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# The Fraternal

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## EDITORIAL

This particular issue of "The Fraternal" is almost historic. In order to conform to the new demands regarding the size of magazines (and to take advantage of Post Office Preferred rates) we are compelled, from our next issue, to change the size and shape of our quarterly journal. We certainly cannot afford the extra cost which we would incur in retaining this present format and we only hope that all our readers will like our "fit-into-your-inside-pocket" issue which will reach your homes in July.

Mention of past issues gives us this opportunity to pay tribute to friends who have given innumerable hours of willing service to "The Fraternal" in former days. We specially salute the memory of our good friend T. Llanfair Cotes who, as Magazine Distributor, did a most demanding job which involved the despatch of over 3,000 magazines every quarter. In order to cover the work he had to address several hundred envelopes every week, and he willingly served the Fellowship in that way for many years. We thank God for such a devoted ministry to his colleagues throughout the world and would assure Mrs Cotes of our sympathy, and our gratitude for sparing him for this valuable service. And, whilst we think of Ministers' wives who have helped us in one way or another, may the Editor and his colleagues on the Board also express their gratitude to Mrs Morris, the widow of our greatly loved friend Sydney Morris? For a very long period of time Mrs Morris has helped "The Fraternal" and maintained useful links and contacts through the despatch of magazines to various parts of the world. She has now relinquished these responsibilities but we want her to know of our sincere appreciation. The B.M.F. owes more to Sydney Morris than we shall ever know, and his gracious wife shared eagerly in this aspect of his ministry to Ministers.

And now, to the future. Remember that it is **your** magazine. We are told that no other denomination in Britain has a magazine of this size specially produced for its Ministers. Do help to maintain and increase the effectiveness of its ministry by reading it, by telling us about subjects you would like to have discussed and, possibly, by writing yourself! We firmly believe that "The Fraternal" has an important ministry in the denomination. It can provide a forum for discussion of important issues and it serves as a vital link between Baptist Ministers throughout the world. Can you suggest ways of furthering its ministry?

## INSTANT UNITY

This is not prompted by the demand of a hectic or an impatient age. It is not submitted as the possible product of a catching slogan, a clever gimmick or some newly devised expertise. These are from beneath; spiritual unity is from above. Nor does it exclude some vital constituents of the complete unity which we all should seek. Our disunities have built-in values centuries old. In their complexities they have eternal contents and temporary patterns and the analysis and assessment of these take time. Thus the scholarly and thorough-going work of the Faith and Order committee of the World Council of Churches merits our praise, patience and prayer. But these essentially long term projects do not preclude short term ones in which we all can share and share immediately.

Moreover it must not be presumed that unity awaits some official ecclesiastical take-over bid, some final merging of denominations, an annexation of the hitherto detached administrations which will lose all identity and be subsumed under one monolithic control. Such ideas are riddled with unexamined assumptions and unwarranted presuppositions. What is certain is that every christian in contact with other followers of Christ can day by day make some contribution to the unity for which Christ prayed. Such partial realizations of christian unity are important and immediately possible.

The all-prevalent and penetrating spirit of ecumenism has disclosed and accentuated great theological differences among the members of Christ's church. Our first reaction may be to strengthen our own positions, build up new bastions of argument, till the differences constitute varying degrees of disunion in the Body of Christ. "You in your small corner and I in mine". The 'no man's land' in between may indicate different measures of detachment and antagonism, thus producing some amount of instant disunity. But a different reaction is possible and commendable. May not the recognition of differences constitute a call to examine the position of those who differ from us? Ignorance can serve no good purpose. Truth can never suffer from increasing knowledge. Here, then, is a step that can be taken towards instant unity. Study honestly the positions of those who differ from us. To refer to the Baptist scene, let those whose position is admirably stated in *The Pattern of the Church* read carefully the equally well-stated thesis titled *Liberty in the Lord* and vice versa and let all study carefully the Baptist Union report, *Baptists and Unity*. But, some will ask, is there not a danger in this? Yes there is a danger to foregone conclusions and entrenched prejudices but not to the seeker after truth.

Such study should be undertaken on the assumption that differences need not beget division and that unity is not uniformity. In the instant unity of a real marriage each partner sheds a certain insularity; old differences are not eliminated but sublimated. The twain become one new man, Herein is an analogy of true christian unity. The twelve disciples of our Lord represented a great diversity

of background and outlook, ability and character. Jesus did nothing to reduce this diversity but He transformed it by subsuming it to a great spiritual objective. In the church of the New Testament one sees a rich diversity of gifts held in the unity of the spirit. In apostolic days there were the Judaistic and Hellenistic christians and great were the differences between them but they were true to their one Lord, one faith, one baptism. One did not excommunicate the other. Dr. Headlam says: "For many centuries after the beginning of Christianity the Church presented to the world the aspect of real Unity. These were, indeed, separated bodies, but they were local and, compared with the great Church, insignificant\*." And in our own day, for the sake of uniformity are we to demand that the Quaker should adopt the rites and the liturgies of the High-churchman or vice versa? Our Master has called us to manifest a unity he had with the Father before the world was. It was a unity in truth and fellowship, in service and love. And ever since the world began it has shown an ever increasing differentiation manifesting an ever deepening unity. This should be the pattern of an ever reforming church, adopting a new tradition as a new age may require and abandoning or reforming it as another age may need but always according to the Eternal One who can make the soul of time His slave.

