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Challenge of Business Behaviour

An edited version of a talk given at Spurgeon's College 9th June 1982.

Far too little attention is given by Christian Pastors to what happens between the hours of eight in the morning and six in the evening to the majority of people in their congregations. Two thirds of all men and one third of all women spend these hours in the production of goods and services and their distribution; the majority of them are employed by other people. It is therefore very likely that at least half of a congregation will be directly involved in this as their principal vocation. The pressures put on them in this calling concern them greatly yet we find that when we are faced with questions that they may have about this most pastors feel pretty inadequate to help.

Scripture is full of references to the economic affairs of nations and individuals and to the principles that are relevant for their conduct. Furthermore, the economic and social life of the nations of the world is the subject of most people's daily conversations both privately and whenever they meet in groups. And yet these matters are rarely mentioned at meetings of believers except when there is a local or national crisis. It is surprising because in the early chapters of Genesis, man was given the task of subduing the earth and harnessing its resources for the benefit of mankind. The element of toil in work came later. It was therefore, in the mind of the Creator that work was to be part of the natural order, the norm if you like. It is a theme which continues throughout the Bible. God set out in the Ten Commandments a description of when work is to be done: "Six days shall you labour in all that you do". There are also references in the decalogue to property, to stealing and to coveting — all of which are to do with economic life. When you turn to the New Testament it is quite surprising to realise that about two thirds of all the parables that Jesus told to illustrate basic truths were based on economic issues, such as: wages, rates, inheritance, investment and rates of interest. Jesus was fully aware of the economic matters in which most of the people who listened to him were involved.

Perhaps the main reason for our neglect of this aspect of our lives is fear; fear of worldliness, the fear of money, mammon, and materialism. Often for good reasons, Christians put themselves at almost the opposite extreme, emphasising the spiritual aspects of Christian experiences so as to act as bastions against the material philosophy by which most people live. We therefore tend to ignore the world of economics and money in our reaction to its deceitfulness. It is of course right that you cannot serve God and mammon, but the statement by St. Paul to Timothy, that love of money is the root of all evil has been interpreted in most of our minds as "economic life, in general, is full of all evil": we will therefore have nothing to do with it. As a result of this, some of the real anxieties of Christians in our pews are hardly ever addressed. They try to bear witness to their fellows of the truth of the gospel but it is often less vital than it ought to be because they feel that their

Ministers and other teachers ignore this particular aspect of their life. As a result the salt is less savoury and the light is flickering and dim in the world of work. So what can we do to redress the balance? First we must understand something of behaviour in the business context.

If you speak to ordinary people about business ethics, you often get a cynical sort of reply — “there is no such thing”. A cartoon was published recently showing a chairman of a company sitting at the top of a board table with his board members down each side; he was grinning broadly and saying, “Well, gentlemen, you will be pleased to know that we have bribed our way out of the corruption charges”. That illustrates, I suspect, the general view of what most people think business ethics are about. And yet, we expect in our society a high standard of behaviour from those who serve us in other ways; we do not expect doctors to have lack of integrity, or civil servants, or teachers or engineers, or ministers of the gospel. Why is it then, that society tends to place business and commerce at the bottom end of the good behaviour scale? Is it because there are different pressures in business than are found elsewhere in our national life?

Can anything be done about it? Is there an approach to this problem which is specifically Christian as opposed to humanist?

It was to find some answers to these questions that I undertook three surveys of what businessmen thought about their own behaviour and that of their colleagues: one amongst directors, one amongst managers and one amongst chief executives. I set out to shed some light on the nature of their problems and to suggest some ways in which the problems might be alleviated.

Other surveys have shown that questionable practices in business are no more frequent than they are in other spheres of activity. Local government, estate agents and other professions all seem to present ethical problems for their employees. One reason why business seems to be singled out is that it is probably more exposed while the professions, generally, have paid careful attention to ethical problems by setting up committees of their governing bodies to deal with ethical questions. Business has not done this. Indeed, if you offend against the code of medical ethics, you can be debarred from practicing medicine. I do not know of any situation where you can be stopped from doing business unless you break the law in a very dramatic way, and even then you can start again. But once a Solicitor or a Doctor is struck off, he will always find it difficult to recommence practice.

There are three levels in which discussion of business ethics takes place. There is the system itself which is not the subject of this paper. The second area is one of determining policy of an individual business. This includes such questions as: Should we set up a subsidiary in South Africa? What about our advertising policy? What about our product policy — will we produce things that some consider to be harmful to people? (Tobacco is often cited). And what about the emission level from our plants both in the river that runs by and the atmosphere around? It covers issues that are dealt with at a senior level in the business.

The third level is the level of personal behaviour. How should I, as an individual, behave within the organisation in which I find myself. It can

include quite mundane things such as time-keeping, use of resources, treatment of staff and so on. It is on these two latter areas that I would like to focus.

What did the surveys show? One in two people who responded in all three surveys considered that there was no problem at all. In effect they were saying: "My ethics are all right and I have no difficulties in these areas, why bother me with this sort of matter, surely there are more important issues". The other half recognised that problems existed and it was on their answers that I concentrated.

A significant proportion of these, something like 78% said that there was no conflict between high ethical standards and successful business. If you behave ethically in your business, your business would not suffer yet two out of three thought that standards generally were declining and this was considered to be the result of undue pressure. Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of business compared with most other professions is the speed in which decisions have to be made simply because the market place changes so rapidly. You cannot have the luxury of having a committee set up to decide how you operate in a particular situation; what happens is that individuals are given the authority to make decisions and then to live with those decisions. A chief executive of a large company told me that he may well have not taken a particular course of action if he had the chance to sit down and think more clearly about its consequences. He had to make up his mind on the spot and as a result of this there were some things that were overlooked. This is not an isolated incident.

The survey showed that there were eight particular issues that people found difficulty with in their commercial experience. First, there were the methods used to obtain business. This is the question of the difference between bribery and goodwill. One man told me that at Christmas time this question becomes acute: his rule of thumb was that to accept a case of whisky is bribery, to accept a bottle of whisky is goodwill! When I asked him how he justified that he said: "When you can consume the gift on the spot it is goodwill!"

Secondly, there is the use of confidential information for personal gain. This arises when you obtain some confidential information which you think you could use to make your financial position or that of your family better. If it is to do with finance and shares it is known as "insider trading". But that is not the only type of confidential information that one is tempted to use and it does cause people problems.

Thirdly there is the question of misleading promotional material such as inaccurate claims about products or services. We are all aware of this: when watching an evening's television on ITV, or looking through a newspaper, you will be able to pick out advertisements which you might suspect are exaggerated or not telling the whole truth in order to impress you. This worries people in the marketing aspects of business.

Fourthly, there is the treatment of employees — especially in situations which involve redundancies. Many people are worried when, for instance, they are given the job of telling somebody that their services are no longer required or that before a certain date they have to find say, twenty people in

a department who must either leave voluntarily or take early retirement. Very often you do find in business that this sort of unenviable task is given to somebody who has not been in on the decision-making process; that can cause real pain for those involved, both the person being told and the person who has to do it. There are ways of doing this that are far more positive than many of the ways that we hear about. and those likely to be given this job need to think about how they will handle it well in advance.

Fifthly, there is the falsification of expenses and allied practices. It might seem straight forward ie: you claim what you actually spend but for a lot of people it is not as simple as that.

Sixthly, there is the problem for the junior manager who is deliberately expected to break a contract or agreement: you know you won't be able to deliver that order in six weeks time as the contract requires, and yet you have to give the customer the impression that all is well. Again you know that perhaps the type of component specified on that contract may not be the one you are going to use, for perhaps very good reasons, but the contract specifies a type and you have the job of telling the customer that he is not going to have that, which may prejudice any future business, and put the employment of others at risk. This is one sort of dilemma that people find themselves in in a business situation.

Then seventhly, there is the question of discrimination — race, religion, politics and so on. It goes on, despite the fact that there is a law against it. Christians are not exempt from the pressures.

Finally, there are the effects of company pressures on a person's personal integrity. This occurs when the company expects you to do certain things, and you find this clashes with your values. If you do not accede, you know that there are people looking for jobs that could easily have yours; you have a wife, family and a mortgage and the pressure for you to trim your standards is very severe and very often you will feel very lonely in that situation not knowing what to do.

