

# Fulness

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Fulness Volume 18

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# Editorial

## The place of authority

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Over the past months the world wide outreach of *Fulness* has been extending. The magazine now goes to about 50 countries. Readers from Argentina to Zaire will be joining you in reading this issue. It is good to know that our family of readers is so widespread.

This expansion has come about mainly by personal recommendation as readers have introduced the magazine to friends and relatives. Keep up the good work.

Many of you know that Maurice Smith is an adept storyteller, particularly when relating his own experiences. Readers will be glad to know that with this issue Maurice begins a personal page where in his inimitable style he will share with us from everyday life.

It is always a blessing to prepare each issue for the press. Some articles, of course, make a greater impact than others. A lot depends upon our own particular needs or response to God's word. It seems to me that this issue has a number of important articles on the theme of authority. Don't skip through them or you may miss something vital.

The extent of our authority is unbounded: seated with him in heavenly places . . . far above all rule, authority, power and dominion. By comparison the exercise of our authority is so often limited. This restriction may be caused by sin or feebleness of faith but it could be that we misunderstand what true authority is and how it should be exercised in this present age.

When Jesus first demonstrated his authority as the Son of Man it was in the realm of forgiveness. He was ministering to a paralysed man. 'The Son of Man has authority on earth . . . to forgive sins.' (Matt. 9:6). The forgiveness of Christ was exercised not only in a general way

but particularly to those who had sinned against him. 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' (Luke 23:34). We have authority to forgive! It takes divine authority to let go of resentment and bitterness and speak the word of forgiveness.

On another occasion Jesus showed how different his authority was from that of the rulers of the Gentiles. They certainly knew how to lord it. The authority of Jesus was expressed in being a slave. (Matt. 20:25). The authority of the household slave was expressed in doing the job his master had given him to do. (Mark 13:34).

We have power or authority to become children of God. (John 1:12). It is the child who inherits the Kingdom. In our sophisticated society with its false standards and status symbols it takes authority to be childlike.

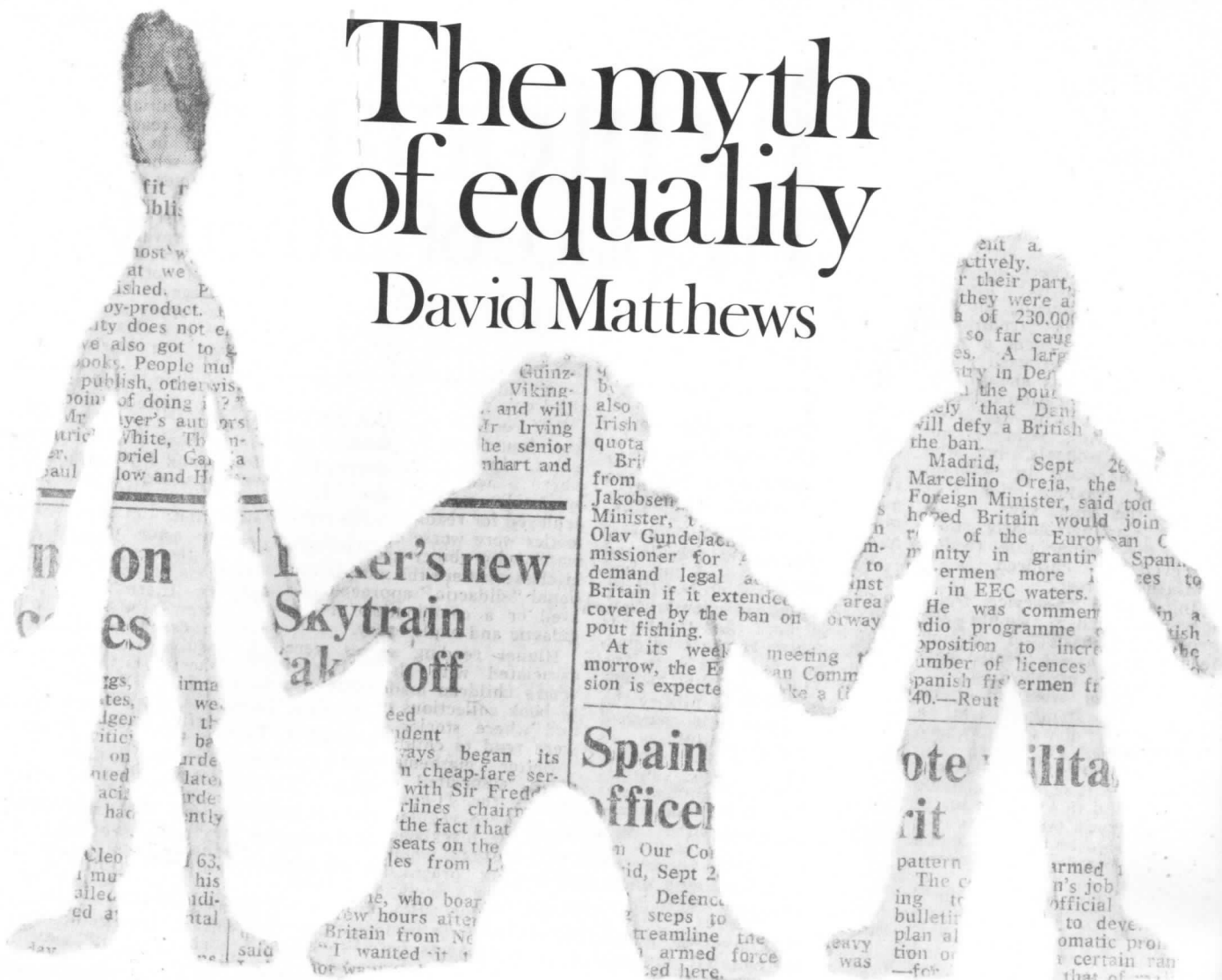
Above all, Jesus had authority to lay down his life (John 10:18). We find it natural to fight for our rights, our reputation or our ministry. Ambition can become a cloak for all manner of self assertiveness. It takes divine authority to lay down our life in a voluntary act of self negation.

These are all aspects of what it means to live in the authority of the Son of Man, of bringing the Kingdom of Heaven down to earth. It doesn't sound as exciting as performing miracles or healings, but our weaknesses in these more obvious areas can often be put down to ignorance of what true authority really is.

Graham Perrins

# The myth of equality

David Matthews



The Church is not a status orientated society. At least it can never be so and still claim to be that which Christ began. When the founder stated categorically that he came not to be served but to serve, then the disciples can hardly state otherwise.

It takes more than statements, however, to change a man's heart, and today it is often more important to carry the title of elder, pastor or minister than to actually carry out their functions. Such is the condition of man's heart. He often desires the status without the service it demands. To put it in New Testament terms, 'you do your alms to be seen of men'. How gratifying it is for us to be seen, to be honoured, to be called 'sir', and yet how utterly meaningless in the pure light of Christ's gospel. This is a present dilemma of the Church; status has become too important.

Leadership has been put on a pedestal, and most of us would like to be up there on it. But a pedestal can only accommodate a few at a time and not many of us make the grade. So, by way of compensation,

we have created a myth. We reassure ourselves with the notion that after all we are all equal, and to make it more reasonable we add the words 'in God's sight'.

But this equality produces a leadership that is not allowed to lead. Oh yes, we allow men to lead us in worship or in praise, or in prayer; but that is a far cry from 'submitting to your leaders and obeying them that have the rule over you'.

Very few know how to serve, but many are ready to impress others with their 'humility'. Such status-seekers wash the feet of the poor, but never fail to file a report on the heavenly editor's desk. 'I tell you they have their reward already.'

How happy are the truly righteous who, when being commended by Christ for their good works, have to ask when all this took place. They are blissfully unaware of their own goodness. They never bothered to keep their score. They were unconsciously righteous.

The myth of equality is almost a religion in the democratic west. It

is enshrined in the American constitution—that all men are created equal in the sight of God—and it is the bedrock of the English parliamentary system, that all men should have an equal say in electing representatives. With such powerful allies it is rather difficult to withstand this ideal; but withstand it I do, for I believe that it has no part in christian life.

Paul encourages us to have the mind of Christ, who thought equality with God not a thing to be grasped at. Yet he was crucified because he declared to his disciples and admitted to those who put him on trial that he and the father were one. And he prayed for us that we might be one, even as he and his father are one. Paul encourages us to understand that God is the head of Christ and that Christ himself will be subject to the father that God might be all in all. 'The Son can do nothing of himself, unless it is something he sees the father doing'. So Christ, who is one with the father, never claimed to be equal with the father



in function. Rather as an obedient son he was glad to be under his father's authority.

You see, both he and the Father understand that to be under authority does not mean to be less than someone. He and the Father, with the Holy Spirit, are one yet each unique. They are so unique that none is the equal of the other yet all are one.

This is the mystery into which we are called to fellowship. This is the glory of the gospel, that I am so unique that no one is my equal and I am the equal of no one. Yet you and I are called to be one. One of the secrets of Christ's life was that he did not try to be the Father or the Spirit—and yet was the perfect expression of both! This is all-glorious! If you and I will get on with being ourselves in the love of God, then he can put us where he will in his plan of things and we will fit together perfectly.

'God is the head of Christ . . . and man is the head of a woman.' Having seen what the first statement means, we can begin to enjoy the second without stress or competition. Let me clearly state that men and women are not equal. To say they are denies them both their rights, and, what is more, decries the whole basis of creation and family life. God made each unique so that they find fulfilment in complementary roles. Adam and Eve did not see each other as a threat but as a complement. Marriage was never meant to be a competition between two equals.

God has ended all conflict, not by averaging everyone out to the same level, but by bringing into humanity the fulness of the Godhead. Thus he declares that unity in his Kingdom is accomplished by men and women of 'different equality' living in complementary harmony with God and each other. Man and woman were not created equal. They were created different—Vive la difference! The denial of such a basic difference has surely reached ridiculous proportions when a cleric is exhorted to pray to our heavenly parent. It would seem that in some sections of the Church God is not only dead, but he is now also of indeterminate gender.

The basis of harmony is for each of us to fulfil our function in the body of Christ. We do not all have the same function, nor do we all have the same say. The Church is not democracy deified—far from it. He

has set first in the Church . . . the names don't really matter, but there are those who are set first in function. For example, Paul unequivocally states, 'For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles.' We in our grey equality can find such statements difficult to stomach. How dare anyone have such an opinion of himself? But Paul is unrepentant; in the same epistle he further states, ' . . . for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody.' Not only are apostles set first in the Church, but it would seem that there are eminent apostles and Paul considers himself one of these. Here is a man who is absolutely clear about his function—so clear in fact that God has seen fit to ratify these statements as part of scriptural writ.

How come Paul is so clear and so straightforward? We get a clue in the latter part of his second statement—'even though I am a nobody'. The truth is that Paul meant that. He really did see himself at one and the same time as a nobody and as an eminent apostle. 'Let him that would be greatest among you be the servant of all.' I am convinced that the more a man sees himself to be a 'nobody', the more he can function in power and authority. The same man could cheerfully say, 'I am the least of the apostles who am not fit to be called an apostle.' 'Not fit', yet eminent.

If the Church can grasp this then leadership will cease to be a status position, and status hungry people will find no entrance to positions of authority in the Church. The same apostle finds himself not only to be 'not fit', but, what is more, to be 'the very least of all the saints'. What we find so difficult is that he meant that with all his heart. I, for one, confess that I could repeat the same words in order to sound humble, but I could not, with the best will in the world, say them and mean them from my heart.

