

# Fulness

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# Editorial

## Proclaiming the Kingdom with power

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... He began his meeting by healing a few people who were nearest to him in the front rows of the hall. Then, after preaching the good news, he followed up with further evidence that Jesus was Lord by casting out some demons and healing many more folk who had come forward for prayer ...

My imaginary meeting is a little different from many of the hymn/prayer syndromes we can get used to, but much more in keeping with New Testament expectations, which emphasise the display of God's power as much as preaching about it.

Luke stresses the order of Christ's commission to the twelve. 'He gave them power and authority over all demons and to heal diseases. And he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to perform healing.' The proclamation comes between the demonstrations.

The commission to the 70 was similar. 'Heal the sick and say to them, "The Kingdom of Heaven has come near to you."' Give them the proof.

It is Luke who records the comment of the disciples that Jesus was a prophet 'mighty in deed and word'. The same writer opens his Acts of the Apostles with, 'The first account I composed, Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach.' Again we see demonstration and then proclamation. I've got the feeling that many of us preachers would be out of business if we had to follow that order.

Of course it's not only the preachers who need to be challenged. The Church as a whole is called to display the Lordship of Christ as well as to sing about it. No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by

the Holy Spirit; this confession in 1 Corinthians 12 is immediately followed by reference to the gifts of the Spirit, all of them an expression of that same Lordship.

These gifts are given to the body, to each one. As manifestations of the Spirit they are a rich and varied display of God's power and authority. When he ascended he gave gifts. They can proclaim that Jesus is Lord more effectively than a hundred sermons. We have spectacular deed gifts like healings and miracles, but even the familiar word gift of prophecy can cause the unbeliever to fall on his face and acknowledge that God is among us.

This generation is seeing a fresh release of the gifts. They are being used more extensively than at any other time in history, but there is still cause for concern. Theologically we have not advanced much in our understanding of them over the early Pentecostals; experimentally they remain in an immature stage and are still squeezed out of much church life. The tension remains between the programmed and the spontaneous, between playing it safe and letting God break through, between word and deed.

Spiritual gifts are God's shop window where he can display his wares, every gift with a guarantee of grace, all giving proof of his intentions, of his willingness to communicate his saving power to us in deed as well as in word.

We need to give proof of his ascension and authority; a new release of the gifts amongst us will see a new release of his Lordship.

*Graham Perrins*

# Character v. Gift

Nick Butterworth

It's exciting to be in the Church these days. God is taking a new initiative, giving understanding to those who want to know, that his plans for his creation have not been scrapped. On the contrary, his grand design still stands, and the past few years have seen the emergence of a wide spectrum of gifts given to the Church to get the job done.

All at once, it seems, our staid equilibrium and predictability have suffered a series of what I hope will prove to be fatal blows. Alongside the tried and tested pastoral and teaching gifts has appeared the prophetic gift which, although meeting with caution in many quarters, is gaining credibility all the time. Even the word 'apostolic' is not unthinkable now and has been whispered in some very unlikely strongholds of tradition.

Gifts of healing are enjoying a new lease of life, and people's hopes are being raised for miracles in a way that is surely a precursor of faith. On top of all this, every new day sees a fresh crop of spiritual gifts reaped by those with the simplicity to receive them. The placid surface of the Church is disturbed as people speak in unknown tongues to express new found worship, and others, prophesying for the first time, take up the theme already begun: 'I am with you,' says the Lord.

Then we hit problems. We hear that someone whose book blessed and challenged us by the miraculous attestation of God on his ministry is now prophesying in apocalyptic tones and, instead of edifying the Church, is bringing many into the bondage of fearing the future.

We discover that the wonderfully spiritual man, who spoke at a convention we attended, who brought so much healing to broken relationships by direct prophecy and supernatural discernment, has had his marriage end in divorce and is now living with his secretary.

Unfortunately, we could easily multiply these examples. They leave us perplexed, and we quickly make superficial assessments in order to find security as the ground begins to break up under our feet.

