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EDITORIAL

"Ministry To-Morrow" is *the* talking point in most of our local fraternals — at least we hope it is. Fraternal secretaries have been asked to share their re-actions with the B.M.F. and it is quite possible that our Fellowship can provide a useful forum for the continuing discussion. An immense amount of hard work has gone into the preparation and production of the Report and the Commission on the Ministry may be assured of our gratitude for it. But if their work is not to be assigned to what Gordon Rupp once described as "the decorous graveyard of denominational archives", then let is be thoroughly examined and carefully assessed by all our men. It is quite possible that some fraternals may find that they want to implement some aspects of the Report and we trust they will encourage men to give papers on a number of questions raised by it. Others will find themselves unhappy about some of its material and may even question its assumptions. If the Report gives rise to serious discussion and wise action, then the Commission will be encouraged. Local fraternals who can produce good papers on the subject might care to send them on to us for possible publication. All we ask is that the immense subject of our ministry in the contemporary world be discussed both positively and creatively. It may well be that there are new patterns which will have to emerge. There are certainly immense tasks before us now, and He who is always sufficient helps us daily to discern our priorities.

CHRISTIANITY AND HUMANISM: MAN'S FREEDOM AND DIGNITY

The longing for freedom is widespread in the human race. Think of some aspects of that longing: the longing for freedom in any community to express opinions without let or hindrance, the desire for freedom to practice any religious belief and cult that the individual chooses without hindrance; the desire to be free from the persecution for what one believes or thinks or does; the desire to be free from acute poverty and the terrible hardships which go with acute poverty, and these are forms of freedom which I think all of us would desire and applaud. Then there are other aspects of freedom often desired which may be more controversial. There are those who wish as individuals to be free from any restraint whatsoever, any discipline whatsoever, any kind of authority whatsoever, and those are ideals of freedom about which we would have to ask a lot of questions and we would not wholeheartedly, I think, associate ourselves with them without first asking a lot of questions.

So, freedom is a matter of widespread human concern but it is also a matter that calls for clear thinking about what it really means. Now what does it really mean? The average man's popular idea of freedom is this—that my freedom means being able to do just what I like, as and when I like to do it. But if a person pursues freedom in that kind of way he is likely to find himself very soon in contradictions and frustrations. For instance, supposing that, regarding your freedom as doing what you like as and when you like it, you indulge that freedom, let's say, on Monday and Tuesday, and again on Wednesday, and again on Thursday. When Friday comes, you may discover that there is something that you have been ardently wanting to be doing on Friday and yet you can't do it because the indulgence of your freedom on the four preceding days has undermined your will and your determination to be doing what may have been a hard task. Thus the definition of a man's freedom, as doing what he likes as and when he likes it, breaks down in contradictions and so we have to go back to the beginning again and see if we can get a better definition of freedom. Here let me mention two points. The first is this, that if we are discussing freedom we have to consider not only freedom *from* certain things but also freedom *for* certain things. You can be free from half-a-dozen things you dislike very much and be very pleased, but what are you free for? Free to go where and how and to what goals?

But the other point is this, that the self-contradictory nature of the superficial view of freedom is so palpable that another definition seems called for, and I put to you this other definition in the light of the breakdown of the rather superficial one which first we tried. What do we think of this definition of freedom: my freedom does not mean my power to do what I like as and when I like it, but it means my power to unite all my faculties in the consistent pursuit of some goal that I have chosen and to reach that goal successfully. That, I think, gives you a rather more consistent picture, and if that is what freedom means, it means that you choose certain objectives; you are ready to discipline yourself in the steady pursuit of those objectives of your choice and while it is freedom indeed it also involves some restraints, preferably restraints that you impose upon yourself in view of the goal that you are so eager to pursue.

Now let me mention at this point the Christian belief about freedom. It is this: that God is the being who is completely and wholly free. God alone has perfect freedom. That God created the human race in his own image, after His own likeness in order to share with them bit by bit the freedom which He Himself possesses perfectly. The human race, God's creatures and children, discover freedom by choosing purposes which are God's purposes and pursuing those purposes consistently, a freedom *from* self and *for* God. That is what Christianity teaches to be man's true freedom.

There is a great phrase in St. Paul which expresses this magnificently, "the glorious freedom of the sons of God," those who enjoy a wonderful freedom, not only because they do God's will but because they actually begin to share in the

very Divine life, that fellowship with God, the air which is freedom itself. They breathe that Divine air which is true freedom and the other phrase, not from the Bible but from a very old prayer "God, Whom to serve is perfect freedom." Serve Him, obey him, but because His will is perfect in obeying it you have the complete freedom for self-fulfilment.

Now I want us to pass on and have a glimpse at Jesus. Now many people study and look to Jesus in different aspects and in the modern world there are some who, without pledging themselves to our Christian faith in the divinity of Jesus, profess a great regard for Jesus as the free man. I think they are right to do so and I ask you just for a moment or two to consider Jesus as the perfectly free man. There are many other things about Him which Christians believe, besides that He is the perfectly free man, but let us look at Him in that light—the freedom of Jesus. See the pictures of Him in the most human scenes in the Gospels and see how wonderfully free He was. In what ways? Jesus was free from the domination of popular opinions. He was ready to stand alone and to defy majorities, to defy the crowds around Him. Again Jesus was free from the rule of conventions. He never accepted behaviours or ideas just because they were conventional. He took His own stand. For instance, Jesus was free from convention in the company with whom he resorted. Jesus kept company with and befriended people like the harlots and the hated Roman tax gatherers whom society and convention frowned upon. Then again, in Jesus there is a wonderful freedom from traditions. He does not accept things just because they are traditional. He courageously sets aside old traditions. Remember how He says again and again in the Sermon on the Mount: "It was said of them of old time but I say unto you"—freedom from tradition. And then another freedom that is very striking, perhaps it is the most significant of all: Jesus was free from the domination of circumstances. What do I mean by that? This: that Jesus showed a deep sensitivity to the sufferings of the world around Him. He cared intensely. He bore the troubles of His fellows. He was involved in the burdens and the trials of His time most deeply, and yet there was in Him a joyful serenity as of one never crushed, and that inner peace and joy in the midst of sensitivity, burden bearing and involvement is I think a very wonderful part of the freedom of Jesus.

But we have yet to mention the most striking part of His freedom and that is a freedom from self. Now that is the more striking about Jesus because Jesus did make very stupendous claims about Himself. The Gospels are full of majestic claims of authority and it was those claims which in the end challenged His followers to believe in His Messiahship and ultimately challenge the human race to believe in His Deity. He made great claims but yet alongside the making of these great claims there was in Him a great self-effacement, a selflessness, a refusal to make Himself the centre and an insistence that His Father must be the centre. While, historically speaking, the freedom from opinions, the freedom from conventions, the freedom from traditions and the freedom from the dominance of circumstances is so significant, I think that the real clue to the freedom of Jesus is His freedom from self, going with a freedom for God. Think of this freedom for God that there was in Jesus.

It was expressed in His constant gratitude to, and praise of His Heavenly Father, and also in His complete obedience. "Not my will but Thy will be done". In this absorption in the Father's purpose, which runs right through from His obedience as a child to His obedience in Gethsemane and on Calvary, He was free *from* self and free *for* God. That is the picture of Jesus as the free man.

Now I am mentioning all these matters simply to give you certain clues to the idea that Christianity has something to say about freedom, something derived from historical experience and something derived from clear thinking; something to contribute not only to the theoretical understanding of freedom but also to the practical problems of freedom as well. But Christians believe far more than that Jesus is the ideal free man, though that in itself is stupendous. Christians also believe that Jesus the man was the perfect embodiment of God Himself in human form. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." So that, looking at Jesus we see not only the free man but also the Divine freedom; God's own freedom brought into the world, embodied and mediated in a truly human life. So it was the claim of Jesus not only to show the human race a striking example of freedom but also to bring freedom to them. The Gospel is a gospel of divine freedom for us all. Remember the saying which comes in the 8th Chapter of St. John's Gospel: "if you continue in my teaching then you are truly my disciples and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free!" Notice the pattern of that sentence; to be disciples of Jesus is to be adherents closely knit to Him—and ultimately that means through prayer and Word and sacrament. Through being closely knit to Jesus as His followers men and women can begin to know the truth: the truth about Him, the truth about God and the truth about themselves and in absorbing that truth into themselves and being absorbed into it they can become free. Christianity claims to propagate the true freedom of mankind, deriving from Jesus that divine freedom that God so longs to share with all of us as His creatures and children. Now then—if Christian people really receive this gift of freedom from their discipleship with Jesus and put it into practice, what happens as a result? The result is, or the result should be, that Christian people are utterly concerned about human freedom on every possible level of human existence. First of all this means that Christians care for the spreading of every sort of freedom, freedom from any kind of persecution, freedom from any kind of discrimination in society about religion or belief or race, freedom from poverty for those who are cruelly oppressed by poverty, all that will be the constant concern of Christians in their actions But, at the same time, Christians will also be concerned with the fundamental freedom of man himself. Man needs to be

freed from himself and for God. Indeed, we can pursue freedom on all those other levels in relation to politics, race, economics, and social existence and yet find our human race totally frustrated unless at the same time we are working for that fundamental freedom from self—liberating man from himself, for God and for the service of humanity in God's name. Most Christians embody this inadequately and inconsistently though many Christians, for all their failures, try hard to embody it. Those whom we call the saints of Christianity are men and women who have conspiciously embodied this freedom, have shown it to others and helped others to share in it. I believe that the saints show us a very special kind of freedom which we noticed when we were discussing the freedom of Jesus, mainly the freedom from the domination of circumstances. Put it like this. We all desire to free people from pain and hardship of any kind, that was Christ's constant endeavour. It is the constant endeavour of Christians as well. Yet it sometimes happens that a human life can have a lot of pain and frustration and yet can be wonderfully free because deep in his life there is that freedom from self and freedom for God. It happens when, in the midst of pain, frustration and suffering, there is in that same human life a wonderful joy and serenity. It is then that we are able to see what Christian freedom can most gloriously do. It is this freedom from self and freedom for God which is at the heart of the Christian ideal and concept of freedom.

