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Editorial

Unemployment among Baptist Ministers is no new phenomenon. Last century, and indeed into this, one could find oneself 'out of pastorate' without too much difficulty. But this resulted as much as anything from the absence of any national system of settlement, centrally administered. Whatever else J.H. Shakespeare deserves to be remembered for, the establishment of the General Superintendency, in 1916, to co-ordinate settlement, must rank highly. Prior to this it was all very much ad hoc, depending upon the extent of your fame, personal commendation, or, quite simply, being in the right place at the right time.

The spectre of unemployment currently on the horizon can be traced to a quite different source, namely the renewal of the Church, which has multiplied significantly those sensing a vocation to full-time Christian service. How ironic this is! For whatever happens in the longer term, it seems almost inevitable that a proportion of our ministers will be "signing on", with certain categories particularly vulnerable. In view of our theology of the ministry, the logic is that since such have not been called to a local church (because there were insufficient to go around), then their service must lie elsewhere, for settlement seals the call. But will acceptance of this theology be sufficient to hold back resentment, and even bitterness, for sacrifices made, training that has equipped, and experience which is crying out to be used?

Not that one overlooks the factors on the other side, notably the growth of team ministries, specialised ministries, and acceleration of church planting. Such signs, 'small as a man's hand', support the view that we will indeed *need* all these additional pastors for the anointing of the nation: God knows what he is doing. Nevertheless, the basic premise is that we are here to serve the Church, not the other way round. So in a situation of parity of ministers and churches, how can a balance be struck between budgetting the workforce economically and being prepared for a great spiritual upsurge? In the meantime, the prospect of a steady seepage of colleagues to other denominations, rueful and reluctant, is painful.

It is with church planting that we begin this quarter. A timely diversion from the inward looking issues of the Seventies and Eighties, it is dealt with head-on by Andy Bruce, who refuses to dodge the hesitation and fears of some. Chaplaincies continue to break fresh ground, ministering wherever people live and work. Arthur Grimshaw shares the results of a recent survey into airport chaplaincy, its range and usefulness. Thirdly, Reg Harvey explores the possible future shape of our Baptist mission in its totality, recognizing the sea change in the relationship of 'Christian Britain' with the rest of the world since the days of William Carey, two hundred years ago.

Sometimes we do not value those in our midst as much as do those in the wider Christian family: "A prophet in his own country...?" However, in the case of David Russell there is warm and widespread appreciation of his contribution as leader, scholar, administrator and ecumenical statesman, going back half a century. George Neal, in a two-part article, pays tribute to the man and his work. This brings us to the second in Philip Clements-Jewery's analysis of intercessory prayer, dealing here with its rationale. It calls us to live deeply, helping those in our care to live deeply too. Lastly, Philip Webb reports on the historic first forum of Churches Together in England (CTE), which bears the hopes of many for a more visible unity.

Church Planting: A Strategy in Context

"I planted the seed, and Apollos watered it, but God made the plant grow" (1 Cor. 3:6)

Church planting is one of the most fashionable causes in evangelical Christianity today. A recent survey has indicated 182 new Baptist churches established since 1980¹, and many more are currently being developed. The DAWN movement ("Discipling A Whole Nation") which met in Birmingham in February 1992 urges us to work towards a church for every unit of 1,000 population. Responding to this sort of emphasis, the Baptist International Conference on Establishing Churches held at Swanwick the following month, called for every Baptist congregation worldwide to aim to plant another before the turn of the century.²

This zeal for founding new churches, by no means restricted to Britain or to Baptists, is built upon significant developments that have occurred within the worldwide Church during the past two decades. Factors as diverse as Charismatic Renewal, the Church Growth Movement and Basic Christian Communities have combined to create a climate where innovation is welcomed, strategic thinking about evangelism has matured and the congregational model has been widely reaffirmed as the most potent and relevant form of church for mission. In the British church scene the remarkable growth of some independent churches, or 'house churches', whilst proving a threat to some in the established denominations, has given rise to a much more flexible notion of what church looks and feels like and provides ample evidence of the vitality associated with new congregations.

In Britain the churches have begun to emerge from decades of serious decline and confidence is increasing. Yet there is a heightened realisation that despite large numbers of churches and a succession of evangelistic initiatives, ninety per cent of our population still has no effective contact with a local church.³ No longer can British Christians see themselves as the hope of a pagan world. Rather, a more realistic appraisal of our own society and the position of the churches within it means that strategies for reaching "the whole world" for Christ find application in our own back yard.

The movement for church planting springs from this context. It affirms **the central importance of the local church in effective evangelism** and views the establishing of new congregations as a timely and realistic long-term strategy for proclaiming the good news of Christ. In particular, I believe that church planting is a relevant strategy for:

- * working in neighbourhoods where there is no effective church presence
- * working with cultural groups outside the orbit of established churches
- * overcoming inertia in established churches
- * modelling a style of discipleship which values the active contribution of every member.

In their enthusiasm, exponents of church planting sometimes overstate their case, claiming too much and denying a place to other important methods of evangelism. The established churches have a vital role to play in mission and the planting of new churches is only one missionary tool among many; nevertheless, it is a strategy with a sound biblical and logical basis.

Biblical Principles

Although principles relevant to church planting can be gleaned from the Old Testament and also from the Gospels, it is Acts and the Epistles which provide the most explicit biblical support for church planting as a missionary strategy. It is likely that the founding of new congregations came naturally to the New Testament church from its earliest days. In the early chapters of Acts the followers of Jesus as Messianic Jews are still closely identified with temple and synagogue worship, but their developing self-awareness and the growing conflict with Judaism led to their own congregational life becoming increasingly distinct.⁴ Perhaps the list of visitors to Jerusalem recorded in Acts 2: 9-11 is an indication of some of the locations around the Mediterranean where Messianic Jewish congregations quickly became established.

In the scheme of Acts, however, it is the emergence of the Gentile mission which leads most directly to church planting and the apostle Paul begins to take centre stage. Paul's journeys are presented to us not simply as preaching tours, but as a deliberate programme of church planting. *"After bringing the good news to that town (Derbe) and gaining many converts, they returned to Lystra, then to Iconium, and then to Antioch, strengthening the disciples... They also appointed for them elders in each congregation..."* Acts 14:21ff. Some of the incidents recorded in detail in Acts have an aetiological flavour, explaining the origin of certain well-known churches. The church at Philippi is a good example - recorded in Acts 16:11ff. Paul's central strategy of, *"taking the gospel to places where the name of Christ has not been heard"* (Rom 15:20) was fulfilled not just in the conversion of individuals like Lydia, but more particularly in the establishment of churches which are able to maintain a resolute witness for Christ once Paul himself has moved on. It is in this sense that he congratulates the Philippians on *"taking part in the work of the Gospel from the very first day until now"*. (Phil 1:5)

It is certain, however, that Paul was not the only church planter active in that period. Many churches were founded independently of Paul. In writing to one of these, the church at Rome, Paul reveals that it was his own colleagues and former converts that pioneered church planting in the capital of the Empire (Rom 16: 3,5,7 etc.), and that **several** local congregations are being addressed (Rom 16:5, 14, 15 etc.). Paul not only founded churches himself, he taught others to do so. It seems that by a very early date, the congregational unit had become the principal means of establishing the gospel and nurturing new disciples.

Current misgivings

Affirming the biblical basis of a strategy for church planting does not of itself establish a case for adopting such a strategy in our own time. The church planting enthusiasts do not have things all their own way in the current debate and some church leaders raise serious queries about church planting.

