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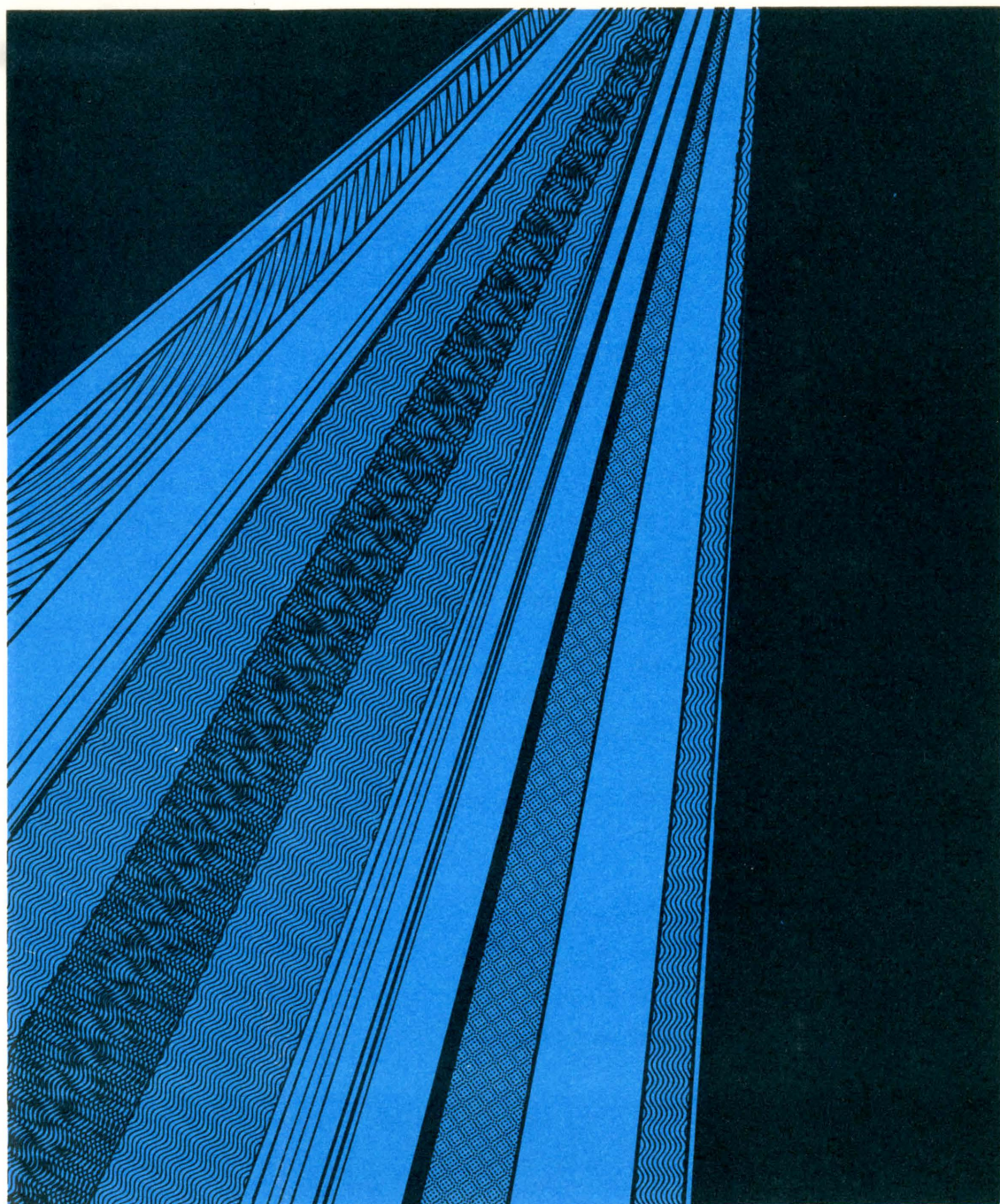
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AUGUST 1970



# Mission



# Mission

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" . . . to explore thoroughly the Scriptures and their meaning, . . . to understand as fully as possible the world in which the church lives and has her mission; . . . to provide a vehicle for communicating the meaning of God's Word to our contemporary world."

—EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT, JULY, 1967

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Change, the father of progress,  
is at the same time the mother of anxiety

## TO CHANGE OR NOT TO CHANGE?

ARTHUR L. MILEY

**T**O BE OR NOT TO BE, this was Hamlet's question. But for us, "To change or not to change"—this is the question. Must our attitude toward change be determined by our economic status, our political affiliation, our friends or our age? Or should our faith in God determine our response to change?

Change, the father of progress, is at the same time the mother of anxiety. Thus, while change is a constant force in life, man has already had a tendency to fight it. His resistance stems from fear; change threatens the stability of the known, which is safe and comfortable, and opens up all the uncertainties and anxieties of the unknown.

The reaction it sets off is the same whether change is proposed in an executive board meeting, in a research laboratory, in a church, or in a congressional hearing. First men try to ignore the change idea. Then they try to rationalize it away. In the final stage, resistance generally deteriorates into a name-calling battle.

### *institutions slow change . . .*

Since we cannot stop change, we seek to control the rate at which it invades our lives. We develop institutions which serve

to preserve some of the past and slow down the rate of change. Our formalized religion is frequently one of the institutions used for preserving that which we want to keep. To retain the past, institutions harden their resistance by formalizing rituals, customs and traditions.

Today we are living in a period in which the scope and rapidity of change are greater than they have ever been before. Our habits, traditions and values are constantly challenged; our minds are continually bombarded by new concepts, techniques and re-orientations.

In the late 19th century, Henry Adams, then professor at John Hopkins in Baltimore, received an attractive offer to move to the University of Chicago. The following considerations about moving appeared in his notes:

<i>Baltimore</i>	<i>Chicago</i>
Quiet .....	Rush
Society .....	New People
Conservatism .....	Boom
Continuity .....	Broken
Assured Position .....	Reprove Self
Settled .....	Moving
Identification .....	Lost

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Adams didn't change. Today the "Baltimore—Chicago" choice is replayed by millions of people. We may prefer the "Baltimore." But the past is "Baltimore." The future is all "Chicago."

### *change is inevitable . . .*

Life is a continuous process and whether we will it or not, change is inevitable. Change can be positive or regressive, or it can be an ungoverned drift. We have the choice of managing change positively or accepting change passively and being its victim. As English philosopher Alfred Whitehead put it, "The major advances of civilization all but wreck the societies in which they occur." Whether it be orderly or violent, a cause of anxiety or fulfillment, depends upon a person's ability to combine an understanding of the past with a fearless freedom of revision.

Our way of looking at nature and understanding nature changes continually. Consider the following; at times in the past people have believed:

- Anesthetics were at one time resisted by clergymen on the basis that pain had been divinely ordained.
- The world is flat.
- The sun revolves around the earth.
- Space travel is against God's will.

Let us consider some of today's impossibilities:

- Genetic manipulation.
- Communication with other species.
- Extrasensory perception.
- Antigravity activities.
- Regeneration of body parts.

Would the development of these into everyday use mean that nature has changed or that our understanding of it has changed?

Change is inevitable . . . whenever Christ touches life. Not change for its own sake, but change which transforms attitudes, priorities, values and actions. To resist

change is to resist Christ.

So why do we fear change? Because of the security of the status quo. We love security . . . it is like a god to us. But the cult of the status quo is idolatrous.

### *future change . . .*

Despite the activities of the crystal ball gazers retained by corporations and government agencies to tell us what lies ahead, it is a sure bet that many of the changes will spring up overnight and catch the public unaware. It is an equally safe guess that the authors of the more outrageous innovations will be stoned, spat upon, picketed, jailed, shot, or—possibly worst of all—ignored.

Mankind's tremendous capacity for 20/20 hindsight is nowhere more evident than in the way we deal with our innovators. Important change has always been born amidst awesome labor pains. It has always been resisted, a fact which the next generation has always conveniently forgotten.

Doctor George Gallup is hopeful that some day the human race will accept change readily. He points out that in the entire history of man, no generation has ever actually been taught to expect change or to seek it out. If our civilization is to advance, he says, future generations must be indoctrinated with the importance of taking innovations in stride.

While Doctor Gallup's thesis is a notable one, it may be difficult to implement. It is doubtful that even a college course—Innovation 101—would attract many students. The fact is that most people, even the most conservative, resent being told that they are close-minded or unchangeable. It is also true that the most radical innovations, when first introduced, are acceptable only to the most avant-garde oriented minds.

"The innovator," said poet Archibald MacLeish, "is every human being at those moments of his life when he resigns momentarily from the herd and thinks for himself." The new doesn't have a chance to

get in unless it is brought in deliberately, with conviction and persuasion.

The future innovators will still be apple-cart upsetters, objectionable and non-conformists. Perhaps the great innovators

of A.D. 2000 will all dress in Brook Brothers suits, comb their neatly groomed Vitalis hair, keep their fingernails clean and eat a hot breakfast every morning.

But let's hope not. ■■

## THOUGHTS ON CHANGE

Things do not change; we change.

H. D. Thoreau, *Walden*

I am the Lord, I change not.

Malachi 3:6

The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate for the stormy present . . . we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves.

Abraham Lincoln, Message to Congress, Dec. 1, 1862

I am not now That which I have been.

Byron, *Childe Harold*

It is an unfinished society that we offer the world—a society that is forever committed to change, to improvement and to growth, that will never stagnate in the finalities of dogma.

Robert F. Kennedy

To innovate is not to reform.

Edmund Burke, *A Letter to a Noble Lord*

All things change except the love of change.

Anon.: *Madrigal*

Change is inevitable in a progressive country.

Benjamin Disraeli, Speech, October 20, 1867

There is danger in reckless change; but greater danger in blind conservatism.

Henry George, *Social Problems*

A party doesn't reform; it is reformed.

