

Editorial

Missions and Missionaries

THE PRESENT PERIOD is a testing time for British missions and missionary societies. It is not just that the lengthy postal strike has resulted, as with other charities, in lower income. That is a temporary problem though an unpleasant one. But before that there were serious financial problems and they have been growing recently. More and more money is needed to keep abreast of present commitments, let alone expand; and the money is not always forthcoming. No doubt there is a certain amount of complacency and lack of missionary dedication, but in our view the problem is more deep-seated than that.

First, there is the very unclear role of the missionary. Among thinking Christians everyone knows the old picture of a missionary with his Bible in hand, his tropical hat, his khaki shorts and walking stick together with the grinning and caricatured cannibal peering out from behind his bush with his spear in evidence and a huge stewpot somewhere in the background; everyone knows that this has gone, but what everyone does not know is what is to replace it, and some even add awkwardly 'if anything'. There are still some obvious missionary society needs, but not all that many. There is the theological teacher with his greater western learning and training still needed to raise the standards of the Asian or African college. There is the western trained doctor or nurse needed for their special training and skill. But how long is there really a future for such people? Some governments of younger countries in their anti-colonialist backlash have virtually turned out all missionaries from the west. That disappoints both the missionaries and western Christians, but it is not necessarily a bad thing. Perhaps it forces a young church to stand on its own feet instead of leaning on its western friends. Then there are those who advocate secular missionaries, men and women going to posts in younger countries specifically to live out Christian lives

there. But then such people can exist without missionary societies. Next there are the same type of Christian people with the same technical skills in medicine, teaching and agriculture, etc. who like to be attached, closely or loosely, to a missionary society. At the lowest level there is an obvious attraction of cheap labour, cheap technical skills, combined with high standards of dedication and integrity, but personal preferences apart, are the missionary societies really needed for such people to work overseas?

When these questions are raised, sometimes a rather too loud and aggressive assertion follows that missionary societies are still needed. That may be so, and we are very willing to believe it, but unless the societies can tell us all clearly and consistently what the role of the modern missionary is and why the societies are still needed, missionary support is not likely to increase or even stay at the present level. The societies have a major educational task on their hands.

Social or evangelistic?

THERE is no hiding the fact that social and political involvement by Christians on a worldscale is currently dividing Christian from Christian. We have written before of the stupidities of the World Council of Churches, and at the present time those stupidities seem rather to be growing than diminishing (now aid to deserters in addition to the race grants). Much of it is publicity seeking, as Professor Paul Ramsey has shown in his perceptive book on the WCC Geneva Conference. Much of it too reflects not the voice of the third world at all, but the voices of a handful of American radicals who dominate in Geneva and who seem to have tired of theology and turned to way out political action instead. It is nothing short of a scandal that they should be allowed to do this in the name of non-Roman Christendom.

But WCC follies apart, there are real problems facing the missionary over political involvement. Some in the younger countries will always be ready to smear the missionaries with colonialist labels whether they deserve them or not, and the nervous missionary can very easily react the other way, seeking to impress his critics by his sympathy with their political aspirations. We have read of missionary spokesmen saying that missionaries must be involved politically. Some missionaries have returned home and launched into passionate campaigning for some political cause. The South African government has been a frequent target for such attacks. How well such people are serving the missionary cause is doubtful, and when a distinguished missionary like the Rev. Colin Morris lashes out over immigration policy on the BBC, he must expect the obvious retorts. Fortunately Mr. Morris had the good sense to withdraw from further programmes before anything serious happened. It so happens that we agreed with some

of Mr. Morris' criticisms, but whether the BBC ought to allow Christians to use religious broadcasting time to make controversial or tendentious political views known to a vast public is doubtful. Christians are not of one mind about these political matters.

Probably the most contentious issue of all is aid to poorer countries. It has become very fashionable and high sounding for Christians from Archbishops downwards to advocate giving percentages of our national income to poorer countries. This is said to be our Christian duty and to be informing the public conscience in a Christian way. Such arguments are pathetic oversimplifications, for they beg theological, political and economic questions. When this is pointed out, not infrequently the claim comes back that aid is not a political issue in Britain because it is not in any one political party's manifesto. To reduce politics to what is in election manifestoes is absurd. Christians (and others) on the political left and on the political right are equally, though for different reasons, critical of aid in terms of grants to poorer countries. Aid is a complex and highly controversial economic, political and theological issue. We do not propose to write further of it here, save to point out that missionary societies which get involved political action and certain political lines must inevitably divide their own supporters and friends, and seemingly the result will be to the detriment of the societies and their cause. One of the basic questions here is that of first principles. Are the missionary societies there to preach the Gospel primarily or to become vaguely Christianised welfare and cheap labour organisations to help the needy? Of course it is not a clear either-or, but it is a question of emphasis and basic priority. In our view the missionary societies today need to educate Christians on the role of modern missionaries and to keep out of controversial political activities. Perhaps it is worth asking if the decline in missionary evangelistic outreach is not due to theological deficiencies and whether concentrating on social concerns is not an easy way out.

