tobago | Spain | Russia | Japan | Aborigines (Australia) | Senegal | Hong Kong | SU |
| 5 | Ireland Spain | Tanzania Kenya | Pakistan | Iran Iraq | Venezuela Guyana Colombia | GLO | Albania Greece | Brazil | N Africa Guyana | Zimbabwe | Taiwan Korea | Wycliffe |
| 6 | Portugal Greenland | Ethiopia Botswana | Afghanistan | Lebanon Syria | Ecuador | OM | Yugoslavia Bulgaria | Argentina | N Africa | Chad | China | MAF |

Society to start its work. Where did she live? What did she have to do before she could have what she wanted? How does the Bible Society help people all over the world?
etc

Extra Badges

Readers' Badge

- 1 Read *Star of Light* by Patricia St John.
- 2 Trace a map of Africa showing in red the country of Morocco.
- 3 Answer the following 5 questions about the book . . .

Echoes Badge

- 1 Name 3 places where there is a mission hospital.
- 2 Who looks after a bookshop in Japan?
- 3 Name 2 schools for missionary children.

Collectors' Badge

- 1 Collect 10 stamps from 3 different countries.
- 2 Collect 3 letters from 3 different countries.
- 3 Collect 3 pictures of missionaries from missionary magazines.
etc.

APPENDICES

1 BRITISH INVOLVEMENT IN INTERDENOMINATIONAL 'FAITH' MISSIONARY SOCIETIES *and the AWARE Broadsheet*

Barbara Baigent

How AWARE came to be

At a consultation of Christian Brethren leaders held at London Bible College in 1981, several specific suggestions were made which the organizing committee summarized as: training and development; mission abroad; and information dissemination. One possibility linking the second and third of these was the development of a broadsheet which might reach a wider readership than that of *Harvester*.

In 1982, John Polkinghorne was approached with a view to editing such a broadsheet to disseminate information about full time workers and churches in UK. He was favourable to such an idea. By 1983, *Harvester* had agreed to publish such a bulletin. It was felt that there should be a similar one dealing with world mission. *Harvester* was approached early in 1984, and agreed to the idea. In August 1984, I was asked to edit this. The first issue was to be in March 1985. It would be quarterly, published as an integral part of *Harvester* but also available separately, in quantities of five. We conceived the title AWARE with its logo of an eye on the world.

The First Questionnaire

Prior to publication of the first issue, a questionnaire was sent to 1,200 Brethren churches in England and Wales asking them to send in names of full time workers both at home and abroad other than those serving in fellowship with Counties Evangelistic Work (in UK) or *Echoes* (overseas) since these were already served by their respective publications. The

churches were asked to give the names of the societies with which they were working, and to indicate if they would be prepared to subscribe to a world mission bulletin.

By November 1984, we had received 168 completed questionnaires. 107 churches welcomed the idea of a news bulletin and the returns indicated that they would take up 1,000 copies in addition to those received as part of *Harvester*. In the event, this figure proved over optimistic, and only about 250 copies have been taken up. 101 churches sent details of 198 commended full time workers (other than those with *Echoes* and 'Counties'): 54 married couples and 90 single people.

The Current List

At the time of writing this paper for the 1987 consultation I had 211 names of people working with 42 societies, or 246 names when such people as Hebron School teachers are included.

Subsequently, Partnership has surveyed the Brethren churches of UK. Returns from just over 300 churches, collated with existing records indicates that there are now at least 276 working in world mission apart from those with *Echoes*. 230 of these are abroad, 40 independent and 190 in societies (56 societies) and 46 are in the UK either with societies (43 in 16 societies) or independent (3). This of course does not include full time workers and evangelists working in UK either independently or with 'Counties' etc.

The reason that I believe these numbers to be only a fraction of the total is illustrated by two examples. When I wanted an article on Operation Mobilisation I wrote to them in 1986 and their computer produced 44 names of Christian Brethren full time with OM (I had only 4 names). In 1987 when I wrote to New Tribes Mission for news they gave me 28 as the number of Christian Brethren from UK with their mission (I had only 11 names).

