

# REFORM- ATION TODAY'84



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# News from Lausanne

In November 1982, Stuart Olyott left the pastorate of the Belvidere Road Baptist Church, Liverpool to take up work in the French-speaking Swiss city of Lausanne. Many were perhaps surprised — though they ought not to have been! It is, after all, thoroughly biblical for men of maturity and experience to be sent into the most challenging situations. And Lausanne was certainly a challenge. Some years previously a small Baptist witness had begun but it had never really taken off. By 1982 there was a dispirited group of about a dozen mainly elderly people and there were clear signs that the work would come to an end, leaving the city once again without baptist witness and the whole region without any reformed baptist testimony.

By a long chain of events the Lord brought Stuart and Doris Olyott into that situation. On their very first Sunday in Lausanne the Lord very graciously set His seal to this new start for the work. Two Christian couples came into the meeting for the first time and subsequently identified with the work. Such things simply had not happened for years previously! The Lord was bringing a team together.

Although he was able to preach in French from the outset, the priority task was to thoroughly learn the language and to adapt to the culture. The contrast between Liverpool and Lausanne is very great and has meant many adjustments. For example, it is not 'done' in Lausanne to call on people without having first made an appointment — usually the day before. This can be a hindrance to evangelism, though other things can help. Personal invitations distributed for a special meeting all brought a response — either the people came or rang to apologise for not doing so.

The Lord has given a number of encouragements over the past 12 months or so. The first baptisms for several years have taken place and there will probably be another baptismal service shortly. Attendance at the Sunday morning service now averages about 40 and at the midweek Bible study about 20. A monthly fellowship meeting on a Sunday evening has been introduced and 34 came to the most recent one. One young Rumanian, who has requested baptism, travels one and three quarter hours by road down from the mountains to attend the meetings. Stuart now has a Bible study in this young man's home on a Friday evening and it is hoped that this might lead to further contacts. For the first time the church are actively working out a programme for evangelism and Stuart is most anxious that this should involve the whole fellowship.

With growing competence in the language so wider opportunities for ministry are developing. Together with another pastor, Stuart has been invited to give three days of teaching on hermeneutics and exegesis to the pastors of a group of evangelical churches in France and Switzerland. This will be a valuable opportunity to present the Reformed Faith.

A major need of the work is for a new meeting place and all enquiries about this have so far been fruitless. The church meets in a rented room, which is difficult to find, hot and stuffy in summer and now simply too small. The lack of a suitable meeting place is now a severe hindrance to the progress of the work and much prayer is needed.

Support for this work is shared between the Lausanne church itself; the Association of French speaking Evangelical Baptist Churches and the Grace Baptist Mission. Gradually the church will take over full responsibility and they have in fact already begun to move in that direction. Stuart prepares a newsletter — *Olyott News* — about three times a year and this is available through GBM.

From September 1st the address for  
*Reformation Today* will be:  
c/o Eurobooks, 361 Aigburth Road  
LIVERPOOL L17 0BP

## Editorial

Repentance is the turning of the whole heart from sin and Satan to serve God in newness of life. The Greek word *metanoia* means afterthought. This infers a change of thought, of mind and of heart. Elijah's foremost concern was the repentance of his people. Hence his prayer for their hearts to be turned back again by the Lord (1 Kings 18:37). Indeed the whole Bible can be summed up as the testimony of God Triune for the purpose of turning humankind around and back into union with their Creator. The first word in the message of John the Baptist was Repent! And likewise our Lord preached repentance. To the convicted multitude Peter said Repent! (Acts 2:38). Paul sums it up in his preaching to the Gentiles at Athens when he says, 'God now commands all people everywhere to repent' (Acts 17:30). And what could be more direct than the statement of our Lord when he declares, 'But unless you repent, you too will all perish' (Luke 13:3).

The chief mark of authentic revival is enduring repentance. The main feature absent in modern religion is repentance. Even in the best which popular evangelicalism has to offer there is much easy believism and easy profession of faith but little enduring repentance. Some talk of a 99 per cent fallout. Yet when we read the narratives of revival we often discover a 100 per cent endurance rate (see page 32).

Many today are deceived into thinking that a great show of uninhibited exuberance is revival and that if we do not endorse the claims made that such spectacles represent revival then we are quenching the Spirit or shutting ourselves off from 'the blessing'. Putting matters to the test of Scripture is not quenching the Spirit. It is precisely because of the absence of the fear of God and the absence of conviction of sin and of those features which are foremost in all the

revivals described in the Bible, from Judges 2, to John the Baptist, to Pentecost, to Ephesus (Acts 19), and on through the history of the Christian Church, that we are reluctant and unenthusiastic. Furthermore an indispensable sign of true revival is that the Word of God grows mightily and prevails — it spreads widely and grows in power (Acts 19:20). Yet too often those who are obsessed with a form of worship in which they can be totally uninhibited, are impatient with expository preaching, even when it comes in the power of the Spirit with powerful application to the conscience and life. The same people show much ignorance of basic Biblical truth.

I am convinced that we have to insist on the necessity of repentance. It may not be as intense as those instances described on page 32. Nevertheless when God of all the universe comes down it is the holiness of his being that is felt, and we are prostrated before him as was Isaiah in the Temple (Is. 6). We are then made willing to face up to the hard work of conforming our lives to Biblical standards and of obedience with regard to holy living.

### *Studies in Biblical Theology*

It is a pity that often the most exciting and important subjects have pedestrian titles. What is more thrilling than the entrance into this world of the Son of God to come and rescue us from eternal woe? And what is more exciting than the advance of his kingdom from one stage to another? Don Garlington most lucidly explains the difference between what we have *already* and what is yet to come, the *not yet*. To what extent can we expect to be subject to weakness? — and to what extent victory? To lose the balance here explains a host of heterodox movements in the past and in the present. This series is one of the most relevant and most helpful we have ever

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Cover picture: Stuart Olyott and Doris his wife with Lausanne in the background. For an up-to-date report see page opposite.

been privileged to publish. It is still possible to procure back copies. And that is not a commercial because there is little financial gain in selling back copies. But here is a commercial! We would like to reduce the tonnage of literature that has to be taken to Liverpool toward the end of August and therefore offer the following.

*Bound copies of 'Reformation Today'*

Volume 3 (numbers 25-36) normal price £7.00 now £4.00.

Volume 4 (numbers 37-48) normal price £7.00 now £4.00.

Volume 5 (numbers 49-70) normal price £9.00 now £5.00.

This offer applies *only* for orders that are made before August 15th, but with some extra leeway in time for our readers abroad because of the time it takes for them to receive their post.

Volumes 1 and 2 have long been out of stock. Few copies remain of Volume 3. Remember that there are full indices and these are included in the above prices.

*Dr. Francis Schaeffer*

The subject of Dr. Schaeffer's theology and his apologetics would require many pages. Thomas V. Morris has written a book on the apologetics of Francis Schaeffer which was published by Moody Press in 1976. It is a critique which does not endorse everything Francis taught. But what a tribute in itself that there is substance enough for such studies to be made! Of particular note is the impetus and encouragement given to young writers some of whom are mentioned in the tribute, men like Donald J. Drew who learned much from L'Abri and wrote 'Images of Man' which is a critique of contemporary cinema and is published by I.V.P. in the U.S.A.

Dr. Schaeffer, a heavyweight in apologetics, was Presbyterian in doctrine (including the bit on infant baptism!) but he would not rank with the theological heavyweights like Professor John Murray. His was the only voice which spoke for truth with regard to compromise with

Ecumenism at the World Congress for Evangelism organised by the Billy Graham Organisation which was held in Berlin in 1966. A report and analysis of that Congress appeared in the *Banner of Truth* magazine number 48. If you are a guest speaker it is not easy to speak against the principles of co-operation employed by your host, and so an image was used by Dr. Schaeffer to capture the imagination. He referred to the Berlin wall which now divided the German people. Lack of foresight by political leaders led to that bitter wall of division. Likewise lack of foresight, expediency and compromise with Ecumenism in the name of evangelism has led to division between evangelicals. Francis Schaeffer was anti-Charismatic, see his *New Super Spirituality*. He was 'pre-mill' in eschatology which is a pity because the inevitable pessimism of that system comes through. If he had had the breadth of application seen in some of the thinking of Rousas Rushdooney it would have brought a welcome note of victory and extra authority, because Jesus will reign until his enemies become his footstool, I mean reign in this last time (see Geehardus Vos' Eschatology of Victory).

*Can we be sure about Jesus?*

Clifford Pond of Grace Baptist Mission writes to say that the reviewer of John Drane's book with the above title failed to point out that the apologetic is basically subjective or man-centred. The fact of the incarnation is left open to debate and not grounded as it should be on the foundations of the overall authority of Scripture.

I believe that Mr. Pond is correct in his observations and we thank him for them. Such comment is most helpful and if John Drane wishes to respond we would be glad to hear from him.

*Liverpool — induction service*

A service of induction for the editor has been planned for 4.00 p.m. on September 1st at Belvidere Road Church, Liverpool, at which the previous minister, Stuart Olyott is to be the preacher. D.V. All are welcome.

# Did Christ have a Fallen Human Nature?

by Donald MacLeod

The doctrine that Jesus Christ had a true human nature is probably the single most important article of the Christian faith. Indeed. The Apostle John insists that the denial of it is the mark of Antichrist (1 John 4:3). Yet denials there have been, in abundance. In John's own day, the Docetists denied that Christ had a true body. Later, the Apollinarians denied that he had a human spirit and later still Eutyches claimed that he was neither God nor man, but a mixture of both. Less drastically, some later Christian traditions, while not denying the Lord's humanity, spoke in a way which compromised it. Mediaeval Catholicism saw Christ almost exclusively as a remote divine emperor. Lutheranism, because of its insistence on the corporal presence of Christ in the Sacrament, had to formulate the doctrine that his body was ubiquitous (everywhere or omnipresent), which is hardly consistent with its being a body at all.

It would be arrogant to claim that Reformed theology got it exactly right. But men like Calvin, Owen and Martin did strive to do justice to the biblical vision of 'the man Christ Jesus' and even the so-called Protestant Scholastics betray no reservations as to the manhood of our Lord. Calvinistic theologians — and preachers — have testified, firmly and unambiguously, that Christ took a flesh-and-blood body, possessing the same anatomy and physiology as our own, and linked, through his mother, to the genetic stream of the race. They accepted fully that our Lord experienced such ordinary human emotions as joy, sorrow, fear, amazement and almost-despair. They highlighted his need for companionship, his discriminating friendships (closer to some than to others) and his pained sensitiveness to all the misery around him. They acquiesced unquestioningly in the clear teaching of Scripture that he was temptable and, on some matters, ignorant.

It is arguable, then, that more than any other tradition Reformed theology has sought to be faithful to the claim that Christ is *of one and the same substance* with us according to his manhood, just as he is *of one and the same substance* with the Father according to his Godhead. Yet the insistence that 'he was in every sense a member of the human race' has its own dangers. As C. F. D. Moule has pointed out, 'According to New Testament writers, the humanity of Jesus is both continuous with and discontinuous from that of the rest of mankind'. The discontinuity is particularly evident at two points. Christ's humanness, unlike ours, was originated supernaturally, in a virgin conception; and Christ's humanness, unlike ours, was sinless.