One objection, born out of the experience some have had with Charismatic renewal and the rise of the 'house churches', argues that new churches tend merely to attract dissatisfied worshippers from elsewhere, resulting in little more than a *redistribution* of Christians - "shuffling the pack". It cannot be stated too strongly that **the primary motive of church planting must always be evangelistic**. The purpose of establishing a new congregation is to reach a neighbourhood or a section of society more effectively with the gospel and to enable relevant patterns of discipleship to be developed. In many cases the focus will be on a geographical area where the church presence is weak, but church planting is also a highly relevant strategy for reaching what Donald McGavran has taught us to define as 'people groups'⁶ at present beyond the reach of the churches. Non-Christians must not be asked to cross cultural boundaries unnecessarily⁷ and

newly formed congregations are able to adopt the language and culture of specific groups of people much more successfully than are established churches, making both evangelism and nurture possible.

With empty and redundant church buildings scattering the land, it may be thought that our problem is one of *too many* churches, rather than too few, and to some a programme of church planting smacks of denominational imperialism. Decades of constant decline in church attendance have resulted in widespread church closures with tiny congregations remaining in many of those that have survived, but a distinction between the presence of an historic church building and a viable witness for Christ must be recognised. A handful of culturally isolated people struggling to keep up an ageing and impractical building are a righteous remnant rather than a source of light to the nations. Yet we maintain an almost romantic attachment to churches that are able neither to engage in mission nor even to stimulate the faith of their own members. There are tales of churches that have revived from such a low base, but they are exceptional. In terms of strategy, a programme of church closure followed by church replacement may well prove to be far more effective, especially as long established but weak churches are often terminally inflexible. A further problem is that churches are not distributed evenly. In Cornwall there is one church for every 500 people, while in outer London and the West Midlands there are over 2,000 people to every church.⁸ Church planting is certainly a relevant strategy in such circumstances.

Issues in Planting

Church planting is risky. For a sponsoring church to release a group of gifted people to establish a new congregation is costly in terms of its human resources, and real commitment is demanded of the individuals who go. But precisely **because** of the element of risk there is much to be gained by those who dare to plant churches. The parent church is stimulated by the decision to plant and will often experience unexpected growth itself, while those involved in the new congregation will find challenges and opportunities which may never have been open to them in a larger and more established church. Correctly understood, there is a gospel dynamic in church planting where the followers of Jesus, both those who go and those who release them "*cease to live for themselves and live instead for him who died and was raised to life for their sake*" (2 Cor.5:15) The strategy is effective not just for evangelism, but also for discipleship.

Church planting is about the church incarnate: earthed in society, relevant, meaningful and accessible to people of all cultural backgrounds, with or without any previous Christian experience. If such a strategy is to achieve its goal it is vital that adventurous and creative approaches should be always to the fore.

Some communities would seem to be especially fertile ground for planting new churches, but it is important that we allow church planting to address those areas and social groups where the church is generally weak and where progress is likely to be slow. Where our Christian witness is trapped within certain cultural expectations, boundaries have to be crossed and new congregations are ideal tools for the job. New styles of communication and new approaches to mission are urgently needed. Church planting has the potential to generate creative initiatives without the encumbrance of irrelevant structures and assumptions. Neither should we shy away from situations where evangelists must wrestle with deprivation and injustice rather than preaching a naively individualistic gospel. Our perception of "success" must not be restricted to numerical increase.

The founding of new churches must always be done in an ecumenical spirit. This is not to say that all church plants must be L.E.P.s - the bureaucracy can sometimes prove

an impossible burden - but consultation and partnership with other Christians should be valued highly; perhaps more highly than they appear to be by some active Baptist church planters at present. New churches need to resist the impulse to gain new attenders at any cost, especially where people have previously attended another church: often it may be more appropriate to refer a new contact to the established church down the road.

And what kind of churches should we plant? Too often a new church quickly takes on many of the structures and forms of its parent, thereby inheriting not only some of its strengths but also a good number of its weaknesses. Such ecclesiastical clones are rarely able to respond creatively to a missionary situation. Pastoral issues nearly always become more pressing than missionary ones and the cross-cultural cutting edge is lost. We are learning to be less dependent on traditional buildings, but have done little to escape from the bondage of traditional patterns of leadership, traditional ways of organising the congregation or even the traditional timing of our gathering together. New churches need to resist the temptation of proving themselves by adopting the traditional marks of church life. After all, it is not as if the traditional formula is an unqualified success in our generation. It is a wise comment that a new church "should aim to stay young for as long as possible"!

Recent church planting in Britain has largely been confined to establishing a church presence in new areas of housing as they have developed. What is of real significance about the current surge of interest is that planting churches is seen - not exclusively but in conjunction with the renewal of the established churches - as a missionary strategy for a once-Christian nation. History may well declare it to be the most effective and durable feature of this Decade of Evangelism.

Notes:

1. A survey of Baptist Areas by Derek Tidball, Secretary for Mission and Evangelism of the Baptist Union - 1992.
2. Baptist Times - 2.4.1992
3. The English Church Census conducted by MARC Europe in 1989 - results published in "*Christian*" England by Peter Brierley - 1991
4. Acts 2:44ff ("*They kept up their daily attendance at the temple*") moves on to Acts 4:32ff by way of the believers' defiant reaction to the attempted silencing of the apostles recorded in Acts 4: 23-31.
5. See for example, 3 John 3-6
6. McGavran's helpful interpretation of the biblical term *ethne* - "nations".
7. See for instance *Understanding Church Growth* Donald McGavran - pp200ff
8. Brierley op.cit., pp62ff

For further reading

Church Planting: Our Future Hope Charlie Cleverley; Scripture Union, 1991
Creating Communities of the Kingdom Shenk and Stutzman: Herald Press, 1988
New Wineskins Pyches and Skinner; Eagle, 1991
Planting New Churches George Carey and others; Eagle, 1991
Planting Tomorrow's Churches Today Robinson & Christine; Monarch, 1992

Andy Bruce

Airport Chaplaincy and Its Nature

This survey is based on answers to a questionnaire by chaplains attending the 23rd annual conference of the International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains (I.A.C.A.C), 1990. It represents chaplains in most of the world, especially Australasia, North America and Europe.

The report arose from my own interest in the overall picture and future possible developments. It could be helpful to those establishing new chaplaincies, but of course personal contact with practising chaplains is indispensable.

The evidence of the last thirty years is that the initiative has been taken to provide suitably trained people and facilities to help staff and passengers with any problems they may have. This work has been done in cooperation with airport managements and representatives of the employees.

Facilities such as a Prayer Room have been made open to people of all faiths and none, to use individually and as groups, for their own purposes, whether for peace and quiet, meditation, or fully liturgical services conducted by their own ministers or those provided by the chaplaincy. (Some airports provide separate rooms for different religions or Christian denominations.)

Separate rooms are needed for counselling purposes and administrative work. At some of the larger airports such agencies as Welcare, Travel-care and Travellers' Aid exist and may be integral to the chaplaincy.

The specifically Christian emphasis is on providing a presence in the person of ministers, clergy, and lay people who have a calling to this work and are appropriately trained. They see their role as loyal colleagues with those employed at the airport, visiting at their place of work on a regular and frequent basis, and being available on call at all times of pastoral need.

In addition to their available presence and facilities such as prayer and counselling rooms, they may hold services and meetings on site or in the community, especially for publicity purposes. They may also provide relevant literature, including articles in airport public and staff periodicals.

There is a concern to relate faith to work and work to worship, involving a feed-back to the churches who provide the personnel and support them materially and spiritually.

It is desirable that there are good links with local churches and ministers' fraternals for the support of the chaplains, and for the airport and its staff to be seen as part of the local community. Indeed many members of staff will live locally. There are clearly mutual benefits: social, pastoral, and ecumenical.

In addition to scheduled and occasional services held for pilgrims, chaplains need to be prepared to hold necessary services and meetings, in consultation with local ministers and clergy, to meet the needs of employees who regard the airport as their parish and the chaplain as their minister. It can be said that people do not live where they live, but where they work.

For 'people on the move', whether they are on business, holidays, or refugees seeking asylum for political or economic reasons, the chaplaincies need to have a visible presence and clear profile. This can be achieved through easily identified chaplains in the public areas, directional signs to the prayer room and offices, literature available at information desks and announcements over the public address system.

