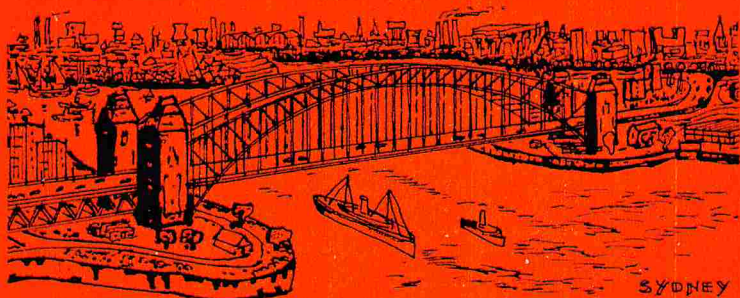


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**NUMBER 9**

**SPRING 1972**

## **LIVERPOOL 1973**

### **Third Carey Conference for ministers**

Plans have been made for a conference to be held at the University of Liverpool from January 9-12, 1973. Further details to be announced. It is our conviction that this will be a timely conference, designed to build up and encourage those in the ministry and deal with major issues which confront us today. The cost will be between £10 and £11. The booking fee is £2.

## **PILGRIM HALL. SUSSEX 1972**

### **Carey House Party**

A family conference has been arranged to take place at Pilgrim Hall from July 31 to August 5, 1972. It would be advisable to write for details immediately if you are interested. Pastor Wayne Mack of U.S.A. will be the guest speaker. Biographical material will be provided by Robert Oliver, Douglas Jones and Dr. Jack Milner. Two or three sessions will be devoted to practical issues, Bernard Honeysett speaking on the responsibility of church membership and Wayne Mack on the subject of the Sabbath. The evening sessions are open to the public and will be devoted to preaching, Wayne Mack, David Kingdon and Erroll Hulse contributing. Care is being taken that a high standard of ministry will be provided for the children at their intake level. The afternoons to be free.

Information in regard to both these conferences is available from John Rubens, Mattaniah, Ditchling Road, Wivelsfield, Sussex.

# The State of Evangelicalism

PAUL'S COUNSEL TO TIMOTHY IN REGARD TO THE FUTURE, "WHEN THEY will not endure sound doctrine", was that he should concentrate on preaching, on the reproof of error, and exhortation, with patience and doctrine.<sup>1</sup> Evangelicalism today is weak in the area of preaching, shallow in doctrine, and impatient when it comes to reproof. The major denominations have long since succumbed to Liberalism, and many churches which remain evangelical are characterised by lack of teaching and discipline. In the interview article, "Israel Today", familiar weaknesses of evangelicalism in Western countries can be discerned.

Is there anything more important for the world than the presence of strong evangelical churches? A spiritually powerful church in any locality is a source of light and preservation. As Wayne Mack points out in this issue, the cults flourish where churches fail. Stuart Fowler, in dealing with trends in our universities, speaks of society being swept into the abyss. The best deterrent, surely, to such a disaster is the presence of churches where those of all age groups are built up in the Faith. Unfortunately, too often students (and not a few nurses) content themselves with adherence to Christian Unions. "C.U.s" have their merits, but they are never churches. In most cases syncretism prevails, a mixture of beliefs, but no integrated framework of theology which students so desperately need in an anti-Christian atmosphere. Unhappily the ministry in local churches is often shallow and students are not helped as they ought to be.

The following features indicate part of the weakness which characterises evangelicalism today.

## 1. Low Standards of Doctrine illustrated by the Baptist Union

Poor doctrinal standards mark the Baptist Union at this time. The January issue of the *Evangelical Times* (1972) argues that the Baptist Union has become comprehensive. This is documented by reference to events following the public denial of the divinity of Christ by Rev. Michael Taylor, Principal of the Northern Baptist College. David Kingdon for this editorial<sup>2</sup> comments by pointing out that the Baptist Union has been deliberately comprehensive since the Downgrade controversy of 1887-88, but now, since the refusal of the Baptist Union Council in March 1971 to repudiate a public denial of the deity of Christ, its comprehensiveness is clearly without any real limit whatsoever. He goes on to say, "Despite its reaffirmation of the Declaration of Principle (not, in any case, to be regarded as a credal statement), which

describes our Lord as 'God manifest in the flesh', the real issue has been hidden behind a smoke-screen of words. The right to continue in fellowship of a person who clearly and unequivocally denies the deity of Christ is upheld as an example of 'Christian' tolerance".

It ought to be apparent to every thinking Christian that this sad affair illustrates the hopelessness of basing inter-church fellowship on anything less than a full confession of faith. Unfortunately we have yet to be persuaded that this lesson has been learned by those who are concerned to form an Association of Evangelical Baptist Churches, for churches and ministers that have left, or will leave, the Baptist Union. During January over a hundred ministers gathered in London to see what could be done to form such an association. Some came away from the meeting greatly distressed. To their amazement objection was taken by some, admittedly a minority present, to the doctrine of eternal punishment. Yet this was the chief issue raised by Spurgeon in the Downgrade controversy! How far has so-called evangelicalism "progressed" that the pernicious doctrine of annihilationism is now allowed to be a valid option in some circles! (e.g. The Evangelical Alliance whose doctrinal basis was recently altered to allow room for annihilationists within its membership).

We earnestly hope that those responsible for drawing up the confession of faith will frame one which *unambiguously* spells out the meaning of the faith once delivered to the saints! It is not sufficient, for example, to affirm "The Sovereignty of God in Redemption, Creation, Revelation and final Judgment", if this can be read in either a Calvinistic or Arminian way. Some may demur at what they regard as our pernicketytness (hyper-scrupulosity), but we are persuaded that compromise here opens the door to the very attitudes which are productive of so much of the weakness of present-day evangelicalism.

## **2. A Turning to Neo-mysticism**

The trend towards neo-mysticism among evangelicals is considerable. A letter from overseas describes the decline in substance of the preaching of a minister who, with some members of his flock, concentrated on a quest for spiritual gifts. After some time the minister asked for a holiday: three months later he returned and resigned. In the meantime the church was sadly divided, confused and ill-fed.

The subject is delicate. Disparagement of effort to seek the Holy Spirit's blessing must be avoided. On the other hand the watchman on the walls of Zion must warn against the spurious and discern between the false and the true. What can be done to prevent believers embarking on a course which many have found unprofitable, unbalanced and unscriptural?

We must first ensure that we have a full and satisfactory doctrine of the Holy Spirit and that we experience His power ourselves. The thorough treatment given to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit by writers

such as Owen, Goodwin, Buchanan, Smeaton, Kuyper, Winslow and Palmer of our own day, stands in strong contrast to writings by neomystics. To start with, the Godhead, holiness and majesty of the Person of the Holy Spirit is to be understood and experienced. He is not just an essence to be tapped and utilised according to the measure of our effort. He is the sovereign God who moves at His own discretion. His work is vast and sublime and includes the creation of the universe; the inspiration of the Bible; the birth, anointing and resurrection of Christ; regeneration and sanctification of the believer and the creation and sustenance of the Church. The work of the Spirit traced out in history is an exercise of great profit.<sup>3</sup> The Holy Spirit works in different ways in history. He is sovereign and omnipotent in the bestowal of miraculous powers such as were received by Moses, by Elijah and by the apostles. Others like Abraham, Jeremiah and John the Baptist did not have the same experiences but their testimonies are no less profitable on that account. Daily we should seek the filling of the Holy Spirit in all aspects of our lives. Preachers should evidence the unction of the Holy Spirit in every sermon.

Secondly, we should be clear and specific at vital points. Jonathan Edwards in *Charity and its Fruits* proceeds directly to the crucial matter of distinguishing between the ordinary and the extraordinary. The apostolic office and the gifts that accompanied the apostolic age were extraordinary. Edwards shows that, "the ordinary influence of the Spirit of God, working the grace of charity in the heart, is a more excellent blessing than any of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit". If any be tempted to think that Edwards did not know much about the power of the Holy Spirit in revival let them read *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of many hundred souls, in Northampton, and the Neighbouring Towns and Villages of New Hampshire*.

The orthodox view held by men such as Edwards has been expressed by contemporary theologians such as Anthony A. Hoekema who hold that there is no injunction in the New Testament for the continued exercise of the miraculous or spectacular gifts of the Spirit, whereas the Church is frequently enjoined to continue to exercise the non-miraculous gifts of the Spirit—like teaching, exhorting, ruling, giving and showing mercy. It has been pointed out where the qualifications of officebearers are given, no mention is made of the miraculous gifts of the Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

Now there are some who believe wholeheartedly in Reformed theology but who find themselves unconvinced by the arguments of, say, Jonathan Edwards in his *Charity and its Fruits* and who cannot go all the way with Hoekema.<sup>5</sup> While they admit that the apostles have ceased and with them the need for mighty signs to attest apostleship, they feel that the Scriptures are not clear as to the cessation of the spiritual gifts. They will also concede that the case to prove the continuance of these gifts from history is forced and weak. The greatest preachers such as Whitfield were filled gloriously with the Holy Spirit, day after day, but there

is not so much as a sentence from them laying claim to special spiritual gifts.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless some feel that it may some day please the Spirit to give these again and so we should keep our minds open. As this question is debated it seems that men like Hoekema have more authority than those who waver; because the orthodox argue on the grounds of Biblical theology as a whole, whereas the others seem to follow the line that if you cannot produce a proof-text that settles the matter.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, claims of inspiration whether by prophecy or glossalia must be examined and scrutinised.

It seems strange that there should be such a stress on glossalia. Why always tongues? When we read of Roman Catholics receiving the gift of tongues while praying to Mary<sup>8</sup> it would certainly seem that careful examination is required. Luther faced the problem of special inspiration, and when he saw that it was being used to endorse false teaching, he used the word *Schwarmerei* (enthusiasm) to deride the idea of superior inner illumination. We who do not have the boldness and unction of Luther do well to combine love with firmness as we test special claims. Scrutiny is not to be confined to happenings, or phenomena, that appear. The constructions placed upon such experiences must be thoughtfully considered. For instance, some claim that they have experienced the same experience as the disciples at Pentecost. At Pentecost there was wind, fire, filling with the Spirit, and intelligible languages. We have claims today of the same "baptism". But where is the wind, the fire, the subsequent works of mighty power in turning the world upside down, and intelligible languages?

### 3. Worldly Standards in Services

From Australia we have a report of a large evangelistic rally. This was Melbourne's greatest youth sing session so far, sponsored by evangelicals. The Mill Valley Wranglers, the Porter Triplets and the Outreach Singers performed with great zest.

Recently, I was asked to preach at a meeting arranged by evangelicals in which the first part consisted of entertainment from singers and their electronic equipment modelled on the Beatle style. Mini-skirted girls gyrated and wiggled as voluptuously as you would find on any south sea island—to the songs of Jesus! When I got up to preach, I was not surprised to find the Holy Spirit absent and the atmosphere more like that of a night club than a Christian meeting.

Where do we draw the line? From Canada a correspondent writes about the musical *Godspell*, now showing in London, where it has been acclaimed by the Archbishop.<sup>9</sup> He says: "A current hit is a musical play *Godspell*. Its songs are hitting the top ratings. Many churches are being sucked in to sing its songs and even have the play. Some of the words are not too bad, but I heard the writer on the T.V. who, when asked by David Frost if he believed in the things he wrote about, said, "Good ——— NO! Religion is popular and it's a good money maker.