Some societies are not prepared to give me a breakdown of which of their missionaries are 'Brethren', saying, 'We are all one in Christ Jesus—no labels!' And many churches still have not heard of AWARE and have not sent in a list of their missionaries.

In the appendix to this article I have listed the societies with which we have missionaries. (Numbers are only given where they are significant).

One of the big problems is trying to discover whether or not a person is on short term service and if so, when they have returned to the UK. I know of no method of keeping the records updated at present.

The Second Questionnaire

This was sent in 1985 to all the missionaries on our list asking them if they

would like their names to be included on a list for prayer. 65 people abroad responded to this, giving their name, society, location and a prayer request. The list was published in *Harvester* in May '86. It is on the computer at Paternoster Press but is in need of someone to keep it updated.

AWARE and its parameters

The aims were stated clearly in 'Editor's Eye' of the first issue. Broadly they were:

- 1 To keep readers informed of what was happening in mission around the world.
- 2 To increase prayer support for and fellowship with God's servants working alongside national Christians.
- 3 To challenge us at home with the needs and opportunities.

We hoped to publish news of national churches where there is no missionary; news of medical electives and other short term service; ideas for twinning churches in Britain with those abroad; news of those working in societies who meet with Christian Brethren either abroad or when at home; information about training courses; advance notices of missionary meetings and reports of such events.

I must confess that, in the main, the response has been disappointing. The letters of appreciation have mostly come from missionaries abroad. No church has sent me an advance notice of a missionary event (perhaps there are none!). No church has sent me a report of one either!

One or two churches have sent me an up-to-date list of people abroad and I have been able to publish details of nine 'sending churches'. In the first 8 issues we featured 24 different societies or groups, and 27 missionaries or national workers, plus their families. 200 different people have actually been named in at least 17 countries. The national workers featured are in Portugal, Spain, India, Singapore, France, Jamaica and Zambia.

The scripture the Lord has given me throughout is Philippians 1:5,18,27; 'partnership in the gospel . . . the important thing is that in every way . . . Christ is preached . . . in one spirit contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.'

Developments from AWARE

I had hoped to include in AWARE opportunities for service abroad, but I rarely receive any. Also I felt it important to provide an opportunity to re-educate readers regarding mission. As a result *Harvester* ran a series which we called 'Going Global'. Between January and December 1987, there

were 12 contributions on such matters as pastoral care, rehabilitation, retirement, tent-making opportunities, responsibility of elders etc.

The AWARE Exhibition When I went to Spring Harvest and saw the vast mission exhibition there, I was saddened to discover that there was no exhibition to show the input of Christian Brethren abroad. We have been able to put together a small exhibition which has been set up at the Swanwick Conference, and is available to be used at conferences, holidays, celebrations etc. It advertises *Harvester*, AWARE and mission.

The future

As Ernest Oliver has stated in his paper, 'the pattern of the international, interdenominational, united mission set up and sustained during the past 30 years provides an outstanding example of modern missionary method'. AWARE is appreciated by missionaries because they are the ones who know that when you get out there, abroad, *you work together with other Christians*. If you don't, you are setting up exclusive churches which may miss the tide of blessing that is sweeping across the world.

Ernest also states that he knows only one missionary society that includes workers from other churches and organizations in its prayer diary because those workers are in the same physical area. We have seen that AWARE is seeking to link together in prayer workers all over the world who have one common bond—that they are commended by Brethren churches—but do not come within the criteria drawn up by the editors of *Echoes*. There are many such people, working with many societies. What AWARE is achieving and where it is going is open to discussion.

I would like to suggest that maybe we should consider praying and working towards *one monthly magazine* which would be a combination of *Harvester*, *Echoes*, AWARE and *News from Counties*. It would be a news magazine of what British Christian Brethren are doing in UK and worldwide, with Bible teaching and feature articles. This may be an impossible dream for Britain but it is actually being done in Switzerland!