For the moment, we shall concentrate on the second point. Christ's sinlessness clearly means two things.

First, he was not guilty of any *actual* sin. Never for a moment does he betray any consciousness of having transgressed in word, in emotion, in desire, in ambition or in action. He never, for all his sense of the holy, prays for forgiveness. Nor can we adduce any utterance or incident from his life at which we can point and say, 'There, surely, is a sin!' From within the gospel records he still stands, challenging us, 'Which of you can convict me of sin!' (John 8:46). Stated negatively, there is no transgression, no lawlessness, no want of conformity, anywhere in the life of the Saviour. Positively, his whole life is an acted righteousness as he goes out to meet the will of God in an almost aggressive obedience.

Secondly, there was in Christ no *inherent* sin. This again is something on which Scripture is adamant. He was a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1:19), holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners (Heb. 7:26). In stating this we have to avoid compromising his participation in our nature and the need for careful formulation is clearly seen in such a passage as Romans 8:3, 'God sent forth his Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*'. We cannot say, 'the likeness of flesh' because that would make his humanness ghost-like – a mere seeming. We cannot say 'sinful flesh' because that would compromise his integrity. We can say that Christ was 'made sin' (2 Cor. 5:21) but we cannot say that he was made sinful. There is no moral or structural defect for Satan to exploit. There is no lust. There is no egotism. There is no proclivity to sin. There is no corruption of nature. There is no want of original righteousness.

There is no fallenness.

*The same fallen nature as ours?*

But this last statement must give us pause. It has become a virtual truism of recent scholarship that 'Christ's human nature was indeed the same fallen human nature as ours'. For the most part, those who hold this view are careful to deny that he was sinful. But they regard it as not only true, but vital, that his humanness was fallen. Otherwise, he could feel no sympathy with us. More fundamentally still, if he did not take fallen human nature, then he did not redeem it.

The credit, if such it is, for the current respectability of this doctrine must go to two men, Edward Irving and Karl Barth.

Irving, an enigmatic, and ultimately a tragic figure, was deposed from the ministry of the Church of Scotland in 1833. He never abandoned his own belief in the sinlessness of Christ, but the way he stated it was, to say the least, awkward: Christ's human nature had the grace of sinlessness and incorruption. He did not have his sinlessness from himself. He had it only from the indwelling of the Spirit: 'It was manhood fallen which he took up into his divine person, in

order to prove the grace and the might of Godhead in redeeming it.' The Lord's humanity was indeed without guilt, but only because it was 'held like a fortress in immaculate purity by the Godhead within'.

Barth, too, held to the doctrine of the sinlessness of the Lord: 'Christ was not a sinful man. He did nothing that Adam did.' But he serves himself heir to all that Irving had said of the fallenness of the Saviour's humanity. 'There must,' he says, 'be no weakening or obscuring of the saving truth that the nature which God assumed in Christ is identical with our nature as we see it in the light of the Fall. If it were otherwise, how could Christ be really like us? What concern would we have with him? We stand before God characterised by the Fall. God's Son not only assumed our nature but he entered the concrete form of our nature, under which we stand before God as men damned and lost.'

### *Fallen and sinful*

It is very doubtful, however, whether the idea that Christ took a fallen human nature can be held meaningfully in any form which is not heretical. There is no practicable distinction between *fallen* and *sinful*. 'Beyond a doubt,' wrote A. B. Bruce, 'the theory requires that original sin should be ascribed to Christ; for original sin is a vice of fallen human *nature*, and the doctrine that our Lord's human nature was fallen, means if it means anything, that it was tainted with original sin.'

The truth of Bruce's claim will appear at once if we recall the teaching of the *Shorter Catechism*: the Fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery (Answer 17). To be fallen means not only to be in a state of misery, but to be in a state of sin. And in what does that sinfulness consist? 'The guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness and the corruption of (our) whole nature' (Answer 18).

This is really the crux of the matter. A fallen nature means a corrupt nature — indeed, one which is wholly corrupt. Is that what Christ had — a nature which lacked original righteousness and was totally depraved?

Both Irving and Barth strenuously protest their belief in the sinlessness of Christ and we must respect that. But there can be no doubt that as they work out what they mean by a fallen nature they use language which is totally inconsistent with his inherent perfection. As Irving saw it, the flesh which Christ took was one in which 'all sins, infirmities and diseases nestled'. Throughout his life, he had to battle heroically against temptations which sprang, not from the Devil, but from his own nature — that 'fragment of the perilous stuff' which he had assumed. The Lord, Irving insists, committed no sinful act. But the possibility of sinning was there and he would have sinned but for the Holy Spirit keeping his flesh under control. He was holy only 'in spite of the law of the flesh working in him as in other men'. What can this mean but that something in him resisted the Spirit — something so powerful that it required the might of the Godhead to keep it in check?

Exactly the same kind of language appears in Barth: *fallen* equals *corrupt*. The flesh which Christ took was 'the concrete form of human nature marked by Adam's fall'. That was not a nature which was good in itself. It was a *vitiating* nature. 'Why does Scripture always speak contemptuously of the flesh unless *corrupt nature* is meant?' Barth quotes a 17th century source to the effect that 'it was not fitting that a human nature liable (*obnoxia*) to sin should be united to the Son of God', and comments: 'Not fitting? If that is true, then precisely in the critical definition of our nature, Christ is not a man like us, and so he has not really come to us and represented us.' When we move from Barth's treatment of the Incarnation to his treatment of the Fall of Man, the language only confirms our suspicions. Here, 'the essence of the Fall' is synonymous with 'the situation of man in the state of corruption' and Christ becoming flesh means precisely that he participated in our *corrupted* being.

### *Discontinuity*

In Irving and Barth the link between *fallen* and *corrupt* is not due to any lack of care. The corruptness of the human nature assumed by Christ is precisely what they want to express and the word *fallen* is the ideal word for the purpose. This fact alone is surely sufficient to make its use in evangelical theology thoroughly improper.

There are, however, several other considerations which have a bearing on the question.

First, the plea for total continuity between Christ's humanity and ours is misplaced. The Virgin Birth (which Barth himself defends and expounds so eloquently) is an immediate and unmistakable reminder of discontinuity. So is the Resurrection: 'The Virgin Birth at the opening and the empty tomb at the close of Jesus' life bear witness that this life is a fact marked off from all the rest of human life.' Christ is the new beginning, the One from outside — outside Adam, outside the Fall, outside guilt, outside corruption. He is God's man, who does not share in the sin of the first man nor in his loss of righteousness nor in the corruption of his nature. So long, indeed, as Christ is without actual sin, Barth cannot have unqualified continuity between him and us. All the rhetoric with which he turns on the un-fallenness could be turned equally effectively against the sinlessness. How can he understand if he never sinned? What does he know of shame and sorrow and frustration and failure? What could have been the use to Paul of a Saviour who knew nothing of the anguish behind the words. 'To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not' (Rom. 7:18)?

The answer is, of course, Much use! because the basis of his being 'touched with the feeling of our infirmities' is not that he was either fallen or sinful, but that he shared our nature, our deprivations and our temptations.

### *Fallenness a disadvantage*

Then there is a second — and vital — consideration: To be fallen would be a

distinct disadvantage in a Saviour. This is something which becomes totally clear from Barth's own treatment of the Fall of Man. It is Barth himself who quotes Ephesians 2:3, 'We were children of wrath' and goes on to define our fallen nature as one *inclined to hate God and our neighbour*. If that is the nature which Christ took then he, too, was a child of wrath and in no position to save others. When one recalls how emphatically Barth stresses the incapacity of fallen man it is difficult to see how Christ could overcome the disadvantage of having a fallen nature: 'With the Formula of Concord we can call fallen man a stock and a stone in order to describe his whole incapacity to help and save himself.' Did Christ then take upon himself this *whole incapacity*? Again, Barth tells us that the corruption from which God's word of forgiveness calls us 'consists in the fact that man is God's debtor. He is a debtor who cannot pay.'

The cumulative effect of this is overwhelming. Christ took a nature which made him a child of wrath, rendered him incapable of helping himself and turned him into a debtor who could not pay. How can his power to save be salvaged from such wreckage?

#### *A fallen person*

Thirdly, it is impossible to speak of Christ having a fallen human nature and yet refrain from describing him as a fallen person. 'If a fallen nature exists at all,' wrote the elder Marcus Dods, 'it can exist only as the nature of a fallen person.' A *nature* is an abstraction. It neither acts nor suffers nor falls. Only persons can fall or be fallen. This is certainly the way theology has traditionally spoken. The Shorter Catechism, for example, does not say that our nature fell. It says that our first parents fell (Answer 13). The Westminster Confession is equally careful: 'By this sin *they* fell from their original righteousness' (ch. VI: II). It was they, not their nature, which became dead in sin and 'wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body'.

To say that Adam had a fallen nature is to say that Adam was fallen. The same logic must apply to Christ. If he had a nature that was fallen, then he himself was fallen. The principle of the *communion of attributes* is sufficient to establish this: whatever is true of either nature is true of the person. If the human nature was fallen, the person was fallen.

The implications of this are totally unacceptable to reverent thought. When did Christ fall? In Adam? Or in his own experience? It seems unnecessary to press these points. Christ was one person, one self, one agent, bearing the name, *the Son of God*. To say that the Son of God was fallen is impossible, especially when by fallen we mean 'wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of souls and body'.

#### *Fallenness not part of humanness*

Two other considerations deserve a brief mention.

First, fallenness is no part of the definition of humanness. The underlying motive of Barth's exposition is to maximise the identity between Christ and

ourselves. As he sees it, the denial of fallenness jeopardises this: 'precisely at the critical definition of our nature Christ is not a man like us'. The answer to that, surely, is that to be fallen is not part of what defines our nature. If it were, then the newly created Adam was not a man. Indeed, on these terms God did not create a man at all. What he created only became a man by falling. The same conclusion would apply at the other end of human destiny. Glorified man would not be human — certainly not in 'the concrete form of our nature marked by Adam's fall'.

Finally, those who argue that Christ had a fallen human nature misconceive the reason for his sufferings. The Lord suffered in every dimension of his existence: physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Furthermore, the agony which this involved brought him to the very limits of his human endurance. Even though upheld by the Spirit he is at last close to being overwhelmed.

But the reason for his suffering was not that he was fallen. It was, instead, that he was the Vicar of the fallen. He was their Representative and Substitute. He was under *their* curse, sharing *their* low estate. His liability to the anathema is not personal. It is contractual. As to himself, he has no debts. He is meeting the debts of others. His manhood has become the place of judgment — the very Gehenna to which all the world's guilt is gathered. He is the Holocaust consumed by God's anger against sin. But the sin is not his own. It is never, in any sense, inherent. He is the atonement for the fallenness of others.

It is superficial to imagine that this unfallenness protected him from the highest levels of pain. On the contrary, it made him uniquely vulnerable. A Nazi could have walked unmoved through Belsen, Bonhoeffer could not. He would have been moved to the depths of his being by the misery and the criminality. In the same way Christ moved among men with an exquisite, unfallen sensitiveness to the pain, the squalor, the oppression and the degradation around him. He had to live amid the manifestations of sin, see it, hear it, feel it, everywhere; suffer for it, bear it — at last, take his very name from it (2 Cor. 5:21). And how could he bear the loss of God? To the fallen, that is a familiar and not altogether unwelcome experience. To Christ, living eternally with God and towards God it was an unspeakable horror. In prospect, it filled him with overwhelming fear. In actuality, it rendered him desolate. The Far Country was infinitely more harrowing for the Only Begotten than for the Prodigal.