Moos and Hess, *Hats in the Ring*

Change has always been a part of human condition. What is different now is the pace of change and the prospect that it will affect every part of life, including values, morality and religions . . . the question about progress will be "how good?" rather than "how much?"

Max Ways, *The Era of Radical Change*

The only difference between a rut and a grave is their dimensions.

Ellen Glasgow

What is new is new not because it has never been there before, but because it has changed in quality.

Robert Oppenheimer

We shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52



# THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL WELFARE

ELTON ABERNATHY

**M**OST SOCIETIES, associations, organizations, and even the church, are affected by the penchant of many people for following after current "fads." Let a persuasive advocate succeed in convincing others that his great new idea will be the salvation of the race, and they will follow him until it seems that anyone who does not do so is bound to be left hopelessly behind in the backwash of progress. The Modern Language Association, the Speech Association of America, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Democratic Party are four organizations with which I am acquainted that are currently being besieged by devotees of ideas for complete change in structure and emphasis.

Regarding these new ideas and movements three generalizations can almost always be made. In the first place, they are rarely new. Solomon's truism that there is nothing new under the sun is as valid today as when he first uttered it. A fresh generation of people is new, but most ideas are not.

In the second place, by their overwhelming emphasis on one particular phase or facet of the organization's program or structure these reformers tend to distort the picture as a whole and throw it out of balance. Almost never does a new idea represent the whole truth; almost never is it entirely right; and almost never is the old entirely wrong. There was a great deal of good about the Speech Association of America and the Democratic Party before these "Young Turks" with their sparkling proposals for change were even born.

In the third place, however, a new idea is rarely proposed which does not have in it some elements of truth. The format or practices of few associations of men are perfect. Most new ideas, if properly integrated into the organization, will be apt to displace some error or strengthen some practice which was wrong or ineffective, thus making for improvement as a whole.

As we would expect, the church has not been spared from this tendency of some to follow after new ideas. For a good many years a body of dedicated Christians has

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been pursuing the goal of total church involvement in the social revolution now sweeping the world. Depending upon the special interest of the ones leading, they may be urging that the church become an agency of the poverty program; or asking that worship services be turned into civil rights meetings; or attempting to mount protests against war, liquor by the drink or segregation. All of these and dozens of other causes have their partisans, and some brethren are partisans of almost all of them.

At the same time there has been a counter reaction. Sermons are being preached and editorials and articles written charging that the advocates of involvement in social issues are heretics, modernists or liberals (how unfortunate that "liberal" has apparently become a dirty word!). The counter reactors would apparently wish us to believe that the problems do not exist, or, at least, are of no concern to the church. In many cases they erect a religious facade to disguise efforts to preserve the *status quo* in society. Though the world may be burning (in some cases literally), they would preserve custom, structure and practice exactly the same in the last half of the 20th century as it was in the last half of the 19th.

In an effort to cast a little light, and considerably less heat on this controversy, I would suggest a re-examination of the role of Christianity. Remembering the points made earlier that partisans of new fads in any organization are hardly ever altogether right in their restricted view of the picture and rarely entirely wrong, I would ask this question: What should be the relationship of the church and of Christians to the affairs of contemporary society? In answer I will propose two major theses:

1. The Church is not merely an Agency for Social Reform.

From the beginning this was not the role of the church. A careful reading of New Testament accounts of the founding of the church, its early history, and the guiding principles laid down for its government and operation gives scant support for any view that it was intended to be a super welfare organization. One searches in vain for historical justification for considering the church a social betterment institution. It was evidently not intended to be such.

This cannot be attributed to the lack of need for social reform in the first century. Perhaps no society that has existed on this planet has had more serious problems, inequities, or injustices than the Roman Empire at the time of the establishment of the church. Hunger was rampant. Human slavery was an accepted fact of life. The tax structure was oppressive and inequitable. Soldiers were regularly sent abroad to fight and die in foreign wars. Drunkenness and sexual orgies were common, and, at least among the rich, were expected. Capital punishment was extensively practiced; beatings and the use of chains and stocks were the accepted lot of prisoners; and jail cells were dungeon hell holes. A ruthless dictatorship ruled with an iron hand. If a more cruel and unjust society has existed I am not aware of it.

Nevertheless, there is no record that the church was ever advised to conduct a pov-



erty census. The scriptures make no mention of the church ever mounting an anti-slavery crusade. It did not, so far as is recorded, sponsor petitions to Caesar, arrange for civil-rights rallies, or lead any campaigns for legislation to regulate the sale of liquor or the practice of gambling. There is no account of Christians taking the lead in sit-ins, pray-ins, or fast-ins, against hashish, pornography or high taxes. In neither sacred nor secular history do we find any record of a concerted effort by the church to reform the corrupt social structure of the first century.

I would suggest that there are as valid ideological grounds for the church avoiding the main role of a social reform agency today as there were in the time of the Caesars. Primarily these consist of the danger, in so doing, of diluting the message of individual soul rehabilitation and salvation. It is virtually impossible to preach Christ while engaged in a crusade against oil depletion allowance, war in Asia or liquor by the drink. When any effort is made to combine the two, the good news about Christ almost always suffers from inattention, being either watered down or ignored while the social program is being enthusiastically pursued.

There is, as well, grave danger that Christians, as amateur social reformers, will become involved in partisan politics. One could not count the times that eager, dedicated idealists have been crassly used as tools by political professionals whose only purpose is the securing of political or economic advantage. The salvation of souls gets lost, and the church discredited, in the political arena.

Finally, I believe that it is highly impractical for the church to attempt to be a social welfare agency. For one thing, it does not have the financial resources, literally billions of dollars, requisite for mounting an effective program of this nature. The total budgets of hundreds of congregations would not dent a problem that is straining the resources of our federal government, while leaving not a penny to be used in telling

the story of Christ to the world.

Nor does the church have the necessary legal authority to do effective work in this field. Government can use the right of eminent domain to tear down slum housing. It can decree the desegregation of schools, hospitals, and recreational facilities. It can enforce regulations on welfare recipients and use legal means to accomplish other needed tasks. Because the church can do none of these things, it would be severely restricted in the scope of its activities.

Nor would the church have the necessary manpower that could be diverted to this operation. When it is hard to find sufficient preachers to staff our pulpits, and almost none of our elders are compensated for the hours they are expected to spend as pastors of the flocks, it is totally unrealistic to consider attempting to construct the enormous bureaucracy necessary for a large scale program of social service.

Therefore, on historical, ideological and practical grounds I reject the idea of converting the church into a welfare agency or social-service bureau. To attempt to make it into either would be, in my judgment, impractical, undesirable and wrong.

## 2. Social Problems May Not Be Ignored.

In the same way that I have just rejected the extreme position of the young militants who would re-direct the church into an all-out campaign to reform society, I would now also reject what I consider the equally wrong point of view of the counter-reactors. I cannot accept *in toto* their position because I do not believe, as they apparently do, that the problems facing society may be safely ignored, or that it may be pretended that they do not exist. Instead I believe that the Christian, the preacher in the pulpit, and, at least in certain ways, the church, should be aware of the injustices and inequities of mankind and exercise a powerful voice in alleviating them.

At least three reasons impel me to this



point of view. In the first place, I do not believe that men can at the same time follow Jesus of Nazareth and pretend not to see evil and injustice. The Samaritan who helped the wounded man did not, so far as the record indicates, question his religious affiliation. Instead he bound up his wound, carried him to where there was help available, and left provision for his physical needs. Paul said, "Do good unto all men, especially them that are of the household of faith." Normally we have concentrated attention on the last phrase of that text, while ignoring the main statement. I would equalize or reverse the emphasis. The message of Christ was so strongly slanted toward love it is summed up in the three-word sentence, "God is love."

To illustrate how far we have strayed from this emphasis, consider the sorry record in the matter of relations between the races. For generations our thinking has apparently taken the perverted line that God's love is primarily for white Anglo-Saxons. Anyone who claims that the church has not practiced, sheltered and promoted racism is either blind or deliberately falsifying. The most segregated hour of the week is 11:00 on Sunday morning. Even in 1970 many of our congregations only grudgingly allow Negroes in the buildings, and almost none award them positions of responsibility. So-called "Christian colleges" were well behind what many refer to as "godless, secular state schools" in admitting Negroes to their classes. In many "Christian homes" Negroes enter only through the back door, and are entertained only in the kitchen.

The second reason that impels me to believe that Christians must be aware of and hostile to the injustices around them is that they cannot do otherwise and at the same time exercise any good influence on men who need the Gospel of Christ. Can a minister of the Gospel be influential with Negro young people who know that he has no concern for the prejudice and discrimination constantly afflicting them? Can he interest Mexican-Americans without mani-

festing real sympathy for the degraded physical circumstances in which many of them exist? Can he appeal to poor people at the same time that he ignores their poverty? Is this a way to lead men and women to that Jesus of Nazareth who said, "I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was hungry and you fed me; I was naked and you clothed me." Mohandas Gandhi once expressed a profound truth in words something like these: "To a hungry man, God is a loaf of bread."

My third reason for believing that we must be concerned for the trials and tribulations of suffering humanity is that I doubt that for long we can continue to interest even our own brethren in 19th century sermons preached in a 19th century way. I do not believe that for long we can dress up in our air-conditioned homes, then drive in our air-conditioned cars to our air-conditioned semi-cathedrals, there to shut ourselves off from the world's turmoil, while we call upon our God and symbolically ask him not to let us be as other men. The time has passed, in my judgment, when this kind of preaching and this sort of action will be effective even with our own young people. Whether we like it or not, they are members of what has been called the "involved generation."

Perhaps fifty years ago a great preacher said, "Only in our churches could it be thought that several hundred weary, worried and troubled people gather together eagerly anxious to hear what happened to the Jesusites." If the statement he made had any measure of justice when he uttered it, certainly it is a hundred times more relevant today.

Therefore, my answer to the question of the church's role in human affairs is twofold:

1. I do not believe that it should become a social-service agency, or involve all its energies toward solving the social, ethnic, economic and political problems that afflict society. To do so would, I believe, water down the Gospel, dilute its effectiveness, be



contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures, and, withal, be highly impractical and unwise.