But today, the Christian view of man is confronted by another view of man which is called the Humanist view of man and it is part of my brief to discuss that. In the past centuries there have been forms of humanism which have been deepy religious and indeed deeply Christian; there is nothing new about '*Christian humanism*'. But today the term 'Humanism' commonly means a humanism diverse from religion. When it is called 'Scientific Humanism' it means a particular creed and outlook upon life which is strongly at variance with Christianity. What are the tenets of Scientific Humanism? Scientific Humanism today is a belief which cares intensely for human freedom and human dignity and human happiness and it believes that human dignity and freedom and happiness is best promoted by the pursuit of all the sciences and the application of all the sciences to the life of man. In that way it is held that the life of man can be made more progressive, more free from frustrations, more happy and indeed more moral. Scientific Humanism is severely critical of Christianity on two grounds in particular. First, is criticizes Christianity for being anti-scientific alleging that the effect of Christianity is to discourage the pursuit and the progress of the sciences in the proper way. Then, secondly, it criticizes Christianity for what it calls a false other-worldliness. It alleges that Christians are led by their religion to spend time in thinking about Heaven, in preparing themselves for another world and in religious exercises instead of devoting themselves to the practical tasks of living in this world. Those are the critiques which they make of us Christians. Now let us look honestly into these scientific Humanist criticisms of Christianity and

face them in a humble spirit. First, let us admit that bad religion or bad Christianity has in the past not infrequently been anti-scientific in its attitude and hostile to the right development and application of scientific ideas. I am afraid that this is all too true. I believe, for instance, that the fundamentalist kind of treatment of the Bible misuses the Bible as a kind of weapon with which to beat scientific criticism, failing to see that scientific criticism so far from undermining the authority of the Bible can when applied to the Bible help us to see its spiritual meaning with greater authority than ever before. I think that misguided uses of the Bible and misguided religion can be anti-scientific in its efforts and when that happens I think it is dangerous and disastrous. While the Bible is indeed God's supreme gift, all the sciences are also gifts of God's Spirit, all are meant to be used for the enhancing of our knowledge of Him. Admitting that bad forms of religion can be anti-scientific, it is for us to see to it that true religion need not in essence be unscientific at all since all genuine truth is inspired by God and must in the end lead to God. As for the second criticism, that Christianity often encourages a wrong kind of other-worldliness, I think we must admit that bad Christianity can do that and has often done it. It is all too easy for Christian people to concern themselves with getting ready for Heaven without seeing that getting ready for Heaven involves their utter involvement in love and service in the world around them. It is all too easy for Christian people to cultivate religious piety and religious exercise in a kind of religious vacuum remote from the hard facts of human lives. Let us admit that that too can be a possibility though when it happens it is indeed a corruption of Christianity rather than Christianity's true expression.

But, while admitting that the Scientific Humanist's criticisms of Christian practice and Christian attitudes are something from which we must learn, we can go on to counter-attack and say that the Scientific Humanist's case gives a totally inadequate diagnosis of the human predicament, the human crisis. First, as regards man's frustration. Man's frustration is not solely that he is insufficiently progressive, insufficiently civilised, insufficiently scientific, because history shows that man can be very progressive, very scientific, very civilized and yet can remain very selfish and insensitive and cruel. The examination of history, the evidence of our own personal experience, and the teaching of the Bible all concur, I believe in showing that man's predicament is rather that he is deeply estranged from God, His creator. He needs restoration to true fellowship with God, His creator, in order to find his true freedom. "He has shown thee, O man, what is good", says the prophet, "and what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God". Human efforts 'to do justly' and 'to love mercy' are, I believe, frustrated again and again through our failure as a human race to walk humbly with our God.

The second fallacy of Scientific Humanism is this: not only is its description of the human predicament inadequate, but

also its description of man's goal is inadequate. What is man's goal? What are we here for? Our belief about our goal, about what we are here for, can deeply affect our ultimate ideals about ourselves and also our practical day-to-day attitudes. We are here, not just to be efficient, ethically competent citizens of this world, but we are here to become what the New Testament calls 'Saints', people enjoying the fellowship with God and then to share ultimately in the very perfection of God Himself in Heaven. That is our goal and it is indeed having that as our goal that can colour our present attitudes to human problems. It can certainly colour our attitude towards our fellow men because, in this perspective of eternity to which we Christians hold, the other man can never be a cog in the machine of a totalitarian state. He is infinitely valuable because he is God's child destined for fellowship with God in eternity.

I believe that when we compare the Christian and the Communist attitudes to life we see very clearly indeed the distinction between a view of man that is purely earth-bound and a view of man that thinks in terms of his ultimate heavenly destiny. Yet here we are with this contrast between Christianity and Scientific Humanism. I have suggested that, if as Christians we are to present our view of man's dignity and man's freedom effectively, we have to do it in a humble spirit. We must be ready to learn from other ideologies not least from the humanist ideology which criticizes us strongly because we are called, I believe, as Christians to an exciting and difficult adventure. It is the adventure of holding in one a religious view of man and a scientific view of man. I believe that it is possible though very hard to do; we are called to it. We are no less called to pursue an other-worldly view of man as a citizen of Heaven together with this worldly view of man as a citizen of earth.

Let me sum up all by two quotations, one of them is from a great ancient Greek dramatist and poet. It gives the Humanist view of man as glorious in himself. The other is from one of the Psalmists who gives the view of man as God's creature. You will see the difference. Sophocles of Athens said four centuries before Christ "Many things are marvellous and nothing is more marvellous than man". The Psalmist said "I thank Thee, O God, for I am fearfully and marvellously created". In the end, the human race has to make its choice between those two beliefs.

MICHAEL CANTUAR

We are grateful to the Archbishop for his willingness to allow us to publish the above article. It was originally given in the form of a public lecture in the Deanery of Croydon, but has not previously appeared in print.

CLINICAL THEOLOGY—A Review

The Clinical Theological Association is now a well established movement in Great Britain. Like other young and vigorous movements, mention of its name tends to invoke a strong reaction, either for or against, in medical men and clergy. This reaction can quickly lead any discusion of Clinical Theology into a discussion of its founder and mainspring, Dr. Frank Lake. Although some knowledge of Frank Lake is necessary to help us to understand the origins and development of the movement, we must also consider some other historical factors which have made Clinical Theology what it is today.

It is now nearly twenty years since Dr. Lake returned to England from India where he had been working as a medical missionary. While in India he had worked as a parasitologist and as the medical superintendent of a large hospital. On returning to England a number of factors conspired together to make psychiatry the next avenue for him. During the early days of his psychiatric training he began to develop those ideas which are now incorporated in Clinical Theology. In his training, particularly in a mental hospital, Dr. Lake met hundreds of people who were to all intent and purposes removed from the direct influence of the gospel. It was from this kind of observation that the idea arose that there should be a technique for those who cared which would enable them to take the gospel to this group of people—hence the title, Clinical Theology.

The idea that a special technique was required to take the gospel to psychiatric patients was supported by the church's and missionary practice of offering the gospel in a formal verbal or written manner and by the psychological-religious view which holds that this form of presentation is only appropriate to those who are psychologically whole. These views raise some very important issues; is the gospel only presentable in a formal way, are we dependent on technique, and do we require psychological understanding in order to communicate with those who are psychologically disturbed? We shall be addressing ourselves to problems of this kind as we look in more detail at what Clinical Theology both teaches and does.

At the time when Dr. Lake was beginning to formulate his ideas and to interest others in them there were few psychiatrists in Great Britain who would have admitted that the gospel had any relevance for the patients under their care. The 1950's saw a psychiatry which was optimistic and successful. It was inundated with well qualified applicants who wished to be associated with this promising powerful branch of medicine. This image of psychiatry was derived from some real achievements in the field of social policy within hospitals with the use of 'open doors' and therapeutic community ideas. Also there were now available for the first time a number of drugs which seemed to be able to control, in a specific way, symptoms and signs which previously had been resistant to treatment. The clerical profession, in contrast, was beginning a period of uncertainty and disillusion-

ment which showed itself in the flight of abler men from the profession and the avoidance of the church as a career by many who could have contributed a great deal to its life. The reasons for all this are obscure but the vagueness some felt about the clergyman's role and the comparative impotence of the church when compared with medicine, played their part.

It was through Clinical Theology that many clergymen, particularly within the Anglican communion, saw a new and vital role for themselves which may well have derived strength by basking in the reflection of an optimistic psychiatry. It was as if this tense and fertile scene were waiting for an enthusiast with the appropriate message. Frank Lake rose to the occasion and by dint of dedication and enthusiasm was able to conceive a movement which gave some clergymen not only a new skill but a new reason for being. This was achieved at first by Frank Lake almost single handed and then gradually with the help of an increasing band of associates via seminars and lectures which were arranged throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain. In most instances these were arranged with the help and blessing of the various dioceses. In the beginning the main purpose of the seminars was to introduce the clergymen to a psychiatric way of thinking and to an understanding of those of the clergymen's flock who were psychologically disturbed. It soon became apparent that this type of activity brought individual students face to face with their own problems in a way which led them to look for personal help from the movement.

The standard form of training is by seminars, each lasting for three hours and occurring 24 times in two years. On the successful completion of this course it is possible for individuals to progress by further training to become tutors who are then held to be competent to run seminars.

During the first year students are introduced to contemporary views on neurotic and psychotic disorders. The Association has produced a number of publications in booklet form to aid these studies; these are of a very high standard and would be found useful by medical students and aspiring psychiatrists. The second year of training "takes up rather more complex study of human personalities as they interact in small groups. Critical transitional periods of human life are observed in which profound changes of adjustment are required of the individual in physical, social and spiritual life"[1] Behind all this work is the massive textbook, *Clinical Theology* which was written by Frank Lake.

Some idea of extent and competence of the organisation and effort invested can be seen in the fact that between 1959 and 1966 the Association's two-year courses were attended by 3,500 clergymen and between 300 and 400 lay people. If we compare this number of trained people with the number of graduates from British medical schools who during the same period went on and specialised in psychiatry, we find that Clinical Theology's total is three times as large as the number of doctors embarking on psychiatry.