Even with our differences we can be faithful to our Lord by our mutual respect for one another. One christian has the right to differ from another but not to sit in judgment on him or question his sincerity. He may cherish a different interpretation of the gospel from that held by the other but they both live, if they live at all, by the same gospel. Each should approach the other in humility and love. The attitude of Pope John XXIII has much to commend it. He said, "400 years of fruitless appeals to the Protestants, 900 of fruitless appeals to the Orthodox, are perhaps demonstration enough that this is no way to reach our goal. It cannot be a matter simply of others 'returning', as though we had no responsibility for the split, as though we therefore had nothing to make good, as though it were not in the least up to us to go out to meet them—they, our brothers, lovers of Christ, our Lord." †

Unity does not exclusively await an ecumenical agreement, valuable as that be, nor could the acceptance of such an agreement, if reached, be enforced by the church or the state. As the church is ever reforming and truth is ever progressing, anything like finality here would 'draw the circles premature.' On this spiritual journey we may reach many junctions (451, 1054, 1517, 1662) but no termini. Moreover there are equally other important approaches to that ultimate unity. Here our insights and foresights are not gained by knowledge and logic alone. That which is born of the spirit is spirit. The very nature of our faith implies this. Our unity with fellow christians is derived from our unity with Christ. In this

\* The Doctrine of the Church and Re-Union, Page 174.

† The Council and Reunion. Hans Kung, Page 135.

communion, service is as important and effective as belief. To serve with others is as magnetic an influence as to confer with them. As human need challenges christians of different denominations their reactions have much in common revealing a basic, though perchance an undefined, unity. This may be revealed in a students' march to raise funds for Oxfam, in the service of the Counsellors at a Billy Graham crusade or in the generous response of the churches to an appeal for the victims of an earthquake disaster.

In the quest for unity we should be ready to recognise all intermediate stages as well as ultimate goals. The former should not be considered as competitive with the latter. In the World Council of Churches, the British Council of Churches, The Free Church Federal Council, the Temperance Council of the Christian Churches and the British Lessons Council, to mention only a few such councils, we have had for years a measure of real ecumenicity without any assumption that there could be no more ultimate unity that would give new strength and meaning to every aspect of the mission of the church, for while the whole is more than the sum of its parts, it is nothing without them. This is a matter of immediate importance to the various denominations and the interdenominational councils which they have constituted and in which for years they have enjoyed a most fruitful fellowship and found the means for effective joint action, impossible without such councils. With the advent of new developments in education and the various social services, the question arises, shall these great challenges and opportunities be met jointly or separately by the denominations. Here are wide open fields for christian action where our distinctive denominational features have little or no relevance, but where a united policy and joint action are a most urgent necessity. Particularly true is this when an effort is made to influence Parliament or the British Broadcasting Corporation or the Press. If the effort be made in the name of all denominations jointly it will be far more effective than if made by them separately.

A similar problem presents itself in some of the new housing estates. Land because of its scarcity and cost must be carefully allocated. Readiness is shown in some cases to set aside one or two sites for the christian church. It would be foolish to contend in such circumstances that every denomination should have the right to a site. And even if that were granted, what a spectacle might then be seen of several little causes each competing for a relatively small and mainly indifferent community. These are certainly special cases but surely they call for instant united action rather than no action at all.

We are showing great concern for the 'image' of the church which the man of the world has. That image may be fair or unfair but what is more important is the fact that this shows us the kind of man to whom we have to address our gospel. The recognition of this might well evoke the prayer,

O wad some Pow'r the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as others see us!

This carries many implications. To refer to a small secondary one, our notice boards. Here we announce to the world what we are and in doing so we generally state only that which distinguishes us from other denominations. No reference is made to what we have in common with them and all would readily admit that what we have in common is much bigger and more important than that which distinguishes us from others. Would it be a dangerous innovation for all denominations to agree to declare themselves on the notice boards "The Christian Church"? In a bracket underneath in small print could appear respectively (The Methodist Section), (the Presbyterian Section) and so on for the sake of clarity and honesty. Thus would we put first things first and second things second.

Often holiday brochures commend to us what they describe as "Holidays with a Purpose". This generally means the provision of an amenity additional to those necessary to a good holiday. Many diverse purposes can thus be accommodated. Some years ago I asked a French church leader if his church benefited greatly by visits from many christian tourists from other lands. "Alas", he replied, "Very little, and I have known such groups go to shoddy and shady places of amusement". He was not cynical nor excessively puritanical but he was aware, as christian visitors would not be, of the wonderful heartening and uplift his little church would receive by a visit from fellow-believers from other lands. Cardinal Bea, the President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, stresses this point in his book *The Unity of Christians*. "Each year," he says, "About 17 million tourists come to Italy—what a different opinion of Catholicism those and non-catholics will take away with them if the Catholics they come into contact with have a deep and real religious life and, most important, are men of real humility and have a deep respect for others\*"? Thus would they press tourism into the service of ecumenism.

Although we are not of this world we are certainly in it and we are in it at a time of a momentous reformation. Change and decay belong to everything organic but these factors in our day have acquired a new depth and rapidity. A nation may be born in a day and eclipsed in a night. We are witnessing a new scientific renaissance; abundant evidence is seen of a Providence which is making all things new. Thus age-long procedures and traditions are crumbling with irrelevance. To many people the church seems just anachronistic, soon to be 'one with Nineveh and Tyre'. But the Eternal which clothes itself with one form to meet the requirements of an age, can divest itself of that form and adopt another relevant to a new age. The onus of discharging this task does not rest on any particular denomination as such but on the whole church. In this situation there is both opportunity and danger. The various sections of the church may unite in their appeal to and in

\* *The Unity of Christians*, Augustine Cardinal Bea, 60.

their service for those outside its borders and so manifest its unity. On the other hand an influential christian leader of the age, having grasped its ethos, having shared its outlook and having formulated an appropriate form of service, may articulate the gospel with saving pertinence so that every man hears 'in his own tongue' the glory of the grace of God. Thus may this christian leader, in the absence of a better option due to the rigidity of old church traditions, gather round him his own detached community and become a modern Martin Luther, a Charles Wesley or a William Booth. So a cause of division would be made of an issue which could have furthered the unity of the church.