I believe that things are happening abroad that we at home don't realise because the missionaries don't tell us, and, at the same time, for some Christians serving God abroad things change so fast at home that they can't keep up with us. Such a magazine as I envisage, sent free to all missionaries, would keep them and us up-to-date with current thinking and events.

Incidentally I was interested to read an article in *Echoes* (August 1986) about the *Missionary Study Class Movement* which in 1911 led to the publication of a magazine called '*Links of Help*'. The article tells us that *Links of Help* published missionary material and opinion not available in other publications and with the object of encouraging personal missionary

study. It included surveys of many parts of the world; general statistical information; the basic tenets of various world religions and touched upon . . . problems that assembly workers were often called upon to face. The Editor set out not only to provide an informative magazine but material for conferences and displays of all kinds which were then very much encouraged.' It was eventually absorbed into *Harvester!*

I would also draw your attention to the last two chapters of the ten-volume series *That the World may Know* by Dr Tatford. One chapter is about change, and the other is about the relevance of mission today. He quotes both Stan Warren and Michael Griffiths and also refers to the MSC Movement. 'Practically all missionary societies' he wrote, 'employ deputation secretaries to visit churches and report on current conditions and needs, using *exhibits*, maps and other visual aids. . . . A great deal might be done in the different regions of the U.K. if those capable of doing so, gave themselves voluntarily to this service, as some did in the early days of the M.S.C. Movement. *An assembly agency* formerly existed to provide information to those who were prepared to take up secular appointments in other countries in order to be in a position to engage in evangelism and teaching in their spare time. It would be well if such an agency could be recommenced.'

One of the reasons why people go out with societies is that they hear of specific opportunities which they can fill.

I would make a plea for the setting up of a *Mission Resource Centre* where opportunities could be advertized and volunteers referred; where books, news, statistics etc could be available, and which was really appealing and exciting to young people.

I wonder, too, if the various Brethren initiatives could not aim to work together more. Should not Gospel Literature Outreach, the London Missionary Meetings, *Echoes*, Partnership and AWARE be represented on a joint committee that met at least annually, since many of their desires and concerns overlap.

Finally, I am concerned that there should be a way of receiving regular news of European and Third World churches where there is no UK presence. We should be encouraging them to set up their own missionary training!

APPENDIX

SOCIETIES WITH WHOM CHRISTIAN BRETHREN ARE ASSOCIATED

People working in UK

Asian Ministry Partnership
Evangelical Union of South America
Far East Broadcasting Association
Gospel Literature Outreach
In Contact
Interserve (formerly Bible and
Medical Missionary Fellowship)
Movement for World Evangelism
Operation Mobilisation
Scripture Gift Mission
Tear Fund
Transworld Radio
Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade
World Vision
Wycliffe Bible Translators

People working abroad

Afghan Border Crusade (now North
West Frontier Fellowship)
Africa Evangelical Fellowship
Africa Mission (?)
Africa Inland Mission
Belgian Evangelical Mission
Christian Literature Crusade
Church Missionary Society
Council for World Mission
European Christian Mission
European Missionary Fellowship
Evangelical Union of South America
Evangelism in Action
Far East Broadcasting Association
France pour Christ
French Village Workers
Grace Fellowship International
International Christian Fellowship
(merging with SIM 1989)

International Fellowship of
Evangelical Students
Interserve (formerly Bible and
Medical Missionary Fellowship)
Indian Bible Society (11 people)*
Japan Evangelistic Band
Lighthouse Harbour Ministry
Mission Aviation Fellowship
(14 people)*
Middle East Christian Outreach
(10 people)*
Mennonite Board of Missions
Navigators
New Tribes Mission (11 people)*
Operation Mobilisation (over
20 people)*
Overseas Missionary Fellowship
(8 people)*
Open Doors
Qua Iboe Fellowship
Regions Beyond Missionary Union
Red Sea Mission Team
Ruanda Mission
Sahara Desert Mission
South American Missionary Society
Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture
Readers Association
St Stephens Society
SIM International
South Seas Evangelical Mission
Tear Fund
Transworld Radio
Unevangelised Fields Mission
United Mission to Nepal
United World Mission (?)
Worldwide Evangelisation Crusade
Wycliffe Bible Translators
(21 people)*
Youth with a Mission

