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The authors' personal views are not necessarily endorsed by all the churches of the BEC.



BRITISH EVANGELICAL COUNCIL

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World Evangelical Fellowship

The Downgrade Controversy

Counselling

Adoptive-Sonship

Liberation Theology

Evangelical Reunion

Wrath, Judgement & Hell

**F O U N D -
A T I O N S**

Published by the British Evangelical Council

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9 St Isan Road
CARDIFF Wales
CF4 4LU
UK

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Editorial

The articles and reviews in this issue of the journal are all essentially practical and immediately relevant to our contemporary situation. After attending the World Evangelical Fellowship General Assembly in Manila last June, Alan Gibson discusses some theological implications of the WORLD EVANGELICAL ISSUES which were raised there. The article is informative and stimulating.

THE BIG MAN MUST GO! is the first of two articles by David Boorman on *Spurgeon and the Downgrade Controversy*. In this first article, the author focuses on the 'prehistory' of the Baptist Union and the factors leading to Spurgeon's resignation from the Union. Here is a timely challenge and warning.

Gareth Crossley has written a penetrating article on COUNSELLING: PASTORAL CARE OR PSYCHOTHERAPY? His definitions and history of these terms are useful. The article proceeds to assess the relationship between evangelicals and psychotherapy (not even Jay Adams escapes from some penetrating criticism) before considering ministerial competence in pastoral care.

Our EXEGESIS article is written by Trevor Burke who examines the privileges and responsibilities of 'Adoptive-Sonship' as the ethics of the eschaton in the context of Romans 8:12-17.

At last we are able to include the long-promised article on the origins and early development of LIBERATION THEOLOGY by Eddy Muskus. This has previously been held back due to lack of space, and expands a topic first introduced in FOUNDATIONS as long ago as 1979.

BOOK REVIEWS are provided by Mark Johnston, Clifford Pond, Neil Richards and Eryl Davies of four very different recent works EVANGELICAL REUNION, MAKING IT HAPPEN, AN ANGRY GOD? and THE ROOTS OF CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

Your prayers for the continued usefulness and wider circulation of the journal will be appreciated.

The Church and its Unity, IVP, £7.95

This new addition to the *When Christians Disagree* series has been edited by BEC General Secretary Alan Gibson. The four issues discussed between evangelicals in a courteous but polemical format are Church Membership, Denominations, Doctrinal Purity and Charismatic Experience. The FOUNDATIONS editor is one contributor, together with seven others, including Derek Prime (FIEC), Graham Harrison (EMW) and Harry Uprichard (PCI).

World Evangelical Issues

Alan Gibson

Some theological issues emerging from the 9th General Assembly of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), held in Manila from 21st - 26th June 1992.

The idea of an international fellowship of evangelical Christians can be traced to the same origins as the UK Evangelical Alliance in 1846. Although still largely funded from Western nations, two significant steps have recently been taken to recognise the greater numerical strength of non-Western churches in WEF. The International Headquarters are now located in Singapore and the post of International Director has been filled by a Filipino, Dr Agustin Vencer.

Some 68 nations were represented at the 1992 Assembly, which was preceded by a week of Consultations by the various WEF Commissions. There are Commissions on *Missions, Theology, Prayer and Church Renewal, Women's Concerns, Youth* and on *Religious Liberty*. Two bodies affiliated to WEF have grown out of its initiatives, the *Inter-church Relief and Development Alliance* and the *International Christian Media Commission*. A feature of this General Assembly was the consideration given to the 120 page Report of a Long-Term Planning Team. Evangelical leaders across the globe had been consulted to produce a fascinating survey of World Trends and their probable impact on the church.

1 WEF and Theology

The Theological Commission is very active, having established Study Units on Faith and the Church, Ethics and Society, Pastoral Ministry, New Forms of the Church, and the Theology of Evangelisation, with two Task Forces working on Jewish Evangelism and New Age Theology. The Unit on Ecumenical Issues, under its convener, Dr Paul Schrottenboer, have published some critical responses to WCC projects and we await with interest their promised symposium, *BEYOND CANBERRA, Evangelical Responses to Contemporary Ecumenical Issues*. Not all the contributors are unsympathetic to evangelical participation in the WCC.

An exhausting consultation of the Commission was held in the week before the WEF assembly. 24 papers were devoted to the urgent and relevant subject of *Pluralism* but one member complained that the format gave too little time for proper discussion. It is feared that the future publication of the papers will not have the benefit of the level of critical appraisal which the subject warrants. We look forward to seeing the Evangelical Declaration concerning 'The Unique Christ in Our Pluralistic World' which was agreed during this conference.

A spin-off from the Commission is the *International Council of Accrediting Agencies for Theological Education* (ICAA) which promotes higher standards and wider academic recognition of the growing number of theological schools around the world. This is a strategic goal as students well trained locally are more likely to retain a ministry relevant to their own culture. A modest Scholarship Fund is

administered by WEF, making grants of £30,000 a year. Requests greatly exceed funds available and this is one area in which WEF would like to see more being done by stronger, western churches to support the work of churches with gifted men but inadequate resources.

During the week proposals were considered for making the theological gifts of those in the Commission available to the work of the other commissions. The need for this became obvious during some of the Assembly contributions, which could have benefited from the advice of those with a better grasp of biblical principles. One matter of interest to UK readers is that Rev Peter Lewis of Nottingham is a member of this Commission and heads a WEF project to train expository preachers in developing countries. Since our return from Manila he has been encouraged to co-ordinate this with other bodies having similar aims.

The Commission has two regular publications. *THE EVANGELICAL REVIEW OF THEOLOGY* (96 pages) is published quarterly for WEF by Paternoster Press, 3 Mount Radford Crescent, Exeter EX2 4JW, UK at £12.00 pa, and reprints articles of interest which have appeared elsewhere in the world. *THEOLOGICAL NEWS* (8 pages) is a quarterly leaflet giving information of importance to those in seminaries. This is available from the WEF Theological Commission, PO Box 94, Choong Jong No, Seoul, Korea, 120-650 at \$7.00 pa. Much of the study output of this Commission has been published and a full list can be obtained from Paternoster Press. Plans are in hand to publish more material in the Third World where lower costs will make the books more easily affordable where they are most needed.

2 WEF and The Church

Like the UK EA, WEF began life as a fellowship of individual Christians. During this Assembly some attention was given to the constitution of WEF, with particular attention to the diversity of the member bodies in the various countries. Some national bodies, like the newly-formed Romanian EA, are much closer to the BEC pattern, with only church groups (denominations) in membership and no overlap with those in ecumenical associations. Some reflect the pattern of denominational missions which gave the churches birth. In an international body of this kind, however, it is hard to trace a uniform understanding of how evangelicals should relate to each other. Cultural and historical factors have profoundly affected the shape of relationships.

In a few countries, notably Germany, there has been a long-standing difficulty over the scope of membership. Germany is one of the EAs which has only personal membership and up till now charismatic Christians have not been accepted. This has affected relationships in the European EA, which have not been helped by other international bodies having more appeal to the younger generation, leaving the EEA with a fear of being by-passed. Discussions are in motion which propose a solution to this problem but the issues it raises cannot be ignored. Can WEF provide a working definition of an 'evangelical' which will be sufficiently distinctive to sieve out the liberals and yet flexible enough to suit the wide range of cultures in which it seeks to minister? Those whose theological experience is limited to one continent will no doubt propose a simplistic answer to this question but no-one present at this WEF Assembly would be so naive.

The 'membership' question also arose when WEF officers were considering how they might speak in the name of the world-wide constituency of evangelicals. In more and more situations the strength of such an international body can be of genuine support to brothers and sisters in trouble. What is harder to achieve is a sufficient system of accountability by which any WEF spokesperson can be sure they are really speaking on behalf of the whole constituency.

The nub of the issue is that **WEF itself does not operate with a clearly defined Doctrine of the Church.** Its members are not all accountable to their churches, some work in para-church organisations overseen by self-appointed committees, others are active in WEF representing only themselves. This does, however, give rise to problems when seeking to apply biblical principles, which assume a 'church' background to personal relationships, in a body made up of those with such diverse views of the church herself.

3 WEF and Politics

Strictly speaking, WEF does not have a political profile but it does have a theological Study Unit on 'Ethics in Society'. It has promoted international support for the body in South Africa known as 'Concerned Evangelicals' identified with Caesar Molebatsi in Soweto and some British Christians have gained enormous benefit from sharing in multi-racial youth camps there. A coloured brother from this group was present in Manila and there was understandable sympathy for those whose interests he represented. There was, however, no contribution from a white evangelical with different perspectives on the issues. Without belittling these problems, it does seem that WEF must be careful not to imply that all evangelicals in a given country are committed to the same political solution and the same timetable for its implementation.

An innovation at this Assembly was the presentation of the first biennial *Civil Liberties Award*. It is not a grant of money but an opportunity to draw attention to evangelical solidarity with suffering Christians in various parts of the world. The recipient this year was the colourful Rómulo Saúne, an Indian from Peru and sometime translation assistant to the Wycliffe missionaries who had laboured to produce the Quechua Bible. He calmly recounted how his grandfather, a community leader in Ayacucho, had been tortured and murdered by the 'Shining Path' terrorists because of his effective evangelical ministry among young people. He was one of 400 evangelicals already killed and, tragically, Rómulo has himself since become a victim of Maoists when he was randomly gunned down at a road block in September. The award will provide a regular reminder that the Theology of Suffering is no theoretical discipline for many evangelicals today.

During the week of the WEF meetings we were honoured by a visit from Fidel Ramos who was about to be installed as the newly-elected President of the Republic of the Philippines. He is a Methodist and the first non-Catholic to hold this office in the country's history. It was significant that he allowed the WEF Chairman, Tukunboh Adeyemo, a Nigerian Pentecostal to commend him to God in prayer before the WEF gathering. Not all present would have been as free in referring to the President as 'brother' and one delegate told me the whole scenario compromised his view of the separation of Church and State. What it did illustrate, however, is our need to be open to opportunities to act as salt in a

corrupt world. This was also vividly underlined by the last minute absence from Manila of Peter Kuzmić. He had been asked by the secular authorities in Croatia to assist in urgent peace talks in his home country.

Having a personal interest in the affairs of believers in Malawi, I had been concerned about the effects upon them of recent political unrest there. In conversation with the two delegates from that African nation it was encouraging to learn how the wider structure of the *Association of Evangelicals in Africa and Madagascar* and of WEF itself are providing resources to prepare their national leaders for testing times ahead. Already pressed by severe famine, their courage and vision call for our sympathetic prayer fellowship.

4 WEF and Culture

For all of us, the WEF Assembly was a classic 'cross-cultural experience' as we shared fellowship with brothers and sisters very different from ourselves. It may be useful to give one or two examples of the questions this raised for me.

One morning a Western delegate presided over the election of the International Committee. He was an experienced chairman and he knew what he was doing. Unfortunately he did not explain to everyone else what he was doing. As the election went ahead some of the African delegates were disturbed to realise the implications of the procedure being adopted. They had not understood it and justifiably felt they had been out-manoeuvred. Although the chairman was (I think!) within his constitutional rights, 'the exercise of his freedom had been a stumbling block' to his brothers (1 Cor 8:9). His Western culture had collided with those who are used to doing things differently. And it hurt.

Being the warm and efficient hosts for the Assembly, the Filipinos were largely responsible for the format of the evening sessions. Apart from the lack of time discipline, which most of us from the West found disappointing, another cultural feature became increasingly difficult for us. Our Asian brothers are used to honouring each other in public and this involves elaborate explanations of who everyone is. The chairman would spend some time telling us how privileged we were to have 'Dr So-and-so' on the platform, and then we discovered that his only function was to give a lengthy introduction to the speaker! They felt they had to do this for everyone. It was important for their culture.

A Scottish visitor with considerable international experience explained to me that this is all connected to the eastern concept of *face*. A speaker loses face if he is not adequately honoured and so we are obliged to make sure that he is. This may be a cultural expectation but is it a Christian obligation? We are not to be bound by the world's standards. The Bible uses the expression 'my face is covered with shame' (Ps 44:15) and even speaks of God being the 'Saviour of my face' (Ps 43:5 Hebrew). The Greek word 'to receive face' (*prosopolambano*), however, means 'favouritism' and just as God does not show this (Rom 2:11) so Christians are commanded not to show it either (Jas 2:1). The NT church faced serious problems in bridging the gaps between believers from different cultural backgrounds (Acts 6:1) and every other international Christian community faces the same task. On our experience, the WEF leadership may still have some way to go.

5 WEF and The Future

The Church in every age is affected by the thought forms of her day. The task of the WEF *Long Range Planning Team* was to identify some of the factors which will provide the background against which our future evangelistic task is to be performed. For example:

- a) Economic. There is a growing disparity between rich and poor. Every 2 seconds in the non-Western world a child dies of hunger and disease.
- b) Socio-Political. Nationalist fragmentation is exerting inexorable pressure the world over. How will the Church cope with militant ethnic loyalty?
- c) Technological. Perplexing ethical issues are arising from bio-ethics. Will the intrusion of technology into nature transform people's perception of life itself? Where does this leave the Doctrine of Creation in the popular mind?
- d) Demographic. By the year 2000 almost 80% of all those in East Asia will live in cities. Yet few churches have any plans to project the effects of urbanisation on their evangelistic strategies. What will be the effect on communities which lose an entire working population through Aids?
- e) Environmental. Others are responding to the challenge of the wasteful consumerist Western lifestyles. Theological study is needed to present a distinctively Biblical contribution to this issue.
- f) Religious. This was the most comprehensive section, reminding us that even secular commentators are noting a spiritual resurgence in the post-Marxist age. The challenge of Pluralism is highlighted as one effect of social fragmentation. Mention is also made of the Megachurch, with 10 of the world's largest churches ranging from 35,000 to 180,000 members.