For occasions of aircraft emergency it is necessary to have adequate, i.e. larger, teams of trained chaplains to respond to the needs of passengers, staff, friends and relatives. This work, will, of course, be carried out under instruction from the police, or other agency in charge of the emergency, and in cooperation with other voluntary organisations, such as the Red Cross.

Chaplains need to have heard God's call to the work and have the appropriate personalities and abilities for training. The areas to be covered are theological, psychological and social with some familiarity with the growth of airport chaplaincies and the influence of industrial mission.

Counselling is a necessary skill and wide experience in parish work, some other chaplaincy, such as industrial or hospital, and an apprenticeship with a senior chaplain are desirable. A facility with foreign languages, not to mention communication with the deaf, is appropriate, and attendance at I.A.C.A.C. meetings is a means of keeping in touch with current thinking and development.

Priority of response will be to those of greatest need, such as refugees, survivors of disasters, the emergency services such as firemen, police, and the medical professions.

The basic commitment will be to staff at the airport, visiting the wide cross-section of trades and professions on a regular basis, and being a ready presence for the needs of all passengers.

It is likely that there will be frequent contact with some members of staff more than others, such as those who provide facilities for the chaplaincy, personnel departments, and trade unionists.

It will be necessary to receive groups interested in the nature of airport chaplaincy from churches, schools, and industry, and involvement with clubs and societies associated with airports.

The support of the work is chiefly from the denominations who pay the stipends of the ministers and clergy. The Church at large from the W.C.C., through Industrial Mission trusts, to chaplaincy boards, are also important contributors to funds. Airports, airlines, and other businesses often support the work, whether through contributions to expenses or by providing accommodation in the form of a prayer room and office plus car parking facilities. Freewill offerings at times of worship are important in some chaplaincies, plus other donations from the general public.

Ancillary work has its ramifications which may be formidable for the chaplain working alone. These cover a range of activities from office work to public meetings off the airport. Other activities are carried out in cooperation with other bodies, such as welfare work for passengers or visiting the sick. Happy is the chaplain who has his or her own support group of helpers, not so wise the chaplain who thinks he can go it alone.

For nearly 25 years I.A.C.A.C. has existed as a fellowship of chaplains giving friendship, encouragement, and sharing expertise at the annual conferences. This has become particularly evident in recent years in dealing with refugees and survivors and workers from aircraft disasters. It has been possible to share methods of training and benefit from continued support in developing the work. The Association has helped to widen perspectives and gain new insights. The world network has also been invaluable in commending passengers and staff from one airport to another.

The Association is beginning to develop through local area conferences. These will help new chaplaincies to start and develop. Newsletters and a specialist magazine would be helpful and already international recognition of I.A.C.A.C. is furthering the work in dealing with refugees and gaining access to new airports.

For such an important ministry as airport chaplaincy there is greater need of commitment by the Church at large. We are still a Cinderella minority group working on a shoe-string budget. We could not exist without the help we receive from airports, airlines, other companies, and general public.

Many chaplains feel that the Church should take a greater interest in this work to the extent of providing more chaplains, resources, and give wider publicity. We are generally accountable to the Church but often feel that we are out on a limb conducting a minority ministry in the name of the Church. Although visible we are too small a force to be entirely credible as a serious expression of the gospel in this vast industry.

Airport chaplaincy is widely ecumenical, having shared use of chapel. An increasing number are interfaith, but as yet in a limited way. Chaplains value sharing their work with those of other denominations to a high degree: "A vital and crucial companionship". Catholic priests have the best universal link-up with a representative at the Vatican. I.A.C.A.C. serves a similar sort of purpose for all denominations. 'Industrial Mission' is a useful national and international network for a number of countries.

There is increasing contact with members of other faiths. Not only their passengers and staff use our facilities but their representatives are chaplains and on some boards and emergency rotas. There are an increasing number of interfaith organisations outside the airports, such as Councils of Christians and Jews, and community work often associated with immigration matters which relate to airport chaplaincies. Other faiths are becoming increasingly matters for study so that cooperation may be sensitive and fruitful in serving the public.

Airport chaplaincy is seen as a growth industry as the airline industry develops and more people travel by air. Chaplains soon feel the need for extra staff, both ministerial and lay, women as well as men.

With the growth of the work larger premises and fuller services are being required both in liturgical and welfare functions. There will be a need for more widely representative boards or committees to develop these services. National or continental meetings will help study and training work as well as the crucial face-to-face meetings of chaplains.

There is an eagerness to learn from each other and the circulation of newsletters, periodicals, and books will help in this area. Implicit in all this is our individual faith and corporate worship on and off the airport, seeking to know the will of God and accepting the grace necessary for service.

As indicated at the beginning of this report I.A.C.A.C. has few members in Africa, Asia and South America. It may be that few chaplaincies have been established at their airports, although they do exist at Hong Kong, Tokyo, Manila, Rio de Janeiro, Costa Rica, Istanbul, Izmir, and Lagos. There is clearly a need to develop links with all airports in our own countries as well as further afield so that the service which we seek to give may be more comprehensive.

Arthur Grimshaw.

Mission, Home and Overseas: The Future Dynamic

The need for a Dynamic

The postman calls and a pile of correspondence yields its mixed crop for the manse. Personal letters, circulars, magazines, bills (of course!) and others. Christian Aid is sending its information and appeal for help, focusing on El Salvador. The Baptist Union writes, including the Social Action Desk's plea for support for - El Salvador. The BMS has sent its ministers' mailing and this month's Herald and Letter to the Manse call attention to - yes, that's right, El Salvador! A picture exaggerated a little, perhaps, but drawing attention to the changed scene within the British Isles and around the world. The scene itself illustrates well the complex of relationships facing local churches. Union, Society, para-church groups all making claims on resources. All of this presses the case for the development of a Dynamic for the Future of the partnership between Unions and Society.

A Backward Glance

Historically the Baptist Missionary Society began with a group of committed individuals. Very quickly that small band was added to by other individuals but also whole congregations. From within England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland a variety of folk committed themselves to World Mission through the BMS. Local churches were able to focus their attention on the nations of the world, including Europe, through the BMS. This included not only mission and fellowship but also social action and development, e.g. Carey's programme against Sati and infanticide, Knibb's against slavery. Throughout the years there has been a continuing support from each of the areas expressed in varying degrees of commitment.

The Changed Situation

Since 1792 there has been the establishment of the Baptist Unions of Great Britain (as it is now called), of Scotland, Wales and Ireland. Each has its own ethos and is different from the other. Whereas those beyond the British Isles talk in terms of "British Baptists" there is in fact a great variety within the Unions' life. An illustration of this variety is seen by the responses to the ecumenical process. The relationship of the Unions to each other at times has been fraught and tenuous, with insensitivity being shown. This has emphasized the differences rather than what is held in common. With the exception of a small number of churches which support the BMS but belong to no Union, the Society and these Unions serve the same constituency.

The independent Unions have had opportunity of developing their own world links and mission concerns. In 1905 the establishment of the Baptist World Alliance brought member bodies into a world fellowship. After the Second World War, the European Baptist Federation tied the bonds of partnership within Europe. Mission has increasingly been seen on broad lines and international links between the Unions have developed where previously congregations might have expected to act through the BMS.

This century has seen the growth of many missions and aid agencies, on theological and other grounds. This has made an appeal to local Baptist congregations and affected Society support. A recent survey in Scotland indicated that there were appreciably more missionaries serving with inter-denominational or non-denominational bodies than with

the BMS. One large Association in England discovered two years ago that four times the number of missionaries serve with other bodies than with BMS.

Britain has seen increasing numbers of immigrants since the Second World War bringing individuals of different culture and faith. Local congregations see a "mission field" on their doorsteps. The plea has come on numerous occasions for the BMS to turn inwards on to the British Isles!