[1] An Assessment of Clinical Theological Training. B. Lake & L. W. Harman, Clinical Theological Association, Nottingham, 1968.

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It may well be asked in the light of this effort, where is Clinical Theology going? Lake and Hardman (op. cit.) write "A present day interpretation of these objectives would be 1) to equip the clergy, allied professional helpers and lay members with an adequate knowledge of the psychodynamics of interpersonal relationships to make them useful in the field of mental health and to relate this knowledge to the theological understanding of man. 2) to enable the student to learn the role of his own personality in pastoral relationships and to deal creatively with his own anxieties in accepting pastoral responsibility. 3) to provide a clearer recognition and a knowledge of the proper indications and methods of referral. 4) to provide a deeper understanding of the problems involved, in individual group and communal relationships and to enable the student to gain familiarity with the wider body of experience available to those who work in the community services."

Having trained several thousand students during a decade the organisation of the training and the objectives are now well established. The theoretical basis of Clinical Theology is by comparison far less amenable to description and discussion and it is in this area that I find myself so antagonistic to the movement. I am antagonistic because many who seek training do so in the naive belief that what they are taught will be both sound theoretically and pragmatically. For a number of reasons I do not think that the theoretical basis is sound, and although some students do empirically develop some competence when faced by disturbed individuals this is largely due to unacknowledged processes rather than the declared reasons. For some the short-fall between the teaching and their practical experience leads to a sense of failure in themselves, to others disillusionment and to others confusion.

The theoretical basis is set out at length in Frank Lake's book *Clinical Theology* which was published in 1966.[1] This has been described by someone within the Association as a 'brilliant synthesis'[2] and by reviewers as 'treasure in a large earthen vessel'[3] and '. . . an ill-conceived . . . misleading book . . . marred by circular arguments'[4].

There are three specific points which I will make in order to show my own dissatisfaction with this work. Firstly, Dr. Lake espouses a branch of psychology which leans heavily on the idea that antenatal, birth and the experiences for the first few months of life are crucial in the formation of enduring personality characteristics. Clearly in some senses this must be true, for example brain damage or no brain damage, but there is no hard evidence that the subtleties of personality in health or disease are related to these events. The second set of ideas which Dr. Lake uses are those which were formulated by Pavlov. Pavlov was able to demonstrate with dogs in a laboratory certain responses to certain stimuli, the like of

[1] Clinical Theology. Frank Lake. Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1966.
[2] News Letter No. 9. Clinical Theological Association.
[3] Book Review. New Christian. R.A. Lambourne, December 1966.
[4] Book Review. In Service of Medicine. C.M.F., R.E.D. Markillie 1967.

which could not have been deduced beforehand and apart from some kind of learning process seemed nonsensical. For example, some dogs learnt to salivate when a bell rang.

Pavlov, like many others who have made original observations, proceeded to formulate a theory by which the observations could be held together. He postulated cerebral processes of excitation and inhibition which were the result of the various stimuli and past experiences. Although the observations still stand, the Pavlovian theory as a means of understanding behaviour is now largely discredited. Lastly Dr. Lake talks in glowing terms of his use of L.S.D. (an hallucinogenic drug) in the investigation and treatment of patients. The value of this kind of technique is, to say the least, highly debatable. Bennet (1968) points out the similarity between the takers' and the givers' enthusiasm for the drug which makes objective assessment almost impossible. He goes on to say " . . . the observer's expectation of effects (as well as the subject's) will to a great extent determine what happens . . ."[1].

Here then are different parts of the theoretical basis of Clinical Theology which I believe are open to reasonable doubt. Each of itself illustrates a way of thinking about behaviour and each way of itself is regarded by some as complete within its own limits. I would agree with Dr. Lake that each way is inadequate to do justice to the range of possible behaviour despite being complete in itself. From this stems the need, if these ideas are used, to look for a synthesis and yet the components are, in my view, incompatible. It may just be possible for someone whose training has been in this area on a full-time basis to use any one of these disparate ideas as a basis for research or treatment projects, but in the Clinical Theological situation the effect of bringing them together is to confuse the student or to drive him to an empirical practice.

Confusion is further generated by the way in which theological and psychological terms and ideas are mixed together; " . . . since the origin of the model is Christ and a Christian is by definition to be a man in whom Christ dwells, no awkward transition has to be made in the language of communication when we move from the 'psychological' to the 'spirituality' of the man of God." The same mixing is seen in "there is no other way of arriving at the proper spiritual treatment of any depressed person . . . except by way of diagnosis . . . through a thorough history taking."[2]

Bearing in mind that Dr. Lake finds no problem in treating different categories as if they logically belonged together, it is not surprising that he suggests that the treatment for certain conditions is to get right with God. (Presumably in view of Dr. Lake's theological position this means in a traditional evangelical sense). It may well be that we can legitimately see in a patient's recovery that in a theological sense he has got right with God and yet at the same time in psychological terms we would equate recovery with a change in behaviour.

[1] L.S.D. 1967 Glin Bennet. Brit. J.Psychiat. 1968 114. 1219.
[2] *Clinical Theology*, F. Lake op. cit.

The error I believe lies in the mixing of logical categories, which in this instance lead on to such ideas as conversion will cure people or the parson should see the patient three times a day after meals. It is just as nonsensical to ask the question 'Is this a theological or a psychological event?' as it is to ask about a piece of iron which has been in a fire 'Is the iron hot or red?'.

Many who come to Clinical Theology as students hope to find the secret of power and control which they believe is shared by members of the medical profession. The confusion which is created in them by the above mentioned mixing of categories is interpreted by some as an indication of their failure to acquire the secret. The adoption of the medical paraphernalia of consulting room, appointments, interview technique, notes, histories, diagnoses, and talk of clients, does not work the magic for which they hoped. When this happens it would seem that Clinical Theology has gone sadly astray from its original intention of bringing the gospel to those with psychiatric problems.

To bring the gospel to psychiatric patients was the starting point for the movement and yet some of its teaching would seem to deny this or at least to make this statement only applicable within certain limits. This I believe, is demonstrated by the way in which the students are taught to recognise the stage at which they should refer a client on to a psychiatrist once they have recognised a real psychiatric condition. The implication is that once the psychiatrist has successfully treated the case, the clinical theologian can take over again. This puts Clinical Theology into the same category as Clinical Psychiatry with the demarcation issue being decided by the severity of the condition. I wonder what the psalmist who wrote "If I make my bed in hell, Thou art there" would have made of this practice.

The idea that a clergyman should opt out of the relationship he has with someone who is sick at some quite arbitary stage is most unsatisfactory.

It implies amongst other things that *all* a clergyman has to offer is the same set of skills as a psychiatrist but in a less effective or competent way and that he is using techniques which really belong to someone else. By adopting this stance the clergyman is denying the value of the relationship which he has to offer. Perhaps it is time to say quite clearly that from a psychological point of view that what he has to offer is his relationship, no more and no less, with or without certain skills, and that this he does in the name of and as a route to the fellowship of the church. This places the clergyman in a much more powerful and enduring position than ever a psychiatrist can be in because the psychiatrist is continually limited by the ideas in our society which attend sickness and treatment.

Many of the comments which are made above are frankly critical of Clinical Theology. There is plenty of evidence from within the Association—particularly at its centre—to indicate that there is an awareness that all is not well. Further there are signs that efforts are being made to modify and strengthen the theoretical basis and to improve the practice. Clinical Theology has survived its honeymoon period and like many other new movements it has tended to be exclusive and to feel that it alone really understood what the problems really were. In the first instance this exclusiveness and 'rightness' is protective and enables the movement to survive, but the time has now come to return to the workaday world and begin to put the ideas and practice in the market place and to subject them to the rigours of some rough handling. If they survive in a modified form, then we shall be delighted and we shall be able to live together.

I would like to end on a positive note. It is quite clear that Frank Lake and Clinical Theology have responded to a very real need within the Church and society. They have drawn our attention to the scandalous deficiencies in the training of our ministers. They have attempted to face and meet the need of those in our community who are psychiatrically ill. In so doing they have written another chapter in the history of the church's caring ministry—as far as impact is concerned it is the first determinedly Christian effort in this direction since the Quakers opened the Retreat in York in September 1777. Individual ministers have been helped to find a role for themselves again by giving them a frame of reference which despite its deficiencies enabled them to tackle situations which previously they would have found beyond their capacities.

As well as this, Clinical Theology has by virtue of its training groups brought together like-minded individuals who are prepared to seek a way together. I believe that it was within the groups that the main benefits were derived as the individuals found support and a mutual sharing of their problems. The Association has published some evidence which underlines the anxiety relieving functions of the seminars.

Clinical Theology is changing and seeking to be more effective, it has stimulated the Church to look again at the way in which it conducts itself towards that submerged tenth of the population who are enmeshed in psychological difficulties and I sincerely hope that just because of the deficiencies of Clinical Theology the Church will not be content to return to the bad old days of pre-1958 when the Association got under way.

F. J. ROBERTS

CLINICAL THEOLOGY—A qualified tribute

"Biggest thing since the Bible!"

That is how I felt about Clinical Theology at the end of my first year's seminars; our group ran for three years, with three-hour sessions every fortnight. It seemed to me to be a true marriage of reformation theology and psychiatric insight. That is something I had been looking for for a long time, for we are pastors as well as preachers. We are not only Servants of the Word responsible for the proclamation of the Gospel, we are also "servants of our people for Jesus' sake", responsible for the cure of souls.

I have never been in doubt of this, but in the cure of souls I knew myself to be a flop. After six years of ministry, what had I to offer folk made desperate by personal compulsions of which they were ashamed, but the one specific remedy for all ills—"Say your prayers, read your Bible, come to Church, and believe, believe." One varied the emphasis, of course, but whether the man had homosexual compulsions or adulterous ones, whether he dreaded responsibility or his wife, whether he had an uncontrollable temper, or an irresistible urge to obscene exposure, whether he couldn't keep his hands off money, or little boys, my spiritual dispensary had only one bottle for them all. I knew it was ludicrous.

But it was worse than ludicrous, for the repeated failure of the remedy undermined one's faith in the message that lay behind it, and I had never hidden the Gospel message behind the remedy. The power of the risen Christ I preached and believed in—why did it not reach and transform these people? Worse, why didn't it reach and transform *me*? For all too often, in their presenting anxieties, I recognised my own. As often as not, when a man with a problem left me, there were two men with a problem.