Surely if Christ was unfallen in his human nature he could not have been tempted in the full and proper sense that we are tempted? This raises a whole area requiring careful exposition which can perhaps be dealt with on a future occasion.

*Professor Donald MacLeod has been preaching and itinerating in Australia for two months. He is due to return to Scotland during September. He is Editor of 'The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland', and kindly allows us to take the cream from the top of the milk for our readers.*

# Studies in Biblical Theology

## The Progression of Revelation in the New Testament, Part Two.

*This is the fourth in a series of expositions by Don Garlington of Durham, England.*

In the previous article (RT78) we began to consider the progression of divine revelation in the New Testament era. In the present study we come now to see how the progression of New Testament revelation bears upon the all-important subject of the Christian life.

### *The interval between the two comings of Christ*

Even a surface reading of the gospel records indicates that our Lord envisaged a period of time between his first coming in humility and his second coming in glory. In one sense the kingdom of God was ushered in when Jesus the Son of David came to assume the reign of God over his people. It is in this regard that he announces that with his exorcism of demons the kingdom has come (Matt. 12:28). Yet we read that in another sense the kingdom is still to come. Such sayings as found in Mark 9:1; Matthew 10:23; 16:28 speak of a coming of the kingdom which coincides with our Lord's death, resurrection and exaltation. At the same time it is also evident that certain passages tell us of the return (*parousia*) of the Son of Man at the end of the age, e.g., Matthew 24:30; 25:31.

From even this sketch of the gospel data it should be evident that the kingdom of God comes in stages: (1) during Jesus' public ministry; (2) with his death, resurrection and exaltation; (3) at the end of the present age when he returns in glory as the victorious Son of Man. Accordingly, the point to be made here is that there is a sense in which the kingdom is *already* and a sense in which it is *not yet*. To be more precise, the church lives in that interval between the two comings of the Son of Man (see further Matt. 9:14f.; Mark 2:18f.; Luke 5:33f.; 17:22). Thus the identity and character of the church are determined by the great fact that its life and worship partake of both the 'already' and the 'not yet'.

Practically speaking, it is of great importance to understand that we live in an interim period. On the individual level the believer must be aware that he lives in a phase of overlap between the old and the new. *In principle* the Christian has become a new creation in Christ because the old things have passed away (2 Cor. 5:17). But in terms of world history the old creation will not actually become a thing of the past until our Lord comes a second time. Thus the believer lives in a period of overlap between the old and the new, and he *feels* simultaneously the pull and influence of both ages at the same time. This is what accounts for Paul's language in Romans 7:14f. Since he lives in two worlds at the same time, he can never be totally free to participate fully in either. It is not until his death and/or the putting on of the resurrection body (2 Cor. 5:1f.)

that he will be delivered from 'the body of this death'. Romans 7:14f., then, is to be read as the transcript of one who has experienced the 'already' of new life in Christ but who longs and groans for the 'not yet' of the spiritual body in which he will bear the image of the heavenly man (1 Cor. 15:44f.).

All of this underscores that the Christian's personal life is one of on-going tension. Furthermore, we are informed in clearest terms that the power of Christ is experienced by us as creatures of *weakness*. We need a theology of power and glory and going from strength to strength, but we need as well a theology of weakness to keep us in contact with the realities of a life lived during the course of 'this present evil age' (Gal. 1:4). In our day we are told by a certain sector of the church that we can effectively by-pass weakness, suffering and tension and be catapulted into the fullness of the age to come. We are told by some that it is possible to leave the 'sub-Christian' realm of Romans 7 and come into the 'properly Christian' world of Romans 8, whereby spiritual struggles become a thing of the past. If, however, we recognise that the Christian lives in a period of world history which is both old and new at the same time, it should be clear enough that *both* Romans 7 and Romans 8 are normal experience for the child of God. As a Christian I am in Christ and walk by the Spirit, but I do so as one who is still very weak and vulnerable to Satan and his devices. The Apostle summarises the matter when he says: 'When I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Cor. 12:10).<sup>1</sup>

One other dimension of the Christian's experience of overlapping ages must be noted at this point. That is to say, in his feeling of tension the believer reproduces the experience of Christ. Paul can say of our Lord that 'he was crucified in weakness but now lives by the power of God' (2 Cor. 13:4). His life, then, becomes the model and pattern for mine. This is not to say (obviously) that Jesus experienced weakness in just the same way that I do — he did not in any sense partake of sin. Yet he did feel the effects of a world dominated by sin and apostasy, and his entire pre-resurrection life was one of direct contact with sin and sinners. Indeed, his coming 'in the likeness of sinful flesh' means that he got as close to sin as possible without being a sinner. Accordingly, he knew the power wielded by sin, and thus Paul could summarise his entire phase of humiliation as 'weakness'.

This fact about the Lord Jesus is important because even now the Christian is to bear his image and be like him (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Therefore, the entire experience of Christ as one who was weak and became strong is to be reproduced in my experience. In the same verse in which Paul says that Christ was crucified in weakness but now lives by the power of God he also says 'For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God'. What Christ was and is, the Christian is simultaneously.

Prof. J. D. G. Dunn has drawn out the significance of Christ as the model for Christian experience: I quote him at length. '*The character of the experience in*

*which Christ speaks through a man is determined by the character of the Christ who speaks. And the key fact here is that Christ remains the Crucified even though he now lives by the power of God. To experience the exalted Christ therefore is to experience not merely new life but new life which is life through death, life out of death, and which always retains that character. As soon as the exalted Christ is separated from the crucified Jesus, charismatic experience loses its distinctive Christian yardstick. As soon as charismatic experience becomes an experience only of the exalted Christ and not also of the crucified Jesus, it loses its distinctive Christian character. In Paul's view, religious experience for the Christian is not a matter of Christ taking him out of his weakness and leaving it behind in experiences of inspiration and ecstasy; on the contrary, Christ is present in his weakness — his weakness is part of his experience of Christ.*<sup>2</sup>

Returning briefly to Romans 7:14f., we note that Paul's cry of frustration in 7:24 must characterise the life of every believer. To me, living in an interim period between the two comings of Christ is no mere academic issue. Again to quote Prof. Dunn: 'The cry of anguished frustration in Romans 7:24 is the life-long cry of the Christian. Neither conversion, nor any other experience of the Spirit in this life raises the believer above this life-death tension, this Spirit-Flesh warfare. The Spirit does not bring the wretched man's struggle to an end; on the contrary, his presence and activity in the believer heightens the conflict. There is no higher experience which exempts the believer from the reality of his divided state as man of Spirit and man of flesh; so long as the believer remains in the flesh he cannot enjoy the full life of the Spirit. There are only two ways of escape, and both are ways of death: one is the way forward — to engage in the Spirit/Flesh conflict till its end in physical death; the other is the way backward — to abandon the conflict, to retreat into a life lived solely on the level of the flesh, the level where death alone reigns, the way of death. In short, the only way of escape is death — either the death of the body, or the death of the whole man.'<sup>3</sup>

I have devoted a good deal of space to the interim period as applied to the individual because of its practical importance. But important as well is the corporate aspect of the Christian life — the church. On this level it is equally vital that we be aware that we live in the tension of the 'already' and the 'not yet'. An historical illustration at this juncture may be useful. The church of the 2nd century came to an appreciation of the 'not yet' of salvation, but it lost its apostolic awareness of the 'already'. In other words, the church settled down into a prolonged waiting period until the Lord should come, and in the process it forgot that the turning of the ages had come, and the church lost its grip on the New Testament's *excitement* that God had intervened in history to introduce his kingdom as a reality. Not surprising, it was in this setting that Montanism became a living force in the 2nd century.<sup>4</sup> But Montanism, on the other hand, like its modern counterparts, failed to appreciate the other dimension of salvation — the 'not yet'. In its attempt to counterbalance the static orthodoxy of the catholic church, Montanism had no real place for a time of waiting during which the church was to disciple the nations.

As applied to our contemporary situation, we must preserve the integrity of both the 'already' and the 'not yet'. On the one hand, we are to live in the light of the tremendous thing God has done in Christ and to reckon ourselves as already risen with Christ and partakers of the blessings of the age to come. Yet on the other hand, we are to come to grips with the realism of God's purpose which has not yet been brought to consummation. If we do this, we will avoid the error of 'deadorthodoxy' by retaining the excitement and joy of salvation accomplished: our excitement will be that of the conversion of the lost and feeding upon the Word of God. At the same time we will recognise that there is a normalcy and a routine to the church's life which is not to be despised and which is not to be disrupted even by the excitement of God's acting in Christ and our possession of the Spirit of Christ. As I see it, the health of our churches depends in large measure on keeping the balance of the 'already' and the 'not yet' and preserving (not relaxing) the tension of the overlapping ages.

In summarising this section on the interim period, we see a progression of what God is doing in Christ. He *has* established his kingdom and he *will* establish it. Christ *has* come and he *will* come. In keeping with this, the church bears the character of a people living between the two comings of the kingdom and the king. As such, it is obliged *both* to preserve the mind-set of the last days *and* to maintain the stability of its existence by the work of discipling the nations until the consummation of all things. In itself the interim period does not tell us the specific content of the normal Christian life, but it does set the framework within which the details become meaningful. The interim period informs us that Christian living must never become imbalanced. The believer walks a tightrope between two extremes at all times, and he must poise himself with the realisation of both what is and what is to come.

In a third article I will attempt to round out our consideration of the progression of New Testament revelation by speaking of the theology of pentecost and the obedience of faith.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Note that simultaneous strength and weakness is a recurring theme in 2 Corinthians. See, e.g., 1:3f; 2:14f.; 4:7f., 16f.; 6:4f.; 11:16f.; 12:1f.; 13:1f.

<sup>2</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit*, London: SCM, 1975, p. 331. The whole of Dunn's discussion of 'The Eschatological Spirit' and 'Sharing in Christ's Sufferings' (pp. 308-342) is highly recommended.

<sup>3</sup> 'Romans 7:14-24 in the Theology of Paul,' *Theologische Zeitschrift* 31 (1975), p. 272. The entire article is a must for one's understanding of Romans 7. Cf. Dunn's article 'Jesus — Flesh and Spirit: An Exposition of Romans 1:3-4', *Journal of Theological Studies* 24 (1973), pp. 40-68. Also J. I. Packer, 'The "Wretched Man" of Romans 7', *Studia Evangelica* 2 (1964), pp. 621-627.

<sup>4</sup> In brief, Montanism was a radical 'Holy Spirit' movement, resembling in certain details the more extreme sectors of the modern charismatic movement.