2 THE PAST AND PRESENT FOREIGN MISSION ACTIVITIES OF GERMAN BRETHREN CHURCHES

Daniel Herm

The first German Brethren assembly was founded through the ministry of George Müller in 1843, at Stuttgart, but within a few years the influence of John Nelson Darby—as a result of his wide travels, his friendship with Karl Brockhaus and his help in the translation of the Bible ('Elberfeld' translation)—became so strong that the Stuttgart assembly and many others developed into 'exclusive assemblies'. It has been estimated that about 100 years later two-thirds of the Brethren movement in Germany were of the 'exclusive' type.

This, of course, means that there was hardly any missionary interest or activity. During these 100 years the exclusive assemblies had only a handful of missionaries in Egypt and in China.

The missionary activities of the 'open' assemblies began towards the end of the 19th century through the influence of Dr Baedeker and the founding of the Bible School in Berlin in 1905. In this school many young men from the whole of Eastern and Southern Europe were trained and went back into their home countries, establishing Brethren assemblies there.

Only a few German Brethren who had been trained at the Bible School went into overseas missions, eg to Turkistan, China, South Eastern Europe, Belgian Congo and South America, the latter in fellowship with Mennonite Brethren refugees. This situation continued until 1937/38 when most German missionaries were required by the Nazi Government to return to Germany.

In 1937 the same government ordered the exclusive assemblies to register or cease to exist. So most of the 'exclusive' assemblies joined together with the 'open' ones and formed the 'Fellowship of Free Church Christians'. This was followed in 1940 by the union of the Baptist Churches with the Free Church Christians, in the 'Fellowship of Evangelical Free Churches'.

After the return of religious freedom, following the Second World War, three branches of the Brethren movement developed in Germany.

- 1 A number of exclusive Brethren returned to their old exclusive practices.
- 2 A second group called the 'Free Brethren Group' left the fellowship with the Baptists and now consist of about 120 assemblies and a number of house groups with their own activities, eg their own magazine '*Wegweisung*', young people's work, children's work, home missions (tents and mobile halls) with about 20 brethren in full time ministry. In addition they have about 10 missionaries in Japan, Zaire and Brazil and are supporting national assemblies and full time workers in Portugal, Italy and East European countries.
- 3 The remainder of the Brethren stayed within the Fellowship of Evangelical Free Churches.

Another activity which has developed within the Brethren movement is the *Zentral-Afrika-Mission* (Central Africa Mission) under the leadership of Martin Vedder. Their main ministry is the distribution of Emmaus Bible Correspondence Courses and other Christian literature in the francophone areas of Africa. They have no missionaries from Germany but support national workers.

Most of these activities in the area of foreign missions had their beginning or motivation through the developments in the Bible School in Wiedenest just after the Second World War and especially through the ministry of Ernst Schrupp.

After freedom had returned to the country and the support of missionaries became possible, a new vision developed among Brethren assemblies concerning their responsibility for foreign missions. So missionaries went to Austria (1952), Nigeria (1952), Japan (1954), Pakistan (1955) and Tanzania (1957). Later on others were led to Nepal (1958), Brazil (1958), Argentina (1958), Afghanistan (1968), Italy and recently to France. There are at present about 110 missionaries in these countries, mainly working in fellowship and cooperation with existing Brethren assemblies or in cooperation with evangelical missions like the International Nepal Fellowship in Nepal and the International Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. In addition, individual friends and assemblies are supporting via 'Wiedenest' the ministry of national workers and assemblies in Italy, Spain, Argentina, Brazil and East European countries.

Growth of Structure

During these 35 years certain structures have emerged which were not consciously planned but developed out of the desire and conviction of the churches which had commended workers, the missionaries themselves and the Brethren in Wiedenest, who see their ministry as a coordinating one.