It had reached a stage where the ministry of the pulpit and the ministry of the study and the pastoral visit had to tie up, or both ministries were threatened with collapse. Of course, I had learned enough to know that folk needed someone who would listen to them. I found that I could do that. When you learn to be quiet and attentive, and refrain from jumping in with your remedy before the problem has been unfolded, folk talk. My how they talk! And how they appreciate someone who will listen long enough to hear them out. They were grateful for that—sometimes pathetically so. And it often helped, even though the problem appeared so massive and threatening that before it the traditional remedy died on your lips before it could be spoken. But why it healed some and not others, I don't know. Some needed your ear like addicts need their drug, and I just felt 'peddled". No matter how much attention you gave them, they only held up their bowl like Oliver Twist and shouted, "More. More. I want more." With some, it was crippling. I knew that a pastor should be ready for heavy demands, and I was willing for that. But folk weren't being *healed*.

Since before I entered the ministry, psychology had held a fascination for me. I read avidly. But whilst it all yielded flashes of insight here and there into isolated episodes of human behaviour, no comprehensive understanding of human nature and its motivations had emerged—not, at any rate for me. Gestalt, Behaviourist, Analytical approaches—they all held lumps of truth in their vessels. But for me, nothing had jelled out of it. And one always had the curious and uneasy feeling that whilst the psychologist's insights and Bible insights overlapped here and there, they were, nevertheless, separate and even alien systems of understanding. Where was the truth?

If the Bible was right, and conversion and faith in Christ the remedy, why were converted church members not better men? For when I moved out of a housing estate initial pastorate situation where I had an almost exclusive pagan clientile, into an established suburban church situation with a congregation of long-converted people, they came up with the same problems and difficulties exactly. Now, of course, too, I came up against the standard crop of "different" church members and officers . . . the obstructionists, the hoggers of the limelight and the retirers into corners, the martyrs, the don't-get-involved-at-any-price merchants, the trouble-makers, the die-hards, those eaten up with resentment and those with chips on their shoulders . . . and so on and so on. We all know them. It's they, rather than financial strictures, which are the cause of "frustration in the ministry."

It was in the light of all this that Clinical Theology fell like manna from heaven to me. For it did three things.

It gave me a comprehensive insight into the dynamics of human personality which until then I had looked for in vain.

It gave me a new understanding of the Gospel.

And it enabled me to relate the two in such a way that guidelines in pastoral counselling were at last clear. I began to see where the resources of the Gospel bore on human need. As we were taken through the dynamics of depressive, hysteric, schizoid, paranoid and phobic personality distortions, it was as though scales were being taken from my eyes. I understood why this man was so grey and gloomy (and why my bungling attempt to help had failed to relieve his melancholy), I understood why that woman made such a thoroughly disturbing and embarrassing nuisance of herself, why this chap wouldn't commit himself, why that fellow had such a chip on his shoulder, why this woman couldn't bring herself to go out of the house. And what's more, it gave one, not simply insight, but compassionate insight into the difficulties folk have. You understand the pain and belief behind the sin. It all became suddenly more bearable. If there was one scripture it illuminated, it was the reference in Hebrews to those "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage".

Not that it made the pastoral task any easier. In fact, it made it harder—and certainly more demanding; but without the overlay of confusion which is the really exhausting factor in pastoral work. Whilst I knew better how to approach the depressive or the hysteric, I knew also that the job might take much longer than I had realised before. But I knew where the Gospel "latched on" to this or that person's need. I began to gain a freedom and a confidence in commending Christ which I hadn't had for a long time.

Then too, Frank Lake's insight into the way in which our Lord's whole Being was grounded in the Father's love supplied what had obviously been missing from all the psychology I'd ever read—namely, a "model" for the "norm" of human personality. Almost all the therapy psychology I had read was, strictly speaking, "abnormal psychology". It studied abnormalities. How, out of the abnormal, do you construct the normal? No psychology I'd ever read could adequately delineate the dynamics of the "proper man". And whilst one knew that our Lord was the only fit subject for such a study, one somehow felt that the study would in His case be unfitting.

And so it would in the usual way of psychologists, for their whole approach was conditioned to abnormality—it **wasn't** fitting. Frank Lake's approach removed the offence, because it preserved reverence intact, and was confined wholly to the Scriptures, chiefly those of John's Gospel.

I can still recall the sheer joy I knew when as a result of those early seminars I understood what it meant to be "in Christ", "accepted in the Beloved", to "have His joy in me", to know that "now are we children of God." Salvation by grace through faith took on new dimensions of truth and reality. The new birth, the Christian's resources in Christ, the status of a child of God, and the life of good works which God has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them —all these basic Christian truths were refurbished till they shone. I could see better now how all these possibilities opened out before the oppressed, the burdened, the heavy-laden, the prisoners, the blind, the paralysed, the lame and the sick. The Gospel had become Good News again.

But there was a price to pay—at any rate for me.

For as we studied the distortions of personality, one group of them after another, spelling out the ways in which we fall short of the glory God intended for us, I became aware of their elements in myself, more acutely and painfully than ever I had before. Whilst the seminars explained past experiences of my own which had always previously baffled me, the explanations revealed hidden depths of unbelief and pride, of lust and rage, of dread and duplicity which I had never suspected.

I will not hide the fact that I suffered. The early joy gave way to dismay. I began to learn the tenacity with which we cling to our preferred defences against the truth. I was alarmed to discover that the more I stood revealed in my shabby rags and tatters, the more vehemently I clutched them to me. I discovered just what sort of sinner I was—that the heart of man was deceitful above all things and desperately wicked —my own included. It silenced me. I stopped sounding off about other people's faults. I myself was a replica of every man who plagued me. But the Holy Spirit was doing His own surgery, and the operation was completed as I preached my way through the first twelve chapters of Genesis, and the convalescence as I preached my way through the first eight chapters of Romans. *There* was the Healing Word. "Lo, it was for my welfare," said Hezekiah, "that I had great bitterness. Thou hast held back my life from the pit of destruction, but now Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back." Hezekiah's experience became my own—and a very blessed business it is too, brethren, to know yourself truly forgiven!

But—and here is the point—the Gospel remedy of forgiveness did not come to me via Frank Lake's Clinical Theology. It came to me via the Scriptures. And this is where I have to enter a criticism of Clinical Theology.

I find it now seriously defective in its Theology of the Cross and Forgiveness. The defect wasn't easy to spot. For there appears at first sight to be great gain in Dr. Lake's insight into the nature of our Lord's sufferings.

He maintains — and, I think rightly — that our Lord experienced in full adult consciousness all those extremes of mental pain which lie repressed in most of us since infancy, and whose re-emergence into consciousness we are not able to bear, so that all our personality distortions are systems of defence erected against their threatening irruption. Through fear of death ("non-being" in the jargon), we are all our lifetime subject to bondage.

This seems to relate the Cross to our need. One is able to say, "He has been where I have been. He knows my suffering. He, the Innocent has suffered as I, the innocent babe, suffered."

But this is the point I think, at which Dr. Lake's attempt at therapy fails. He tries to line up two innocents, the Lamb and the infant, and then tacitly assumes that the infant's suffering will be lost by a sort of merger in the Lamb's. And it isn't. His suffering remains His, and mine remains mine, and so long as He is He, and I am I, that's how it must remain. The situation in real life is never that of two innocents —Christ and I—but of the Innocent and a sinner. However accurately psychiatric insight may trace our personal failures and compulsions back to their origin in severe emotional stress in infancy, this does not alter their character as sin in the grown man. If my homosexuality, for example (I'm not one, by the way! My lusts, though no less distressing, are more conventional!) is due to factors over which I had no control, it is still my homosexuality, and as such, it is sin. It offends God. The real question for me in my distress is not the degree of personal culpability which God in His perfect knowledge and understanding attaches to me (as though to know all is to forgive all, sort of thing—that's a hoary old lie)—the real question is how I'm to be rid of it. For God certainly doesn't approve it. Nor can He be content for it to remain. FOR me—on my side—He may be, but He's against my sin. As W. R. Maltby put it long ago, "He is on my side against the sin I love." And it IS MY SIN. I need forgiveness, and God's forgiving grace is the only final remedy for it—both as to its guilt and its power over me.

Now it would be quite unfair to Dr Lake to say that he fails to acknowledge the need for forgiveness, or the renewing power of it. He does acknowledge it. But it seems to me often that he is so preoccupied with the psychological ramifications that lie behind the sin that he fails to keep the sin itself in sharp focus as being just plain sin. It is almost as though he is like a man who has only ever looked at a painting through a magnifying glass. He hasn't stood back far enough to see the picture whole and entire, allowing the psychological detail, as it were, to melt back into the broader theological features. He sees the human condition well enough—far better than most, but he sees it always in close-up. And at that range, there are always things you fail to see.

It is often as though he takes the suffering infant behind the sinning man, and tries to relate the infant to the Cross. But the suffering infant is not the problem. The problem is the sinning man—as the sinning man knows!. HE has to be

related to the Cross. And the sinning man relates to the Cross not by identification, but by penitence. It is the suffering to which I, by my sin, have put Him that He suffers there. The Son's sufferings are not a sinner's sufferings, they are a Saviour's sufferings. He represents, not only me to God, but God to me. "The Son can do nothing of Himself, but only what He sees the Father doing"—and this is as true at the Cross as ever it was before it. By His death, He registers the Father's everlasting "NO" to sin–He dies rather than sin–"He died unto sin". His death at the hands of sinners is their everlasting and unequivocal condemnation. "God," says Paul, "has done what the law could not do—sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." If the Cross is not allowed to utter this voice of judgement on sin, the Word God speaks in it is muzzled. It is this word of uncompromising judgement on sin which Frank Lake's theology of the Cross, fails I think, to sound. He funks the wrath of God with sin.