We write here not as a missionary specialist but as a concerned observer. If others have other views, we are always glad to consider contributions on the missionary front.

Missionary Studies

BY contrast with the problems and shortcomings above, it is pleasant to record that serious missionary writing is increasing. Some missionary societies (and it is to be feared that the most evangelical ones are the worst offenders) have not got beyond the vision of home literature as very simple 'challenging' support-rousing material, but two major missionary studies have just made their appearances. First, *The Concise Dictionary of Christian World Mission* edited by Stephen

Neill, Gerald Anderson and John Goodwin, Lutterworth, 682 pp., £3.50, is accurately described by its title. It is indeed a pioneering work, but a successful piece of basic study on which others can now build. The book spans the period from 1492 to the present time, and it reflects the labours of over two hundred experts. It covers people—missionaries, missionary writers, etc.—particular countries and particular missions, theological issues from polygamy (very much a missionary problem) to predestination (rather less successfully treated in an article scarcely relating to missions). It might have been wiser to include more missionaries and less potted theology. Particular types of missions, e.g. industrial ones, are written up, and there are short articles on other religions. Most articles have short bibliographies and all are signed. It is an excellent work, and we wish it the widest possible success.

The second major work is Gordon Hewitt's *The Problem of Success*, SCM, 506 pp., £5.00. This is volume 1 of a new CMS history covering the period of 1910-1942 and the areas of Tropical Africa, the Middle East and Home base. This is the start to the continuation of E. Stock's famous three volume work to which a fourth volume was later added. The title is apt, for there were many problems stemming from the very success and immense missionary growth in the nineteenth century. But not all the problems stemmed from success. Without being unfair to other Anglican missionary bodies, the lead always came from the evangelicals, but it is not surprising that with the inroads of liberalism groups of evangelicals began to fear that the cutting edge of their message would be blunted. That was the origin of the trouble which led to the CMS-BCMS split. This is described at the end of the book but Hewitt does not really tell us enough about the issues involved, and what people really feared was happening. Our impression is that the CMS committees, though in a difficult position, could have done more to prevent the split by better understanding what was at stake. Perhaps too many of them were committed to certain pressure groups, and it is a pity that not enough distinction was made between the inflammatory but much less permanent question of ritualism and the very much more serious matter of biblical authority. On the latter liberalism had made serious inroads into CMS and has remained there ever since.

What of CMS on the field? Canon Hewitt notes the gradual decline in the 'adventist' approach to mission 'Act as though it is the last hour', though it has never completely gone. The liberal impact and divide he frankly admits, but his period stops short of the anti-colonial reactions and also stops short of the modern study of the theology of mission. It is impossible to treat every section adequately here, so we must just pick out a few points in this major study which is a must for any serious missionary reader. In West Africa, for instance, missionaries often felt that British rule favoured Islam; this

is fully discussed on pp. 71-88. In East Africa the break up of the German territories presented political problems. Again Islam was a major enemy. Work in the Middle East was on a smaller scale. Again the work amongst Muslims was slow and hard, not helped by the apparent apathy of the ancient Christian churches who showed little interest in missionary zeal. The outlook and negative actions of the ancient Orthodox churches is a very black chapter in Christian history.

Methodist Friends

THOUGH *The Churchman* is an Anglican journal, it is part of our policy to take an interest in all our fellow Christians, and recently the Methodists in particular since the Church of England and the Methodist Church have been discussing a reunion. One factor that has impressed itself on us as an outside observer of Methodism is how incredibly Methodism is dominated from the central bureaucracy with the obvious consequence that any Methodist minority group that falls foul of those who control the central Methodist machine is in for a pretty rough time. There seems very little in the way of powerful independent Methodist organisations to exercise a counterbalancing influence. Accordingly we welcome the news of the foundation of an association of conservative evangelicals in Methodism with the Revd. Howard Belben as its first chairman. There does not seem to be an office address but the press announcement was signed by the Revd. Dr. A. Skevington Wood of Cliff College, Calver, Sheffield, England. That release states that CEIM hope to hold an annual conference, to co-ordinate evangelical witness within the denomination, and at the same time to work with the existing Methodist Revival Fellowship to promote spiritual renewal.