At the end of his life Paul writes to his beloved young protegee, Timothy. One of the first things he says is 'that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am [not was] foremost of all'. So the foremost sinner was also one of the foremost apostles. Is not this the core of the gospel and the rock of offence to our status conscious society? The 'first

is the last' and when you have grasped that, then the 'last is the first'. The meek slain lamb of Revelation chapter 4 is also the roaring lion of Judah. God will have it no other way. We are not 'equal' in function for God has 'set' whom he will.

We are so neurotic about position that we even fail to allow God to love how and whom he will. Some will rightly say that God loves everyone, but I want us to understand that he doesn't love everyone in the same measure. Because we keep making this demand of him we ourselves end up trying to love everyone equally. Christ never lived this way. Everyone he met was aware of being loved and appreciated, but even Jesus had one 'special' disciple whom he loved—and, praise God, he didn't feel guilty about that.

It is recorded in scripture that Jesus chose his disciples. If we examine the record carefully, it becomes apparent that his choice was based on his own personal preferences. 'He called unto him those whom he would.' Out of the multitudes of willing followers he picked out 70 to go before him into certain villages to heal the sick and prepare folk to hear the words of life. The only qualification for being one of the 70 was that you were Christ's choice. The 70 were further reduced to the apostles; out of the 12 he chose three to be with him for special occasions; out of the three he chose one whom he loved.

Isn't it wonderful to learn that Jesus, who was free from all prejudice, had a special friend? A friend so special and a relationship so different from any other, that John has since been remembered as the disciple whom Jesus loved. Let us free ourselves from the bondage of endeavouring to love everyone equally, for it just cannot be done, and God does not require it of us.

All men are created unique by God and are loved uniquely. Let us stop trying to force people into an unreal equality, and allow God to set in his Church whom he will. May the world yet see a society of people who are truly free to be themselves in Christ, joyfully serving him and each other; a society whose leaders are seen to be servants and whose servants are highly honoured.



# This other king

by Malcolm Muggeridge

*This message was delivered at the University of Edinburgh in The High Kirk of St. Giles on 14th January 1968. Malcolm Muggeridge has kindly given permission for us to reprint it in Fulness.*

Nowadays, when I occasionally find myself in a pulpit—one of those bad habits one gets into in late middle age—and never, by the way, in a more famous pulpit than this one, I always have the same feeling as I look round, as I do now at your faces: a deep, passionate longing to be able to say something memorable, to shed some light.

'I am the light of the world,' the founder of the Christian Religion said. What a stupendous phrase! And how particularly marvellous today when one is conscious of so much darkness in the world! 'Let your light shine before men,' he exhorted us.

You know, sometimes on foolish television or radio panels, or being interviewed, someone asks me what I most want, what I should most like to do in the little that

remains of my life, and I always nowadays truthfully answer, 'I should like my light to shine, even if only very fitfully, like a match struck in a dark night, and then flickering out.'

How I should love to be able to speak to you with even a thousandth part of the certainty and the luminosity of St. Paul when, as you heard in the lesson, he was speaking in Thessalonica. Golden words, a bright and a shining light indeed. Now something had happened to him, as it had to Christ's disciples, transforming them from rather inarticulate, cowardly men, who ran away for cover when their leader was arrested, into the most lion-hearted, eloquent, quick-witted, yes, and even joyous evangelists the world has ever known. Irresistible in their oratory, indomitable in their defiance, captivating in their charm; overwhelming in the love which shone in their faces, in their words and in their deeds, so that, as we heard, in the most literal sense they turned the world upside down with their

crazy allegiance to this other king, one Jesus.

Well, what happened to them? We can call it what we like as far as I'm concerned—'the Holy Ghost descending', 'Damascus Road conversion', 'speaking with tongues'—they were reborn! They were new men with a new allegiance, not to any form of earthly authority, but to this other king, this Jesus. Ever since their time, with all the ups and downs, confusions and villainies of institutional Christianity, this notion has persisted, of being reborn, of dying in order to live, and I want to consider whether such a notion, as I understand it the very heart of the christian religion, has any point or validity today.

In the boredom and despair of an expiring Roman civilisation, with all the inevitable accompaniments of permissive morality, addiction to vicarious violence, erotic and narcotic fantasies, it offered a new light of hope, a new joy in living to

one and all, including, perhaps especially including, the slaves. In our uncannily similar circumstances, has it anything to offer today? That's my question. Of course, I can't answer it as St. Paul and the disciples did. They were the beginning; we are the end.

I belong to the twentieth century, with a twentieth century sceptical mind and sensual disposition, with the strange mixture of crazy credulity in certain directions, as for instance in science and advertising (if you happen to cast an eye through the advertisements in your colour supplements you will see displayed there a credulity which would be the envy of every witch doctor in Africa) and equally crazy scepticism, so that illiterate schoolboys and half-baked university students turn aside, with contemptuous disbelief, propositions which the greatest minds and the noblest dispositions of our civilisation accepted as self-evident. That is our twentieth century plight. Let me then, in true twentieth century style, begin with a negative proposition—what I consider to be the ineluctable unviability and absurdity of our present way of life.

How can anyone, apart from an occasional 'with-it' cleric, Provost of King's or Hungarian economist, seriously believe that by projecting present trends into the future we arrive at enduring human felicity, while we go on producing more and more and consuming more and more under the impetus of an ever frenzied persuasion of mass communication media, and at the same time watching the rest of mankind get hungrier and hungrier, in ever greater want; with the means at our disposal to blow ourselves to smithereens many times over, and at the same time becoming ever more neurotic about the imminence of global nuclear war; moving ever faster and further afield, exploring the universe itself, and pursuing happiness, American style; 'grinding out our appetites', with physical and even moral impunity, and spiritual desolation.

It is a state of affairs at once so bizarre and so tragic that I alternate between laughing hilariously at it and looking forward eagerly to my departure, quite soon now—in at most a decade or so. This year, at 65 years old, I move into the N.T.B.R. (Not To Be Resuscitated) bracket, when some high minded, highly skilled doctor will look me

over and decide in his infinite wisdom and humanity whether I am worth keeping alive. As I have said, I alternate between a sense of the utter absurdity of it all and a desire to get out of so nonsensical a world.

May I, moving from general things to more particular ones, consider for instance the situation in this ancient University, with which, through the accident of election, I find myself briefly associated? The students here in this University, as in other universities, are the ultimate beneficiaries under our welfare system. They are supposed to be the spearhead of progress, flattered and paid for by their admiring seniors, an elite who will happily and audaciously carry the torch of progress into the glorious future opening before them.

Now, speaking for myself, there is practically nothing that they could do in a mood of rebelliousness or refusal to accept the values of our run down, spiritually impoverished way of life, for which I shouldn't feel some degree of sympathy or, at any rate, understanding, up to and including blowing up this magnificent edifice in which we are now assembled. Yet how infinitely sad; how, in a macabre sort of way, funny that the form their insubordination takes should be a demand for pot and pills, for the most tenth rate sort of escapism and self-indulgence ever known! It is one of those situations a social historian with a sense of humour will find very much to his taste. All is prepared for a marvellous release of youthful creativity; we await the great works of art; the high spirited venturing into new fields of perception and understanding—and what do we get? The resort of any old, slobbering debauchee anywhere in the world at any time—dope and bed.

The feeling aroused in me by this, I have to confess, is not so much disapproval as contempt, and this, as you may imagine, makes it difficult, in fact impossible, for me as Rector to fulfil my functions. Here, if I may, I should like to insert a brief word of personal explanation. I, as Rector, and Allan Frazer, as my Assessor, find ourselves, as you know, responsible for passing on to the university authorities the views and requests of the student body as conveyed to us by their elected officers and as set forth in their magazine *Student*, for whose conduct they

are responsible. Their request concerning the birth pill is, as it happens, highly distasteful to us. The view of the S.R.C. officers as expressed by some of them, and not repudiated publicly by any of them, is that the Rector and his Assessor are bound, not only to pass on, but to recommend whatever the S.R.C. may decide. This is a role which, in my opinion, no self-respecting Rector or Assessor, could possibly countenance, and I have therefore asked the Principal to accept my resignation, as has my Assessor. The ensuing Rectorial contest, when it takes place, will serve to show, as I hope, what calibre of candidate will come forward to contest the Rectorship on the terms laid down by the present S.R.C. officers, and whether the views now put forward by them in fact enjoy the support of a majority of the students of Edinburgh University.

So, dear Edinburgh students, this may well be the last time I address you, and this is what I want to say—and I don't really care whether it means anything to you or not, whether you think there is anything in it or not. I want you to believe that this row I have had with your elected officers has nothing to do with any puritanical attitudes on my part. I have no belief in abstinence for abstinence's own sake, no wish under any circumstances to check any fulfilment of your life and being. But I have to say to you this: that whatever life is or is not about, it is not to be expressed in terms of drug stupefaction and casual sexual relations. However else we may venture into the unknown, it is not, I assure you, on the plastic wings of Playboy magazine or psychedelic fancies.

I have recently, as you might have heard, been concerned in making some films for BBC Television on the New Testament; and it involved, along with much else, standing on what purports to be and, unlike most shrines, may well be, the Hill of Beatitudes, where the most momentous of all sermons was preached some two thousand years ago. It was rather marvellous standing there, looking down on the Sea of Galilee and trying to reconstruct the scene—the obscure teacher and the small, nondescript, mostly illiterate crowd gathered round him. For the Christian religion began, let us never forget, not among brilliant academic minds,



not among the wealthy, nor the powerful, nor the brilliant, nor the exciting, nor the beautiful, nor the fascinating, not among television personalities or leader-writers on *The Guardian*; it began among those very simple, illiterate people.

And then there were those words, those incomparable words, which were to echo and re-echo through the world for centuries to come, even now not quite lost—how it is the meek, not the arrogant, who inherit the earth—how we should love our enemies and do good to them that hate us—how it is the poor, not the rich, who are blessed, and so on. These words go on haunting us all, even though we ignore them; the most sublime words ever spoken.

One of the Beatitudes that had for some reason never before impressed me particularly, this time stuck in my mind and has stayed there ever since. It is: 'Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.' May I commend this Beatitude to you as having some bearing on our present controversies and discontents. To see God is the highest aspiration of man, and has preoccupied the rarest human spirits at all times. Seeing God means understanding, seeing into the mystery of things. It is, or should be, the essential quest of universities like this one, and of their students and their staff. Note that the realisation of this quest is not achieved through great and good deeds, nor even through thought, however perceptive and enlightened, certainly not through sensations, however generated, or what is called success however glittering. The words are clear enough—'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

To add to the macabre comedy of our situation, into the ribald scene of confusion and human inadequacy that I have been talking about there break idiot voices prophesying a New Jerusalem just round the corner. One always, I find, underestimates the staying power of human folly. When poor old H. G. Wells breathed his last, having produced in *Mind at the End of its Tether* a final hysterical repudiation of everything he had ever said or thought, I fondly supposed and said to myself that no more would be heard in my time of men like gods. How wrong I was. A quarter of a century later a Provost of King's Cambridge was to carry the same notion to an even higher

pitch of fantasy. No doubt, long after I am gone, someone will be saying on some indestructible programme like *Any Questions* that a touch more abortion, another year at school, and birth pills given away with the free morning milk, and all will be well.