In trying to arrive at some practical ways of helping people faced with these difficulties it is necessary first to try and discover what are the main influences on managers, directors, employees, in deciding their reactions to these pressures. The surveys showed that roughly 53% of those responding said that they bring their own personal values into their work place. As one put it "I do not leave them behind as I shut the garden gate, I bring them to the office with me and that is the most important thing in helping me make decisions".

The second strongest influence on the employee is the reputation of the company he or she works for; the third is the behaviour and standards of his immediate boss and his superiors. In a similar survey done in the United States, the reputation of the company and the influence of the boss were the most important influence in resolving ethical problems in the minds of employees. For them their personal code of behaviour seems to be less influential. In Britain a person's ideals still seem to play an important role in the decisions of individuals at their place of work. Unless this is nurtured and people are helped to do this there is a strong possibility that as pressure mounts we might well drift into the situation found in the United States.

Now what can be done to help? Directors and Managers were asked this question and it was not surprising to find that they indicated that if there was a higher standard of behaviour in society generally, then standards would be higher in the world of business. The suggestion which consistently received the second highest vote was for the provision of a professional code of business ethics.

It was argued that this would provide the bench mark — the norm — by which behaviour could be judged and furthermore, companies could say that they do business on the basis of such a code. A question was inserted asking about support for such a code: 71%, 77% and 84% of respondents of each survey said they would support the drawing up and promulgation of one. On the basis of this response the Christian Association of Business Executives who sponsored one of the surveys drew up a draft code. It was not easy to do, there were some difficult questions to answer: What would go in the code? Should it have teeth? And who should administer it?

To resolve the first of these questions we approached it like this: Ethical considerations arise and become a problem when the relationship between two people breaks down. Bearing that in mind, we selected six different occasions when people in business came together in ways which may cause some friction. We drew up principles of conduct for the following: employees in relation to employers, the business in relation to its customers; the business in relation to its suppliers, ie: people it buys from; relations with shareholders and other providers of capital; relations with society in general and with local and national government. Under each of these we set out about five or six different precepts drawn from the experiences of people who have faced ethical problems. An example of one of the precepts in the code relating to business relations with customers is one concerning the provision of after-sale service. The code states that:

“The company shall, in all its marketing arrangements, provide an after sales service commensurate with the kind of products supplied and price paid. Terms of sale should be clearly and unambiguously stated and the terms of guarantees and warranties scrupulously observed in the spirit as well as the letter”.

There are in all, twenty-six such “standards” for corporation and seven for individual managers.

So what happened to the code? Well it was welcomed in the press and elsewhere as something which would be useful to companies in setting standards of corporate behaviour.

Therefore, I would encourage those in business to press for such a code to be adopted: it would at least prevent the standard of behaviour from going much lower.

What a code will not do of course, is to improve standards of behaviour, any more than the law can make an individual good. The Christian knows it is the gospel that can change an individual, not the law, but you cannot have a gospel without the law.

Standards of business ethics then, are not always high; indeed they are conspicuously bad in a number of cases. We therefore owe it, I think, to

those to whom we minister to think clearly about this and help them to work out within their own context how they should behave. Very few decisions in business are of a black and white character, most are shades of grey. We badly need to understand the principles of working out how to behave in these conditions. It is a case of discerning the lesser of two evils. That is the challenge. Those in our congregations who, between eight in the morning and six at night earn their living in a hostile world do need help about these difficult matters.

To sum up: Behaviour in any sphere matters; most businessmen want to be seen to be good businessmen and to behave properly, the law is pretty ineffective in the realm of ethics, a code of business ethics would be a considerable help in preventing things from getting worse and in guiding people in individual decisions about behaviour, but it has its limitations. In the end, the Christian has to make up his mind about his decisions and we must enable him to do this in a way which brings glory to God. In all these things I believe that we, and the people in our congregations, can be "more than conquerors through him that loved us".

Simon Webley

★**A Code of Business Ethics**, Christian Association of Business Ethics, 114. Mount Street, London W1, 1978, 50p plus p & p.

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Licence to Kill

A Case Study in Medical Ethics

“Things ain’t what they used to be”. This is certainly our perception concerning morality. Moral standards seem to be shifting and changing. This process is often described as secularization. That is a shift from a culture and context in which morality, law and culture presuppose God to one in which atheistic, humanistic presuppositions form the basis for making laws, moral decisions and the cultural expressions within a society. This is certainly *not* to say that there was some golden time when everyone was a religious believer. Rather it is to suggest that in the framing of laws, the teaching and expression of morality, the drawing up of professional codes of conduct, and the development of ways of behaviour socially and culturally, Judaeo-Christian teaching, doctrine and beliefs played a major and fundamental role. In that sense, there was a God-centred morality at work shaping society. Now that is less and less true, and in its place there is a man-centred view of morality. In this man is the designer of all things and creates his own morality. This propounding of an humanistic moral view usually rests on the man’s reason, feelings, or will, or on some amalgam of these.

Another aspect of this process of secularization is a shift away from the idea that some things are right and wrong, good or bad in themselves to the idea that things are right and wrong on the basis of consequences alone. This is the move from the deontological to the teleological account of morality. Consequences are what really matter. Why does our government pursue the policies it does, or the opposition parties propound their alternatives? In the end, it is because they believe, rightly or wrongly, that their policies will lead to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people. Social policy making is clearly teleological and consequentialist for the most part. “Right” equals good consequences.

The main feature, and indeed threat, in the process of secularization lies in relativism. As a philosophy, it begins from the apparent variety of moral views in our midst. In Timbuctoo, if you have an aging relative you kill and eat him to send him to the next life whole and hearty, rather than too old and decrepit to function properly there. In Taunton, if you have aging relatives, you put them in an old folk’s home providing the best of care and visit them once a month. Morality varies from time to time, place to place, person to person. This means that there are no absolutes. Everything is relative. Right, wrong, good and bad vary according to the circumstances, people and setting. Therefore, argues the relativist, live and let live. We must be tolerant. We must allow people to do their own thing, and be free to do our own thing too. This is radically affecting our evangelism and apologetics. We must be tolerant of the views of others. We must see that our views are just our way of looking at and feeling about things. Thus truth is simply relative and existential and we make no absolute claims and present no absolute chronicle of truth.

These aspects of the secularization process have had a great influence on us all, but it is to the medical profession we turn to examine the effect. Traditionally, the medical profession is highly conservative. It has high professional standards and moral codes.

Nevertheless the medical world is on the side of change. Its values are shifting. Younger doctors have little in the way of ethical training. Morality is supposedly caught from the doctors; rather than taught. At the same time, the consumer society is affecting the doctor-patient relationship. When we visit the doctor, we expect him to give us something to help the pain. What kind of doctor is it if he doesn't give us medicine? The problems of over prescribing are partly the result of patient pressure on busy doctors to prescribe. We expect and demand that the doctor does something. Thus there grows an atmosphere where the doctor is expected to do what the patient wants. Patients have rights and these rights are not only defended but demanded with great vigour. Of course, there is much that is good in the recognition of patient's rights, but there is also a danger that the doctor may simply become a "need-meeter". He is in danger of losing his integrity, freedom and even responsibility. In such a context, there is really little surprise in a patient asking to be put out of his misery and expecting the doctor to be willing to kill him. Can you really be a doctor, if you never say "no" to a patient?

One further aspect of the changing medical world is the impact of technology. The growth in expertise has meant narrower specialization in medicine. The growth of technological capacity has meant that medical people are *able* to do wonderful things like kidney and heart transplants, hip replacements, and keep people alive for long periods of time by artificial means. But does *can* imply ought? Because they are able to do wonders, does this mean that they ought to do them? Should people be kept alive? Should a doctor be allowed to kill?

Our society seems increasingly to demand a right to die. Another way of expressing part of this demand is as giving doctors a licence to kill. When, if ever, is it right to give a licence to kill?