The great new fact of our time, said William Temple, is the World Church. The Society's experience in its mission partnership has brought the understanding that, within the whole Body of Christ, mission must be mutual. The missionary movement no longer proceeds from the West to the rest of the world! This has not always been grasped within British congregations who welcome Billy Graham, Luis Palau, Martin Luther King and Desmond Tutu, but have seen that as different from the need for us to benefit from the insights of Christian partners from Zaire, Angola, India and so on.

The current economic climate is a dominant factor in the present situation, each of the Unions facing a continuing deficit situation and the Society only avoiding this because of large numbers of legacies. There has been pressure upon each separate body to pursue its own appeals and to be as clamant as it could in the single market of the constituency, regardless of the implications of this.

Is there then any prospect for good for the future? Are we doomed to a pattern of Unions separate from each other, from the BMS, from overseas partners? Are we to see a proliferation of the para-church and non-denominational organisations? Will individual churches and ministers be continually bombarded with items of information, education and matching appeals for support for prayer, personnel and finances?

Signs of Hope

In 1971 a body was formed called the Joint Consultative Committee. This brought together representatives of the Baptist Union of Scotland, of Wales, of Great Britain (and Ireland, as then) and the Baptist Missionary Society. The terms of reference were "To provide a means of joint consultation with a view to recommending action to the end that there may be a constant exchange of information between the bodies and the maximum amount of co-operation in common concerns". The matters which were recognised as receiving first attention were - finance, ministerial recognition, closer co-operation in departmental work, joint publishing, representation on other bodies and joint action. These laudable aims were implemented with varying degrees of success. A planned Joint Conference of British Baptists was never held. By 1981 there was recognition that the visible links were less and less. Nevertheless considerable achievements have come about in terms of near parity in stipends, mutual recognition of ministries, sharing in a variety of ways, not least young peoples' activities. A fresh beginning came in January 1990, when the Joint Consultative Committee was reformed. Only three representatives of each body now serve and these include the General Secretaries. Still an advisory body, it has been moving on in the areas of co-operation, particularly with respect to international links. There is definite discussion about the possibility of federal links being established between the Unions and that enabling the Society to have a distinctive relationship with the federally linked bodies.

Arising from the JCC, history was made in a visit to what was then the USSR. The General Secretaries of all four co-operating bodies, together with two other individuals, travelled together, a team able better than ever before to represent British Baptists. There are other plans for the international relationships to be on a genuinely shared basis.

The BMS has established a Working Group that is looking to the election of General Committee members. This is noting the changed nature of membership of the Society, more accurately seen as by local churches, and of the very strong influence of Association and Union life which should be related to the General Committee membership. A recent survey indicates that the Group's preliminary findings are generally approved and this is likely to lead to stronger ties between Unions and Associations and the Society's decision-making body.

Since 1915 the Society has had the fourth version of its "object". The time was ripe for a more contemporary version of the Object, this to take into account contemporary language and a fresh understanding of mission. Each of the Unions was consulted about the proposed wording and the recommendation, to be debated and decided in 1993, will be pursued in preliminary discussion with each area before a final decision is taken.

The stimulus of the BiCentenary has given opportunity for local churches, Associations and Unions to rise to the challenge of looking to World Church and World Mission issues. The response has been tremendous! This has been enhanced by the presence of many Fellowship Visitors and others from overseas who can bring their insights to share with us. Some from Britain have been able to share in multi-national visits to other parts of the world and these will reap their own special harvest of insights into World Mission. The plans for a World Church Mission Seminar Assembly as the culmination of the special BiCentenary Celebration year is also giving opportunity for in-depth study of the challenge that faces us now.

The Dynamic of Change makes its demands. Even a readiness to face those demands will not solve all of the problems of complexity of appeal within Britain, for there continues to be a growth of para-church organisations.

The Demands of the Dynamic

Realism is essential if there is to be progress. Each of the Unions, indeed each of the Assemblies, within the British Isles is separate and has its own ethos. There is not a uniformity, for instance, between the Welsh Assembly of the BU of Wales, the Baptist Union of Scotland or of "Great Britain". Nor can we evade the appeal of non-denominational organisations while the whole issue of Baptist identity is current within our congregations. Baptists have benefited from the influx of those who come from a non-church or a different church background. There is no inherent loyalty to the Baptist position or to denominational organisations.

Sensitivity to the issues, whether they be national, linguistic, theological or cultural, must be cultivated. The differences will not go away and they cannot be ignored, so also in our own relationships with each other there needs to be an attitude of and a plea for consideration and prayerful handling of the situation.

God's one mission and one Church does not set aside the special heritage and gifts granted to Baptists, and, at least to some extent, enshrined in the different Unions and Society. Whatever may be the demands of sharing in fellowship or ecumenical co-operation with other Christians, God is continuing to **choose** to work through Baptist bodies. We have to see how there can be that right participation within the denominational fellowship as well as the wholeness of the Body of Christ, His Church. None of the above will be effective without commitment on the part of individual ministers and local congregations to a recognition that this is part and parcel of our response of faith and of obedience. I believe that God calls to this, not the Society or any Union.

Shape of the Future

One can dream! My hope would be to see each local Baptist congregation aware of its membership within the wholeness of the World Church and committed to participating fully in the One Mission of God to humankind and all creation. Matching this, there needs to be that right relationship of ministers and local churches to the Unions and to the Society, which in their turn are committed to a partnership with each other. We may express in our togetherness both the gratitude to God for the gifts that He has granted to us as Baptists living within the British Isles and which may be used as a resource for His missionary work within the world, as well as our openness to receive from Christians around the world the special insights and gifts that He has given to them.

What will be the pattern of our shared activity? It will not necessarily be a monolithic structure of a single federation, nor of united appeals. Experiences amongst the Canadian Baptists and American Baptists indicate that this may not be right. Co-operation and a sense of one-ness for the sake of the Gospel will surely lead us on with a readiness to submit some at least of the individual claims to the demands of the higher cause of being British Baptists together for Christ's sake.

Reg Harvey

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David Russell: An Appreciation of His Life and Work (1)

It was my privilege when training for the Baptist Ministry at Rawdon College to sit at the somewhat large feet of a man whose body, soul, erudition, intellect, perspicuity were of equally large dimension. I speak with deep respect and gratitude of Dr. David Syme Russell. Even within the compass of two articles I cannot hope to do justice to this man's contribution to the world of scholarship and to the life and work not just of the Baptists on the British and wider European scene, nor just for the World Baptist Fellowship, but also for the World Church. However, in this first article I will briefly emphasize the high points in a life that strode on mountain tops through a long ministry which is still journeying on with little diminution of activity; although indifferent health and advancing years try to slow down his momentum.¹

We should, as Baptists and as ministerial colleagues, be proud to claim David as our own. He has such gifts and for all of us his fertile mind and capacity for incredibly long hours of work, even in retirement, is a challenge and example to us all. In May last year he prepared and delivered ten two hour lectures at McMaster University, Canada, when he was asked to go and receive an honorary Doctorate of that prestigious University. This at seventy five and with rapidly deteriorating eyesight.

In David Russell we have a man dedicated to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and convinced that God graciously required that dedication to be expressed and offered in the Baptist Ministry. Again, he is unusual in the way his gifts are so varied and yet so united. A scholar who knows his subject thoroughly and who could teach and write on that subject so that almost anyone could understand. This not because his work was shallow, or simplistic but because he had the gift of eloquence that shone through both his spoken and his written word. He is an academic who **can** teach - often combining the pedagogic gift with the preacher's fervour. We have had other scholars and thank God still have a few; but not all could hold your attention for very long.

With deep respect, some lost you as soon as they stood up! But not David. He carries with him an aura which means that even before he opens his mouth you are ready to be uplifted and enlightened and often led to the altar of God. Then when his rich, smooth, redolent Scottish accent smites your ears you were charmed and hooked.