We venture two hopes for CEIM in addition to our general welcome. First, we hope that it will not stand aloof as a partisan pressure group but rather will work together with others in Methodism (and elsewhere) who perhaps could not sign the CEIM Evangelical Alliance basis of faith but nevertheless have a substantial agreement with CEIM's aims. This we think to be important partly because it will demonstrate against the inevitable critics that CEIM is concerned for the good of all Methodism not merely sectional interests, and partly because in plain terms of ecclesiastical politics a series of small independent Methodist groups (MRF, CEIM, Voice of Methodism, National Liaison Committee) will exercise no influence unless they work together for common ends. Second, the adjective conservative was probably inevitable since many other Methodists would doubtless claim to be evangelical in varying senses, but we believe it nonetheless undesirable. Evangelicals are evangelicals (we did try to explain what this meant in a

Churchman article republished in *Churchmen Speak*, Marcham, 1966) and they do not need epithets in addition. In England the adjective conservative is often used, in America they have added to this the concept of neo-evangelicalism. We do not think this trend helpful, and the sectarian adjective could lead to charges of sectarianism which are alien to true evangelical spirit. For real evangelicals have always been churchmen, because taking the evangel seriously means taking the church seriously, something which it cannot always be claimed that some 'evangelicals' have perceived clearly in recent years.

Quakers

DR. Elizabeth Isichei's Oxford thesis *Victorian Quakers* (Oxford, xxvi + 326 pp., £3.25) fills an important gap in the study of Victorian religion. It is likely to interest Evangelicals particularly. When her study starts, Quaker quietist leaders are ageing and despite their dislike of evangelicalism, that movement was making rapid progress within Quakerism, spearheaded by leaders like J. J. Gurney whom to quietist Shillitoe had not thrown off his Episcopalian rags (p. 21). One effect of the evangelical impact on the Quakers was to draw them out of their isolationism, their quaint dress, their rigorist views of Quaker-only marriages, etc. Gurney and his fellow Quaker evangelicals had numerous friends among Anglicans, and many of them contemplated leaving the Friends at one time or other. Some actually did leave. But what brought Quakerism to its knees was not the older quietism, with respect, almost veneration, for Fox and even more Barclay, but liberal theology. It is true there had always been a neo-Unitarian, if not actual Unitarianism, strain in the Friends. The Manchester area was strong in this heretical aspect. This strain within the Friends prepared the ground for liberal leaders like Worsdell and later J. W. Rowntree. Their liberalism spread like wildfire, and is no doubt responsible for the almost total absence of evangelicalism from the Friends today. These Quaker theological differences are reflected in various schisms, the Beaconite (Crewdson) evangelical schism in the 1830s, the Fritchley quietist schism 30 years after, and the liberal seceders a decade later. All are capably described in chapter two.

Geographically the Quakers were strongest in the central north, the west midlands, and north eastern Home Counties. They were middle class, with a few wealthy aristocrats. During the Victorian era they emerged from isolation, received a good press from outsiders largely due to their philanthropy (just as later Salvationists are still remembered for their Soup Kitchens rather than their Gospel). They had their social shifts. When a Quaker got into Parliament, they soon changed their anti-political stance, and almost as it were in return they took up in a large measure fashionable teetotalism.

Dr. Isichei has written a good book, based on much careful research. Her faults: she is not always too good on theology, e.g. some rather sweeping remarks on the liberal critics of conservative soteriology. I noticed no reference to the fascinating Victorian Quaker attempt to help Spanish Protestants, associated with Benjiman Whiffen, and the maddeningly inadequate index prevented any careful checking. In such a detailed study a much more thorough index is essential for scholarly use. And a very un-OUP-like misprint (*dcotrine, sic*) appears as early as page 4.

Reflecting on Quaker theology, a Reformed evangelical finds it hard to muster much sympathy: an untenable spiritualising of the sacraments, a basically arrogant doctrine of the inner light which went so far as to prevent Bible reading and family prayer (p. 24) so as to avoid quenching the inner light of God (hard to imagine a much more misguided piety than that), yet for a while many Quakers were evangelicals, though they were always uneasy Quakers and usually looked at askance by non-evangelical Quakers. In the light of this it behoves evangelicals to examine their Quaker history, but at least one reader may perhaps be forgiven for feeling that Quakers have now largely reverted to type, a semi-Christian group lacking most of the essentials of evangelical faith. If other readers doubt that, they can at least thank Dr. Isichei for being able to examine in detail a period of religious history during part of which Quakers were at their most evangelical.

Authorised Version

AN important discovery for the history of the Bible in English is the finding of John Bois's notes on the final revision of the Authorised Version in Corpus Christi College library, Oxford. The finder, Professor Ward Allen, has edited them in *Translating for King James*, (Penguin, 155 pp., £3.50). He says the book is aimed at the popular and the specialist market, though it is likely to meet the latter rather more. The introduction describes the find, what its significance is, and whether the notes are authentic. The text is photostated on the left hand page, transcribed (and foreign languages translated for the ordinary reader) on the right. The notes cover the translation of early Romans through to Revelation, and two appendices give a list of references cited and Anthony Walker's brief life of Bois. The chief character appearing in the notes is Andrew Downes, Bois's own tutor. The book is carried through with scholarly editing, despite the irritating references to Bois as Fr. Bois (which makes one think he is a Roman Catholic!). The notes themselves reveal scholarly care in linguistics, cross-referencing to the classics, to the Fathers, especially Chrysostom, and the use of contemporary dictionaries and lexicons.