In fact I am now working on another Myth from another world religion". Pressure is often applied to introduce entertainment or gimmicks into services on the grounds that this is the only way to get the people in. But we know of contemporary churches where numbers of young people of the non-intellectual type, complete with their up-to-date status symbols, have been converted through expository preaching without entertainment of any kind.

#### **4. Uncritical Approval of the Jesus Revolution**

The need for careful thought in regard to worship, experiences, music, art and culture should be obvious. It would seem that the most elementary factors are forgotten. The Jesus Revolution is an example.

Billy Graham has agreed with a Roman Catholic theologian in the statement that, "America is on the verge of the greatest religious revival in history".<sup>10</sup> He has acclaimed the Jesus Movement by pointing to ten marks which he regards as encouraging. Now the evangelist may have said these things because he does not want these young people to be "turned off". Generally speaking they have no time for the bourgeois society and think churches a waste of time. Our sympathies with some of these sentiments, particularly disillusionment with materialism, have been discussed in detail before.<sup>11</sup> We ought to do all we can for them and it would be charitable to read Billy Graham's statements in that way. On the other hand uncritical approval of the Jesus Revolution can be disastrous. Individuals known to us have given up constructive, disciplined lives to become virtual tramps living off charity in the name of Jesus.

Hence the urgency to think about the issues carefully. We may revolt against society and the Church, but revolution, unless it has a positive programme, is negative and destructive. Protest alone achieves little. Hospitals, schools, universities, factories, government, and a thousand other institutions may not be to our liking but the Scriptures are quite clear as to our responsibilities within society. If we are not willing to work then we are not entitled to eat.<sup>12</sup>

In an article, "The Jesus Freaks and their Groovy God", Gary North shows he has thought deeply about the Jesus Revolution.<sup>13</sup> He points to the fact that most Americans seem to suffer from lawless offspring in an ethos which has paid much attention to passing exams but has neglected the development of character. Instant gratification, irrational will and the denial of systematic thought and planning are much in evidence. This is ideal soil, says Gary North, for Jesus Freakdom. "They roam in unshaven packs handing out tracts, mumbling about 'full gospel preaching' and spiritual revolution". They are premillennial dispensationalists in their view of the future and as a leading dispensationalist once said, "you don't polish brass on a sinking ship". This world is on its way to total destruction. It follows, as North shows, that we say, "Good-bye libraries, so long architecture, see you around art, history is bunk!". The answer according to the Freaks is communal living, "Good vibra-

tions", and Jesus Rock music. North's positive solution is that the Freaks be confronted "with orthodox Christianity before the heat of emotion ends, leaving them with a faith without content, an empty shell—they need to escape from the kingdom of the Freaks just as surely as they needed to escape from the world of drugs".

### What is the Answer?

We have thought about the theological poverty of some present-day Baptists, the comprehensive state of the Baptist Union, neo-mysticism, Gospel "Rock" and the Jesus Freaks. What is the answer? What does our Lord require? The prophet Micah would reply, "To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God".

With quiet determination the work of reformation must be pursued. The building up of believers in the Faith and the establishing of Christian churches is a lifelong task. If one considers the endeavours of Paul and Barnabas during their first missionary journey we will find that they achieved their objective as follows: 1. They made converts by convincing Jews that Jesus had fulfilled the Old Testament promises, and by preaching repentance and faith to the Gentiles. 2. They made provision for the building up of the converts by establishing churches with oversight, discipline and teaching. All that we do should have these ends in view. Every believer should examine himself in regard to his local church. Is he robbing the Lord by denying the Lord's body of those capabilities and gifts which are intended for the Church. The doctrine of the Church is a fundamental question as we consider reformation today.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

<sup>2</sup> The whole of this section regarding the Baptist Union is by David Kingdon.

<sup>3</sup> George Smeaton's exposition, *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, is highly recommended. Banner of Truth Trust, 372 pp. <sup>4</sup> 1 Timothy 3:1-13. Titus 1:5-9.

<sup>5</sup> *What About Tongues Speaking*. A. A. Hoekema. Paternoster, 160 pp.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:28-31.

<sup>7</sup> The doctrine of the Trinity emerges from the Scriptures as a whole, yet the word appears in no single text.

<sup>8</sup> With other people, the beginning comes quietly, gently and effortlessly: with Tom N., it was as he was finishing his rosary; with Rita M., it was while she was singing a hymn at Mass! with Sister M., it came as she knelt in silent prayer to the Blessed Virgin. Colleen W. woke up in the middle of the night and burst into tongues; another person began praying in tongues in his sleep, and was not able to do so consciously until two weeks later, p. 128, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*, by Edward D. O'Conner, C.S.C. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556. \$1.95, 301 pp., pub. 1971. Refs. to Mary, pp. 57 and 169.

<sup>9</sup> Supplies of the 12pp booklet by Jim van Zyl, reviewing and analysing the rock opera, *Jesus Christ—Superstar*, have been renewed. The cost is 5p per copy, to which postage expenses must be added.

<sup>10</sup> Several points are substantiated only by anecdote and most do not stand up to examination. To illustrate the anecdote style of substantiation one could cite an instance of the great improvement in the life of a person since that person embraced Mormonism. Conclusion: Mormonism must be right!

<sup>11</sup> *Reformation Today*, No. 7, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

<sup>13</sup> *Christian News*, June 21, 1971.



*This exposition by Pastor Ian Tait, of Welwyn Evangelical Church, forms the final chapter of a paperback to be published shortly with the title, "The Ideal Church". The eight sections read as follows:*

1. *Missionary Outreach is the Work of God.*
  2. *Missionary Outreach is also the Work of the Church.*
  3. *Missionary Outreach is therefore the Work of every Local Church.*
  4. *The Missionary Call comes to the Local Church.*
  5. *The Sending Body is the Local Church.*
  6. *The Spirit is Lord in the Local Church.*
  7. *A Local Church should expect great things from God.*
  8. *A Local Church should attempt great things for God.*
- Only the first part of this study is included here.*

# Missionary Outreach and the Local Church

## 1. Missionary Outreach is the Work of God

Missionary work was born in the counsels of the Triune God where it was decreed that, by the preaching of the gospel to all people, there should be brought to eternal glory a great multitude which no man could number from every tribe, people, and language. So we read in the *Confession of Bohemia*, published in 1573—sometimes called the *Confession of the Waldenses*—of “the holy Gospel, brought to us from the Privy Council of the Holy Trinity, concerning our Lord Christ, and our whole salvation purchased by Him”. That the gospel should be preached to all nations is as implicit in the new Covenant made in the blood of Christ, as it is explicit in the commands of the risen Christ. As J. H. Bavinck has written in his *Introduction to the Science of Missions*, “If the missionary enterprise is what we have described it to be, then it can have but a single foundation: the gracious good pleasure of God in Christ Jesus”. It was the Father who sent His Son into the world that there might be a gospel to preach; it is God the Son—incarnate, crucified, dead, buried, risen, ascended, and enthroned—who is Himself the gospel. On the rock foundation of who He is, He builds the Church that is both born out of the gospel and commissioned to preach that gospel “to every creature”; and by God the Spirit, promised by the Father, sent by the Son, the disciples were empowered so that “they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following”. And the commission was to be carried out “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”.

Missionary work is the gracious work of the Triune God. If there is a gospel it is the gospel of God; if there is power it is power from on high;

if there is transcendent love it is the love of God; if there is grace it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ; if a door is opened it is—notes Paul —“opened unto me of the Lord”; if a heart is opened, it is of the Lord, as Luke writes of Lydia, “whose heart the Lord opened”; if the intellect is opened it is, as we read of the risen Christ, that “He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures”. History then, is His story. And evangelism is the story of the grace of God in which the Bread of Life pursues the hungry, the Fountain seeks the thirsty, Rest overtakes the weary, the Highway finds the lost traveller, the Light overcomes the darkness, Peace dismisses fear, and the Giver of Law pronounces benediction upon the guilty law-breaker! The ground of all evangelism is God Himself. It was not that Adam sought God. It was God who came saying, “Adam, where art thou?” So Paul quotes Him saying in Isaiah 65:1, “I was found of them that sought Me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after Me” (Rom. 10:20).

Sinners must indeed call on the Name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13-15), but before that they must believe, and before that they must have the truth, and before that a preacher must proclaim it to them, and before he does so, God must send him. And when he arrives—as a Paul to plant or an Apollos to water—only God can make him fruitful, can give the increase. In this work, therefore, men are nothing, relatively speaking. So Paul writes, “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God who gave the fruitfulness”. What then are Paul and Apollos? Just servants by whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to every man (I Cor. 3:5-7). Paul takes no credit, not even for working harder than the others! So in I Cor. 15:10, “. . . by the grace of God I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”.

In the closing chapter of his *Introduction to the Science of Missions*, J. H. Bavinck points out that the first factor of missionary work is, that we know that the missionary enterprise is not a human undertaking, in which we must take into account our forces and counter-forces, but it is the work of Jesus Christ who will gather to Himself, through our instrumentality, a congregation out of every nation.

The origins of missionary outreach are found in the counsels of eternity, in which the Father said to the Son, “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession”. Missionary work is the harvesting of that for which Christ died; it is the work of the Spirit, sent into the world by the Father to bring back a bride for His Son. If the Church is sent to the work it is sent “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”. And the Church *is* sent to the work.

## 2. Missionary Outreach is also the Work of the Church

This is a corollary of the premise that missionary outreach is the work of God, for Christianity is “The Life of God in the Soul of Man”. The Church, and every member of it, is a partaker “of the divine nature” (II Pet. 1:4) of Him who came to “seek and to save that which was lost”. Missionary outreach, therefore, is the indwelling life of the Good Shepherd, driving His people out after those “other sheep” whom He “must also bring” (John 10:16). At Pentecost, where the Church as we know it was brought to birth, it was immediately manifest that missionary outreach is the nature of the Church. Whilst some aspects of Pentecost were unique and critical, the Book of Acts bears record that missionary outreach was a continuing process. Bavinck—complaining of lack of missionary interest—comments that, “people are much too busy with themselves, with questions of their own, with their own confession”. This is part of the Church’s sickness today. But it is more than sickness, it is disobedience, for missionary interest and outreach is commanded. That which is implicit in the nature of the Church is also commanded explicitly by the Head of the Church.

Reformation doctrine rightly stresses both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. If on the first the stress is stronger, it is no plainer than the emphasis on the second. Biblically the two concepts are often taught side by side as in Romans 10 and 11. The best of us “see through a glass darkly”, but our inability to reconcile divine sovereignty and human responsibility is no excuse for our failure to give each its proper place. We are to rest in the power and comfort of the one, and assume the real responsibilities of the other.

The Scriptures do not allow any divorce between the foundation work of the gospel and the preaching of the gospel, as though one may be loved and held without the other. Rather do we read:

“Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

The “death of the Cross” and the “preaching of the Cross” is as a marriage made in heaven. And what God hath joined together let no man put asunder! In the words of the Synod of Dort (1618-19) concerning *The Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby* we read: “Moreover, the promise of the Gospel is that whosoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the Gospel”.