Dr Vencer, the new International Director, provided his own 16 page Executive Charter and his key objective was for WEF to:

... enable local churches to fulfil their scriptural mandate to disciple nations by providing them with a global identity and presence, a structure for fellowship and co-operation, an international forum and a representative voice, and a network of information and resources for holistic ministries. This shall be accomplished primarily through the strategy of establishing and strengthening regional and national evangelistic fellowships and alliances.

One priority already evident at Manila was for WEF to improve its relationship with other international evangelical movements, all of which seem to compete for the support of the same church leaders on the ground. The presence at Manila of Dr Tom Houston, the International Director of the Lausanne Movement was seen as a positive gesture but it will be no easy task to find a basis for synergism between these bodies with such different roots.

The next WEF assembly will be held in 1996, probably somewhere in Britain, to celebrate the 150th anniversary. It will be interesting to see how much progress has been made by then in tackling these theological issues.

Rev Alan Gibson BD is BEC General Secretary

The Big Man Must Go!

David Boorman

This is the first of a two-part account of the Downgrade Controversy. A second article will trace its course from the time of Spurgeon's resignation to the Baptist Union assembly in April 1888 and will consider the relevance of the Controversy for today.

The Downgrade Controversy took its name from two unsigned articles entitled *The Down Grade*, which appeared in Spurgeon's magazine *THE SWORD AND TROWEL* in the spring of 1887. Written by Robert Shindler of Addlestone, they were historical in nature, dealing with the defection in the eighteenth century from the faith of the Puritans. To the first Spurgeon appended the footnote: 'earnest attention is requested for this paper. There is need of such warnings as this history affords. We are going down-hill at break-neck speed'.¹ The second drew forth a similar footnote.²

Denominational Changes

This Controversy can only be understood in the context of the 'prehistory' of the Baptist Union, and of developments in nineteenth century thought, especially in the fields of science and theology. What eventually came to be *The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland* had its origins in a 'Society', which, at its foundation in 1813, was described as a 'General Union', made up of Baptist ministers and churches maintaining Reformed doctrines and observing a congregational (in contrast to a presbyterian or episcopal) form of church polity. Three years later it became 'The General Meeting of the Particular (or Calvinistic) Baptist Denomination'. One of its founders, Joseph Ivimey, had written in 1811: 'We are anxious to see such a union prevail in our Denomination as shall most effectively continue all our efforts in the cause of Truth and Righteousness at home, and give ten-fold vigour to our exertions on behalf of the heathen abroad'.³ The 'Truth' was defined succinctly in the initial constitution of the Union as:

Three equal persons in the Godhead; eternal and personal election; original sin; particular redemption; free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; efficacious grace in regeneration; the final perseverance of real believers; the resurrection of the dead; the future judgment; the eternal happiness of the righteous; and the eternal misery of such as die impenitent.⁴

Had the Baptist Union in subsequent years remained upon that foundation, there would have been no Downgrade Controversy. But sadly, nineteen years later, in 1832, the objects of the General Union were redefined. No longer was there any specific reference to the doctrines of free and sovereign grace. Henceforth the Union would exist to 'extend brotherly love and union among the Baptist ministers and churches who agree in the sentiments usually denominated evangelical'.⁵ The disappearance of distinctive Reformed truths opened the way for the adherence to the Union of what was known as the *New Connexion* of the General

Baptists whose stance was an Arminian one. With the passage of time even the phrase 'the sentiments usually denominated evangelical' became ambiguous and liable to misrepresentation and misuse. Of course, by the time that this was realised, it was too late to turn back the tide even if there had been any real support for such a course of action. What actually happened was that, in 1873, all reference to 'evangelical sentiments' was removed, and the basis of the Union became, 'In this Union it is fully recognized that every separate church has liberty to interpret and administer the laws of Christ, and that the immersion of believers is the only Christian baptism'.⁶ Such was the 'doctrinal basis', if it be worth of such a name, at the time of the Downgrade Controversy.

But what was the function of the Union? The Union of 1813 was formed for the purpose 'of affording to the ministers and churches of the denomination the means of becoming better acquainted with each other, with a view to excite brotherly love, and to furnish a stimulus for a zealous co-operation in promoting the cause of Christ in general, and particularly in our own denomination, and especially to encourage and support our missions'. The aims may seem modest but it needs to be remembered that there were already in existence, among the Particular Baptists, a Missionary Society, a Home Missionary Society, a Widows' Fund, and a fund known as the Particular Baptist Fund designed to help ministers and churches in particular need. Although these various funds and societies were commended by the General Union to its member churches as worthy of their support, they were not controlled by the Union.

Over the years, however, the original functions of the Union were extended. The Union opened its own Church Extension Fund to help with the building of new churches; it established in 1870 an Augmentation Fund to supplement the stipends of the more inadequately remunerated ministers; it sponsored in 1876 an Annuity Fund for ministers, on the grounds that a central denominational scheme could handle more effectively the situation created by the growing movement of ministers from one part of the country to another; in 1882 the Union took over the work formerly done by the Home Missionary Society and the Baptist Irish Society; and, in the spring of 1887, a few months before the Downgrade Controversy, the Union established a Board of Introduction to advise churches needing pastors and pastors seeking churches. The Union found itself committed, perhaps not unwillingly, to ever-extending responsibilities towards Baptist ministers and Baptist churches. Conversely, ministers and churches became more and more dependent upon the Baptist Union and, therefore, were less and less likely to rock the Union boat in times of crisis.

One other fact deserves to be mentioned. Because the Union from its outset was a union of churches whose order was congregational, it is not surprising that it disclaimed, in the words of the 1813 constitution, 'all manner of superiority and superintendence over the churches; or any authority or power, to impose anything upon their faith and practice'.

Modern Thought

At the same time there were taking place developments in the fields of science and theology which were to have devastating results. The nineteenth century was

a time of spectacular advances in many spheres of knowledge, when, in the name of progress and in an attempt to harmonise the teaching of Scripture within the alleged findings of science, the Higher Criticism movement called into question the interpretation and inspiration of the Word of God. Along with attacks on the inspiration of the Scriptures went another attack on other central doctrines. A leading Congregational minister, R W Dale, declared against the doctrine of eternal punishment, expressing a preference for the theory of annihilation. He argued that the experience of saving faith in Christ could be known without subscribing to the doctrine of his deity. Samuel Cox, a Nottingham Baptist minister and editor of THE EXPOSITOR until 1884, fervently propagated the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all men. In some quarters the Biblical doctrine of the atonement as penal, as substitutionary and as a propitiation, was branded as immoral and unnecessary. The book of Genesis and its account of origins was under attack following Darwin's ORIGIN OF SPECIES (1859) and THE DESCENT OF MAN (1870). Everything was in the melting pot, or, as THE CHRISTIAN WORLD, (no friend to Biblical truth), expressed it:

We are now at the parting of the ways, and the younger ministers especially must decide whether or not they will embrace and undisguisedly proclaim that **modern thought**, which in Mr Spurgeon's eyes is a 'deadly cobra', while in ours it is the glory of the century. It discards many of the doctrines dear to Mr Spurgeon and his school, not only as untrue and unscriptural, but as in the strictest sense immoral; for it cannot recognize the moral possibility of imputing either guilt or goodness, or the justice of inflicting everlasting punishment for temporary sin. It is not so irrational as to pin its faith to verbal inspiration

...

The new mood was well summed up by Alexander MacKenna, the chairman of the autumn session of the Congregational Union in 1887, when he distinguished between *dogma* as a final statement and *doctrine* which is always progressing! According to MacKenna, Congregationalists rejected dogma, but retained doctrine. Sadly, the same could be said of some of Spurgeon's fellow Baptists. From 1883 Spurgeon made active representations from behind the scenes against these alarming developments. He did not attend meetings of the Union after 1882 and, although frequently invited to preach at its gatherings or at those of the Baptist Missionary Society, he, in his own words, 'declined to take a public part in the meetings because I could not feel sure that I would not be compromised thereby'. Each year the secretaries of the Union and of the Mission heard his complaints. However, it was not until 1887 that matters came to a head.

Sounding the Alarm

Contemporaries had no idea that the articles in THE SWORD AND TROWEL were intended to apply in any way to the prevailing situation in the Baptist denomination. However, they were left in no doubt once Spurgeon himself entered the lists with an article in the August edition under the heading *Another Word Concerning the Down Grade*:

A new religion has been initiated, which is no more Christianity than chalk is cheese; and this religion, being destitute of moral honesty, palms itself off as

the old faith with slight improvements, and on this plea usurps pulpits which were erected for gospel preaching. The atonement is scouted, the inspiration of Scripture is derided, the Holy Spirit is degraded into an influence, the punishment of sin is turned into fiction, and the resurrection into a myth, and yet these enemies of our faith once delivered to the saints expect us to call them brethren, and maintain a confederacy with them . . . It now becomes a serious question that those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous evils; but how far are we justified in being in a confederacy with those who are departing from the truth? . . . It is one thing to overleap all boundaries of denominational restriction for the truth's sake . . . It is quite another policy to subordinate the maintenance of truth to denominational prosperity and unity.¹⁰

Spurgeon continued to sound an alarm. In the September issue, he again spelt out clearly what was at stake.

A chasm is opening between the men who believe their Bibles and the men who are prepared for an advance upon Scripture. Inspiration and speculation cannot long abide in peace. Compromise there can be none. We cannot hold the inspiration of the Word, and yet reject it; we cannot believe in the atonement and deny it; we cannot hold the doctrine of the fall and yet talk of the evolution of spiritual life from human nature; we cannot recognize the punishment of the impenitent and yet indulge the 'larger hope'. One way or another we must go.¹¹

But still the validity of Spurgeon's charges was denied. So, once again, Spurgeon returned to the fight, expressing surprise that, 'In many quarters the main question has been, not "How can we remove this evil?" but, "Is there any evil to remove?"'¹² Spurgeon saw clearly that the all-important question was, 'Are brethren who remain orthodox prepared to endorse such sentiments by remaining in union with those who hold and teach them?' Spurgeon had no doubt as to the answer: 'To us it appears that there are many things upon which compromise is possible, but there are others in which it would be an act of treason to pretend fellowship. With deep regret we abstain from assembling with those whom we dearly love and heartily respect, since it would involve us in a confederacy with those with whom we can have no communion in the Lord.'¹³

Why He Resigned

Despite Spurgeon's warnings, as delegates travelled to Sheffield for the autumn meetings of the Baptist Union, 'the great joke was the Downgrade. It did not seem to be treated very seriously'.¹⁴ Whatever his fellow ministers might think, to Spurgeon the matter was no joke, a fact which was brought home when, on 28th October 1887, Spurgeon sent to Dr Booth his letter of resignation from the Baptist Union. If any further explanation of his action was needed, it was given in the November issue of *THE SWORD AND TROWEL*. While readily acknowledging the right of Christians to unite in unions, he pointed out that:

a union of churches ostensibly committed to the biblical gospel ought not to contain within its ranks those whose clearly held beliefs were at variance with

the faith once delivered to the saints. We have before us the wretched spectacle of professedly orthodox Christians publicly avowing their union with those who deny the faith, scarcely concealing their contempt for those who cannot be guilty of such gross disloyalty to Christ. To be very plain, we are unable to call these things Christian Unions, they begin to look like Confederacies in Evil . . . It is lawful to unite with all sorts of men for good and benevolent and necessary purposes, even as at a fire, Pagan and Papist and Protestant may each one hand on the buckets and in a sinking ship, heathen and Christian alike are bound to take their turns at the pumps. But the case before us is that of a distinctly religious communion, a professed fellowship in Christ. Is this to be made so wide that those who contradict each other on vital points may yet pretend to be at one? . . . It is our solemn conviction that where there can be no real spiritual communion there should be no pretence of fellowship. **Fellowship with known and vital error is participation in sin.**¹⁵

Spurgeon could no longer be ignored or laughed at. His resignation from the Union forced its Council, into action. The problem facing the Union was expressed, in possibly an over-simplified way, in the UNITARIAN HERALD on 11th November: 'The authorities of the Baptist denomination are perfectly well aware of what is taking place; and powerful as the name of Mr Spurgeon has always been among them, they know that they must not take his side against the younger men who have the spirit of the age with them . . . **The big man must go; the big man is nothing before the march of the spirit of the age.**'¹⁶

(To be continued)

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Counselling: Pastoral Care or Psychotherapy?

Gareth Crossley

Use the word 'counselling' in the presence of Christian ministers and it is guaranteed to produce a whole variety of responses. Some will readily and warmly receive the word because they have taken a counselling course, read some counselling books or practised some counselling skills; others will want a more precise definition to clarify just what is meant, and yet others will react in horror as the word immediately conjures up thoughts of secular rivals to the pastoral office.

What is counselling? Is it the same thing as pastoral care? What is the difference between counselling, pastoral counselling, Christian counselling and biblical counselling? Is counselling the same as psychotherapy? Is it the same as the 'care of souls'? Does a Christian functioning in counselling automatically make his work 'Christian counselling'?