Thirty-Nine Articles

CHURCH Society have recently produced a valuable study course for churches. It is entitled *The Faith We Hold* and is written by O. R. Johnston, who earlier wrote the highly successful Marcham study guide *God's World* (on Conservation). The new guide is available in two forms, leader's version and student's, and prices vary with quantity. The basis of the guide is the 39 Articles, and that is to be welcomed, for it is high time that this brief confession of faith was widely studied instead of being a wrangling ground between clergy of differing traditions.

Designing your Notepaper

A GOOD many readers must be involved in getting letterheads printed up, selecting envelopes, etc. both for themselves and for church organisations. Few small organisations can afford a professional designer, but those who want to use the contemporary international paper sizes and their related envelopes will find 80p. well invested in the British Standards Institution's Specifications for Sizes and Recommended Layouts of Commercial Forms (BS 1808 Part 1 Letterheads and forms). It is of course a technical document, but it will show you how to lay out the type in an efficient and attractive way, and how to get the address area exactly right so that it will fit a window envelope. The last alone will save those who write many letters a lot of envelope addressing. We think this booklet should be in every society's office, and a good many churches would find it to their advantage too.

Church Unity in England

ALL our articles in this number are related to church unity, and they centre round two main issues. First, admission to communion, a subject on which the Keele NEAC Conference said one or two unusual things for evangelicals, and a subject on which a Church of England commission is soon to report. Second, the Anglican-Methodist union scheme which will be before the General Synod in some form or other this July, the precise form being uncertain at the time of writing. For ourselves we have from the start believed this particular union scheme, with its ambiguous service of reconciliation, misconceived and seriously wrong in theology, but we do believe in a united church, and we further believe that the South Indian method of union is both right in principle and, despite some initial and formidable problems, in Britain probably the most practical. That is our own position, but as the Bishop of Derby points out in his article both scorn and abuse have

been cast at those who criticised the scheme and sought to suggest alternatives. Accordingly it seems that churchmen need to control their emotions somewhat and look again at the real issues involved. That is why we have included an article from a Methodist minister who is concerned that Anglicans should appreciate what actually happened within Methodism and what some Methodists think. That is why we have included Mr. Wansey's article asking if union is really the right goal after all. In *Theology* last year Professor Macquarrie raised much the same issue as Mr. Wansey. Those of us who do believe in the concept of organic unity will have to think out again our reply. But the important thing is that the questions are raised and faced seriously, not laughed out of court or dismissed as un- or anti-ecumenical. And even if we are convinced of organic unity, there remains the question the late Professor Ian Henderson left uncomfortably with us, that of power politics within ecumenism. Now is a time for serious rethinking within a framework of Christian charity and mutual understanding. It is not a time for tearing ahead each with our own favourite ideas, without regard for the views of others, or even worse regarding them as against the mind of God.

Open Table

LAST February the General Synod made a memorable decision in reasserting a traditional Church of England viewpoint. What used to be called occasional hospitality at the Lord's Table, has now been reasserted. Some have already attributed this to the new Synod membership. That may be partly so, but much more likely is the steady pressure that was building up in the old Church Assembly, especially the House of Laity. Baptised communicants are now to be *welcomed* (not grudgingly admitted as previously proposed) to communion within the Church of England, and that decision is right theologically, pastorally, historically and ecumenically. Certainly let the fears of Anglo-Catholics that confirmation discipline would break down be met so long as the theological principle is maintained, and the practical action not impeded by giving ministers or bishops a discretion in the matter. That has often been a convenient way out of problems but it is no solution here when major theological issues and the doctrine of the church are at stake.

Latimer House

THE Council of Latimer House, Oxford are offering some financial rewards (first prize £60, another of £40, down to ten of £5) for essays on the future of the Church of England, and ideas designed to promote its

renewal. The intention is to discover new talent and unearth fresh writers. Intending essayists must submit their work by the end of November 1971, and the essays can be of any length from a magazine article up to a 20,000 word small book, but the Council intend to encourage the larger works most. The field of choice for subject has deliberately been left very wide, but sectarian contributions are not desired or expected. There is no restriction on the writer's viewpoint, nor is membership of the Anglican Communion required of an author, but a sympathetic understanding of the principles of the Reformation is expected. Those interested in this new venture should contact the Warden, Latimer House, 131 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7AJ, and he will be glad to send full details and particulars.