By His death, also of course, Jesus registers the Father's everlasting "YES" to sinners. Unable to yield to their sin, He nevertheless bears it, with a love strong enough to suffer unto death, and still forgive. God shows HIS love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us. His death at the hands of sinners is proof of the Father's love. In His visible Cross, He images forth by His perfect obedience the invisible Cross in the Father's heart. THIS aspect of the Cross, Dr. Lake has grasped very firmly indeed. As Campbell Morgan has so finely said (*The Bible and the Cross*) "In the moment in which man sinned against God, God gathered into His heart of love all the issue of that sin, and it is not by the death of a Man, but by the mystery of the passion of God (embodied and revealed in the death of that Man), that He is able to keep His face turned towards wandering men, and welcome them as they turn back to Him." It is in forgiveness that the love of the Lamb redeems, renews and transforms the sinner. And at the heart of forgiveness, divine forgiveness, there is utter condemnation of the sin forgiven. Only thus can forgiveness kindle in the sinner the "mind of Christ", and that repentance without which no forgiveness is possible.

I owe to Clinical Theology an enormous debt, and I am glad to acknowledge it. But at the point of the Biblical doctrine of Atonement, it led me up a by-path meadow.

P. T. HARRISON

A MAN OF GOD

What reputation among his people should a pastor covet most? Should he strive to be regarded as well read and well informed, thoroughly familiar with current thought, secular and theological? Should he seek the reputation of being a wise counsellor, an outstanding preacher, a dynamic administrator or a visionary leader?

No higher reputation should, or can, be desired by a Christian minister than that possessed by the prophet Elisha in the mind of the Shunnamite woman. "I perceive", she said, "that this is a holy man of God who is continually passing our way". No matter what other gifts a Church fellowship may admire in their minister this is, in the final reckoning, what they most desire him to be. All other virtues are virtually irrelevant and most other faults are forgivable if, to them and in their midst he is a "man of God".

Woodrow Wilson was once asked, "Should a minister wear clerical or lay dress?" He replied, "It makes no difference what he wears. But one thing matters supremely. He should never be in any company a single minute without making them realise that they are in the presence of a minister of religion". Substitute "man of God" for "minister of religion", in his reply, and you have the heart of the matter.

What in their minister will lead God's people to this assessment?

They will conclude him to be a man of God when they see the call of God resting on him. Robert Louis Stevenson was once asked to address the students of a college training pastors. He told an ancient fable of a religious teacher who wore a veil over his face, thus giving the impression that its glory was too bright for his listeners. One day the veil slipped. He stood revealed as an ugly old man. "Whatever impression you give of yourself," said Robert Louis Stevenson, "you will eventually be seen as you really are!"

In the early days of his ministry among them a veil undoubtedly exists between a minister and his people. The veil will gradually, or suddenly, slip. His people will look into his soul. They will see what drives and motivates him. They will see him as he really is. How forlorn the flock will be if they see only some base, earthly, human motive. How desolate they will be if they realise that their pastor is where he is, not because of a compelling divine constraint, but as a result of some chance, accidental circumstance. How tragic if they see behind the veil simply a desire to influence men's minds or a love of status and power.

Only that man merits the title "man of God" who is seen to be in the ministry by an act of God. His sole motive for being in the pulpit is that God has kindled a fire in his bones which nothing can extinguish. The prophet Jeremiah deserved Elisha's reputation. (Jeremiah 20:9). So did John the Baptist, the man who was "sent from God". So did Paul who believed himself to be "called to be an apostle . . . set apart for the gospel of God".

No man can hide his real self behind a veil for ever. Sooner or later, consciously or unconsciously, he will let it drop. Happy are the people who are able to look full into their minister's face and see there the constraint of God. They will say "this is a holy man of God" when they cannot explain his ministry apart from the call of God.

The title "a man of God" will also be deserved when our people see in us the love of God. The absence of that love will be quickly discernible in a sour censorious note in, and a constant smiting of men's weaknesses from, the pulpit. It will be revealed in a bitterness and hardness of outlook. All too often a minister can be heard loudly dismissing all pastoral work and visitation as a waste of time. Such signs are all too common and a congregation, sensitive to their presence, will react to them.

If the signs of lack of love are all too obvious, what are the evidences of its presence which cause a man to earn the tribute paid to Elisha?

Richard Baxter, in *The Reformed Pastor*, wrote that a congregation should see "that we care for no outward thing, not money, not liberty, not credit, not life, in comparison of their salvation". In other words the congregation should be able to see the depth of their pastor's concern for their spiritual welfare. The apostle Paul displayed this concern of love to the full. He addressed the Galatians as "My little children, with whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you". He told the Philippian Christians, "I yearn for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ".

From Paul's example we note that loving concern becomes principally articulate in prayer. Let the assurance of their pastor's prayers come home to a congregation and the effect will be profound. Bishop Ryle said of George Whitfield "They could not hate the man who wept so much over their souls". Such a man would be unmistakably a "Man of God".

This love of God will be recognised by a congregation as they realise how fully their minister is prepared to be one with them in their sorrows, joys and problems. Love leads to identification and that, for the Master, was the road to the cross. The love of God will exclude a cold, professional interest. It will transform the detachment of the social worker into the sympathetic involvement of the pastor. It will cause him to weep with the weeping and to rejoice with the rejoicing. It will give a minister a willingness to listen—a habit which does not often come naturally to many of us. It was the love of God in his heart which caused Fenelon to say, "I had rather die than fail a soul sent me by God".

The love of God in a man of God's life will also be revealed in the true gentleness and grace of his spirit. There will be nothing brash, abrasive and brittle about the man of God. The Apostle, who could write of the "meekness and gentleness of Christ", could affirm his own attitude by saying, "We were gentle among you like a nurse taking care of her children". (1 Thess. 2:7). The necessary hard things will be said not in a hard, censorious spirit, but with a gentle and loving firmness,

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal.

Dear Friends,

"A good book is the precious life blood of a master spirit."
—Milton

This week I caught up with a T.V. programme I had missed a year ago — a repeat of "An Evening with Lady Asquith".

I had heard of the width of Lady Asquith's mind and I was now impressed by the long list of her reading.

I jotted down some names as she read or rather recited for much was spoken by heart and all from her heart — the Bible, Milton, Shakespeare, Edward Lear, Tolstoy, Jane Austen, Dickens, Shelley, Herrick, Pushkin, Blake, Keats, Houseman, John Donne, Shaw, Hardy and others.

All this reminded me of a brown, pocket sized book of essays, which carried my quotation in its frontpiece and which I was fortunate enough to be given to read at school in 1923. Those essays included one by A. G. Gardiner on Word Magic which opened my young eyes to a new world. A world which at that time seemed to be what the Lama in Kipling's Kim called "a Treasure locked". Clearly Lady Asquith had early in her life found the right key.

The right key is so important in any field whether it is the ministry, lay service in the denomination, administration, banking, insurance and so on.

Some find the right key through experience but for many the key is ready to hand if they will pick it up.

In the field of insurance the key for Baptists (and their friends) is labelled **Baptist Insurance** and that is us!

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,
General Manager

not in a mood of carping criticism, but with a broken heart of compassion. Said Richard Baxter, "When people know that you unfeignedly love them they will hear anything and bear anything from you".

Only the minister from whom is heard the Word of God will merit the title "man of God" among his people. The biographer of Phillips Brooks stated that just before he entered the pulpit, "Phillips Brooks appeared to be like one burdened with a message from God which he was in travail to discharge". The man of God is recognisable in the pulpit, not by his oratory and diction, not by the signs of his homiletic skill, not even by his wisdom and accumulated experience, certainly not by his insight into current events, but by his ability, week by week, to bring "a word from the Lord". The people come before him, out of the agony of their hard and demanding world, not to admire a cleverly constructed masterpiece, but for God's Word interpreted and applied. They come with their fears, anxieties, doubts, with their temptations, struggles, defeats and frustrations. Their upward faces cry more eloquently than words, "Is there any word from the Lord?" Only the man of God answers in the affirmative. Let him be confused and hesitant, sending his people empty away, and whatever else his people may feel about him, they will never consider Elisha's title.

In the Scots novel, *Beside the Bonny Brier Bush* by Ian MacLaren, the young minister settles down to prepare his first sermon in his first charge. He decides that it is to be worthy of the College prizewinner and so it surveys the current theological scene. His aunt, a wise and discerning woman, gently reminds him of his mother's dying words. Translated from the author's Scottish dialect, and lacking the flavour of it, her words were: "The first day you preach in your own Church, speak a good word for Jesus Christ". The first sermon went into the waste paper basket where, perhaps, more of ours should go too. Before the morning service closed in Drumtochty Church the next Sunday the people knew that, young and inexperienced as he was, a "man of God" had come their way. There is no greater privilege than that of introducing paupers to Christ's unsearchable riches, of introducing the hungry to the Bread of Life and of introducing the lost to the Saviour of men.

To be recognised as a "man of God" is a reputation to be desired above all others. It involves no status, rank or position. It is demanding and infinitely costly. It will, however, elicit the people's thanksgiving and the Master's "well done".

JAMES TAYLOR

BAPTISTS AT WORK IN EUROPE TODAY

We have just celebrated the twentieth Anniversary of the founding of the European Baptist Federation and I would like to remind you of the happenings and decisions of those early days and of the motives and thinking behind them.

Baptists have always been and still are wary of giving corporate expression to their unity. We are afraid of any organisations which may tend to limit the independence of the Churches. This independency is born out of a conception of the Church of Jesus Christ which we believe is true to New Testament teaching and principles. An over-awareness of the danger of forsaking this principle has led some of our people to a reckless independency which has altogether disregarded the essential of "our common life in Christ". It is this phrase taken from Philippians 2:1 (NEB) to which I would draw your attention.

Although we begin with the essential unit—the individual believer—we can never stop there. We believe that we are born individually by grace that we might live corporately by and in the Spirit. We have been zealous in emphasising the personal faith of the believer and if we are true to our convictions we must continue to emphasise this, but we have not always been as emphatic about the life, witness and responsibility of that believer to the "common life in Christ". In our Baptist family our loose and voluntary forms of organisation often seem to hinder the formation and utterance of common conviction and concern.