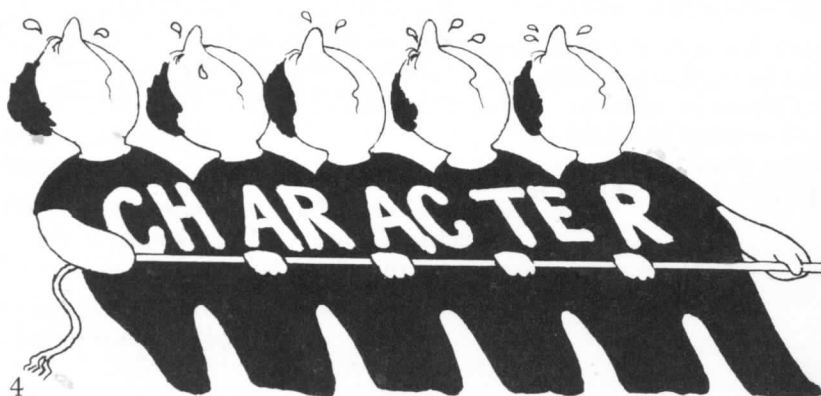
'I knew it,' says one man to his wife, with the sort of expression that suggests he knew nothing of the kind. 'There was something funny about that bloke's eyes when he prophesied over us. Never again.' And so, with the closing of his mind this man is in danger of rejecting a prophecy that could have been the saving of his own marriage.

Well then, what are we to think? How shall we understand the contradiction of a God-given gift being wielded by one of questionable character?

Strangely enough, the question gives us a clue to the answer; namely the separation of two aspects, character and gift. It is the confusion of these two which leads us to believe that supernatural manifestations are evidence of godly character. In actual fact, the gifts God has given to people are not necessarily an attestation of their integrity. We can see this quite plainly if we consider 'natural' talents like musical gifts for example. The God-given ability to play the piano can be used to promote good or evil. The Lord doesn't take away a person's ability to sing if he uses his voice in the promotion of evil.

Confusion arises because we have made a division in our thinking between natural and supernatural gifts. We tend to think of the endowment of a supernatural ability, as a kind of reward, a divine seal of approval on the quality of a person's life. In the words of the old song, 'it ain't necessarily so'.

The realisation of the difference between character and gift gave me insight into something that had long puzzled me. It was the observation that, within certain church situations that were all but dead, there were a few older Christians whose close fellowship with God was evident and whose character was beyond reproach, who nevertheless had apparently little





or no observable effect on the situation in terms of bringing it back to life.

I began to realise that character alone will not build anything. Character is rather the foundation on which gifts will get the job done. On the other hand, if we employ our gifts to build, without a foundation of character, what we build will be insecure and liable to collapse. This explains the fate of the 'wonderfully spiritual man' I gave as an example. He tried to build the kingdom of God into people's lives using the supernatural abilities God gave him and succeeded to a point. But he extended his operations beyond the foundation of character in his own life and crashed as a result.

Graham Kerr, the Galloping Gourmet, made this comment soon after his conversion: 'There seem to be a lot of characters in the church with no personality; I am the opposite, a personality with no character.'

Noting the distinction between character and gift helps us to see the need for them to be yoked together.

Ideally this will be in the same person. But there is also the possibility that a gifted person, who acknowledges a character weakness, can be released to function in the church yoked to other people who may not possess the same gift but

have the integrity of character to exercise wise oversight of the person's gift. This is another aspect of the body of Christ, a related company of people who have discovered that they really do need each other, and not just because they have read it in scripture. Freelance celebrities and shooting stars are not what God is longing for in the Church.

It wasn't long ago that one of our local leaders was heading up another church situation some miles away. Increasingly he became aware of a need to be 'covered' by men who would direct the employment of his strong gifts in a way that would enable him to avoid the problems he had come to expect. Now his gifts of intuition and the ability to initiate are being released, but he would thankfully admit that he's not allowed to 'get away with anything'!