The Law — Licence to Kill

Law is crucial for medicine. More and more laws are affecting the practice and control of medical matters. The law is one expression of the kind of society we are and have. Our laws express our values. They also set limits to what we will and will not tolerate within our society. The law does sometimes grant a licence to kill.

(a) War and Defence

The recent Falklands "adventure" reveals a situation in which the law not only allows, but encourages people to kill. In situations of war or in self-defence or, indeed, in the defence of others, it is held that people have a right to kill. This is not to imply that there is no debate over the matter, but, in the context of law it is sometimes possible to grant a licence to kill. This is *justifiable homicide*. There is good reason to kill others. Mostly it is the final way of preventing them from killing others. It sets a limit to the killing of others by taking the life of the adversary.

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(b) Capital Punishment

A second example of legal licence to kill is capital punishment. Recent debates have raised again the possibility of the death penalty becoming the law of the land especially in cases of terrorism, the murder of police, and treasonable offences. Our law *could* (and at one time *did*) allow capital punishment. It could give a licence to kill. This taking of a life is seen as a proper response to the taking of other people's lives. It has the effect of limiting the killing of and harm to, others. It is also propounded on the grounds that those who have killed by the seriousness of their action, have set themselves outside the law. Thus we may legitimately take their lives.

(c) Abortion and Euthanasia

What is interesting in both the war and capital punishment debate is that we are not talking about an indiscriminate killing. Rather, it is a licence to kill which is strictly limited. The same point may be seen in the current legislation and attempts at legislation in the areas of abortion and euthanasia. Abortions are permitted in law under certain specifiable circumstances like before twenty-eight weeks and if there is serious threat to the health of the mother. Likewise in the demand for legislation allowing euthanasia, there is a clear attempt to specify conditions under which such a practice would be permitted. Such licences to kill in law are within limits. Part of the impact of such legislation on society and in medicine is that the very process of setting limits seems itself such a reasonable exercise that the limits themselves become "reasonable" to us. Thus it becomes more difficult to refuse the whole procedure, once we have begun setting limits. As J. Rawls draws our attention to this, we need to note the difference between the setting up of standards and the arguments based on and in light of these standards. We may confuse arguments about which set of standards with those concerning whether we ought to allow any standards to be set at all in matters of life and death.

For those whose response to war, capital punishment, abortion and euthanasia is a resounding rejection, it is for them absolutely forbidden. Thus for the conscientious objector, the pacifist, the anti-hanging lobby and the pro-life groups there are clear moral objections to the taking of life. For them there is no licence to kill. Killing is never permissible. Nevertheless, there are those who disagree with this most forcefully. For them war, the taking of life in self-defence, the taking of life in defence of others, the taking of life in capital punishment *is justifiable under certain circumstances*. These circumstances usually include the importance of preserving the lives of others. The argument is now growing that in modern medicine, society and the law ought to allow doctors to take life. Doctors should be (and are already) given a licence to kill. But when? Certainly, it is not in any and all situations. It is not simply a matter of when doctors feel like it. There must be good grounds. There must be justification for an act of killing. In general, there are two kinds of arguments presented in support.

Justifying a licence to kill

The two commonest arguments in support of a licence to kill are based on the good of the patient and the good of others.

(1) The good of the patient

It is held that sometimes it is in the best interests of the patient to end his or her life. In some cases of the severely malformed, the terminally ill, the senile and the unwanted or deformed foetus, it is for their own good that they should die. There are three separate elements to this kind of argument. The first deals with those cases where the patient himself or herself has *requested death*. They have asked for death. They have a right not only to die, but to be killed. We have their permission to kill them. The second line of support is that such killing *saves further suffering*. This holds both for those who have requested death and for those who are unable to make such a request. It assumes that if they were able, they would seek death. The argument is that the degree and amount of suffering is so great that death is a better alternative than to live suffering. Compassion will mean response to alleviate suffering. If that means killing, then that is what must be done. A third, and different, line of support is that the kind of life the individual has, is not worth living. This is not only a question of suffering, but also one of future expectations and hope. The quality of life present and to come seems so poor that such a life is not worth living.

(ii) For the good of others

The second main line of argument in support of some limited licence to kill is on the grounds of the good it will lead to for others. Again it is to permit the killing of the severely malformed child, the terminally ill, the senile, and the foetus, if it will lead to the benefit of others. The argument has three general lines, though these are not exhaustive of the position. It will spare the suffering of those close to and involved with the patient. In particular, it will bring relief to relatives and family. They are the ones who suffer directly both in the effect on their lives, but also in watching, often helplessly, their loved ones suffer. For their sake, it may be right to take the life of another. The second strand in the benefit to others line is an economic point. The cost of keeping alive those who are severely handicapped, senile, terminally ill, or those requiring extraordinary forms of treatment is very great. At a time of economic recession, where there are many demands for money within and without the Health services, hard financial decisions must be made. There is little cost benefit in keeping alive those whose lives are limited and painful, there are many more profitable ways of spending and allocating our limited resources for the benefit of others. There is a third level of argument which rarely, though sadly, still appears: It is that for the sake of a majority, it may be right to rid ourselves and our society of what is offensive, unacceptable and unprofitable.

The Critical Method

WEST HAM CENTRAL MISSION

York House, 409, Barking Road, Plaistow, E13 8AL

Dear fellow ministers,

At last we know the date! On Wednesday, November 24th, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, an old friend and beloved Patron of the West Ham Central Mission, will come to share in the official Opening of York House, That day will be the culmination of many years of thinking and praying and planning and working. Of course, there will not be room in the church here at West Ham for everyone who would like to come, but we shall do all we can to ensure that the congregation will be as widely representative as possible.

The building of York House, and indeed all our varied work, would not be possible apart from the faithful, prayerful, generous support of thousands of individuals and many hundreds of churches. I know that you will want to pray for us especially on the 24th November, that God will crown the day with His presence and His blessing.

Even more important than the ROYAL PATRON is the ROYAL RESIDENT, without Whom all our work would be in vain. If the folk who come to the Mission with their pain and their need and their loneliness only find a religious variant of the Social Services, then our work is in vain and our right to exist as a Mission is seriously to be questioned. It is our hope that whoever comes to us in whatever circumstances may indeed find skilled and loving care, but above all find the Christ who inspired our work, who sustains it by His Spirit and for whose glory it is done.

Brothers and Sisters, I appreciate more than I can say the encouragement and support you give to me and to the Mission. In the past, I have brought to you many specific and practical matters for your prayers. Now, however, at this turning point in the Mission's life, I ask you to join with us that in all our work, however it may develop, JESUS CHRIST MAY BE PRAISED.

May the Lord richly bless you as you begin another busy session in the Church's life.

Yours in His service,

Trevor W. Davis,
Superintendent of the Mission

When the Christian is confronted by these kinds of arguments, it is vital to use the proper method in response. This response has three elements. We must deal with the arguments offered in a methodical, step-by-step manner, answering (or rather seeking to answer) each specific point made. Secondly, we must try to get behind the arguments presented to examine the presuppositions and assumptions, which form the basis of such arguments. Thus we must question the basis of the argument itself. Thirdly, we must seek to offer constructive alternatives. It is relatively easy to pick holes in another person's view. It is much more difficult to present a viable and convincing alternative. Christians need to present their views and remedies, based on their clearly stated presuppositions, as forcefully and faithfully as possible.

Response 1. — The good of the patient

There seems an oddity in suggesting that death is for the good of the patient. Does this actually make sense? Can it be better to kill someone than to let them live? The question is "In what sense better?" How can I know that it will benefit them? How can I ask them afterwards? Are you happier dead than living the way you were? This is even more complicated in the cases of those who are unable to decide for themselves or express their view of their quality of life. Such folk need greater protection and care. Nevertheless, there are those who, it is claimed, give their consent to be killed.

However, there are many problems over what constitutes valid consent. Is a person bound at the age of seventy by a piece of paper they signed at twenty-five asking that their life be terminated in certain circumstances? If the seventy year old signs another form, how can we be sure they have fully understood the issues or whether they have had undue pressure from friends, relatives or the medical and nursing staff? What follows, if large insurance policies are at stake? Consent is a difficult area. Equally the so-called right to die is problematic. Who gives or ensures this right? Whence is it derived? Can my right to die require others to take my life? Have they no right to refuse? The issues of the right to die and consent to be killed inevitably involve others and this impact is hard to gauge. Such a view of consent assumes a view of the autonomy of men and women, suggesting that they are free to do what they like with their own lives. But is this so?