2. I do believe, however, that the church and individual Christians who compose it must not ignore the injustices about them, or pretend that they are nonexistent. To do so would, I am convinced, be contrary to the teaching and practice of Jesus Christ; would make efforts to spread the Gospel puerile and ineffective; and will lead to the disappearance of the church as a vital institution because it would have become totally irrelevant to the lives even of our own members.

This is not in any sense to say that we need a new gospel and/or a new Christ. The homeless carpenter who taught the poor and oppressed people of Galilee in their own language, in their own idioms, from their own daily experiences, about

their own problems, is fresh, is new, is entirely relevant, and is almost unknown today. The good news of kindness, meekness, peace, love and hope that brought joy to the downtrodden people of Palestine is altogether adequate, entirely new, and almost unheard today. The church, an organization of zealots eager to spread news of this Christ and this Gospel to citizens of the Roman world would be entirely new and altogether welcome if it existed today.

When the church becomes involved with that Christ, and that Gospel, making of itself a duplicate of that church, then it will be so deeply involved in alleviating the injustices and inequities of people of our time that no either-or dilemma will be apparent. The work of the Lord, bringing peace and love to people, will then be the work of his church. III

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## In Black and White

Black,  
He looked for a black soul.  
Not for a part but the whole.  
Not as a gift or a grant,  
He looked for a root, not a plant.

White,  
My own soul I possessed,  
Secure and at ease, at rest.  
Until his black agony  
Tore my white soul from me.

Black and white,  
Both soulless, we two,  
Guilt-groping are looking for new  
Ways, and clearer weather.  
Now dare we grope together?

—Ron Durham

"All those who want to live a godly life  
in union with Christ Jesus  
will suffer persecution."

## TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN SUFFERING

WAYNE WILLIS

THE WORLD IS HEMOPHILIAC, writes a contemporary revolutionist.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, but from a first-century Christian perspective, Paul the apostle observed, "To this day the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain" (Romans 8:22). Trauma and tragedy are the *sine qua non* of human existence.

A schoolboy knows it is more than crass melodrama to say that the history of man is written with blood and etched in suffering. From the jungles of Vietnam to Flander's Field; from the charity ward of an urban hospital to the kitchen of a poor Appalachian miner; from the streets of Watts to the Lorraine Motel; from the catacombs of Rome to Modin—violence, fear and anger mark the presence of man.

The fundamental problem in Christian apologetics is the riddle of human suffering. We have to confess that ultimately man is impotent to understand God's ways or to justify them to men. The clay cannot interrogate the potter or psychoanalyze him. Rather, the solution the New Testament suggests for the problem of pain is the avail-

ability of the therapeutic grace which Jesus Christ supplies the believer in his hour of need. "I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me. I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). "I know what it is to be in need. . . . I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me" (Philippians 4:12, 13). The Christian's response to the question of pain is an affirmation of faith. He is sustained by the conviction that the risen Christ brings power out of weakness and hope out of despair for those who trust in him.

*consequence of discipleship . . .*

But what of suffering incurred by the Chris-

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tian in the line of duty? Must we not distinguish between the pain inherent in human existence, indiscriminately infecting mankind, and the pain the Christian incurs because he has *chosen* to follow Christ? The former pain is universal; the latter exclusive. The former is the "natural fallout" of the universe; the latter is the promised consequence of discipleship.

Jesus charged his disciples, "You will indeed drink the cup I must drink and be baptized in the way I must be baptized" (Mark 10:39). "Whoever wants to come with me must forget himself, carry his cross, and follow me" (Mark 8:34). "All mankind will hate you because of me" (Matthew 24:9). Primitive Christianity was a religion of the cross. At baptism the initiate was given a cross to bear. That cross may have been alienation by his family, the sale of his property, sacrifice of his belongings, rejection by his associates, physical punishment, or even death. Eusebius researched this early period of the church and designated it "a history of the church under a cross."<sup>2</sup> This was a time for tasting the cup of suffering and undergoing the baptism of blood.

Paul's contention—"All those who want to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Timothy 3:12)—intrigues twentieth-century Christians. It threatens our comfort and shakes our confidence. Few Christians today, having taken their profession seriously, have become social outcasts. Church membership today is a giant stride toward social acceptance. The stigma of Christianity has been removed and the cross is optional. Seldom is a family compelled to forfeit the conveniences of home to serve as missionaries in a foreign land. We occasionally hear of a disciple who has been murdered at the hands of the Mau Mau or by the sword of Islam. Our era is witnessing the heroism of a handful of young laymen invading the slums and incarnating themselves as resident ministers of Christ. Some ministers are seeing the impotence of their doctrinaire ser-

mons and ivory-tower prescriptions and are increasingly immersing themselves in the emotional conflicts and crises of their people. Crosses are available even today for members of the Body of Christ. Our responsibility is to identify them and pick them up.

One thing we do know. To the early Christians, suffering for one's faith was not a senseless ordeal to be endured, void of rhyme or reason. Suffering then was charged with deep Christological significance and rich personal interpretation. As we involve ourselves today in the ongoing work of the living Christ, we need to be aware of at least three dimensions of meaning that the martyr church assigned to the suffering accompanying discipleship.

1. Christian suffering is in the truest sense the *imitatio Christi*. The one who suffers for the name is the disciple of Christ *par excellence*. Jesus said, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:27). One of his cross-bearers concurred, "Christ himself suffered for you and left you an example, so that you would follow in his steps" (1 Peter 2:21).

Jesus is the true Rabbi. We are his learners. Following him entails more than a skillful study of his words. Following him means a wholehearted acceptance of his life and a baptism into his very fate. Discipleship means following his steps in life and to the end. "The disciple is not above his teacher," said the Master (Matthew 10:24). The one who would imitate Christ must walk with him into the bowels of degradation and death. The one who identifies with suffering can know with an unfaltering trust that he is walking the road the saints have trod. He can bear the cross in full confidence that he is faithfully following in the footsteps of the Master.

2. The experience of discipleship provokes the believer to reflect on his continuity with the saints of the past as he imitates the passion of Christ. But suffering has more than a past referent—it brings empowering



assimilation to the immediate Christ. In baptism and communion the devotee intimately participates in the reality of the resurrected Christ. Just so, in suffering Jesus Christ comes near and graces the believer with life and strength. Bearing the cross grants the disciple a most intimate *union* with the glorified Lord. The theme of the *imitatio Christi* thus finds its meaning and fulfillment in an absolute union with the Lord.

One finds in the martyr literature of the early church the staunch persuasion that Jesus Christ infuses the confessor's soul with spiritual nourishment for his season of trial. The martyrs of Vienne and Lyons for example were aware of a presence in them of Christ who would share their suffering. The end-product of the living Christ's work of equipping the disciple for his work in the world is evident in the amazing powers of endurance possessed by the sufferer. The earliest martyr documents are replete with remarkable examples of courage and fortitude under the most severe trials. The sustaining power and presence of Christ was a special measure of God's grace that the confessor interpreted as a sure sign of salvation.

Conversely, the Christian confessor/martyr shares Christ's suffering. Paul could say, "All I want is to know Christ and experience the power of his resurrection; to share in his sufferings and become like him in his death" (Philippians 3:10). "If we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory" (Romans 8:17; see also 6:3). One is reminded of Ignatius' overwhelming aspiration to "attain" Christ. Suffering in the name of Christ was held by the early church as nothing less intimate than a mystical communion and conformation with the risen Savior.

3. Suffering to the early church was essentially eschatological. Paul speaks of "what is yet to come of the afflictions of

Christ" before the end (Colossians 1:24). To Paul there is a "quota" of sufferings which the corporate Christ is destined to undergo before God's purposes are complete. By suffering, Paul is doing his share in hastening the *telos*.

The Christian Apocalypse allots in the panorama of history an essential role for the Christian martyrs. When the souls under the altar plead for vengeance of their persecutors they are told to rest for a short time until the roll of martyrs is complete (Revelation 6:9f.). When the martyr roll is full the *eschaton* can set in. The man who suffers for Christ plays a vital role in God's scheme for history. No one knows who will be the last Christian to suffer, but each confessor makes his own personal contribution toward reaching the limit of atrocities and filling up the number of saints that must take up the cross. God needs men who will take on themselves the burden of suffering that remains to be borne.

### *the mission . . .*

Ours is a suffering world. The Body of Christ is entrusted with the mission of investing herself in those who are the counterparts of those whom Jesus required the early disciples to serve. Hungry children must be fed. The poor must hear the good news and the oppressed must be liberated. The anxious, lonely, forgotten people must experience acceptance and understanding. The Son of God must appear in human form, once more to live and walk among men.

"O God, deliver us from our naive insulation. Introduce thy church to a waiting world of pain and conflict. Expose us to the real emotions of real people. May thy kingdom come, in power and in redeeming love. In simple faith like theirs who heard beside the Syrian Sea . . . Let us like them, without a word, rise up and follow Thee. Amen." **m**

<sup>1</sup> Eldridge Cleaver, *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1968), p. 173.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, preface.



# GOD OR EVOLUTION?

## REVISITED AND REVISITED

STANLEY K. McDANIEL

**G**OD OR EVOLUTION? This question embodies the deepest fears and the most painful doubts for many people. I would like to suggest that the fears and doubts, and the question that evokes them, are irrelevant to the mission of God's community on earth. However, I cannot dismiss the God or Evolution question because it has been a major issue by conservative American Protestant church organizations. The magnitude of this question in our minds is witnessed by Neal Buffaloe's article in *MISSION* of April, 1969, and Reuel Lemmon's editorial in the June 3, 1969, *Firm Foundation*.