From the New Testament we judge that undoubtedly there is a connection between all members; undoubtedly there is a responsibility for all other members each to the other; undoubtedly there is a form of blessed unity between the members, undoubtedly there is a sure and general consummation for all members of the Body of Christ and ultimately as the Bride of Christ. It was this conviction and understanding that led to the formation of the Federation in 1949. Thus it was born out of a great vision. The fellowship of the Baptist communities of Europe for over four years so gravely interrupted by war needed to be reborn. The need to help to rebuild and restore the stricken churches was urgent. Even more urgent was the need to rebuild the national frontiers and beyond the old hostilities and beyond the deep and bitter resentments, a brotherhood whose fellowship found its inspiration in the love and service of Jesus Christ. Straitway the newly formed European Baptist Federation began to bring together the scattered remnants, to restore the shattered fellowship and to create a structure for effective help.

In the days following the war it was said that in Europe Christianity would have an opportunity unparalleled in history. The people were weary of war and had had their fill of totalitarianism. However, the big revival never came and today millions of Europeans are outside the Christian Church, and Albania has given Europe the sad distinction of being the first nation to become a completely atheistic society. Instead

of a new Christian Europe our critics tell us that we live in the age of "post Christian Europe" and that any influence the Church had must now be considered in terms of the past with no relevance to the present or future. Europe has become a mission field in a sense nobody could have imagined before the first world war. These were the conditions and considerations which led to the formation of the European Baptist Federation.

We are therefore a fraternal association joined by the ties of love in Christ and in the unity of the one Spirit. If ever we sought to dominate churches or Unions, or if ever we interfered with and complicated the work of our churches or Unions, we would deny our historic principles and stand condemned. By our existence we refute the idea that only by the iron bands of ecclesiastical machinery can Christian men be held together. By our existence we seek to demonstrate that with liberty in the Lord there may also be full and joyous oneness in Him. Speaking of our "common life in Christ" challenges us to think of our relationship as Baptists with other Christians.

I

The desire to further and prosper ecumenical relationship is not expressed as unanimously or enthusiastically among Baptists as some would wish or think desirable. Five of our 24 Unions are members of the World Council of Churches and if this was the standard by which ecumenical interest was to be judged Baptists in Europe would be thought to have little regard for their fellow Christians. But it is not and should not be the standard. In almost every country Baptists are working and witnessing together with their fellow Christians and in a number of places our Baptist leaders are also responsible for the work of Ecumenical Councils, Free Church Councils and of Protestant groups. For instance, in Spain it is a Baptist who leads the work of the Spanish Protestant Defence Council and our Baptists in Sweden are pioneers in the field of Christian co-operation in that they are involved in continuing discussions with other Free Churches on the possibility of a United Free Church in their country. A Baptist is Secretary of the Ecumenical Council in Poland and others of our Polish Baptists are actively engaged in the work of the Council and in teaching in the Ecumenical Seminary. I know of no area in Europe where our people are not at some point engaged in the witness of the Gospel with fellow-Christians.

Even more of the Baptist Unions in Europe are members of the Conference of European Churches which provides for them a forum for discussion and a fellowship with Christians of other denominations. In some instances this forum for discussion can be quite vital to their life and work in their country and has already resulted in new understanding of their position and new respect for their work.

To some it is cause for anxiety that any attempt to bridge the gulf between ourselves and other branches of the Christian Church might cause rifts to become evident within our own

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fellowship which as yet are not there. Evidence does not support this. Baptists best serve their fellow Christians and the cause of the Kingdom of God generally by being themselves and by giving clear expression to their common convictions and outlook. The Body of Christ is not co-terminous with our communion or indeed with any other visible organisation. Because of this we must faithfully play our part and welcome the part played by our fellow Christians in the "common life in Christ".

II

Then, arising out of our "common life in Christ", we should think of our concern for the life of each other. Let us admit at once that it is not easy to be concerned about those far from us, about whom we know little and whom we are unlikely even to see. Paul has this problem and speaks about it in Philippians 2:20: "There was nobody I could send—they were all concerned with their own business". Although such an attitude still persists among some of our less enlightened people I am delighted and honoured to be able to report just how splendidly response is made from country to country in the cause of our "common life in Christ". Let me give a few illustrations which will show something of the extent of our concern for each other. One of the highlights in the Baptist story in recent years was the opening of the new Church, Seminary and Headquarters in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. None of us who were privileged to be present that day will ever forget the occasion. It was the occasion of two miracles. When we arrived on the Saturday for the opening on the Sunday morning, workmen were everywhere, the windows were not in, the floor was not ready for the seats, scaffolding was all round the outside and great heaps of earth were just in front of the doors. I said to one of our Yugoslavian brethren—"You have wasted our time in bringing us here". "Wait," he said, "it is not Sunday". What a miracle of transformation when we came on Sunday morning—everything was clean and ready, even with flowers growing in front of the church! The other miracle was equally wonderful. It was utterly impossible for our friends in Yugoslavia to face the heavy cost of such a building project, made necessary by the loss of their previous premises through a street widening scheme. Nevertheless the building was opened practically free of debt. Help had come from all over Europe as also it had come from our Baptist brethren and sisters across the Atlantic. Here in a tangible form was evidence of our common life in Christ. It was in these buildings that the Federation held its Executive Meeting in 1967, thus creating history. This was the first occasion on which we had been able to hold such a representative meeting in a communist country.

In another and quite different way were you again able to show the love of Christ. In one of my visits to an Eastern European country I met one of the pastors who had had to resign from his Church because of increasing blindness. He was a man beloved of his people and still quite young. He had been told that, if he could get to a Western country, an operation could restore his sight. There was far more involved than the raising of the money to cover his journey and pay for the surgery and provide his hospitality. Government permission had to be granted for him to travel, visas had to be granted, surgeons had to be found, but we believed that if God's people provided the money God would see to the rest. And so it was. He came to Switzerland, he was cared for, and the surgery was successful. Thank you to those who helped to give a brother his sight and a Church its pastor in renewed health. Further evidence surely of our common life in Christ.

Again one of the delights of the Vienna Conference was that so many of our fellow Baptists were able to be with us from countries whose financial arrangements did not permit the bringing out of any currency. We wanted them to come so much. We knew they would have to be our guests and this would be our privilege. I pay tribute to the "common life in Christ" which has so demonstrated its reality that all the cost was met and almost every Union in Europe had a share. Again and again the words have been used in so many languages as people made their gift—"I cannot go to Vienna but I would like my brother or sister from another country to be there."

In quite another way again our concern for each other has been expressed. For long enough evangelism in its traditional sense was thought of as being a concern of Baptists in the non-atheistic states of Europe where freedom to carry out campaigns and programmes was permitted. This was not true because many of our Baptists in Eastern Europe continually sought to win men and women for Christ within the restrictions imposed upon them. Now, however, our brethren in many of these situations are seeking to know more about the possibilities of outreach to their fellow men. So for the first time ever we have been able to arrange a Conference on Evangelism for delegates from the Eastern European countries.

Then again in some countries among our people there has been and still is a grave shortage of Bibles. In one place I discovered a pastor who had not a complete Bible and on occasions had to go to a fellow church member in order to share a Bible and prepare his sermon. We have constantly been able to provide Bibles to areas of need and will continue to do so as often as we can as an expression of our "common life in Christ" and of concern for each other. This year we rejoice that we have had a share in the printing of 5000 Bibles and 2000 Testaments in the Slovakian language.

In help for new church buildings, in medical care and personal help, in the arranging of conferences to meet particular needs, in the supply of Bibles and theological and devotional literature and in a number of other ways through the Federation, Baptists express their responsibility towards each other and demonstrate something of the reality of our "common life in Christ".

III

In the third place our "common life in Christ" challenges us to think about what we are doing for the people of this world in turmoil. Are Baptists in Europe facing the challenge of the Mission of Christ to the world?

I would like to write of the many attempts that are being made to bridge the gap between Christ and the people for whom He died. Indeed there are two heartening signs that reveal something of the widening and deepening sense of mission characterising our Churches. The first is that there is a new understanding of the meaning of Evangelism in terms of the full mission of Christ, rather than in terms of meetings, and, secondly, there is a wide variety of methods and experiments now being used.

Beginning in Brazil and coming to Europe via the Baptists in Spain, Simultaneous Evangelism has been and is being used in 15 of our European Baptist Unions. By Simultaneous Evangelism we describe a form of outreach in which churches in a country or an area agree to prepare themselves together and carry through a programme of evangelistic effort at the same time. In many countries there have been encouraging results. Baptists in London are preparing themselves even now for a variation of this called "Shared Evangelism" which will place emphasis on a continuing programme of outreach rather than on a campaign over a brief period. In every large city in Europe today there is an area where hippies and drug addicts gather and live, an area where perhaps Baptists are not often to be found. In the centre of one such district there is a house with an ever open front door, a place of refuge bought and staffed by our Baptists in Hamburg, Germany. There, our friends do not pass through the district but live in it and such has been the ministry of rescue and transformation that the Town Authorities have taken notice of it and turned to our people for their help. This is evangelism.

In an entirely different way, one man—a fellow Baptist—is seeking to bring men to the Lord of Love and Peace. I shall never forget the first time I met David, a strong, husky Dane dressed in black leathers and a crash helmet. He told me something of his ministry of evangelism. It began in no seminary and it uses no pulpit. Every evening when the day's work is done he puts on his leathers and helmet and goggles, starts up his powerful motorbike and sets out for the transport cafes where long distance truck drivers stop for their meals. They are his congregation and to them he ministers the things of Jesus Christ.

Let none of us despise another man's ministry. It may not be our way, it may not be the way of our country, but in "our common life in Christ" let us recognise, respect and pray for all that is being attempted among our people in this continent to reach out, to bridge the gap and to bring men out of the turmoil into the peace of the love and the power of Christ.

We recognise that there are many things that divide us from each other, language barriers, political barriers, cultural barriers, historical barriers. We have been able to see increasingly over the years that the power of the Living Christ can and does transcend and overcome all of these barriers in a way no secular or political organisation can. However, "our common life in Christ" compels us to recognise that there are many problems. There are some disturbing situations of which we are reminded by the absence of any of our people from Bulgaria. There are sad divisions separating our people the one from the other. There are Christians imprisoned and sorely afflicted from whom the Vienna Conference received the most moving messages of greetings.