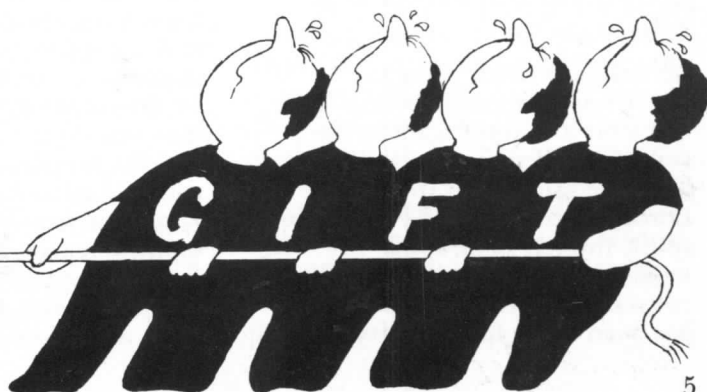
It is important not to over-react when things go wrong. It is too easy to dismiss God-given gifts as being 'of the devil'. Sometimes, of course, there may be a wrong spirit motivating their use, but let us discern between such a situation and one where there is simply a lack of wisdom. If correction is needed let us seek to temper the character, not the gift. It might be necessary to recommend that the gift be held in abeyance for a time but let it be from a desire to see it released with greater effect rather

than because we are threatened by it.

If the Church is going to make an impact on the world it will need to be at least as spectacular as the early Church, probably more so. To most people today the Church is irrelevant — even my 'lively' little bit of it. They are not opposed to the Church — they don't think about it at all.

My vision is not for a proliferation of charismatic churches who incorporate tongues and prophecies into their meetings alongside the traditional elements. I long to see the increase of powerful gifts, not to form evangelistic organisations or healing crusades, but to bring spectacular healing at the scene of an accident; to cast out demons in a crowded shopping precinct; to raise a prophetic voice through the media, particularly television, as different from Songs of Praise as the late night horror movie, creating once again in people the awareness of the reality of God.

I confess I'm not ready for it as yet. But my prayer is that the Lord will create in me a depth of character that will serve as an anchor to the gifts he has given me and perhaps to someone else with more significant gifts. May he build us into a community of honest-to-goodness people who challenge the godless norms of our day with supernatural resources.



# Maurice Smith Dripping on



One evening David Mansell and I were sharing ministry together in the seaside town of Cromer and the subject we were considering was the use of spiritual gifts. I really wanted him to speak because I felt he had a clearer grasp than myself, but he felt that somehow I would have the leading contribution. With very little faith, or hope, I turned to the well-known passage in 1 Corinthians 12 which begins, 'Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.'

'What we need to get at,' I said, 'is the whole principle behind the operation of the gifts. I am not so concerned about the minutiae of their outworking as about whether they have effect or not. After all, verse 5 does say, "There are differences of administration" — or different ways of doing things — "but the same Lord." The previous verse speaks "of diversities of gifts but the same spirit" . . . .'

On and on I went, using my partner as a sounding board. 'In fact time and time again in the first eleven verses we get phrases like "the same spirit, the same Lord, the same God, by the same spirit, the self-same spirit". It seems that there is something constant here even if allowance has been made for diversity.'

We went back to the beginning of the chapter for a clue and realised that Paul was concerned that the Corinthians shouldn't get led astray as they previously had when worshipping dumb idols. Now they were in touch with a living God who spoke, and he wanted them to grasp a principle that would be a safeguard. He went on about what seemed to me an apparent irrelevancy, stating that no one could call Jesus accursed by the Spirit (that seemed obvious) and no one could say that Jesus is Lord but by the Spirit. Now that didn't sound so obvious; for as I pointed out to my friend, 'If I nip across to the local pub now and lay five pounds on the counter and offer it to anyone who will repeat, "Jesus is Lord," I reckon I'll soon have a queue. There's something else here.' So I pondered.

'Can one actually say, "Jesus is Lord" in the Greek?' I addressed my more learned associate. 'I mean, will the construction bear it out word for word?'

I sensed we were on to something as he replied that the word 'is' would be missing. It would literally be 'Jesus Lord'. Then with typical inspiration he rushed excitedly from the room to consult his Greek New Testament.

'It's better than that, Maurice,' he declared with a beaming countenance. 'No one can say "Lord Jesus" but by the Holy Spirit.' Suddenly it all came together and we saw and we worshipped. Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus . . . why, Sir John Geilgud himself couldn't say that as I can say it, not unless he knows and worships 'the same Lord'!