The zeal for unity must never be allowed to neglect that which is to be unified. "All for unity" could be a mistaken slogan. What is a transport system without its means of transport? What is a work of art without its daubs of paint? What is a lovely melody without its notes of music? What is the unity of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, etc? It is the contents not the connections of a unity which have prior significance and value. Moreover what unifying power have the various aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. Love is the most unifying force in the world. Marriage is but one expression of this power. Joy has a wonderful contagion bringing all within its range into its own happy elation. Peace is the oil on troubled waters, the voice that bids all conflicts cease. These and other aspects are the fruit of the Spirit and without them the unity of the Spirit is non-existent. Very inconsistent is the man who is reserving his loyalty for the fully united church which does not yet exist and can do nothing for any of the denominations which are the only unities that do exist.

The unity that we seek is a unity that we already possess in essence and in principle. The Divine forgiveness, the renewal of the Holy Spirit, which made us one with the Father has in like manner made all other believers one with God and consequently one with us. Unity is thus not an optional state a christian can accept or decline anymore than a man may rejoice in being the son of his father and repudiate being the brother of his sisters and brothers.

To differentiate between the unity that we seek and the unity which is already ours may be difficult. It has been said that we are one ontologically but many existentially. But if we were to join all such relevant ponderous names they would all be too mean to denote that wonderful, transforming and sublime relationship which makes us one with God through the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ

And the call to realize, make manifest, and deepen this unity comes everywhere and at every time. Say ye not then, to justify inaction, there are yet 12 years and then cometh 1980. "Behold the fields are already white unto harvest" and at our feet at this moment are gleanings that we may garner and which the Lord of the Harvest will not deem unworthy of a place in His final ingathering, when He who "was wounded for our transgressions" and



“bruised for our iniquities”, who in His church was straitened in our lethargies and timidities and rent in our divisions, “shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied”.

T. G. DUNNING

## MINISTRY IN THE MID-SIXTIES

I begin with a personal reminiscence. As a young National Service officer cadet in 1954, the most numbing experience I recall was my first sight of the unit assault course. Never having been an agile, fresh-air loving hearty, I was petrified. One of the obstacles was a “hen-coop”, a ten foot high structure having two planes set at about 45 degrees, and one was expected to run up one side and down the other, thence on to the next dreadful hazard. At my first attempt, desperately lacking in confidence, sure I could never survive the ordeal, I in fact descended in ungainly fashion on the farther side, quite out of control, and sustained a nastily twisted ankle for my trouble. This saved me a day or two of “square-bashing”: but it wouldn’t do. At the point when I inwardly cursed myself for being a fool, told myself that I could do it and must, at that point I was able to deal successfully with the hen-coop. No more twisted ankles.

My theme is want of nerve, and in particular, want of nerve in the ministry. Few of us will doubt the truth of the assertion that the mid-sixties have seen great uncertainty and malaise amongst us. This has been illustrated over and over again in the years since my ordination in 1962. I take some journalistic examples.

In February 1963 R. E. O. White, then of Borehamwood, wrote a short series of articles in the “Baptist Times” on the theme of ministerial dissatisfaction and the exit from the pastoral office amongst us. In the first article White produced statistics to show that the problem lay not so much in the recruitment of ministers but in the retention of them. What was it, he went on to ask, that caused 184 men in the years 1953-1962 to depart from the ranks of the ministry in largely unexplained fashion, and a further 121 to leave for administrative or educational work. White came to the conclusion that a whole series of factors were at work, and contributed each in its way to the overall phenomenon. He listed:

- a. a failure on the part of many churches to appreciate the work and problems of their ministers
- b. a sense of futility and irrelevance on the part of many ministers
- c. the fact that the ministry as such had lost ground in the esteem of society in general
- d. the fact that an appreciable number of young ministers were palpably lacking in maturity and grasp at the time of their commencement of the pastoral ministry.

White, it seems, did not find that financial pressures contributed to the wastage rate. Was he being kind at the time of writing? What would he say on this score today?

A similar utterance came from the work of Eric Carlton, a former Baptist probationer minister, who conducted a sociological survey amongst probationers the results of which were published as an article in "New Society" in January 1965. I had myself been one of the 50 or so young men whom he had interviewed with a gigantic questionnaire. Carlton wanted to find out what the attitudes of probationers were, and the work was conducted as research for a thesis that was being carefully supervised by tutors at the London School of Economics. Carlton as good as said in letters to the "Baptist Times" that it was not a mere matter of academic interest for him to investigate the contemporary probationer, but through his own experience of ministry in our ranks he felt involved with the widespread failure of ministry and the withering influences to which it was subject. His conclusion read:

There is considerable wastage in the Baptist ministry, and it is believed that this is due largely to frustration and the need to find more satisfying routines. It is my contention that very many ministerial problems arise mainly from conflicts of role and uncertainty of function.