# The Life and Being of a Local Church

J. K. Davies

## 1. *The life and being of a local church in relation to Christ*

Any consideration of the life and being of the church — universal or local — must take account of its relationship to Christ. The church is made up of sinners saved by the grace of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

In the little booklet *Union with Christ* A. N. Martin writes:

‘all of the lines of Biblical revelation point to the centrality of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the work that he accomplished on behalf of sinners’.<sup>1</sup> He also says, ‘as the Person and work of Christ are central in the doctrine of salvation, so it is equally clear that the method by which men and women become partakers and the beneficiaries of that salvation is by union with Christ’.<sup>2</sup>

Union with Christ is usually regarded as an individual relationship with Christ,<sup>3</sup> and is often indicated in the New Testament by the phrase ‘in Christ’, which occurs in the writings of the Apostle Paul no fewer than 150 times.<sup>4</sup> Yet an examination of many of these occurrences will reveal that the phrase also has a corporate dimension which serves as a pointer to the teaching of the New Testament on the closeness of the relationship between Christ and his church.<sup>5</sup> The identification of Christ with his church may be demonstrated in a number of ways. Certain descriptive titles reveal it — Body of Christ, Bride of Christ — and we shall return to these shortly, and certain incidents in the life of the early church confirm it.

Such an incident may be found in Acts 9. Saul journeyed to Damascus ‘breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord’ in order to carry out his policy of persecuting the church. Yet when he was confronted by the risen Saviour, he was challenged, not with his persecution of the church, but with the question, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ (Acts 9:4).

In this remarkable way the risen Saviour identified himself with the persecution being suffered by his Church. What happens to the Church relates directly to him, for he is in the Church and the Church is in him — ‘in Christ’.

John Calvin in his Commentary on Acts expresses this truth in the following way:

extraordinary consolation comes to the godly because, when they are labouring to bear witness to the Gospel, they hear that the Son of God shares the Cross with them, and that, in a sense, he puts his shoulders underneath to lift part of the load. For it is not for nothing that he says that he suffers along with us (in persona nostra), but he wishes us to be really convinced that he is moved by the same common feeling, as if the enemies of the Gospel wounded us through his side.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the highest designation the Church receives in the New Testament is the ‘Body of Christ’.<sup>7</sup> Although there are a number of occurrences of this phrase making reference to the physical body of Christ,<sup>8</sup> we are particularly concerned here with its use where it denotes the Church. The Church’s life is derived from Christ — it is his body ‘the fulness of him who fills all in all’ (Eph. 1:23). The ‘Body of Christ’ is a designation used indiscriminately of both the total invisible universal Church (all believers past, present and to come) and its local expression in time, without seeking to define the differences.<sup>9</sup> This is because the very character of Christ which should be obvious in all who make up the universal Church should also be seen in the local church. The local church is a ‘microcosm’ of the universal Church. Christ is its head (Col. 1:18) and its members share his life and express that life in the gifts he has given to them to benefit each other (Eph. 4:1-16, note verse 12).

What all this emphasises is that the Church is the portrayal of the life of Christ

to the world around. Believers are his ambassadors<sup>10</sup> and the Church is his representative in the world.<sup>11</sup> In saying that, however, we must take note of the warning given by Donald Guthrie in his *New Testament Theology* of the danger of regarding the Church as an extension of the incarnation.<sup>12</sup> 'The body metaphor makes clear that a distinction is maintained between the head and the body, between Christ and his Church, which would exclude the view that Christ could be incarnate in the Church.'<sup>13</sup>

When we turn our attention to that other great designation of the Church in the New Testament which identifies the person of Christ and the Church, namely the 'Bride of Christ', similar features can be seen. In fact, there is a close link between the ideas contained in 'Body' and 'Bride' as Ephesians 5:22-33 reveals.

Donald Guthrie writes of Christ and his bride, 'The bridegroom is not only the head of the Church, but also its saviour. But bride and bridegroom become one flesh and it is this that the apostle designates as a mystery.'<sup>14</sup>

The emphasis involved in this designation of the Church is to do with purity and separation. Donald Guthrie expresses this emphasis in the following way, 'What is most to the fore is the requirement that the Church, as the bride of Christ, must remain pure and loyal to its one husband, Christ. This bride figure is a particularly intimate illustration of the relationship between Christ and his Church, for it presupposes a strong bond of love between them.'<sup>15</sup>

But there is also a future dimension involved here, as Michael Griffiths points out in the booklet *Cinderella's Betrothal Gifts*: We know that God's ultimate purpose is to 'present to himself the Church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing' (Eph. 5:27). One of the things that is meant to be happening now is that perfecting of the saints which makes the Church fit to be the bride at the marriage of the Lamb.<sup>16</sup>

The 'Bride' motif, therefore, suggests that the Church, made up of redeemed sinners,

is separated to Christ as a bride is separated to her husband. The Church similarly takes Christ's name and his dignity. As a wife is identified with her husband's name and rank, so the Church is identified with Christ.<sup>17</sup>

The Church is related directly to the Lord Jesus Christ—it is his Body and his Bride—and this enables us to see in Christ the principles of life and conduct which should govern the Church's life today. Questions such as, 'What should the Church be like?' and 'What should the Church be doing?' may be answered first of all by examining the teaching of the New Testament on the life and work of Christ and secondly by examining its teaching on the Church related to Christ.

The coming into the world of the Son of God to do his Father's will<sup>18</sup> is the most significant event in human history. It is not our purpose here to discuss in any depth his incarnation nor his sacrifices for sin at Calvary. His victorious resurrection and glorious ascension together with his triumphal return to the earth must also be left unconsidered. All we can do, in fact, is make one or two remarks on his incarnate life to lay a kind of foundation for our thinking. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews refers to Christ's life in a number of places, e.g. 2:17-18; 7:26-27. The Lord Jesus Christ was 'made like his brethren', and can 'sympathise with our weakness', yet was 'without sin' and was 'separate from sinners'. The twin strands of involvement in the life of men and separation from the sinful quality of that life are clearly to be observed in the incarnate life of Christ.

His earthly life was sinless,<sup>19</sup> and that sinlessness was revealed and maintained even when undergoing severe temptation 'in all points . . . as we are'. Christ's sinless and separated life did not prevent him having dealings with needy and sinful human beings. In no sense did it mean he was to live an isolated life. He lived 30 years in a human family, enjoyed fellowship with his disciples, had dealings with every level of society and engaged in controversy with his opponents. He had no unhealthy notions of holiness such as

those held by the Pharisees in bondage to ritual. Although criticised for contact with sinners he lived a perfectly holy life in every true sense. His transparent humility and meekness marked him out from the proud and self-centred 'holy' men of the day. He exposed their blindness and their hypocrisy, and they hated him for it. His separated life meant repudiating error, refusing the world's ways and rejecting the aid of ungodliness.

'Separated' though he was, his life was nevertheless lived in the world. He was not detached from it. He identified himself with men and entered into their lives fully. He was involved in human life and affairs at every level. He was the 'Servant of the Lord'<sup>20</sup> who came to do his Father's will, and that meant living in the world among sinful people. Jesus did not enter into this service by accident. He was deliberately sent into the world by his Father.<sup>21</sup>

In a similar fashion he sent his disciples into the world.<sup>22</sup> As he was sent into a hostile world, so he sent his disciples into a hostile world — 'as sheep in the midst of wolves' (Matt. 10:16). Jesus came from above into this world. He was not of the world<sup>23</sup> and so the world hated him.<sup>24</sup> His disciples would also be hated by the world because they would be identified with him.<sup>25</sup> They would not be removed from the world, but would be kept from its evil as they testified of Christ to it.<sup>26</sup>

Christ's service involved suffering. He suffered 'being tempted'. He suffered in the misunderstanding of family and friends. He suffered in rejection and persecution. And in particular he suffered in his death for hell-deserving sinners. That suffering was not in vain, for this was God's will for him, and in fulfilling it victory was assured. H. L. Ellison makes the following point in his study of the Servant Songs of Isaiah entitled 'Servant of Jehovah':

The pathway of the Servant contradicts the wisdom of man, and his methods the power of man, but he shows that the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

The weakness of the Church comes from its unwillingness to learn this fact. It has always been tempted to follow the path of human wisdom and to use the arm of flesh. As it walks the path its Lord trod, it will have to suffer with him, but it will also triumph with him.<sup>27</sup>

Because the life and being of the local church are bound up with Christ's life it must of necessity be triumphant. Anything less is not Christ's life.

#### Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> A. N. Martin, *Union with Christ*, Toronto: Gospel Witness Publications, 1978, pp. 7-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> L. S. Chafer, *Systematic Theology*, Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948, IV, pp. 60-61, 92-100.

<sup>4</sup> A. N. Martin, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. Galatians 1:22; 3:28; Romans 12:5.

<sup>6</sup> John Calvin, *The Acts of the Apostles*, trans. John W. Fraser and W. J. G. McDonald, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1965, I, p. 258.

<sup>7</sup> J. K. Davies, ed. *Concerning the Doctrine of the Church*, Norwich: Norfolk Baptist Revival Fellowship Fraternal, 1966, p. 1. A consideration of this designation is more fully developed in the author's *Life and Work of the Local Church*, Norwich: Hughes and Coleman Ltd., 1971, pp. 13-19.

<sup>8</sup> John Murray, *The Nature, Unity, and Government of the Church*, London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1964, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Notice how the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 refers to the universal church as the body of Christ in verse 13 and yet refers to the local church in Corinth as the body of Christ in verse 27 — 'you are the body of Christ, and members individually'.

<sup>10</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:20.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 14:23-25.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1981, pp. 745-746.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 746.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 747.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Michael Griffiths, *Cinderella's Betrothal Gifts*, Sevenoaks, Kent: OMF Books 1978, p. 7.

<sup>17</sup> The wife of a king becomes a queen. The wife of a duke becomes a duchess.

<sup>18</sup> John 6:38-40.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Peter 2:22; John 8:46. For a fuller consideration of Christ's sinlessness see: Donald Guthrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 228-235, and H. R. Mackintosh *The Doctrine of the Person of Jesus Christ*, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912, pp. 35-38.

<sup>20</sup> For an extended treatment of the 'Servant' motif as applied to Christ see: H. L. Ellison, *The*

(continued on page 16)

# The New Deprived: Do we care?

Arthur Henderson

*One of the major social problems of our day is receiving scant attention from Christians. Arthur Henderson reports on a recent Conference designed to stimulate concern.*

In all developed countries the second half of the twentieth century started with high hopes of maintaining full employment for all able-bodied persons willing to work, but the last quarter of the century has started with a marked increase in unemployment and a prospect of continuing high levels to follow the present recession as a consequence of further labour-saving technologies. In the last ten years the numbers entering the ranks of the unemployed in the U.K. has risen by only 30%, but this has led to a rise of 300% in the numbers registered as unemployed because fewer are regaining employment. So there are now many more long-term unemployed, particularly among the groups and in the regions where there are fewer job opportunities. Currently the U.K. is harder hit than its competitors among the developed countries, because pay has been increasing more rapidly and productivity less rapidly than theirs.

In the welfare state where some redistribution of income is arranged in favour of the unemployed, the problem is not primarily financial. The

deprivation is more serious because it is psychological and social and is often not recognised as a problem until it works itself out into some form of disaster like vandalism, domestic strife, or suicide. Church-members with busy schedules extending into their leisure time may not realise the problems of enforced idleness and loss of status suffered by the unemployed. The preremptory or unrealistic advice which they may offer with good intentions only exacerbates the hurt felt by the more unfortunate members of their family or fellowship. Perhaps the churches need a twentieth-century Booth or Barnardo to demonstrate how Christians can help these newly deprived people.