The significance of the *MISSION* article, "God or Evolution," and its commentary in the *Firm Foundation* lies in the fact that both articles represent divergent modes of thought among many of our brethren today. Unless we can live with these divergent modes of thought, we have a potential source of future mischief for God's people. My comments are, therefore, not designed as an answer to either article. My objectives are to clarify issues, raise new issues and achieve a clearer perspective on the God or

Evolution controversy.

There are issues which could arise from a reading of the *MISSION* and *Firm Foundation* articles which we must avoid. For religious purposes, how many and which biologists accept organic evolution as a historical process is a pseudo-issue. To argue this, and even to provide a statistical answer, meets no human need for which Jesus died. Likewise, to argue evolution as being an article of the gospel is completely off the track. Our faith does not rest in the wisdom of man. The God or Evolution dispute is frightfully dependent upon man's intellectual ability to abstract and infer. Thank God we are neither saved nor lost on the basis of our faith in such abstractions and inferences, however interesting they may be.

*very real issues . . .*

There are some very real issues arising from the God or Evolution question as portrayed in *MISSION* and the *Firm Foundation* at which we must carefully look for our welfare and the welfare of our youth. The first issue we must face is that the tradi-

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tional American Protestant attitude toward organic evolution and the significance of the Genesis account of creation is not working for us today. No amount of polemic excellence changes the fact that we send our young people to public schools unprepared to face the world of secularism, empiricism and technology in which they must live. We supply them with all the right answers to keep them faithful, and they soon discover that our answers don't even relate to the questions they begin asking. Regardless of the opinion we hold concerning organic evolution and Genesis, it is long past time that those of us over thirty begin thinking about the welfare of our youth. In my opinion we are highly *immoral* when we intellectually bind them to any system of thought which cripples their human development. And, if I can generalize from my experiences as a young student and from the many tearful students who come to my office seeking guidance, I say that the traditional Protestant position on evolution, when inflexibly and categorically accepted, will create great anguish of spiritual and mental conflict for the young college student. Brethren, these things ought not to be. Instead of giving our energies to witch hunting for evolutionists, we should be giving

our energies toward developing in our youth a capacity to formulate their own convictions and a profound sense of honesty, humility and courage to live by those convictions.

A second paramount issue we must face is inherent in the question, God or Evolution. It is my conviction that as long as we pursue an answer to this question, as phrased above, we will be chasing the wind and catch a tornado. The very language and structure of the God or Evolution question implies a dichotomy. It sets up a forced choice between theism and organic evolution. I personally resent the question when put to me this way, because I know this mode of dichotomous thinking is a prime reason for the mental anguish of my students. I also resent this question because some well-meaning brethren have used it as a creedal test of other men's relationship to God. The question implies that if a man accepts organic evolution as an historical process, he is something other than a Christian. To make such a judgment is itself very unlike Jesus. I do not argue for or against organic evolution since that is not my area of specialization. However, I do argue for the person who, in the exercise of his human capacities of reason, justice and love, has accepted evolution as a historical process. This in no way changes God's love for him. Jesus didn't any less die for him. The Holy Spirit doesn't leave him because he accepts evolution. His God is no less God if the man believes creation consumed seven trillion years or seven solar days. Either way the man stands in awe of the infinite character of God. The gospel is still the gospel. His faith in Jesus and his immersion of a man and a man's acceptance of God is not dependent upon that man's concept of the chronology and *modus operandi* of the creation of the physical universe. Christians who are diametrically in opposition to each other's thinking on the God or Evolution question can, in Christ, sing together the words of William Cowper:



God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea,  
And rides upon the storm.  
Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain:  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.

We would be more blessed if we would stop asking the question, "God or Evolution?" and begin asking questions like the following: What is the message of the Genesis cosmology? What is there in the creation account for the soul of man to turn him from war, bitterness, malice, apathy, divorce, crime, lawlessness and such like? What message is given to help me to be restored to the image of God from which I have fallen? I advocate these questions as being essential to the religious life and germane to the mission of the community of God on earth. I further advocate that great value will result if we as a people will give our time and thought to questions of this nature. I propose that public forum discussions be conducted among leading scholars of the Churches of Christ to grapple with these questions. I would like to see our college students included as forum participants. This would do more for our college-age youth than all the forensic battles we might wage. Brother Buffalo, Brother Lemmons, how about it?

### *the mission of God's people . . .*

A third issue we must face is the question of how germane is the God or Evolution conflict to the mission of God's people. I suggest we have its importance out of perspective. It is obvious that the origin of man is related to the destiny of man on earth and also hereafter, but to listen to ourselves argue, one would get the impression that the only thing that really mattered was the mechanics of how we originated. I do not find Jesus majoring on such themes. In fact, I find him silencing people who

would distract from the Father's business with such questions. I am interested in how I got here, but if I never have a comprehensive and consistent concept of my origin, I cannot escape one concrete fact I must believe. I *am here*. Since I am here, what now? Jesus' life and teaching emphasized living in this world, not intellectualizing about it. Jesus' way of living is practical, rather than primarily philosophical. Brethren, the important questions of life and death must relate to our actions while in the flesh. We should be consumed with the job of living the Christ-like life right now. It saddens me to think that we have been very reluctant to tread the road from Jerusalem to Jericho to apply the Balm of Gilead to the wounds of suffering, dying mankind. We are pleased to occupy only the first mile of the road and there use it as a battleground to argue masochistically about how the contractor built the road. There is something profoundly unlike Jesus in our behavior.

A final issue which arises from the *MISSION* and the *Firm Foundation* articles concerns the threat of "crass materialism" to the religious life of man. This threat is very real and one with which we must come to terms. The human frailties which caused ancient Israel to devote their lives to idols still plague the people of God today. However, I think it is a mistake to equate a concept, such as organic evolution, with crass materialism. It has been traditional to warn the faithful about the materialistic teachings of empirical science to the point that we overlook other forces at work in our culture that are devastatingly materialistic and are blatant idolatry. I am very concerned about materialism, but I do not fear that its threat comes from biology or the continued research of any science. In fact I am thrilled by scientific research and eagerly follow the scientists as they unfold the mysteries of life. It is wonderful to live in an age when one can empirically walk in the footsteps of God. The greatest threat comes from contemporary man's willingness

to give himself to things and to make himself a means to materialistic ends. A classical example of this type of materialism may be seen by examining the fiscal policies of our churches. We gather money into our church treasuries and claim that this is one of the "acts of worship" because Paul directed the Corinthian Christians to give money on the first day of the week. But we surely fail to emphasize that he asked for the money to help people suffering from poverty and hunger. Discover how much of our church income goes to obtain and maintain religious real estate and how little goes to meet human needs. It is common among ourselves that we devote thousands of dollars toward buildings and land, while in the same communities children suffer from hunger; crime rages while police are underpaid; school dropouts increase while schools beg for money; alcoholism, divorce and mental illness increase among members of our "lonely crowd," but not one dime is appropriated by God's people for these human problems. There is not even a motion made to spend "the Lord's money" on such problems. In the light of these conditions, I must agree with Erich Fromm when he wrote:

It is not conceivable that any discovery

made by the natural sciences could become a threat to religious feeling. On the contrary, an increased awareness of the nature of the universe in which we live can only help man to become more self-reliant and more humble. As for the social sciences, their growing understanding of man's nature and of the laws governing his existence contributes to the development of a religious attitude rather than threatens it.

The threat to the religious attitude lies not in science but in the predominant practices of daily life. Here man has ceased to seek in himself the supreme purpose of living and has made himself an instrument serving the economic machine his own hands have built. He is concerned with efficiency and success rather than with this happiness and growth of his soul. More specifically the orientation which most endangers the religious attitude is what I have called the "marketing orientation" of modern man.<sup>1</sup>

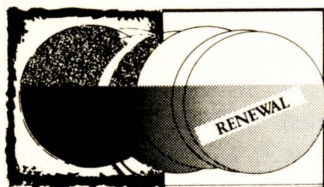
Briefly to conclude, let me satirically say that, since the infamous Scopes trial to the present, we have answered the God or Evolution question by our actions. "Man did not descend from the monkey. He is a relative of the jackass." **m**

<sup>1</sup> Erich Fromm, *Psychoanalysis and Religion* (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 97.

## NEXT MONTH IN **Mission**

Carol is a Christian in college. She writes about the difficulties and problems facing her. *Donald E. Green* and *Thomas A. Langford* reply to her with observations, suggestions and advice designed to help the Christian student. *William Adrian* offers insight into the current student unrest in *STUDENT UNREST AND PUZZLED PARENTS*. *F. W. Mattox* writes on *THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AND POLITICS* and *George S. Benson* replies to Dudley Lynch's feature, "The Politics of Harding College."





## THE OAKHILL CHURCH: YOU ARE THERE

DWAIN EVANS

WHEN THE EDITOR wrote and asked me to make a response to the conditions that exist in the Oakhill church, I accepted with enthusiasm. I called together a representative group from the West Islip congregation. The diversity that exists in the West Islip church is represented in the group. At the beginning of our session, the Oakhill story was read. Each person was asked to respond from his perspective. This dialogue session ran 48 typewritten pages. I have tried to include the essential elements of our interview.

We have tried to be a renewal-minded church here in West Islip. It was a painful experience to see the many points in which the Oakhill story indicted us.

The following men participated in the interview: Don Haymes was a member of the first group that enlisted in the Faith Corps inner-city program in 1966. Following his tour he has stayed and worked in a number of poverty programs. He is skilled and knowledgeable in areas of urban crisis that confront our nation. Denzil Porterfield received his Ed.D. from the University of

Oklahoma. He serves as our educational director and is a reading consultant in the Smithtown schools. Forrest Wells, a former elder of the congregation is a civil engineer, employed by the Entemann Bakeries. John Tanner is presently serving as an elder and is a local businessman. Dee Colvett is a physicist at Brookhaven National Laboratories.

### ... *first impressions*

EVANS: Gentlemen, you have heard the Oakhill story. What are your first impressions?

PORTERFIELD: One impression I had was that there seemed to be lots of places where they could do service in the community. There seemed to be a Negro community there . . . there might be opportunity to be of service in this area.