Representatives from all churches supporting missionaries meet once a year in our 'General Meeting'. There are about 180 assemblies and

churches represented and an additional number of friends and former missionaries. Out of these 200 about 20 are elected to form a 'Council of Brethren' (*Bruderrat*) which meets at least three times a year to interview missionary 'candidates', hear financial reports, and make decisions about bigger projects and concerning the teachers of the Bible School and other 'staff members'. From the Council of Brethren an executive committee (*Vestiband*) is elected, usually comprising seven brethren, three of them from the school or the *Missionshaus* and four external ones. This council meets about four times a year and is kept informed about the work on the mission fields, the school etc.

Another way of fellowship and cooperation has developed between churches supporting missionaries in a particular country. A number of brothers and sisters from these different churches meet with missionaries on furlough about once a year for a whole day when reports of the work are given and many aspects can be discussed in detail.

In the area of finance the principle is that churches having commended workers are informed about their financial need. Missionaries and projects have an internal account and all earmarked gifts are used only for that purpose. There are no deductions made for the administration etc, but all 'staff members' trust that God will provide for them what is needed. Resources are pooled, eg if churches cannot fully support their missionaries, gifts received for free distribution are used to make up such deficits. It is possible for assemblies and churches not having commended someone of their own fellowship to 'adopt' a missionary or a family after a time of fellowship and opportunity to get to know each other and find the basis of fellowship and cooperation.

Evangelical Cooperation

The Wiedenest Bible School has from the very beginning cooperated with the Evangelical Alliance. Men like Johannes Warns and Erich Sauer were members of the general council of the German Evangelical Alliance. This practice was continued after the Second World War, and Wiedenest as *Missionshaus* and Bible School is a member of the Association of Evangelical Missions and cooperates in the postgraduate School for Missions (*Freie Hochschule für Mission*) in Korntal and *Hilfe für Brüder* (Help for the Brethren) which is a fund for evangelicals and their projects in evangelism, church planting and theological training.

Generally speaking it could be said that there is a new missionary interest among evangelical young people in Germany, not only in foreign missions but also concerning the challenge of our own country and Western Europe. There was a time when 'development' in third world countries and social responsibility were considered as having priority, but

this has changed during the last five or six years so that we hope that many of the areas in our own country without evangelical churches or Brethren assemblies can be reached within the next three or four years, and that a number of those called can be commended and supported for their ministry in Western Europe.

In the area of finance there has been a slow but steady growth in the giving of individuals and churches which we have received in Wiedenest. We do not solicit any gifts, and financial needs are only made known to local churches concerning 'their' missionary and his work. At the request of the annual meeting we give information once a year, usually in the autumn, about the current financial situation.

Our magazine '*Offene Türen*' is published bi-monthly, and each number has a theme, eg 'Literature in Evangelism' or 'Gospel and Culture' or 'Teaching and Training'. The circulation of '*Offene Türen*' is about 12,000.

At the beginning of every month we publish a 'prayer letter' which is sent to about 7000 people. In addition to this, of course, each missionary has his own prayer letter sent to his local church, and to his friends.

In all our ministries it is our desire to fulfil the Lord's command concerning evangelism and teaching in Matthew 28:18-20 and 2 Timothy 2:2 and in so doing we have close fellowship and cooperation with all Brethren churches in other countries, and, where necessary and possible, fellowship and cooperation with other evangelical churches and institutions.

3 SPANISH CHRISTIAN BRETHERN ASSEMBLIES AND THEIR MISSIONARY AWARENESS

Terry Wickham

A Few Facts and Figures

After twelve years of democratic government, there have been great changes in Spanish society, in spite of the severe economic crisis. Among these we must mention the total religious freedom we now enjoy under the 1977 Constitution. The population of Spain is now nearly 40 millions, of which still 98% are nominal Roman Catholics. The evangelical minority of 55–60,000 represents less than one half of 1%. There is an evangelical testimony in only about 500 of the more than 8,000 towns and cities of over 5,000 population. Paul Thompson, Spain-team field director for Worldteam Mission, says that 'in 16 of Spain's 50 provinces there are less than 100 believers'. At the same time, according to David Frank who works with Greater Europe Mission in Spain, 'some 170 cults are proselytising and are doing quite well'. He goes on to say that 'Spaniards are not necessarily spiritually hungry, but spiritually curious'.