What are we to do about it, this crazy gadarene slide? I never met a man made happy by money or worldly success or sensual indulgence, still less by the stupefaction of drugs or alcohol. Yet we all, in one way or another, pursue these ends, as the advertiser well knows. He offers them in technicolour and stereosound, and there are many takers. The politician likewise, often with a nondescript retinue of academic and clerical support, offers the same package in collective terms. Underneath, we all know how increasingly hollow and unconvincing it is—the great society, mankind coming of age, men like gods, all the unspeakable cant of Utopians on the run.

Our very art and literature, such as they are, convey the same thing, the bad dreams of a materialistic society. Bacon and Pinter tapering off into the sheer incoherence of a Burroughs and a Beckett, with the Beatles dancing on our graves, and Alan Ginsburgh playing his hand harmonium, and that delectable old Hindu conman, the Maharishi, throwing in his blessing. Communist utopianism produced Stalin; the pursuit of happiness, American style, produced Lyndon Johnson, and our special welfare variety has produced Harold Wilson. If that doesn't put paid to all three nothing ever will. As for the scientific utopia looming ahead, we have caught a glimpse of that, too, in the broiler houses, the factory farms, and lately the transplant operations, with still warm bodies providing the spare parts for patching up others, and so ad infinitum.

So I come back to where I began, to that other king, one Jesus; to the Christian notion that man's efforts to make himself personally and collectively happy in earthly terms are doomed to failure. He must indeed, as Christ said, be born again, be a new man, or he's nothing. So at least I have concluded, having failed to find in the past experience, present dilemmas and future expectations, any alternative proposition. As far as I am concerned, it is Christ or nothing.

To add a final touch of comic relief (because you know an ex-editor of *Punch* cannot help, even in the most gruesome situations looking around for something comic), I might add that what I have just said is, I know, far more repellent to most of the present ecclesiastical establishment than any profession of scepticism or disbelief. They find such an attitude pessimistic, though I wonder whether, in the history of all the civilisations that have ever been, more insanely optimistic notion ever been entertained than that y and I, mortal, puny creatures, may yet aspire with God's grace and Christ's help to be reborn into what St. Paul calls 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'.

I increasingly see us in our human condition as manacled and in a dark cell. The chains are our mortal hopes and desires, the dark cell our ego, in whose obscurity and tiny dimensions we are confined. Christ tells us how to escape, striking off the chains of desire and putting a window in the dark cell through which we may joyously survey the wide vistas of eternity and the bright radiance of God's universal love. No view of life, as I am well aware, could be more diametrically opposed to the prevailing one today, especially as purveyed in our mass communication media, dedicated as they are to the counter-proposition, that we can live by bread alone, and the more the better. Yet I am more convinced than I am in my own existence that the view of life Christ came into the world to preach, and died to sanctify, remains as true and as valid as ever, and that all who care to, young and old, healthy and infirm, wise and foolish, with or without 'A' or 'O' levels, may live thereby, finding in our troubled, confused world, as in all other circumstances and at all other times, an enlightenment and a serenity not otherwise attainable. Even though, as may very well prove the case, our civilisation, like others before it, soon finally flickers out, and institutional Christianity with it, the light Christ shed shines as brightly as ever for those who seek an escape from darkness. The truth he spoke will answer their dilemmas and assuage their fears, bringing hope to the hopeless, zest to the despairing and love to the loveless, precisely as happened two thousand years ago and through all the intervening centuries.

**In a word** (werd) prep./adj./n. (colloq.) Regular feature (not all Gk.) in printed publication, lucid, free of obscurity, radical (of the roots), concise, enlightened, particular, source of which can be traced from original Jn. (abbr.) MacLauchlan.

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# IN A WORD

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The word *koinonia* is derived from the adjective *koinos*, common. Its root meaning is 'a having in common'. In classical Greek, the word meant an association or partnership, and the related verb was used of business dealings. It had other phases of meaning too, all related to the root idea of 'common': it was used to suggest the idea of community, of sharing an opinion with someone (i.e. agreeing with him), and Plato used the noun in the phrase 'koinonia of men with women' to refer to co-education! Later on, the word came to be the opposite to *pleonexia*, which means a selfish, grasping attitude. *Koinonia* was generous sharing.

At the time of the New Testament, secular occurrences of the verb refer to sharing an action with someone (e.g. sharing the misdeeds of a wrongdoer); sharing a common possession (e.g. men sharing human nature); and of sharing life together. A man's testimony to his deceased wife read, 'I shared (*ekoinones*) all life with you alone.' The noun is used of business partnership, marriage, and of relationship with a god—the last two categories implying close sharing and intimacy.

Such is the background to the New Testament occurrences, which, for convenience, I will tabulate below.

1. *Koinonia* with God (1 John 1:6) means sharing a common life with God, having intimate union and partnership with him! Such a relationship excludes conscious sin, for God's partners do not 'walk in the darkness'. Those who enjoy fellowship with God display like characteristics to his, for they are

'partakers (*koinonoi*) of the divine nature' (2 Pet 1:4).

2. *Koinonia* with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:3) implies enjoying with them the same kind of fellowship they enjoy with each other! The exact construction of John 1:1 is a telling reference to the beauty of the active fellowship between the Father and the pre-incarnate Son. Jesus' incarnate life displayed the intimacy of his fellowship with the Father. Our lives, now, are to be saturated with such communion, and to display the inevitable result: the image of the Father and the Son.

3. *Koinonia* with Jesus (1 Cor 1:9; Phil 2:1) has to do with being *in* Jesus (see context), and sharing in all he is and does. It has to do with union and participation with him in his completed victory, and in the progress to the full manifestation of his kingdom. It means that a testimony to him is made visible in us. It means being one spirit (lit. '*koinonia* of spirit') with him, moved and motivated similarly.

4. *Koinonia* with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14). We share a common life and purpose with the Holy Spirit as we actively participate with him in the realisation of God's plan. We share with him in love, reality and revelation (John 16:13). We share his thoughts and attitudes. We are his partners as he actively accomplishes the will of God in the church and in the world. We are to be intimate with him, so we know his stirring and motivating us in all things.

5. *Koinonia* in the body and blood of Jesus (1 Cor 10:16). We participate in the body and blood of

Christ; we take the bread and the cup. This is not a mystical sacrament (see 'Breaking Bread' in *Fulness 13*), but something very real and practical. The body has to do with Jesus' impartation of himself to us. The blood has to do with his sacrificial death. We share in him and one another on the basis of all he has accomplished through his death. We eat and drink together to express this union. We enjoy Jesus himself, and participation in deliverance from bondage and sin, and in full salvation and kingdom glory.

6. *Koinonia* of the saints involves energetic, wholehearted, perpetual, exciting involvement together in submission to Jesus as Lord, in salvation, prayer and breaking of bread. Sharing in every practical area of life flows from this (Acts 2:42 in context). There is a definite commitment to one another involved (Gal 2:9). The fellowship flowing from this commitment is a continuous experience (1 John 1:3), as we live in God's purity and righteousness and hence in reality and honesty with one another. There is nothing hidden, nothing of which we are ashamed, to hold us apart (1 John 1:7).

7. *Koinonia* in faith (Philn 6). This is a very complicated verse, which literally reads: '... in order that the *koinonia* of your faith may become operative in a complete knowledge of every good thing in us leading into Christ'. The primary reference is to the sharing of faith in the community of the redeemed. Through consciousness of God's full provision in Christ, our faith may encourage and quicken that of others as we jointly move into

*Continued on page 23*

It was the occasion of David's eighteenth birthday. Neighbours, friends and Tesco's supermarket staff had been adequately wine and dined. We had been called from the garden into the large living room for the speeches. There was an unusual air of expectancy as David's father became the focus of attention.

'Well, Gerald will tell you,' he began, 'I am no communicator.' 'Nevertheless I would like to say a few words about David. As many of you know, Coral and I adopted him when he was less than a month old. Since then we have loved him as our son . . . I was fortunate enough to have a public school education but later turned my hand to carpentry, plumbing and electrical skills. Like me, David, you are not an academic and perhaps, despite your education, will never be one. What blesses me about your life, nevertheless, is your willingness to serve others, despite your academic limitations.' At this point numerous Tesco staff shouted, 'Right on!' 'Son, I don't care if you never pass an examination providing you continue to serve others. I don't want you to be loved and appreciated simply for what you have achieved in terms of scholarship, but rather for what you are as a man. I love you, son, and I am proud of you because you are humble enough to be continually looking after other people and blessing them in very undramatic ways.'

If David's father had ever touched a raw nerve, it was now. Unconverted friends and neighbours were visibly moved; here was intimate reality. David, a little backward when it came to some things, had earned a lot of warm respect and friendship as he had willingly swept up the mess others had made and tidied up when everyone else had gone home. A strange mixture of conviction and gratitude filled the room. All the world, it seems, loves a server.

There is, of course, no premium on ignorance; there is no virtue in being unable to remember facts, hold a conversation about current affairs or understand the technicalities of car mechanics. Personally, I have been helped beyond measure by some of my more academic and knowledgeable companions. However, an extraordinary emphasis has been placed on this side of things in both the world

and the Church, almost to the complete exclusion of a more important facet of God's Kingdom, one even more foundational than knowledge.

In our own church community we have a number of people who went through various bible colleges before they eventually found themselves joined together with folk in Cobham. The other day one of these, a man in his early twenties,

## Bossing and Serving



### Gerald Coates

was chatting with me in our kitchen. He said, 'You know, I can't think of one thing I was taught at bible college which has any relevance to what I am doing now.' Perhaps that is an exaggeration, but he would be the first to admit that the pursuit of study, reading of books, passing an examination, gathering of knowledge and preaching out what he had learned, have made it extremely difficult for him to relate to the normal aspects of life: decorating, making friends, garden-

ing, car maintenance, sport, etc., never mind cultivating the sort of attitudes that David had.

Now of course the two are not mutually exclusive, but the former often promotes a wrong concept of what ministry is and puts a man beyond picking up a garden fork or a paintbrush. Such men can only find fulfilment in 'ministry'. Many such men have ended up pastoring churches, their academic qualifications giving them a pseudo-authority. Sadly they are often unable to relate to people and the things of life. Indeed at bible colleges you are often taught not to get too involved with your congregation, not to make friends or have favourites, the complete opposite to Jesus and his ministry.

Realising you cannot build a church on preaching alone, I have counselled a number of such men to return to work. They have been predictably horrified. In their thinking they would deplore the clergy-laity concept, but they still feel that they are somewhat different from everyone else, despite continually telling their congregations, 'We are all the same really.' (One vicar I know kept telling his folk he was the same as them and so one week his entire youth fellowship turned up in dog collars!)

When I was in Sweden recently God spoke clearly to me concerning three areas related to the issue of serving. The first was that division was coming between real leaders and 'professional' leaders. There are those who are willing to serve and those who itch for the status of a place on the platform. There are those who are willing to serve in mundane ways if necessary and those who will only operate in their 'professional capacity'. Paul, for example, gladly received support for his ministry but wasn't beyond setting up business making tents.