The second line of argument rested on the sparing of suffering. This assumes that there is no other way to control pain and that suffering and pain can have no point. Both may be queried. Much work has been and is being done in pain control. There seems now no good reason why anyone should suffer severe pain without alleviation. Modern medicine is able to relieve pain. It is also possible that pain — quite apart from its useful warning function — may have a point in the life of an individual. Many attest to discovering their true humanity and/or a closer relationship with God as a result of painful experiences. Pain *MAY* have a purpose.

The third argument was that an individual's life was not worth living under certain circumstances. The problem is how we (or they) can know that now, and how we (and they) can guarantee that this will continue to be the case in the future.

Response 2 — The good of others

It is important to note that once we allow this kind of principle to operate, we are all vulnerable. Today it may be the senile and demented. Tomorrow it may be the normal, but socially, racially, politically unacceptable. The general argument has three lines. It is to spare the suffering of others. This assumes that we shall not simply replace the suffering of watching a loved one die with the guilt of having taken (or agreed to take) the loved one's life. It assumes that there is and can be no alleviation, change, cure or alternative to the suffering and pain of the loved one and the suffering of those involved with the direct sufferer. But pain can be controlled and may have a point. More basically, is it ever right to kill someone for the sake of others?

The second argument was that of economics. Inevitably we must make economic decisions. But there is a distinction between economic and moral decisions. Wherever we have allocated resources on an economic basis, it is always possible to ask whether such a decision is right or wrong. Morality is independent of economics. People are not simply economic units. If economic considerations are the only basis for such a decision to end another's life, we are saying that people are simply economic units and we are attempting to calculate their worth. People are more important than economics.

The third argument for compulsory euthanasia has received universal condemnation and needs no other response. What is as important is to see the way in which all the arguments which support the killing of a person for the good of others are based on the consequences which will follow. The end is used to justify the act and the means.

The Presuppositions

There are two main presuppositions at work in the arguments presented in support of killing another. The first may be seen in the argument from the good of the patient. It is that man is the centre of all things. Man is autonomous. He is free to do whatever he wants. But is this so? Are there no limits to man and to his freedom? When medical experiments were first being brought under the control of ethical committees, there was a need for criteria by which to judge the acceptability of experimental procedures. One early criterion was whether or not the medical experimenter would use the procedure or drug on himself or herself. This soon was recognised as inadequate when it became obvious that some experimenters would do anything and go to any lengths for the sake of their theory and their work. More severe limits than what a person will do to himself were required. We may question whether people have such autonomy as is assumed in the arguments propounded, but we must continue to ask whether it is ever proper and just to require others to kill us. Even if one accepted that a person had a right to die, that is very different from a right to be killed by another.

The second presupposition is a basing of moral decisions on consequences. There are two levels of response to such a position. The first is to query the practical issues of legislation, control and monitoring. If

something cannot be so controlled, the consequences cannot be guaranteed. This leads to the other response which asks how we can foresee or guarantee and control which consequences will arise. I may covet the post of my College Principal for myself. I may be walking down the street with the Principal, when the temptation to get rid of him and open the way for my gaining his post becomes too much for me I may push him in front of an oncoming 'bus. At that very moment, the 'bus driver may have a slight heart attack, lose control of the 'bus, causing it to swerve and mount the pavement, thus missing the Principal and killing me. I had a certain intent. I acted to achieve that intention. The consequences were very far from my desire or intent. We cannot guarantee the consequences of action. It seems a faulty basis then for moral decision-making.

Christian Presuppositions

If the Christian is unhappy with moral decisions based on the autonomy of men and women and consequences alone, it is important there is some propounding of an alternative set of presuppositions. The Christian begins with an affirmation of the *sovereignty of God*. Life is seen as dependent on God. In Him, we live, move and have our being. He is the Creator, Sustainer, Preserver, and Lord of life. Thus life is seen as a gift from God. Gifts require appropriate responses. The appropriate response to God's gift of life is the recognition of responsible stewardship towards God for all that He gives. We are stewards to God for our lives. A steward is not free to do whatever he wishes with the things he has as his responsibility. He must answer to his master for all that he does with what he has been given.

How much is a person worth? Some want to see the will. Others look at the contribution an individual makes to his or her family, friends or society. Others suggest that worth is how we see ourselves. The problem arises when people have no worldly goods, appear to make no contribution to society, appear as a drag on family and friends, and have no sense of self worth. Have they then no value or worth? The Christian affirms that the *worth of a person stems from God*: God created people. He made us. We have worth as creatures of God. He made us in His image and breathed His life in us. We are like God and have value as we bear His likeness. He made us for fellowship with Him. Thus we have a purpose and value in life. Christ came, lived and died for us. (Rom. 5:8). We have value in Christ's living, dying and rising again for us. Thus the value of a person rests in God.

The Old Testament is quite clear that we have a duty to preserve life. The commandment is clear that we are not to commit murder and we are enjoined not to slay the innocent or the righteous. (Ex. 23:7). From the account of the first murder in Genesis, it is clear that the taking of life is unnatural. At the same time it is clear that the Bible teaches that life has an end. Three score years and ten is the average span of life. Creaturely life has no absolute value. The meaning and worth of life is with reference to God, not on its own terms.

There is a tension here for the Christian. Death is seen both as something *natural* and as something *unnatural*. It is natural in that it is part of the way the world is. For the Christian it is a necessary part of what it means to have

life. It is, however, not the end of everything and so it need not be fought against at all costs. On the other hand, death is unnatural. It is not part of the original description of creation and comes as part of the Fall. Sin brings death in its train. Thus death is an evil which must be fought against. This struggle against death is never to be at all costs. With modern techniques and the extraordinary power of new drugs and technology, medicine may be in danger of striving against the inevitable in degrading and inappropriate ways. There is a meddlesome medicine which uses heroic measures to preserve an existence, where death is the natural and appropriate alternative.

The Christian also believes that pain and suffering *can have a value*. This is not to say that they are good in themselves; nor that they are always valuable. Rather in some situations there is a value to be derived from pain and suffering. This may be seen from the book of Job, where there is great point to the suffering of Job, but Job himself cannot know what is that point. There is a test in hand to see whether a person loves God, even when it is of no benefit to him or her. Can a person love God for nothing? Job is thus deprived of the blessings of God, as part of this test. We, the readers, know that there is a point in all the suffering. Job, however, does not see that point, though in the end lives with his questions in light of meeting God. Paul, in his argument in Romans chapter 5, suggests that there are times when suffering and tribulation develops qualities in people which are important.

The difficulty for the Christian is that the arguments in favour of killing another are based on compassion. Can you allow patients to suffer? "No, of course not" is our response. We must struggle to overcome suffering; yet that may be without taking life. I can (am able) to kill, but ought I to kill? The situations depicted are often those on the borderline, where people are very vulnerable and defenceless. In such situations compassion must be very cautious and careful. This is particularly the case where there is no opportunity to correct any mistake.

This is why we are right to be uneasy with the exceptional nature of many examples presented in support of killing. The problem is that people then proceed to build a case on the exceptional, as if it were the normal. Laws, and moral laws, are based on the normal. They are general rules which work most of the time. If there is to be an exception to the normal law, then there

ERRATUM:

We apologise for a typesetting error in the Baptist Insurance Company Limited's Advertisement in the last edition of the Fraternal.

The second paragraph of Mr Purver's letter should have read:

"The Articles of Association require that a director of our Company must be "a Baptist or a member of a Baptist Church". This of course ensures that the Company has a unique bias towards the needs of the Baptist cause."

We are happy to acknowledge the error as it enables us to recognise the valued work of our own Insurance Company within the life of our Churches.

THE BAPTIST INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED
4 SOUTHAMPTON ROW,
LONDON, WC1B 4AB
Telephone: No. 01-405 4084

To the Readers of the Fraternal

Dear Friends,

“L” for Liability

Two years ago I made use of “E” in my insurance alphabet to write a few words on Employers’ Liability insurance, which has been legally compulsory since 1972. Usually we issue to churches a combined Liability policy covering legal liability both to employees and other persons. Liability to other persons is often referred to as public liability or third party insurance.