In the agenda of a church, therefore, missionary outreach belongs to “Matters arising” out of the gospel, and not under “Any other business”. It is good that in our doctrinal statements we reiterate that, beyond all

human endeavour, salvation from first to last is the free and sovereign work of God by which countless myriads of people from all nations and languages, each chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world, shall be brought from guilt through grace to glory. But no less plainly should our doctrinal statements affirm that God has bound the Church by a specific commission, by the nature of the gospel, by a compassion for the lost, and by the glory of His grace, to teach and preach the good news that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that this evangelising is to be done by the spoken and written Word, at home and abroad, in season and out of season, by all means consistent with the gospel, and that God commandeth all men everywhere to repent and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.

Paul claimed no credit for a life of missionary outreach. It was his "reasonable service", his bounden duty. "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of," he passionately disclaims (I Cor. 9:16). This was no matter of choice—no carnal enthusiasm or activistic hobby—but of compulsion. "Necessity is laid upon me," he adds. It was a burden of responsibility from which only death or the coming of Christ could separate him, a grief which could find relief only in preaching Christ to the lost! So he feels it as he writes, "Yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel". In the redeeming love of Christ, in the death of the Cross, his heart and mind had found a constraint there was no escaping (II Cor. 5:14). Here he was plunged into a debt he could never begin to repay, but yet must ever be repaying, not as a debtor to his forgiving Lord, but as "debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise . . . I am ready to preach the gospel . . . I am not ashamed of the gospel . . ." (Rom. 1:14-16). He has been put "in trust with the gospel" (I Thess. 2:4). To the Jews at Corinth—blasphemously rejecting the gospel—Paul borrowed from the Old Testament a most fearful idiom and cried, "Your blood be upon your own heads". Again we hear him as, reviewing his faithful ministry at Ephesus, he says to the elders of the Church there, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men". Here are words heavy with what Dr. Oliver Buswell has described as "a solemn, even fearful responsibility".

Paul's was no thoughtless compassion. That the intellect and the heart marched together in the apostle's missionary outreach is made plain in his words that "the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge that if One died for all . . . they which live should . . . live . . . unto Him who died for them, and rose again". Love and judgment went hand in hand. More than that, they went hand in hand with the Word of God. There is a thoughtful missionary compassion that is yet quite bankrupt of doctrine. With Paul the movement of heart and mind into missionary outreach sprang from doctrine. This is plain in II Corinthians 5:14, where the moving doctrine was the doctrine of the Cross, and in many other Scrip-

tures. Perhaps the plainest of these is Romans 8-9. In these chapters—as one ends and the other opens—his teaching of foreknowledge, predestination, calling and justification is followed, first by the comforting deductions of 8:31-39, and then, at 9:3, by the statement that “I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh”. Here, having heaped up the blessings of being in Christ, the apostle to the Gentiles declares that, if it were possible he would willingly forfeit them all—be “accursed from Christ”—if only his Jewish kinsmen might be saved. Now that is missionary-mindedness! Robert Haldane—Reformed theologian and leading founder of the Scottish Baptists—comments on these verses: “In this we may discern a characteristic of a Christian. He who has no sorrow for the perishing state of sinners, and especially of his kindred, is not a Christian. No man can be a Christian who is unconcerned for the salvation of others”.

### **3. Missionary Outreach is therefore the Work of every Local Church**

A local church is a local manifestation of the whole Church. So Paul refers to the Church at Ephesus as “The Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood”. The New Testament does not view the Church in terms of *Visible* and *Invisible*, but in terms of the *Whole* and the *Local*. For an example of the latter distinction: in Matthew 16:18, “I will build My Church” refers to the whole Church, but in 18:17, “tell it unto the Church”, a local church is in view, putting its own house in order. Every church has a two-fold location, spiritual and geographical, so that we find Paul addressing the saints as “in Christ . . . at Colosse”, as “in Christ . . . at Philippi”, and writing to “the Church of God which is at Corinth”.

In the New Testament, for every reference to the *whole* Church there are more than eight references to the *local* church. As for the “visible” and “invisible” distinction, believers in heaven may be invisible to us, but we are not told that they are invisible to each other. On earth the Lord has forbidden His disciples to indulge in invisibility. Rather He has commanded them to declare themselves openly, by baptism, with the lips, and in terms of corporate fellowship. Such fellowship is to be as united as the parts of a healthy physical body, as orderly as the design of a well-planned building, as close as the bonds between the members of an affectionate, disciplined family, and as real as the relationship between a man and his bride. The life and fellowship of the family of God is to be cultivated and demonstrated in local manifestations of that family, each one a microcosm of the whole family. So the Pastoral Epistles are written that we may know “how men ought to behave themselves in the household of God, which is the Church of the Living God . . .” (I Tim. 3:15). In the same chapter the parallel has already been drawn between the local church and a family. Paul has written of an Elder, “If a man know not how to rule his own household, how shall he take care of the Church of God?” (3:5). In the words of Psalm 68:6, “God setteth the

solitary in families"; each a family into which one is welcomed, each a family bound together by incalculable blessings, conscious that it has responsibilities, secrets, resources, standards, and therefore the disciplines by which those standards are maintained. Each is a home to be guarded, so that as with its great archetype "naught that defileth shall enter therein", a home from which heresy, immorality, and a spirit of divisiveness, must be firmly excluded, that it may continue to be a home where love is to be enjoyed and cultivated, and where true rest, wholesome food, and pure fellowship are to be found. There the Father is to be loved, the presence of the Lord Jesus is to be known, and the power of the Spirit is to be demonstrated. A local church is a local manifestation of the whole Church, and as such is to be a demonstration ground of the glory and grace of God. And this not only in the eyes of heaven (Eph. 3:10) but in the sight of the whole neighbourhood. As such it is a divine evangelistic method, heaven's continuing missionary outreach in that locality. Did not the Son say to the Father, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given me . . . that they all may be one . . . one in Us, that the world may believe . . ."?

Missionary outreach is of the essence of the Church. That was seen plainly at Pentecost. It will be demonstrated in every healthy church fellowship. It is a token of life. Its absence is a token of deterioration. We evangelise or fossilise.

The same doctrines that spell out the darkness, death, depravity and inability of man to save himself also declare that salvation is by grace and that there is hope for the greatest sinner—even the chief of sinners—at the hands of the God of all grace. The God of election sincerely, beseechingly, even urgently invites every sinner to salvation. And He does this through the preaching of the gospel by His Church. He has foreordained *all* that comes to pass. The *all* embraces the means as well as the ends. The doctrine of election *demand*s missionary outreach as surely as it guarantees that it will issue in true conversions. It is both our high privilege and our real responsibility that God has given to us "the ministry of reconciliation". Having in our hands the New Testament, we too say, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead: Be ye reconciled to God". Here, in a sentence, is the whole missionary responsibility of the Church, and therefore of the churches. It was no accident that the greater part of the New Testament was written on the "mission field". Recently a missionary, who loves the doctrines of the grace of God, wrote:

"Churches must realise that missionary work is part of their very *raison d'être*. The church which has no missionary vision is no New Testament church."

*Unbelievers as well as Christians are concerned about the breakdown of the family in our society. Broken homes cause terrible psychological and social damage. What can be done to ensure stability? Herbert Carson suggests a Biblical and practical approach.*

## Reformation and the Christian Family

CONTEMPORARY MAN HAS HAD SUCH SUSTAINED AND RESPECTFUL treatment from theologians that his image is in danger of becoming a caricature. Since Bonhoeffer popularised the idea that 20th century man has "come of age" we have been inundated with attempts to present the Christian message in a palatable way so as not to offend the susceptibilities of this rather superior being.

In fact "man come of age" is a figment of the radical theologian's imagination, for modern man morally and spiritually is not a whit different from his ancestors. It is true that he can move at a much greater speed from one place to another, that he has built on the achievements of his predecessors to a remarkable degree, and that his technological expertise is quite outstanding. But man in his essential nature remains exactly what he has always been.

The Book of Proverbs is a clear proof of this. The sins with which the sage deals are precisely the sins of today. Here are excessive drunkenness, immorality and adultery; here too is the exploitation of one group by another with the dishonesty and the cruelty which accompany; here are covetousness and greed, character wounding gossip and devious talk. Here in fact is a picture of contemporary man in the 10th century B.C. and also in the 20th century A.D. Now take the book of Ecclesiastes. There is the classic exposition in Scripture of the utter futility of life apart from the fear of God. Does the 20th century intellectual complain of the aimlessness of existence? He is only echoing the anguished cry of the preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity". The New Testament verdict is as valid as ever it was, "The whole world lies in the evil one" (1 John 5:19). Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:10). Marvel not if the world hate you (1 John 3:13). If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before it hated you (John 16:18). At the same time there are particular issues which confront us in each generation. In a sense they are variations on an age long theme. But if we are to deal with our own situation we must not only recognise the basic theme of man's spiritual plight in his rebellion against God, but we must also discern the particular variations which call for specific

answers. So we must set the Christian family in the context of the contemporary world.

### **Modern Culture**

We begin with the wider context of the culture of western society. Basically it represents a secularised view of life in which God is rejected and as a consequence not only is divine law dismissed but the whole concept of law goes into the melting pot. The result is a rejection of any kind of absolute. Truth is no longer viewed as conformity to the mind of God. It is simply the statement of one man's reaction to his own situation. The ultimate consequence of this position is an agnosticism which denies any ultimate knowledge, and ends in the present acknowledgment of the meaninglessness of life.

The same treatment has been accorded to the idea of goodness. It cannot be presented as conformity to the will of God since for the humanist there is no God, and the ultimate point of reference is man himself. If then there are no absolute standards based on the law of God, man must react as best he can to each situation as it confronts him—hence the term “situational ethics”.

It is this kind of thinking which lies behind so much humanist pressure towards what they would call a liberalising of society. Hence we have the pressures in parliament which have led to the legalising of homosexuality and the lessening of censorship. So too we have the descent of cinema and theatre into the gutter, and now television and radio seem well on the way to emulating them. The peculiar significance of the last two, and especially of television, is that the secularised philosophy of the 20th century is persuasively presented in the family living room.

### **The Churches**

The penetration of the churches by humanist thinking is a further factor. The new theology popularised by the former bishop of Woolwich is ultimately a sophisticated idolatry in which the amorphous deity of John Robinson's imaginings is substituted for the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But since the churches have capitulated to the world doctrinally, it is no surprise that moral capitulation follows. The new morality so called is simply humanist situational ethics with an ecclesiastical veneer. When the notorious report of the British Council of Churches on sexual morality claimed that fornication was not of necessity always wrong, it was echoing the episcopal defender of the novel “Lady Chatterley's Lover”. The absolutes of the law of God had been dissolved in the solvent of the theologians' debate.

### **Family Life Affected**

How has family life been affected by these trends both outside and inside the churches? The answer is—both directly and indirectly! There is the direct assault in the current questioning of the whole conception of



family life. The family unit, accepted in the past as normal, is now being challenged, and in many cases rejected as an outworn pattern which can no longer serve a generation where easily contracted and equally easily terminated liaisons are quite acceptable.