Counselling

Counselling has to do with the relationship between one human being and another in which help is given towards solving problems of living. There are personal problems like anxiety, grief, guilt, resentment, uncontrolled desires and appetites, selfishness, feelings of insecurity or worthlessness, indiscipline and destructive patterns of behaviour. There are relationship problems between husband and wife, parents and children, brother and sister, employer and employee, neighbours, friends and work associates. There are 'spiritual' problems such as loss of identity, bitterness against God, resentment over sufferings, a feeling of desertion, lack of assurance, spiritual doubts, fear of death or judgment, and a host of doctrinal difficulties.

In counselling one human being offers himself in a helping relationship to another human being in need. He uses his expertise, knowledge, insights, skills and experience. **The goal of effective counselling is to help the counsellor to help himself by focusing on problems and their resolution.** As the psychotherapist Nelson-Jones expresses it: 'The counsellor's repertoire of psychological skills includes both those of forming and understanding relationships with clients and also focuses on helping them to change specific aspects of their feeling, thinking and behaviour'.¹ A whole range of professions are taught counselling skills for their work, such as social workers, probation officers and nurses. A new category which has emerged in recent years is the professional 'Counsellor' from whom time and attention can be purchased. Counselling in Britain and America is a growth industry. A whole variety of people with a host of different approaches are practising counselling.

Pastoral Care

By contrast, pastoral care is the sole prerogative of the pastor. The care of souls is not a side interest in the pastor's life and work. **It is his life's work.** It is exercised through preaching, teaching, the supervision of public worship, the leadership of the church and through private pastoral counselling. Hence the apostle Paul urged the Ephesians pastors to exercise their God-given office: 'Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd (or pastor) the church of God which he purchased with his own blood' (Acts 20:28).

Much pastoral care is carried out through applicatory preaching. When a minister follows the direction of Scripture to 'take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you' (1 Timothy 4:16), and, 'Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching' (2 Timothy 4:2) his preaching will contain biblical counselling. Sermons will contain four distinct emphases suited to the occasion; doctrinal, pastoral, moral or evangelistic. Over the year a careful balance will be sought to declare 'the whole counsel of God' (Acts 20:27). God-honouring preaching consists substantially in the exposition, interpretation, clarification and application of the written Word containing 'the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3), and addressed to the here-and-now community of saints and others who would hear it.

But preaching is not the only means ordained by God for the exercise of pastoral care. Referring to the minister of the gospel William G T Shedd writes,

He is not only a preacher, whose function it is to impart public instruction before an audience, but he is also a *pastor*, whose office it is to give private and personal advice from house to house, and to make his influence felt in the social and domestic life of his congregation . . . and hence requires the special discipline that qualifies him to watch over the personal religious interests of his flock . . . The pastor . . . has the care of souls . . . The pastor . . . is a watcher for souls.²

Definitions

As counselling is a feature common to the Christian Church (exercised in the context of pastoral care) and to a secular society (as practised by a host of differing professions) definitions are necessary for clarity. *Pastoral care* will be used to designate the whole activity of the Christian pastor. *Pastoral counselling* will be used of private conversations in which the pastor gives help, comfort, support, challenge or advice. *Psychotherapy* will be used to describe the activity of secular counselling. Whilst originating from the stable of *psychology*, psychotherapy is quite a different animal. **Psychology is a science** in which tests are carried out, observations recorded, reactions measured, statistics compiled and evaluated. It is a strict science dealing with animals, birds, fish and humans. Procedures are tested for reliability and validity. Psychology is a discipline devoted to the understanding of how animate creatures think, feel and behave. It is no more sinister than biology or chemistry.

In marked contrast psychotherapy (secular counselling) is not a science. It is a belief system in which assumptions are made about the nature of human existence, the quality of human life, and the necessary conditions for personality change. The Bobgans declare, 'Psychotherapy is not a coherent science in principle or in theory, diagnosis or treatment'.³ There are over 250 distinguishable variants in psychotherapy. Among the ranks of psychotherapy there is no shortage of critics who admit there is no proof whatever that their procedures are successful in achieving what they purport to achieve. Adams⁴ and M & D Bobgan⁵ detail numerous internal critics of psychotherapeutic procedures.

The issue faced in this paper is, 'What is the relationship between pastoral care and psychotherapy?' In seeking to address the question it will be necessary to begin by tracing the historical developments of pastoral care and identifying its courtship with psychotherapy.

The History of Christian Pastoral Care and Psychotherapy

Until the middle of the last century pastoral care exercised by ministers of the gospel was practised with great seriousness and general recognition in the community. Peter Lewis substantiates the point that 'among the puritans of sixteenth and seventeenth century England, pastoral work was not the light and uncertain thing which it has largely become in our own day'.⁶ Ministers were seen as effective counsellors for the whole community. People facing problems of living for which they needed help, support or advice, turned to the clergy. The wisdom of pastorally oriented classic Protestant theology was known and practised by caring pastors.

The nineteenth century produced its own outstanding men in pastoral care - William G T Shedd in America, Patrick Fairbairn in Scotland and Charles Bridges in England. These men championed the application of Scripture to the pastoral needs of the people with the same devotion, skill and commitment seen in the earlier fine pastoral theologians such as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Baxter Wesley, and Edwards.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Protestant liberalism blossomed. Biblical infallibility and authority were abandoned and consequently biblically informed and directed pastoral care was also abandoned. One of the key ideas in Protestant liberalism is the notion of the innate goodness of the human self. There was a consequent neglect in responding pastorally to human self-assertiveness and pride. Another assumption of liberal Protestantism was the progressive evolutionary delusion that things are getting better so that eventually, even if we do have some difficult human problems now, they will doubtless work themselves out either naturally, rationally or technologically.

In the early twentieth century the content of pastoral care was to change drastically. There was a dramatic shift away from a basically evangelical approach to the Scriptures and also a shift away from an appreciation of the accumulated wisdom, insight and experience of classic pastoral theologians. The arrival of the new theories and practices of psychiatry and psychotherapy diverted the attention of theologians and pastors away from their classic roots to the new therapies. Pastoral care took on a whole new meaning.

Theologians became frantically engaged in building bridges to the modern psychotherapies. Bridges were certainly built between theology and psychotherapy but the traffic on them was all one way! **Theologians imbibed the new psychotherapies without critical analysis from the vantage point of Scripture and the classic pastoral tradition.** The 'emergent psychologies,' as Thomas Oden points out, were 'becoming accommodated, often cheaply, into pastoral care'. The pastoral wisdom of the godly forefathers was thrust aside. New mentors had arisen to lead pastors and people into the new promised land of solved problems, healed minds, stable emotions and controlled behaviour. Freud, Jung, Rogers, Ellis, Berne, Skinner - these were the men. That they were God-haters, antichristian and largely amoral, was of no concern to the beguiled theologians and ministers, who blindly followed and became their ardent supporters.

Under the misguided assumption that they could only function effectively in their pastoral work by the practice of the new therapies and skills, ministers began taking courses in a whole variety of therapies: psychodynamic therapy (Freud, Klein or Jung), personal constructs therapy (Kelly), person-centred therapy (Rogers), rational-emotive therapy (Ellis), reality therapy (Glasser), cognitive therapy (Beck), cognitive-behaviour modification (Meichenbaum), behavioural therapy (Pavlov, Watson, Skinner, Wolpe, Eysenck and Bandura), existential therapy (Rollo May), transactional analysis (Berne), gestalt therapy (Perls), logotherapy (Frankl) and a whole host of eclectic amalgams which have produced a mish-mash of therapies with strands crossing, inextricably interweaving or sitting uncomfortably in contradiction. Pastoral theology in recent years has become 'largely a thoughtless mimic of the most current psychological trends'.¹⁰

By stark contrast there are those in the ranks of psychotherapy who openly recognise its religious dimension. An example of this is found in an article by psychotherapist Brian Thorne who admits the encroachment of secular counselling into the realm of 'the spiritual' and concedes that we might now be 'witnessing a massive take-over by therapists of the traditional role of the clergy as spiritual guides or companions'.¹¹ Of course what Thorne means by 'spiritual' and what the Bible defines as spiritual are two entirely different things!

Evangelicals and Psychotherapy

Evangelical pastors have not escaped the influence of modern psychotherapy upon their God-given office. For many this has resulted in confusion (as illustrated by Ian Williams' article in the Anglican evangelical journal ANVIL).¹² Some will have imbibed ideas through previous professional training and consequently import some secular techniques, methods and principles. A few may react, like clinical psychologist turned clergyman Richard Krebs and discount all psychotherapy and all pastoral counselling from pastoral care. Krebs asserts that 'pastors should not be counsellors. They should evaluate, provide support, and refer'.¹³ Others will have been influenced by evangelical theorists whose books flow in profusion from the presses. Jay E Adams, Lawrence J Crabb and Gary R Collins are three key figures representing the spectrum of evangelical thought on psychotherapy that is, respectively - *rejection, accommodation and integration*.

Lawrence J Crabb

Crabb offers four alternatives for dealing with the relationship between Christianity and psychotherapy (unfortunately he uses the term 'psychology' which is misleading. In this context he is using 'psychology' in the sense of 'psychotherapy'). The alternatives he presents are designated (i) separate but equals, (ii) tossed salad, (iii) nothing buttery, and (iv) spoiling the Egyptians.¹⁴ In Crabb's opinion 'separate but equals' fails to recognise the relevance of the Scripture to psychological problems. 'Tossed salad' adds scriptural concepts to psychotherapeutic thinking rather than beginning with Scripture and cautiously scrutinizing psychotherapeutic concepts in the light of biblical presuppositions. 'Nothing buttery' neatly handles the problem of integration by disregarding psychotherapy altogether. The basic tenet is *Nothing But Grace, Nothing But Christ, Nothing But Faith, Nothing But The Word*. In identifying his own approach as 'spoiling the Egyptians' he contends 'we can profit from secular psychology if we carefully screen our concepts to determine their compatibility with Christian presuppositions'.¹⁵

How then did Anna Freud's writings on the ego-defence mechanism squeeze through the sieve? (Anna was the daughter of Sigmund.) Crabb, unhesitatingly and without qualification, recommends her writings as 'appropriate and helpful reading for a Christian'.¹⁶ The heavy emphasis on these defence mechanisms of unconscious denial and repression continue throughout all of Crabb's work. It is essential to 'Understanding People'¹⁷ and for changing from the 'Inside Out'.¹⁸ Freudian theory has met with growing criticism both in and out of the field of psychotherapy. Furthermore Anna Freud's teaching conflicts with the biblical view of conscious choice and responsibility.¹⁹

Erich Fromm also receives commendation. Crabb says, Fromm 'offers a useful discussion of love . . . Some of his insights are useful',²⁰ in spite of the fact that Fromm denies that God is love or that he is the source of love. Fromm says, 'love is not a higher power which descends upon man or a duty which is imposed upon him; it is his own power by which he relates himself to the world and makes it truly his'.²¹

Crabb has wholeheartedly recommended Christians to read the works of Anna Freud, Erich Fromm and Carl Rogers. Furthermore his psychotherapy betrays a strong affinity with the work of Abraham Maslow (hierarchy of needs) and Albert Ellis (rational emotive therapy). Maslow's work is shot through with godless insinuations. In the late 1950s he wrote against the human tendency to look for supernatural help in life's struggles, criticising the 'good many' who 'have thrown up their hands altogether and talked about original sin or intrinsic evil and concluded that men could be saved by extrahuman forces'.²² Ellis also attacked Christian teaching. He says, 'one of the central theses of rational-emotive psychotherapy is that there is no place whatever for the concept of sin in psychotherapy and that to introduce this concept in any manner, shape or form is highly pernicious and antitherapeutic'.²³

The Israelites 'spoiled the Egyptians' by requesting and obtaining 'articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing' for 'the LORD had given the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians' (Ex 12:35-36). God did not direct the Israelites to

emulate the theories, ideas or practices of the Egyptians. The expression 'spoiling the Egyptians' as used by Crabb is distinctly unfortunate and may indicate the limitations of his theological expertise. The Bobgans expose the inadequacies behind Crabb's thinking and demonstrate how he is more influenced by his training in psychotherapy than his study of Scripture.²⁴

That there are strong similarities at times between some of the insights of psychotherapy and the teachings of Scripture is readily admitted. The issue facing the Christian pastor is whether he can learn pastoral care from, or have his pastoral care enhanced by, the proponents of secular psychotherapy. The Bobgans suggest that,

Crabb's rationale for integrating psychology with the Bible is based on his observation of superficial, ineffective Christians, his confidence in psychology, and his contention that the Bible does not give direct answers to people with problems of living. Crabb touches the common sense of the church when he points out the fact that there are Christians who are struggling with difficult problems of living. And, he touches the nerve of the church when he admonishes Christians for being materialistic and superficial . . . We also believe that Christians should be in the process of learning to walk in full dependence upon the Lord who saved us and who is conforming each one of us into the image of Jesus Christ. But, the inner man is not transformed into the likeness of Christ through psychological systems or techniques devised by men. The spiritual transformation of the inner man is outside of the domain of secularly based systems.²⁵

It is also to be noted that Crabb designates his own psychotherapy as 'biblical counselling',²⁶ which is grossly misleading for the average Christian reader. His 'biblical counselling' (or 'Christian counselling') is a mish-mash of secular philosophy, secular techniques and secular methods garnished with numerous biblical references served as though it came direct from Mount Sinai.