TANNER: The member who wrote the story in a statement near the end offers his own answer, if he would take it and pursue it—that is, to study the Bible.

COLVETT: I don't see that the Oakhill

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congregation is any different from most other established congregations. They are a group of people looking for something to do. He is not asking so much for an inspiring and up-lifting preacher as for one that is less embarrassing than Shipdecker. The flavor of the congregation is set by the community, rather than the congregation flavoring the community. I don't get the impression that there is a large group of people on edge to be the kind of congregation Christ calls them to be.

WELLS: I think the problem basically is that their acknowledgment of the Lordship of Jesus is only intellectual. There seems to be the feeling that through the manipulation of personnel everything can be made right. I think the member's comment that John mentioned is an answer, but I don't believe he proposed it as that. I'm not sure he feels that there would be anything gained by a study of the Bible and prayer. I think that a new preacher might please the group that is dissatisfied now, but in two years time there would be new dissatisfaction. I have been in congregations where we went through seven preachers in 13 years and for a while we were entertained, but changing the preacher without acknowledging the lordship of Jesus and the position we hold in his body doesn't accomplish anything.

HAYMES: I feel many of us are in the position of being alumni of the Oakhill church because *we* were not satisfied and something was beckoning in the far North that indicated the possibility of change. I think we transplanted much of Oakhill to where we are today. There is no sense in this story the member tells of his being part of the spiritual, mystical organism that the New Testament talks about. Instead there is a sense of a kind of social gathering. It could be the Kiwanis or the Rotary. Once there is present the idea that the church is the body of Christ, then the next question is, what is the sign of the body of Christ in the world? From there you go to Matthew 11 where disciples of John come to Jesus and

say, "Are you the one who is to come or are we looking for somebody else." And he says, "You go tell John what you see and hear. And these are the evidences of the presence of the body, the blind see, the lame walk, the dead are raised alive (I don't think that is just physically dead either). The poor are hearing the good news and happy is the man who does not find me a 'skandalon.'" "

### *the preacher . . .*

EVANS: It is distressing to read this story of the Oakhill church and then look at our own congregation. This story really convicts us of sin. If we were the kind of people Christ has called us to be, it would be the "world being turned upside down" kind of thing. They would know we are here. They would know we are involved. The question I want you to deal with now is this: What should be done about Shipdecker? More often than not, the solution to congregational problems is seen in changing preachers. Do you think this is a solution to the Oakhill situation?

PORTERFIELD: I see the attitude of the member who writes this discourse as one who goes to the worship service to be fed. He goes up there like a starved cow and he goes for whatever food is there and takes it all away to digest it and then he starves again. There is no inward revitalization from within. I think anyone who relies totally on the minister for his spiritual nourishment must have a very energetic, inspiring and uplifting minister or he will not survive. He has to begin studying, to begin looking in the Word to see if there is something there he can discover for himself without having it digested for him and given to him in an eye dropper on Sunday. I don't think firing the minister is in any way going to solve the problem.

TANNER: I don't think the minister's release would solve the problem either. I wonder if Shipdecker is not similar in personality to the one who writes the story.



COLVETT: I agree with John 100 percent. The one who calls the order of the exercises is the preacher. Exercise number one, we put another missionary in the field; number two, we build a building. The member may want to try some different exercises or none at all. If the preacher is a problem, he is an independent problem. The view of the church being contained in congregations is at variance to that of the New Testament. I think if churches existed only as congregations here and there you would have to go back to John and change a verse to read, "I am the vine and ye are the branch offices."

HAYMES: Does the preacher still have his job?

COLVETT: Yes, he still has a job, but for no good reason. If the congregation were to change fundamentally the preacher would probably be gone. He would be glad to report to the papers that "he was able to get out of that mess unscathed," and he would have no trouble finding another place to be where he would be more comfortable.

WELLS: Don mentioned some of the criteria that Jesus presented for recognition of the body of Christ. I think there is one that Jesus pointed out that is even more basic, and that is that his followers were recognized by the way they loved one another. I feel there is a lack of love in this group of people. We end up many times condemning the preacher for something that no man can do for us. As for changing the preacher, I think it could be the best thing, and I say this out of compassion for Shipdecker.

HAYMES: I have ambient feelings. First, we are not faced with the immediate existential implications of having to go and sit down each Sunday and listen to brother Shipdecker. This gives us an objectivity that the writer cannot possibly have. If I put myself in the writer's position, I can't wait for Shipdecker to leave; but objectively—what good will it do? The only thing it will do is change the tenor of the orations during the assemblies, and it may change

the preacher's advice and consent to the eldership. Very likely if a preacher is the opposite of Shipdecker, you are going to have the elders mad, which means the preacher will last about as long as a snowball in June. I have been thinking of the situation in which the preacher so many times is the head "brain" of the congregation. A change of "brains" often creates a kind of schizophrenia in which you have a preacher who comes in and says he is anti-Mason and for awhile the congregation is anti-Mason and throws out the Mason elder, etc. Then the preacher either quits or the Masonic elder wins, and this preacher leaves and another comes who is hot on something else, and so the congregation takes off on that tangent. This is what causes anger, strife and turmoil within the congregation. Whatever the preacher happens to push is what creates the difficulty.

COLVETT: Trying to reject the latest transplant is what you are saying.

HAYMES: In a sense. There is a rejection system that automatically binds up when the body comes up against a strange organ which is permanent. "He ought to have been like the last guy, or maybe we are glad he isn't like the last guy."

### *in the middle . . .*

EVANS: Suppose somehow the spirit of God picked you up like he did Phillip and put you in the middle of the Oakhill church. He told you that the Oakhill church is your ministry. How would you begin? What would your course of action be?

HAYMES: Well, I don't know whether the Lord is still making those great fish out in the deep, but I would be very much like Jonah going up to Nineveh, "Oh, Lord why me, why me, oh Lord?" On the other hand it has certain perverse, attractive, beckoning qualities. What to do? I think I would start looking around in Foxboro and seeing where the problems were. I would start looking for people in the congregation who felt as I did and say, "We need to



stop talking about it and do something about it." If the church sees that it is a good thing, they are going to look at it as Gamaliel did and we can continue. There could be an apartment ministry, and somebody mentioned a ministry to the blacks.

WELLS: Until such time as I was withdrawn from, I would affirm my belief in God's power to operate among his people today in the way he operated in the first century. I would encourage my brothers there to examine the scriptures and to accept what they teach. I would stay until I was ejected. Only God can change an Oakhill. The problem with Oakhill and West Islip lies within the areas of our unbelief.

EVANS: Dee, how do you feel the Lord would lead you to begin here?

COLVETT: Well, under the assumption that it would be good practice to remain unrejected for as long as possible, I would begin slowly. Nothing is going to change to make the situation more difficult, and there is plenty of time. The positive stroke would be to find something to do and accumulate other people whom I would meet at the congregation and with whom I could find myself working on something significant. If I were sentenced to listen to Ship-decker, and my opinion of him is that he is as bad as the member says he is, I would take along the old *Jerusalem Bible* and sit there and read and listen occasionally and I might learn a whole lot.

TANNER: I think that if it were the will of God for me to go to Oakhill, my mission there would not be less difficult or more difficult than anywhere else. I would try to stimulate goodwill, regardless of the convictions that various members of the congregation might hold. Love has to be the motivating factor for all concerned.

PORTERFIELD: I can speak to what I really would do, and also to what I think I should do. What I probably would do would be to find people who were complainers like I would become and group with them. We could have social interaction and have a time of sharing complaints when

we got together. We would condemn everybody but ourselves and tell each other how bad everyone was and that there wasn't any hope for the congregation. This is probably what I would do. I would go regularly, I would sit near the front, I would be neat, I would sing high tenor, I would try to whip my kids down to where they wouldn't make too much noise in the congregation, I would smile and tell the preacher "good job." That is probably what I would do.

What I think I ought to do is something else. I think my ministry probably should be a teaching ministry through the young adult's class. I should seek to become a servant of the church, perhaps as a deacon. I should seek to share some of the ideas that I had. I should work through the Bible school in order to achieve the objectives I felt ought to be accomplished.

EVANS: Let me see if I can bring any kind of sense to what you are saying. What I hear you saying is that there ought to be a new beginning. You feel the people in this congregation ought to pick up their Bibles again and objectively take a new look at the scriptures to see what they really say. I hear you saying that they ought to look at the life of Jesus again and see what his life was really like. Further, they ought to see what they are called to be and that whether the group is small or large they ought to begin to be like that. How would you add to this in terms of what we have been talking about?

WELLS: I would like to make a suggestion with reference to the Oakhill church. I made the same suggestion for West Islip. I think restoration is a good term. I don't think we have tried much of it but it is a good term. Our outreach has been basically to people who are members of other religious groups in our area. A prime prospect is a good Southern Baptist or someone who knows something about Jesus already. If we are a people with a message, if we believe in restoration, or even if we are just about to read the scripture and see what happened in the early church, what we will



begin to do on Sunday mornings at times of appointed meeting in other houses of worship is that we will go there. We will worship with them, we will respect them. I don't know whether to use the term brother or not, but to the degree that they know Jesus and accept Jesus as Lord, to that degree we will acknowledge them. If we have a message, if we have something they don't have we will become teachers in their Bible schools. We will become workers among them. If there is anything we have of the Lord that they don't have, we will share it with them. We will meet together from house to house in our homes, or if we feel better, in a building. We will come together at other times in our building and will share how the Lord is using us. We will allow the Lord to use us as his instruments. I'll assure you that I could be teaching in their Bible schools in four months time. I have visited places and signed the registration card and had them call me and ask me if I would take part in their activities and their programs. If we are serious, if we are a people with a message, then we can spend our time so much more effectively reaching the people that we traditionally reach. I think this is the way Paul operated when he went into a town. He met with people of his background. He met with people that knew about God. He had something to share with them. I think if we would do this that God would operate through us. We are a people with a message, but we just tell it to each other and we do that bashfully. We don't even witness and share confidently to one another. There is something that has our hands tied, and we ought to look at it. I think Oakhill must look at it, and West Islip must look at it. If we are not people with a message, then something is wrong. The early Christians were people with a message, and they could not keep quiet. The member asked, "Why are things so miserable?" If you are God's child, there is nothing miserable about that. It is the greatest thing in the world! We should just be rejoicing and praising the Lord! When

we stop worrying about whether the preacher says the things I want said and concentrate on allowing the love of God to be in me that was in Christ, things will change. Until we can get Christ centered, we don't need a preacher. They don't need Shipdecker; they don't need anything. They need a message, and that message will come only from God's word, and if this has not happened to us, we need to get one because it is available to us from God. He promised it and he doesn't lie. He is great!