The indirect attack comes via the attitudes in educational circles which are of course reflected in a popularised version in newspapers. A denial of God and of divine law leads on to a questioning of the whole idea of law. Discipline is a dirty word. Retribution is rejected with horror as a barbaric relic of a blood feud mentality. It is a short step from the cult of self-expression to the rejection of parental authority. The final step towards social anarchy is not long in coming—the downward path as Paul pointed out in Romans 1 becomes increasingly steep.

An accompanying factor is the persuasive materialism which intrudes into every department of life. The insatiable appetite for personal gain, for pleasure, for luxury—this functions well in an amoral context. If God is forgotten it is not long before the neighbour is ignored. Selfish ambition becomes the arbiter and self-satisfaction the ultimate goal. Such a mentality, if accepted, is like a powerful corrosive not only in family life but in society at large.

There are other particular elements in the situation. There is the decline of Protestantism which either degenerates into liberalism, or, as in Ireland, is side-tracked by an alliance of gospel and political theory. There is the crumbling character of Roman Catholicism which produces the vacuum into which other forces move. There is the increasingly articulate voice of the young Marxist bent on revolution. All these factors need to be taken into consideration by anyone concerned with the healthy development of young people in the present situation.

### **The Christian Family**

Against the background of a secularised age we must assess the role which the Christian family should play. But first of all some general observations are needed on the Biblical teaching on “the family” in general and then on “the Christian family” in particular.

In Scripture family life has its roots in the work of Creation. It was God who saw that Adam needed a partner. It was God who created Eve and brought her to the man. It was God as Jesus pointed out in Matthew 19:4 who ordained the physical relationship which was to be consummated only within the marriage covenant. It was God who gave the ten commandments to Moses, and insisted there in no uncertain way, on the responsibility of children to honour their parents. Consistently throughout the Bible the relationships of husband and wife, and of parents and children, are presented as divinely ordained and therefore must not be set aside by men.

What then do we mean when we speak of the Christian family? Clearly

the Baptist will not mean what some versions of covenant theology mean when they speak of covenant children as being in some sense different from other children. Such children apparently need, not the gospel call to repentance and faith, but an exhortation to recognise what they already are. With such scriptures as John 1:12-13 in front of us we cannot make heredity such an overwhelming factor that saving grace is located in the blood-stream! There is no special gospel for the children of believers. Like their less privileged contemporaries, who do not enjoy the benefits of gospel training, they still need the same experience of the new birth.

At the same time we must not rush to the other extreme and ignore the plain fact, both of Scripture and of experience, that God generally works in families. God saved not only Noah but his family; God not only called Abraham but blessed through Isaac. The New Testament opens with two families being the source of blessing, Zechariah and Elizabeth on the one hand, and Mary and Joseph on the other. Timothy is only one of very many who can thank God for a godly parent, or as in his case for a godly grandparent. The promise of Acts 16: 31 does not end with the gaoler, it goes on to speak of his household.

So we may have a strongly based confidence that God will indeed bless the children of believing parents. But that confidence must never slide over into presumption. The sons of Eli have an unhappy line of descendants!

### **The Constitution of the Christian Family**

The basic constituent of a Christian home is the union of two believers, a man and a woman, in marriage. The warning of Scripture is too plain—"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers"—for a Christian to ignore it, even if he rationalises his disobedience by pious hopes that the unbeliever may be won to faith. The Spirit does not normally add His blessing to our disobedience. It is to a marriage constituted according to the full divine pattern that God promises His blessing.

When children come, one can speak of it still as a Christian home, although the children have not yet come to saving faith, because the standards, the attitudes, and the practices of the home are governed by the will of God. But obviously a home can be described as a Christian home in the richest sense when parents have the great joy of seeing their children following them in the path of faith. This and nothing less must be the goal, and for this Christian parents will constantly hope before God, and for this they will continue to pray.

Family life is essentially a matter of relationships. The intimacy of the life of a home, and the pressures arising from the constant and close contact make these relationships at once deep, and at the same time delicate. Time should enrich them, but it can also damage or even rupture them. They must therefore be carefully developed and conserved.

The basis for the development of a closely knit family life is to realise that our human relationships mirror those within the Godhead, and those between the Lord and His people. This realisation will not only give us the standard but will also teach us where strength is to be found. Thus family love at its best is but a faint reflection of the perfect harmony within the life of the blessed Trinity. The love of a man and his wife finds the ideal in the love of Jehovah for Israel, and in the love of Christ for His Church. Parental love and care is simply a distant echo of our heavenly Father's constant care which is the central fact of divine providence. The obedience of children to parents should reflect the loving submission of Jesus to the Father who sent Him into the world.

### **The Marks of the Christian Family**

One distinguishing characteristic of a Christian home in contrast to the general run, is that it is a worshipping unit. Thanking God for each meal is a constant reminder of our dependence. Family prayers draw the family together in united worship. It is sad to see how many families have allowed the general rush of life to furnish them with excuses for dropping the practice of family worship. The reading from Scripture and the short time of prayer are more important elements at the breakfast table than some of the varieties of cereals! It may mean aiming at a slightly earlier beginning, but those few minutes are well invested. It can happen that a father is off to work very early in the morning, but this does not rule out family worship. A mother can still lead her children in prayer and the evening meal can become instead the time when the father leads his family in worship.

The Lord's Day gives special opportunities for worship together. The small child will look forward to a Sunday morning treat of being able to sit in his parents' bed and listen to a Bible story. The afternoon can give opportunity for learning his Bible text, or for colouring his Bible story book, or in the case of an older child producing a missionary scrap book. Above all the Lord's Day brings the family together with the rest of God's people in the local church

Mention of the local church prompts one observation of a trend which has become almost a settled pattern among us—the splintering of family life at the church level. With our multiplicity of organisations—for women, for children, for young people—it is sadly possible for the local church to be an agent for the fragmenting of family life rather than for its consolidation. Some American churches can teach us here, with their developed sense of family solidarity which is further strengthened by the participation of the whole family in church life.

### **Work**

The family is also a working unit, not simply because work has to be done, but because God has commanded it. Labour is not merely a

tedious chore, it is a divine ordinance which is embedded in the ten commandments. The call to observe the weekly Sabbath rest is accompanied by the insistent requirement: "Six days shalt thou labour". Children should be taught from their earliest days the responsibility of honest work. This will begin with the insistence that the small child puts away his toys. It will continue with the refusal of a mother to spoil her children by doing all the household chores herself. And why should boys be allowed to loiter around while their sisters are expected to wash up dishes?

Laziness should be anathema in a Christian home. The apostle has a firm word for the Thessalonians, "If any man will not work neither shall he eat". It is a continuing word for us. Idleness is far removed from godliness, witness Jesus' own words, "My Father works hitherto and I work". "Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise"—the book of Proverbs is as apposite today as ever it was.

We live in an undisciplined age with a general disregard for law, an indifference to other people's rights and a scanty respect for others' property. It is in the Christian home that these pernicious attitudes must be countered. The law of God will not only be the standard, it will also colour our ways of acting. The father's authority, while it must not degenerate into petty tyranny, must none the less be exerted. Thus punishments will be carried out. There is nothing worse than the threats which parents make and then constantly fail to implement. It is no surprise if children decide that you can often get away with things if you simply persist. But on the other side promises must also be kept. A child has a lively memory where promises are concerned, and will resent any breach of faith. Perhaps even more seriously, a parent's readiness to forget or ignore a promise to the child may well lead to the child's adopting a similar attitude—and who is to blame for this?

One final point needs to be noted in this matter of discipline. There is a place for parents to apologise as well as for children. When a child has done wrong we expect him to apologise, and in fact insist that he does so. But parents are not infallible. We make unreasonable demands. We are tired, and in our irritation we are unduly harsh. We punish when perhaps we should have overlooked. Most parents are only too sadly aware of their failures in this realm. But what is really serious is not the mistake—children know that their parents are only human—but the stubborn refusal to admit the failure. It may be a humbling experience to have to apologise to our own child, but to refuse to do so on the specious pretence of maintaining parental authority, is simply to shelter unjustifiably behind an authority which at that point we forfeit by our own obstinate pride. Parents as well as children must conform to justice. Indeed if they do not, they have only themselves to blame if their children follow in their footsteps.

## **Play**

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." We must not give the impression that Christians cannot relax. After all we serve the God who gives us all things richly to enjoy. Parents can learn to share their children's pleasures, as well as helping them with their homework. Many a hard pressed father will probably have to admit his failures here. Yet how greatly a small child appreciates a parent who takes time to read with him. While of course, as already noted, we will read the Word of God to our children, they are also heirs to the benefits of common grace! So the joys of Beatrix Potter or of A. A. Milne, the doings of Grey Rabbit or of Brer Fox—these and many others will not only bring enjoyment to the children, but will deepen the idea that the family does things together. As children grow older they develop their own hobbies and interests, but parents will do well to take an intelligent interest and to encourage their children in a constructive use of leisure time. The parent whose only relaxation is in front of a T.V. is hardly likely to encourage a different attitude in his family.

## **Witness**

What is true of the individual believer can also be applied to the Christian family. To be the salt of the earth is so to live as to arrest the corruption in the world around. To be the light of the world is so to witness that Christ's gospel is spread. The Christian home should therefore be a centre of light in the contemporary spiritual darkness.

This means that we must open our homes. The outsider is hardly likely to know the secret of God's blessing in a family if he never enters a Christian home. Many Christians behave just like the man of the world. Their home is their castle and only their own friends are invited into it. They may delude themselves into thinking they are hospitable because they entertain their friends lavishly, but the man of the world does exactly the same! An open home means not simply limited access to a restricted circle of friends, but a readiness to welcome others. For many young people today, growing up in the ungodliness of a pagan home, it can be a revelation to see what Christian family life really means.

But there is also the out-going aspect. The Christian home should be a gospel nursery, training up ambassadors for the King of kings. It is significant to discover in many university and college Christian unions, the high proportion of those who come from Christian homes. The mission fields of the world could tell the same story. Here is the aim being realised as children come to know their parents' Saviour, are taught the Word of God, grow up in the atmosphere of worship and godly discipline, and ultimately go out to serve their own generation and in turn to train up their own children in ways of godliness.

*This interview is with a young man who is well acquainted with the situation in his homeland.<sup>1</sup>*

## Israel Today

*Ricky, when did you emigrate from the United States to Israel? And can you tell us about your conversion?*

My family and I emigrated to Israel in 1953. My parents are both Jewish, but not religious in any sense of the term. As far back as I can remember, I always asked myself questions—about life—about God—I wanted to know who I was, what I was here for, and what life is all about. As far as I was able, being very young, I asked, enquired and read, and when 1961 came around I was as hard-bitten and hardened an atheist as you could meet. I was selfish, bitter, and angry with the whole world. I had not found the answers. I tried all kinds of things, and of some of these I am now ashamed. I loved acting for example. An aspect I liked about acting was that on the stage and facing an audience, I could take my mask off and scream out all the questions, and express the anger, bitterness and fear that filled and tore at my heart. I grew a beard, smoked a pipe and looked as if I was very confident, but inside I was as broken and bewildered as a little child.