It is also interesting that many of his apostolic teams were made up of 'helpers'. We are not told much more about them than that. One of my closest friends is a helper. He helps me cut the hedge, mow the lawn, develop my character, thrash out practical issues in the church, prepare halls for public meetings and a multitude of other things. I have no doubt he is growing into specific ministry, but at the moment for me he is a helper. Under my oversight his sphere of service is growing and with it his



sphere of authority as well. The sacrifices he has made in serving me and my family are causing others in the church to trust him and invest in him the authority they want him to have.

Of course I know it doesn't sound very impressive to be a helper. 'Hello, brother, I hear God is using you; what is your ministry?' 'Well, actually I am a helper.' Doesn't quite have the same ring as apostle or prophet, does it? But I would rather have that helper around me than a dozen pastors or evangelists who only want to work with me to promote their own ministry. Three years ago a brother asked me to help him weed a field. I was shocked and disturbed. 'Me, weed a field?' I thought to myself.

'Don't you realise how busy I am? There are plenty of people to weed fields. I am a man of responsibility and authority. I have the care of churches on my heart. Besides I am a ministry.'

It is all very laughable now, but wasn't at the time. By the grace of God I have been rescued from a course which ends in ministry becoming authoritarian or theoretic, where I am not willing to dirty my hands for others. I have said to the men I work with that if any of them is beyond working in someone else's garden, helping another decorate his house or clean his car, mend a lawnmower or sweep his neighbour's yard, then he has no usefulness in the Kingdom of God. Should such a person be promoted into leadership, he will suffer from all of the accompanying pride that attaches itself to the status seeker.

The second thing I sensed God speak to me about concerned those who are open to change and those who are not. Not those who have been open to change and those who have not been, but those who right now are open to change in their lives, families and fellowships. God is growing the Church and growth is a continuing process. Hence there is a need to remain flexible, enabling God to grow what he will out of what exists.

We must get beyond releasing top echelon leaders who can preach, teach and administrate. We are not to be an army with a few top ranking strategists who are beyond helping out with the spud bashing. The Church is full of brilliant men and women of non-academic qualifications who nevertheless have a heart to serve. Their minis-

try, if released, supported and financed by a local body of Christians, would make a tremendous impact on the Church.

The world produces bosses but the Church produces servants. Everyone in the world, it seems, wants to be his own boss. Bosses are not open to change, other than to increase the sphere of their own influence. However, servants must be continually open to change, for they are subject to the wishes of their masters. Our Lord did not have to maintain his authority by adopting a ministerial pose, feeling responsible for people who had not given him responsibility and ordering people around. 'I came, not to be served, but to serve,' he said. And whilst he preached and taught, healed the sick and cast out demons, he also prepared meals, washed men's feet, visited friends and often spent time with his disciples, doing nothing in particular. He wasn't concerned with what people thought his ministry might be; he just got on and served people.

The third thing God said to me was that I should give my car to one of my closest friends. Now the first two things I felt God speak to me about, I received gladly, but this last thing I felt was probably of the flesh. So I ignored this final word until my tour of Sweden was over; you always feel differently about people when you are away from them. However, eventually I realised that God's word was not going to go away. I shared the situation with Anona, my wife, and after a few days we were both quite sure that God had spoken. Whilst we were not exactly thrilled at the idea of giving away our car and having no money to buy another of a similar quality, we felt our response to God and obedience to his word was of prime importance. The brother in question had no car and when we told him and his wife they were of course both thrilled and stunned. I drive a relatively new jet-black Ford Capri Special, 'Who wouldn't be happy to have that as a present?' I thought to myself.

However, even in our own fellowship, where giving and serving has become a part of life, I was both amused and somewhat concerned at some of the reactions. With some you would have felt that I was giving away my life blood instead of a car, signing my death warrant rather than passing on £3,000

worth of machinery. As it turned out, other friends have blessed us financially, enabling us to buy a new car straight away. If we cannot serve others with things, we shall never be able to serve them with ourselves.

There is a general principle here. The first mention of Barnabas was when he served the apostles with his money. He did not put it into a trust or save it up for a rainy day, nor did he feel it necessary to get direct guidance as to what he ought to do with it, but gave it to men he trusted. I am looking forward to the day when fellowships, families and individuals will go to apostolic ministry and say, 'Brother, God has blessed us with excess. I know there are needs, but I am not sure where they are or what the priorities are, but because I trust you I give it to you to administrate as you feel is necessary.'

A little later Barnabas was called by the Holy Spirit to serve in a 'full-time' capacity along with Paul. I believe the church there gave an almighty amen to the voice of God. In their hearts they knew this was the sort of man they wanted to lead in the Church. God has always entrusted such men with authority, not official but real, not taken but given. As has been said already, you have only got as much authority as people give you. If you take more, either you will lose those you rule over or your authority will be no more than that of a policeman.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn recently delivered his first major speech for three years. His main target was not the Soviet system which he has vividly chronicled, but the West, where he has made his new home. He denounced the evils of civic cowardice, immoral legalism and godless humanism. He also said, 'I have received letters in America from highly intelligent persons, maybe a teacher in a far away small college, who could do more for the renewal and salvation of this country than many in official places of responsibility, but his country does not hear him.' Brethren, we in the Church do not have to adopt such an attitude. We must, if we are going to see the purposes of God fulfilled in our time, keep our ears open for the unrecognised servants, those gifted in non-dramatic and non-public ways, whose attitude is only to serve and bless others and in so doing bless God.

# The streams make glad?

## John Noble

It's no secret that the present move of God across the world is made up of many streams of emphasis. What is happening in individual nations is no exception to the general rule. In the British Isles we see groups springing up, having an aspect of truth, and the measure of life they enjoy is a testimony to the fact that God is with them—at least to some degree.

However, the idea behind the scripture chorus which has become so popular, is that the streams should flow together into one great river which will bring gladness and joy to the city of God. Tragically, what has happened is that facets of truth have been set up as the whole. The ground of fellowship often ceases to be in the simple recognition of a walk with God and a life in the spirit. Instead it becomes related to a common interpretation of scripture or a practice of tradition. The refreshing little stream, which might have added its force to others in making a great river, forges its own path in an effort to become the river itself.

The result, far from being gladness and joy, is confusion and division, for God will not be limited to our petty understanding of him. He is committed to nothing less than a full expression of his kingdom life in 'the city'. That expression will only be brought to completion through that which every stream of truth supplies. We shall not achieve it alone or by simply uniting with those who see things as we do.

Inevitably when two streams meet there is turbulence and all kinds of undercurrents. They boil and bubble as they settle down to flow on in a common course. Most of us

prefer to avoid the pain and problems of merging streams and so we continue to meander in some peaceful backwater. However the spirit is moving and God is calling us to lose ourselves in one another, and ultimately we shall all be lost in him. The streams thus united increase their momentum and speed on back to the ocean, whence they originally came.

At the moment, I consider that the multiplicity of christian groups and denominations fall into four main categories with an infinite variety of sub-divisions in each. I should like to make mention of these for two reasons: that we might see first the utter futility of trying to make it on our own, and then, secondly, the tremendous wisdom of God in calling us together. For whilst some may be beginning to realise that others need what they have, few seem to be really convinced that they will fail to make it without the input of their brothers.

I have based my breakdown on a passage of scripture taken from Psalm 107 verse 3, which depicts a remnant returning to Mount Zion, to the house of the Lord. They come from all four corners of the land bringing their own peculiar blessing and, hopefully, leaving behind their harmful idiosyncrasies.

First, let's consider the northern tribes, the cold north where emotions and feelings are hidden under winter garb and caution is the watchword. The need for order and discipline is emphasised together with a 'solid biblical approach'. Structure and form are frequently the subjects under discussion here, and there's plenty of bible teaching or exposition. Any extravagance in praise and worship is frowned upon; the soul is to be kept under strict control as being a christian is a serious business. Thus great weight is placed on evangelism and activities such as bible and literature distribution, and work amongst the underprivileged. At best the north produces folk with a sense of awe and reverence towards God, with a thorough bible knowledge and a willingness to share the gospel. At worst we find men being ruled by the letter of the law, with legalism and hypocrisy rife. The bible is elevated to be the third person of the trinity, and it may be idolised as such.

At the other extreme are the brothers from the south. They are used to a much warmer climate with plenty of sun and balmy breezes. Spontaneity is their theme; they are ruled by the Spirit and who knows what he may do next? They speak much of miracles, revelation and experience and tend to despise human thinking. They lay great stress on hearing God speak by the spirit and they very often claim, 'The Lord told me . . .' Guidance can come through random bible verses and they delight in manifestations. In some cases folk may fall back under the 'power' when prayed for. Demon forces are the enemy and deliverance is the answer. There is usually a great deal of tongues speaking and prophesying.

The more earthly responsibilities such as work, family life, discipline and enjoyment, if considered at all, are necessary evils and not much to do with the move of God. Meetings and conferences are central, with testimony and witness high on the list. On the positive side these folk give room for God to speak and move in unusual ways. Their devotion to praise can be a real example and they are almost always willing to speak to outsiders about the Lord. On the negative side, character seems to be trodden down in the rush for the supernatural, and the devil is blamed for anything that goes wrong. A sickly pseudo-spirituality emerges which cripples reality. There's also considerable group pressure applied to get newcomers to conform.

Now, moving on there are the worldly westerners with their talk of friendship and of being natural. They do not feel threatened by materialism and openly enjoy things which other christians look down upon. They minister much on the Church as an alternative society or community and believe firmly that the Kingdom of God is to be established upon earth. As a result of this teaching the folk tend to be close together, often sharing their homes and finances. Creativity and art are more likely to find a place amongst these groups as they see no division between the sacred and secular; thus music and dance are much in evidence in worship as well as in normal living. They do not have much respect for sabbaths, holy days or tradition, and formal prayer and breaking of bread may

be neglected if they are not seen to have obvious input into the life of the community.

The strength of these fellowships lies in the depth of their personal relationships. The meetings and buildings are no longer central as life and living have taken priority. There is an out and out commitment to reality and to the family. The weaknesses that emerge are often in the realm of self-sufficiency and a pre-occupation with the home. The demand for reality can produce inactivity and a problem orientated company, and may also generate unbelief.

Finally, there are those from the mystical east where sacraments and spiritual exercises are of prime importance. Buildings, shrines and places rate high in their estimation, together with holy days (and I'm not only talking of Roman and Anglo Catholic charismatics here—many evangelicals make their pilgrimages for thousands of miles to 'walk where Jesus walked'). Religious art, crosses and texts, and other images thrive, and the Church building is referred to as 'the house of God'. They see the Lord very clearly in their observances, and the bread and wine in particular take on special significance. Beauty and devotion are meaningful words to them, and there is a tendency to elevate the celebrate state. The need for service and self-denial may well be stressed and can lead to almost complete separation from normal living.

However, it is good to see that among them many singles do find genuine fulfilment and express a deep concern in their work for the Lord and the community. There is generally an openness to the miraculous and, in the more developed community style situations, a real willingness to receive discipline and authority. The bad effects come in the form of fear, superstition and even idolatry when an undue emphasis is placed on form, tradition and ceremony. I suppose this stream is more prevalent in the USA than here in the British Isles, although the numbers are growing in Ireland, particularly in the South.

Obviously this article in no way deals adequately with the differences in these streams; indeed it is not my purpose to attempt that.