Jay E Adams

In his definitive book, *COMPETENT TO COUNSEL*, Adams claims to strike a new note: 'Rather than defer and refer to psychiatrists steeped in their humanistic dogma, ministers of the gospel and other Christian workers who have been called to help his people out of their distress, will be encouraged to reassume their privileges and responsibilities'.²⁷

In spite of his undoubted desire to recall pastors back to the exercise of their God-given responsibilities as guided and instructed by the Word of God, and to shun modern psychotherapies, Adams nevertheless shows a remarkable affinity with the procedures of those he disclaims. He has developed systems, methods and techniques which when coupled with a lavish use of Bible texts seem to win the day with evangelical pastors, especially of the 'reformed' persuasion.²⁸

What is an even greater concern about the counselling approach of Adams is that he majors on one aspect of counselling in pastoral care to the detriment of others. Adams chooses to major on 'nouthetic' teaching and disregards the 'para-kletic' element in biblical pastoral care. 'Nouthetic' derives from the Greek words *noutheteo* which occurs eight times and *nouthesia* which occurs three times in the New Testament. *Nouthesia* is translated as admonish, warn or confront. Whereas

'parakletic' derives from the words *parakaleo* and *paraklesis* which are used a total of 138 times. *Parakaleo* means literally 'to call alongside' and is translated as comfort, console, exhort, or entreat. One of the outstanding usages is in reference to the Holy Spirit as another Parakletos (Jn 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7) and by implication designates also our Lord Jesus Christ (Jn 14:16).

Adams' 'nouthetic counselling' rightly addresses the omission of secular psychotherapy in calling sinners to repentance and faith. Confrontational counselling has its place in Christian pastoral care. The admonitory function has been generally neglected. Ministers have struggled to appear non-judgmental and have succumbed to the pressure of the age. The corrective task was a vital aspect of pastoral care in the past. It recurrently appears as an essential dimension of virtually all classical descriptions of the care of souls. Most agree that it is necessary to ministry and that the task 'must be approached with great care, concern, sensitivity and delicacy - and that it is fraught with hidden dangers'.²⁹

But Adams highlights admonition to the detriment of comfort and compassion.

Adams argues that the triple requirements of change, confrontation and care within the counselling process are best met by the possession of 'extensive knowledge of the Scriptures, divine wisdom, and good will towards others'.³⁰

However 'nouthetic' counselling is not the whole approach of pastoral care in individual counselling as represented in the Scriptures. Indeed, in comparison with the number of references to the 'parakletic' element, the infrequent occurrence of the 'nouthetic' element would lead to the conclusion that it is only a small part of pastoral care. Noting this imbalance in Adams' approach, Hurdling concludes that 'Adams seems to favour the more distinctive and admonishing stance . . . to the more encouraging and consoling style'.³¹

'Parakletic' counselling receives greater attention in the Scriptures than 'nouthetic' counselling. A typical example is found in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God,' from which it is clearly seen that, (i) God is the source of all comfort, (ii) we ourselves have been comforted by God, (iii) we are called and equipped to share this comfort with the afflicted.

Summary

Christian pastoral care has come under the corrupting influence of psychotherapy. Protestant liberalism absorbed, virtually wholesale, the secular theories, principles and practices of psychotherapy. **Evangelicals have been more cautious but they have gradually yielded ground as influential leaders came 'under the spell' of the secular practitioners.** Identifying similarities at certain points between biblical teaching and the theories and practices of psychotherapy, evangelical theorists have assumed psychotherapy had something to offer that could not be obtained through the Scriptures. Even where a stance of opposition to psychotherapy has been adopted the plain marks of influence can be clearly seen. A formal methodology, work sheets, interview techniques, manuals and pocket guides for the busy counsellor have largely replaced the spiritual and theological preparation of the man of God. Pastors need to walk with God, to be immersed

in God's Word, to love people and to learn from godly forefathers. Our heritage is not from Freud, Rogers, Ellis or Skinner but from the words and example of the Lord Jesus Christ and from godly men of the past who were mighty in the Scriptures and had large pastoral hearts - Paul, Peter, John, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Owen, Baxter and Edwards . These fine men have more to teach the Christian pastor than all the psychotherapists put together.

Competence in Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the sole prerogative of the pastor. It is his life and work (Moody, in an article in the journal THEOLOGY, helpfully delineates the distinctive roles of a Christian pastor and a secular counsellor.)³² But competence in pastoral care, and in particular that aspect of pastoral care related to the application of Scripture to the personal needs and conditions of the individual in private counsel, does not come automatically with the office. Hard work (1 Tim 5:17), careful study of the Scriptures (2 Tim 2:15), real self-sacrificing love for the people (Acts 20:19-20,31; Phil 1:8), reliance on the Holy Spirit for illumination and insight and, preferably, years of experience, make the competent pastor. Oden states it succinctly when he writes, 'The fabric of effective pastoral work involves the constant interweaving of spiritual wisdom, historic awareness, constructive theological reasoning, situational discernment, and personal empathy. It is best studied by examining case materials of concrete problems of pastoral counsel, viewed in the light of Scripture and tradition'.³³

One of the arguments which is used against the minister functioning in pastoral counselling with those who are disturbed is *the perennial issue of mental illness*. What if the counsellor is mentally ill? What if it is something which cannot be cured by 'talk therapy'? Won't the pastor make the situation a whole lot worse? The question of mental illness is largely a red herring. It is used to undermine the confidence of the Christian pastor when faced with people presenting with serious problems. In the first place 'mental illness' is a term widely used and rarely defined accurately. It is often used by 'professionals' and 'experts' as a blanket term to describe any condition where a person is not coping with life's problems. By contrast Jay Adams asserts, 'Apart from organically generated difficulties, the "mentally ill" are really *people with unsolved personal problems*'.³⁴

Consultant psychiatrist, neurologist and neurophysiologist Dr Raju Abraham fully endorses the assessment of Dr Adams. With all the weight of his medical expertise, he distinguishes *non-organic* and *organic* problems as problems originating in *the mind* and problems originating in *the brain*. Dr Abraham writes, 'One of the reasons there is so much confusion is because of the failure to distinguish between mind and brain. We often think that mind problems are somehow brain problems and therefore the purview of the medical profession. Little do people realise that actual organic problems cause only a tiny proportion of counselling problems'.³⁵

One of the reasons why pastors are so often intimidated by psychiatrists and psychotherapists is because of their own inability to distinguish between 'organic' and 'non-organic' mental disorder. Only 'organic' disorders should be termed 'mental illness'. Adams is often wrongfully criticized for having no category of mental illness. This is blatantly untrue. In COMPETENT TO COUNSEL he states

clearly, 'Organic malfunctions affecting the brain that are caused by brain damage, tumours, gene inheritance, glandular or chemical disorders, validly may be termed mental illness'.³⁶

Consequently Adams recommends the completion of a Personal Data Inventory³⁷ by every counsellor which, among other things, will elicit the general state of health, the use or abuse of drugs, patterns of sleep, hallucinations, perceptual distortions of colour and shape, phobias, etc. He also insists that 'The pastor . . . works back to back with the physician. The latter will help him immensely in sorting out cases in which thyroid deficiency, myxoedema (*a disease resulting from underactivity of the thyroid gland characterised by puffy eyes, face, and hands and mental sluggishness*), or some other condition is at the root of a disorder. There is, of course, a grey area between, where it is uncertain to both whether a problem stems basically from organic or non-organic sources'.³⁸ (italics mine)

Adams further acknowledges that there is a possibility that some of the bizarre behaviour which one meets in so-called schizophrenic persons, stems from organic roots. Adams raises the question, 'What about people, for instance, who suspect that others are after them? Can a Christian counsellor help them? What if they freeze up in a catatonic state? Other persons also may talk about visions, claim to hear voices inaudible to others, etc. What can the Christian counsellor do for them?' Adams answers his question,

To begin with, a good medical checkup is the place to start. Counsellors with problems of this sort may have an organic problem; perhaps a tumour on the brain or, as may be more likely, a perceptual disorder resulting from chemical malfunction of the body. Chemical malfunction also may result from toxic chemical buildup in the body caused by acute sleep loss. Christian counsellors who are aware of the effects of sleep loss (often as the result of sinful abuse of the body) have been able to get to the root of the problem when physicians could find no cause.³⁹

The pastor is at no greater disadvantage than the psychotherapist in his work for he too must carefully watch for any tell-tale signs which may indicate that the presenting problem is organically based.

So where does the pastor begin? **What are the guidelines for the pastoral care of the seriously disturbed?** He requires confidence in a number of specific areas:

- a) In his God-given task and God-provided resources. Many of the so-called 'mentally-ill' are people who can be helped by the ministry of God's word provided the Scriptures are well known, accurately understood, graciously applied and mediated in reliance on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit and with much prayer.
- b) That there are only two origins of disorder; organic and non-organic, and that only the smallest proportion of presenting problems will have an organic origin. When uncertain, especially where there are other tell-tale signs, the pastor will immediately refer the counsellor to his/her GP with a covering letter.
- c) In knowing that his secular counterpart, the professional psychotherapist, has no greater perception, skill or expertise in determining when problems are organic or non-organic.
- d) That in fulfilling his work of pastoral counsel he will be assisting in the

prevention and cure of stress-related illness, such as arthritis, vascular disease and gastrointestinal disease.⁴⁰

Singleness of Mind

In order for pastors to achieve their God-given responsibilities in pastoral care (preaching, teaching, supervision of public worship and the private application of the Scriptures to individual needs) God gives them colleagues, gifted brethren and sisters in the church to fulfil other tasks. Deacons were appointed to release those in pastoral care who would otherwise be distracted from their duties of 'prayer and the ministry of the word' (Acts 6:4).

Ministerial megalomania, the obsession with power and control, hampers not only the full functioning of the body of Christ to which pastors should be committed (Eph 4:11-12), but it also renders the pastor ineffective in pastoral care through the neglect of prayer and spiritual reflection. It is pride which causes the pastor to want to do everything in the church. The Jethro principle (Ex 18:14ff) enables more people to share the leadership load, so that God's grace works through many and spares anyone excessive demands (Calvin's Institutes 4.11.8).

A 'golden rule' for pastors is 'Never do the work of general ministry that can be done by others.'

Pastoral leadership consists principally in learning how to empower, enable and enrich the leadership of others. It often seems more trouble-free for the pastor to do the job himself. 'If you want a job doing well, do it yourself' may not be presumptuous arrogance but it comes perilously close to it. Pastors are to train, nurture, educate, equip men and women of God for the tasks of the church (1 Tim 3:2-13; 2 Tim 2:2; Tit 1:5-9; 2:3-5; Eph 4:11-13; 1 Cor 12:7). The phenomenal rise in men leaving the pastoral office, particularly young men in their first church, may be accounted for, at least in part, by confusion as to what ministry entails. When the minister leads the flock and educates the flock so that 'every part does its share' (Eph 4:16) he has time to give to the study of systematic, biblical and pastoral theology. When he is diverted to other work: bricklaying, cleaning, church letter writing, caretaking, accounting, delivering, administering or by organising teas, evangelistic campaigns or open-air speaking; attending meetings, committees and functions, then his work of 'pastoring' of necessity suffers. Are pastors so entrenched in these activities that they abdicate their pastoral responsibilities by referring people with problems to 'professional' counsellors? Pastors *are* the professionals; professionals at pastoral care. The pastor who does not pastor is like salt that has lost its savour, 'good for nothing but to be thrown out' (Matt 5:13; cf. Ezek 34:1-16).

Personal Qualities Needed For Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is the heaviest responsibility in the world. As a teacher the minister is warned that he will 'receive a stricter judgment' (James 3:1). As one who watches for souls the minister is reminded he must one day 'give account' (Hebrews 13:17). Great care must therefore be exercised in the choice and training of men for the pastoral office.

A man suited to pastoral office will have:

An ability to maintain absolute confidentiality - recognized by the church

A thorough working knowledge of Scripture

A deep insight and extensive self-knowledge

A genuine care for ordinary people

An ability to accurately empathize with a variety of human conditions

A gentle spirit

Practical wisdom

Ability to communicate in public and private

A willingness to learn

Trustworthiness and a trusting disposition

Genuineness, internal congruence (feeling your own feelings accurately)

Gospel hope, Christian optimism

Courage, humour and the willingness to face limitations and admit mistakes.

Where better to start in the study of pastoral care than with the Great Pastor, the living God. Substitute the word 'pastor' for 'shepherd' throughout the Bible and the magnitude of the task begins to dawn. 'Jehovah is my Pastor' (Ps 23:1). The good Pastor leads his sheep beside still waters and restores their soul (Ps 23:2-3). The good Pastor is self-sacrificing. He 'gives his life for the sheep' (Jn 10:11). A fellow-pastor, the apostle Peter, says, 'Pastor the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by constraint but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Pastor appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away' (1 Pet 5:2-4).

The Lord Jesus is the Wonderful Counsellor (Is 9:6). He teaches pastoral counselling by example. He talks with needy people; Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, little children, an immoral woman, the blind, deaf and lame, the demon possessed and mentally deranged. The Bible is a mine of teaching, of examples and of illustrations in the art of pastoral care.

The pastor who has reliable knowledge of himself is best prepared to offer good counsel. This is emphasised in the works of Augustine, Calvin, Wesley and especially Baxter and yet is curiously absent from much modern day pastoral training. The care of souls requires accurate understanding of one's own driving passions, distorted motives, neurotic tendencies, latent doubts, and emerging struggles.

The art of pastoral care is hard won. Pastoral counselling is not to be handed over to 'Christian professionals' as Crabb recommends⁴¹. It is the long-working, hard-thinking, God-knowing, Christ-centred, Bible-based, people-loving pastor who alone is competent to counsel towards a permanent and effective outcome.