## *Justice*

The Christian response to unemployment was discussed at a recent conference in Newport (Gwent) under the heading 'Standing in the Market-Place'. The phrase in the title was taken from the parable in Matthew 20 where the owner of the vineyard cared enough to go repeatedly (instead of sending his agent) to the job centre of that day to ensure that any who

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## FOOTNOTES (continued from page 15)

*Servant of Jehovah*, London: The International Hebrew Christian Alliance, 1953, and Donald Guthrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 258-268.

<sup>21</sup> See John 6:39, 40, 44, 57; 7:16, 28-29; 8:16, 18, 26, 29.

<sup>22</sup> See John 13:20; 17:18.

<sup>23</sup> John 8:23.

<sup>24</sup> John 15:18.

<sup>25</sup> John 15:19-21; 17:14.

<sup>26</sup> John 17:15; 15:27.

<sup>27</sup> H. L. Ellison, *op. cit.*, p. 36. See also 1 Corinthians 1:21-29.

wanted to work could do so. At the end of the day he ensured that each was treated fairly, though his standards ran counter to expectations.

It would appear from the attendance at this Conference that few have grasped the magnitude of this social upheaval or the seriousness of its effects. Are we too busy maintaining accustomed services to help those who are not as busy as they would like to be? Do we need to be reminded of the castigation by Amos of the religious people living in comfort who forgot the deprived of their day?

The topic was introduced by Michael Moynagh of Trinity College, Bristol. With simple statistics he showed how the problem of the long-term unemployed had been growing. But the problem was even greater than the statistics showed as some who wanted to work were not included. There were many more school-leavers and redundant skilled and professional workers included, but not counted were those on temporary work-experience or training schemes and many housewives or retired people who chose not to register as available for work.

Drawing on investigations conducted while he worked on employment policy with the Confederation of British Industry, Dr. Moynagh indicated the general psychological effects of unemployment and appropriate pastoral responses. First comes the shock of enforced idleness and loss of status with a pretence that the disaster has not occurred or is merely an opportunity for a long holiday. Sooner or later reality asserts itself to be met by optimism in an active search for a

job within well defined limits of acceptability. If work does not ensue, hope is followed by depression, eventually turning to a fatalistic despair.

#### *Pastoral Care*

The appropriate pastoral roles are first to be supportive — to maintain the self-respect of the unemployed; the adjustive — to work towards a new balance in his outlook; then evaluative — to encourage him to assess his own needs and discover ways of meeting them; and finally motivational — to promote new ways of thinking about work. This new thinking involves widening the definition of work beyond paid employment to embrace all ways of establishing man's dominion over the laws of nature, for example, by sports, by arts, by social services, or by evangelistic activity. For when man is at work, his activity is designed to subdue one or more of the laws of nature; he is at leisure, biblically, when his attention is focused primarily on the glory of God.

#### *Action*

Other helpful roles for Christians beyond this caring role are a communicating role — to encourage churches and social agencies to relieve or reduce unemployment — and a catalytic role — to secure action from those with power to influence the situation.

Discussions of case studies in groups concentrated on the caring role. The four cases were drawn from different age groups with a variety of personal problems exacerbated, if not initiated, by unemployment. Not surprisingly the strongest expressions of feeling

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*Right up to the last days of his 72 years Francis Schaeffer worked ceaselessly to promote the Gospel. He died on May 15th after battling with cancer for six years.*

## **Dr. Francis Schaeffer – a tribute**

Never before and not since has there been a speaker like the one who visited Zion Baptist Chapel, Cuckfield, Sussex, on April 26th, 1964, just 20 years ago. He dressed differently, spoke differently, and was different. He disdained the old-fashioned pulpit probably because he thought it would inhibit him. Instead he sat on the communion table and lectured for an hour and three quarters! – a Sunday morning service with a difference! He explained how we have come into a new era – the post Christian culture. He quoted various philosophers but only three or four present really understood what he was saying. It did not matter as it was good to be challenged.

In those times my wife and I visited L'Abri at Huemoz, a village in Switzerland. Like so many others we were greatly impressed by the open house maintained, the lectures which were followed by open discussion and the relevance of the subjects in which the emphasis was on analysing the thought patterns of our

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### **THE NEW DEPRIVED** *(continued from page 17)*

came from the unemployed participants who insisted that, whatever the personal failings of the subjects, they needed constant assurance that they were loved by Christian friends and above all by God.

After the reports on the cases, Dr. Moynagh reiterated three biblical principles in regard to work. First, that work should be marked with justice, with fairness in its distribution and rewards; second, work involving fellowship in community is not a basis of individual worth; third, that work is a means of exercising man's responsibility to husband the world's resources. This biblical viewpoint, running counter to much current thinking about paid employment, should lead to a healthier attitude among the unemployed.

Finally, information about actual or

possible practical initiatives to help the unemployed was shared and some indication given of the available support from public bodies and charities. We were given the general advice to 'start small' in order to gain experience of coping with the less predictable difficulties of organisation in local circumstances. Varied suggestions together with sources of advice and support are collected in the British Youth for Christ guide, *Who Cares?* (available from BYFC, 80 Darlington Street, Wolverhampton WV1 4JD at 75p).

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day. It was my privilege to share with Dr. Schaeffer the reading of one of his first manuscripts, *Escape from Reason*. Little did we realise then that a tremendous injection of radical thought was about to be inserted into the evangelical world — something very necessary because the evangelicalism we inherited was circumscribed and confined in many ways. A liberation was needful and I believe that Dr. Schaeffer has been the instrument to provide it.

He began his ministry as a Presbyterian pastor in the U.S.A. but left to settle in Switzerland in 1948 with a commission from his denomination to initiate children's Bible clubs. In those early years Dr. J. Gresham Machen, by his fearless stand on the authority of Scripture, made a deep impression on Francis and Edith who were married in 1930. Loyalty to Scripture always characterised Dr. Schaeffer's ministry which was unique in two respects. Firstly there was an outstanding pastoral concern demonstrated in practice. That was basic. He spoke truth in love and that makes all the difference. One day while lecturing in Northern Ireland he described the musicians who composed pieces by throwing dice. Someone laughed. 'You should not laugh but weep,' was the response of the speaker. Secondly there was his boldness and insight as an apologist. He was not afraid to tackle the whole trend of thought through Church history but particularly over the last century and a half. The reading and study required for such a task is colossal, something well suited for a recluse who can read and read undisturbed. But Francis was willing to mix his study with the demands of counselling the constant stream of visitors who travelled far with the express purpose of gaining his help. What a contrast with A. W. Pink with whom it was very difficult to have any time at all! That is not meant as a criticism of A.W.P. whose literary contribution was outstanding. Our world would be poor indeed if there was no room for individualism and character.

Hans Rookmaaker of Holland was a great stimulus, help and partner to Schaeffer over the formative years of his thinking, bringing a wealth of knowledge, insight and illustration to the work in the realm of art, music and culture. *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* is a classic and that work stands well beside Dr. Schaeffer's best book, *The God who is There*, in which the author tackles the trends in philosophy, theology, art, music and culture. Rookmaaker by his own admission did not specialise in theology but in his field he was unexcelled. He brought a quality and authority to the illustrative material used by Francis which was important.

To sum up the apologetical aspect we would disagree with the notion that Christians should expose themselves to hedonistic modern literature, films and theatre. Let those truly called do it and the rest benefit from the result. An analogy is research in bacterial disease. We do not all have to expose ourselves to deadly diseases in order to develop vaccines. There is a fine balance to be preserved. We want to face the issues and be equipped to give honest answers to honest questions. But there are severe limits on the average Christian's involve-

ment in that which is sordid. With this caution I can now make the assertion that the compulsion to face right up to the pressing questions of our generation *and analyse them*, is Schaeffer's contribution of incalculable value.

Altogether Francis and Edith produced about 35 books and booklets. The human and practical was Edith's forte. Also she excelled in sharing the ongoing work of L'Abri in the most newsy of newsletters. Moving testimonies are woven into her books, *L'Abri*, *Hidden Art*, *What is a Family?* and *Tapestry*.

The Schaeffer family joined hand in hand to work as a team — three daughters and Franky. Susan is married to Ranald MacAulay who is shortly to take over the leadership of the work in Switzerland. Franky has pioneered in films and produced several in which Francis' teaching is presented, namely, *How Should we then Live*, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race*, and, *A Christian Manifesto*. I have often heard these criticised for imperfections just as I have read a criticism of Francis that he did not dress like a minister! But this is like criticising the colour of the plate on which a good meal is presented. Francis always dressed neatly and who can judge whether Swiss clothes are more Biblical in appearance than English?

In the mid 1970s Dr. Schaeffer partnered with Dr. C. Everett Koop in a strong pro-life anti-abortion campaign which is expounded in the book and film *Whatever Happened to the Human Race*.

Just before his last traumatic illness from which he recovered dramatically to fulfil a demanding series of engagements Francis wrote a book *The Great Evangelical Disaster* in which he acknowledges the practical help of his publisher Lane Dennis of Crossway Books, Westchester, III 60153. In this he shows that the authority of Scripture is basic to all moral issues and that relativism and the denial of absolutes is responsible for the slide in which we stand not only to lose the Church but our culture as well (p. 90).

That a number of gifted writers have been schooled by Dr. Schaeffer reveals the power of his influence — Os Guinness, Udo Middleman, Jerram Barrs, Donald J. Drew. That Friedemann Schafer of Pretoria, South Africa could prepare a doctoral thesis on the counselling methods of Francis Schaeffer for the department of psychology of the University of Pretoria demonstrates the breadth of Schaeffer's capacities in the counselling realm.

He would not want us to sound his praises but rather seek the favour of the Son of God and be ready for his coming. Nevertheless we must acknowledge our debt, lament his passing, and say as did David of Abner, 'Do you not realise that a prince and a great man has fallen in Israel this day?' (2 Sam. 3:38).

*This is the second in a series of articles on evangelism by Earl Blackburn. The first appeared in R.T. 79 in which he gave reasons why evangelism is a priority.*

# Hindrances to, and Mis-conceptions about Evangelism

In our last article we looked at the definition of evangelism, the scriptural mandate for evangelism, and some reasons why we should evangelize. We will now continue by looking at some hindrances to and mis-conceptions about this great priority of the Church.

## *A. Hindrances to Evangelism*

Our Lord Jesus Christ tells of a man that had two sons (Matt. 21:28-32). The father went to the first son and told him to go and work in his vineyard. The son responded with a definite no, but afterward repented and went to work. The father then went to the second son and told him to do likewise. Immediately the second son said, 'I go sir', and went not. Christ quickly followed this parable by asking which of the two sons did the will of his father? Obviously it was the first son.

If we, like the first son, are to do the will of our Father, we must also go to work in his vineyard through evangelism. And just as the second son was hindered from working in his father's vineyard, many present-day churches and Christians are likewise hindered in their outreach! While we do not know the things that interfered with the second son, we do know some obstacles that hinder God's people today. Let us look at some of these.

1. The fear of man is a major hindrance in evangelism. Many times believers would like to speak to someone of Christ and then their hearts are seized by the reality of the situation in life of the individual with whom they wish to speak. The person may be important, wealthy, famous, powerful (physically and otherwise), spiteful, aggressive and dangerous, or just a good neighbour that you would not want to offend. Others dread the thought of being rejected or scorned. These and numerous other factors work together to breed a fear of man which in turn brings a snare (Prov. 29:25). Men-pleasers must especially be watchful over this subtle terror which silences their mouths, because as Paul states if we seek to please men we cease being the servants of Christ (Gal. 1:10).