No sure role, no place in the social structure, no prestige, doing nothing that lay people could not also do—the probationer minister was subject to all these forces and pressures. I quote further:

When the respondents were pressed for a *raison d'être* in the face of possible lay alternatives, there was no satisfactory answer. Their traditional routines were justified only in terms of training, time and their functions as co-ordinators of other men's work. Perhaps there is no adequate answer, because they make no distinctive contribution to society. There is nothing which they do which could not be done equally well by trained amateurs. Is his task simply to echo and endorse the current values of society or is there something significant and prophetic still to be said?

Carlton confessed to the "Baptist Times", while answering the rather bitter things that had been said about him in that journal, that there might well have been a gap between the strict, statistical assessment of the evidence and his own interpretative comment. But I see no reason whatever to dispute the fundamental accuracy of his picture. What he found, he described.

It is not only the Baptists who have suffered from this kind of malaise. The magazine "New Christian" often spotlights the issue, taking its examples generally speaking from the Anglican communion. It may be that the radical temper of this journal makes little appeal to some of us, and we should prefer the comforts of the evangelical weeklies and monthlies. But there is no doubt that we learn more from the critics than we benefit from being shored up by the faithful. I list three pertinent articles from "New Christian:" "Blame Conditions not the Strikers" (30 Dec. '65)

—“Ministry in the Melting” by John Robinson (10 Feb. '66)—and “Exit Clergymen” (23 Feb. '67). Each tells a story or expounds a view leading to the conclusion that the ministry is a shame and a shower and suggests that we had better flee from it for ever if we would be saved.

The most interesting of the articles I mention is the last, because it is a personal testimony from a failed clergyman, one John Cotton, who deliberately set out to describe in this way the reason for his abandonment of the Christian ministry. Nothing in what he says has anything to do with the traditional emphases of Anglicanism. What drove him out was a complex of a realisation that *much theological instruction was irrelevant* (“I let myself be seduced by a particular branch of recherche ideology which still goes by the name of theology . . . I fled from the stresses of 20th century adulthood and let myself be subtly indoctrinated in the medieval ethos of a theological college”), of *the impossibility of discovering the true task of the ministry* (“I began to ask myself and my teachers what I was being trained for. They could give me no clear answer. But . . . I read that the clergyman’s job was to train the laity for their ministry . . . the implication was that I was being trained to train others in some ministry of which I had no experience . . .”), of *the failure of any recent insights to achieve desirable results* (I tried hard to succeed at the job. One by one I pulled out all the stops of the theological organ . . . every latest prescription for making my little corner of organised Christianity come alive . . . It was only my theology which enabled me to persist in such self-deception. The consequence was a feeling of frustration, and deeper and deeper bouts of depression. My colleagues were not able to help”) and of *the sheer physical impossibility of the task* (“You were trained in theology. You received mere snippets of the social sciences at theological college, little or no guidance in the art of teaching, or of helping people with problems too great for them. And yet in spite of this you perjured yourself by promising to care for an impossible number of souls. Was it that you genuinely believed that the Holy Spirit would make up for all your deficiencies?”).

This acrid contribution clearly possesses a generic relationship with the two other studies which we have glanced at. So we dare not say that it is negligible, unreal, dangerously overdrawn.

The serious question for us is this: what keeps us *in* the ministry? it is a good thing to return in thought and prayer to one’s call and the deliciousness of it, but for all that we cannot sustain our spirits on memories, precious though they be. I was finally convinced of the rightness of my personal candidature for the ministry while sitting on a felled tree in a Thameside meadow near Wolvercote. But if the tree is finally cut up for someone’s fireplace, I still have to know why I am in the ministry *now*. It may be, of course, that merely to quote the kind of comments we have reviewed has the effect of a catharsis upon us. If ever we thought

we were wasting ourselves, the justifications of those who have so thought, and acted in consequence as they have done, might have the effect of keeping us from taking the same path. We might see ourselves in their analyses and confessions, but also realise we could not adopt their expedients.

At all events, I for one, faced with the articles and the climate they portray, have to think clearly about my personal position. Why do I remain a minister? and I answer my own question in this fashion:

i. theology is still vital, alive, enabling: men are still trying to comprehend the meaning of things and of themselves through the tissue of faith. But it is not easy. It is, in fact, a professional discipline which requires the labour of understanding to make it one's own, and communication to share it truly with others. Like all professional disciplines, this one makes training, time, reflection and the opportunity for it essential. At college I was warned against "professionalism" in the ministry. This is nonsense. Theology is my professional competence or ought to be—and people need it.

ii. pastoral disciplines are similarly difficult and demanding. In five short years of ministry—and doubtless with many shortcomings and false steps—I have comforted the sick, counselled the dying, shared the anguish of the bereaved, corrected the muddled, led the wayward back to a better way, helped the anxious, relieved the guilty, healed those who were sundered from others. There is a zest and a deep satisfaction from being thus privileged to share in others' lives. But this too must be done properly. We dare not content ourselves with prayer and common sense in this department. Pastoral care is no less a professional achievement than is theological study, and so must receive no less dedicated attention.

iii. the service of the house of God, and thus preaching, are still a necessary means of grace. I know this. In the providence of God I have both experienced it as a hearer and been the channel of it as His minister.

If for a further moment I may wear my heart on my sleeve, I have to say that it is because I believe in these three continuing features of my ministry that I remain in its exercise. Here lies for me the rationale and justification of my work. I put these quite happily against the comments of the gainsayers and doubters. That we *need* to ponder such a rationale, and coldly itemize it too, is necessary if we are to resist the more or less insidious effects of portions of the ecclesiastical environment in which we find ourselves and carry out our tasks.