(I use the past tense occasionally although David is still with us, but apart from hearing those dulcet tones over the telephone it has been some years since I have had the pleasure of hearing him preach or lecture).

A Full Life

He was born and brought up in a Christian home. Thus blessed, the blessing was enhanced by having parents with outstanding qualities of character that provided a balanced ambience of stimulus for growth in Christian character. This eventually culminated in a personal response to Christ, believer's baptism, and a commitment to discipleship which very soon led to the conviction of God's call to the ministry. Both as a boy, but more especially as a theological student at Trinity College, Glasgow, he showed large intellectual ability. At Trinity he obtained a B.D. with distinctions in both the Old and New Testaments. He received prizes in Old and New Testament Studies, Systematic Theology and Church History and won the University Gold medal in Greek and Hebrew. (No wonder he was not impressed with my pathetic academic efforts in my student days!)

He then spent some years at Regent's Park College in order to read for honours in Orientals. Through no fault of his own, but through lack of a tutor to guide in Semitic languages, and the need to begin learning Arabic from scratch, he was awarded a good second in his B.D. His B. Litt. instead of a D. Phil was a shock; but such an omission was rectified when Glasgow University awarded him a D. Litt for his magnum opus: *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*.²

During his time at Oxford he spent two years as the pastor at Woodstock Baptist where his innate gifts as preacher and pastor were honed by experience into qualities which later stood him in such good stead for his ten years as pastor of Church Road Baptist, Acton, and then subsequently as Principal of Rawdon College and Joint Principal at Manchester Baptist College. Those qualities, which all Baptist ministers need to have in balance, also helped him later to offer a distinctive pastoral and preaching role in addition to his administrative duties as the General Secretary of the Baptist Union which he held from 1967-1982.

What momentous years of service they were both for our denomination and the wider church fellowship, both Baptist and Ecumenical. Challenges and epoch-making decisions through the Baptist Union Council. Problems galore for the denomination intra mures and on the wider church and world scene. One of his strengths and perhaps something which can be a weakness is his capacity and love for hard, sustained work. He cannot be idle. Even now at 75, with very bad eyesight, he fights that handicap, so great for an academic, and studies at least eight hours a day most days!

During those fifteen years he was here, there and everywhere. Read his little book *In Journeyings Offer*³. However, his first trip abroad, and just a foretaste of what was to come, was to Amsterdam at the outbreak of the war to an International and Youth Assembly. He has since been to most countries in Eastern and Western Europe, eight countries in Africa, to India, Sri Lanka, China, Russia, USA, Australia, Brazil and that is only half of his journeying - read that book and note his encounters and his illuminating reflections on all he experienced.

Involvement in organisations both Baptist, Ecumenical, and for other purposes are incalculable. He was a chairman on numerous important committees in Britain, Europe and Overseas - Committees for Human Rights, Educating the Third World etc.

Authority on Apocalyptic

In addition to all this he wrote thirteen books: the magnum opus already referred to, and twelve others, ranging from 72 to 170 pages each. They are mainly about the Apocalyptic Writings and the historical periods covered by these writings. However, although there is inevitably much repetition you do not feel you have read it all before. He always seems to bring something fresh; new insights and ways of making relevant to our day and age matters that would seem at first sight so alien and outdated.

With this corpus there are a few books which look at specific writers and their work - especially Daniel. There are two books on Daniel with one on Ezekiel and Isaiah.⁴ One of the books on Daniel is a verse by verse commentary and the other has a more thematic approach. Although both deal with Daniel there is little sense of repetition. They look at Daniel from different perspectives.

There is also one book on general theology and related ethical problems. It is an excellent study on the tensions that essentially co-exist in biblical and theological experience.

So, to conclude this final part of the first article, I will review briefly the last two books I have mentioned which were published respectively in 1989 and 1990.

The first book *Daniel an Active Volcano*⁵ is a further study of Daniel published by the same Saint Andrew's Press which published the earlier commentary on Daniel.

Although one ought to have the feeling of *deja vu* as you read, most especially if you have read his earlier commentary, instead you get the exciting feeling of feeding in fresh pastures. Although, again, the earlier volume aimed at rooting the message in the present day and age, *An Active Volcano* does it magnificently and graciously with smooth unforced and natural movement from the Old Testament text to the New Testament and then into showing the relevance of the message for today. All Russell's books are earthed; you do not feel they are unrelated to life as it is now; and none more so than this excellent study. I have never been a Danielophile - on the contrary I have been more of a Danielphobe, never feeling at home in eschatological thought, and finding the concept of Christ's return difficult to fit into any cosmic time scheme. Russell's book has helped me to come to grips better than most with both the book of Daniel and eschatology. This book does what I most want theological and biblical studies to do - give me food for reflection and preaching. To get one is a blessing, to get both in one book is a bonus! This book provides both in every chapter; it makes Daniel understandable, fascinating and relevant to the world in which we live, he offers numerous excursions into the highways and byways of ethical and philosophical questions and offers answers concerning them.

In chapter six, for example, he extracts from the chapters thoughts on jealousy, prejudice, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and the degree of responsibility that religion has to take for its share of this terrible, inexplicable phenomenon which has beset the Jews through history. Friends, read this book and open up a new world, and a horn of plenty for many Sunday sermons. Apocalyptic may have bewildered you, but with this and the other works in my next article, you will see not only the significance of Apocalyptic writing but its relevance to any age. And this without having to become involved in the bizarre.

The second book is concerned with the existence of paradoxes within Christianity: it is titled: *Poles Apart: The Gospel in Creative Tension*⁶.

He describes them in less technical language as tensions within the Faith. However, these tensions are not created by failure or sin, nor should they be feared, for they are creative tensions. They are endemic to faith and must be seen as inescapable. If only one side of the problem is accepted and the other denied, the problem is not only misunderstood but fails to be true or helpful. The paradoxes are mainly familiar, but they can be troublesome; and Russell offers a way through them all and some of these theological insights and excursions are very exciting.

George Neal

Notes:

1. For a fuller account of his life's work vide *Bible, Church and World*, edited by J.H. Briggs. A supplement to the Baptist Quarterly published in honour of Dr. D.S. Russell. Baptist Historical Society, 1989. Geoffrey Rusling's article, pp4-20.
2. D.S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic*, SCM Press, London, 1964.
3. D.S. Russell, *In Journeyings Often*, Baptist Church House, London, 1981.
4. D.S. Russell, *Two Refugees* (A study of Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah), 1962
Daniel: The Daily Bible Study, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1981.
Daniel, An Active Volcano, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1989.
5. Vide Note 4.
6. D.S. Russell: *Poles Apart: The Gospel in Creative Tension*, The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh, 1990.

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To the Readers of the Baptist Ministers' Journal

My last letter was concerned with the increased incidence of theft from our Churches and the damage to the buildings caused in gaining entry for the purpose. At the same time there is a considerable increase in the level of sheer malicious damage commonly termed "vandalism".

I thought it might assist to set out the difference from an insurance standpoint between these two different causes of loss. Damage by "malicious persons" **excluding theft** is an additional cover available as an extension of the Fire Policy. Bottles etc thrown through windows, the spraying of paint on walls are both examples of such damage. The damage caused to gain entry for the purpose of theft is excluded from malicious damage cover and is included under our Theft policies provided an item on Fixed Property has been arranged.

To cover both eventualities it is therefore necessary to include malicious damage under the Fire Policy and to effect a Theft Policy with a fixed property item. Occasionally both types of damage occur simultaneously. Thieves having broken in and stolen Church property, add insult to injury by perpetrating entirely wanton damage whilst on the premises.

We live in troubled times!

Yours sincerely

M. E. Purver

English Churches Housing

APPEAL FOR HELP

This page used to be headed Baptist Housing Association Limited. On 1st July BHA merged with Church Housing Association to form English Churches Housing Group. That of course is a fairly drastic change, but it does not change the fact there are over one hundred properties between Falmouth and Preston which were built on Baptist property with the active help and encouragement of Baptist churches. This also does not change the fact that we still need volunteers to help run those Local Management Committees who are, by their work for those less fortunate than themselves, expressing in the most practical way their love of God and man.