There are between 110 and 120 assemblies of Christian Brethren, mostly small, totalling 8–10,000 members. We are no longer the largest evangelical grouping; this is now the Gypsy Pentecostal church with about 250 churches and more than 12,000 members.

Brethren assemblies are served by about 70 national workers, of whom 55 are on the list of the Evangelization Fund (roughly equivalent to *Echoes*) and 46 foreign missionaries, of whom about 25 are found on the *Echoes* list or those of similar agencies from USA, Canada or New Zealand.

Missionary Interest in Spanish Christian Brethren Assemblies

Most live assemblies—and, happily, the majority come into that category—are too absorbed in the task of evangelizing their own country, and too limited in resources, to have very much interest in foreign missions. But there are a few honourable exceptions.

1 A group of churches in Barcelona, Madrid and Algeciras, founded by the same evangelist, are very interested in Muslim work and are preparing several married couples for this. The evangelist and his wife (on the EF list mentioned above) spent four months in *Turkey* a few years ago before being expelled by the police.

2 Nurses have gone from one or two assemblies to countries like Equatorial Guinea or Indonesia to help in missionary work, but only for short spells of time.

3 A small number of Spanish young people over the years have gone abroad with Operation Mobilisation teams or on the ships.

The Spanish assemblies, in common with the Independent Evangelical churches and some Baptist churches, support generously disaster or emergency funds set up not only for national emergencies, but also those located overseas. During the last fifteen years much money has been donated for emergencies in Pakistan, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, Mexico, Colombia and El Salvador. In this last case, even though the disaster followed hard on the heels of the previous one, over £9,000 was raised in two months. Many assemblies also support generously agencies like the Leprosy Mission and the United Bible Societies, although this is more likely where the presence of foreign missionaries makes easier the obtaining of information about needs in the world.

International Youth Rallies like SPREE, Mission 80 and Mission '87 have always been well supported by some assemblies. About 400 Spaniards attended Mission '87, and quite a number came from assemblies.

What Spanish Evangelical Churches/Assemblies can Contribute to European and World Mission

Recently, the magazine *Edificación Cristiana*, of which I am the editor, interviewed Baptist pastor José M Martínez, one of Spain's greatest missionary statesmen, and asked him—among many other things—the following question: 'In your opinion, has the moment come when Spanish evangelicals can contribute to the evangelical movement in Europe? To what extent and in what areas can we do so?' He replied: 'I don't think we have much to contribute; in almost every aspect of Christian life and service our European brethren are still ahead of us. But there is one matter in which perhaps we can be useful to them: in ecumenism. The document produced by the World Evangelical Fellowship 'task force', *A Contemporary Evangelical Perspective on Roman Catholicism*, arose from the opposition of the Spanish and Italian Alliances to an attempt by the European Evangelical Alliance to get closer to the Roman Catholic Church (on an official basis). Due to our special knowledge of Catholicism we can help

believers in other countries to see things in the correct perspective and to maintain without qualification their faithfulness to the gospel. Some of our brethren from other countries recognise and are grateful for this.'

What Does the Future Hold for Spanish Assemblies?

I would like to deal first with some negative tendencies, most of which stem from the rife materialism which has overtaken Spain during the last 25 years, and which the advent of democracy has only aggravated—hedonism, religious indifference, ethical mediocrity, which surfaces in the evangelical churches as a lack of basic Christian sanctity and piety. At the same time traditionalism, structural rigidity, coupled with a shallow evangelism often divorced from an exemplary ethical conduct, are plain to see. Evangelical churches in general—and the Brethren assemblies are no exception—display the worst features of European Christendom, highlighted in the Spanish case because we are a tiny, greatly fragmented microcosm of the European macrocosm. Some feel that religious freedom has arrived too late in the day for us ever to be able to evangelize Spain; others feel that it can be done, but only if the Roman Catholic church undergoes a massive reformation.