But others put this far better and more winsomely than I have tried to do. Out of a great volume of letters written to "New Christian" against the spirit of the articles I mention and in glad defence of the Christian ministry I quote one from an Anglican clergyman working in a Kentish village. In its quiet confidence it forms a fitting conclusion to these thoughts.

The shortage of ordinands is caused, I believe, because the clergy are constantly being told that they are fringe men des-

perately seeking a role in society, when in fact we have an exciting, exacting and sometimes frustrating, but very definite role.

Ordination releases a man for the privilege . . . of being a man of prayer. He, with his people, can provide the praying heart for the community, he is called to exercise an incarnational ministry of word and sacrament and compassion to churchgoer and non-churchgoer alike, he does not have to seek frantically for his role in the social services, because he is called, for Christ's sake, to minister to the whole person.

I am a parish priest in a new housing area where gods are many and churchgoers few, but people matter and they seem to welcome the church's concern and I have to confess that I am kept too busy to worry about my role in the community. Seven years ago I was happily engaged in commerce, but now in spite of the usual crop of parochial and domestic problems, I am a supremely happy priest thanking God for the joy of serving Him.

I feel that there must be many Christians for whom the call to be a minister of God's word, sacrament and love is enough and more than enough."

E. BRUCE HARDY

## THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION IN EVANGELISM

The problem of communicating the Gospel to modern man is a particularly pressing one. In an age of specialisation such as our own, we are witnessing a breakdown of communication between groups and sciences which once could use common categories of thought on a common platform. The problem now is to find new forms of inter-communication. So revolutionary does this rapid change appear to be, that many are convinced that we are passing through an intellectual crisis. As such it is felt that the Christian Church must re-orientate its theological thinking and adopt some new terminology in order to make the Gospel intelligible to the modern mind.

Now in one sense this may seem to be just so much academic hullabaloo, but in actual fact it is a matter of real concern to all who are fired with evangelistic zeal. How can the Christian message be presented in order to make it tenable to modern man? The problem is a profoundly practical one and affects every preacher worth his salt. Here the problem is not merely what method to employ in the presentation of the Gospel, it is the problem of how to translate the language of the Scriptures into the thought, language and experience of those whom we are seeking to influence and win for Jesus Christ. This must of necessity mean that when we bear witness to the Word of God, we do so with the Word of God adapted to the concrete situations in which our hearers find themselves. *If the law of communication is to be observed, we must proceed from the known to the unknown, that is, we are to introduce the Gospel to our hearers where we find them, and then lead*

*them to the place where they, by the grace of God, ought to be.* "If you want to teach Tommy Latin, then you must get to know Tommy too" is equally relevant to the preaching of the Gospel. This means—"I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Few will deny that we are passing through a wind of change, but somehow I feel that all this talk about an intellectual crisis is sometimes a little bit overdone by present-day writers. We may well be living in a revolutionary age, but to say as one modern writer contends, viz. that the church not only has to meet a new intellectual, cultural and social situation, but also a new kind of man and woman, seems a bit far-fetched. This has raised a timely protest by another writer—"Would someone dispel this horrible murky darkness and tell me what the intellectual crisis is that I ought to be in". If the present-day situation is a crisis, then the problem remains as old as the day in which the Gospel was first preached in New Testament times, and as new as my most recent attempt to bear witness to the saving power of Christ to my fellow-students. The proclamation of the Gospel creates a crisis, and the reaction of the hearers has not really changed through the centuries. When Paul bore witness to the resurrection at Athens, and the message of Mount Golgotha shook the foundations of the wisdom of Mount Areopagus, there were men even in that day who mocked, others who said "We will hear thee again in this matter," and others who believed. The problem is not merely that man fails to understand the Gospel when it is proclaimed, but that he so often does. The fact that the Christian message is an embarrassment to man's self-sufficiency, is reflected in his blind rebellion against it.

The Gospel, by its very nature, creates a crisis wherever it is proclaimed, for it is "the power of God unto salvation". It may well be, however, and here we must confess with shame, that we as the heralds of the unsearchable riches of Christ have often by our very presentation of it obscured its true glory and worth. As far back as 1906, Dr J. H. Jowett made a shrewd analysis of those who are unattracted to, or alienated from, the Christian Church. In the first instance there are those who never think of us, and to them we do not so much as exist. Secondly, there are those who have thought of us and as a result of their thinking have determined to ignore us. To them we are like exhausted batteries which can serve no useful purpose any more. A third group has, as a result of their thinking of us, been aroused to fierce and determined opposition. To this class the church is a perverse, nefarious, perverting influence, ministering to mental and moral paralysis—"a foul fungus souring the common soil". No doubt the situation may have changed since Dr. Jowett made this telling observation, but the assessment has not lost its poignancy with the passing years. This remains a discerningly accurate summary of popular estimates of our Christian impact on the mass. If the "mass mind" has changed, could it not more accurately be said that the "bulk" of Christian witness has

changed, having lost the motivating force at the heart of its message. "If the salt has lost its savour . . ." Could it be that this is where the problem lies?

In order to solve the problem of communication in the realm of evangelism, two distinct schools of thought are to be found. On the one hand there is the "Rewrite the Bible" movement inspired by Rudolf Bultmann, and on the other hand the "Back to the Bible" movement of Karl Barth. As to the former movement, the common conviction and concern is that the New Testament must be demythologized and rewritten in the thought-forms of modern philosophy. The contention is that the Gospel message, as originally proclaimed by the New Testament Church, was clothed in the mythological dressing of Jewish Apocalypse and Gnostic Redemption Myth. Though this was intelligible and acceptable to the world in which the early Christians lived, this out-dated scientific worldview is no longer acceptable, nor is it intelligible to modern thought.