If one of these properties is near where you live, and you are willing to help, please either contact the Local Management Committee, or write to the Deputy Chief Executive of English Churches Housing Group at the address below. If you don't know where the properties are, we can send you a list of them all.

English Churches Housing Group Limited
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Intercessory Prayer: The Rationale

In the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the Seven are appointed in order that the Twelve may give their "attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). In this context, prayer almost certainly means the leading of prayer in worship, as well as private prayer. Often that verse is read as if it only included a reference to the preaching of the word, while the actual words of scripture here seem to suggest that the leading of prayer is at least as important as teaching the scriptures. As one who leads others in worship, I find this a very challenging observation. It suggests that preparation for the leading of prayer needs as much attention as is given to sermon preparation, both in terms of time and in terms of personal preparation. It also suggests that we need to be clear about what it is we are doing when we lead others in prayer.

So, what are we doing when we lead people in intercession?

Intercession Implies Mission

Firstly, I suggest, when we lead intercessory prayers we are helping our people to respond to God's invitation to share in the accomplishment of his purpose for the world. Intercession and mission are very closely related. Neville Ward says, "There is no reason to think that God will do on his own what he purposes to do with us" (*The Use of Praying*).

Thus in the story of Abraham's intercession for Sodom, the Lord is boldly represented as having a debate with himself: "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?" (Genesis 18:17). The prophet Amos cries: "Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets?" (Amos 3:7). Jesus said that the Son "can do only what he sees the Father doing...for the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he does" (John 5: 19-20). Thus scripture declares that God graciously reveals to his people his plans and purposes and so invites them to share in their accomplishment. Intercession is part of this missionary partnership with God. It is, as Neville Ward says, "A means God employs to summon our help through our membership in the body of Christ" (p87).

W.H. Vanstone, in *Love's Endeavour, Love's Expense*, describes the church as the offering of love in response to love. "If the activity of God is a precarious activity, ever poised between tragedy and triumph, ever redeeming tragedy into triumph, and if the church is a responsive offering to God, then the intercession of the church is the offering of its will to participate, to uphold, to support." (p.110)

The Corporate Dimension

Secondly, I suggest that when we lead others in intercession we are helping them to experience more fully the corporate dimension to Christian experience. But Christian experience is corporate only in so far as it is "in Christ", that is, part of the high priestly ministry of Christ himself. All prayer is gathered up and offered to the Father by Christ. Neville Ward writes: "Truly Christian prayer is part of the eternal prayer and sacrifice of the great High Priest" (p87). And James Montgomery in his hymn "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire" (BHB 340) has this verse:

Nor prayer is made on earth alone,
The Holy Spirit pleads;
And Jesus on the eternal throne
For sinners intercedes.

It is in Christ and through Christ alone that the Church on earth is one with the Church in heaven, so that there is a "communion of saints" in which we can all intercede for each other.

The classic text for this in scripture is found in Hebrews 12: 22ff: "You have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly to the church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant."

Thus, Richard Baxter in his hymn "He wants not friends that hath Thy love" (BHB 360) can write of the fellowship that exists between those who are in Christ in this world and those who are with Christ in the next:

"Before Thy throne we daily meet
As joint petitioners to Thee
In Spirit we each other greet
And shall again each other see."

The implication of this doctrine of the communion of saints is, as Ann and Barry Ulanov in their book *Primary Speech: a Psychology of Prayer* baldly state, "All prayer is social" (p85).

Evelyn Underhill in her classic work, *Worship*, goes so far as to say, "The intercession of the liturgy, though no detailed petition or individual need is too homely to be brought within its radius, **is always a corporate act**" (p.151). Thus, in the Lord's Prayer, we will always, even when alone, pray, "**Our Father...give us...forgive us....lead us not...deliver us**".

For Ann and Barry Ulanov, intercessory prayer is rather like drifting with the current in the vast ocean of God's love. "Intercessory prayer pulls us in the tow of God's connectedness with everything" (p92) Intercession is about becoming "part of one great current that gathers us into its own course (p96)...the prayers of others flow through us and intercede for us (p97)..." Failure to intercede is sin, because "sin is the refusal to get our feet wet in the ocean of God's connectedness". (p 96)

If I have seemed to labour this point about the communion of saints as the context for our intercession, it is because the doctrine is somewhat neglected among Baptists. I suspect the reason for that neglect is that for some other Christians a strong sense of the communion of saints is the origin of practices frowned upon by Protestants, practices like prayers for the dead and the intercession of the saints.

But we must be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath water. To those who feel that to emphasize the communion of saints is the thin end of the wedge, the top of the slippery slope, I would only reply that you don't have to descend that slope, but you can at least stand on the summit and understand where that road has come from. If such a staunch Protestant as Richard Baxter could affirm so strongly in his hymn the communion of saints, there can be no reason why we should not do so as well.

I will conclude this section with a quote from Harry Williams (*Becoming What I Am*): "The real basis of intercession..is..the communion of saints. We are not isolated entities.. in the inside of life, in the invisible world, we are, all of us, the whole of mankind, closely and deeply interrelated...none of us can enter the presence of God simply for himself alone". (p 70)

The Priestly Calling

Those words lead us, thirdly, to the point that in leading people in intercession we are helping them to fulfil their priestly calling and ministry of representing and presenting the world to God.

Sometimes the idea of the priesthood of all believers has been misunderstood. It has been taken to mean the right of the individual to direct access to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit without any other mediation.

Of course, this is gloriously true. Nevertheless, I believe we should be thinking of a corporate priesthood of all believers together and this is part of that corporate identity of the community of faith about which we have already been thinking.

A priest is one who acts as a representative of others before God. Thus the whole church in its intercessory prayer acts as a representative of a race that as a totality cannot yet, or will not, pray on its own behalf. Vanstone called the church "the response of recognition to the love of God" (p109). It is that part of God's creation which recognises the intensity of the divine love that is expended upon the world, and which **on behalf** of the world makes a response. It is the first-fruits of God's total redemptive activity on behalf of the whole creation.

I have already mentioned the costliness of such representation, that it requires for its effectiveness an act of solidarity, of identification and incarnation to the point of self-sacrifice. "Our prayer is Christian prayer as we enter into the self-offering of Christ, as we want to be part of God's purpose and channels through which his love can act" (Ward, p 87).

The Context of Thanksgiving

Fourth, when we lead people in intercession we do so always in a context of thanksgiving. This applies in a number of ways.

In the 11th chapter of John, Jesus is recorded as standing before the tomb of Lazarus praying for divine help to perform the miracle of raising his dead friend to life again. But what Jesus actually prays is: "Father, **I thank you that you have heard me**" (John 11:41) The implication of this is that when (and if!) we are totally in tune with the heart, mind and will of God, we can pray **as if our request had already been granted**.

Again, it is noteworthy that when St. Paul offers to pray for the people to whom he is writing, he often, or even usually, expresses himself in this way: "I thank God when I pray for you". (e.g. Eph 1:6, Phil 1:3-4, Col 1:3)

This is not only because Paul may be indebted to these people for some service they have rendered him, as in the case of the Philippians, nor is it because he rejoices in the grace of God revealed in the lives of those to whom he writes, though this may be true as well. It is because there is a more profound reason for thanksgiving being the context of intercession.

To offer to pray for someone else can sometimes be perceived as patronising or condescending. The one who offers to pray can appear superior to, or as having something more or better than the person prayed for. However, when thanksgiving is the context of intercession there can be no superiority or condescension, but a mutuality of giving and receiving and interdependence as opposed to dependence. To give thanks for someone is to acknowledge that somehow you are in debt to that person, that you have something to receive from that person, just as she or he is in debt to you and receives something from you when you intercede for her or him.