### *the answer is mission . . .*

HAYMES: I think a lot of what Forest is saying is the answer to renewal. The answer is mission. The idea of going to other churches appeals to me enormously. If they are not our brothers, they are probably our first cousins. But I wonder about people who reject Christ and those who have never heard of him?

WELLS: There are many people who know a great deal about Christ but don't know him.

HAYMES: That is what is happening in the Oakhill church. Why should I go to the Baptists when I can't take care of my own people?

COLVETT: Because the Baptist may be able to take care of you.

HAYMES: That is very appealing, but this question will come back over and over again. (I think brother Shipdecker would probably be the first to point it out, and he would probably be in one sense quite right.) What about all those people over in Kenya who worship animism or whatever it is they have there. What do we do about them, and what are we doing about all the people that don't believe in our own community, the unchurched?

WELLS: My proposal was that we work with religious people at the normal times of worship and that we work with the unchurched on our jobs. You don't need to go and knock on doors because the Lord has placed you among the unchurched. We

witness where the Lord has placed us.

HAYMES: Then in a sense you have become a part of the body at the place where you are? I would agree with it but I don't think everybody here, and certainly I don't think many people in Oakhill would agree that they could become a part of the body and blood of the Lord at the First Baptist Church of Oakhill.

WELLS: My statement was that I draw my spiritual fellowship with my brethren in their homes, daily rejoicing, breaking bread, and that if we meet in our buildings, we

meet at some other hour than that of 11:00 Sunday morning. My day-to-day activities would be among the unchurched whom I frequently ignore. Fellowship comes from the Holy Spirit; you can't whip it up any other place. You can have unity forums and make all kinds of overtures and make all kinds of concessions, but the unity you read about in the scriptures is the unity of the Spirit. We don't have this. We haven't experienced it.

EVANS: Thank you gentlemen for these thought-provoking comments. **m**

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## TO PREACH WITH HONOR

GAYLE E. OLER

A PREACHER should first of all remember that his calling, highest among human endeavors, is to teach the scripture and its meaning. He is not an official spokesman for the church. He is not a champion hired to defend, or an actor hired to dramatize "our position." In the tradition of John the Baptist, he is a voice of one, one man seeking to help his contemporaries get ready for the Lord. He must understand and have it understood that his preaching is but his own opinion and interpretation of what the message of scripture means for his time and place. By virtue of a broad-based education and through constant study he will probably tend to be accurate in his understanding of what the will of the Lord is; but in the final analysis, it is still only his understanding. And though the scripture

be infallible, his understanding of scripture is not. Other people have their own views, and so be it, for in the New Testament church, *each one* has a teaching, each one an interpretation. It is not only poor taste but also inaccurate for the preacher to describe his views as "what the church of Christ believes" or "what the church of Christ teaches," for if he is a man of integrity, those views are only what he personally believes and what he personally teaches.

But let him, with the courage of John the Baptist, preach to the current situation, trouble and predicament of his audience. Entertainment is not his calling. He preaches *to*, not *for* the people. An itch longs for a scratch, but the preacher is not a masseur. The mouthing of hackneyed platitudes, the

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firing of a barrage of bombastic blandishments at other religionists, or excitingly fighting a phony "issue" is of scant value to men on the way to their doom. The pulpit is the place for frankness, for urgency, for the consequential.

A preacher should speak the message of grace and its power over human guilt. He should address himself to the troubles that corrupt the heart in this year of the twentieth century. He should proclaim the virtues which reflect the presence of the Holy Spirit in human life. The basic, the more significant aspects of the Christian way should be stressed, and the preacher should not forget that justice and mercy require emphasis equal to faith. The preacher must dare each listener to personally grapple with the great principles of Christianity and to apply them to the facts of his own life and time.

A preacher should speak out of the depths of his personal conviction; he should preach the sense of scripture as he sees it. Of course, he should delve deeply into the wisdom and understanding of others, both past and present, as to the meaning of scripture and its application to life. He should conscientiously acquaint himself with the great theological trends, dogmas and questions. At the lectureships, he might spend more time in listening to the lectures and less time in bargaining for meetings or in trying to shake loose a ripe pulpit plum. But all these explanations and expositions of scripture he will consider only as advisory and he will struggle with these views in the light of his own understanding, experience and conscience until his own views emerge. Real thinking produces pain, as Aristotle noted, and that is why there is so little thinking done. But the preacher should be different; he should truly seek to *understand* what the will of the Lord is. Let him not peddle as "the truth" anyone else's sermons or outlines, any "brotherhood position," or anything else which is not the product of his own conscious, conscientious decision as to the meaning and application of scrip-

ture. Let him constantly think and wrestle and wonder in the search for truth. With the Ephesians, let him burn those contemptible books which would produce the fake magic of an "instant sermon." When he preaches, it should be indeed out of the abundance of his own heart.

And a preacher should spend much time in private devotion, knowing that for him to preach well, the Lord must govern him from the very center and citadel of his nature. Because he teaches, a preacher is subject to the harsher judgment, and through incessant prayer he should seek help in bearing the load. A preacher should read the scriptures at least part of the time for what they say to him personally, without reference to how well the text would "lather" from the pulpit. Frequent periods of reflection and supplication are crucial to him. For in his own quiet Gethsemane the preacher is calmed and sobered and hallowed. In the secret place he goes from strength unto strength, his knowledge is enlarged, and his character is deepened.

And he ought not to preach longer than 25 minutes per sermon. **m**

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## Adam and Eve Get Younger All the Time

Back in the early 50's when my generation was in college, we didn't get too stoked over national and world affairs. Today we're referred to as the apathetic generation, and not without justification. In those days the big news from the universities had to do with panty raids and stuffing fraternity brothers into VW's. I went to a Christian college, and, of course, we weren't allowed to have panty raids. We substituted hanky (handkerchief) raids, so that today I can't help feeling that something was lost in translation. But that's beside the point.

The point is we were indeed apathetic, and I was more apathetic than most. I thought Pakistan was a rug. If the conversation wasn't about girls, sports, or doctrinal errors, I tuned it out. Happily, I am much altered these days, and not for the worse, I might add. One eventually wearies of doctrinal disputes.

To paraphrase Fitzgerald, "The kids of today, Ernest, are very different from you and me" ("Yes, F," Ernest replied, without changing expression, "they're younger"). Not only are college students of today informed and active, but so are the high school kids. In the last year, as a matter of fact, campus demonstration reached down to the junior high level. The frontier of innocence is being pushed back further and further, or farther and farther, as the case may be. It is a very moral, sober, humorless world we live in today, which is to say, the ingredients of the apocalyptic (the last stage in polarization) are with us.

If the college students of fifteen years ago were quiescent, and the junior high school kids of today are demonstrating, what can

we expect in, say, the year 1980? Most people would shrug and say, "Who knows?," not stopping to realize that, of course, I do. For by tracing the events of the last fifteen years and projecting trends on a cost plus continuum which magnifies the microcosm and makes evident the totally invisible and undecipherable, not to mention incoherent, I have managed to approximate the coming reality in a sketch called "Kindergarten, 1980."

"All right, Children," sang Miss Fosbury, "it's time for *Show and Tell!* What do you have for us today, Kevin?"

"A poster," answered five-year-old Kevin.

"Class, did you hear *that?* Kevin has a poster to show us. Isn't that *nice?* It looks like a big one, too. Here, Kevin, let me help you unfold it."

Miss Fosbury took one end of the rolled up poster and let the rest drop to the floor. It was a picture of Mao Tsetung. All the little boys and girls cheered and Kevin drummed on his desk with a pair of chop sticks, after which the students started an obscene chant about our first woman President, Martha Mitchell.

"Now, now, boys and girls," chided Miss Fosbury, "let's not get too boisterous. We don't want to have to call in the National Guard again, like we did yesterday, do we? What about you, Priscilla, what do you have for us?"

Without a word, Priscilla, a little girl with a long pony tail, produced a tricycle bumper sticker that said, "Off The Pigs!" Miss Fosbury was greatly relieved, remembering, as she did, the last bumper sticker that Priscilla brought in, which had been a trifle too



scatological for Miss Fosbury's refined taste.

By this time, the young tykes were so eager to show and tell that formal invitation from Miss Fosbury was no longer considered a necessity, and they began rummaging in satchels and lunch pails for their Molotov cocktails, homemade gas masks and other assorted goodies.

"Order! Order!" pleaded Miss Fosbury. "These are very *interesting*. But hasn't someone brought something more—how shall I say—creative?"

"Me," claimed Timothy, holding up a fire extinguisher.

"A *fire* extinguisher," exulted Miss Fosbury, happy that Timothy had not brandished an automatic pistol. "A *fire* extinguisher! Now, class isn't that *thoughtful*!?"

Here, Timothy, let me put it on the desk, and if we should ever have a fire, Heaven forbid, we shall surely put it to good use!"

Timothy consulted his Mickey Mouse watch. "That won't be long," he said.

"Why, what do you mean?" asked Miss Fosbury.

"Well," said Timothy, "when the little hand is on the two, which it is, and when the big is on the twelve, which it will be in about five seconds, Norman will have blown up the gymnasium."