The anxiety to rewrite the Bible in the thought-forms of our age is a very definite spirit of our age. In this connection Helmut Thielicke has pointed out that the thought-forms of our present day are in themselves a revolt against God, and are therefore unworthy vehicles of the Gospel, and need to come, like modern man, in repentance before God before they can be used in the Kingdom. Furthermore, be it noted that the problem is not merely to do with those who cannot understand the supernatural, but with those who doggedly deny that anything supernatural exists. The revolt of modern man is seen not merely in his rejection of Christ dying for him, but in his refusal to believe that he is the kind of person who required this to be done to him. In short, man in his pride, refuses to be called a sinner. The problem lies not so much in the "myth" of the modern mind, as in the fact of modern man himself. The problem is not merely that of the modern mind, but that of the unregenerated mind "which receiveth not the things of God". This is more than an intellectual crisis, this is a revolt of man in his entirety against the sovereign right of God. In such a case the problem is not solved by re-writing the Bible, for the Bible is rejected anyway, and is relegated to the scrapheap of antiquity.

The "Rewrite the Bible" movement tends to make man's thinking the master of truth, whereas the "Back to the Bible" movement makes Truth the master of man's thinking. Rather than getting lost in the mist of speculation, the task of evangelism is to rediscover the inherent message concerning the glories of Christ's Peerless Person and the majesty of his Deathless Work. Here, too, we need to recapture the spirit of the New Testament in its ministry of evangelism in order that we may be effective witnesses of the saving power of Christ. In this way we will discover a number of significant features in the life of the early church which are of moment to us in our proclamation of the Gospel. In the first place, we will discover that the apostolic church refused to come to terms with the syncretistic religions and ideologies of its day. The great

attraction of Issis, Cybele, Mithra and the rest was their accommodating spirit. These and a pantheon of gods could go arm in arm to Rome and share their honours, but the lowly man of Galilee, raised in Glory, would tolerate no rivals. He was Lord Supreme, and Absolute in His Supremacy. The fact that the early Christians refused to recognise that there was any fellowship between Dionysius and Christ led to the great persecutions. Furthermore, what impressed the heathen was not the fact that the Christians were so like their own religions, but that they were decisively so different. The driving force behind their revolutionary belief was the fact of the Resurrection. This was the core of the Gospel they proclaimed; it was the theme of every sermon; it was the master-motive of every act of Christian evangelism. Not one single line of the New Testament was written apart from the conviction that He of whom these things were being written had conquered death and was alive for ever. Here was a small minority, very often ignorant and unlettered men, but with such a deathless conviction they could turn the world upside-down—and they did.

In the light of such a message to proclaim, our impotence in communicating the Gospel becomes all the more disturbing. Here we have a glorious Book crammed full of rich and precious promises—yet we see so little fulfilment. We have a mighty soul-saving Gospel, charged with the energies of God, yet so few seem to be saved. We have a Risen and Ascended Lord, and yet we see so little of His heart-rending presence manifested. All this we have, and yet with such limitless resources we seem so powerless to meet the situation. Little, if anything of our witness is felt in the world. Techniques we have, gimmicks and gadgets, but so little of the dynamic of the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation. It would seem to me *that the problem may well lie with ourselves, and the answer to the problem of the communication of the Gospel may well be found in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, in which he confesses—*

- (1) The limitations of his own human resources  
(I Corinthians 1: 26-29);
- (2) His absolute confidence in his all-sufficient message  
(I Corinthians 2:2); and
- (3) His utter dependence on the ministry of the Holy Spirit  
(I Corinthians 2: 4-5).

*“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand by the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”.*

In the words of a modern writer—“It must not be presumed that technique is the substance of evangelism. Mere methods, mere schemes, mere endeavours will not of themselves produce the desired effect. Without the tide of the Spirit they may prove as futile as the frenzied activism of Elijah's rivals on Mount Carmel. ‘And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their custom with



swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation, but there was no voice; no one answered, no one heeded' ”.

JOHN N. JONSSON

## DOES STEWARDSHIP STIFLE SPONTANEITY?

Two women in the Gospels were expressly commended by our Lord for their generous giving. One gave “all that she had” to the Temple offering, as part of her normal religious duties (Mark 12, 41-44); the other gave spontaneously, on the spur of the moment, in an uncalculating response to the love of Christ (Mark 14, 3-9). There was a prodigality about both the widow’s mite and the woman’s alabaster box of ointment that appealed to our Lord, though they represent very different types of giving. The one was the responsible fulfilment of a religious obligation; the other, a generous impulse that arose out of the occasion.

Most people now recognize that as a method of financing the vast work of the Church at home and overseas in these days, as well as fulfilling our obligations as Christians to many other needs, the method of casual, spontaneous giving is barely adequate; for in most people the generous impulse is too timid and infrequent to be relied upon. In any case, should the measure of a Christian’s giving be determined by an emotional reaction to some urgent and well-pleaded appeal? Ought we to be more responsive to the love of God when the church needs a new organ, or the hall has to be redecorated, and less responsive when the final instalment of the debt on the new buildings has at last been paid off? Should there not be some more objective standards that determine how and when a Christian should give?