The cure for this sin is to realize that men can only destroy the body, but God can destroy both body and soul in hell (Matt. 10:28). Perfect love casts out fear of man, rejection etc. We should therefore 'sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread' (Isa. 8:13).

2. Lack of faith in the power of the gospel is another factor that hinders evangelism. We rejoice in the might of our sovereign God. We gladly preach and tell other Christians, who do not hold as high a view of God as ourselves, that God can do anything he pleases. Nobody can hinder him for his power is irresistible and God shall accomplish all that he has purposed to do. Romans 1:16 is freely quoted and yet our practice is, many times, inconsistent with our beliefs. Neighbours, friends, co-workers etc. have never once heard from our lips this message which God declares is his power unto salvation unto all that believe.

Paul in quoting David said, 'I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak' (2 Cor. 4:13). His belief and confidence in Christ and the gospel caused Paul to speak to all types of men everywhere and endure severe hardships and persecutions. It is no wonder the apostle could testify, 'Yea, so I have strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named . . . ' (Rom. 15:20); his faith in the power of the Gospel produced this holy striving to evangelize. Are we striving to speak as Paul did? Are we 'speaking'? If not, then we must face the question, do we really believe? This Gospel has saved us, can it not save others?

3. Forgetfulness as to the condition of man is another hindrance to evangelism. In our fast paced 20th century with its many schedules that must be met, it is easy to forget that the person we rub shoulders with the most is in possession of a totally corrupt nature which is under the wrath of God and, that they are unable to remedy their helpless situation. The man who works at the supermarket where you shop, the lady who is driving the car in front of you, the policeman at the corner and myriads of others who have hopes, sorrows, joys, ambitions, families, just like you, are in a sad and deplorable condition that will lead them to destruction. Yet many times we don't even think about it! We must never forget that the multitudes of people around us are dead and must be made alive again; they are guilty, lost, depraved and hopeless and in imminent danger of eternal ruin!

4. To add to the problem of our forgetfulness of man's condition, we find that coldness of heart about that condition also hinders evangelism. No concern about man's pitiful plight and a 'don't care' attitude is often prevalent. When we are cold in heart towards sinners, we are not imitators of our great Saviour who was moved with compassion when he saw the multitudes, because they fainted and were scattered abroad (Matt. 9:36). Could it be that this coldness of heart stems from a lack of love and devotion to him who first loved us? Richard Baxter puts it well when he says, 'Oh, if you have the hearts of Christians or of men in you, let them yearn towards your poor ignorant, ungodly neighbours. Alas, there is but a step betwixt them and death and hell; . . . Have you hearts of rock, that cannot pity men in such a case as this? If you believe not the Word of God, and the dangers of sinners, why are you Christians yourselves? If you do believe it, why do you not bestir yourself to the helping of others? Do you not care who

is damned, so long as you be saved? If so, you have sufficient cause to pity yourselves, for it is a frame of spirit utterly inconsistent with grace. . . .’

5. Personal unconfessed and unrepented sin in one’s life is a hindrance to evangelism. Just as sin blocks our fellowship and communion with Christ, our relationship with our family and others; it does the same in our talking to the unconverted. When our consciences’ smite us because we have not dealt with personal individual sins, it becomes difficult to talk to people who are in bondage to sin and need salvation.

The answer to our guilty silence because of our sins is to bring them before God in confession and repentance. God, upon the authority of his Word, will cleanse and restore fellowship. There is nothing like a clean conscience, void of offence, before God. This makes for a free heart and a loose tongue in speaking to men about the Saviour of sinners.

6. Another hindrance to evangelism is prayerlessness. How futile our efforts seem to be when we have not sought the face of our God for power in speaking to sinners. Someone has ably stated, ‘Before we can rightly talk to men about God, we must talk to God about men.’ Here lies the secret to successful evangelism.

We want the power of Knox, Edwards, and Whitefield but we are not willing to expend the effort to labour for that power, at the throne of grace! According to his own testimony, George Whitefield frequently spent whole nights in prayer and often rose from his bed in the night to intercede for perishing souls. It is no wonder that he saw multitudes brought to Christ. Henry Fish, in the booklet *Power In The Pulpit*, tells of the ‘seraphic Robert Roberts, Clynnog, rolling on the floor of the hay-loft, weeping and praying. Why is the poor man in such agony? He is starting on one of his preaching journeys and is anxious lest the Spirit of God be not with him to convert the world and edify the saints.’ We must pray for the power of the Spirit of God and boldness that we might not be hindered in evangelism. Prayerlessness is truly a deadly sin!

7. The last hindrance that I want to mention is discouragement. None of us are exempt from this scourge. It strikes at the most unexpected time and is a merciless enemy of our souls. If we yield to its influence through the weakness of the flesh and the activity of Satan, we will eventually lie down and become useless in the service of God and to the souls of men. Discouragement will rob us of all expectation, and triumph in Christ and leave us destitute of any desire to evangelize.

We must resist this wicked villain and cast our burden upon the Lord. God spoke to Joshua and said, ‘Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, *neither be thou dismayed*: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest’ (Josh. 1:9). The word ‘dismayed’, in this

verse, means to prostrate or to be broken down and has the connotation of even lying down. God is commanding Joshua, as well as ourselves, to be strong and refuse to be broken and lie down for he is with us wherever we go, especially as we go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).

In concluding this section on hindrances to evangelism, let it not be said that we are among the number of those who always talk about evangelism, but never do it!

### *B. Mis-conceptions about Evangelism*

Because of the new evangelicalism created by Finney and Moody, the twentieth century has brought forth much confusion and many mis-conceptions about true evangelism. Numerous false ideas and notions have crept into churches and are accepted as normal and biblical. Not to embrace certain of these beliefs and practices is thought to be heretical in some parts of the world. And we that believe the doctrines of free and sovereign grace are not without mis-conceptions also. A few of the mis-conceptions are:

1. We are to produce results. America is plagued by this mentality which places the power, burden and responsibility of converting the lost solely in the hands of the witness or soulwinner. The propagators of this teaching reason that since God commanded us to go, he also gave us the ability to produce results. One pastor in Utah actually told me that the Holy Spirit had nothing to do with a sinner until he had won the person to Christ. Then the Holy Spirit takes over at that point. Pastors are taught that unless they have won a certain number of souls to Christ within a year they have not been successful. They teach this to their people. As a result, all sorts of psychological manipulation and deception is used in evangelism.

Paul the Apostle knew the folly of this mis-conception when he declared, 'I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase' (see 1 Cor. 3:5-7). He was honest about his insufficiency and realized only too well the power to convert sinners was of God and not of himself (see also 2 Cor. 4:3-7).

2. Another mis-conception is the idea that we are to try and reach only those who are receptive. The 'Church Growth Movement' emphasises this idea. The areas where people are not responding to the gospel are usually to be avoided. Put all of your time and efforts into the areas where people seem open, we are told. Because of data and statistics that have been gathered, certain types of people are regarded as unwinnable. It is strange that usually the ones who promote this idea are arminian and believe that Christ died for all men. They fail to see that all men are unresponsive and unwinnable until the Holy Spirit effectually draws them to Christ, giving them the grace to repent and the faith to believe.

3. Following the same point of view, but on the other end of the spectrum, is the mis-conception of preaching *only* to 'sensible sinners' and to the 'awakened elect'. This is of course hyper-calvinism. Many precious texts which deal with

the free offer of the gospel are either neglected or explained away (e.g. Isa. 45:22, 55:1-3; Eze. 33:11; Mark 16:15; Acts 17:30, 31; Rev. 22:17).

David Jones in commenting on Romans 1:14, concisely gives the proper biblical answer to both numbers 2 and 3 by saying, '... in light of modern 'Church growth' teachings, responsive and unresponsive, winnable and unwinnable, God does not command us to seek out his elect, either by sifting experiences or by feeding data into a computer, he commands us to preach the gospel to every creature, indiscriminately and without reservation whatsoever. The gospel is for all men and it is to be seriously and sincerely offered to all men.'

4. A very destructive mis-conception is the equating of modern methodology with scriptural evangelism. Modern methods such as 'altar calls' or the invitation system and the salesmanship approach have led to countless numbers of people thinking they are saved and secure, when they in actuality are barren of the new birth. To illustrate this point one evening in my house to house evangelism I came across a young couple that invited me into their home. They were of Protestant background and the husband informed me he was saved. I asked him what assurance he had that he was truly a Christian and he was quick to tell me he went forward at a Billy Graham Crusade and was sure everything was alright between him and God. I turned to his wife and asked her if she was saved and she replied that she was not because she did not go forward at the Billy Graham meeting with her husband. Turning to the Word of God I explained to them that going forward at a religious meeting did not, nor could not take away sin, give them a new heart, or make them right with God. Only repentance and faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, through the supernatural workings of the Spirit of God could they be accepted in the sight of God and be assured of eternal life. This upset them and I had to leave their home with the husband still steeped in his deception.

To further illustrate I was invited to sit on an ordination council in which a brother that held to the doctrines of grace was being examined. The council consisted of a variety of pastors, ranging from Arminian to moderate Calvinists. After several hours of questioning the candidate was asked how he gave a public invitation at the end of a worship service. His reply, in essence, was that he did not give one. There immediately ensued a fiery twenty minute discussion. Finally I raised my hand and the moderator gave me permission to speak. I reminded the council we were gathered to question the candidate about his theology, his call, and qualifications for the ministry, not to determine his orthodoxy by whether he practised a novel innovation that was less than 175 years old. I pointed out that one could not find the practice in Church history before the early 1800's and that historically Baptists were in total agreement with our brother. The moderator then said since most Baptists, today, give public invitations it appears they have moved up to bigger and better things. I was grieved at the humanistic reasoning that permeated the meeting.

The problem, in both instances, was the misunderstanding of what true evangelism really is. While liberalism has slain its thousands, Arminian decisional regeneration has slain its tens of thousands!

5. We must be faithful in dealing with serious error on the other side and refer to the mis-conception that we are not to expect results. Many a pastor and Christian holding to the doctrines of grace has been led astray by this erroneous idea. Because we believe in unconditional election and effectual calling there is the tendency to believe only a few will be saved. While there are such statements as Matthew 7:13, 14 there are other such passages such as Revelation 5:11 which encourage belief in a generous harvest. It is wrong and tragic to have a defeatist attitude. Spurgeon put it well when he said, 'Yet, as a rule, God has sent us to preach in order that through the gospel of Jesus Christ the sons of men may be reconciled to him. Here and there a preacher . . . , like Noah may labour on and bring none beyond his own family circle in the ark of salvation; . . . but for the most part, the work of preaching is intended to save the hearers. It is ours to sow even in stony places, where no fruit rewards our toil; but still we are bound to look for a harvest, and mourn if it does not appear in due time.'

With such a great God and powerful Saviour as we have, why should we not expect for him to move on the souls of men and bring many sons into glory? Let us sow with expectancy and pray with confidence for a mighty ingathering of sinners.