Pastoral Care and Theological Reflection

For too long ministers have been and still are being trained as theologians, teachers or preachers but not as pastors. Pastoral theology deserves a position by the side of, and equal in importance to, systematic theology and biblical theology. To quote Oden once more,

Since pastoral theology is theology, it proceeds by the same method as any well-formed theology, utilising a well-known quadrilateral of sources for

understanding God's self disclosure in history: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience . . . The texts of Scripture . . . are the Word of God, addressed to us for our healing, instruction and benefit. Tradition at bottom is the history of exegesis. It implies an ongoing process of trying to understand the address of Scripture in various historical settings . . . The application of reason as a criterion for pastoral self-reflection implies an effort to think constructively, rigorously, and consistently; to argue cogently; and to reflect systematically on the cohesive ordering of pastoral wisdom . . . Personal and social experience forms the fourth branch of the quadrilateral of the theological method for pastoral theology. This includes factoring into our conception of ministry not only our own existential experience and personal story, but also the experience of others we know who have been engaged in ministry. The best pastoral insight is derived from lived experience of ministry.⁴²

Conclusion

It has been shown that the demise of pastoral care has been precipitated by the undermining of biblical authority and the influence of secular psychotherapy. Christian pastors need not be intimidated by psychotherapy. At best secular counselling only does a patching-up job. Pastors mediate Christ by the Spirit through the Word. It is the Lord Jesus who effectively and eternally cares for souls. 'Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly . . . But his delight is in the law of the LORD (Psalm 1:1-2).

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Exegesis 14: Adoptive - Sonship

Trevor Burke

A consideration of the term 'huiiothesia' in Romans 8 verse 12-17 and the ethics of this end-time blessing.

Introduction

In the early verses of Rom 8 the apostle Paul sets out two very different kinds of life - that lived *kata sarka* which is death (v 6), hostile to God (v 7) and cannot please God (v 8) and the other *kata pneuma*, which is life and peace (v 6). The rest of the chapter (v 9-28) is dominated by the subject of life in the Spirit (*pneuma* occurs 21 times) which is in contrast to Rom 7:14-25 where Paul delineated the struggle with sin. What the apostle is saying in the two chapters is that the struggle in Rom 7 and the life in the Spirit in Rom 8 are both part of the **normal Christian life**. In Rom 8 Paul unfolds what it means to live in the Spirit and relates this to adopted sons of God.

Exegesis

Paul begins Rom 8 with a summary statement, 'Therefore, there is now (*nun*) no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus'. Having been declared righteous in Christ there is for the believer no condemnation. The apostle had already sounded the same note in 3:21, 'But now (*nuni*) a righteousness from God apart from law has been revealed . . . through faith in Jesus Christ'. This righteousness from God has been unveiled in Christ, (ie the Christ-event) and is, 'the dawning-time of salvation'. In other words, the 'now' is not merely logical but eschatological in that the Christ has come. This state of 'no condemnation' (justification, a forensic term, here put in another way) anticipates the final judgment and hence an 'eschatological' state of affairs. Furthermore, all who are, 'in Christ' are also spoken of as 'in the Spirit' - another eschatological condition, because the gift and outpouring of the Spirit is an end time event (cf Joel 2:28-32) and here regarded by the apostle as the 'first-fruits' and the 'guarantee' of the consummation of salvation. In these motifs we have the eschatological 'already' and the future 'not yet'. Hence, it would not be unreasonable to suppose that the adoption motif itself is eschatological in character, since it is connected with the gift of the Spirit and obviously refers to those who are 'in Christ', and are justified. We shall look at this more closely in our exegesis which we will approach serially because of the apostle's close reasoning.

Having discussed the two different ways of living in v 1-8 Paul then addresses the Roman Christians, 'But **you**' in v 9 (*humeis*) because of your new standing are not under the control of the flesh but under the Spirit. The Spirit of God now lives in them (v 11) and for Paul living in the Spirit is evidence of adoptive sonship (v 12-17).

If we are dealing with eschatological language here as we have already postulated

then Paul in v 12-17 gives us **the ethics of the eschaton** - how to conduct oneself as an adopted son of God in the last days.

Verse 12: The word 'therefore' (*oun*) connects with what has gone before, ie in the light of this new standing before God and more specifically, 'now the Spirit of God lives in you' (v 9) Paul instead tells his readers there is an obligation upon them. He includes himself, 'We have an obligation not to the flesh' which would cause the reader to look for the qualifying phrase, 'but to the Spirit'. Instead Paul breaks off to insert a warning in v 13a. The obligation is not to live according to the flesh (*kata saka*). The word *sarx* is a complex Pauline word usually employed by him in a negative sense². To live according to the Spirit means obedience to God. Ziesler captures the contrast, 'The opposition is not between physical and non-physical, but between life centred in something other than God and life centred in God'³. Thus, *kata sarka*, means to live with one's horizons bounded by the requirements of this fleshly life and existence as if this life were all that really mattered. The Christian has an obligation not to live that way.

Verse 13: The last phrase of v 12 ('live according to the flesh') is repeated here and shows us that Paul has no mere hypothetical situation in mind but a real one. To live that way means death - the word *mellette* is a strong one and means 'must/will certainly'. Instead the responsibility of the believer is to actively put to death (*thanatoute* present continuous tense) the misdeeds of the body. Although the word *praxeis* does not have any inherent negative meaning the inclusion of the word *somatos*⁴ provides the negative tone. The 'deeds/misdeeds' in this case are as Dunn states, 'Actions which express undue dependence on satisfying merely human appetites'.⁵ Although the 'old man' has died because we are still in this human body, the flesh, and its downward pull is always a menace to the Christian. There is no doubting the apostle's words that we need to be ruthless with the flesh, killing it off continually. The responsibility is upon the believer and, writes Paul, he has the energy to do it - it is done, 'by the Spirit'. No slackness on the part of the Christian is to be entertained as J Murray warns, 'The believers once-for-all death to the law and to sin does not free him from the necessity of mortifying sin in his members; it makes it necessary and possible for him to do so'.⁶

Verses 14 - 15: In the previous verse the emphasis was upon the responsibility of the believer (Those who by the Spirit put to death the misdeeds of the body will live) but here the role of Spirit is stressed (all who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God). The verb *agontai* is in the passive voice and means 'being led'. Allowing oneself to be led by the Spirit is a sign (or evidence) of sonship as Morris writes, 'We should understand the leading of the Spirit as a distinguishing sign of God's sons'.⁸ It may seem that this verse is at a variance with what Paul has to say elsewhere about sonship. Here it seems that the Spirit makes people sons whereas in Gal 4:6 we read, 'Because you are God's sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts...' The question then regarding sonship is this, Does the Spirit effect this new filial disposition of sonship (as it may seem in Rom 8:14) or merely express it? In other words, is the Spirit the agent of sonship? We need also to look

at v 15 in conjunction with v 14 because here Paul goes on to say, 'by him (ie the Spirit) we cry Abba, Father'. John Murray helpfully comments; 'It is the Father who by way of eminence, is the agent of Adoption. The evidence particularly in the Pauline epistles, indicates that it is to the Father believers sustain the relation of sons by adoption and it is therefore the Father who adopts...The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of Adoption, not because he is the agent of adoption but because it is he who creates in the children of God the filial love and confidence by which they are able to cry, Abba, Father'.

All this must not allow us to lose sight of the full import of what the apostle has just written. Previously he has stated that a Christian is one in whom the Spirit dwells (cf 8:9) now we have another designation of what it means to be a believer - an adopted son of God! The greatest privilege and most solemn responsibility for the believer is to know and act as a son of God - this is Paul's focus in these verses. Paul unpacks the full significance of sonship¹⁰ in v 15 - no longer slaves, receivers of the Spirit of Adoption, and able to address God as Father.

There are problems with the word *pneuma*¹¹ but because of the prominence of this word in Rom 8 the apostle states two things - that the Spirit is not one who will lead back again (*palin*)¹² into slavery but more positively he is the Spirit of adoptive-sonship. Believers are (*eisin*) now sons of God (the eschatological 'already') because they have been justified and have the Spirit but they await the future consummation of adoption (the 'not yet' cf especially v 20). Adoption is a present reality but there is a cosmic dimension to it (cf v 18-22), 'as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our bodies' (v 23).

The word for 'adoption' used here is peculiarly Pauline occurring 5 times in his writings (Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15,23; 9:4; Eph 1:5) and although Israel is spoken of as a son (eg Hos 11:1) most commentators¹³ today see the *huiiothesia* term as being a Roman¹⁴ or possibly Greek concept. Adoption was not practised by the Jewish people¹⁴ and the term *huiiothesia* or an equivalent is lacking in the LXX. This is not to rule out any OT significance that Paul may have had in mind. Indeed, it may be possible that Paul with his peculiar mix of cultural backgrounds (a Jew, Phil 3:5; and a Roman citizen, Acts 22:27, who wrote fluently in Greek) used a term which would have meaning to all the above groups. The term is an appropriate word for it denotes that people are given the full rights and privileges of adoptive-sonship - a new status, name and inheritance. **Perhaps the greatest privilege is that they are able to call God 'Father'.**

The words, 'Abba, Father' have long been held by Jeremias to be an alien address by a Jew to God.¹⁵ The word, 'ABBA' is Aramaic not Hebrew and is the language of the home and everyday life. These words were used by Jesus himself (Mk 14:36; cf Gal 4:6) and may have even been used as an introit to the Lord's prayer. However, to translate the word, 'Abba' as 'Daddy' is now regarded as being oversentimental¹⁶ but this is not to rule out intimacy, reverence and obedience. The important point in this verse is that Jesus, as the unique Son of God, enables his disciples to communicate with God in the same way that he did. Jesus' use of this double form, 'Abba, Father' (Mk 14:36) in the context of his close band of disciples also implies that their sonship to God was **dependent** (Dunn's term) upon his. This is not to say that the believer's sonship is in every way the same as

that of Jesus. Paul has already stated at the beginning of Rom 8 that Jesus is God's 'own Son' (v 3). Jesus' sonship is different from the believers' in that he is the eternal son (scholars continue to debate whether Rom 8:3 teaches a pre-existent sonship); we are sons by grace of adoption.¹⁷ The verb *krazomen* has been taken by some¹⁸ to imply glossolalic utterances but the context here and later (cf v 26-28) imply the fervent language of prayer. The verb is used a number of times of crying out to God in prayer (Ps 3:4; 4:3).

Verse 16: Here we have the assurance of adoptive-sonship. The Spirit bears witness within - the question is whether he bears witness to or with our spirit. We cannot be dogmatic about this although the form of the verb *sunmarturei* would seem to favour the latter (cf Hendriksen). However, Cranfield states, 'What standing has our spirit in this matter? Of itself it surely has no right at all to testify to our being sons of God'. But we could ask, Does not the fact that believers are now sons of God and have the Spirit of adoption within not give them the privilege to witness with the Spirit of this new disposition, in Paul's view? Furthermore, the OT background recognises the importance of more than one witness (Deut 19:15) and the NT provides evidence that Paul was aware of the principle of multiple witness (cf 2 Cor 13:1; 1 Tim 5:19).

Verse 17: Now Paul relates other privileges together with that of sonship. 'If children (*tekna*)... then heirs of God... joint-heirs with Christ'. The Christian's inheritance¹⁹ depends on first being a son. In the OT inheritance was associated with the land (Gen 12:2; 18:8; 22:16f) but here it is not so much ownership as relationship which the apostle has in view. He speaks of heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.²⁰ Also note that the apostle links together sonship and suffering (no health-wealth gospel here!). Kasemann writes, 'In all Paul's theology participation in coming glory does not mean the cross can be dodged' (p 229). If our sonship depends upon Christ's then this also means treading that same path of suffering that he trod - a privilege of an adopted-son?

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Liberation Theology: Its Origins And Early Development

Eddy Muskus

The Theology of Liberation emerged from the subcontinent of Latin America and from Roman Catholic thinkers. This theology seeks to reflect the problems of millions of people in Latin America, namely, dependency, poverty and injustice. Its advocates aim to eradicate injustice and establish a society which is fair and just: in other words to establish the Kingdom of God. From the perspective of liberation theologians, the failure of the Church in this respect has been abysmal. Consequently, the choice the Church is making today in opting for the needy and oppressed is a momentous rediscovery. Over five centuries the Roman Catholic Church has sided with those in positions of authority and wealth thus blessing the status quo and thereby impoverishing and enslaving the Latin American peoples.

Definition

Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian Roman Catholic priest and theologian, defines Liberation Theology as

a theological reflection based on the Gospel and the experiences of men and women committed to the process of liberation in this oppressed and exploited sub-continent of Latin America. It is a theological reflection born of shared experience in the effort to abolish the present unjust situation and to build a different society, freer and more human.¹

The definition is clear: Liberation Theology advocates a rereading of the gospel. The Boff brothers write:

Every true theology springs from a spirituality - that is, from a true meeting with God in history. Liberation Theology was born when faith confronted the injustice done to the poor. By 'poor' we do not really mean the poor individual who knocks on the door asking for alms. We mean a collective poor. The 'popular classes'; the poor are also the workers exploited by the capitalist system; the under-employed, those pushed aside by the production process.²

In brief, the Theology of Liberation is 'a critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the Word'³; this has become a formula for Liberationists. Theology is then a reassessment of the actions of the Church in her pastoral role. Leading Peruvian Evangelical, Samuel Escobar, confirms that Liberationists are not just adding to the traditional way of theologizing but instead they are doing away with it and bringing in an altogether new methodology:

The new contribution of Liberation Theology would be that she functions as 'critical reflection on praxis'. The contemporary Christian has adopted a certain form of action in response to the social and political demands unique to Latin America; this is his praxis. Only after the action, and then reflecting critically

on it, is he doing theology of liberation.⁴

This new way of doing theology is foundational to Liberation Theology. Gustavo Gutiérrez and Juan Luis Segundo presented this new method for the first time in 1964 at Petrópolis, Brazil in a conference led by Ivan Illich. Illich organised the conference to discuss the pastoral activities of the Church in Latin America. 'At that meeting Gutiérrez developed the epistemological theme of theology as critical reflection on praxis.'⁵ In a later work, *THE POWER OF THE POOR IN HISTORY*, Gutiérrez confirms:

From the beginning the theology of liberation had two fundamental insights. Not only did they come first chronologically, but they have continued to form the very backbone of this theology. I am referring to its theological method and its perspective of the poor.