Then through various circumstances, which God in beautiful mercy ordained, I met a family—Gentiles—who had emigrated from Rhodesia and settled in Israel. Through them I first heard the Gospel, but what was more important, I saw the Gospel. I witnessed its power in their lives. I felt its reality and instinctively sensed that the warmth, the stability, the truthfulness and the courage to face the world in all its aspects, which so typified this little family, were just what life should be like, and what my own book—the Bible—talked about. So I visited this family for about a year and a half. They were not hesitant in any way to speak to me of Christ. They said I was sick. My sickness was called sin and they pointed me to Christ, the only One who is able to heal. I had been guilty of many offences and had stood before judges in a court. But I balked at this idea that I was a sinner. I thought myself better than many. After about a year and a half of trying to get what they had, while avoiding Jesus, I tried to destroy their joy and confidence, and did all I could to provoke them: I even taught their children to smoke and to curse. But I couldn't destroy this thing. It was founded on a rock.

<sup>1</sup> Inquiries have been made about the availability of the Editor's book, *The Restoration of Israel*. The second edition, which is revised and enlarged, is obtainable from local bookshops, 192 pp., 50p. The publisher is Henry E. Walter Ltd., 26 Grafton Road, Worthing, Sussex, England.

Finally, I broke off relations with them. My greatest problem was the moral one. I would not face the reality of my sinnership—the rottenness of my own heart. The excuse I used was that I was Jewish and the message they offered me was Gentile and not Jewish—perhaps even anti-Jewish. I would have nothing of it. But to make a long story short, it was on November 11, 1963, that God met me and opened my eyes, showing me who He is and what I was before Him, convincing me of His love to me in Christ and giving me a portion in Him.

*I am sure the Rhodesian family were much encouraged by your conversion. What of your spiritual pilgrimage subsequently?*

Like most people in Israel—perhaps most people in the world—the Gospel message I first heard was basically Arminian, Dispensational and, in my case, very Pentecostal. To me that was life in Christ, I heard of nothing else and this is what I sought to grow in and know more of. However, the more I studied the Scripture, the more disturbed, and the less assured I became. I began to discover that many of these teachings could be justified by proof-texts from a pulpit, but when one took the Scriptures and the texts, and placed them in their original context, they could not substantiate the views they were supposed to support. In 1965 I came to Britain—a country to whose people I owe a tremendous spiritual debt—in order to study the Scripture. I first found myself in a certain Bible College which was not only extreme in its Pentecostal views but had a particular blend of Pentecostal doctrine, peculiar to itself and which its members dedicated themselves to propagate. After three months there, I was asked to leave because I could not accept the College teachings, but had, on the contrary, become increasingly uneasy with Pentecostalism as a whole.

*Excuse me, Ricky, I must ask you at this point if you could just say what those teachings were? It won't give the Bible College away because we wouldn't know it, but a lot of our readers are really puzzled by what we call Neo-Pentecostalism.*

This was not 'neo'—it was 'hyper'! A certain man had an *experience*—a great word in Pentecostal thinking this word *experience*—he had a peculiar experience, unique to himself. Instead of interpreting his experience in the light of Scripture, he interpreted Scripture in the light of his experience, evolving a theology around it. He then came to claim that all Christians, if they were to reach God's utmost, must have just such an experience.

*What happened then after you were turned out of the College?*

Well—I applied to be accepted by the Christian Literature Crusade in order to train myself, so as to return to Israel and make a contribution to the sphere of literature in my own country. The training meant having time for study and reading. Consequently I became more and more uneasy with regard to my position. A friend in the room had been

reading *Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, by John Owen, and we had long conversations on the subjects that the book provoked. It was the first time I had heard of the five points of Calvinism. When I first heard them they seemed to be as blasphemous and as far from Scripture as could be. After training, I went to a Bible College, during which time I had a great deal of opportunity to question, study and investigate Scripture with regard to the whole framework of my faith in Christ. I decided that I would start at the beginning. It was a long struggle. My greatest problem, I remember, as I yielded point by point to a Calvinistic understanding of the Scripture, was the question of the free will of man. This was my pet idol—*free will*. It was when I came to see that *will* is not free but is limited by what man is, that I found myself squarely and stoutly in a Reformed position, and I trust that I have been growing in the knowledge of the truth since.

*Israel is the centre of the Middle East situation and a focal point between East and West, about which has come much dramatic, sometimes sensational, reporting in the press. Concern is often reflected in private and public prayers, for the survival of Israel in their ancient land. You are a soldier ready and standing by for call up at any time. We intercede for your safety and for the safety of your nation. Nor do we forget to pray for the Arabs and for peace. Do you feel a security in Israel, or do you feel that there is a very real possibility that you might all be swept into the sea?*

I remember talking with a doctor who had come to Israel from Czechoslovakia. She told me that she had been in Prague when the Germans marched in at the beginning of the war, meeting with no resistance. She had been in Prague when the Russians marched in, again meeting no resistance. She had received some very tempting offers to go to America or to Scandinavia, with real financial and professional advantages. I then asked her why she had chosen to come to Israel, and will never forget the tone of voice and the look on her face, when she said: "I came here because I knew that if the Russians tried to walk in here, they would be resisted". She came here, not to find security but conviction. In Israel we have no security on a human level, although I feel more secure in Israel, walking in the streets of Jerusalem, even East Jerusalem mainly populated by the Arab people, than I would walking in the streets of certain areas of London or Glasgow or New York. But I am as confident as anyone could be of my country's ability to defend itself.

*And you don't fear that that ability will be overwhelmed by the Arabs in the future?*

Yes, we do—that's the limitation. One is as secure "as anyone could be", which means we are not a hundred per cent. secure on a human level. I think there is a possibility of our being overwhelmed—although not by the Arabs alone. The Russian factor brings into focus the possibility of our having to face a terrible defeat.



*Yes, and you are human like all of us. Do you experience a natural fear because at any hour you might be right in the thick of gun-fire and all that sort of thing, or is this something that you don't put your mind to very much?*

Well, as you said, I'm human like all of us, and we tend to push out of our mind those things that are unpleasant to us. Israelis do not live in constant fear. Many tourists would be surprised to see the kind of life we lead, in spite of the tensions around us. There *are* times of worry, when a fellow sits and talks with friends, or listens to a certain bit of news, or is on the way with his unit to some station. When these things arise I am sometimes very much afraid, but like all my people, I have nowhere else to go. I am Jewish, my back is against the wall and so I have to stay and conquer my fear, and overcome the hatred of those around me. One day there will be peace in the Middle East. I wait and long for that day. What else can I do except pray for the day when "they shall neither hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea"—the day when Jew and Arab and all men of all nations shall live together in love and real brotherhood.

*Having discussed the reality of the physical situation, could you tell us something about the churches in Israel?*

Glowing reports are available about the situation in my country. The facts, I fear, are not at all like the impression given in some reports. It's a sad, disconcerting, horrible situation. Where would you like me to start?

*When visiting Israel I was impressed, perhaps wrongly, that there were very few evangelical churches, which seems to indicate a paucity in the number of believers. Was this impression correct?*

It is not easy to give an accurate number because no census has ever been taken. I can only hazard a guess which would be more or less correct. I would say that possibly the number of Jewish believers does not exceed four hundred. The population is just under three million. As for the number of churches, that I find difficult to answer, because there are groups that consider themselves churches which you and I would not. Moreover, we face, among other problems, a great gap between the foreign-based denominational churches in Israel (Lutheran, Anglican, various Pentecostal groups, Baptist, Brethren, and others) and the national churches or assemblies of believers. These are two different spheres altogether, and to a great extent with different purposes, different motivation and different approaches to the various problems confronting us in the country. There are churches that either purport to be, or are becoming, or already are, national churches in Haifa, in Jerusalem, in Tel Aviv and in Beersheba. If we had time to look more closely at these churches, we would soon discover that in two out of the four mentioned,

the majority of the members are foreigners. As to the one in Tel Aviv, of which I am part, there are not yet elders elected by the assembly. The full Biblical sense of a church has in this respect, therefore, yet to be attained. One could say that national churches are beginning to make headway in Israel.

*What about the Arab churches?*

I am glad you asked that question because they are as much part of the country as Jewish churches and Jewish believers. They should not be forgotten in our enthusiasm about the Jews. I wish I knew more about the Arab situation. They are divided very much by the same denominational interests. National churches in the sense that I understand the term are basically the Brethren churches scattered all over Galilee, with a fine assembly, perhaps the finest church in Israel, in Nazareth: a lively church which is evangelistic in its outreach, with some emphasis on Biblical doctrine, as faithful, as loyal and as lively a church as I have seen anywhere. For example, the presiding elder of the assembly is always happy in taking guests to the meeting, to send them ahead of him a little—"Go on, go on", he will say, "You'll be stopped"—and sure enough the whole area around the assembly hall will be cordoned off by young members of the assembly. It is impossible to pass them without receiving a tract and receiving a warm invitation to the meeting. It is a real encouragement to know that, even in the midst of the kind of problem we are facing, such an inspiring church exists.

*What are your main problems concerning believers?*

Perhaps it will be useful first to enumerate them and then to go into them in detail. Firstly, there is theological confusion. Secondly there is, as a direct result of that, moral confusion. Thirdly, these two lead on to a strange quest for simple, easy, instant answers. The situation brings a host of sincere people to our land, all of whom earnestly try to help, and who fail for various reasons we will be talking about later.

Firstly, in regard to theological confusion, Pentecostalism, Arminianism, and Dispensationalism are rampant in Israel. But young people are not satisfied for instance with the notes in the Scofield Bible.

Secondly, the amount of moral confusion is disconcerting. The Gospel has been preached by people who are basically Arminian, and this means that a "Come to Jesus and be happy" shallow kind of Gospel has prevailed—the kind that never exposes the real root of evil in the human heart, and hence never gets to the real power of God's Gospel to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him. It's a Gospel of forgiveness without deliverance. We have people who have made their "decisions", and yet, typical of Arminianism, feel secure while living grossly immoral lives. It has always amazed me to note that those most confident of their salvation work the hardest at it, while those who teach that our ultimate end is determined by our continued faithfulness—or

unfaithfulness—seem to be the most lax in the pursuit of holiness. We have back-biting and gossip, we have dishonesty, cheating, lying and many of the other gross sins that ought not to be named among us. Thus dishonour is done to the name of Christ. There is an emphasis on numbers—how many tracts given away—how many books sold—how many people spoken to—how many decisions recorded—how many rededications and altar responses—how many raised hands in a meeting. These are the criteria by which ministries are evaluated. You find yourself slowly dragged down, stretching a point here, obscuring another there—over-emphasising another, until truth is lost in a mass of confusion. And then different denominations are all clamouring for members. If a person is disciplined he has little difficulty in finding an assembly that will receive him with open arms and not carry out the judgment determined for him. This means that people are not compelled to face themselves as they should. They can always escape. And yet even here there is some desire for something better. Young people in Israel have spoken to me, and expressed what to me is a new and very thrilling development in Israel, the desire for a framework of love and discipline in which they could be guided and built up in the faith.

Thirdly, we are faced with the problem of superficial solutions, or the human tendency to look for instant answers. You know the kind of thing—three dollar “Anti-Satan Kits”—as advertised in certain types of American Christian periodicals. Providing the kit is correctly used the purchaser is assured of protection from all Satan’s tactics.

Also there is the tendency to seek instant holiness. This is one of the reasons why Pentecostalism and some holiness groups have appeal in Israel.