What I would like to achieve is to open folk up to the realisation that we actually do need one another. Surely we all understand that we shall never find all the checks and balances we need in ourselves, but rather in a willingness to be related to others. If we are able to find our security in God, we shall not need to defend our denomination or group or doctrine. We shall be in a position to take time to find out what others are really trying to say. As secure people in Christ we shall not be changeable but we shall be open to change. We will learn to see through the extremes and the caricatures of doctrine to discover the reality in Christ which others enjoy.

It is a common human failing to feel guilty by association; to fear that we shall be labelled or even tainted if we mix with others who appear to be less spiritual. This kind of concern is certainly unjustified in the light of the relationships Jesus sustained. Nevertheless, this problem constantly cripples the work of God's Spirit in bringing Christians together. We need to remember that Jesus taught that light overcomes darkness. Our knowledge of Jesus should affect those with whom we share, rather than the reverse. How glad I am that Jesus did not withdraw from Peter when he cursed and made his denial, nor from Thomas who seemed to make such unreasonable demands. It is clear that we cannot condone rebellion or outright sins, but immaturity, lack of vision, impetuosity and so on, are all part of growing up and we must learn to hold on to one another when these things are being manifested. To pull back from involvement when a brother's weakness, or apparent extremes, begin to show can be the very thing which pushes him into further extremes and even into total failure, whereupon we justify our caution. 'That's just what I expected!' we cry, gratified that we were right once again.

The strange thing is that we are often willing to associate with those furthest from us in doctrine or revelation. We are less likely to be aligned with them, I suppose, and we may even be heralded as ambassadors for unity and commended for our brave approach. It is often those who are nearest to us in vision who

cause us the most difficulty. It is extremely unlikely that I'll be accused of becoming a high Anglican and so I may happily share the platform with such a brother; but if I'm seen with the leader of that slightly super-spiritual house group at the other end of town, people might think we're due for a merger. I'm sure many Christians will find that they have to face God's judgment as a result of their endeavour to remain 'pure'. Many may discover that their discernment was a genuine gift from God, but that their undoing was in the misuse of the knowledge God gave them.

There are at least two ways in which I can see the Lord calling the streams to come together. The first is at leadership level, both locally and extra-locally. God's men need to learn to open themselves up to one another, initially as brothers and then as ministries. If we enter into this kind of exposure as a result of the Holy Spirit's prompting we will eventually discover that security is growing amongst us, and in time we will find our groups and fellowships uniting. It will take time and effort, but can we afford to spare the expense in the long run?

The second way is through development of friendships amongst the saints across our fellowship and denominational structures. This will need great care and wisdom as we don't want leaders feeling that there is an infiltration of fifth columnists undermining the work.

As relationships amongst leaders develop and genuine friendships spread throughout the body of Christ, we shall find trust and harmony emerging, which will make a platform for a deeper work of the Spirit. If we do not respond we shall discover either that another generation passes without God's purpose being fulfilled, or that we shall be pressed together by circumstances: perhaps by economic depression or persecution, as has happened elsewhere in the world. My prayer is that the Lord will have a free will offering of response from his people in answer to the Spirit's universal call to unity; in the end perhaps, this will be the only truly acceptable sacrifice to make way for the coming of the King.

22



# Flashback

*A reconstruction by Graham Perrins of the kind of article that may have been published by the religious press in 50/60 AD.*

The following letter was addressed to one of our leading Bishops. A copy came to us from a reliable private source. We have decided to publish it in full. Paul of Tarsus has been subjected to much criticism in recent months, but he still has a considerable following throughout the world. Any decision made by the Bishop in response to this formal complaint is likely to have far reaching effects.

My Lord Bishop

I respectfully submit, in response to your request the following report on the activities of Paul of Tarsus. The details given may be verified not only from written testimony gathered by myself, but also from public accounts compiled by the accused himself and from the account of some of his followers. He in fact stands self condemned.

I am in the process of writing a more detailed and substantial account, but I feel that because of the seriousness of the case it has been necessary for me to submit this preliminary report in order that my lord should not be held back from immediate action.

It grieves me to report that one who claims to represent our Lord should be the source of so much public disorder. He has offended our Jewish brothers in Damascus, Jerusalem, Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, Berea and Achaia. In most of these places he has succeeded in stirring up large crowds, and the ensuing riots have resulted in many being seriously injured.

In the matter of winning the Jewish people to Christ, his methods are seriously suspect, to say the least. His usual approach is to use their synagogues. Here, far from behaving as a guest as you might expect, he wastes no time in propounding his own controversial viewpoints. As you will imagine, these ideas, whilst understood by ourselves, are obviously antagonistic to long cherished Jewish traditions, and are thus guaranteed to confuse and upset. It is surely bad policy to openly

attack and affront those we are seeking to win. Apart from the rudeness of the man, I am concerned that doors of witness are being permanently closed to the Church. Our long term plans to build a sympathetic and understanding relationship with our Jewish brothers are being irreparably damaged.

I am afraid that the area of his offence has not been limited to the Jews. Uprisings have occurred amongst Gentiles also. In these days of harsh economic pressures, high taxes, and large scale unemployment it is deplorable to have to report that many have been put out of work as a direct result of Paul's influences. Philippi and Ephesus have been particularly affected. In the latter city, silversmiths and goldsmiths of high repute have seen their businesses ruined. Old established trades have been hardest hit. I have on my files reliable written testimony of a number of instances of hardship which can be directly attributed to this man's activities. It is obvious that we will need to accept some responsibility in the matter.

The economy of the regions concerned has been seriously affected and the hostilities of all the leading businessmen aroused. Again, in Ephesus he instigated the burning of literature valued at over 50,000 pieces of silver. Similar repercussions ensued. This behaviour can only be described as wilful vandalism. Many irreplaceable historical and religious documents, of great interest to students of antiquity, were totally destroyed. They were also of not inconsiderable financial value and their destruction in my view can only be described as criminal, particularly as their sale could well have financed much needed welfare services in the area.

In the sphere of local church life his movements have been no less devastating. He has split church after church over the issues of circumcision and the place of the Law. Whilst we do not deny the validity of his basic position, it is clear that due allowance must be made for the outworking of these principles in each locality. Patience must be exercised towards those from Jewish backgrounds. Understanding and consideration must be shown to older believers who find it hard to reconcile proposed changes with their past behavioural patterns.

In the area of personal relationships with fellow workers there is much to be desired. He is arrogant and boastful, an individualist who is always seeking the dominant role.

A colleague of mine, Barnabas, has referred to a personal clash he once had with him which divided his apostolic team and ended a united front that had been much blessed of God. Although my colleague refused to blame him, it is clear that this clash was no isolated one. His abrasive personality came to the fore again at Antioch, and I have first hand accounts of the way in which he publicly insulted Peter.

He has shown great reluctance to receive advice. He even continued a planned trip to Jerusalem in blatant disregard to the warnings of God given through the prophetic ministry.

His own behaviour, not surprisingly, is most inconsistent. What he demands that others should stop doing, he continues to do himself. In Cenchrea he followed the Jewish practice of letting his hair grow whilst keeping a vow. In Jerusalem he observed Jewish laws of purification and sacrifice in the Temple itself. This naturally aroused great ire among the Jews, who were well aware of his attitudes to such practices often made public to the Gentiles. It was also at variance with his own oft repeated statements about the total sufficiency of our Lord's own sacrifice.

I am convinced that before long he will bring about a head-on conflict between the Church and the Roman authorities that could jeopardise the fulfilment of our commission to take the gospel to all nations. Without the cooperation and support of the State our endeavours would be greatly restricted.

I forbear to prolong this report. Assuring my lord of the veracity of the foregoing, it is to be hoped that you will arrange for this man to be recalled from the field immediately.

I trust that it is not too late to take diplomatic steps to remedy at least some of the situations mentioned. It is imperative that we re-establish our contacts and influence in these areas.

I remain, as ever,  
Your faithful servant.

If life in the Kingdom of God presents you with practical problems that you feel could be aired on this page, please write to Gerald Coates and John Noble at 47 Copse Road, Cobham, Surrey.

## John Noble and Gerald Coates

*Q. What do you think a christian should do when working with non-christians who are involved in theft and corruption, such as filling expenses forms incorrectly and taking work property home? Where are we answerable to the law of the land and where do we turn a blind eye?*

A. We must come to terms with the fact that we all live in an immoral society. Company profits are used for ungodly purposes, and attitudes of both management and workers to company time and company money are often diametrically opposed to the teaching of Christ. Therefore, to simply change companies is rarely a way out of the dilemma. However, we have an obligation as citizens (not simply as christians) to inform the police of deliberate lawlessness, especially if it is under our noses. We must be careful that we do not adopt a 'holier than thou' attitude, realising that, were it not for the grace of God, we should be in the same position. If we hold a position of authority then we certainly have a duty to those who have given us that authority.

However, those of us who do not hold such a position, who are surrounded by corruption, can appeal in weakness to our colleagues. For instance, one brother found himself in a situation where he was asked to sign for overtime that he had not worked. His work-mates were already doing this and regarding it as normal. He went to his boss and simply let him know that his conscience was troubling him about it. Consequently his boss allowed him to sign only for the time that he had actually

worked. Even when it is the behaviour of a colleague that is troubling us it is possible to approach him directly and, again in weakness, without having clear-cut answers, let him know our dilemma. We have both counselled folk in our fellowships to do this and the results have been quite surprising.

The self righteous attitude rarely gets anything done, but an appeal in weakness will often do a lot to foster better relationships and enable christians to live with their consciences in relative freedom.

*Q. I have been happily married for many years and have three grown up children. My wife is well balanced, practical, church minded, a 'Martha' type. I, on the other hand, am introverted, unstable and have a history of nervous troubles. I am more of a 'Mary' type. My wife has refused to be involved with work of the Holy Spirit and almost feels sick about tongues and ecstatic prayers. She accepts my new friends, but will not be influenced by them. However, I am not satisfied as I have seen the vision of Fulness. What do you feel about our situation?*

A. Questions such as this are most difficult to answer as each personal situation varies enormously. However it should be said that we are not always good at assessing ourselves. You compliment yourself by saying that you are a 'Mary' type, whilst adding that you are introverted (non communicative) and unstable (untrustworthy). It may well be that your wife's 'Martha' role may be more of the spirit than your own 'Mary' one.

It is likely that your own background is largely responsible for your wife's present attitude to your new found blessing. Our advice is that devotion to your wife and not to 'the vision' is the number one priority. To love your wife with an end in view (i.e. in order to get her involved in the work of the Spirit) will only put further pressure on her. She must be loved for her own sake. You need also to give attention to the areas of communication and stability in your own life. This, we feel, will probably restore your wife's confidence in your motives and in your integrity. On this firm foundation God may then open her heart more fully to his present work.

*Q. As a pastor I find one problem above all others which precipitates marital breakdown. This is frigidity. I am sure that in your marriage counselling you have come across this problem many times, and I would appreciate your comments on this subject.*

A. There are often deep rooted causes behind feelings of revulsion and impotence. For instance, a wife may be insecure because she is afraid of bearing more children; she may be threatened by her partner's spirituality or lack of it. Many superspiritual husbands leave their wives cold. There are a thousand other reasons too, and as pastors we need to delve a little and bring out the hidden things.