Over the past ten or twelve years the Christian Stewardship movement has sought to inculcate in the churches a far healthier (and more Scriptural) attitude to the use of money, with the result that a much more responsible and calculating approach to giving has been adopted by many church members. We love God because He first loved us; we give and serve sacrificially because of what He gave and is still doing for us. Christian Stewardship thus encourages people to regard their giving as a deliberate and responsible act of commitment; it is concerned, as the Bishop of Bedford has put it, with “raising our standards of discipline”.

Christian discipline means, among other things, recognising that the use of *all* our money should reflect conscious and deliberate thought and careful judgement. For the individual Christian this involves a thoroughly calculating approach to *giving*. This in turn involves drawing up a budget, on a weekly, monthly or yearly basis, in which provision is made for all the main items of expenditure, and the available money divided in a suitable proportion between them. This in itself is a spiritual discipline, for as Monica

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To the Members of the Baptist Ministers' Fraternal

Dear Friends,

"Thank heaven for little girls  
For little girls get bigger every day.  
Thank heaven for little girls  
They grow up in the most delightful way"

So sang Maurice Chevalier in *Gigi*. At the age of 80 he retires this year and I could not resist introducing his name into the Fraternal.

But if you object that Chevalier is not the epitome of his song then what about Dame Edith Evans who at the age of 80 apparently has no thought of retiring. A T.V. documentary the other day discloses her as a charming little girl who has indeed grown up most delightfully. Who will forget her performance as Lady Bracknell in the *Importance of Being Earnest*.

I am, however, thinking, in tribute, of the host of women (a bit older than little girls but rather less than 80!) who are ministers, deaconesses, members of diaconates and of the B.W.L., all of whom work so loyally for the denomination. To all such who have the handling of insurance matters for their churches or their people may I say that we are anxious to be of assistance.

The women on our own staff are skilled in handling questions on insurance (skilled too in handling me for that matter) so we trust that the women of the denomination will write to us.

If there is an insurance problem to be solved, then let us share that problem.

Yours sincerely,

C. J. L. COLVIN,

*General Manager*

Furlong remarked in an article in *Punch* (October, 1961), "a man who spends £1 a week on cigarettes and puts half-a-crown in the plate has made a confession of his faith". Individually, then, we Christians have this responsibility for what we give.

But also, corporately as a Church, we have a similar responsibility for what we *spend*. It is of the greatest importance that the Church should exercise just the same deliberate thought and prayerful judgement on how it spends the money it is entrusted with. A carefully calculated budget of expenditure must be drawn up, and church members informed clearly and in detail how their money has been spent in the past year, and is likely to be spent in the coming year. Not all churches show sufficient responsibility in this respect. A survey carried out by our Stewardship Department in 1965, commented on the unsatisfactory way in which many churches present particulars of their expenditure in their balance sheet. Details of ministerial stipend, for instance, are given in such a way as to suggest in some cases that the aim is to conceal rather than to reveal what the minister is being paid, his salary sometimes being lumped together with that of the caretaker, sometimes with no indication given of the composition of ministerial expenses, and so on. The church's careful management of money, both in giving and in spending, is not merely a counsel of prudence, but a religious duty.

All this, Christian Stewardship has been teaching with remarkable success in many churches. But as the movement has gathered momentum, and the administrative side of church life has become more and more efficiently organised, especially on the financial side, it is not surprising that some concern has been expressed that the encouragement of such a thoroughly calculating approach to giving and spending might well rob the Church of the opportunity for "spontaneous benevolence". Is there, in fact, room for the expression of both types of generosity we referred to at the beginning of this article, or does a highly organized church budget and pledged giving preclude the occasional and unexpected demand for which no system of planned giving can allow?

One answer to this would be to recognise a double obligation in Christian giving, the limited one of providing for the Church and its proper needs, and the comparatively unlimited one of giving "alms", as one writer in *Theology* (May, 1960) has done:

"... The first proceeds from the fact that we are members of a body, and therefore are responsible for undertaking a fair share of the cost of the work. . . . The other obligation, to give alms, proceeds directly from our Lord's command to heal the sick and succour the distressed. In each case the appeal is to a different motive, the one to plain honesty, the other to our love for God and our neighbour".

The Diocese of Newcastle drew up an elaborate scheme of stewardship based on this double obligation. The church makes known a budget of its needs, and asks the individual member what share he is prepared to take in meeting them. These are his "dues". "Alms" are whatever he may give over and above his dues. By thus distinguishing between these two forms of giving, it leaves scope for the generous response to the new and occasional appeal which cannot be included in the budget.

The chief criticism of a scheme of this kind is that it starts at the wrong end. It makes the main part of our giving dependent on the needs of the church budget. But the question that Stewardship teaches us to ask ourselves is *not* "How much does the church need to carry on its work?" but "What ought I, in recognition of all that God has given me, give back to Him of my time, talents and money?" Were that question to be faced honestly and with prayerful calculation by all our members, the local church, the B.M.S. and the B.U. would all be assured of a regular income adequate to meet their estimated needs, nor would the springs of spontaneous generosity dry up. For Stewardship campaigns have proved over and over again that when that question is faced sincerely by any group of people, the results can be measured not only in terms of calculated and pledged generosity, but in a generosity that readily overflows such defined proportions in the light of a special or unforeseen appeal.