Let us pray for them without ceasing, and let us pray for those who work for reconciliation. Let us always regard them and remember them as part of "our common life in Christ". When you gather Sunday by Sunday spend a moment in silent thought. Let us remember each other in every country and lift up our hearts and rejoice in that we are part of such a family, of such a fellowship, of such a miracle, and let us take heart.

RONALD GOULDING

OBSERVATIONS OF A GLOBE-TROTTER

You don't need to tell me I'm a fortunate man; I know it! A number of factors have combined to give me a Sabbatical break after twenty-five years in the pastoral ministry. One of these was a number of invitations to visit different Baptist and ecumenical institutions around the world, and the other was the good fortune of having a wonderful collection of friends and relations conveniently placed along my intended route.

So in October 1968 my wife and I sailed from Southampton to Cape Town. Our fellow-passengers were an interesting lot of people and we were struck by the number of well-to-do English couples who were going to spend the winter in South Africa and who assumed that anyone in his right mind would want to escape from the rigours of the English winter and the Wilson government and enjoy the delights of the sunshine and cheap Black labour of South Africa.

Our friends in Cape Town were determined that we should see as much as possible in a short space of time. They had organized a morning with the P.R.O. of the Dutch Reformed Church, a tour of a Bantu township, an evening with Dutch

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

409 Barking Road, Plaistow, London, E.13

My dear Brother Minister,

ORCHARD HOUSE EXTENSION:—The building of the extension at Orchard House is more or less up to date in spite of some bad weather, and we are hopeful that it will be finished by the beginning of June this year. As you will probably know, we are building this extension to provide extra accommodation for both staff and boys. We shall have an average of 25 boys in residence in the Autumn of this year.

I am now trying to raise the necessary cash. The cost of the project is roughly £12,000 and I am glad to tell you that the Home Office have provided a grant of £6,000. I have circulated an Appeal to all our Y.P.F.'s and Youth Clubs and already some of them have responded quite generously but it will take an effort to raise the other £6,000 and I would be most grateful if you would be kind enough to say a good word for us to your Youth Organisations in the hope that they might be able to do something for us. Of course, there is no need for you to confine yourself to your Youth Organisations, if, in your wisdom, you think any other section of your people will be interested in making a gift towards this scheme!

Arising out of this scheme we shall be advertising in the near future for an Assistant Warden at Orchard House and if you know of anybody suitable I shall be grateful if you would get in touch with me.

We need a man of Christian conviction and who is in his 20's or 30's with a fair amount of experience of work with boys and ideally with experience in work similar to that being done at Orchard House. It would be a resident post with a flat available and the man can be married or unmarried!

GREENWOODS OPEN DAY:—For those of you within striking distance of Stock I would send you a reminder that our Greenwoods Open Day this year will be held on Saturday June 13th 1970 at 3.0 p.m. We rely a very great deal on our friends in the Churches to provide the personnel at this open day and we welcome coach parties or smaller groups.

With warmest good wishes for God's blessing on you and your loved ones.

Yours very sincerely,

STANLEY TURL,

Superintendent of West Ham Central Mission

Reformed elders and deacons, another evening with Cape Coloured Baptist pastors and their wives, an interview with the Anglican Dean of Cape Town, a meeting with the Baptist minister's fraternal, a visit to the Central Y.M.C.A. (where I was alarmed to find myself billed to speak on "Hippy London"!), preaching engagements in two Baptist churches and a lot more besides.

It is always tempting and dangerous to make judgements on the basis of a short stay in a country. But one cannot avoid coming away from South Africa with at least some very vivid impressions of Apartheid in action since the system hits you wherever you look, and we found that so many people, especially in the churches, assumed that this was the one subject we wanted to learn about.

So here goes! We found first that many of those who administer the apartheid policy do so with a sincere belief that it is right and without any apparent trace of hostility towards non-whites. The administrator of the Bantu township in Cape Town took us into one Bantu home after another and his visits were reminiscent of pastoral visitation at its best; he knew the needs and problems of each individual family and had worked for over twenty years in this township where he was obviously trusted and respected.

Not all White South Africans are so humane, and even those who are, cannot redeem a system which breeds a deep sense of injustice, particularly among the Cape Coloured people. These are probably the greatest victims of apartheid, for their skills and ability equal those of the Whites in so many ways and yet they are treated as inferior and are prevented from earning anything approaching a comparable wage. We found a deep sense of grievance among them in relation to their place in society and to the attitude of Whites to them within the Church.

To find apartheid so widely accepted within the Christian Church is a shattering experience. The most prophetic and courageous stand appeared to us to be coming from the Anglicans and we were impressed to hear from the Dean of Cape Town that he, English by birth, had taken up South African citizenship in order to be able to protest more effectively from within the actual situation. He showed us the statement on apartheid issued by the S.A. Council of Churches; this is a courageous and prophetic document and the reply it evoked from the South African Baptist Union, in which apartheid is neither approved nor condemned, seems to me to be weak and evasive. Yet having said that, one realizes how easy it must be for those who live within the apartheid system to slip into a gradual acceptance of it, and one wonders what one would do in similar circumstances.

We had a brief spell in Johannesburg and then flew to Perth, Western Australia, with a brief stop at Mauritius en route. Geographically, Perth is the most isolated big city in the world with vast distances separating it on all sides from other large centres. Some of this isolation is to be found among the Baptists, warm-hearted though they are as individuals.

But when I dropped into the office of the Western Australia Council of Churches and revealed that I was a Baptist, the Secretary quickly motioned me to the most comfortable armchair and said, "Sit down and make yourself at home; we haven't had one of your people in here for years!" If this unhappy situation is changed in the coming years it will probably be due to the influence of Dr. Noel Vose, the Principal of the Western Australia Baptist Theological College, who impressed us with his personal charm and wide range of Christian sympathy.

Australia is vast and one State varies so much from another. Southern Australia is open and more English in its ways and the Baptists there play a considerable part in ecumenical life. Victoria seemed to be a mixture with Mervyn Himbury and the new Whitley College propelling the Baptists into the mainstream of University and ecumenical life, whilst at the same time we saw a number of exciting new ventures in Christian co-operation from which the Baptists seemed to be standing conspicuously aloof. There was one such which struck me particularly; the Anglicans and Methodists were doing an imaginative piece of team-work in a vast suburb with great blocks of high-rise flats, whilst the Baptists insisted on doing a similar piece of work but with their own building, and apparently unwilling to join with the others in joint planning, shared man-power and common prayer.

My reception in the office of the Australian Council of Churches in Sydney was like that in Perth. In Sydney our people seem to be grouped in the popular mind with the Anglicans, who are the most Low Churchmen (if you get my meaning!) in the whole of the Anglican Communion.

From Sydney, we flew to New Zealand and had six weeks there, visiting most of the main centres in both islands and enjoying the superb and amazingly varied scenery. The churches seemed to be immersed in the implications of a theological controversy in which a Presbyterian professor had been actually tried for heresy in a public ecclesiastical trial. How exciting! His views would not have seemed so alarming to anyone who had read many of the modern American and European theologians, but in New Zealand they had really rocked the boat. The good man had been acquitted of the charge of heresy but the rumblings of the debate were still to be heard and a Baptist classical scholar had issued a reply from the Conservative Evangelical angle.

Perhaps more important in the long run than all this rather highly-charged controversy seemed to me to be the plans for a United Church in New Zealand which are quietly going ahead. The denominations working towards union are Anglicans, Methodists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Churches of Christ. The Baptists have considered the matter and are divided, and have decided not to participate for fear of splitting their ranks. But what is really interesting is that the Churches of Christ are participating and have produced a long statement on the question of Baptism declaring their continuing loyalty to Believer's Baptism, but their willingness to enter a union in which the two forms exist side by side.

We sailed from Wellington in the "Rangitoto", the flagship of the New Zealand Line, bound for Jamaica. The journey took three weeks and apart from the inherent interest and delight of a long sea voyage, these were three of the best weeks in my life. The passenger list revealed that I was the only parson on board and for a day or two my three hundred fellow passengers seemed to be rather aloof. But having entered all the deck-game competitions—and been eliminated in the first round—I sensed a cracking of the ice and before many days I found myself engaged in all kinds of discussions at a really deep level with people whom I would never have met in an ordinary pastorate, not even at Beechen Grove, Watford. My wife helped run a Sunday School for the children on the ship, and so many contacts opened up that even the long tropical days weren't long enough to make use of all the opportunities that came for the exercise of a real pastoral ministry.

So we came through the Panama Canal and to Jamaica, to stay with David Jellyman at the new United Theological College of the West Indies. Some seven denominations, including our own, have sold up their individual sites and are now installed in a new ecumenical college with a mixed staff and a total of about seventy students. Everything is done on a united basis except for one session per week when the students go into their denominational corners and deal with domestic affairs of their own. The College is delightful and adjoins the lovely new University of the West Indies. During our stay the Archbishop of Canterbury visited the Theological College and the University.

The United Theological College has been in existence only a few years and it is too soon to tell how it will affect the life of the Church in the West Indies. But it is hard to believe that the training of ministers and clergy in one seminary will not lead to an increase of understanding between the different denominations. Some Baptists I spoke to regretted the disappearance of the old Calabar College, whilst others welcomed the new move.

It was a great thrill to preach in some of our Jamaican churches; they have a wonderful combination in their worship of spontaneity and dignity, and an appreciation of liturgy which was as exciting as it was (to me, in my ignorance) unexpected.

Bermuda was our last stop. Maurice Buckler and his wife are busy establishing an inter-denominational centre for conferences and for personal rest and renewal. They were our hosts on this lovely island where under a surface of beauty and affluence, great social problems abound in alarming proportions. The work which the Buckler's are doing could be a great blessing to Bermuda as well as to the many holiday-makers who visit it.

An almost hurricane-force wind blew our plane home from Bermuda and I was able to go straight from the airport at

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4 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

Heathrow to the Baptist Union Council Meeting to give a brief report of my travels. A few weeks later another good stroke of fortune took me off as Joint Leader with the Bishop of Salisbury of an ecumenical pilgrimage to the Holy Land. To tell that story, with all the wonders of visiting the land of our Saviour's earthly life, and the interest of many receptions on the way including one from Archbishop Makarios on Cyprus, must wait for another time.