*And not only in Israel! These trends seem universal. In our day of saucy salesmanship we must resist superficial formulas. Having the right beliefs does not guarantee results any more than the use of methods which may have had success elsewhere.*

Yes, I remember a minister from America whose case illustrates what you are expressing. He had laboured in a church in America which was almost dead. Folk had been built up, backsliders restored and souls converted. He then came to Israel. He was full of tears and frustration when he said to me, “Ricky, what’s wrong with me? Why can’t I glorify Christ in Israel amongst Jewish people? Why has everything been neutralised?”. You see, this man failed in not making adequate allowance for an entirely different situation. Some of the missionaries have much potential, knowledge and experience, but failing to lay aside their existing formulas and get down to the exacting task of analysing a new situation, means that many of them are a hindrance rather than a help.

And then there is the vexed problem of money. Some churches, especially wealthy American churches, are ready to lay hold of Jewish believers

in Israel and pay them to be their missionaries—a kind of status symbol. It is an awful temptation and danger for a young person, say, who has been married and has hopes and longings and plans for the future, to face a situation where he just has to say “Yes” and he will be a well paid employee of a foreign church. Well-meaning believers have often been far too liberal and too uncritical as to giving money, and this has been, I am sorry to say, a source of corruption.

*From where do you get your own money? Is your church self supporting?*

The church of which I am a member is self-supporting. We each and every one of us give of our income to the Lord and to the work of the church, and all our expenses are met by that money. As for my wife and myself, we both work in a secular capacity. In my view there are few, if any, projects which need overseas support. Israel can support her own churches.

*What about literature? Publishing work costs a fortune. What is the position in this regard in Israel?*

There are a number of titles, some published by the United Christian Council in Israel, some by the Baptist group, some by Catholic organisations, and some by the Yanetz Press which is run by a group of Jewish Israeli believers, who are endeavouring to provide Israel with evangelical literature. But there is practically nothing that we can really place into the hands of young believers for their edification. I do not know of one really reliable commentary. There is a dearth of material with doctrinal content, and nothing that I know of which explains the crucial issues about human depravity and free grace.

*Ricky, would you like to sum up points, so that we can pray for Israel in a more intelligent way?*

Yes, please remember us in the need for believers to be built up in grace and understanding; the spread of the Reformed faith in Israel; the establishing and strengthening of local churches; the blessing of the Holy Spirit in our quest after holiness; better relations between local and foreign-based believers; the writing and translation of literature into Hebrew that will ground saints in the faith; the continuance and enlarging of the fellowship between Arab and Jewish churches in the country, and finally, pray, too, for peace in this troubled region of the world, that God’s message might have free course and prosper.

### *Crawley*

In the last issue the beginning of a new work was described. We wish to express gratitude to those who have prayed for this venture. Services have been well attended and the believers in Crawley continue to concentrate on providing a teaching ministry for the assembly and on reaching out to the town in evangelistic endeavour.

*Mr. S. M. Houghton here completes the article begun in the last issue dealing in particular with the divisions which vex Russian believers.*

# The Christian Faith in Russia Today

OUR FIRST ARTICLE ON THIS THEME INCLUDED A GLANCE AT THE REMOTER background, a brief survey of the religious policy of Communism, followed by a look at matters educational, and ending with mention of Nikita Khrushchev and his policy of stepping up the persecution of Russian evangelicals. We now proceed to look at the difficulties experienced by evangelicals on account of their differing views in regard to their relationship with the State.

The problem of the relationship of the State and religion is of ancient date. In Old Testament times it appears in the relationship of Daniel and his friends with the Babylonian, and later with the Persian monarchy. Indeed, it may even be claimed that it is to be found in the disobedience of Israelitish midwives, and of the parents of Moses, to Pharaoh of Egypt. In New Testament times it appears in the refusal of Peter and his fellow-apostles to obey the Sanhedrin when ordered to cease to preach Jesus and the resurrection. Later, when Roman judges and magistrates commanded Christians to cast their pinch of incense into the flame of a pagan altar, thousands of them died rather than violate their consciences and disobey the plain command of "the only true God". Their belief that "Jesus is Lord" involved them in the confession of the truth with their lips and the repudiation of every other claimant to Deity. In more modern times the fires of Smithfield and other scenes of martyrdom remind English believers that their own forefathers have suffered for making the same noble confession. A little over a century after the Henrician and Marian persecutions, the Covenanters of Scotland sealed their testimony with their blood.

All the martyrs bore testimony to the fact that if a State assumed to itself powers, and made for itself claims, over and above those allocated to it by high Heaven; in other words, if it acted *ultra vires* and claimed the right to require obedience to itself in a manner which involved disobedience to God; then, no matter what the cost to the evangelical, its demands must be resisted according to the fundamental principle followed by the apostle Peter when he said, "We ought to obey God rather than men"; and again, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard".

In one sense Russian believers are in even worse plight, for whereas Peter could appeal to a Sanhedrin which believed, though after a fallacious manner, in God, the Russian faces a State which blatantly and defiantly declares that there is no fear of God before its eyes. It takes its stand with the fool, saying "There is no God", and thereby is guilty of denying the most basic of all truths—GOD IS.

### **The Divisions Between Russian Evangelicals**

Unhappily, too, the position of the Russian evangelicals is made more difficult by reason of their division into two camps with opposing views. It is this division that, to a great extent, has perplexed the minds of Christians in the West and even those who have themselves personally visited Soviet territory, and Moscow in particular. On the one hand the visitor from the West who finds his way to (say) the Moscow Baptist Church, discovers a large and devout congregation apparently assembled without let or hindrance from without, with a minister (or ministers) able to preach the Gospel freely to all in attendance, and claiming the right of publication to a restricted extent. On the other hand reports are frequently received of an active and bitter persecution involving ministers of the Word, and not rarely parents also who insist on teaching their offspring the basic elements of Christianity and using all endeavours to bring them to the Faith and its confession.

The fact is that there are two chief sections of evangelicals (not to mention the various groups or sects such as Jehovah's Witnesses which cannot be included in the term "evangelical")—those who have applied for and received official recognition by their willingness to accept *in toto* all regulations imposed upon them centrally and locally by the State, and those who regard the acceptance of such regulations, or at least the bulk of them, as an act of treason against God and of unfaithfulness to His will as revealed in Holy Scripture. The latter "sect" finds it difficult and indeed impossible to understand how the former "sect" can remain faithful to the Lord while bowing to the regulations. Unregistered evangelicals assert that when the State interferes in the internal affairs of the church, its claim must be resisted even unto blood.

In or about 1944 the Soviet government tried to force as many Protestant streams as possible to join the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians and Baptists (the AUCECB). This action was taken in order to facilitate the imposition of State control and not in the slightest degree for ecumenical reasons. At least it was taken to enforce a pattern on believers outside the Orthodox church in order that the State might the more easily bring them into line with its requirements. Russians, it appears, tend to be individualists, unable or unwilling to combine readily with their fellows. One visitor is said to have remarked that three Russian Baptists will form four different Associations.

Many believers refused to bow to this State requirement on the ground,

accepted in the Leninist Constitution, that Church and State were fundamentally distinct. They claimed that Caesar had no right whatsoever within the Church of God. About the year 1961 the conflict of opinion within evangelical ranks reached its climax, and since that time, whereas AUCECB has been left in comparative peace, those who refused their adherence to this body have been savagely persecuted. The State calls them the Action-Group, and urges that, as they refuse to keep the law or to apply for registration (on the terms previously stated) they are guilty of treason against the State. Pastors and responsible persons in such a plight are repeatedly and heavily fined, imprisoned or driven into exile. Believers, and especially Protestant nonconformists, living in the free West, cannot but feel the deepest sympathy with them, realising as they do that these afflicted brethren desire to adhere in all good conscience to the Word of God.

At the same time the writer has been much interested to read very recently a substantial booklet issued by the AUCECB believers (104 pages) in which they defend themselves against the charge of compromise brought against them by Action-Group believers. They maintain that the latter hold extravagant ideas of the Church-State relationship and that furthermore, they speak bitter things against their evangelical brethren who are unwilling to accept their radical views. The booklet includes the following points, supplied partly by way of information for Christians living in the western democracies, partly by way of argument in defence of the existence of the AUCECB. AUCECB claims that:

1. Its members are the true spiritual descendants of Mennonites and Stundists.
2. They know nothing of the theological controversies of the West. Such matters as the conflict between Arminianism and Calvinism do not divide them. They claim to be one in all essential doctrine with their persecuted brethren.
3. They give no place to Modernism (liberalism) in doctrine, but cleave to the full inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. "We follow with profound anxiety the development of that other theology (the modern) which preaches a different Gospel and a different Christ, not Christ the God but Christ the Man, a theology which calls into question many scriptural truths, corrodes faith and cuts the ground from under the Church, relegating the Bible to the level of human books. This new theology must be barred from our brotherhood if we want it to survive spiritually."
4. They feel little need of theological colleges (though three are to be set up), for such men as Spurgeon, Moody, Finney and, in more recent times, Billy Graham, have had no special theological training.
5. They hold to the universal priesthood of all believers but have no intention of giving way to the divisions which have been the ruination of churches, including the failure to distinguish between primary and secondary questions.
6. They must be "singing churches", delighting in Russian compositions and also in translations of such western hymns as "What shall the harvest be?", "It is well with my soul", "Sing them over again to me", "Tell me the old, old story", "It may be at morn", "The sweet by and by".
7. They praise God that they can publish their own magazine, supplying rich spiritual food to readers, and hope soon to start publishing the Bible and a collection of hymns.
8. They have links with Christians outside Russia and are messengers of apostolic Christianity to the West where the truth has been forgotten.

9. They are seekers of world peace and encourage all men to act as a fire brigade to put out such fires as burn in Vietnam; they carry the banner of peace everywhere and help to prevent world war.

10. They support the World Council of Churches, while confessing that it is a mixed body with much modernistic theology professed by its leaders, but it feeds the hungry, and promotes peace. Christ willed peace and harmony among churches. The Russians are much given to division and must fight against this tendency. In the days of Spurgeon the Downgrade Controversy took place and the famous minister left the Baptist Union, but 40 years later Spurgeon's people returned to the Union (AUCECB clearly approves of this return).

11. They do not commit a deadly sin in observing Soviet law which permits them to practise their religion and to preach the Gospel.

12. They pray for their brothers and sisters who have separated from them through certain erroneous ideas on their part, and they hope that the authorities will show humanity and leniency towards those in custody. They respect and abide by Soviet laws in all activities other than those involving the inner spiritual life of the faithful.

Thus far the AUCECB booklet.

It is this "apologia" that fails to coincide with the strongly-held convictions of the Action-Group believers who feel that AUCECB has surrendered vital principles in order to obtain and retain State recognition. Moreover they feel that the "freedom" to meet for worship and to print Christian literature is so greatly hedged about by restrictions and so limited in scope that to accept it would involve them in bondage. Michael Bourdeaux and certain other writers supply a considerable amount of detailed information concerning the imprisonment of evangelical leaders of the Action-Group and one cannot but feel intense sympathy for them in their stand for truth and for liberty of conscience. It is not for Christians enjoying all the liberties of the western democracies to sit in judgment on believers experiencing tribulation and distress in Church, home, school and place of employment, not to say prison and labour camp. If their lot was often severe under the Czarist regime it is no less painful in the present age. Their stand for what we can only call the crown rights of the Redeemer compels our admiration. It is little or nothing that we can do in the way of practical assistance; the presence of a certain curtain makes contact a matter of great difficulty except for a privileged few; but let us at least give them such help as we may by our intercession on their behalf at the throne of grace.