This section of our policy normally covers the legal liability of the Trustees and Deacons for bodily injury or damage to the property of “third parties” up to £500,000 any one accident. These may be Church members, visitors or merely an unlucky passer-by who has a loose slate from the church roof fall on his head. It must be stressed that the policy protects the deacons against legal liability for accidents which are attributable to their negligence e.g failure to detect and remedy an obvious danger or fault in the premises. This is the position at common law. Whilst it is unfortunate if a person is injured on church property, if the accident does not arise from a failure in the duty of care owed by those responsible for the premises, there is no basis on which the injured person can claim damages from the diaconate. The yardstick for damages is the amount a Court would award if the case went to litigation, although only a small minority of cases reach the courts. In the absence of negligence, the court would not make an award, and as Insurers we would not be called upon to make a payment under the Liability policy.

A system of awarding damages irrespective of negligence obtains in some countries e.g. USA, and this “no fault” approach is under consideration here. Notably the report of the Pearson Commission is “on the table”. Our function as Insurers remains to protect our clients for their legal liabilities in accordance with the law at the material time. At present the time honoured principle of negligence at common law obtains, and the premiums for liability insurance are geared to this. Whilst I have been talking mainly about accidents arising on Church premises, our policies provide cover for liability arising from church activities anywhere in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man or Channel Islands.

Yours sincerely,

M.E. PURVER
General Manager

must be an overwhelming reason for that exception. Otherwise we must follow the general rule, law, or principle. If we are to set aside the traditional, normal way of behaving the support for such a procedure must be of the strongest.

There remain problems in dealing with pain and its relief. Some treatments will have fatal results. Some withholding of treatment will have fatal results. There are real moral questions over act and omission and their moral standing. Yet there seems an important distinction between *rendering someone unconscious with the risk of killing him* and *rendering someone unconscious in order to kill him*. The motive is key. This is not to say that motivation is the only relevant moral criteria, for a moral action is more than moral motivation.

There are limits to what can be defined in the ivory tower. When people ask for the application of these moral principles outlined above, the question arises where they are to be applied. Is this simply a theoretical exercise, or a practical one? The issue facing the medical profession is very practical. Does this treatment offer a *reasonable chance* of an appreciable duration of *desirable life* at an *acceptable cost* of suffering? The way to define this is not in the narrow confines of academia but in the actual situations of life, with the principles enunciated.

Our response to licence to kill

Sometimes we have a duty to protect people from themselves and their own desires. In dealing with the suicidal, the depressed and the chronically sick it is important to protect people from some of the things they think they want to do or even they actually want. Part of our problem is a misunderstanding about the nature of compassion. It does not mean letting people do whatever they want or like. Rather it means loving them *in spite of* what they do and what they wish to do. It may be far more compassionate to prevent people doing what they want.

Another aspect of misunderstanding comes with the idea of tolerance. Tolerance is often propounded as a great virtue as if anything goes and is acceptable. Variety does not mean that we must accept everything from everywhere. But is there really such a variety, especially in morality? There seems a great degree of common moral themes and principles in all the world and among all cultures. But even if this were not the case and there was a vast variety of moral principles, that does not necessarily mean that there are no absolute principles. Nor does it mean that all principles have equal value. Some principles may be much more valuable than others. If I ask my students a question, I may be given many different wrong answers. That does not mean there is no one correct answer. Tolerance too is by its very nature limited. This may be seen when intolerance confronts tolerance. How is tolerance to respond? Dare we tolerate intolerance? At its most forceful the issue is how tolerance responds to the special intolerance of tolerance. If a person cannot stand tolerant people and wishes to destroy them, must the tolerant person tolerate annihilation?

- One danger in much of the talk of licensing to kill is that the medical profession may have the perception of its nature and role changed. This is a

change from being seen as the preservers of life to being death controllers. If there is to be any form of licence to kill, this will be a momentous change of policy on the part of the medical profession. Such a change from tradition, history and moral codes must be supported by overwhelming reasons for change and with cast iron guarantees that the consequences of such changes will be far better than the present situation and its consequences.

The trend in our society is to change our moral values. Christians must dare to be different. We must dare to be different in the affirmation of our standards and the defence of these standards. We must dare to be different in the living out of these standards as a witness and challenge to our world for Jesus' sake.

David Cook

Christians Against Torture

Last year's Baptist Union Assembly commended the campaign against torture to the denomination. Since the assembly also urged action on the Brandt Report, disarmament, unemployment, the Nationality Law and Salvador, a vigorous response was hardly to be expected.

Torture is not an issue with immediate appeal even to a socially-committed church meeting, especially set alongside half-a-dozen equally worthy and pressing causes. It might have been sunk without trace, with the conscience-salving words of the assembly declaration (borrowed from the British Council of Churches) the all-too-understandable limit of Baptist response.

It hasn't been quite like that. While the denomination is not exactly gripped with enthusiasm for the campaign, here and there churches and associations have been making room for it on crowded agendas. In Wales, dozens of our congregations have taken some part in the "Christians Against Torture" campaign of the Council of Churches for Wales. A few churches have established action and prayer groups. And this year's London assembly again confronted us with the torturer's victims — this time under the related theme of "the disappeared".

This ugly issue refuses to go away, if for no other reason than that the practice of torture is spreading cancerously; at least seventy countries are now contaminated. And Christians dare not stay silent.

Quakers, with their traditional commitment to unpopular causes, have pioneered Christian involvement in Britain. In France, the churches run their own campaigning and praying organisation, working alongside Amnesty International. They have known the trauma of living under an occupying power which used torture routinely. They have also shared the revulsion of discovering that as colonial masters, their authorities were practising the same horrors on Algerians as their own people had suffered from the Nazis.

Britain's Christians presumably find the issue much more remote, and the imperative for action less pressing. Perhaps our focus needs sharpening.

Recent activities in the South Atlantic make us exceptionally well informed about a country with one of the blackest torture records (15,000 Argentinians have “disappeared”, many of them one suspects, after the most unimaginable torment; many dissidents languish in prison or in exile, physically broken). A spate of television features and newspaper articles at the time might have been seen as a useful contribution to a period of “bash-the-Argies” jingoism, but the human rights abuses remain, long after the celebrations. Are we now to ignore the victims of this regime because formal hostilities have ceased? Can we pretend not to have heard?

Much more uncomfortably, have we forgotten Northern Ireland? It would be misleading to represent the United Kingdom as a leading culprit, but neither should we forget that six years ago the use by our security forces of “interrogation in depth” was condemned as torture by the European Commission on Human Rights — a verdict later subdued to “cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment” by the European Court. “The case seems to show how easily, under conditions of severe social stress, a community may slip into using means which in its better judgement it would find wholly abhorrent,” writes Sidney Greaves, one of the leaders of the Quaker campaign.

There are, then, reasons of recent history to justify a British concern for the issue. But can it be shown to be a Christian concern?

Reg Harvey, looking to “a future for the BMS” reminded us in the June *Fraternal* that recent decades “have seen the setting aside of a large measure of the contempt some had for the ‘social gospel’. There has grown, within varying shades of theological thought, a desire for the proclamation by word and deed of the wholeness of the Gospel.”

This view of salvation asserts our responsibility for the physical well-being of the victim of oppression, as well as for his soul. It reminds us that he is made in the image of God, the object of his redeeming love in Christ — and therefore that he has a unique dignity which the most powerful state has no right to deny.

It looks back to the great Old Testament law codes with their specific provision for the actual or potential victim (widow, orphan, refugee, pauper); and to the prophets, denouncing the abuse of power, whoever exercises it.

And it focusses on Jesus — proclaiming liberty to the captives, freedom for the oppressed; telling disturbing stories about responding to the need you’ve been confronted with; talking of judgement in terms of prison-visiting; being tortured to death.