6. Next, among the mis-conceptions about evangelism is the belief that we should not press sinners to give an immediate response. Many of us have dealt with concerns as to what to say to someone who wants to be saved. Professor Donald MacLeod dealt with this at a Leicester Conference. He insisted that 'we must call upon men to *decide* for Christ. We must not merely tell them to go home and think about the gospel.' They must be challenged to respond 'in the pew' [or wherever one is witnessing]. 'Faith is volitional in character. We must tell men to embrace Christ as prophet, priest, and king and as preachers we need to work hard to attain a theological vocabulary that is both accurate and contemporary' (*Banner of Truth*, issue 238, p. 20).

While some may think this smacks of Arminianism, it is not so. When pressure is applied which omits repentance that is wrong, but to strongly urge repentance is Biblical. That is what Paul did when speaking to King Agrippa (Acts 26:26-29). Even though repentance and faith are gifts of God, we must still press upon sinners the necessity to do both now! For an individual to procrastinate and reject Christ makes their sins more heinous and angers God who was so gracious in giving them an overture of mercy. We must urge them to close with Christ and not put off the issues of life and death.

7. A further mis-conception is that evangelism is to be done only in the church building. Many think there is power in a building and that God only blesses

within those four walls. In many instances, time and energy is spent trying to get sinners to come to church with no avail; whereas if the energy was properly channelled to pray and speak to the individual of their sins and Christ, it could be that the soul would be converted.

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not against getting people to come to church to hear the Word of God expounded. I believe that the preaching of the Word is the *chief* means that God uses to save souls. What I am saying is that the church building is not the only place to evangelize. It is but one venue among a host of other places to spread the good news.

8. The last mis-conception is that evangelism is to be done by the pastors and elders only. The view prevails that the ministers are hired to do the evangelism, along with all their other work. They are called to give themselves to prayer and ministry of the Word (Acts 6:4). Add to this their pastoral work and inevitable administrative responsibilities and you will discover that many pastors work many more hours a week than the average. No it is the responsibility of both ministers and church members together to engage in evangelism.

Peter commands that each believer set apart the Lord in their hearts and be ready to give an answer to everyman of the hope that is in them (1 Pet. 3:15). In the book of Acts we find that persecution came upon the church at Jerusalem and everyone was driven out of the city except the apostles. 'Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word' (Acts 8:1-4). Observe the point: *every church member evangelizing!*

Again, Spurgeon has some choice thoughts on this matter. 'It should be our ambition, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to work the entire church into a fine missionary condition, to make it like a Leyden jar charged to the full with divine electricity, so that whatever comes in contact with it shall feel its power. What can one man do alone? What can he not do with an army of enthusiasts around him? Labour to gather a church alive for Jesus, every member energetic to the full and the whole in incessant activity for the salvation of men' (*Lectures To My Students*, pp. 346-347).

The chief object of the Christian and the churches is the glory of God. May the Spirit of God arouse us, that hold to the precious truths and establishing hundreds of thousands of churches around the world for Christ's name sake!

**CAREY MINISTERS' CONFERENCE**

**SWANWICK**

**JANUARY 8-11, 1985**

*Gratitude is expressed to Mr. Butler who is a member of a sovereign grace Baptist church for his work on a sensitive subject. Writers on revival all seem to struggle with the problem of depending too much on the few books available with the result that those sources are over-quoted. The editor would be far more cautious in citing the Hebrides revival especially out of respect for Donald MacLeod who has a healthy and desirable caution about many of the accounts that are attributed to his homeland. What is urgently needed is reliable specialisation in this area of Church history. There are books recently published which have profuse authentication of revivals. Reference has been made in these pages before to six volumes on revivals republished by Richard Owen Roberts of Wheaton, Illinois. It would be good if the Evangelical Library, London, could devote a special section of the Library to books which authenticate or describe revivals, and if all concerned about this subject could donate their individual books to this one central source. Researchers would then have adequate material. The Evangelical Library does have books and unpublished manuscripts on the subject of Revival, but not brought into one locus.*

*Although the material which follows could have benefited from a source such as just been suggested the features outlined are all true features of the amazing phenomenon of spiritual awakening, and, for those willing to research, those characteristics could be documented almost ad infinitum. See a little documentation on page 32.*

## Is the Charismatic Movement a Revival?

by C. S. Butler of Rainham, Kent

The charismatic movement is sometimes referred to as 'the charismatic revival', and sometimes writers sympathetic to the movement have sought to explain it in terms of revival.

If we compare the movement with revivals of the past, revivals which charismatics themselves would recognise as movements of the Spirit, we shall be able to see clearly whether it is revival or not.

First of all we need to have a definition of what revival is. Duncan Campbell, a man experienced in revival, defined it as 'a community saturated with God'.<sup>1</sup> Emyr Roberts defines revival as 'the conviction and conversion of a great number of people, taking place contemporaneously, publicly and very often dramatically, to the great increase and expansion of the Church. There is no fundamental, qualitative difference between the work of the Spirit in the case of one individual and the work of the Spirit in that which we call revival, but only a difference of degree.

Both are the work of the same Spirit of God; both are equally miraculous and supernatural, like the mystery of the wind 'which bloweth where it listeth!'<sup>2</sup>

There are a number of features noticeable in times of revival. Firstly, there are areas where the presence of God can be felt. Pastor Harry Waite says that, 'there are areas of the presence of God, into which you can move geographically and out of which you can come and pockets of revival where there is no sense of God's presence'. And he continues, 'Not everyone is saved in a revival but everyone is conscious of the presence of God'.<sup>3</sup>

This geographical presence can be illustrated many times from the records of past revivals. Pastor Waite, in the same sermon tells the story of a Lancashire man and his two daughters who travelled to Wales in 1904 to witness the revival for themselves. They were heading for Rhos just outside Wrexham. 'They came off the train at Chester and got into the train for

Wrexham and they said to the platform attendant, because they were strangers, "How will we know when we get to Wrexham?" and without hesitation the station man said, "You'll feel it" and they didn't quite understand what he meant but as they drew near to Wrexham they felt the presence of God in the train.<sup>4</sup>

During the Hebrides revival in 1949 we are told that 'The presence of God was a universal, inescapable fact, at home, in the church and by the roadside. Many who visited Lewes during this period became vividly conscious of the spiritual atmosphere before they reached the island.'<sup>5</sup>

One man came to a minister in great concern for his soul. The minister asked him, 'What touched you? I haven't seen you at any of the services.' "No!" he replied, "I haven't been to church but this revival is in the air, I can't get away from the Spirit."<sup>6</sup>

A second feature is that people became very concerned about eternal issues and over the state of their souls.

Jonathan Edwards, in his famous Narrative states that, 'There scarcely was a single person in the town, old or young, left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world. . . . This work of God . . . soon made a great alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following and 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then.'<sup>7</sup>

On the island of Lewes there were occasions when the preacher's voice was drowned by the sound of men and women weeping uncontrollably. Sometimes the preaching had to be halted because of the distress of those listening.<sup>8</sup>

Jonathan Edwards relates in another part of the Narrative, 'Persons are sometimes brought to the borders of despair, and it looks as black as midnight to them a little

before the day dawns in their souls. Some few instances there have been, of persons who have had such a sense of God's wrath for sin, that they have been overborn; and made to cry out under the astonishing sense of their guilt, wondering that God suffers such guilty wretches to live upon earth and that he doth not immediately send them to hell.'<sup>9</sup>

In the Hebrides and the New England revivals secular work seems largely to have been set aside for a period because of the great concern over eternal issues.

The same concern and spirit of distress expressed itself in the Korean revival in 1907. The 'Spirit flamed forth and spread till practically every church, not only in North Korea, but throughout the entire peninsula had received its share of the blessing'.

The sense of sin was almost overwhelming and even children wept over their wrongdoings. Some went 'from house to house, confessing to individuals they had injured, returning stolen property and money, not only to Christians but to heathen as well, till the whole city (Pyongyang) was stirred'.<sup>10</sup>

William Blair, commenting on the confession of serious sins which took place at the time, says, 'Such sins cannot be confessed without the whole nature being torn as with a death struggle . . . [But] the result was everywhere wholesome, except where men deliberately resisted or sought to deceive the Spirit and their brethren.'<sup>11</sup>

Bruce Hunt is keen to point out in the introduction to 'The Korean Pentecost' that little charismatic phenomena accompanied this revival. He states, 'It is noteworthy that in Korea itself, and especially in a denomination (Presbyterian) the majority of whose missionaries have recognised the 1907 revival as having had a great influence on church growth, there has been so little of what in the West is

known as Pentecostalism. It is only in recent years [this was written in 1977] that the tongues movement and the emphasis on faith healing have become popular in Korea.<sup>12</sup>

Thirdly, we note the joy of the worshippers in a time of revival. Past revivals have often been noted for the hymns which have been produced. The hymns of the Wesleys, for example, came largely as a result of the so-called Methodist revival. The revival in Wales in 1904 was another revival where singing played a very large part — in fact some have criticised this aspect of the revival as it tended to displace the preaching of the Word.<sup>13</sup>

Fourthly, the most important aspect of any revival is the revelation of the character of God. Men, women and children have become overwhelmed with the revelation of God by the Holy Spirit in their own souls.

Rev. J. T. Job, a minister in Bethesda, Wales, tells of a night in 1904 when 'I felt the Holy Spirit like a torrent of light causing my whole nature to shake; I saw Jesus Christ — and my nature melted at His feet; and I saw myself — and I abhorred it!'<sup>14</sup>

Jonathan Edwards tells how, 'Our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ, the glory of the way of salvation, the wonderful, free and sovereign grace of God, His glorious work in the conversion of a soul, the truth and certainty of the great things of God's Word, the sweetness of the views of His perfections, etc.'<sup>15</sup>

In another place he says, 'Many have spoken much of their hearts being drawn out in love to God and Christ; and of their minds being wrapped up in delightful contemplation of the glory and wonderful grace of God, the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ; and of their souls going forth in longing desire after God and Christ. Several of our young children have

expressed much of this; and have manifested a willingness to leave father and mother and all things in the world to go and be with Christ. Some persons, have had such longing desires after Christ, as to take away their natural strength. Some have been so overcome with a sense of the dying love of Christ, to such poor, wretched, and unworthy creatures, as to weaken the body. Several persons have had a great sense of the glory of God, and excellency of Christ, that nature and life seem almost to sink under it; and in all probability if God had showed them a little more of himself, it would have dissolved their frame. I have seen some, and conversed with them in such frames, who have certainly been perfectly sober, and very remote from anything like enthusiastic wildness. And they have talked, when able to speak, of the glory of God's perfections, the wonderfulness of his grace in Christ, and their own unworthiness, in such a manner as cannot be perfectly expressed after them. Their sense of their exceeding littleness and vileness, and their disposition to abase themselves before God, has appeared to be great in proportion to their light and joy'<sup>16</sup>

How do these features compare with the charismatic movement of today?

First of all, we cannot see that it qualifies as a revival if we accept the definitions of Duncan Campbell and Emyr Roberts. The whole community has certainly not been affected.

Secondly, there are no areas where the presence of God may be felt. No doubt the charismatic would claim that the Holy Spirit's presence is felt in their meetings, but unfortunately this does not compare with revival. Very often the feelings that the charismatic is subject to are the result of deliberate pressure brought to bear by the leaders. In other words it is a manifestation of the flesh, rather than the Spirit.