Before Miss Fosbury could finish lecturing Timothy on the vice of mendacity, a loud explosion from somewhere in the vicinity cracked three windows in the room and knocked over the teddy bear which Miss Fosbury always kept on her desk.

## REVIEWS

Edited by Robert R. Marshall  
2126 Wilmette Avenue  
Wilmette, Illinois 60091

### *Now, It's Teenagers*

*Between Parent and Teenager* by Dr. Haim G. Ginott (Toronto: Macmillan, 1969), \$5.95.

Someone has observed that we generally purchase books with which we already have good reason to believe we will agree. When you consider this fact and also either the over-confidence or the crippling fear which most of us who are parents of pre-teens possess, this leaves only the parents of adults to purchase Haim Ginott's, *Between Parent and Teenager*. What a tragic mistake!

Ginott's earlier book, *Between Parent and Child*, will no doubt prejudice many for and against this book. Such lack of objectivity is as unfair to the same author of the two books as it is to a child who passes through these two periods of human development.

Yet, Ginott is open to criticism. His basic thesis presumes a capacity for agapeic love that is not demonstrable universally among his readership to any significant degree. For example, when he treats the phenomenon of anger, he writes, "To express anger without insult is not easy. It goes against natural inclinations and ingrained habits. But we must learn a new language that will enable us to give vent to anger without

damaging those we love" (p. 104). He argues against a contrived, mechanistic manufacture of agapeic love, yet is silent as to its genuine human and supra-human source.

There will be spurious criticisms also. Some will feel that he is totally permissive without seeing how he objects to total permissiveness. He writes, "The distinction between feelings and acts is the cornerstone of the new approach to teenagers. We are permissive when dealing with feelings and wishes. We are strict when dealing with unacceptable behavior" (p. 150).

Others will feel that Ginott skirts moral issues. Yet, where his discipline in psychiatry permits him, he comes down firm in his practical chapters on teenage sex, drinking, driving and drugs.

For the parent of pre-adolescent children, I heartily recommend this book as an attempt to get at the answers on how to help, guide and communicate with your teenage son or daughter. I have several reasons.

First of all, you will find this book helpful because of its readability. Since you can't help your son or daughter by sitting him down and throwing technical words at him about his "sadistic-masochistic ambivalence," Ginott throws no technical words at you. So that you may have some



authentic base by which to understand your teenager, Ginott gives you his points by citing the details of pertinent real-life teenage-parent episodes.

Secondly, you will find he treats your major questions (plus most of the minor ones) sufficiently. Do you want to know why teenagers act the way they do? What policy should you adopt toward the teenager who wants help—but doesn't want *your* help? How do you communicate with a teenager? How do you praise or criticize him? Can you be yourself? How? What should you expect of him? In social relations? Personal habits? The ideological, generational war? How do you deal with maturity? In your child? In your self?

Thirdly, you will have a precise statement of the issue you will face as a teenage parent: "Can teenagers and parents live together in peace and dignity? Only under certain conditions. What are these conditions? This book delineates roads to peace."

If that were the only function I achieved in reading this book, it was well worth it for my two pre-adolescent children. Yet I already know that Lisa and John Mark have gained more than merely the road to peace by their pre-teenage father reading now *Between Parent and Teenager*.

—David Malone

*David Malone was formerly the director of the Biblical Studies Center in Austin, Texas. He is presently a minister living in La Mesa, California.*

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## ***Disturbing and different answers***

*Black Theology and Black Power* by James H. Cone, (New York: Seabury Press, 1969), \$2.95.

Theology is a safe discipline. With little thought an author can theologize his life away without even disturbing his own slumber. Deal with the meaning of the "wholly other" or the "Holy Mother," and the odds are that you will gain a following. There is comforting stability in a theological eloquence that leaves the status quo unchanged. In *Black Theology and Black Power*, James H. Cone has written a book that is as eloquent as a jackhammer. He leaves the theological status quo in shambles, for his theology homes in on the racial agony troubling the heart of our nation. If you read only one book this year dealing with the Christian faith and racial tension, this should be the book. If you are white, read it for the testimony it gives on behalf of the black Christian come of age. If you are black, I can

imagine no more helpful book in relating the Christian faith to the black teen-ager or college student who has given up Christianity. For senior-high or college-age groups, with a competent adult leader, this would make an excellent book for class discussions.

The central thesis of the book is "that Black Power, even in its most radical expression, is not the antithesis of Christianity, nor is it a heretical idea to be tolerated with painful forbearance. It is, rather, Christ's central message to twentieth century America" (p. 1).

Cone recognizes that a definition of Black Power acceptable to all is difficult to come up with, but as a working definition he affirms that Black Power means the "... complete emancipation of black people from white oppression by whatever means black people deem necessary" (p. 6). Black Power, so defined, is a humanizing force, a force that proclaims the black man's independence and identity. The black can live now because he is not afraid to die, and this is, after all, the approach to life personified in Christ.

The Church has failed, Cone argues, as a reconciler of the races because its theology has failed to speak to the specifics of human existence. "... The task of theology," he writes, "is to show what the changeless gospel means in each new situation" (p. 31). This is precisely what has not been done. Black Theology is an attempt to relate the message of the gospel to the need of black people. It is a "... theology whose sole purpose is to apply the freeing power of the gospel to black people under white oppression" (p. 31). The freedom of the black is crucial for the white man because he can be truly free only when he ceases to be an oppressor.

Black Theology is a Christ-centered theology. In Christ, God enters human affairs and takes sides with the oppressed. Their suffering becomes his; their despair, divine despair. Through Christ the poor man is offered freedom now to rebel against that which makes him other than human (p. 36).

The key to Black Theology is that "It refuses to embrace any concept of God which makes black suffering the will of God" (p. 124). "The task of Black Theology is to make Christianity really Christian by moving black people within a spirit of black dignity and self-determination so they can become what the Creator intended" (p. 130).

Since Christ is the supreme gift of love, Christians must live in response to that love. A Christian is one whom Christ has set free, and he must cast his concerns upon his Lord and join God in activity on behalf of the oppressed of the earth. This stance leads to confrontation, and the reader rightly asks: Can love exist where confrontation



occurs? Cone answers YES. The great commandment still stands. The black man loves God because he has been loved and he must respond.

. . . For the black man to respond to God's love in faith means that he accepts as truth the new image of himself revealed in Jesus Christ. He now knows that the definition of himself defined by white society is consistent with the newly found image disclosed in Christ (pp. 51-52).

To love your neighbor, more specifically the white man, ". . . means that the black man confronts him as a Thou without any intentions of giving ground by becoming an It . . . The Black man must, if he is not to lose sight of his new found identity in Christ, be prepared for conflict, for a radical confrontation (p. 53).

Cone argues his case with clarity and force. From his perspective white Christianity is a perversion with scant hope of saving itself. The black church, in most cases, has sold out by adopting an otherworldly orientation. To play a meaningful role in the future, it must look to its pre-Civil War past for direction as it seeks to relate the gospel to black life. Cone speaks pointedly of the reality of violence in our culture, not the potential for violence, because he regards most talk about violence growing out of confrontation as a white smokescreen to divert attention from the daily violence perpetrated by whites upon blacks. The results of violence are seen everywhere on the faces of those walled into ghettos and forced to live on the outer edge of the social order. The

issue, then, revolves around how much violence and where.

This book is articulate and persuasive. But the question remains: Is Black Theology a legitimate exercise? I recoil at a theology that puts emphasis upon racial pride and separateness, a theology that ties God to man's goals. In Reinhold Niebuhr's words:

If coercion and self-assertion and conflict are regarded as permissible and necessary instruments of social redemption, how are perpetual conflict and perennial tyranny to be avoided? What is to prevent the instruments of today's redemption from becoming the chain of tomorrow's enslavement? (*Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 231)

Dr. Cone, I suspect, would dismiss these reservations with a curt "So what! Cut the talk and come to grips with the issues raised." And we must! Too long theologians have kept God at a distance while in the folk theology of white America, those who would claim the name Christian have shaped a white theology. Cone brings the distant God of the theologians into the world of the white theology. He asks the questions theologians have asked throughout the history of the Church, but his answers are different and disturbing. Unlike the esoteric exercises of our theological past, they have an edge of urgency to them and the ring of truth. Cone cannot be dismissed or talked away, and thoughtful Christians will respond to what he has to say.

—Robert M. Randolph

## FORUM

### Gifts of gurgle

Dear Editors:

The apostle Paul spoke of the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:10), but Warren Lewis wrote of the gifts of gurgle:

There is nothing wrong in being a baby in the Lord, in being weak, in loving to coo and gurgle to our Daddy in heaven when, sometimes, "we do not have the words to pray as we ought." For it is then that the Holy Spirit comes to our aid, teaching us to talk to our loving Abba in a heavenly language that transcends human intellect and human speech (Romans 8:26f.). [*MISSION*, November 1969, p. 158]

We briefly comment as follows: First, who has

the gift of interpreting the gurgles? Second, to coo and gurgle requires no gift; pigeons can coo, and uninspired babes coo and gurgle. Their gurgles are no more inspired than their burps. Third, what proof does he have that his coos are a heavenly language but the baby's are uninspired? Fourth, Romans 8 speaks of three groaners: (a) The creation groaneth (8:22), but this is not a heavenly language. (b) We groan, but it is not a sign of our inspiration (8:23). (c) The Spirit makes intercession for us "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (8:26). This does not have reference to any groanings *within us*. It is something the Spirit does in heaven when he intercedes for us (8:26f.).

James D. Bales

Searcy, Arkansas



## Return to goal

Dear Editors:

. . . When is MISSION going to return to her goal or editorial policy printed on the inside of the front cover of each issue? I realize that Dudley Lynch is Feature Editor, but surely he could do better than push time back several years to the time when it was popular to attack anyone opposed to communism. [see April, 1970 article, "The Politics of Harding College"] Or, is he trying to please the "hippies" or "Yippies" or small minority in this country that favors anarchy? I personally feel he is "dragging MISSION in the mud" just to gain the popularity of a few malcontents. . . . Vice President Agnew has had enough to say about Lynch's sources without my commenting on their complete unreliability. . . .