There will often be the need for correction; a spiritually enthusiastic husband, always out at meetings, may need to be counselled to give

*Continued on page 23*



# I.D.

## Bernard Cope puts a face to the name of Maurice Smith

Maurice and I live in neighbouring streets. If you open our back door, with the wind in the right direction, I'm sure you can hear him praising.

And when Maurice sings, he sounds something like a cross between a regimental sergeant major and an old-time crooner. So for half the time at least, you feel under obligation to join in!

As you get to know Maurice you become aware of what can only be described as a faint military bearing about him, that manifests itself in his smart appearance and well-ordered lifestyle. Only the other day one of the local brothers remarked thoughtfully and topic-ally, that Maurice is the only man he knows who would go swimming with a tie on.

The fact is that as a teenager Maurice was sergeant major in the Army Cadet Force, and followed it with three years in the Army proper, serving as a commissioned officer in India and Egypt.

For most of his working days before 'turning pro', Maurice was a salesman and then sales manager, and I have it on reliable authority that he was a very capable one. His administrative flair still shines through, and will be ideally exemplified if I tell you that when I was rather dilatory in producing this article, Maurice, as co-ordinator of *Fulness*, dictated short autobiographical notes to his secretary, Sheila, who typed and presented them to me on his instructions, for my encouragement.

To these notes I now refer, and they take me back to where I started: the Smith 'estate' more or less backs on to ours, with Maurice taking a pride in the well kept garden on his side of the fence. He lives in a 'small but well-furnished end-terraced house' with Eileen, whom he married in 1948, and their two younger sons, Jason and Matthew, who are both well into their teens and Arsenal through and through. Their eldest son, David, has made his home with his family in Canterbury, and Joss,

their only daughter, lives with her husband and two children in the thick of the fellowship in nearby Chadwell Heath.

The notes now say 'Enjoyed athletics as a hobby' (small world—Ron Wing used to go running with him in those days. Or was it the other way round?) 'but gave up everything except breathing when became a christian. Is now learning how to live again. Infrequently seen in shorts jogging slowly in the park at 7.30 am along with his springer spaniel'. Well, hallelujah, but I've never seen it, although maybe that's more a reflection on me.

He continues, 'Avid Agatha Christie fan. Can read same book twice a year as memory so bad he forgets whodunnit.' Maurice next makes mention of his three years in the Army, and then goes on to say, 'Written a book called *Amazing Grace* (first half of it was published as 5.5.55—his conversion date).' A lot leads up to that, and Maurice filled me in on the details with more notes, this time handwritten, and entitled 'Religious History'.

With these Maurice plots a rather undulating course through childhood days spent briefly in the Band of Hope Temperance Society, Baptist Sunday School and finally the C of E choir, which he joined for the pay, coming as he did from a poor family. But he was thrown out for laughing in the services. He tried his hand as a scout too, after years in the cubs, only to be lured away by the attractions of street life.

During Army days Maurice started confirmation classes, but he gave them up because of the attitude and lifestyle of the senior officer who instructed him. Nevertheless from the age of 18 to 28 Maurice was searching for the truth, for the answer to the seeming enigma of life. Where did he come from? What was his identity?

Several people told him about Jesus. Principally it was a young Australian ex-fighter pilot who was in the Brethren; and finally it was

the rector of Kingham in the Cotswolds, where as a successful businessman Maurice was living in a large detached house. Here in his bedroom, Maurice says, 'I gave my life to God, lock, stock and barrel on 5.5.55, and have known his inward presence ever since'.

He was baptised—by sprinkling—in the Church of England one Sunday morning, and the same evening he was confirmed along with Eileen, who came to Christ after she saw the change in her husband's lifestyle: his duodenal ulcer cleared up when he found salvation, his bondage to cigarettes stopped instantly, and he even began to help with the washing up!

But the confirmation service only confirmed to Maurice that he had not yet experienced real Church life. Subsequently Maurice set himself to find a company of people in whom he could see the expression of what his heart was now longing for.

Moving to Kent he tried to continue at the Anglican Church in the village, but it was obvious that the vicar was unconverted and uninterested in spiritual things. So he tried the Methodists. When the group there saw his fire and zeal, they wanted him to go to college, or at least take a course of study, in order to become a full-time preacher. But 'I said I'd preach and they could shout at me, like they shouted at Wesley if they didn't like it,' he told me.

Unable to fit into that system Maurice moved on to the Baptist Church, where he struggled with what he felt was a 'works' orientated fellowship. At Toc H he came under pressure to bear the responsibilities of 'spiritual pilot' whilst the others got on with their works; but strangely enough he seemed to be turning up for more work than anyone else too.

From the beginning Maurice had been born again with a vision of the Church as a people, not a place; a people closely involved together in a way he had not yet found.



Then Maurice met a group of folk in Canterbury who really seemed to be seeing the same things as himself. He started meeting with them, usually in a hired room in the city, and occasionally in homes. Maurice relates, 'We ended up in a denomination without a name, but with strong unwritten liturgy. Others called us 'Honor Oak' after the name of the centre from which most of our truth was disseminated. The overall leader was T. Austin Sparks, a man with profound insight.' Maurice preached with them for about ten years, and really enjoyed a measure of corporate life.

With a longing to get back to his first love, and feeling the need of more power, Maurice sought more of God, and had a second encounter with the Holy Spirit, resulting in a new dimension of joy and praise and including the gift of tongues. This brought with it inner battles and problems from without. When, after coming out of secular employment, he met men like Graham Perrins, Hugh Thompson and Peter Lyne, he was thrilled to find that they were open to change, and had prophetic insight; they were not bound to stereotyped biblical interpretations and were still in the excitement of discovery; they greatly influenced his thinking.

He was greatly encouraged to have found other men who felt that the Holy Spirit was putting the emphasis on homes as the centre of spiritual activity, even though he encountered opposition from some of the folks back in Canterbury, who loved the weekly prayer, bible study and breaking of bread meetings, at their 'rooms'. Nevertheless, for the last ten years Maurice has been dedicated to building this non-institutional 'extra-mural christianity', as the last Archbishop of Canterbury called it.

Maurice loves speaking at weddings, and has always held the marriage bond as precious, because of the blessing, strength, encouragement and balance that Eileen has brought

him in their life together. In their thirty years of marriage Maurice and Eileen have lived in eleven houses, five of them in and around Canterbury. He has great affection for the city and the folk there, but he is now part of the community in Collier Row, Romford, working alongside John Noble. His ministry has taken him to Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Germany, France, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the USA.

As well as his book, Maurice has written for various christian magazines, and has been a regular contributor to *Fulness*. Maurice is happiest when leading large praise meetings, or 'dripping on' about his experiences with God, warming people's hearts and bringing en-

couragement and revelation.

This autumn a new development in his ministry has taken many people by surprise, although Maurice had been considering the step for some months. When he was asked if he knew of a representative who could cover the Essex territory for a steel manufacturing company, Maurice knew that it was a job he should apply for himself.

He was a successful applicant; and since the beginning of October, Maurice has been back in secular employment. The 'change in status' has coincided with a growing desire in Maurice's heart to spend more time in teaching and sharing with the saints at home. It will probably mean more praising in the back garden, but I'm all for it.



# Maurice Smith Dripping on

It was a crowded room somewhere in Norfolk; David and I were looking forward to a profitable meeting. We could not decide who was going to minister and communicated as much to everyone.

Just before we started, an upright, very respectable-looking man entered majestically and sat down. Something of a hush came in with him. We got under way by praising the Lord, and eventually David rose and launched into a word of ministry. He began in Deuteronomy and worked his way well into the New Testament, touching on bits of Hebrew or Greek here and there. It was a fine exegesis. We were all uplifted, encouraged and well taught.

Mingling afterwards, a lady approached me. 'I'm so glad that David ministered tonight,' she said. 'Oh . . . er, yes,' I replied. 'There was a well known local bible teacher here,' she continued, 'and he will have been very blessed by the excellent ministry.' 'I'm glad,' I offered. 'Please don't misunderstand me—it's not that I don't appreciate *your* ministry.' She went on, seemingly getting deeper and deeper into the treacle. Finally, the lady made one final attempt to convince me: 'As a matter of fact,' she said with absolute conviction, 'I just love to hear you drip on!' I've never forgotten it. In fact, I've been dripping on ever since; story after story and hour after hour. The editor has asked me to drip on a little in this and succeeding issues, so I'm going to be busy writing down some of these

everyday situations. Here's the first one.

Everyone was praising and the volume switch was turned high. It was a night of great release and many were dancing for joy with arms lifted high in the air.

It seemed there was some movement everywhere. Everywhere that is, except over in one corner of the room where a severe looking lady surveyed the action with a steely eye. Feeling sorry for the onlooker (and if I am honest, being somewhat under pressure from her lone unresponsiveness) I edged through to encourage her to enjoy things with us.

'No thank you!' she snorted with eyes flashing, and I recoiled visibly, quite taken aback by her violent reaction. I was genuinely puzzled to find someone whom I knew to be a professing christian, behaving like a superior elderly aunt who would not join in the family merriment.

Why does it always happen to me? How is it my friend John has such a high success rate at moving people into a new phase of experience? Better ask him I suppose! 'I think you always go for the one person who doesn't want to move on, whilst I look to see who is itching to go and just needs a little encouragement.' So that's it. No wonder I get into so many hassles.

I began to ask the Lord to make it all clearer to me, and gradually he did so, like the time I was looking out of the picture window on a Hampshire farm whilst on a ministry tour. The downs were sloping gradually away from the farmhouse and the sheep were peacefully grazing. Next time I looked they had all gone, but I had heard no orders issued, no stentorian parade ground word of command. I began to examine their habits and I noticed one day that one of the sheep had wandered through a gate and had begun to eat the greener grass in the next field. Soon others had followed—perhaps the more daring ones—and finally there were just a few old ewes (the analogy falls down here) left in the corner of the field. As I watched they finally struggled to their feet and ambled slowly across to join the rest of the flock in the new pasture.

As I pondered over this I realised that the Lord's reference to us as sheep was not at all a bad effort. He knew that you couldn't make the whole flock stand still until

the most reticent decided to move. Some are just going to take more time. They cannot be marched into the Kingdom, left, right, left, right.

Of course there are times of spiritual danger when we may need to offer clear indications which will inevitably bring confrontation. We should not be afraid of that, and we cannot hope to build the Church without some eyeball to eyeball confrontation; but generally speaking, some move more quickly than others, and we must not subject the slower ones to group pressure to keep up. Nor must we continually hold back the more ardent types among us for fear of upsetting the extremely sensitive.

We must not hold this, nor for that matter any other analogy, too tightly, for in one sense we are to become a mighty army. Even in this respect, however, I am sure there will be commando units, the forward infantry and the base units, all under the same supreme commander. Once within a tightly knit operational team, we shall need to move cohesively together; but the praise meeting I have described hardly came into that category, and that applies to so much of our church family life. The last thing we want is everyone evened out into uniformity.

So we can learn from all our experiences; seemingly good or seemingly bad, they are all in the school of Christ, and work out for our eventual benefit—yes, even the snorting rebuffs!



# AUTHORITY

## *and obedience*

by Tom Marshall

The present age is characterised by such disorder and lawlessness that it is not surprising to find within the Church a fresh emphasis on the truths of authority and obedience. We need reminding, perhaps as never before, that we live in freedom only within the constraints of divine order in all our relationships.