Thus Harry Williams can say: "Part of intercession is giving thanks for people". (p 71)

Finally, in leading intercession, we seek to bring the people and situations for which the congregation is concerned into the presence of God so that the grace of God can be given in that situation or what God wants for those people can be given.

This is not to deny that God is already at work in those people or that situation. It is, rather, to affirm that in some mysterious way our prayer is the channel God uses for his love; that spiritual energy may be released at the point where our prayers are directed.

A possible Biblical model for such prayer could be the action of those who lowered their paralysed friend through the roof down to the feet of Jesus. The gospel says, "When he saw **their** faith..." (Matthew 9:1ff and parallels). I remember one of my tutors in college commenting that this was not so much an example of vicarious, saving faith such as paedobaptists might claim in the case of infant baptism, but rather an example of the kind of faith exercised in intercessory prayer.

In our intercession we simply lay the person, or bring the situation, into the presence of the Lord, so that he can act in his way and for his own purposes. Such prayer may require little in the way of actual request and even fewer words; but it does require great imagination. We shall be considering the role of imagination in prayer later in part three.

Such prayer also requires a willingness to seek a knowledge of God's will as the first requirement of true intercession; that is, to listen to what God is saying so that when we do pray we will be doing so in accordance with his mind and purpose. This, I take it, is the real importance of what is said by those who talk about "words of knowledge" in this context. I do not count myself as being part of their circle, but I fully understand what it is they are intimating.

To return to the story of the paralysed man: the first thing that the Lord wanted for him was to heal his inner paralysis of guilt. Only when he had received forgiveness could he then receive a physical cure. But I'm sure that was a surprise to the paralytic and his friends alike. They got more than they bargained for when they sought the help of Jesus. We too ought to be prepared to receive more than we bargain for when we pray (see Eph 3:20).

Philip Clements-Jewery

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A RE-AWAKENING

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Report on the First CTE Forum, Swanwick, 19 - 21 July 1991

My trip to Swanwick for the three days of the CTE Forum, the bi-annual conference of English Churches Together, proved fascinating. It was a very full and rather tiring programme, but it was certainly very stimulating. Some 350 members and officers of the Forum were there for a packed programme of conference, fellowship and worship. A few folk I knew, including a dozen or so Baptists, some old friends from other denominations - contacts made over the years - and lots of others known to us all by sight, including such famous faces as Cardinal Basil Hume, the Archbishops of York, Canterbury and Liverpool, various Bishops (all of whom went straight into 'muffi' as soon as was decently possible), and various imposing Metropolitans in their long beards and longer cassocks.

Some people were Regional Forum representatives, like myself, while others were local agents and representatives, such as local ecumenical officers from around the country. Various para-church organisations involved with CTE also had their representatives there. It was in every sense a major event, although subsequent Press coverage belies this! We can at least, however, claim that for those three days we had full TV coverage on Channel 4 Ceefax.

It was certainly fascinating to see how many Baptists were in positions of leadership; for example, Roger Nunn and Keith Clements are both CTE officers, while John Nicholson was the Moderator (or Chairman) for the time being. In the election held during the Forum for his successor, members looked no further than the excellent character of Hugh Cross. I say this not as a denominational boast, but as a balance. A number of people, identifying me as a Baptist, commented, "Ah, yes, of course, a lot of your people aren't very happy about all this, are they?" Some clearly see us as very cautious, not to say unwilling members of the Forum. It was good, therefore, to feel that other Baptists are demonstrably actively committed to this process of co-operation.

One item was also noticeable - by its absence. There was not a single mention of amalgamation or absorption of any group by any other. Despite the fears of some of our denomination, this is clearly no part of the CTE agenda. Instead there was much more talk about co-operation outside of a spirit of fear, with the idea that in a given area we should be able and willing to share resources on a common journey. One might then see a person supported and trained by one denomination, ministering to the churches of several denominations in his or her particular area of expertise. Equally one might see local training schemes or similar resources being made available to all Christian churches, rather than being copied into the ersatz mould of each church.

The Programme

What did we do? One of the major features was worship. A husband and wife team, both URC Ministers and members of the Iona Community, led us in this. We found, not surprisingly, that much use was made of Iona and Taize material, with various other chants or choruses coming from Africa or South America. "Kendrick" did get a look in when we sang "Shine Jesus Shine" - at the end of the Roman Catholic Mass! The worship had typically little in common with that of the average evangelical Baptist Church today, but was nonetheless very acceptable for all that. It was a clearly voiced conscious decision by the organisers to invite traditions over the years to lead the Forum in worship just as they would in their own context. Hence one service was an authorised Roman Catholic Mass, while another was a URC eucharist. (Provision was made for any other group to hold a service of their own according to their own rite if they felt left

out; it was only some Anglicans who took this up, but they had to hold their eucharist at 7am before the rest of us met at 7.45am for a 75 minute service before breakfast!)

The problem and pain of inter-communion or its lack were clearly faced up to - even agonised over - but perhaps that very process left many the more determined to seek ways forward. Derek Warlock, leading the Mass, was keen that we should all feel able to concentrate on all that we could each get out of the service, of which he described "Communication" as but a part, and certainly there was much else of blessing. But, nonetheless, none but Roman Catholics could go forward to receive the elements, although any others were welcome to go forward for blessing, as many did. Equally, when the URC led, although they described their table as open, those who could not accept their orders, (Protestants among them) felt unable to receive more than a blessing. It may sound as though our worship was divisive: I would prefer to call it honest and provocative.

But this was not more than part of our work. Most of our time was given over to seminar discussions on a variety of topics. Indeed, we met as groups of no more than a dozen, typically representing a wide variety of churchmanship, to consider various issues of the hour. Social and political responsibility, evangelism, ecumenism, - these were but some of the areas covered. This seminar work took a fair portion of our time, but even more time was commendably spent by the Chair and Secretary of these groups producing excellent reports overnight, having these in some miraculous way printed up in the small hours so that they could be received and discussed by the entire Forum in synopsis the following day. Each area of interest typically had four or five groups meeting to consider it. These groups then met under the leadership of the overall Chair so that a common mind could be reached before the reports were composed. Once again, it is worth emphasizing that these were not intended to reach any conclusions, far less to pass down any orders which would affect the member churches. Rather were they an attempt to test the water of opinion of our churches today.

Some of the issues which were raised in these groups were also dealt with in smaller fringe meetings.

One such excellent meeting was that led by the various representatives of the Black-Led churches. To see a little of their history, their experience and the perception of us, was I think for all of us, a humbling, moving and very informative experience.

Another very sensitive area was relevant, The Role of Women. Most loquacious on this, whether in individual conversation, or addressing the entire Forum from the floor, was Sister Lavinia Byrne. She must be the first Nun in my experience to stand up in such a meeting and wave a rape alarm at the assembled delegates, explaining her fear of walking the streets today. Clearly she is a lady who has provoked considerable controversy within her own tradition, and perhaps she added to this during our weekend, but once again many people were made to think about unhelpful assumptions that can otherwise be made. It was noted that a lot of the groups had a man as Chair and a woman as Secretary. Happily after this observation was made, further reports then took their turn and it was found that a man had been acting as secretary to some very competent ladies, both lay and ordained!

This is not an attempt to produce a synopsis of the material which we considered over the weekend, but rather a personal reflection on the experience itself. I could of course provide for any interested, more detailed material as given to delegates.

All in all one could describe the Forum meeting as eminently successful, a young movement finding its way, but one that shows much promise and grounds for encouragement for all of our churches as we explore God's future together.

Philip C. Webb

Book Reviews

A Concise Dictionary of Theology By Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia (Harper Collins, 1991, 272pp, £10.99)

The essentials of a good dictionary include comprehensiveness, clarity, accessibility and illumination. Within the constraints of its concise format this dictionary comes close to fulfilling all these criteria. It is a reflection of the times that although the product of Catholicism, only marginally is the dictionary weighted in this direction. Generally, it breathes a truly ecumenical spirit.