With regard to the Christian Brethren scene in relation to all this, we may also note:

- 1 An over-concern with secondary matters, which is leading to a clear rift between more traditional and more 'open' assemblies. The influence of foreign missionaries can reinforce these tendencies.
- 2 The increasing polarization, stemming from 1 above, limits fellowship and therefore seriously inhibits united efforts to reach out with the gospel.
- 3 A few assemblies are losing their identity and forgetting—or deliberately ignoring—their roots. Such usually end up in the charismatic camp, becoming stronger in Spain, or become independent or mission churches.
- 4 In many cases evangelistic and pastoral methods are superficial and outdated, palpably unable to cope with the challenges and problems of Christian life and witness in a secular society, eg divorce and marriage, contemporary ethical problems, etc. (It doesn't help to have as elders only men who are busy businessmen, as they haven't the time or the skill for the specialized pastoral and teaching work required to deal with these matters.)

But some very *positive* things are happening amongst the Brethren and other evangelical churches in Spain:

- 1 In some areas, notably Catalunya, the Basque Country, Madrid and Central Spain and Seville, a considerable evangelistic work is on the increase, especially in the big cities or conurbations. New churches are being planted each year and many souls are coming to Christ. The monthly ¼-hour TV 'slot' granted to the evangelical community, in spite of being shown at a very late hour, draws an

average 5 million audience, and an increasing number of people are writing in for help. We are praying for a better hour for this programme, so as to increase the audience still further.

2 Through the Roman Catholic base communities, of which there are many throughout Spain, streams of charismatic renewal are coming from the study of the Bible. Although the hierarchy has this well under control, as usual, we look to God to do a great work through his Word, according to his promise that his Word will 'not return unto Him void' but will accomplish his purposes. We are expecting him to do great things in Spain.

4 THE GENERAL SITUATION AMONG ITALIAN ASSEMBLIES AND THEIR MISSIONARY AWARENESS

Michael Tancredi

The General Situation of the Assemblies

The assemblies in Italy started in Florence over 150 years ago, and from there they spread into most parts of the country. There are now about 200 assemblies. Some are small, some meet in private homes, and some are large with 100 or 200 or more believers in fellowship. It is thought that there are around ten to twelve thousand believers in fellowship in the assemblies today in Italy. A paper circulates among the assemblies called *Il Cristiano*, ie *The Christian*, which was founded exactly one hundred years ago by John S Anderson, a British brother who worked for many years in Italy. A few years ago another publication was started, called *Creedere e Comprendere*, ie *Believing and Understanding*. There are a number of English speaking missionaries associated with the assemblies, some of whom are British. On the whole, however, ever since the beginning, the work has been carried out by Italians. There are now about twenty full time workers supported by the Italian assemblies and six or seven more supported by assemblies abroad.

In addition to the assemblies, there are other Protestant churches such as the Waldensians, Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals and some smaller groups started mainly by Americans since the Second World War.

The Missionary Awareness of the Assemblies Today

Italy is itself a large, needy mission field. There are fifty-seven million inhabitants who, for the most part, do not know the gospel as we know it. Many hundreds of towns and villages have no evangelical testimony and—as far as the Brethren movement is concerned—there are large regions that have not yet been reached.

Because of this, the first concern of the assemblies has always been our own country. The Brethren have always been conscious of their

missionary responsibility towards their fellow citizens. They carried on the work through the years in spite of the suspicion of the Roman Catholic population, and in spite of persecutions coming both from the Catholic Church and from the authorities. These persecutions were suffered especially during the twenty years of the Fascist regime, when many believers were imprisoned and treated unjustly.

Progress of Missionary Activity Since 1945

From the end of the Second World War, the work of the Lord has progressed considerably. During the last forty years the number of assemblies has doubled and new regions have been reached, among which are the islands of Sicily and Sardinia, and the region of the Molise where we are working.