Nevertheless some aspects of authority and obedience are so gravely misunderstood and misrepresented, often by preachers and Church leaders, that we need to think through very carefully the real issues involved. At times, for example, obedience seems to be regarded as a kind of moral medicine—it is nasty, and must therefore be good for us. Worse still it is confused with conformity, and conformity is one of the most dangerous features of modern society. It is a way the individual has of avoiding personal moral responsibility. The task of moral decision-making is delegated upwards to the superior-leader, pastor or the party machine. The individual then simply does as he is told; the nature of the actions, or the consequences that may follow are no longer his responsibility.

The Bible makes it quite clear that obedience, merely as obedience, is not necessarily good. We can obey unrighteousness as well as righteousness; we can obey men when we ought to obey God. It is therefore of some importance that we understand the living truth about authority and obedience and learn to distinguish it from both its counterfeits and its misapplications.

Let us begin by analysing the circumstances in which questions of authority and obedience are likely to arise. They can be broadly classified into three categories:

*Task situations* in which there is a job of some kind to be done.  
*Teaching situations* in which some principle or practice is to be learned.  
*Moral or spiritual situations* in which some spiritual or ethical precept or law is at issue.

What we need to understand is that the way in which authority is exercised is different in each of these classes of circumstances. So also is the nature of the response that can be called obedience. Many of our problems in fact arise from using a type of authority and looking for a kind of response that is inappropriate to the situation. It is not without significance that the New Testament actually uses three different words for obedience, and they fit very closely the three categories we have described above.

Task authority is the simplest and most straightforward to understand. There is a job to be done. In charge is a leader who gives the orders; under him is a team whose responsibility is to comply as promptly and efficiently as they can with the leader's instructions. In such circumstances the subordinates are merely extensions of the leader's capabilities. They represent multiplied feet or hands to act in response to the one mind.

In appropriate circumstances this is a wholly legitimate and effective form of authority. It welds a group of individuals into a single operating unit. In particular it is the best, perhaps the only, type of authority that can cope with emergencies. The New Testament uses the word *peitharcheo* (to obey a chief or ruler) to cover such situations. It is used of obeying magistrates (Titus 3:1) and of obeying God rather than man (Acts 5:29). Specifically it recognises the Lordship of Christ and his inalienable right to direct us about his business without having to explain his reasons. 'Whatever he says to you, do it' (John 2:5). Disobedience is *anupotaktos* (unruliness) and if not checked, will lead to disorder.

When we turn to the teaching situation, however, the purpose in view is something more than just task accomplishment. It is not so

much that something be done, but that the pupil learns how to do it for himself so that after he has learned he will no longer need detailed instructions. In these circumstances, unlike the task situation, questions and answers, reasons, explanations and dealing with objections are all part of the learning process. Thus for obedience in this setting the word is *peitho* (to be persuaded). Obedience comes from understanding the reasons and purposes behind the orders. Now when the writer to the Hebrews says, 'Obey your leaders' (Heb 13:17), *peitho* is the word he uses. This is because authority in the Church is more often a teaching authority than a task authority and the minister or pastor who balks at legitimate questions such as, 'Why?' or, 'What for?' needs to understand this. Applying task authority to teaching situations will never produce learning; in fact it is only too obvious when someone has not grasped the principles, but is just repeating a lesson 'parrot-fashion'.

This is not to say that the pupil must always understand before he can be expected to obey. Far from it. Often he will never understand the reasons until he tries to obey, but he must always be led on from there to understand the principles involved. He will not always want to. Many times he will rest content with merely copying rather than grappling with reasons and principles. But the good teacher will never rest content with rote learning, because he knows how severe its limitations are.

When we come to moral and spiritual situations the aim is different again. It is not primarily that the disciple learns to do, but that he learns to be. In other words, it is concerned with character change, with questions of motivation, which is why scripture links obedience so closely to holiness. What we must grasp is the essential

*Continued on page 23*



# The dynamic church

John MacLauchlan

Human tradition has always been the enemy of the purpose of God. No institution, no static system or entity, can be the vehicle of God's plan. This must be fundamental in our approach to the church. The church is nothing if it is not a living, moving, developing body through which God can express himself. It is the means whereby God manifests his person and glory and rule in the earth. It is the reflection and expression of the One who gives his name as 'I will be what I will be'. If the church is to partner a God who will not be defined or tied down or boxed in, it must itself take on similar characteristics. We must be able to say of the church: 'It will be what it will be'. Just as with God, when we talk of the church there is a sense of trying to express the inexpressible, to define the indefinable.

Now it is patently impossible to say 'It will be what it will be' of a church that is institutional or pattern-based. If the church must conform to a format established in the past, or seek to grow into a clear-cut pattern held for the future, it cannot be the expression of the God of glory. Rather, it will be the expression of an historical entity, or it will develop into the manifestation of a previously-declared blueprint. Neither of these is compatible with the ongoing self-disclosure of God. No institutional or structural pattern can possibly be! God is not static; nor can the church be static.

Nor is it sufficient to take refuge

in the spiritual-sounding statement that 'the church is not a building, but people'. For if your view of the church is of people conforming to a certain pattern, doing things a certain way, people meeting in homes, people holding certain beliefs or emphases, then your concept of the church is potentially just as sectarian as that of the man who ties the church to a certain building or to certain forms and ceremonies. People conforming to any externally imposed pattern constitute an institution.

We must go beyond the elementary concept of the Church as people, and ask: 'What sort of people? People doing what?' Clearly, if the Church is to fulfil its purpose, the answer must be that it consists of people in active relationship and response to God, those who are hearing and doing the word of God. It cannot be defined as 'all the regenerate' (though would that it could be!), but as consisting of all who are actively responding to what God is now saying, and who are therefore enabling the realisation of his purpose on earth.

Is such a concept, such a non-institutional approach to the Church, possible? We respond that it is the *only* approach possible, if we have an eye for the glory of God. Any other approach robs him, and forms something that in itself takes away energy and attention for its own self-realisation and perpetuation.

My own concepts were updated some months ago when I was reading Matt 18:15-20, which tells of the action to be taken when a

brother sins. Ultimately we are to bring the matter 'to the church'. It is so easy to make the assumption of many writers and interpreters that Jesus is there fore-telling the Church. The argument runs along these lines: there was not yet in existence an organised body capable of carrying out the Lord's instructions, so he was looking forward to a day when an established, structured entity would emerge which could put them into practice.

But wait, there is no hint at all of prediction here, no mention of his forthcoming death and resurrection, or of the outpouring of the Spirit. Rather, he is giving practical directions to a motley band of men and women, moving with him from place to place, on how to conclude their problems with one another. And in that context, Jesus called them 'the Church'!

Perhaps the clearest point of definition is v 20. If I may paraphrase it: '... where two or three have been gathered together to move into all that I am, there am I in the midst'. So Jesus' definition of the Church is of men and women who are actively responding to God's summons to come together, with a view to moving into the name of Jesus, into all that he is. No matter that they are not a geographically local entity, nor that they have no established leadership 'offices' among them. No matter that they have no institutional form or structure; they are the Church as they actively, continuously respond to the living God.



From Matthew 18, my thoughts went to Acts 7:38, to the phrase 'the Church in the wilderness' used by Stephen of Israel after the Exodus. In what sense could this emerging nation be called 'the Church'? They had been called together, summoned out of Egypt, to be the people of God. In their response, they became 'the Church'. So long as they continued to hear and obey the voice of God, they continued as the Church. But when they stopped hearing and obeying, all but a minute remnant perished in the wilderness. The lesson drawn by the writer to the Hebrews is of the necessity of current, living response to the will of God: 'Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked me . . . in the wilderness' (Heb 3:7, 8). The Church consists of those currently hearing what God is saying, and obeying him. When it ceases to hear and obey, it dies, and a remnant is always called out to move on in active response to God.

An examination of the Old Testament followed, in which it became clear that the Hebrew word most closely equivalent to the New Testament word 'Church' (*qahal*) is used, not of the people as a static, defined entity, but of the people when they are active and moving, usually when they are actively responding to God. Thus the occasion of the giving of the Law to the people gathered at Sinai is called 'the day of the Church' (Deut 10:4), and the same term is used of the people when they gather before the Lord, take up arms, or congregate for the administration of justice. There is another word altogether (*'edah*) for the more static concept of the people per se, without reference to what they do.

Moving on to the New Testament, it is of great importance to comprehend Paul's concept of the Church. Passages like Ephesians 3 consistently emphasise purpose as the keynote. The Church consists of Jews and Gentiles summoned together into one body through the Good News. And the purpose for this summons? It is 'in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies' (v 10). So the Church consists of those who respond to God's call, and who are joined together to display the heart and wisdom of God.

Over the page, in Ephesians 4, Paul shows that the ministries of v 11 are given for purpose, defined in the following verses. They have no static or 'official' status. They are to embody and express God's will to the Church as a whole. Their authority is drawn from his commission, not from any humanly established office. Far from undermining their authority, this concept upholds it, for those through whom God is speaking and moving will never lack recognition and respect from those eager to hear God's voice; from those who constitute the Church (Luke 10:16). A non-institutional Church cannot have an institutionalised ministry. The ministry must be a living entity, currently revealing and expressing God to the whole Church. Thus we are preserved from the deadening effect of institutional veneration for 'appointed' men who have long since ceased to express the word of God.

From Paul, it is logical to move on to John, but when we turn to the Revelation, it is in fact the Lord himself who has the last scriptural word on the nature of his Church. In the letters to the seven Churches, he shows how they are failing and what they should be. For example, addressing Ephesus (Rev 2:1-7), he recognises their deeds, toil, perseverance, orthodoxy, endurance and tirelessness, but still warns them that he is about to remove their lampstand! This must mean that they would no longer be a church in his eyes (Rev 1:20). What is lacking is the reality and flow of active love, which once they had (Eph 1:15). They have fallen from reality in the heavenlies (Eph 2:6), and now exist in an energetic but dying earthbound orthodoxy. Only repentance, only a return to different deeds, those they 'did at first' when they were moving responsively to God, expressing his heart and purpose, only sharing the overcoming life of Christ, can save them from ceasing to be known or recognised as the Church of God.

So the testimony is unanimous: the Church is nothing if it is not a living, responsive, moving, dynamic body. It is not the product of a pattern, but an expression of function in response to a heart-felt revelation of purpose. When we read of 'the church in Corinth', the reference is to those submitting to Jesus' lordship and moving with him, those hearing and responding

to those he sends, his apostles and prophets and elders, in that geographical area. When we read of 'the church in a house', it indicates, not a pattern, but the function of meeting together in smaller units for mutual edification, exhortation and correction. If it is objected that this is all rather insecure, we answer that it is security itself for the man of faith, for whom a living relationship with God and his brothers is more important than membership of an external organisation which gives the appearance of security, but which will in fact soon be swept away.

Obviously, the ground covered in study was considerably wider than the scope of this article, but I trust that the following points are clear: Firstly, the Church is the Church by virtue of its continuous response to the living God.

Secondly, the Church consists of those who are hearing and doing the will of God.

Thirdly, where ongoing response ceases, whatever else that body may be, it is not the Church of the living God. Lastly, the Church cannot be defined by reference to creeds, structures or individual experiences.