Indeed, let us bear up in our petitions both groups of believers—those accused of compromise with the demands of an overbearing atheistical State, and those who are prepared to suffer all the rigours of oppressive laws for Christ's sake. Both groups suffer tremendously from the State-manipulated lack of Bibles, and hymnbooks; they are alike athirst for Christian literature. As we, in the enjoyment of all the freedoms of the western democracies, pray "Thy kingdom come", let the urgent needs of our brethren in tribulation find fervent expression in our prayers.



*In this study Stuart Fowler says that unless an integral Christian witness is forthcoming we can expect the whole of our society to be swept into the abyss. Readers should not interpret these comments as gloomy. We should not spend our time in whining about darkness, but rather in intelligent analysis of enemy forces and positive effort in dependence upon God. For most of her history, the Church has lived in danger but how glorious have been the deliverances of the Lord.*

## Revolution in our Universities

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN UNIVERSITIES WERE POPULARLY SEEN AS IVORY towers of learning. Today, they are rapidly acquiring a popular image as focal points of irresponsible behaviour, of revolution and unrest.

While this is by no means the whole story, it does have an important element of truth. Revolution is a respectable word on our university campuses, and is a prominent theme in university student journals.

There are those who vigorously oppose the revolution on campus. There is also the great silent majority who never get involved. As a writer in a student paper said recently: "Silent multitudes of students are just here to get a job qualification, and many academics . . . are just here to do a job and collect a good salary".

### Dissatisfaction

Yet, the revolutionaries are not just a lunatic fringe. They are a force to be reckoned with; a force that will not be got rid of by ignoring it or by suppressing it. Its very existence is a symptom of a deep-seated malady of our society; a malady that is diagnosed far too superficially if it is seen merely in terms of law and order.

Is the impetus for the university revolution merely youthful dissatisfaction with contemporary society; with its shallow materialism, its half-hearted democracy, its hypocritical morality, its blatant, but white-washed, inequities and injustices? Is it merely rebellion against the sterility and meaninglessness of the existing social order?

Perhaps this discontent with society as it is has always been a characteristic of youth. No doubt the weakening of authority patterns in our society is an important factor in permitting this discontent to erupt into open rebellion. Doubtless also it is mixed with an immature idealism that fails to take account of the realities of a sinful world.

Yet these factors alone do not explain the existing situation. It would be a tragic mistake to suppose that all this unrest on university campuses is just a passing phase of youth; to argue, with some, that they will get over it and settle down as good, stable members of the established order without any serious harm having been done to society.

Certainly, without any positive, integrating idea to give meaningful direction to discontent, it is likely to spend itself. If there is no alternative offering, most, after futile protest, will settle down to accept things as they are, with, perhaps, minor changes here and there.

### **The New Left**

The important factor in today's situation is that dissident youth are being confronted with a coherent, positive alternative to the existing order. An alliance between dissident youth and dissident, dedicated, maturity is turning the potential, but undirected, energy of youthful discontent into a realistic force for revolutionary social change. This focus for dissent, focusing dissent into purposeful revolution, is provided by the new left.

The new left is not to be confused with organised Communism, in spite of some superficial resemblance. The new left can be just as scathing in its criticism of organised, political Communism, and specially the State Communism of Soviet Russia, as it is of western capitalism.

Briefly, and simply, the new left wants to follow consistently the principles to which western man has long paid lip service. It calls modern, secular man to a more wholehearted pursuit of his professed ideals—freedom, democracy, and reason. For this reason it can be specially critical of the “liberals” who loudly profess these ideals but, in practice, are half-hearted and equivocal in pursuit of them.

The new left wants to see the utopia of human freedom become a reality; the freedom about which modern man has said so much, and which he has enshrined as an ideal in so many documents of human rights.

### **Human Reason**

Believing passionately in the inalienable rights of human reason, the new left contends that man must be free to follow wherever his reason leads; to go in the way that he judges to be right.

To secure this freedom for man demands the rejection of the existing social order, the system, with its traditional values enforced by the various power structures of society. This system, with its enforcement of what are seen as arbitrary and false values, is regarded as the enslaver of man and the major barrier to the establishment of a society of true freedom, equality, peace, and happiness.

It is in line with this that the new left condemns police restraint of demonstrators, for example, as an intolerable repression of basic liberty.

In the desired restructuring of society, democracy is a key word. In the new society the will of the people must prevail. “Rulers” must become servants who do as they are told.

They demand, therefore, that universities should be restructured on democratic lines. They insist that decisions must be made by the com-

munity, with each member of the community, from the gardener, to the student, to the senior professor having as much say as any other in the making of decisions affecting his own life in any way.

Bringing these two ideas of freedom and democracy together, in direct relation to the university community, John Fox proposes a system of anarchodemocracy. In such a system every person will make his own rules, "as a rule", but, where decisions affecting more than one person are necessary, in order to preserve the university as a community of free-acting individuals, the decisions will be made jointly by all affected.<sup>1</sup>

### **What is Our Response?**

All this, of course, is a simplified view of the new left. It has a consistent philosophy and a clear programme for the re-formation of society with more complexities than we can explore here. Enough has been said to show the nature of this movement and why it is a powerful integrating force in student unrest and revolt. It has a coherent philosophy and points the way forward with a purposeful finger.

What shall be our response as Christians to this movement? Clearly, we cannot identify with it, because, at its very roots, it deifies human reason. It makes man himself the arbiter of his destiny, and the shaper of his society. It seeks to capture the minds of men for the humanistic gods of this world.

Yet, if we take our stand with the established social order against the revolution and the new left, we will be equally unfaithful to our Lord. Our modern society *is* sick. It is sick because it has elevated to the place of highest honour the god of human reason.

God, so far as He remains at all, has a small altar in an isolated corner of life. God's ordinances for the functioning of human life and human society are despised, except when it seems good to man to follow them. The established order, as much as the new left, is committed to the principle of following what seems right in man's own eyes.

To support and defend a social order built on this foundation would be denial of our Lord. We should not be misled into thinking that Romans 13 demands of us uncritical and unqualified support for the powers that be. Our Lord Himself attacked the ruling powers during His earthly life, as did His prophets of old. They denounced them, not only for personal, private sins, but for the perversion of the divine order of society and the abuse of power.<sup>2</sup> We too must speak against apostasy wherever it is found.

For all their fighting with one another the new left and the old left, the right and the centre, all worship at the same shrine, the shrine of human reason, and pursue the same destructive course.<sup>3</sup> As Christians we are called to stand over against them all declaring that Christ alone is Lord of all human life, and that before Him every knee must bow in every area of life.

## **The Tragedy of Weak Christian Students**

The tragedy of our university campuses today is not the presence of revolution and the new left. It is the absence, with only rare exception, of this radical Christian confrontation. Students are not being brought face to face with the gospel as a coherent, all-embracing Christian alternative to both the new left and the established order.

The gospel is too often presented as a purely private, inner thing; a way to personal peace. As a result, most do not even think it worth arguing about. It is irrelevant.

Something is very wrong here. The apostolic proclamation was opposed and hated, but it was never ignored. This we are told is the normal pattern of response.<sup>4</sup>

In an attempt to break this apathy toward the Christian witness, others make a serious attempt to relate the gospel to the burning social issues of the day. Too often, however, because the thought of the Christians involved is still entangled in the deceptive humanistic divisions of right, left, and centre, the witness lacks an integral Christian character.

Instead of Christian witness, it comes out as a conservative—or liberal—political stance, with a dash of Christian colouring incongruously added. The Christian element still appears irrelevant. All it succeeds in doing is in identifying the gospel with one or the other of the warring humanistic political factions.

What is needed, and needed urgently, if the forces of humanism are not to sweep our whole society into the abyss altogether, is an integral Christian witness, disentangled from all humanistic alliances, declaring fearlessly the word of God in its vital relevance to every area of man's life in this day and age—a witness that points to the divine revelation as the only basis for the renewal of the individual and of society.

As Bernard Zylstra says, commenting on the works of Herbert Marcuse, the septuagenarian prophet of the new left: "There is no hope for the west in terms of Marcuse's solution. There is also no hope for the west on the basis of the principles on which it is 'organised' today . . . Man cannot redeem himself,<sup>5</sup> cannot discover genuine humanity on his own—which is why the world is heading for final disaster or for a new 'dark age'. Unless the Way, the Truth, and the Life again be revealed in our midst, and those in our lands who call themselves Christians again become confessors of His name".<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *University Reform—Rabelais*, Vol. 5, No. 10, November 9, 1971.

<sup>2</sup> Mark 12:38-40.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. 14:12.

<sup>4</sup> John 15:19-25.

<sup>5</sup> John 3:7.

<sup>6</sup> *Hegel, Marcuse, and the New Left*.

*It has been said that the cults are "the unpaid bills of the church", and that if the church had been doing its job many of the cults would never have arisen. Certainly, if the church was more perfectly paying its Biblical bills, the cults would not be nearly as attractive and appealing. Wayne Mack concludes by asserting we had better, therefore, take inventory and start paying our bills.*

## The Attraction of the Cults

DURING THE COURSE OF THIRTEEN YEARS IN THE MINISTRY, I HAVE HAD considerable opportunity to observe and talk to cultists, and to read literature written by and against the cults. From a study of this literature I am going to suggest reasons why people are attracted to the cults. Of course, not all of these reasons are true in every case. Perhaps, there are some cases where none of these reasons is involved, but I am convinced, that many do join the cults for one or more of the following reasons.

1. Men by nature would rather believe a lie than the truth. "They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send upon them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." "The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."<sup>1</sup>

2. Men are attracted to the cults by their novelty. Some of the heresies that the cults propound are quite old. The average church person is quite ignorant of church history, and so when he hears what the cultist has to say, it sounds rather novel and refreshing. Yet it still has something to do with Christianity. Many there are like the Athenians who wanted to "either tell, or to hear some new thing". Paul warned of such when he told Timothy that "the time will come when . . . after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears".<sup>2</sup>

Albert Place, a former Mormon and now a missionary to the Mormons, has said, "Many are intrigued by the novel idea and fascinated by the unique interpretations of Scripture made by the (Mormon) missionary".<sup>3</sup>

3. Men are drawn to the cults by the apparent vastness of the cult adherent's knowledge of the Bible. This, of course, is in great contrast to his own meagre knowledge of the Bible. W. J. Schnell, a former Jehovah's Witness, says:

The Watch Tower leadership sense that within the midst of Christendom were many millions of professing Christians who were not well grounded in "the truths once delivered to the saints", and who would be easily pried loose from the churches and led into a new and revitalised Watch Tower Organisation. The Society calculated, and that rightly, that this lack of proper knowledge of God and the widespread acceptance of half-truths in Christendom, would yield vast masses of men and women . . .<sup>4</sup>

Walter Martin writes in the same vein:

The average Christian layman is hard put to confront and refute a well-trained cultist of any variety. The shock troops of cultism are surprise and confusion. Cultists surprise the Christian by the apparent mastery of his own textbook, the Bible, and confuse him with glib quotations . . .<sup>5</sup>

4. Men find the cults attractive because of their authoritarianism. When Jesus was here on earth men "were astonished at his doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."<sup>6</sup> Jesus spoke with assurance and certainty, and the crowds flocked to hear him.