If Lynch had really wanted to be critical of Harding College, wouldn't it have been better for him to suggest that the school get away from teaching some of their narrow-minded viewpoints on scriptural doctrine? . . .

Abe Hatcher

Apollo, Pennsylvania

## Ad nauseum

Dear Editors:

We wish to make known our dissatisfaction with the recent level of articles in MISSION. We feel that the increasingly negative and critical character of the articles of the last six or eight months represents a decline in the quality of the magazine and a departure from the announced editorial policy.

In particular, we find the recent article on Harding College [April, 1970] in very bad taste and lacking in redemptive qualities. As lamentable as Harding's alliance with right-wing politics may be, it certainly is no justification for the tactics of slander, innuendo and guilt by association that have been used in MISSION.

It is especially tragic since there are so many burning issues and questions posed by contemporary American life that need to be addressed. Similarly, in a movement rapidly demonstrating its lack of spiritual resources, it seems that Mis-

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SION might well move from its stage of perennial adolescence to a more mature and constructive stance. While there can be no doubt that there are many foibles of Christians, is it MISSION's purpose to deal in this vein *ad nauseum*?

Wendell Willis  
John Meeker

Austin, Texas

## Disturbing nationalism

Dear Editors:

. . . The kind of nationalism spread by some members of the church of Christ disturb me since strong nationalism seems not to be in harmony with the biblical concept of oneness in Christ. Look at the situation in the last war of the countries of Britain and Germany with each country's churchmen preaching the downfall of the other. The abstracted views of patriotism seem naturally to lead to the exclusion of "alien" cultures. What would our positions be if America and Britain were ever at war?

Brethren in the U.S. may be interested to hear of the tendency of members of the church of Christ in Britain—a completely apolitical one. Many brethren in the last two wars were conscientious objectors since their consciences would not allow them to kill anyone however Anti-Christ he might have been. . . .

Presumably, the Christian's duty under this principle meant that an individual Christian was to live his life and witness to others whatever the political circumstances — whether Stalin, Churchill or Nero ruled. The Christian's duty was to do good to all men, even dirty Communists and Facists. The Bible is completely and significantly silent on commitment to any political view, and I am disturbed when capitalists and communists alike point to the scriptures to prove their theories (there are Christian communists in Britain who do not completely follow Marx or deny God).

The fear of the Red Terror held by many Americans amuses Europeans. Communism strikes me as more of the Scapegoat than the Antichrist. History shows that whenever Christians have gone further than their positive commitment to Christ and have become anti-Non-Christ, they eventually end up on a field of blood. Have Christians not learned yet? Have we not bloodied enough rivers and slaughtered enough men—and women and children—in the name of God? If we were the nation of Israel with a prophet (a *real one*) to refer to for God's command to "Go slay the Enemy," the case might be different.

Tom Hurcombe

London, England



## **Renewal—ask God**

Dear Editors:

. . . I am in complete agreement with Edward Fudge's premise [May, 1970] that "the only proper standard for a New Testament church is the New Testament." The question that raises in my mind is: "Is it either possible or indeed desirable to recreate a New Testament church in this age?" I suggest that it is not.

The Bible is a record of the dealings of God with man—not a creedal statement for all matters of faith and practice. If I want to know what God told Paul, I read Paul. If I want to know what the will of God for me is, I ask God. To base my actions solely on what the Bible says, or the way the church interprets the Bible, is to make idols of the Bible and the church. . . .

As an alternative to worrying about getting a new preacher or strengthening the eldership, may I invite your consideration of the words of the One True God to his servant, Solomon, at the dedication of the first temple:

If my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land (2 Chronicles 7:14).

David T. Broadus

Houston, Texas

## **Change or leave**

Dear Editors:

. . . There are two ways out of the mess [see "The Oakhill Church," May, 1970]. The first way is for each deacon or member who feels as this member does to make an individual appointment with the elders and with love and patience state exactly what the problems are as he sees them and propose some solutions for consideration by the elders. It is vital that the eldership realize the nature and extent of the concern and unhappiness at Oakhill.

If only a small portion of the church desires change that would upset the majority of the church, the elders must wisely reject the change. If a relatively large number of deacons and other members insist on the need for changes, the elders must make some realistic decisions about whether they want the continued presence and support of these members.

The second way out is the only reasonable option left if the elders refuse to initiate change. Without threats, pressures or other efforts to change the *status quo*, leave! And either find a church with meaningful preaching and leadership or start your own with some clear and non-nego-

tiable principles about content and method in worship, preaching, leadership and organization.

There are two things one must not do: (1) exist indefinitely in a church that is unacceptable for the reasons stated by the member and with no hope for improvement and (2) leave in such a manner as to harm those who are content to stay. It is their option and their responsibility.

Christians who continue to worship and serve in a church that does not approximate their concept of New Testament Christianity and thus does not meet their spiritual needs have only themselves to blame. They have knowledge, skills, money, influence and concern. Speak up! Or another church may continue in its complacency, irrelevance and mediocrity because of the default of some of its most concerned and capable members.

Paul Magee

Irving, Texas

## **Anti-theological bias**

Dear Editors:

In his very timely and provocative article ["What Did You Say?" June, 1970], Mr. William J. Cook, Jr. has highlighted a very important point—the necessity of learning to communicate the gospel to a world full of theologically unsophisticated souls. In the process, however, he betrays (or at least lends aid and comfort to) an anti-theological bias which has been a traditional aspect of the "theology" of our brotherhood. Mr. Cook could have made an essential point in his discussion of his third "language hangup." Certainly, it is quite appropriate in religious thinking to avoid "the language of absolute absurdity." In comparison with the dogged certainty of ignorance, new exposures and new insights will probably result in a great deal of what some people call "fuzzy thinking." Clarity and precision are, of course, to be diligently sought; and certainly we could live without "words that do not mean beans in or out of context."

All of this is true whether we are discussing theology with a theologian or a mechanic. One would expect, however, that Mr. Cook would choose as an example of "the language of absolute absurdity" some passage which contained some sort of language absurdity or "ineffectual vacuism." Instead he extracts a passage from a rather scholarly discussion of one of the more important theological issues of the day. The work from which he quotes was obviously not written for the enlightenment of the average mechanic (or even the average English professor). No part of the passage involves any absurdity, however; I hope that Mr. Cook is not implying that pre-



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cision in New Testament exegesis and more exact comprehension of Biblical eschatology are among the “psuedo-ethical trivialities” of which he speaks. Quite orthodox and evangelical Christians throughout the ages have been able to distinguish a somewhat basic difference between gnosticism and the legitimate theological enterprise essential to the doctrinal integrity of the church in every age. Everyone does theology; some more expertly than others. My grandmother does not do theology as well as Mr. Cook; Mr. Cook does not understand some theological issues as well as someone else might.

Perhaps Mr. Cook really does not understand the point of the section he has quoted (I certainly do not know whether he does or not). If he did, he would possibly agree with it. If he does not, his teaching and preaching would benefit greatly from his looking into the matter. The issue of dualism being discussed in the section quoted has great bearing on the nature of practical piety.

The average field hand would not benefit from having a copy of the work quoted. If that is Mr. Cook’s point, it is too obvious to make. I might add that the average field hand (or member of the church to which I have ministered) would not understand or benefit from Mr. Cook’s article. From this I do not infer that Mr. Cook has gone gnostic on us or that his article is an “ineffectual vacuumism.” In fact, I think that it is an excellent article on the whole. My remarks should not be viewed as a reflection on either Mr. Cook or the field hand.

The fact of the matter is that my grandmother will probably enter heavenly bliss never having known what “psallo” means or what difference it makes (and the church would probably be better off if most of its membership thought that “Pre-millennialism” is the disease that Job’s cows got). However, I do hope that Mr. Cook will come to expect more precision and insight from his spiritual teachers.

Mr. Cook’s article is not really the target for

this letter; it is simply the occasion. He is not the first English professor I have known who expects sophistication, expertise and depth of insight from his fellow English teachers, but considers the same qualities in his minister to be symptoms of gnosticism. Neither in Shakespearean studies nor in theology is more precise knowledge of one’s subject to be cavalierly equated with “fuzzy thinking.” If Mr. Cook thinks theologians are bad, he should hear what some of my high school students have said about some of the books English teachers write. Personally, though I may be more ignorant in one than in the other, I think that good literature and good theological writings are both worthwhile—sometimes they are even the same thing.

Mr. Cook’s primary point—the necessity of learning to communicate with the theologically untrained—still needs to be made, but not at the expense of other important aspects of the Christian ministry. Some members of the body are under divine compulsion to use their particular intellectual and scholarly gifts in the service of Christ. We need these members to help make sure that what we are communicating is the gospel and not traditional ignorance and prejudice.

Lynn Mitchell, Jr.

Mercedes, Texas

### Covers

Dear Editors:

Recent MISSION covers have been an excellent variation on the basic design. . . . Who did them?

Carole Straughn

Tübingen, West Germany

*EDITORIAL NOTE: Talmage Minter, an artist in Austin, Texas, to whom we are greatly indebted.—RBW*



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## The Age of the Aspirin

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There is reason for pain. It is an “early warning system” when something is wrong. There are three things that can be done when the shoe pinches the foot. Take a pill to ease the pain, ignore it and hope it will go away or simply remove the shoe. Suppression of pain either physical or emotional, does not eliminate the cause of the pain.

Christianity does not presuppose a life free from tension, worry and fear. However, God has promised to accept those anxieties which are cast on him. This relief requires a total surrender of heart, mind and body. Obviously, it is easier to take a capsule, for one does not have to become so involved.

But, there may be more involvement than one is willing to admit.

—Carl Thompson

CARL THOMPSON is a minister of the Land Park Church of Christ in Sacramento, California.