If we once see that the Church is more an 'event' than an institution, then it is clear that what the Church does, how it works, will be a matter of practical function in response to God, and not a matter of pattern or tradition-orientated activity. Indeed, we must be unafraid to ask ourselves of anything we do, is this activity, this meeting, this concept, this way of doing things, really serving God's purpose? Is it *now* a response to what he is saying, or is it a leftover from what he was saying some time in the past? We pray because it is an active response to God. We read the Bible because the Lord communicates to us by the principles contained in it. We break bread together because our table-fellowship expresses and confesses the Kingdom of God. Woe betide us if we do any of these things for form's sake, merely because of an established pattern, out of external obedience. Such externalism would lead, inevitably, to a static institution, bereft of the living presence of God.

The Church is not an institution, it is the entire corpus of those who bow before Jesus in his lordship and glory, hearing what God is saying, and actively obeying his word and will.

# ETC

Fellowships from several parts of Great Britain were joined by a few folk from the USA and Norway at Kingdom Life '78, a week long event held in Cobham, Surrey. Hundreds camped just outside of the town in what turned out to be one of the sunniest and driest weeks of the year. During the day there were optional seminars and workshops covering subjects such as wholefood eating, dieting, car maintenance, bible studies, music, drama. There were also visits to places of historical interest, creative worship sessions and prophetic teaching meetings.

In the evenings about a thousand people joined the campers in a large marquee situated in central Cobham.



Christians from major denominations attended each evening for times of worship, dance, drama, teaching and bible study. In the main the preaching and teaching ministry focussed on the issues of holiness, character and reality as well as encouraging a response to God in movement, dance drama, etc.

Roger and Jane Davin from the USA came for the week adding

their own unique blend of humour and sobriety and drama and dialogue. The audience roared with laughter at Bethuel, a Levite priest from David's



tabernacle, who was 'on the 3 am shift'. On another occasion people wept at Roger's portrayal of King David's loss of Jonathan and Saul. On this particular evening God moved in a remarkable way. People found repentance from ungodly attitudes and relationships, and many knelt and wept before the Lord as he moved through the tent, convicting and challenging.

Both Dave Bilbrough and Graham Kendrick were featured in concert to coincide with their recent LP releases, and Bill Latham from Tear Fund shared the many needs there are throughout the world and of how christians in Tear Fund are seeking to meet some of them. A cheque was later given to Tear Fund for one of their projects.

On Saturday afternoon, many hundreds of people gathered in the marquee to praise God before processing through the streets of Cobham, led by musicians on an open-backed trailer. Police made a special point of communicating to the leaders of Kingdom Life that they felt the march was the best thing that had happened in Cobham for a long time and added that as far as they were

concerned Kingdom Life could go on in the town every week.

A number of unconverted people came into the tent each night, both from the town and from surrounding areas. Many returned night after night, seeking for reality in their lives.

David Matthews, from Belfast, gave a moving and factual account of the situation in Northern Ireland and later spoke on the issues of righteousness and unrighteousness, declaring that the real battle for the christian is not with political parties but with unrighteousness. He underlined the need for us to make righteous decisions in all affairs. Roger Davin gave an excellent bible study on the issue of character formation.



George Tarleton gave a radical, but well received message on the role of women in the Church. Gerald Coates spoke of the continuing need to be repairing relationships, deepening existing ones and maintaining the vision of being built together. On the last night Graham Perrins spoke on God's kingdom, a kingdom of forgiveness, after which many stood to receive God's forgiveness and also to release forgiveness to others.

Plans are going ahead to have another week next year in August; look out for details in Fulness.



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## IN A WORD

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*Continued from page 9*

all that Christ is. Thus we share our faith with others in the Body of Christ. We communicate faith, not by grumbling and complaining, but by full inner consciousness of the good things God has invested in us, making us like Jesus.

8. *Koinonia* of monetary giving (2 Cor 8:4). This use of the term is more frequent than any other. Since fellowship is the sharing of the whole of life, it is not surprising that it involves the sharing of material substance. Monetary giving is not a separate (and rather sordid) department of life, but a part of our giving of ourselves, all we are and have, to God and one another. In Rom 15:26, the word *koinonia*

is actually used for the money itself! The money embodies, objectifies and expresses the commitment and participation between the saints. The money represents the lives that give. The flow of funds within the one company emphasises participation in the whole. Other references include: 2 Cor 9:13; Gal 6:6; Phil 4:15; Heb 13:16; and, probably, Phil 1:5.

9. *Koinonia* of Christ's sufferings (1 Pet 4:13; Phil 3:10). If we have any pioneering instinct breathed into us by the Spirit of God, we must realise that we are not called to an easy option. Trailblazing, bearing the heat of the day, will make it easier for others to follow, but can be very hard and long drawn-out for the forerunners! But it is the only way to glory, and is a cause for rejoicing. Indeed,

suffering apparently without deliverance may be an indication of faith, if accompanied by prophetic vision, and involved in God's purpose (Heb 11, especially vv. 35-38). It may be vicarious in the sense that it leads to life for others (Col 1:24; 2 Cor 4:12). Above all, it is participation with Jesus, and involves the promise of the same glory and joy he has entered into after suffering death on a cross (Heb 12:2).

10. There are several other uses of *koinonia*: of our common human participation in flesh and blood, and of Jesus' identification with us (Heb 2:14); of the Gentiles sharing blessings originally given to Jews (Rom 15:27); and there is strong warning against participating in evil (2 Cor 6:14; 1 Tim 5:22; 2 John 11).

## Q&A

*Continued from page 15*

more time to his wife. The wife who has become bitter will need to repent of her wrong attitude. Also,

even though we may not understand how it has arisen, we need to repent of an unbiblical attitude towards our sexual relationship. Our bodies are not our own; we have taken vows to share ourselves. So there needs to be an active request for forgiveness and reconciliation in spite of the fact that we may not understand what lies behind our problem. I believe that a willingness to face wrong attitudes, both spiritual and sexual, is vital.

Then, on this basis, we can work towards the goal of compatibility. I think that many times we fail in this area because we are not functioning corporately. We do not rub shoulders together in all facets of church life, and honesty and openness are not part and parcel of our daily living. My prayer is that the Body of Christ will come together and find itself to be a self-healing organism, just like the human body.

## AUTHORITY and obedience

*Continued from page 19*

nature of the moral response that is in view. The whole essence of moral behaviour is that it is the free response of the will to truth as it registers on our conscience. The witness of truth to the conscience is vital. It is only when I am responding to its demands, its 'oughtness' speaking to my conscience, that I am engaging in moral behaviour. If I alter my actions or attitudes for any other reason, it may well be prudent or socially desirable for me to do so, but it is not even a moral response at all. It is mere conformity to external pressure. The most common New Testament word for obedience recognises this. It is *hupakouo* which means, 'to listen under'. The 'hearing' is hearing in the conscience. Thus disobedience

is *parakoe* (the refusal to hear). There is a wilfulness about it, the deliberate rejection of the impact of truth.

Now if task authority is deficient in the teaching situation, we need to understand that it is deadly in the moral or spiritual realm. It produces legalism and the letter that kills (2 Cor 3:6). It creates either conformists or rebels, and the conformists are in danger of being hypocrites because they do not really believe in the standard to which they conform or the doctrines to which they ascribe.

What, then, is the true nature of spiritual authority and spiritual obedience? First, the preacher needs to realise that his authority is the authority of truth. Therefore he is responsible to declare it, fully, clearly, passionately and graciously. But he must remember that truth carries its own validation. It does not need the support of human pressure or human authority.

Secondly, he needs to teach his people how to 'hear' the truth and to faithfully obey its demands on their conscience. If they do not hear it in their conscience it will never produce fruit in their lives. If they are not hearing it the preacher needs to ask why. Does the fault lie in him or in them?

Most important of all we need to trust the Holy Spirit to apply the truth to human hearts because only then will they 'know' it, and only then will obedience to it set them free.

*Tom Marshall is married and has 4 grown-up children. He is a leader of Kapiti Christian Centre, Raumati South, near Wellington. He is also a lecturer at a Technical Institute. His group, about 200 strong, is one of the newer groups being established in New Zealand.*

# The Battle of the Sexes

John Noble



## Chapter 8

### Delivered



If we finally overcome all the problems of contraception, abortion and divorce and eventually get to having babies, then there are a few things it might be helpful to know, apart from all that the clinics and doctors might advise.

After the long months of waiting 'expectantly', the little bundle of fun finally arrives. Most parents assume that it's plain sailing from here; after all, God made us to be parents quite naturally. We have all that it takes to be good parents! Yes, but we tend to forget about all the inbred fears, phobias and failures that have come as a result of being Adam's offspring. We have totally underestimated the situation. For a start, baby is usually much smaller than we expected. They're so tiny and—er, lovely? Most of them look like wizened old men, all red and crinkled. These delicate little creatures make the most appalling noises and smells at all the wrong times and in all the wrong places. They have a very strong will of their own which manifests itself immediately they are born. They also have an uncanny way of knowing just when to exert their will to your disadvantage. In spite of this there are moments when they really are 'lively' and 'absolutely adorable'. We just have to learn to handle them—that's all!

During this training period the wife may be drained and the husband tired. And it's so easy for the baby to dominate the whole of their lives. At this point mother may give herself wholeheartedly to her child, especially if dad is tired and irritable. If this happens it will almost certainly cause

**"mum and partner must continue to enjoy one another and let baby become a part of their relationship"**

jealousy, and a rift will emerge between mum and her partner. With all the new demands mother faces she must remember it's their baby, it's a joint effort even though dad's not much use as yet. Together they must continue to enjoy one another and let baby become a part of their relationship; this is what makes a family. In this sense Grandma's been through it all before, a help or a hindrance. Obviously Grandma's been through it all before, but if she doesn't leave room for you both to take her advice or leave it she becomes a threat to the government of the house, and as a result all sorts of added pressures will build up. Often a wife *does* find her mother helpful, but she needs to remember that her husband is still the head of the house. Any fellowship amongst the women that makes the new 'pop' an intruder is sure to bring trouble.

Bringing new babies into the world can be quite an emotional experience for both parents. We often hear the phrase 'post natal depression', which can cover all kinds of feelings from a mild sense of anti-climax to acute and unreasonable darkness hanging over you like a cloud. As with most forms of depression, having recognised its reality and understood the pain it causes, we should take up a strong attitude of trust in God's goodness or we shall soon find the feeling gaining a foothold and dominating whole areas of our lives. A young mother will not fight this alone, but with prayer and true love you'll gain victory together. Make sure your diet is right, plenty of iron for the blood; anaemia doesn't help depression one little bit. During these times a woman may lose interest in herself, becoming unattractive and apathetic in her approach to life. At the very moment the family needs to pull together, the strain may be such that temptations come, particularly to the man, to look outside the family circle for comfort—the pub, another woman, or just an over-involvement in work. So minister to one another with real understanding. Men, be firm with your wives, encouraging and helping them practically, without allowing their tiredness or misery to drag you down. Women, do give attention to your selves and your husband's need for your love; even fifteen minutes spent dressing up or making advances to him will help convince him you still care.

Don't get too tied down by what your medical advisors say. Thank the

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For a number of years John Noble has been concerned that Christians do not generally face up to many of the problem areas in family life. The outcome of this concern is this book. John's aim is to open up certain areas for thought and frank discussion; it is not intended to be a complete manual. The book was put together slowly over a period of three years and its contents are the substance of much personal help given to couples by John, and of his widely travelled verbal ministry.

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