Spiritualise as we may, there are hard, practical challenges here. And to our shame, the Christian Church has not usually recognised them, has failed, in particular, to recognise the Saviour in the face of the torturer’s victim. The Inquisition tore men apart to get their theology straight; Roman Catholics and Protestants venerate the martyrs made for each other in flame; Anabaptists were drowned in Lake Geneva for offending a Calvinist establishment; anti-Semitism has been urged as a Christian duty. The name of Christ is being invoked to justify torture even today: South Africans, and South American dictators claim, do they not, to be defending “Christian civilisation”?

"In each of us there is a potential for torture," said that BCC declaration; and we do well to remember that before we dismiss this barbarism as the reserve of "The heathen in their darkness" ... especially the "godless communist" variety.

Torture is, I submit, a clear case for British concern, and for Christian concern, and should be especially a Baptist concern. The sufferers are often enduring for the sake of conscience, and was it not the blessed Thomas Helwys who declared that men should be free to obey their conscience "whether heretic, Turk, Jew or whatsoever"?

What can be done? The most important basic recognition is that change is possible — at least as possible as the abolition of slavery when the first campaigners set themselves against a world of vested interest.

Torture would not stop if every Baptist in Britain began campaigning. But many individuals would have been spared the ordeal; some would have been released; and governments (including our own) would be forced to place its universal abolition higher on their list of diplomatic priorities. Colin Morris has written that the most the average Christian can hope to do "is to take hold of the near edge of a great problem and act at some cost to himself". We have to encourage people to grasp that "near edge".

Ministers must, it seems to me, begin by convincing our people that this is a legitimate Christian concern. "The wholeness of the gospel" is all very well while we talk of old people's luncheon clubs alongside youth evangelism, but appealing to governments, lobbying MPs, raising petitions for tortured prisoners can sound altogether too provocative and "political" for the average congregation — especially if the particular victim is one whose politics are loathed.

We must seek to expose the roots of our concern in scripture and within our own tradition; point to the necessity of using the political process to produce social change; and deal with the reflex "Don't they deserve it?" questions.

Most victims of torture could in fact, never be shown to "deserve it" in any sense. They have not been charged, still less convicted. Their agonies are designed to extract information, to frighten others, to spread terror. Frequently, they are not the main object of the authorities' concern, but wives, children, or aged parents, whose screams can loosen the most stubborn tongue.

But even in the case of known criminals and terrorists, torture cannot be justified, as Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes plain: "No-one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." No one. The practice always dishonours God and is a denial of love for neighbour, says the BCC declaration, which condemns the use of torture "by any government, group or individual, in any place, at any time, for any reason." As Paul Oestreicher has put it: "We are not against the torture of good people: we are against the torture of people."

Justifying involvement in the torture campaign means educating the local congregation to contemporary realities, as well as to Biblical principles. Most hear only disconnected snippets of the story. They may well be

genuinely shocked to know that the practice of torture is spread between so many countries of such widely differing ideologies.

They will be sickened by the details: however restrained the presentation, there is still revulsion in learning of the use of clubs, whips, chains, water and live burials, not to mention the refinements added by electricity, drugs and generations of research psychologists. And they will be deeply moved by the faith and heroism of many of the victims.

Then most will switch off, emotionally unable to cope with the horror; willing maybe to give, but unprepared for involvement. That may be genuine self-understanding rather than evasion, and we take unjustifiable risks if we press such people.

But there will be a few who will see this as a yoke laid on them by the Lord, and will feel constrained by the love of Christ to act. Thank God for them — and get on with it!

There are many possibilities, the most direct being personal links with Amnesty and its local group. There is, however, a particular contribution which Christians have to make, and it might be simplest if I outline our modest beginnings here in Cardiff.

Following two studies at the midweek meeting (one on the Biblical basis for human rights concern, the other on torture) the church meeting sanctioned the formation of a “Christians Against Torture” group. (This procedure was important, since the group needs to be seen as part of the church response, not simply a gathering for enthusiasts: it reports to the church meeting and is answerable to it.)

With an active membership of no more than ten, we meet each month to receive information about a prisoner in whom we have a special interest (currently Mikhail Khorev, a Russian Baptist), to learn about the church and human rights situation in different countries, to consider our next steps in the work against torture, and to pray.

There are two elements in that mix which make this group different from, for instance, a typical local Amnesty group. Prayer is the most obvious. We work in the conviction that the worst evil in the world is ultimately subject to the Christ to whom all authority has been given: we seek to see this authority evident in a particular area.

We are aware, too, that there are prison doors which will never be opened by the traditional methods of campaigning, but which can yield to prayer. We pray for individual prisoners, for all who are suffering torture, for the international attempts to outlaw its use, and for the torturers: their spiritual need is the greatest of all, since they are denying not only their victim's humanity, but their own, as well.

Such prayer inevitably finds its way into Sunday worship and midweek activities, and photographs of Mikhail Khorev encourage members and non-members to pray regularly for him and for the work.

The second distinctive element in the group is the study of church life in different countries, alongside the human rights situation. Using three basic handbooks, and any other material available, members speak for about ten minutes, and there is discussion and prayer. This not only broadens our vision of the universal church: it also saves us from morbid preoccupation

MEN'S MOVEMENT

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is one of the Housing Association's nineteen schemes at present under construction. It will comprise seventeen flats (fourteen for single people and three for couples) with a lift; a communal lounge and a laundry. The flats are being built on the site of the former Church building and an adjoining lecture hall has been made into the new Chapel.

4 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4AB

with one of the darkest features of modern life: there are many signs of encouragement to give thanks for, along with a deepened sense of unity with all God's people.

Apart from praying, our action on behalf of Mikhail Khorev has been similar to that of any other campaigning group: we write letters regularly to various state officials in the Soviet Union (under the guidance of the Newport Amnesty group, which has our friend as an "adopted" prisoner) and encourage others to do so. He has been sent a greeting in Russian from the church, and many of our people posted cards at Christmas (more than 1,000 went from all parts of Wales as part of the "Christian Against Torture" campaign: another 1,000 went to a tortured Uruguayan trade unionist Antonio Soucecoff Tejera): this, too, helped to involve the whole fellowship.

The group was similarly able to prompt the rest of the church to act on the appeal for Easter greetings to the Baptists of El Salvador.

A major breakthrough could come with the adoption by the United Nations of a Convention against torture, and at our suggestion the church meeting wrote to our MP seeking his support for this measure.

A more direct way of helping prisoners in danger of torture is to take part in Amnesty's "urgent action" scheme, and we are about to consider whether our resources will stretch to this. Since in many countries a prisoner is most at risk within days of his arrest, an international telegram or express air letter to the authorities can prove a very effective restraining influence (especially when it joins several hundred others): an individual or group can send as few or as many as they choose.

Later this year we hope to hold a vigil and service to mark Human Rights Day (December 10th), encouraging other churches to share with us and take up the cause.

We are at this point after 15 months: a modest beginning, for sure, but a beginning.

As I have written elsewhere, the work is not for those who want instant results: it can sometimes seem a long, frustrating slog. But that, I believe, is part of the obedience to which Christ is calling us.

Roy Jenkins

For further reading:

"Torture" by Sidney Greaves

40p inc. p and p.

"Thirty Years of Human Rights" by Paul Oestreicher

30p inc. p and p.

"What to read on human rights" by Alan Falconer

40p inc. p and p.

"Christian Concern for Human Rights" by Roger Williamson

40p inc. p and p.

"Torture: A Crime Against God and Humanity"

papers from a BCC seminar £1.25

"Torture — How to make the International Convention Effective"

(International Commission of Jurists) 40p.

“Abolition of Torture : What can we do”

(Quaker resource pack) 50p.

“Public Policy and the Use of Torture” by Eric Baker.

(Quaker Peace and Service) 50p.

“Sermons, Readings, Prayers and Songs for Amnesty International”

by Roger Williamson. Free

“Human Rights” by Leah Levin

(UNESCO) 50p.

“Understanding Human Rights” by Alan Falconer.

(Irish School of Ecumenics) £5.

Ministerial Training at the Scottish Baptist College

The Scottish Baptist College was founded in 1894 and is situated in Glasgow. It has had three previous locations and moved to premises shared jointly with the Baptist Union of Scotland in October, 1981. It is unusual in the British Baptist scene in that it has no residential facilities. For good or ill the founding fathers considered that it was better for ministerial candidates to relate more closely to secular society outside lecture hours than would be possible within a residential framework.