From the beginning, the theology of liberation posited that the first act is involvement in the liberation process, and that theology comes afterward, as a second act. The theological movement is one of critical reflection from within, and upon, concrete historical praxis, in confrontation with the word of the Lord as lived and accepted in faith - a faith that comes to us through manifold, and sometimes ambiguous, historical mediations, but which we are daily remaking and repairing . . .

The second insight of the theology of liberation is its decision to work from the viewpoint of the poor - the exploited classes, marginalized ethnic groups, and scorned cultures. This led it to take up the great themes of poverty and the poor in the Bible. As a result the poor appear within this theology as the key to an understanding of the meaning of liberation and of the meaning of the revelation of a liberating God.

This second point, of course, is inseparable from the first. If theology is to be a reflection from within, and upon, praxis it will be important to bear in mind that what is being reflected upon is the praxis of liberation of the oppressed of this world.⁶

According to Gutiérrez, therefore, the Church's mission is the transformation of the social order by a direct involvement in the struggle for liberation in Latin America. Gustavo Gutiérrez in his discussion of the function of the Theology of Liberation enumerates several factors which distinctively shaped the historical praxis. He outlines in particular the rediscovery of charity (love) as the centre of the Christian life; the significant evolution of Christian spirituality marked specially by Ignatian spirituality; the contributions of modern theology in the area of Revelation, in particular its anthropological aspects; the Church becoming a theological locus where Christians participate in social movements; the rediscovery in theology of the eschatological dimension helping to see the centrality of historical praxis. But he also mentions the philosophical origin which underlines the importance of human action as the starting point of all reflection. This is due, he adds, to 'the influence of the Marxist thinking centred on praxis, directed to the transformation of the world.'

Gutiérrez argues that in the confrontation between Christianity and Marxism, there is fertile ground. He says; 'Theological thinking is orientated towards a reflection in the sense of the transformation of this world and of the action of man in history.'⁸

The definitions offered by Gutiérrez and Boff substantially explain the radical new way of doing theology. The viewpoint of the oppressed, in this case the poor, will direct those critical reflections. This will necessitate a constant review of theology as it will be based on the experiences of a particularly defined group. In this sense Liberation Theology can be applied to several areas where particular minorities suffer oppression. This application is seen as one observes the other liberation theologies that have emerged in the past three decades: Black Liberation Theology, Feminist Liberation Theology, Asian Liberation Theology, Jewish Liberation Theology and Irish Liberation theology.

Theology is no longer based on the foundation of fixed theological formulations but in the ever changing circumstances and experiences of certain Christian groups.

The Notion of Development

Liberationists advocate the eradication of poverty by removing the economic and political structures of Capitalists which are responsible for the injustice and poverty in Latin America. The achievement of this aim relates to the notion of development.

Gutiérrez explains:

There has been much discussion recently of development, of aid to the poor countries... Attempts to produce development in the 1950's aroused hopes. But because they did not hit the root of the evil, they failed, and have led to deception, confusion, and frustration.

One of the most important causes of this situation is the fact that development, in its strictly economic, modernising sense, was advanced by international agencies backed by groups that control the economic world. The changes proposed avoided sedulously, therefore, attacking the powerful international economic interests and those of their natural allies: the national oligarchies.

Gutiérrez sees the response of developed countries as totally out of touch with the real problem. What is needed is liberation because it 'is more accurate and conveys better the human side of the problem.'¹⁰ The fact that aid comes from nations that are oppressing and exploiting the Third World makes the issue of dependency more acute. It is the task of these poor nations to take their own destiny into their own hands. Gutiérrez sees this reality as expressing 'the profound meaning of Hegel's dialectic Master-Slave.'¹¹ He further adds:

Liberation, ..., seems to express better both the hopes of oppressed peoples and the fullness of a view in which man is seen not as a passive element, but as an agent of history.... there are three levels of meaning to the term "liberation": the political liberation of oppressed peoples and social classes; man's liberation in the course of history; and liberation from sin as a condition of a life of communion of all men with the Lord.¹²

Latin America became a dependent colony of the Spanish and Portuguese empires five centuries ago and this prolonged dependency must be understood in order to appreciate why liberation is sought so fervently.

Gutiérrez gives priority to liberation in the political, socio-economical spheres of oppressed people. His understanding has been moulded by the plight of this social class. Gutiérrez speaks of the need of profound transformation, a social

revolution, which will radically and qualitatively change the conditions in which they now live.¹³ Liberation theologians are shifting the balance to a more socially involved Church, and they deliberately reduce to a non-priority level and reinterpret the answers that the gospel offers to the plight of human beings.

Violence

The definition of liberation opens the door for justified violence so that the process of liberation is achieved. The Church has to place herself in this process. Gutiérrez maintains: 'The Church's mission is defined practically, pastorally and theologically in relation to this revolutionary process.'¹⁴

In the process of *conscientization* actions will be taken against oppressive structures. Those actions may take the form of violence; they are justified as self-defence and are only a response to the first violence committed to human beings, hence the phrase *second violence* is used. The 1968 Medellín documents, however, teach that this second violence is not acceptable.

However, among Liberation Theologians, Camilo Torres

was driven to admit that only a violent revolution could change things: 'Now the people do not believe in elections... The people know that only armed rebellion is left. The people are desperate and are ready to stake their lives so that the next generation of Colombians may not be slaves'.¹⁵

Camilo Torres was ambushed and killed on February 15th, 1966 in a small town called El Carmen in Colombia. However, Liberation Theologians do not all agree in advocating a violent revolution.

Catholicism's Attempts at Renewal

On May 15th 1891 Pope Leo XIII wrote the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* aiming to deal with the problems of the working classes. The encyclical has been recognised as the Magna Carta of the social doctrine of the Church; in fact, it was the first Pontifical Social Document in the modern world and greatly encouraged those who were champions for the social cause. The teaching had at heart the plight of the oppressed. He called upon masters to give a just salary to workers and not defraud, otherwise heaven would avenge the cry of the oppressed. *Rerum Novarum*, however, was not seen as a mandate to be honoured by all.¹⁶

In the 1950s Pope Pius XII started his own reforms, which were dominated by the vision that Europe was becoming smaller and that the Church ought to project herself and her hierarchy at a world level. Added to this, 'there was great concern in Europe for the state of poverty in Latin America and the threat of communism'.¹⁷ Pope Pius XII issued a call to the Catholic hierarchies of Europe and North America to send priests to Latin America. Joseph Comblin (b 1923) a Belgian Catholic priest, ordained and trained in Theology at the University of Louvain, responded to this appeal.¹⁸ Comblin's influence in Latin America has been considerable, working together with Archbishop Helder Camara, 'he was introduced to a new world, a world teeming with poverty. As a result his entire attitude toward both church and society underwent a profound change'.¹⁹ These changes are discernible as Ferm indicates further:

(Comblin) came to know and participate in the struggles of the oppressed

people, the *mestizos*, the blacks and Amerindians. He became more outspoken against the oppressive Brazilian government in the process. Comblin also came to see the United States, not as a great liberator, a view which he held during his years in Belgium, but as the ruthless oppressor allied with Latin American military governments.²⁰

In addition to the importation of foreign priests to Latin America, there was an exodus of bright young Latin American men to Europe, many went to Centres of Catholic Education, in particular, Louvain in Belgium. It is known that 'scholarships were provided for Latin American students with the hope that they would help to counter that threat, eliminating poverty and establishing a "just and Christian order."' ²¹

For an appropriate understanding of the renewal being sought within Catholicism, we need to pause and examine the crucial years from the 1930s to the 1950s. From this period one can trace the roots that gave rise to Liberation Theology.

European Catholic Surge

In Europe under the leadership of the lay philosopher Jacques Maritain, many European thinkers reflected on social questions. They were inspired by Maritain's classic work *TRUE HUMANISM* ²², which shared the vision of a New Christendom. Samuel Escobar mentions that these thinkers 'made a serious revision of Catholicism without separating themselves from it; they tried to reformulate the traditional faith without abandoning fundamental Catholic beliefs'.²³

Gutiérrez himself acknowledges this awakening of the social conscience of certain groups in Europe. He writes:

This current had issued from the modern wing of liberal Catholicism, from certain ideas of French social Catholicism, and from the social doctrine of the church launched by Leo XII. Jacques Maritain was its principal framer, as he welded these different lines of thought along an axis of Thomistic philosophy. It was an attempt to infuse some breath and flexibility into the mentality of Christendom - to open Christianity up, in moderation, to the values of the modern world and the bourgeois ideals of liberty and democracy.²⁴

Andrew Kirk writes that it is 'significant that theological renewal eventually came by way of an original philosophy and that "professional" clerics in Latin America were awakened to change through the impact of one lay thinker upon a largely lay group'.²⁵ The impact of Maritain in Latin America was due largely to Alceu Amoroso Lima who propagated Maritain's work. In Lima's estimation there is no doubt that Maritain was received 'as a liberator of the theological conscience, as a teacher of intellectual rigor, as a renewer of the Catholic Church and as a prophet of the new times'.²⁶

While Jacques Maritain was the main architect of the Catholic renewal, Emanuel de Kadt indicates helpfully that the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1933) indirectly influenced the thinking of the earlier generation of Catholic philosophers such as Maritain.²⁷

Jacques Maritain and the New Christendom

Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) was the child of a non-practising Catholic father and a liberal Protestant mother; he was born and educated in Paris. He 'grew up

without personal religious faith. In his late teens the problem of life's meaning forced itself upon him in an acute and agonising way. A solid grounding in the empirical sciences and in turn-of-the-century university philosophy failed to provide an answer to this tormenting problem'.²⁸ *Positivism* was the dominant philosophy when Maritain studied at the Sorbonne. There he met Raïsa Ouman-soff who shared Jacques's anguish concerning the meaning of life. Attending a lecture by Henri Bergson, he found a new world of freedom, process and creative evolution in which life was no longer meaningless. However this relief was not totally satisfying. McCool tells us where Maritain found that satisfaction at the age of 24 (1906):

Contrary to their expectations (Jacques and Raïsa being introduced to the Catholic Church by Lon Bloy), life's ultimate meaning manifested itself on the religious rather than on the philosophical level. His religious conversion, however, imposed painful personal sacrifices upon the young Bergsonian philosopher. To insure his intellectual independence as a convinced Catholic in the anticlerical French republic, Maritain abandoned his plans for a university career. When he could not reconcile his own Bergsonian philosophy with the rigid requirements of Catholic orthodoxy at the height of the modernist crisis, he made up his mind to abandon philosophy as a career.²⁹

Maritain's convictions led him to support the Official Teachings of the Church. In his practical theology he sets out the notion of *New Christendom* 'based upon the premise that all modern ideologies have failed to grasp the primacy of the spiritual dimension for understanding human nature'.³⁰

Maritain was proposing a new balance between the spiritual dimension and the significance of the temporal. McCann further comments in relation to these two aspects:

Both ideas articulate the problem of social justice primarily in spiritual terms: social justice is viewed as a necessary precondition for the pursuit of an authentic relationship with God.³¹

New Christendom would entail a form of political organisation, not a political party but a Christian-inspired politics. Through his writings, many Latin American leaders were encouraged and went on to form different Christian Democratic parties. Jeffrey Klaiber SJ writes:

In Chile, Eduardo Frei, begun as a lay leader in university circles and José Dammert in Peru, main organiser of the country's first Social Week (1959) and currently bishop of Cajamarca, was an active member of Catholic Action in Italy. He also influenced Gustav Gutiérrez, who was president of a Catholic Action group before becoming a priest.³²

Gustavo Gutiérrez

Gustavo Gutiérrez was an enthusiast within the Catholic Church for social action before he decided to become a priest in 1950. Within the ranks of Catholic Action (CA) the mission of the Church was based on a new and aggressive lay apostolate. Andrew Kirk points out that

Stress was laid on the education of leaders. This paid great dividends, as a whole generation, with a new mentality towards spiritual renewal, evangelism and social issues was formed.³³

Gustavo Gutiérrez was one of those leaders within the CA who benefited from this commitment of training a new leadership.³⁴ Gutiérrez together with Camilo Torres and other Latin Americans found themselves in Europe for their educational formation. Gustavo Gutiérrez went to study Philosophy and Psychology at the University of Louvain in Belgium. During this period (1951-1955) Gutiérrez did his licentiate in philosophy on Freud and studied the prominent Catholic theologians of the day: Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Christian Duquoc and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. From 1955 to 1959 Gutiérrez studied at the University of Lyons where he received his PhD in Theology. 'At Lyons he studied privately under Henri de Lubac, who like his fellow Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin, was not permitted to teach in public.'³⁵ At both European universities Gutiérrez continued his studies of Karl Marx, a task he began earlier in Lima in the 1950s. Gutiérrez's experiences and learning in Europe are important for the task of understanding his liberation theology. Klaiber writes:

During those years he lived and breathed the stimulating intellectual atmosphere of a European Catholicism in full renovation and in search of a deeper dialogue with the modern social sciences, and even with certain philosophies and ideologies still condemned or viewed with suspicion by the church: Marxism, Freudianism, . . .³⁶

Gutiérrez's encounter with the theological surge in Europe was deeply influential. On his return to Lima in 1959, he became a parish priest and began working as a tutor in the Department of Theology and Social Science at the Catholic University of Lima. He also became the chaplain of the National Union of Catholic Students. He came to a community of individuals tired of their situation and who yearned for change. The atmosphere in the university was one of revolution and change; Fidel Castro had just led the Cuban Revolution, and the students could see the possibility of a new revolutionary force. Gutiérrez immediately identified himself with the political struggle of the people. Gutiérrez's commitment was evident as Emilio Núñez indicates in his book *LIBERATION THEOLOGY*:

In 1960 the Catholic student movement had opted for Christian Democracy and its ideology of the New Christendom. By 1963 it had changed its emphasis from the religious to the political sphere under the influence of Gutiérrez. . . . Garland points out that . . . the doctrinal position of the National Union of Catholic Students became more extreme, emphasising the Marxist analysis of reality under the guidance of Gutiérrez, who by then had begun to outline his theology of liberation.³⁸

In March 1964 leading Latin America theologians met in Petrópolis, Brazil; Juan Luis Segundo from Uruguay, Lucio Gera from Argentina and Gustavo Gutiérrez from Peru. Then, Gutiérrez posed the question 'How do we establish the dialogue of salvation with man in Latin America?'³⁹

In 1966 Gutiérrez published his first work entitled *CHRISTIAN CHARITY AND LOVE*, (Lima, 1966). Here he developed his thesis that human love cannot be separated from the love of God.⁴⁰ Love for other human beings involves loving God because man is God's temple. In July 1967, Gutiérrez gave a course on *The Church and Poverty*. Núñez writes:

In Montreal the Peruvian theologian declared that poverty opposes evangelical justice and should not be attributed to the will of God. Christians need to fight

for the suppression of that scandal, which is the fruit of social sin. The church is called to identify itself with the poor, assuming poverty, ceasing to be a rich church in the midst of destitution.⁴¹

A year later from April 20-27 1968, an important meeting took place in Melgar, Colombia. The ensuing documents reveal that the notion of *salvation in history* was developed further than in Vatican II. Nonetheless, the references were fully supportive of Vatican II, namely, that in history there is salvation for man. Melgar pointed towards the unity of history. This theme is developed by Gutiérrez in his *Lineas Pastorales de la Iglesia en America Latina*, where he further developed the concept of the integration of creation and salvation in a singular historical process in which man is not simply a spectator but rather the agent and transformer of history. The influence of Marx is evident here.

Medellin⁴² became a watershed in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. The documents drawn up at Medellin recognised as legitimate the experiences and efforts of a number of Catholics from the peasants to the arch-bishops. The principal theme was the subject of poverty among Latin Americans, thereby the choice was made at Medellin by the Roman Catholic Church of 'opting for the poor'.

After Medellin, Gutiérrez participated in a conference at Cartigny, Switzerland in November 1969 where he delivered his *Notes for a Theology of Liberation*⁴³. These notes were a prelude to his book *A THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION* published in 1971.

Conclusions

Liberation Theology is unashamedly a *class theology* because it theologizes from the perspective of the oppressed. It also identifies the poor of Latin America as 'a believing and exploited people' with the poor of the Bible. Pablo Richard resolutely says:

God lives and bestows self-revelation in the world of the poor and their struggles for liberation. This special presence and revelation of God in the heart of the people is liberation theology's deep root, whence it draws its strength and future.⁴⁴

The poor hold a privileged position in Liberation Theology. They have become the milieu where God speaks, acts and liberates because of God's preferential love towards them. As stated above, the import of the word *poor* is expressed clearly by Gutiérrez. They are 'those who live in a social condition characterised by the lack of goods in this world, and even including misery and destitution. Furthermore, it is a marginalized social group, with a shade of oppression and lack of liberty'.⁴⁵ These are the explanations given by liberation theologians to the 'poor' as used by Luke in the New Testament.

Criticism

But this interpretation is unsatisfactory as it does not do justice to the background behind the passages in Luke in relation to the prophet Isaiah. In a helpful dissertation David P Seccombe argues the thesis⁴⁶ that Luke uses the poor as a characterisation of Israel in her need of salvation.⁴⁶ Seccombe builds his position

from the view that the poor in the light of the Old Testament are designated as the heirs of salvation. Gutiérrez, together with scholars like E Hatch, A Nolan and R E Brown,⁴⁷ regards the poor as the economically deprived classes. Seccombe observes a different definition of the poor in Luke's gospel; they are those who are unable to subsist without charitable assistance. He further adds:

There is nothing (in the NT) that would support an identification of the *ptokoi* with the peasantry. This leads to an important observation which has been largely overlooked; in the NT the *ptokoi* are regarded as a group apart from Jesus and his disciples. The former are alms-takers, the latter are alms-givers.⁴⁸

This is an important distinction, since liberation theologians do create a parallelism between the Lord Jesus and the *ptokoi*, to the point of calling him the poor Jesus. Another point mentioned by Seccombe is that there is historical warrant for saying that Jesus came from an *artisan* family.

Seccombe concludes that the above explanations, advanced by different groups of scholars, fail to explain adequately the term 'poor' as used by Luke. They fail to consider adequately the dependency of Luke's use of 'poor' on Isaiah 61:1. From a separate study he affirms:

I conclude, therefore, with some confidence that in approaching quotations from and allusions to Isaiah there is a presumption in favour of Luke's awareness of their context and wider meaning within Isaiah as a whole.⁴⁹

Support for Seccombe's conclusion comes from E J Young:

The prophet now takes up again the description of the people as needy, which he had introduced in chapter forty and again in the word *worm* of 41:14, to show that no matter how great that need might be, God would meet and answer it. To describe the people he employs two words frequently used together, *NIYYIM* (*afflicted*) and *EVYONIM* (*poor*), which represent Israel in the state of affliction and poverty that had come upon it. Such affliction and poverty, however, are not to be understood merely in a material sense; rather these words appear to refer to the devout and pious who endure suffering patiently, trusting in the Lord.⁵⁰

Young identifies too the poor in the text of Isaiah as the nation of Israel, but furthermore, he speaks of a believing and trusting people, who endured sufferings. In reference to Isaiah 61:1, he writes:

What is pictured here reflects partly upon the exile but describes also New Testament and eternal relationships. It is the Messianic work, which no prophet in himself could carry out.... He preaches *good tidings to the afflicted*, i.e. he evangelizes them in that he declares to them deliverance from their bondage, *bind up the broken heart*. Their sins have weighed them down so that their heart is, as it were broken, and there is no heart left in them....

Whereas the phase *broken of heart* characterised the inner condition of the *afflicted*, the words *captives* and *them that are bound* refer to their outward state. There may be a possible reflection upon the exile, but the captivity in which the true Israel of God lay was deeper. The people were captives to sin and bound with the fetters of iniquity. For such there is to be a blessed release and an opening. Isaiah is not speaking of deliverance from a physical prison but from the spiritual darkness in which the people have been imprisoned. Deliverance from that spiritual darkness is an opening of the eyes, in contrast to the

darkness in which the people were.⁵¹

Gutiérrez's definition of the poor as 'those who live in a social condition characterised by the lack of goods in this world, and even including misery and destitution' has no justification from the Scripture. Rather, the gospel which Jesus Christ preached was intended to reach people in deep poverty across the spectrum of the social classes; that is, **people who are spiritually bankrupt in the sight of God** with needs beyond the material and needs only Christ himself can supply through his substitutionary atonement.

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- 34 Klaiber comments: In a sense CA had 'fulfilled its mission: to create a dynamic laity with a sense of responsibility both to church and society.' Klaiber, 'The Catholic Lay Movement in Peru: 1867-1959', *THE AMERICAS*, 1983, vol 49, p 170
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- 39 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Petrópolis*, Lima, Centro de Estudios Bartolomé de Las Casas, 1964, p 1. The papers presented at Petrópolis were mimeographed and are kept in the files of the above centre. Quoted by Roberto Oliveros Maqueos, *LIBERACION Y TEOLOGIA. Génesis y Crecimiento de una Reflexión: 1966-1976*, Lima, CEP, 1977, p 55

- 40 Gutiérrez develops this theme in chapter 10 of his THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION. He concludes that 'since God has become man, humanity, every man, history, is the living temple of God'. TL p 250. Gutiérrez arrives at this conclusion because he interprets the incarnation to be the event in which humanity becomes God's temple. This temple involves every person whether he is a Christian or not.
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Book Reviews

Evangelical Reunion

John M Frame,
Baker, 1991, 185 pp, £7.10

When anyone writes on a controversial subject like evangelical unity, it causes a stir. When a leading theologian steps into the arena the shock-waves are bound to be greater.

John Frame has created something of a stir, at least in his native America, with the publication of his latest book. This was inevitable since the book was born as Frame emerged from deep personal involvement in inter-church discussions between two of the major evangelical Presbyterian denominations in the USA, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America - Frame refers to these discussions throughout the book. Their outcome has, if anything widened the gap between the denominations concerned and therefore polarised opinions with regard to Frame's position. Hence reviews of the book which have so far appeared tend to reflect, at least to some extent, the interests of the various parties to these discussions (Cf Richard B Gaffin Jr in *New Horizons*, June 1992 and Cornelius P Venema in the March edition of the magazine of the Christian Reformed Church.).

The dangers inherent in writing a book under such circumstances are obvious - objectivity is bound to be impaired - but Frame acknowledges this. He uses the preface to give some biographical background which indicates his personal involvement. In fact in a strange sort of way this becomes one of the strengths of the book. As he says himself, despite being a systematic theologian he is not attempting a systematic

treatment of this issue as he writes. Rather, he sees the book as a 'cry from the heart' (p 12). It is helpful to bear this in mind, regardless of our personal perspective on these issues. It is the case that no-one can be truly objective in this area. We are all too much involved and have too much to lose. It brings home the fact that theology can never be done in a vacuum - in the rarefied atmosphere of the ivory towers in the seminaries and theological colleges of the world. The Word can never be understood in abstraction from the world with all its complexities.

Setting Parameters

In his first chapter Frame sets out a Biblical basis for understanding the nature of Church unity. Beginning in Eden he traverses Old and New Testaments, gleaning principles of unity and factors which have impaired it, ending up with a section on Church government and how it has been affected by division.

This chapter is perhaps more crucial to the book and its acceptance than might normally be the case. No matter how uncomfortable the reader may feel as he listens to the rest of what Frame says, if the author is right at this point, then the thrust of what he goes on to say is valid. Every reader will feel uncomfortable as he reads on (and I daresay the author at times felt uncomfortable as he wrote on) because things we hold dear are being challenged. Frame is challenging the validity of denominations and in so doing strikes at the heart of sins within God's family that Christians are reluctant to acknowledge as sin. (He considered giving the book the title *The Curse of Denominationalism* (p 46) but decided against it because of its

negative overtones.)

Frame goes on in the second chapter to survey the history of division within the Church. He is not exhaustive, he is at times subjective, his summary is nevertheless useful. This leads into a chapter entitled 'Towards a Post-Denominational View of the Church', where the author is perhaps at his most radical. He advocates a view of the Church which, in practice as well as theory, transcends denominational boundaries. He goes as far as to challenge those denominations which use the word 'Church' (as opposed to 'Churches') in their title (p 44). Gaffin in his review takes issue with Frame on this point in the light of New Testament usage of *ecclesia* when it refers to a group of churches.

The following two chapters provide a very constructive and fair critique of denominationalism. Frame outlines 14 ways in which denominations have damaged the Church and suggests ways in which attitudes to denominations can be brought into balance. Even if the basic thesis of the book as a whole is rejected, these two chapters alone provide a valuable basis for self-examination by Churches.

Dealing With Obstacles to Unity

The sixth chapter leads into the second major section of the book, 'Some Roads Back to Unity.' Thomas McCrie, a Scottish minister, published a book entitled *The Unity of the Church* in 1821. Frame draws heavily on this work and the implications of different eschatological views on attitudes to church unity and then proceeds to offer a variety of 'perspectives' on denominations. (These are intended to show that denominations are less important in practice than they are often deemed to be in principle.)

Chapter 8 begins the process of sugges-

ting concrete ways in which denominational differences might be dealt with. This includes a helpful section on 'A Biblical Basis for Tolerance' (pp 88-90) and a comment to the effect that the more divided the Church becomes, the less able she is to study the Scriptures. Here Frame refers to the great Councils that have given the Church some great formulations of the faith throughout her history (p 90).

The following four chapters take up obvious objections that cry out for an answer. How are differences of practice, history, government and priority going to be dealt with? This leads to some interesting offerings, not least on the Baptist-Paedobaptist controversy (pp 100-102).

Again, chapters 13 and 14 are ones which stand in their own right as needing to be etched on the heart of every Christian: how we are to deal with attitudes and assumptions. It is so often at this point that believers nurse their sin so protectively and proliferate the wounds that have divided God's family over the centuries.

There are then three chapters which seek to evaluate difficulties felt at different levels in the Church situation as it stands at present. They are helpful in so far as they raise issues that must be dealt with before significant confidence be built up and progress made.