And now I find myself as a Research Fellow at the Selly Oak Colleges for this academic year. Against such a rich and varied experience of travel, there is a lot to think about and assess. I have seen something of the world-wide fellowship of the Church and have been both encouraged in some places by her resilience and vigour, and depressed in others by her apparent impotence and hide-bound rigidity. The theme of my research during this year has really emerged from my travels and will, I hope be of some little use to others as well as of interest to myself.

The revival of the Church in the secular age. This is really what concerns me. And the special aspect of this that I want to examine in detail is that of new and experimental forms of church and ministry and their bearing on future ministerial training. It seems to me to be an urgent issue if we are to be the means by which God is to do His work in the new kind of world which is emerging around us.

To have been able to stand back for a bit from the day-to-day machinery of ordinary pastoral work and denominational machinery and view it all objectively and against a world-wide setting has been a marvellous experience. It has led me to see the local church with perhaps even greater love than before (for distance makes the heart grow fonder) and yet with deep concern. I hope to find some of the answers here at Selly Oak.

IRWIN BARNES

CONTINUOUS EVANGELISM

Campaigns in Australia, material reprinted in New Zealand, translated in Yugoslavia and used in many other countries such as Portugal and Canada, who would have thought it possible just four years ago when it all started?

The idea is not new, but it began for us in Essex when a friend and I shared our concern for smaller churches that could not afford a Stewardship Campaign or a visit from an evangelist. Gradually the idea took shape and became known as ONE STEP FORWARD because the main thrust was to do with spiritual growth. It was a biblical idea, simple and financially possible to any church. It challenged the entire church membership in its relationship to Christ and His Church and the world around them. It also challenged the uncommitted fringer to put his faith in Christ and follow Him through the waters of baptism.

One church, who took the trouble to write and tell us of what happened, had this to say, "One of the most encouraging outcomes of the campaign has been the number of people seeking to rededicate their lives to Christ and also to give more time to prayer and bible study. There were conversions, requests for baptism or church membership, and MANY OFFERS OF SERVICE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. The total membership is likely to increase by about twenty, a training session for Sunday School teachers is under way; baptismal classes continue; guidance for those wishing to take up lay preaching and those wishing to correspond with members of the fellowship away from home will be arranged —these were just some of the blessings for which we give God grateful thanks." The minister went on to say, "Since the campaign, evidence that God spoke to many people continues to manifest itself in conversions and requests for baptism. The final effects of these days will not be fully known for some little time."

THE IDEA JUST GREW

From its early beginning in Essex, other Associations took an interest until today most of them have adopted the ideas and are encouraging their churches to put them into practice. The news of the spiritual and practical results spread fast and material has been printed in bulk and distributed to many parts of the world.

Even the original concept of O.S.F. grew as we examined it in the light of scripture, our failure and success and the needs of our churches. Some churches were not ready for such a campaign because they had internal problems which could basically be described as a lack of love. The members did not know each other or talk to one another; few of them prayed for other members each day; criticism rather than encouragement was quite common and any visitor that did attend soon spotted the divisions and could feel the atmosphere.

Because of this basic world wide problem we again turned to our bibles for some help. Jesus had said of the relationship between believers, "By this shall all men know you are my disciples, if you have love (agape) one for another." We took this greek word AGAPE and made it the new term to introduce Christian love in the membership. Using each of the five letters of the word, we tried to provide a practical answer to some of the problems within any church fellowship. Members were encouraged to get to know another person each month and to pray for another member each day; to visit someone in need each week and to refrain from an unkind critical word each day, rather to say a word of encouragement to another Christian each day instead.

There is no shadow of doubt at all but that this emphasis has worked wonders within the churches who have adopted the idea and tried it out. The minister has preached about it after the church meeting has accepted the general principles as being good for the whole church. Workbooks for each member are available and have proved a useful weekly basis for bible studies and group work as well as a personal challenge

and reminder to love one another. Where OPERATION AGAPE has been tackled it has become an evangelistic force in itself and prepared the way admirably for further evangelism.

ONE STEP FORWARD

This type of approach has two main results which commend it. Firstly it mobilizes the entire membership and seeks to move them forward in the Christian faith; secondly it draws the fringe element of the church to the point of commitment to Christ, baptism and membership.

If we want to mobilise our membership it is not sufficient just to issue a strong spiritual challenge from the pulpit for them all to be powerful witnesses, and then to leave it there. It is vital that our members realise the biblical teaching on spiritual growth, and that they look for the next step that God is asking of them as individuals. Each one will be challenged on a different aspect of their Christian life and will therefore be making a different response at a differing level. We cannot group all Christians in a local church as the same, merely because they are all Christians. Some have been in the faith longer, others have hardly got started. Some do not know what tithing is, others have no conception of personal witnessing, while others rarely pray except on Sunday. Some are over-active Christians, and others are bone lazy passengers in the church. Some have gifts that are being used, while others have never been encouraged to even try. Added to all this, there should be people connected with every church who as yet have not discovered Christ and are still on the fringe of the fellowship. Some may not have focused on what it means to be a Christian, others are holding back, while some feel that there has never been a suitable opportunity to make their faith public.

It has been interesting to note how many middle aged people have asked for baptism through the use of a Covenant Card, because it was for them the best way of letting the pastor know. They would never have come walking to the front during an open appeal, but still wanted some opportunity nevertheless.

The O.S.F. project lasts for three consecutive Sundays and is prepared for by Operation Agape and also by the select visitation of all sympathetic fringers who are either lapsed members or uncommitted adherents. The content of the preaching during this time is mainly concerned with straightforward explanations of the Christian life, its demands and responsibilities. It is important that the people are given careful teaching on such matters as Baptism and Membership, Bible reading, Giving and Witnessing etc. and not superficial vague remarks about taking a step forward. To some in the church it will be like repeating the ABC, but to others it will be food for the hungry.

At both of the services on the final Sunday there is an opportunity after the preaching for those present to fill in a Covenant Card on which are listed various steps of commitment or requests for spiritual help. The card will have been handed

out two weeks before and explained at each of the services. Those asking for help or offering their help can then hand the card in after the service for it to be followed up. The national average number of cards handed back is around a third, possibly because a number keep theirs. It is a personal step, and others are just not ready to take a step forward.

INSTRUCTION

Following the O.S.F. project there is always a need for a time of instruction. Those asking for baptism and membership need classes; those offering to do evangelistic visitation or wanting to start lay preaching all need help. The pastor cannot be expected to run all these and should therefore seek to delegate as much as possible. Unfortunately, most of us seem reluctant to do this and the result is either a breakdown for the pastor or a disappointed, neglected member.

This period of follow-up and instruction is as vital to the ongoing continuous evangelism programme as any other part. Most of us know of experts in various fields of Christian work and witness who could be invited to help run a series of classes. Even tape recordings by others can prove a great help. What an improvement to most churches if the pastor spent one evening going over the duties and responsibilities of being a steward at the door on Sunday. How evangelism would benefit if these worthy stewards had a higher standard and could inform visitors of all that went on and at the same time get rid of the literature that tends to slowly submerge the rear of our churches. If only they could be taught how to shake hands instead of offering their hand like the tailend of a wet fish!

So far in this outline of Continuous Evangelism I have not mentioned the kind of OUTREACH that is so often thought of as evangelism. I believe that there is a definite place for aggressive outreach evangelism, but its place comes when the church itself is more spiritually healthy and loving, when the existing members and congregation are committed and mobilized and instructed as well. Things will begin to happen even without any organized methods of outreach, but on the other hand a framework is often useful.

It is at this point that no one can legislate, for every situation is different. What type of outreach suits one area will not help another. However we do seek to encourage each local church to try EXPRESSION EVANGELISM. This can include a variety of forms including social concern, visitation, house meetings and the useful guest services etc. It is good at this point to make use of the offers of help that emerge from the O.S.F. campaign held earlier. The church should not set aside only a week or two for such evangelism, but over a period of months it can try different ways to reach the differing age groups. These ideas have been tried out by many churches with varying results. A lot does depend on getting the deacons and members to accept general principles and back up the idea. Time is well spent explaining it again and again for the sake of each member. Then a lot does depend on the contacts that the fellowship has. If the fringe element is small, then evangelistically the response will be equally small, although it may bring the members out of their rut.

Some churches have now been able to repeat these ideas year after year in slightly amended forms such as "A Renewal of Agape" or "Another Step Forward". There are many different kinds of outreach expressions that can be used and so each year new areas can be exploited in this sphere too.

Let me close by quoting the last page of the book entitled "Continuous Evangelism" which gives a much wider description of the work than I have been able to give here.

"Evangelism needs the whole body of Christ to be in action for it to be most successful. There will be methods used by some who have gifts in that direction, but unless the warmth of Christian love receives the new enquirer, then so much is wasted. Unless there are some who can instruct the new Christian in the faith, we shall be working to bring a generation of spiritual pigmies into the Kingdom of God.

"If love needs to be continuous, so also there must be some form of opportunity for people to make a response. Therefore a ONE STEP FORWARD project could be held every year for the benefit of the new contacts being made during the year and also to help the new Christians to make spiritual progress by taking the next step forward. Outreach methods will vary from year to year, but new members will always be needing help and instruction. Let us seek to make our church a MISSION CHURCH in a missionary situation rather than plan a spasmodic church mission."

The East Midlands Association of Baptist churches, of which I have the privilege of being the Evangelical Adviser, has adopted the programme I have outlined. Lay preachers will be trained to hold campaigns in churches where there is no pastor. Area conferences on 'Speaking for Christ' and other useful subjects have been planned, as well as area evangelistic rallies during the final phase of the first year. From our mistakes and discoveries I hope that others will learn and benefit. For the time being I believe that God has called me from the pastorate to develop this work on as wide a scale as He will allow. I would ask for the prayers of the brethren as this work crosses over denominational as well as national boundaries.

BRYAN GILBERT

"One Step Forward" and "Operation Agape" materials can be obtained from Mr A. L. Keeble, 323 Southbourne Grove, Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. A sample kit costs 2/6 plus postage.