The College has two full-time tutors, the Principal, Dr Gordon W. Martin, and Dr Edward Burrows. There are five other part-time tutors assisting in the basic theological course. The Diploma of Practical Theology course (one year's duration) requires, however, the help of a dozen working pastors and lay persons.

In 1981-1982 the College had twenty-two students. Eighteen of these were in training for the Baptist ministry as approved candidates. The other four (three women and one man) desire theological training but are not as yet sure in what capacity they will use it. Most of our students are married, many of them with a young family. The average age on entrance is about twenty-six.

The course of training occupies four years. During the first three the ministerial student is tutored towards our internal Diploma of Theology, while in the fourth he undertakes our internal Diploma of Practical Theology. Under the requirements of the Ministerial Recognition scheme of the Scottish Baptist Union, all students for ministry undertaking full-time study are expected to gain these two Diplomas.

Wherever possible students are encouraged to take degrees in Arts or Theology or both. There are, however, a number of factors which differentiate the Scottish scene from that found in England and Wales.

First, in England and Wales one can often study for an Arts degree and major within it in Theology. This is simply not possible in Scotland. Scottish universities do offer some courses in Religion, but not the detailed courses in Biblical Criticism, Systematic Theology and Church History which are

required for ministerial training purposes. This means that to gain training in Arts and Theology in Scottish universities involves a minimum of six years study (three years for Arts and three for Theology).

Second, under the agreement at the Union of Parliament of 1707, Scotland retained its own legal, educational, university and State Church systems. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland is recognised by law as the State Church within Scotland. This gives it certain privileges: thus, no other Church has the right to train persons within its own courses for presentation for a Scottish degree in Theology (or Divinity). Thus, the Scottish College does not have the ability to train students for degrees in Divinity within Glasgow University. Accordingly, the majority of our students who take a university degree in Theology, study for the external Bachelor of Divinity degree of London University.

Third, for the last few years it has been possible in Scotland to take a BD degree from a Scottish University without first having an Arts degree. Until recent years this was impossible.

The cumulative effects of the above factors is that the more academically able student no longer takes an Arts degree (unless he comes straight from day school, in which case we do encourage him to take training in Arts), but trains through our College for the London BD.

During the first three years of a man's training he takes courses which have a dual purpose: we require them as leading to our internal Diploma of Theology, but at the same time they provide tuition for London BD (or, in some cases, for the Diploma in Religious Studies, offered by the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate).

What has been said above outlines the basic provisions for study. In Scotland there has always been a real respect for education. Accordingly, in the early days there was a strong emphasis upon a course involving Arts and Theology. Of more recent years the emphasis upon an Arts training for younger men has continued, but in more mature students it is acceptable to take a good theological course leading, wherever practicable, to an external qualification such as London BD or Cambridge Certificate in Religious Studies.

The basic philosophy governing the training for Baptist ministry is, doubtless, close to that found in other Baptist colleges. We seek through training to achieve a number of objectives.

First, we aim to provide basic data about the Scriptures, Christian doctrine and the history of the Church which will enlarge men's horizons. The emphasis is not simply upon the presentation of information but upon training students to evaluate and reach their own conclusions.

Second, we hope through the corporate life and worship of the College to deepen the basic sense of Call and to stimulate the desire for Christian service.

Third, we seek to quicken the natural gifts that God has given, whether they be in preaching, counselling, administration, or whatever.

We are conscious that reserving most of the units of Practical Theology to a final one-year course may seem to pull asunder the academic and the practical. We simply find that men cannot always cope with the practical

units adequately, or gain as much from them when they are involved in the drain imposed on the system by driving towards a qualification in theology. We do not, however, totally isolate the academic and the practical. Courses are provided within the first three years on Homiletics and on Worship. Students attend a Sermon Class. In addition the academic work is set within the context of the College's own fellowship and worship.

It may be helpful to make in brief some further comments on the two basic courses which we provide for ministerial candidates.

In regard to the Diploma of Theology, it may be said that we require the study of New Testament Greek while the study of Hebrew is not demanded. We are aware that the gaining of expertise in translation of Greek imposes a heavy burden upon students. We do not always succeed! We do, however, demand that students undertake a study of the elements of New Testament Greek grammar and that they show proficiency in New Testament exegesis in translation of the text and in understanding exegetical comments which depend for their understanding upon a knowledge of Greek.

The general emphasis in the basic course centres upon the interpretation of the Scriptures of Old and New Testaments and upon the systematic study of Christian doctrine as derived from the Scriptures and interpreted in the history of the Church to the present time. Students are also required to study Philosophy of Religion and Christian Ethics.

Due attention is paid to modern reinterpretation of Christian doctrine, and the student is encouraged to form a discriminating judgment. Even so, there is a strong commitment in all of this to the authority of Scripture and to the need to be faithful to the foundation elements of the Gospel. We see little value in theologians being 'avant-garde' — unless they can show that they are bringing to light some forgotten aspects of the Gospel as originally given.

The Diploma of Practical Theology represents for us a new departure. It is only two years old. In 1980-1981 we had three students taking this course; in 1981-1982 we had four students. In 1982-1983 we expect to have six students. Whether students take their basic course in this College or in some other institution (such as London Bible College or a University) they are required for purposes of ministerial recognition to add this course. This does not apply, however, to Baptist Union Examination candidates (who may study while in secular life for the Cambridge Certificate in Religious Studies or some comparable qualification). Students taking similar courses in another British Baptist College would not, of course, be required to take the Diploma of Practical Theology in the Scottish College.

The Diploma of Practical Theology involves study in eight separate areas:

1. Preaching:
 - i) Homiletics; ii) Relation of Biblical Interpretation and Preaching.
2. Christian Worship — its History and Principles.
3. Pastoral Studies.
Basics of life of ministry in terms of relating to people — counselling; Christian leadership.
4. Psychology.
5. Christian Evangelism and Christian Missions.



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6. Christian Education and Christian Communication.
7. Baptist History and Principles.
8. Church Administration.

The students who have thus far taken this course profess to have been helped by it, and we are grateful to the many pastors and to other helpers who make it possible.

The College expects students taking this course to give the equivalent of two afternoons per week in assignments within churches, hospitals or other caring agencies. A limited amount of exposure to church work is also expected during the first three years of a student's course.

We should mention that the churches give fine support to the College in requesting the services of our students in preaching. This means that after four years a student has had a fair amount of experience in preaching. Some students receive student pastorates, but this is dependent upon their availability and upon the ability of students to combine the demands of such work with their theological studies. Student pastors are not expected to preach at more than four services per month nor to do more than one afternoon's work per week in the church, say in sick visitation.

We mention in conclusion that entrance to the College for men under twenty three years of age requires three subjects at Higher Grade and two at Ordinary Grade (the normal University minimal entrance: Scotland does not work the A-Level/O-Level system). For men over that age the normal requirement is three O Grades or one Higher and one O Grade — English must be gained at either level.

We select men for training through a Joint Ministerial Board. This represents the Ministerial Recognition Committee of the Baptist Union of Scotland together with the College's Board of Studies and the College Treasurer. Persons approved by the Board do not appear separately before the College Committee. Where students come to us from Ministerial Recognition Committees of English Local Associations they are interviewed by the College Board of Studies alone.

We have found that the Joint Ministerial Board makes for a strong liaison between the Scottish Baptist Union and the College. The College aims to serve the churches in partnership with the Union.

Gordon W. Martin

BOOK REVIEWS

Jamie Wallace has, as they say, a way with words. There is often a vivid colour about his language, surprising turns of phrase and images. So the book is enjoyable in this sense but is there anything else that might persuade us to buy and read yet another book on a well-worked theme? I think there is.

First, for all its well worn tread, this journey must be made again and again. None of us is complete in our understanding of what happens in worship

What happens in Worship by Jamie Wallace, The Baptist Union
£1.00

The Way to Life by Helmut Gollwitzer, T. & T. Clark Ltd £4.95

and what makes worship worship. I think it was Dr Johnson who said we need more sufficiently to be reminded than to be informed.