They were tired of the "I think" and "Rabbi so and so says" teaching of the Pharisees and especially the Sadducees. So it is with many people in our churches today. They have heard of problems and theories for so long, that they want someone to tell them with assurance what they should believe and how they should live. This the cults do. The followers of Father Divine have an authoritative voice in his writings. When I heard a lecturer for Father Divine, she would often answer questions in this fashion, "Well, Father says . . .", or "I can't recall any specific statement that Father made on that matter". The same thing is true of the Mormon, Christian Science, or Jehovah's Witness adherents. They are certain that they have the truth in the official writings of their cult. This authoritarianism appeals to many, for it gives a sense of security.

5. Men are attracted to the cults because they teach salvation by works. Many people like to feel that they can earn their own way. This desire to earn God's favour seems to be deeply imbedded in our hearts. Witness the prodigal when he returned. He knew he had sinned, but he still had a "works salvation" concept, for he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father . . . make me as one of thy hired servants". The cults cater to this imbedded "works salvation" concept, and thus appeal to many people. Einar Anderson, who had been born and reared a Mormon, writes this:

I was taught that my salvation depended on baptism, obedience to the ordinances of the Gospel (so called by the Mormons), and a life of good works . . .<sup>7</sup>

Later, in the same book, he says:

Oh how happy I was to know the truth! I was saved. I had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour. I felt like shouting for joy and I wanted to tell everyone. I thought they would be so happy to hear about

it. I was sadly disappointed. I found that people preferred to have some part in their salvation by working for it . . . Oh, the pride of the human heart! <sup>8</sup>

6. Men are attracted to the cults by the re-emphasis of some neglected area of Bible truth or experience. Every Christian Scientist that I have met has become one by way of physical healing. I'm sure that this is not the case with every Christian Scientist, but it probably is true of a good percentage of them. The same could be said of many of the other cults. They have picked up some truth from the Bible which the church has neglected, and often distorted that truth out of all proportion and context. Walter Martin states:

The cults have also emphasised the things which the church has neglected, such as Biblical exposition on healing (Christian Science), prophecy (Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormonism), and a great many other things . . .<sup>9</sup> When the cultist is able to show the church member how he has been "short changed" by his church, the church member begins to lose confidence in his church. He then becomes a "sitting duck" for the cults.

7. Men are drawn to the cults because the cults often deny some of the more objectionable doctrines of the Christian faith. Men don't like to believe in an eternal hell where men suffer the wrath of God forever. Men can't understand how God can be one and three. The doctrine of the Trinity baffles them. Men don't like to believe in the total depravity of men. Men cannot understand how Christ could have two natures and yet be one person. "The cults consistently appeal to 'reason' and 'rationality' which many times they use as their sole guide in evaluating the character of God and His revelation."<sup>10</sup> The cultist, in keeping with the thinking of natural man, reasons that since these doctrines seem irrational, they are untrue.

8. Men are attracted to the cults by their well written, attractive, understandable, and appealing literature which is made easily available at little or no cost. I was in Tucson, Arizona, in February 1970, and within the space of four or five blocks, there were four teams of Jehovah's Witnesses peddling their literature. In that same area, there wasn't one representative of historic Christianity distributing literature. Walter Martin says: The startling growth of Jehovah's Witnesses . . . can only be appreciated when one sees a mission field, literally inundated by tracts, pamphlets, Bibles, books, and magazines . . .<sup>11</sup>

Again he states:

Almost 4,000,000 of the "Watch Tower" are printed annually in more than 60 languages, and . . . their publication "Awake" is close upon the heels of the "Watch Tower" in circulation, being distributed in 25 languages and in a number of 3,800,000 copies per issue.<sup>12</sup>

9. People are brought into the cults by their zealous evangelistic and missionary programmes. Many have been the cultists who have knocked on

my door during the last thirteen years, but I'm still waiting for the first team of people from a historic Christian Church to arrive. Recently, Mr. Bennett from the Jehovah's Witnesses said that they have every house in the United States of America located, from the richest to the poorest person. Their plan is to get into every home with their message. Walter Martin says:

They (Jehovah's Witnesses) have better than 30,000 full-time workers, only one thousand of which are on the mission field. And their two-by-two doorstep evangelism has become the plague of the British Commonwealth, most of the countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. The number of hours that Jehovah's Witnesses put in in such personal evangelism pursuits in 1961 was 132,695,540 . . .<sup>13</sup>

Writing of the Mormon missionary efforts, Martin states:

Boasting a missionary force approaching 15,000 full-time workers, and bolstered by a church whose gross income last year (1961) was \$365,000,000, the Mormon cult is moving at a rapid pace . . .<sup>14</sup>

These missionaries make contacts, sell or give out literature, make back-calls and then set up Bible Study groups. Many people who are hungering for personal help in Bible study have been led into cultism this way. Several years ago, I visited a family in Park Ridge, Illinois, who had been led into Jehovah's Witnesses in this fashion. Some folks showed up at their door one night and asked them if they would like to study the Bible. They said, "Yes". That was the beginning of the end as far as their connection with a historic Christian church was concerned.

10. In addition to the reasons already given, some people may be allured into the cults through their publicity campaigns. The Mormons are kept before the people by many of their people who have been or are in high places, by their well known choir, by their magnificent temples, and by frequent newspaper articles about their work. W. J. Schnell, in his book "Thirty Years A Watch Tower Slave" shows how cleverly the Jehovah's Witnesses use the press to keep themselves before the public. He makes the point that in the past, the Jehovah's Witnesses actually courted persecution to gain the attention and sympathy of people.

Other things, such as their rigid discipline, the exemplary lives of many of the cultists, the denial of the absolute reality of unpleasant aspects of life (Christian Science), the united voice with which each cult speaks, the genuine concern which they manifest for people in need, their dogged perseverance and dedication to their cause, their many activities (they are doing something—many people like to be doers—they want to be busy), and the fact that the cults are minority groups, may be factors which entice some people to leave the folds of the historic Christian churches for what seems to them to be the "greener pastures" of cultism.

Walter Martin has said that the cults "are a challenge to the church to affirm once again the great principles and foundations of the Gospel of



Christ, and to make them meaningful to the present generation . . .”<sup>15</sup> There are many things which people find attractive about the cults which we should avoid like the plague (works salvation, denial of the great doctrines of the Bible, etc.), but there are other things which the cults are doing which we must re-emphasise or perhaps even re-introduce into our churches if we would be true to the sacred trust that God has given to us.

The cults teach us the importance of doctrine. Most of the cults arose in a time when distinctive doctrine was being played down. There was a tendency among the revivalists of the 19th century to obscure the distinctive doctrines of different denominations. The most important thing was not doctrine, but “winning people to Christ”. Preachers ceased preaching great doctrinal sermons such as Edwards and Tennent and Finley and Dickinson preached in the 18th century. “The clergy is largely at fault . . . because they do not always emphasise the teaching ministry of the pulpit, but rather, settle for an evangelistic (*or political or humanitarian*)\* emphasis, with very little doctrinal depth.”<sup>16</sup> \*(Italic is mine.) The cults earnestly train their people in the distinctive doctrines of their group. Most of their adherents know what they believe and why they believe it. Many people want this. They want a basis for their faith. We are remiss if we do not instruct our people “line upon line; precept upon precept; here a little, there a little”. We are commissioned to “Preach the Word . . . with all longsuffering and *doctrine*” (II Tim. 4:2).

Then too, we must provide our people with meaningful activity as the cults do. The cults do not simply have “get togethers” where people sit around and drink tea and talk about nothing. They “get together” for a purpose. They involve their people in meaningful work or study. There is a place for sitting and talking, but how much more should we desire to involve people in “the fellowship of the Gospel”, or, to borrow a phrase from the Jehovah’s Witnesses, “Kingdom business”. People want to feel they are making a contribution, that they are a working part of the cause.

We must break with tradition and train our people “for the work of the ministry of edifying the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:12). Too long, our people have been made to feel like spectators who come to watch the professionals play. Now, we must help them to become participants who are involved in the game.

The emphasis that some cults have upon ministering to the physical needs of people is also one we must emulate. It is New Testament Christianity. We may not want to do it in the same way, or to the same degree as some of the cults. But, we cannot be Biblical Christians and ignore the fact that men have bodies as well as souls. We cannot call ourselves disciples of Jesus Christ and fail to follow His example of concern for the whole man. As evidenced in the account of the palsied man who was brought to Jesus in Mark chapter two, our Lord was most concerned about this man’s spiritual need. He first said, “My son, your sins are forgiven”.

But we must never forget that in this same account, He also said, “Arise,

and take up your pallet and walk". In Mark chapter eight our Lord manifests His primary concern for men's souls by first teaching them the Word of God, but we must remember that on this occasion He also demonstrated concern for the bodies of men when He said, "I feel compassion for the multitude because they . . . have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their home, they will faint on the way . . ."

True it is, that these aspects of social and physical concern have been abused by many to the point where men's spiritual needs are completely ignored. But, just because some have been irresponsible in one way, does not give us the right to go to the other extreme. The example of our Lord and the clear mandates of Scripture enunciate the fact that prayer for the sick, assistance for the poor, and the visitation of the widows, the fatherless, and the afflicted are parts of our Gospel responsibility. During the time of Martin Luther when a plague was raging through a certain city, Luther encouraged the Christians who had not been affected by the plague to remain in the city and minister to the sick. He said, "We owe a death to one another". Martin Luther, to some extent, saw the cultural, social and physical implications of the Gospel. So must we! Many of the cults who know not our Lord Jesus Christ and obey not the Gospel do. How dare we who have been so blessed of God do any less.

It has been said that the cults are "the unpaid bills of the church", and that if the church had been doing its job many of the cults would never have arisen. This may be an overstatement of the case, for even if the church was fulfilling its mission perfectly, that great adversary, the Devil, would be at work creating counterfeit religions. It may, however, be safely said that if the church was more perfectly paying its Biblical bills, the cults would not be nearly as attractive and appealing. We had better, therefore, take inventory and start paying our bills.

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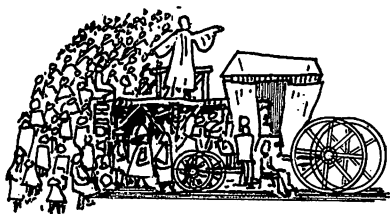
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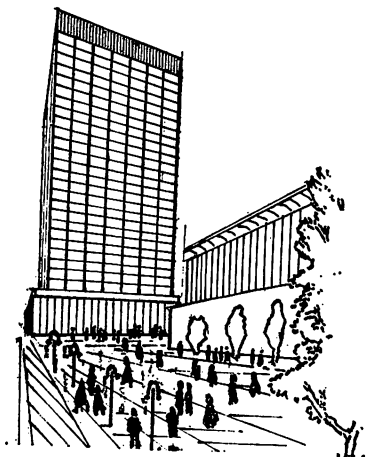
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