Various factors have contributed to bring about such a progress, for instance:

1 *Religious liberty* which we have been enjoying increasingly during these last forty years.

2 *The widespread use of marquees* by means of which new towns have been reached and new assemblies started, eg at Rimini on the Adriatic coast. The use of marquees has been increasing since the 1960s and about ten are regularly used during the summer months in many parts of Italy, Sicily and Sardinia.

3 *Open air meetings* which have been possible since the end of the Second World War. Through these meetings thousands have been reached with the gospel and some have come to know the Lord.

4 *Radio work* has been increasingly used. At first programmes were broadcast from Tangiers, Morocco, and then from Monto Carlo, but now, as a result of the liberalization of the media, several assemblies have set up their own local radio stations from which they broadcast the gospel for many hours a day. Other assemblies use local commercial stations for short periods each week. Response to the programmes has been encouraging.

5 *The distribution of block calendars* with a daily Bible message. Some of these calendars are prepared by a group of Italian Brethren and others by a Swiss mission. About one hundred thousand of these are distributed to Italian individuals and families each year and they speak to the hearts of many.

6 *The distribution of portions of the scripture*, mainly provided by the Scripture Gift Mission.

(The first New Testament I ever read myself, and by which I came to know the Lord, was in fact an SGM publication!)

7 *Bible camps* which are held in three main centres: in the north near

Turin, in the centre near Florence, and in the south near Foggia. Many children and young people attend these camps yearly to learn about the Word of God, and the results are extremely positive. There is a great need for similar centres in other parts of the country.

We can be thankful for what has been done in past years and is being done in Italy today, but all our efforts are like a drop in the ocean of great spiritual need. The ratio of one believer for approximately every 4700 Italians is a clear indicator.

Suggestions for the Future

Until now, the progress of the assemblies has mainly been due to individual initiative. Some brethren have been full time evangelists while others have had a secular job, and, on occasions, the Lord used women, as in the case of Lydia, the dealer in purple cloth (Acts 16:14), to start a new assembly, as was the case in San Severo.

Today, I believe it is time to consider the possibility of adopting a coordinated plan of action in order to evangelize systematically each town of Italy. The isolated efforts can be praised for what they have been able to achieve, but it is time now to move forward.

I believe that we should get together to pray and fast as the leaders of the church at Antioch did before sending Paul and Barnabas to the mission field (Acts 13:1-4), We need to get together to pray and make plans for the evangelization of our country.

I am well aware that a strategy would not solve all the problems involved in missionary outreach. However, I am convinced it would make a valuable contribution by: encouraging believers to feel more involved in the work of the Lord, both in prayer and in practical support; helping to unite the assemblies, making them realize more fully the oneness of God's family and the reality of the body of Christ; increasing contact and communication between those who hold particular responsibility in this work.

I was therefore thankful when at the annual Brethren conference held at Poggio Ubertini near Florence, in May 1986, two important evangelistic projects were approved by over 150 delegates from all over Italy. The first project concerned southern Italy, in particular the city of Bari. As a result of this decision, an evangelistic campaign was held and several people came to Jesus Christ and a new assembly was formed.

The second project concerned the much neglected region of the Friuli, with the town of Monfalcone, a few miles from the city of Trieste as the centre of this activity. In connection with this project, Dr Giona Prencipe from Genoa and myself have been visiting this region for some time.

Important steps forward have been taken. The few believers scattered in this large region have been encouraged and a little flat has been prepared for use by servants of the Lord who will take turns in ministering there for short periods.

I believe that if we move forward wisely and prayerfully in this direction, similar projects could be carried out in the future in other locations.

Wider Horizons

I said earlier on that the Italian assemblies have always regarded Italy itself as their prime mission field. However, at the same time, we must be ready to go wherever the Lord sends us . . . 'to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8). Last year a girl from Southern Italy, Claudia Pignatelli, went to Indochina as a missionary under the auspices of WEC. An assembly in Northern Italy is supporting a national full time worker in Africa.

Thus missionary awareness is gradually developing and widening its scope.



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