A Call for Action

The book ends with two chapters that provide significant help and encouragement to Churches and Christians who mean business when it comes to Biblical ecumenism. It is to such that Frame is really appealing in all that he says, those he describes as 'potential ecclesiastical revolutionaries' (p 16).

'Short of Union, What?' (Chapter 18) pulls us back from the dizzy and seemingly unattainable heights of what the

Church ought to be, yet fails to be, and focuses more realistically on what she can begin to be. Among other things there should be serious thought given to 'Partial Unions' (p 159). There are a significant number of churches that are so close in doctrine and practice that it is a sin for them not even to be talking about union.

Then chapter 19, 'What do we do now?' Well, Frame suggests 34 things we can be doing now, one of which is to 'Find three good jokes about your own denomination or tradition and share them with your fellow members'! (p 168). At the behest of Jay Adams (p 12) the book concludes on the commendable note of being doers as well as hearers of the Word.

The Heart of the Matter

It was said at the beginning of this review that **Evangelical Reunion** is a controversial book. Because it is, it would not be hard to go through it with a fine-toothed comb and identify many weaknesses of detail and opinion. For example, Frame's attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church is far too soft and arguably out of touch with reality (p 91). He is not, however, interested in 'jot and tittle' agreement with the finer points of his views. He is more concerned with finding broad agreement on the major principles of Church unity which he is setting out and the concomitant action that should accompany such agreement.

Some have dismissed what he says as being naive and one can well appreciate why - he seems to be dreaming of the impossible. But the same could be said of the Bible's teaching on sanctification. From the perspective of this world 'being perfect even as the Father is perfect' (Mt 5:48) is a pipe dream. Yet we are not absolved from aiming for that standard.

The unity of the Church is a vital aspect of our corporate sanctification. No matter how elusive it may seem we are simply not permitted to stop pursuing it. The 'Spare no effort...' of Ephesians 4:3 carries more force than many Christians or Churches care to admit. The evangelical community is being destroyed this century by what Donald Macleod has aptly described as 'the small-business mentality', churches are too content to be isolated and live with the horizons of pygmies.

If Frame's book does nothing else, it ought to rouse evangelicals from their guilty lethargy and stimulate some healthy thinking and action in the arena of inter-Church relations.

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Making It Happen

*John Harvey-Jones
Collins, 266pp, £12.95*

A review of a secular book in a journal like this has to be explained. At a recent conference of Christian leaders one man with experience in business management and associated courses remarked that it was interesting how secular thinking is in some aspects beginning to arrive, by force of experience and unwittingly, at principles, long ago given us in Scripture.

This book is sub-titled *Reflections on leadership* and is said to be 'a radical and refreshing philosophy of leadership, and one with a proven track record'. While reading it I noted well over fifty principles for guidelines, many of which could easily have been deduced from the Bible and all of which are to be recommended for consideration and application by Christian leaders.

A church is not a business organisation and an eldership is not a board of managers. Even the title 'Making It Hap-

pen' grates on the minds of those who believe only the Spirit of God can make things happen in churches. Our aim is spiritual, not material, wealth. We are not in competition with others for their downfall, rather we are fighting Satan with a view to lifting those who are under his sway. We are not limited to human wisdom, expertise and resources, but we can 'spoil the Egyptians', and in some matters 'the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light' (Luke 16:8).

It may well be that people who have been harshly treated by their firms in recent times find it hard to believe that any good can come from a secular source. As in many other fields, the findings of the thinkers take time to filter through to practical application. The fact is that here, at least, we are reminded of principles of leadership that many of us Christian leaders have never deduced from Scripture, or if we have done so have failed to apply them. Had we done so there would have been less pastoral breakdowns than, alas, there have been. About once every four pages I paraphrased what I had read and here are some of the results, along with some application:

1 Apparent success can be deceptive and leaders should subject it to serious investigation.

The acclaim of the people when Jesus rode into Jerusalem did not deceive him, but many of us would have looked no further. We must not assume that when progress has been made by others they must inevitably be guilty of some false doctrine or questionable method. But we should beware of assuming all is well with us when we appear to be advancing!

2 There is no future if there is no genuine caring for the people.

Too often we give the impression that the church exists for its own benefit. John tells us in 1 John 3:18, 'let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth'. There is no substitute for the positive programme of caring for those in financial, material, physical, mental as well as spiritual need.

3 If leaders are to be trusted they must make their thinking and intentions clear.

If the people do not trust us we cannot lead them, but that trust is often undermined by poor communication and failure to make sure the people have understood what we are saying to them. Paul was accused of lacking in clarity but his reply was 'When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, 'Yes, Yes' and 'No, No'? ' (2 Cor 1:17). Good leaders actually ask the people if they have understood, just as Jesus did (Mt 13:51).

4 Good leaders will not lay themselves open to the charge of manipulation.

Leaders exist to seek by all means to arrive at answers to problems. That is right. But the danger is that when we want to persuade the people of the rightness of our conclusions we can easily give them the impression we are determined to have our own way by one means or another. This leads to resentment and distrust. (Observe Mt 20: 25-28; 2 Tim 2: 24-25; 1 Pet 5:3).

5 Good leaders will subject their own performance to rigorous scrutiny.

This not only applies when there is little progress. Regular but not frequent self-examination by leaders individually and in the group is time well spent (1 Tim 4: 15-16).

There is a lot more of the same. It is certainly true that the Bible is sufficient for our needs as leaders, but sometimes

we need books like this one by John Harvey-Jones to open our eyes to things we have not noticed or taken seriously enough.

Pastor Clifford Pond

An Angry God?

Eryl Davies

Evangelical Press of Wales, 1992, 163pp, £4.95

Subtitled: 'What the Bible says about Wrath, Final Judgement and Hell', this is a disturbing book and yet one which should be widely read amongst Christians and especially those called to preach the gospel. It is a book that troubles the heart and the conscience, and will leave the reader feeling ill at ease with himself. Indeed, it could be described as a *tremendous* book, in the more literal sense of that over-used word - it causes trembling. Which of us who has even a grain of compassion can contemplate the final state of the impenitent, cast forever into hell, there to endure the righteous wrath of God, without feeling a sense of awesome dread and a burning desire to tell to every man that 'best news' the lost can ever hear? It was just this that Paul felt when he wrote, 'Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men'. The book is out of character with the easy-going, this-world centred, 'everything now' evangelicalism of our times. Its concerns are with eternity, the world to come, human destiny and the judgement of God. We are too preoccupied with time; we think too little of eternity. We have low views of God and consequently light views of sin which, as Tozer says, are 'the cause of a hundred lesser evils everywhere amongst us'.

Dr Davies writes against the background of the growing popularity of annihilationism and conditional immortality

amongst evangelicals, but the interrogative form of the title must not be taken to imply any uncertainty in the author's mind that the Bible teaches that the impenitent will receive in hell eternal punishment for their sin. He sees 1974 as the watershed in the history of the doctrine of eternal punishment - the first chapter is devoted to this point. In that year IVP published John Wenham's *THE GOODNESS OF GOD* (re-published in 1985 as 'The Enigma of Evil') - a popular book by an established evangelical author issued by an evangelical publisher, in which conditional immortality is put forward as a possible and more satisfactory alternative to eternal punishment. So the die was cast and a signal was given to the evangelical fraternity that the nature of hell was an open question.

Other books followed, by far the most significant of which was *ESSENTIALS* by John Stott and David Edwards. For some years it had been known that Stott was agnostic on the issue, but now he finally admitted that he found the concept of eternal punishment in hell 'intolerable', and saw annihilation as a more acceptable alternative.

The book proceeds to examine the issues carefully. The opinions of others are treated with honesty and respect, with the result that the case made is very powerful and convincing. Chapter 2 contains a history of the doctrine of hell from the 17th century to the present day and is followed by two chapters which examine various modern forms of universalism. Chapters 5 to 8 and 11 were first published in a smaller book entitled *THE WRATH OF GOD*, and deal with the Wrath of God and the Day of Wrath (that is, the final judgment), an examination of the Biblical words used for hell and a study of its nature and duration. On the concept

of 'hell-fire', Dr Davies refers to Jonathan Edwards' stress on the centrality of God for heaven and hell. 'God will be the hell of the one and the heaven of the other . . . 'tis the infinite Almighty God that shall become the fire of the furnace'. There is some discussion on how literally we should take the fire of hell. I like Packer's comment: 'Clearly, we are in the world of imagery here, for fire and the darkness are both picturing the same condition, one of painful and hopeless desolation; and equally clearly, what is being pictured is a condition that is unimaginably dreadful, one that is worth any labour and any cost to avoid' (THE PROBLEM OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT).

Chapter 9 takes up the matter of the immortality of the soul. Is man immortal, or is immortality a benefit which God bestows on those who believe on his Son? Dr Davies concedes that 'The orthodox doctrine of the soul's immortality is Biblical but we have not always described and expressed it with sufficient distinctiveness or scriptural precision.' The conditionalists accuse the orthodox defenders of immortality of being influenced more by Greek philosophy than Biblical theology, but the charge cannot be made to stick. It is a basic assumption of the Bible that the soul survives death. Job's question, 'If a man die, will he live again?' is as old as mankind. Prof R A Finlayson argues in his valuable little book GOD'S LIGHT ON MAN'S DESTINY that the Bible is concerned with the 'continuity and accountability of personality'. 'If the resurrection involves the resuscitation of a personality that is discontinuous with the man that lived in this life, it is very difficult to understand how personal responsibility can survive.' Chapter 10 takes up more objections to hell and examines three kinds of objec-

tions: observational, exegetical and theological. The final chapter is entitled *Hell: Its Challenge* and seeks to show how such a solemn and fearful truth as this should affect us. Indeed the book is throughout practical in its concern, and properly so. What kind of wretched men are we if we can consider such awesome realities and not be moved by them?

The faithful maintenance of the Biblical doctrine of hell as endless punishment is important for a number of theological and practical reasons:

1. For the reality of God's judgment on sin. Paul Helm writes, 'Scripture teaches that the impenitent wicked will suffer (Luke 16:23). But it is impossible to suffer if one does not exist.' (THE LAST THINGS quoted in this book).
2. The idea that God's judgment on the wicked is annihilation must have implications for the work of Christ on the Cross. What was the judgment and wrath that he bore there on the Cross? Did it not consist in the conscious suffering of Divine abandonment, with all its darkness and anguish and sorrow and pain? Surely the Cross tells us something about hell?
3. The doctrine has implications for missionary work. We gladly acknowledge that the gospel preacher is primarily a preacher of good news to the lost and those who must otherwise endure the just punishment for their sins. For many today the idea of annihilation is not too disturbing - it is what they have come to believe and even hope for - 'When I die I rot'. As someone has said, 'What men fear is not that death is the end, but that it is not'. We have to warn men that their sins have eternal consequences for them - consequences of God's holy displeasure, of which they will be conscious for all eternity.

Rev Neil C Richards

The Roots of Christian Freedom

The theology of John A T Robinson

Alistair Kee

SPCK, 190pp, £8.95

John Robinson (1919-1983) was a prolific writer and contributed articles/reviews to many journals and papers; he also wrote 23 books and contributed chapters to other books as well. His speciality was New Testament studies and 8 out of his 23 books were major works on NT subjects such as *THE BODY: A STUDY IN PAULINE THEOLOGY* (1952), *TWELVE NT STUDIES* (1962), *REDATING THE NEW TESTAMENT* (1976), *CAN WE TRUST THE NEW TESTAMENT?* (1977), *WRESTLING WITH ROMANS* (1979), *TWELVE MORE NT STUDIES* (1984) and *THE PRIORITY OF JOHN* (1985). Robinson's other books tended to be more controversial and sceptical and included *BUT THAT I CAN'T BELIEVE!* (1967; here he systematically re-interprets major Christian doctrines in a symbolic, non-literal way) and his more famous *HONEST TO GOD* (1963) then *IN THE END GOD* (1968). Robinson was a competent scholar and an influential theologian yet he was an enigma in some respects. Although an Anglican clergyman (and Bishop of Woolwich for a time), he was radical in his theology but more conservative in some of his conclusions in New Testament studies (eg the earlier dating of John's Gospel, which he strongly advocated).

Alistair Kee's book is a real help to those who want to understand Robinson's writings and theology. The opening chapter concentrates on the main

details of the life of John Robinson. This is the only chapter not written by Kee (Eric James is the writer) and is the weakest, consisting of just 6 pages with only the barest of biographical information provided.

Kee then divides the book into three sections: Part One is called *Biblical Exploration* and summarises and documents Robinson's teaching on the 5 subjects: The Gospels as Recorded, John and Judaism, The Relevance of Paul, Redating the Testament, Trusting the Bible. Kee's observation in this section is accurate and perceptive. Although at times Robinson's conclusions were 'conservative' yet 'this does not mean he was simply a conservative. He could hold or come to hold positions regarded as conservative, but on grounds which were entirely critical. This is nowhere better illustrated than in his Johannine corpus ...' (p 18).

Part Two is entitled *Theology Exploration*; here, Kee again gathers together and clarifies Robinson's more controversial teaching on The Personality of God, Honest to God, The Divine Field, The Humanity of Christ and the Inclusive Christ. *Social Exploration* is the title of Part Three which tackles crucial ethical issues like Morality Old and New, and Being a Christian in the Third Wave.

The main value of the book is that it provides a convenient introduction to, and also a reliable summary of, Robinson's theology; its appeal will be limited yet it is undoubtedly a further aid for the serious student of contemporary theology.

Dr Eryl Davis MA BD, ETCW

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should be sent to:

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113 Victoria Street
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ISSN 0144-378X

Printed in the UK by Horseshoe Press, Stowmarket