The stated aim is to "clarify theological terminology and to promote accuracy in its usage". And so, from Abba to Zwinglianism, we are taken on a grand tour of the rich territory of theology. Inevitably, an extended treatment of subjects is not possible ("Baptists" gets only eight lines, but this is more even than "Catholicism" which is allotted only three, demonstrating remarkable restraint). The Eastern Church as well as the Western is represented, as are the great non-Christian world religions. A useful feature is the cross-referencing system and the Greek and Latin roots of many of the entries. Most subjects chosen at random were found in this value-for-money dictionary, comprising over a thousand entries.

Michael V. Jackson

Heaven on Earth by Brother Ramon (Marshall Pickering, 1991, 176pp, £4.50)

Brother Ramon's latest book is "A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Making a Retreat". This popular author provides 7 days' worth of material for a private retreat, with the retreatant on his or her own; nature-related themes (images of the earth and sky), Bible passages, meditations, recipes(!), and exercises (reflective, not aerobic).

Those of us who have discovered the great value of retreats will warm to the first part of the book, with its practical hints on preparing for and making a retreat. This section could open up new horizons for many other people, too. A retreat involves "withdrawing from the immediate and insistent claims of the difficulties and responsibilities of life, in order to be totally available to God".

Why retreat? For at least 4 reasons: "To dwell within the divine love; to be filled with the Spirit for conflict with dark powers; for guidance and direction; for physical, mental and spiritual refreshment and renewal".

I recommend this readable and practical book. The real test, however, is not in the reading but in the doing. The idea of 7 days in solitude and silence may not be 'where we are at' - yet. We may need a more structured, led retreat, or a one-to-one retreat (such as the Baptist Union Retreat Group arranges - plug!). But a lot of us probably have a regular day of quiet and reflection, on our own. Next time, instead of preparing the deacons' agenda or catching up on correspondence, you might take this book with you, and actually use it to give shape to your day.

Barry Vendy

The Gap: Christians and people who don't go to Church: by Jack Burton. (Triangle, 1991, 144pp, £4.99)

A readable and pithy account of the ministry of Jack Burton, Methodist minister, "catholic spirited non-conformist", and worker priest. Member of an ecumenical team, he is dependent financially on secular employment as a bus driver in Norwich. Since

1960 his pastoral ministry has been devoted entirely to the needs of the non church-goer. Burdened about the enormous gap between the church and the working class, he seeks to build a bridge between the two. He sees clergy as stranded on the wrong side of the gap and congregations hermetically sealed from the world.

We are introduced to various theological themes. The mystery of God and our understanding of Scripture (not a view many evangelicals would welcome). Evangelism as not wanting to change people but to love, enjoy and help them to be more loving (fine sentiments but leading to a diluted gospel). Political action as the way the world gets changed. We must throw in our lot on the side of peace, justice and radical social change - anything else is first aid. Worship for him is sparked off by such things as the sight of the sun, a barn owl, even a steam engine; these cannot be fixed for 10.45 am. Church worship can often be an anti-climax.

His spiritual base of operation is St Clements - a hired redundant church, open daily as a place of sanctuary and prayer. A small statue of our Lady of Walsingham, holy water, votive candles, icons and a banner for the bus workers' Trade Union form part of the furniture. There are no service books. Baptisms, weddings and funerals are performed for the non church-goer with real attempts to make the services meaningful.

His bus may not be going your way, but it's worth taking a ride to see what is taking place on another route.

Jack Ramsbottom

The Gospel and Contemporary Culture ed. H. Montefiore (Mowbray, 1992, 192pp, £11.95)

Edited, and with an introduction by former Bishop of Birmingham, Hugh Montefiore, this book is a contribution to the theme of *The Gospel and Our Culture*, particularly taken up in works by Lesslie Newbigin. The book seeks to explore the relationship between the Christian gospel and "certain key areas of our cultural thought". The areas chosen are history, the arts, epistemology, economics, education, health and the media. There is a chapter devoted to each area written by a contributor from the academic field, each with an impressive background in his or her respective discipline. Among the contributors are represented many churches and none.

Each chapter looks at the interaction between Christianity and the area under discussion, and what the Christian faith has to say to these important areas of our life in society today. Is there common ground? Has it anything to say which will challenge the assumptions and presuppositions of each discipline?

This is a book which tackles some interesting contemporary issues, for example, the role of religious education in schools; the consequence of the market economy and what the gospel might have to say in the light of these consequences; the role of religious broadcasting. Inevitably, I found some chapters appealed more to my interests than others, but this book also taught me something about those disciplines with which I am not familiar, as well as teaching me about the relationship between faith and culture. On the whole I found that this is a book which reminds us that our Christian faith has to do with the real world, with our life in society, and if this is the case then Christianity needs to have a relationship with these important issues, a relationship which can include challenge and criticism as well as seeking for common ground.

Amanda Harper

Evangelical Spirituality by James M Gordon (SPCK, 1991, 352pp, £12.99)

The aim throughout this book, says the author, "has been to provide an appreciative exposition of Evangelical spirituality." James Gordon, one of our Baptist ministers serving at Crown Terrace, in Aberdeen, allows his obvious love of the Evangelical tradition to shine through his writing, which has a clear and lucid style. The heart of his book is an exploration of the lives and faith of 11 pairs of individuals who stand within this tradition, beginning with the Wesleys and ending with two figures from our own century, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott. They all come from the UK or the US, and the author succeeds in picking out the common strands of thought that unite them as Evangelicals, notably a deep dependency on God's grace shown in the cross of Christ, a close adherence to the Bible, and a concern for evangelism.

I found insights offered into familiar hymns by people such as Cowper and Havergal particularly illuminating, as was the chance to discover something of the struggle and commitment of Alexander Whyte. There are many quotations and helpful bibliographies for each character. However, I regret that the book left me sensing the weaknesses of the Evangelical tradition. Faith is expressed in such personal terms. There is little sense of the importance of belonging to the Church and to the world, or recognition that we must see all of life as spiritual. Perhaps we would have been helped if the author had given us a deeper critical evaluation of those he introduced.

Maybe the choice of individuals was at fault, and certainly the definition of "spirituality" seemed a narrow one, but I found myself longing for the gentle and profound mysticism of Julian of Norwich and the visionary political commitment of a Thomas Merton.

Graham Sparkes

Women Models of Liberation by Marie Anne Mayeski (Fount, 1991, 244pp, £5.99)

This book gives us insights into the stories of eight women who, in very different ways, are models of Christian liberation. The author draws from a wide range of Christian traditions and works chronologically from the martyrdom of Perpetua in 203AD, through to Caryl Houselander working in the nineteen forties and fifties.

The great variety makes this a fascinating read. (A minor irritation is the number of printing errors which can create some confusion.) Each chapter consists of biographical highlights and samples of each woman's own writing. These range from diaries and letters to extracts from the "Showings" of Julian of Norwich, and an eighth century mother's "Handbook for a Noble Son".

The "models of liberation" come from equally varying situations. The moving account of Perpetua's approach to martyrdom shows not only her freedom as a Christian in the face of cruel persecution, but also in relation to her expected roles as daughter and mother. Dhuoda, who did fulfil an eighth century wife and mother role, was a "model of liberation" in her understanding of her God-given freedom also to be a teacher. The journal of the nun "At the end of the Santa Fe trail", and the letters of the Quaker Sarah Grimke, show other facets of freedom in Christ from social and ecclesiastical stereotypes. The space given to extracts from original texts is refreshing.

The author gives bibliography and "Questions and Activities" of various kinds at the end of each chapter - not for discussion but for serious reflection and study. I am not sure who would use these, but creative ideas for probationary studies for both women and men might be found here - and could someone's sabbatical add a Baptist to the list?

Ruth Matthews