Thirdly, there is usually no great concern displayed or expressed by converts of the

movement or those who claim to have received 'the baptism of the Spirit'. There is no great sense of sin and whilst repentance is sometimes taught, it is not stressed very much. Indeed if a person displays great concern and distress over the state of his soul, he might well be thought to be in 'bondage' or to need some specialised ministry such as casting out of demons.

Fourthly, whilst there is considerable 'joy' displayed in meetings, this is often a manifestation of the flesh. There is a light-hearted approach to the worship. Hymns are not used very much; the preference is for very simple (indeed often childish) choruses. David Pawson suggests that one of the first signs that God is moving in revival is through music, indeed he goes so far as to say that this is a proof that God is moving.<sup>17</sup>

Dancing is also something which occurs frequently in charismatic meetings, especially the larger gatherings. It is encouraged by leaders like David Pawson and again is looked upon as a sign that the Spirit is moving. Sadly much of this 'dancing' is clearly a manifestation of natural exuberance i.e. it is of the flesh. It is also interesting to note that 'dancing in the Spirit' can be learned rather as tongues can be learned. Whilst there are references to dancing in the Old Testament, there are none in the New Testament which suggest that the early disciples danced in their meetings. It is noticeable too that very few manifestations of dancing have occurred during historic revivals. One exception would be the Welsh revival of 1762. This manifestation appears to have been 'the practice of jumping in response to the Word preached',<sup>18</sup> a practice which gave rise to the nickname 'Welsh Jumpers'. This phenomenon would seem to have little in common with 'dancing in the Spirit' as practiced by the charismatic movement.

Lastly, and more seriously, the character of the God revealed by the charismatic move-

ment is often a caricature of the God revealed in Scripture. He is not a God to be feared — charismatics are fond of quoting the verse 'Perfect love casts out fear' (1 John 4:8). He loves everyone and doesn't seem too concerned over sin; indeed if some charismatics are to be believed he seems to encourage it on occasions.

Some charismatic teachers suggest that God is a God who puts himself at the disposal of the Christian; we can give him orders. Dr. Yonggi Cho, the Korean Pentecostal minister, in his strange book, *The Fourth Dimension*, tells how he encouraged a spinster who desired to get married, to 'order a husband from God'. They mapped out together what this husband would be like — Caucasian, tall, skinny, musical, a schoolteacher, etc. Dr. Cho then told her to read this list to the Lord until she received what she wanted.<sup>19</sup>

Is the God whom we can manipulate in this way, the God of the Bible?

We, in the churches of the West, need a revival desperately. We need a fresh revelation of the character of the God we worship; a revelation of his holiness, his majesty and his grace. It has not come through the charismatic movement, although this movement claims it is 'a movement of the Spirit of God'.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> *Duncan Campbell*, p. 121.
- <sup>2</sup> *Revival and Its Fruit* by Emrys Roberts and R. Geraint Gruffydd, published by the Evangelical Library of Wales 1981, p. 4.
- <sup>3</sup> *Peace and Truth*, 1981 No. 1, p. 8.
- <sup>4</sup> *Peace and Truth*, 1981 No. 1, p. 8.
- <sup>5</sup> *Duncan Campbell*, p. 121.
- <sup>6</sup> *Duncan Campbell*, pp. 121-122.
- <sup>7</sup> *The Narrative* by Jonathan Edwards, abridged and with a biographical sketch, notes and comments by J. A. Stewart, published by Revival Literature, 1844, 73rd Avenue, Phila. 26, published 1957, p. 25.
- <sup>8</sup> *Duncan Campbell*, p. 128.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Narrative*, p. 37.
- <sup>10</sup> *The Korean Pentecost and the Sufferings which Followed* by William Blair and Bruce Hunt, published by the Banner of Truth Trust, 1977, pp. 76-77.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Korean Pentecost*, pp. 76-77.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Korean Pentecost*, p. 8.
- <sup>13</sup> There are some ways in which the Welsh Revival of 1904 was different to other revivals. The over-emphasis

(continued on page 32)

# Authentic Revival

The Rev. Nathanael Macaulay Brown describing the practical and blessed results of the 1859 revival in county Derry had this to say, 'Individuals are changed — families are changed — churches are changed. A family where there is no prayer and praise is now the exception, and not the rule. Prayer meetings have sprung up all over the land, like stars in the firmament, and are sources of light and guidance to many in their own particular spheres. So many as fourteen can be enumerated as belonging to one moderate sized congregation. Crime cognisable by the law has almost entirely disappeared. (*Authentic Records of Revivals* edited by William Reid and published by Richard Owen Roberts, Illinois, 1980, p. 346.)

In the book just adverted to there is a word which appears over and over again. It is the word *stricken*. In many places scores of people of all ages were stricken down spiritually and physically being virtually paralysed by an overwhelming sense of conviction of sin and lostness. 'There were thirty or forty stricken down, and their rending cries for mercy were such as baffle all attempts at description' (p. 278). 'A young man — one who had been a believer for more than a year — rushed out of the adjoining vestry to see who had been "stricken" (he had heard groans of despair). Going to the place where the man lay, he lifted his drooping head, glanced at the sorrowing face, and turning round with gushing tears of joy, exclaimed, "Oh, it's my brother!"' (p. 369). Another instance of individual 'strickenness' reads, 'A young man on leaving a meeting began to ridicule the matter, and was stricken down on the road, about a quarter of a mile off, and had to be carried home to his master's house, where he lay prostrated for the space of three days. But we read on the same page (279) that it was not unusual for individuals to be stricken down at home who had not been to meetings, at least for several days previously.

The Rev. James Warwick of Carrickfergus testified that about 400 were awakened in his congregation, about 200 of whom experienced bodily symptoms and prostration. 'In some instances the individual would be smitten instantaneously with a sense of conviction of sin, would fall prostrate, and some cases nearly powerless, screaming for mercy and pardon, would writhe in the agony of despair, in fear of

the Divine wrath, and continue in this state for a day or two. And in one or two cases the persons continued so for more than a week. One person was nineteen days under conviction of sin before finding peace, but the most of them found peace in a day or two. Some few, but they were very few, had these bodily manifestations more than once' (p. 257).

Rev. William Blair witnessed many phenomena and discusses these in detail (p. 47ff.), and the Rev. John Stuart of Ballycarry claimed that among all who were 'stricken down', he did not know of a single backslider (p. 19).

A very moving account of the revival spreading to a school is provided by the Rev. George Stevenson of Pulteneytown. Distress of soul spread rapidly until there was loud weeping in all parts of the school. It had become a Bochim (see Judges 2:1-5). When dismissed the children went home weeping, and when asked by friends the cause, one said, 'For the load of sin that is on my soul,' and another, 'For Jesus to come to my soul,' and another, 'For fear they should be taken and I be left' (p. 447).

In the same account the minister observes that a striking feature of the work was the grace of God bestowed upon *families*. He reported instances of whole households that were awakened and brought to rejoice in the Lord.

C. H. Spurgeon describes how he had occasion to visit Dublin and on the voyage to that city he discovered that the revival had turned the ship into a floating church — a very Bethel for God. He quoted Hervey who once said, 'Each floating ship a floating hell,' and further that of all classes of men the sailor is the least likely to be reached. On the way back from Dublin Spurgeon said that he did not expect to find another ship like the one he had come on, but it was precisely the same. The crew had marvellously come to a saving knowledge of the truth (see sermon no. 296 preached on January 26th, 1860).

In concluding I would confess to have witnessed very few instances of souls overcome with conviction of sin, and known first hand of only one occasion of the breath of the Spirit moving across several groups of young people at prayer with saving results. But even through the very little I have seen I can say that I know that our greatest need is for genuine spiritual awakening. Also I would urge that we keep our souls hungry for revival by reading accounts of past revivals and then praying that the whole world might be so visited again. *Editor.*

on singing and the consequently lower place given to preaching was one area. Evan Roberts also had strange ideas regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit. He used to ask the congregation to repeat a prayer, requesting the descent of the Spirit, over and over again. He was also in correspondence with men of a pentecostal outlook and seems to have had a great deal of sympathy with them.

<sup>14</sup> *Revival and Its Fruit*, p. 9.

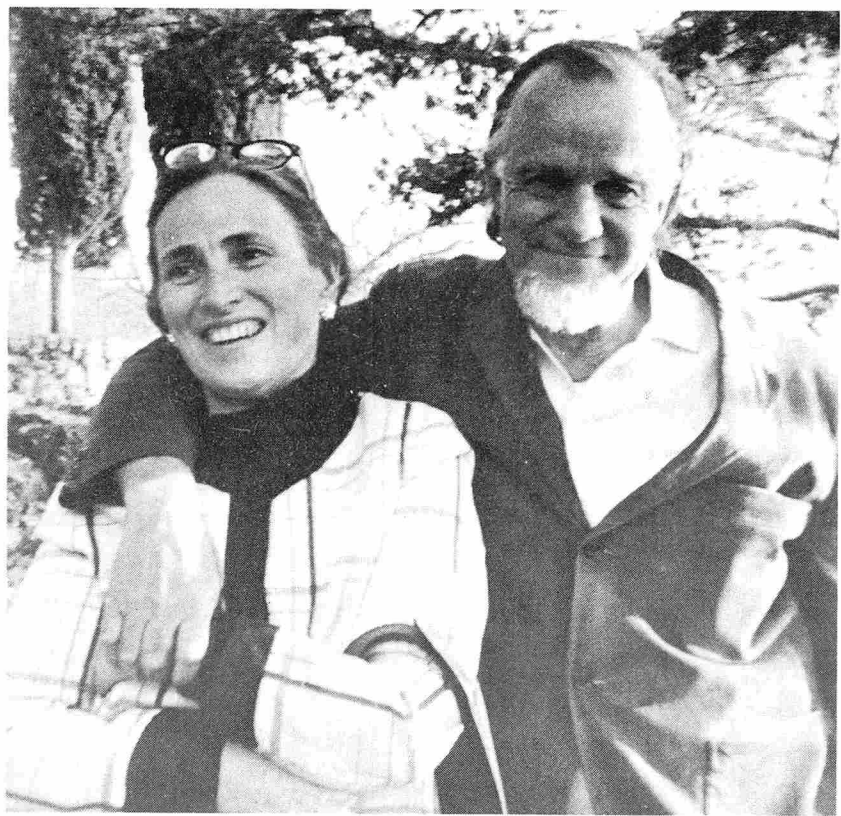
<sup>15</sup> *The Narrative*, p. 27.

<sup>16</sup> *The Narrative*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>17</sup> David Pawson Tape.

<sup>18</sup> *Revival and Its Fruit*, p. 20, etc.

<sup>19</sup> *The Fourth Dimension* by Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, published by Logos International, Plainfield, New Jersey, 1979, pp. 18-21.



*Edith and Francis Schaeffer, see page 18 following*

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## Editor

**ERROLL HULSE**

*P.O. Box 106, Haywards Heath, Sussex RH16 1QL.  
and from September 1st, c/o Eurobooks,  
361 Aigburth Road, Liverpool L17 0BP.*

## Associate Editors

**DAVID KINGDON**

**JOHN DAVISON**, Scotland

**JIM VAN ZYL**, South Africa

**WAYNE MACK**, U.S.A.

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