Second, there are important things said here. I noted in particular his comments on Celebration, Books and the transaction which is at the heart of the matter. What he has to say about order and freedom is well and freshly expressed under the headings of pattern, scenario and behaviour.

He speaks, as the Quakers say, to our condition. He suggests that historically we Baptists have 'concentrated so much on the Church's polity that we (have) neglected the Church's praise'. But he also argues that the truth and reality of worship are there in Baptist experience. He wants to help us discover or rediscover it.

I have a friend who lived for a brief while in South Wales. Generally he enjoyed the experience (being an Englishman) but he had one complaint about the preachers. It seemed that never a sermon could go by without either a reference to the Depression or the Revival and quite likely both. Doubtless if you had lived all your life in the community these events would stand like great features on the map of your pilgrimage with God's people. But if you were from another land, it did rather sound as though some folk were living wallowing in the sufferings and the glory of the past.

This recollection came to me as I read Helmut Gollwitzer's sermons. These were first preached in Germany and that shows. There are references to the world events of this century, the horrors of the Nazi rule, under which Gollwitzer himself suffered. But the preacher does not dwell in the past. He recognizes that all this is inescapably part of one generation's experience. He is concerned to preach today, as he subtitles the book, 'sermons in a time of world crisis'.

The sermons are all preached from texts. They are often surrounded by prayers. They have about them at times that genuine prophetic spirit. Gollwitzer, the loyal pupil of Barth, believes in preaching. It is a joyful occasion but never escapist. So here the preacher brings us face to face with the great doctrines and claims of Scripture and we listen to them with him in the light of our unjust, unrighteous world. There are courageous bold words spoken, most notably on peace, justice and the threat of war. We have moved out of the little world of pious sermonettes to gently tickle those over concerned about their own salvation. Here are sermons spoken from a beginning in Scripture and leading to the demanding saving word that confronts us now.

Brian Haymes

Turning the Tide — Paul Beasley-Murray & Alan Wilkinson

— Published by the Bible Society at £2.25

Paul Beasley-Murray tends to be a provocative person and Church Growth (for some reason which I have yet to grasp) tends to be a provocative subject. All of this adds up to a provocative little book for which we should be grateful to Paul, Alan Wilkinson (who provided the technical skills among other things) and the Bible Society which has shown itself once again to be

adventurous in the publication of this 'first'. It is the first book to apply church growth thinking in such a scientific way to the British scene.

This reviewer thoroughly enjoyed reading it. It is possible that some might be put off by the intimacy of the love affair Paul obviously has with the Altrincham Baptist Church (and why not?) or that others might imagine that this is yet another of those 'perfection and how I achieved it' books (which it is not); but the present reviewer found it intensely stimulating to share from the inside something of the joy, heart searching and struggle for discovery which is known by any pastor seeking to lead his church into health and growth. All credit to Paul and Alan that they are prepared to share this with us and provoke us with their conclusions.

This is a carefully researched, well thought out and well written book. It takes the 'Seven Vital Signs' of Church Growth evolved by Peter Wagner and tests them against 350 Baptist Churches by means of an exhaustive questionnaire and the aid of a computer. The aim is not to suggest that growth can be achieved in any church by the mere mechanical application of certain principles but to discover common factors among churches which are in fact growing and to ask penetrating questions about what is discovered. It is based on the assumption that growth is a sign of health. It sees the church as a spiritual body which is at the same time a human organisation and which is therefore properly the subject of analysis from the standpoint of the human sciences. Conclusions abound and cannot all be quoted here but among those factors which create or reflect a bias for growth are the following: a conservative evangelical theology with a charismatic dimension, the proliferation of small groups within the life of the church, the age and length of service of the minister (a minister in his thirties and in his 5th - 10th years of ministry in that church being the optimum), the high value of administrative gifts and the size of a congregation in relation to the amount of full time pastoral assistance (150 - 175 being the maximum effectively coped with by one pastor). Negative discoveries include the fact that many growing churches do so at the expense of smaller churches and that the actual rate of conversion growth even in growing churches remains low — a reminder to those in such churches to look honestly at the effectiveness of their work.

For many to think in these terms about church life is illegitimate. After all isn't it quality that counts? Isn't faithfulness more important than success? Isn't there a danger of making organisational growth our objective rather than the forming of Christ in real people? The answer to all of these questions must be in the affirmative as this book acknowledges. But equal dangers are that we are caught up in woolly thinking and deceptive assumptions. This kind of book encourages us to think honestly and with precision about what is actually happening in our churches so that we are not piously rationalising our failure to reach people for Christ nor euphorically exaggerating our apparent success. What it says ought to inform and stimulate our *total* and prayerful examination of our church life. The fact that small groups or charismatic experience are conducive to growth will not of itself cause us to set up house groups or start speaking in tongues, but it ought to make us think about how the life of God is shed

abroad and shared in our churches and how that can be applied to our actual situations.

In addition to analysis, this book makes a positive contribution towards the development of church life. The spiral concept in which church life is conceived of as an ongoing and upward moving process of attracting, converting, nurturing and developing undergirded by the service of the people is an insight which if properly incorporated in our thinking would in itself make for health and growth. We cannot afford to ignore contributions of this kind. Neither can we afford not to listen carefully to the kind of patient and thorough research offered to us by this book.

Nigel G. Wright

Of Interest to You

DEATHS

To those who have lost their loved ones, we commend them to the love and care of our Heavenly Father.

Bessie Appleby (formerly Sister Bessie)

Phyllis May Bayliss (Widow of Fred)

Edwin Exall

Lionel Higgs

Daniel Hughes (husband of Myra)

Ieuan Lewis (husband of Margaret)

Trevor Martin (husband of Christine) while on active service in Canada

Phyllis Mackie (wife of Walter)

Sidnie James Newbery (husband of Mary)

Jack Keogh (husband of Olive)

John Saunders (husband of Emily)

Elizabeth Sutton (widow of Ernest)

Reg. H. Spooner (husband of Lucy)

Arnold Page

Frank Trout

William C. Williams (husband of Emily)

STUDENTS SETTLING

The Lord make our colleagues strong in His Grace

Paul Allen (Northern) to Mansfield, Notts (Associate)

Stephen Biddall (Regents Park) to Hainault, Essex

Gareth Cheedy (Cardiff) to Mount Calvary, Swansea

David Fort (Bristol) to Castle Street, Calne

Rosalie Hall (Regents) to Wolston, Coventry

David Hill (Spurgeons) to Tangier Road, Portsmouth

Michael Kendall (Spurgeons) Rye Lane, London (Assistant)

Carol Murray (Bristol) to St George's, Bristol

Leslie Morrison (Bristol) to Hutton, Essex

Colin N. Speed (Bristol) to Middle Wall, Whitstable

David Pargeter (Northern) to Camsbourne, Hornsey

Brian Radcliffe (Northern) to Macclesfield

Alan Thomas (Spurgeons) to Dronfield, Sheffield

Spurgeon's Homes

SPURGEON'S ARE SPREADING CARE THROUGHOUT BRITAIN.

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RETIREMENTS

We remember our colleagues in their future ministries.

Albert Crowther
Ronald Goulding
Denis Horwood
E. Bryn Little
Gladys Smith
Leslie Jenkins
Hugh Reid
Kenneth Price
Fred Wilson

RESIGNATIONS

Our prayers go with these brethren
Philip Greenslade
Ralph Stevens (due to ill-health)
Mark Warner

AUSTRALIA

Ralph Willicombe has resigned his pastorate at Dundas (NSW) due to a continuing laryngeal condition, and he is now retiring from the active ministry. We would assure Ralph of our prayers.

A.F. Barlow has accepted a call to Rockville, Queensland.

Roy Pointer of the Bible Society in UK has contributed some good articles on Church growth in the "Australia Baptist".

TASMANIA

Keith Applegate writes: "Greetings from 'Down under'. All our brethren here rejoice in all that the Lord is doing here, and we are trusting him to do even the greater things. We were sorry to learn of the tragic death of Trevor Martin. He was in our batch at Spurgeons. Keep the flag flying. Hallelujah, Jesus reigns."