In my own church, for instance, since adopting the principles of stewardship six years ago, our annual income, in direct giving, has risen from £2,500 to £6,000, most of it from pledged giving. In addition to this, we have always held an annual Gift Day, strictly for some "outside" cause not covered by our budget. Under stewardship this occasion for spontaneous giving has also shown a notable increase in gifts year by year. This was particularly so last year, when during the year we heard of the need for a new Landrover in Congo where one of our members is serving with the B.M.S. We immediately decided to organise the raising of a sufficient sum of money to purchase and send out this piece of equipment to the mission field. Within three months, with some help from other churches, just on £1,000 was raised for this by direct giving, *all of which was over and above regular pledged giving.*

The ultimate standard to be accepted by us is surely that which Paul found and commended in the churches of Macedonia, of whom he said, "They gave according to their means, and beyond their means, of their own free will . . . but first they gave themselves to the Lord". (2 Cor. 8; 3, 5). When giving is self-giving, it will not stop at pledged giving, though it needs to start there. Responsible stewardship will always keep the generous impulse alive.

ERIC SHARPE

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## TEACH YOURSELF RELIGIOUS GOBBLEDYGOOK\*

*This word was invented by Maury Maverick in America, is classified as U.S. slang in dictionaries, and means pompous or pretentious unintelligible jargon.*

There are Teach Yourself books about nearly everything; they are the do-it-yourself kits of the would-be literate. You can teach yourself about subjects as far removed alphabetically as amateur acting and Zen Buddhism, and as far removed in theme as Pericles and Judo, anthropology and card games for two.

Happily, religion and philosophy have not been neglected. But so far there has been no attempt to deal with a subject which is of great importance to those concerned with the language of religion. No one has yet given us a Teach Yourself Gobbledygook!

### **Words to dazzle**

Gobbledygook is, of course, the name for 'officialese' (which is itself a gobbledygook word for the jargon which seems to be essential to every subject today). And religion has more than its share of this.

Let us then make a preliminary outline of the kind of book we need. We do not need it to understand religious gobbledygook words (for to understand them is to abandon them), but rather so that we may recognize them if we are listeners and use them if we are preachers or writers.

The essence of the study and its supreme aim is to acquire a vocabulary of words which will dazzle without illuminating, and impress without leaving any impression.

They may be variously described as U words, O.K. words, in words, must words, prestige words and status words.

We begin with nouns. To be theologically 'with it' it is imperative to use abstract nouns instead of simple phrases. Consider the following rules:

### **Always be complex**

Never speak of meeting but always of encounter or 'meeting up with'; not of talking, but of dialogue; not of taking part, but of participation; not of arranging, but of structuring; not of putting into practice, but of implementation; not of making oneself understood, but of communication.

Other essential words include tension, involvement, confrontation, and dimension.

When you have mastered these words (and given yourself bad marks if your prefix them with an article or if you use a simple form), it is too early as yet to try them out in sentences until after the next step which is the use of adjectives which are applicable to these nouns.

*\*This article first appeared in "The Congregational Monthly" and is reproduced here by kind permission of the Editor of that magazine and also of its author, a distinguished leader in the Congregational Church.*

There is a very wide range of these prestige adjectives. Consider, for example, and learn how to attach the following to the nouns listed above:

creative, meaningful, insightful (yes, we have met this one), responsible, open-ended, minimal, basic, contextual, dynamic, existential, fluid, static, ambiguous, integrated, ambivalent and viable.

Try fitting one, two or even three of these adjectives to any of the nouns (remembering that some of these adjectives contradict each other).

The permutations and combinations are endless. Begin with simple combinations such as 'creative and meaningful tension.' Then move on to complicated ones such as 'fluid and open-ended contextual dialogue.'

### **Don't be smug**

If it occurs to you that this last phrase really means no more than talking freely together, close your mind against such a thought otherwise you will never become an expert in gobbledygook.

The next stage is to pass on to the learning of more nouns. Let me suggest the following: integration, fragmentation, polarity, totality, validity, motivation, orientation, mutuality, dichotomy, ecumenicity and image.

When you have mastered these and find yourself using them freely, you are not to be smug about your progress. True, you will now be able to impress your hearers or readers, but you are by no means the finished product as yet.

Your vocabulary must be further enlarged and this is the point at which you introduce words which are taken directly from foreign languages or are newly minted out of foreign words.

### **Invent new ones**

It is perhaps a shade old-fashioned to speak of Weltanschauung and Zeitgeist (but see below) and possibly eschaton has had its day. But have you thought of any of these words:

agapeistic, empathy, heuristic, noosphere, or zymotic?

And, best of all, have you thought of reaching the stage when you can invent new ones such as agorization (which means bringing things down to the level of the person in the shopping precinct), and theothanatoism (to describe the impact of the 'God is dead' school of writers)?

Any student of language will tell you that there are some words which gravitate towards each other to form clusters. This is true also of gobbledygook. Consider the following:

disclosure situation, anthropological insights, exploration in depth, grass roots, and frontier situation.

Now try throwing them all in together. You will find yourself engaged in exploration in depth of anthropological insights into the disclosure situation at the grass roots on the frontier. What could be more rewarding than that?

No language study is complete until the student has dipped

into its literature. There is no one book written entirely in gobble-dygook (though there are some which come very near to this ideal).  
**Some good examples**

At present we must content ourselves with building up an anthology of examples. We would commend the following, drawn from recent practitioners of the subject:

'This dilution of apostolic personnel' (meaning the defection of Judas Iscariot).

'The historical impingement' (meaning the Incarnation as an historic event).

'Christ was responsible to his own Zeitgeist even when transcending it' (meaning —?).

When this essential Teach Yourself book comes to be written, as written it should be, it will be dedicated to Humpty-Dumpty in Through the Looking-Glass.

'When *I* use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less. The question is which is to be master—that's all. Words have a temper. I can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That's what I say.'

GORDON ROBINSON