It all seemed so obvious now; how some tongues seemed dead and lifeless and inspired no interpretation; why some prophecy was crushing or debasing rather than edifying or building people up, and why faith was so often lacking in the ministry for healing. Everything truly spiritual was to issue forth from a current experience of God and dependence on the Holy Spirit. Worship of our Lord Jesus was to be the encasing spirit for every manifestation of the supernatural and the breeding ground of true spiritual gifts. And for those who know and love him such a spirit is unmistakeable. It is as far removed from the use of pseudo-spiritual jargon and ecstatic sighs as it is from mere down-to-earth practi-

cality and independence of spirit, and we who are spiritual should have our senses exercised so we are able to judge these things and not be led astray.

I trust you are grasping what is the essential ingredient in the operation of spiritual gifts. It is worship, a continually worshipping spirit. This is further borne out by a fuller understanding of the meaning of 'service'. For instance, verse 5 of 1 Corinthians 12 is translated in some versions as, 'There are different ways of serving,' and that word can equally well be translated as worship, or worshipping. The same applies at the beginning of Romans 12 where the issue being approached is once again gifts for the body of Christ. Two translations read differently: 'Offer yourselves. . . which is your reasonable service,' and, 'Offer yourselves. . . this is the true worship you should offer.'

When it comes to serving one another with the gifts which God has given to us, then worshipping is a must. Once a situation so overwhelms us that we lose touch with God then truly inspired gifts dry up. It is an increasing desire of mine that we become a body of constant worshippers, both in meetings and outside of meetings. Stirring up the presence of the Lord within us, filled and refilled with the wine of the spirit, ready to meet one another's needs because we are continually in touch with the source of all blessing, authority, power, healing, enlightenment and whatever else the needs of each other might be at any given time.

For the Church to become initiators without the attendant gifts of the Holy Spirit would mean working on very limited resources. Undoubtedly God uses sanctified reasoning but there is a whole realm of 'spirituals' available to us and it is a realm particularly open to worshippers. 'Come and worship . . .' is the call, and in the midst of our abandonment we shall know the prompting of God to say this, or do that. Our voice, our eyes, our touch will themselves convey that we are drawing from the one who moved continually because of his contact with, and appreciation for, his Father.

For those who commenced reading in the hope that they would find some kind of formula for the correct operation of each gift, then

I'm afraid you are by now disappointed. There are books available packed with details of this nature; but somehow I am not impressed that one man's *modus operandi* can be all that helpful to someone else. In circles where such manuals are standard reading one so often finds stereotyped manifestations with very little miraculous to show for all the effort. It is the outcome that counts, and whether we lay on hands gently, go to a pool and wash, or spit in someone's eye, the final questions persist. Did the person recover? Was their condition helped? Did the Kingdom of God come and make its mark on this earthly realm? Now, for the perfectionists that is a great opportunity to delay action yet again, but there is no real excuse for you to hold back. We shall have to learn as we go along, and even our set-backs can be examined with God in an attitude of worship.

We need each other and we need what each has to offer in service. The Lord has 'given everyone some proof of the spirit's presence for the good of all', and my prayer is that we shall all increasingly serve one another in a spirit of worship; that self-same spirit that is continually in touch with God and is uttering audibly or breathing inaudibly, 'Lord Jesus'; all this in such a way as to be inimitable unless one is also a worshipper of the same Lord.

## Book Review

Ron Trudinger: *Master Plan*  
Olive Tree Publications £2.95  
paperback only

In this age of 'instant everything', the prospect of tackling a 362 page non-fiction paperback is considerably daunting to many people. But *Master Plan* is very easy to read; remarkable for its clarity, it flows readily from page to page, its argument liberally illustrated with personal reminiscences and case histories, and supported by an abundance of scripture and other references tucked tidily away in two appendices. It is not, in the event, at all formidable.

Chapter one begins, 'This book is written for restless people.' With its material drawn largely from a wealth of real experience in the Basingstoke Community Church, its purpose is to set out systematically what the author sees as the biblical blueprint for church life, designed to produce in its fellowship an embodied restoration of God's glory and Kingdom. This is the 'Master Plan' which, Ron Trudinger says, 'if you follow it, carries a guarantee of success'. It is indeed an attractive package.

The danger of such a systematic approach, of course, is that despite the warning that 'you cannot build a church by following a text book', there are many who will try to do just that and who, as a result, will very soon be disappointed and disillusioned. Church building, and kingdom restoration, are really not quite so simple as this book could suggest to those



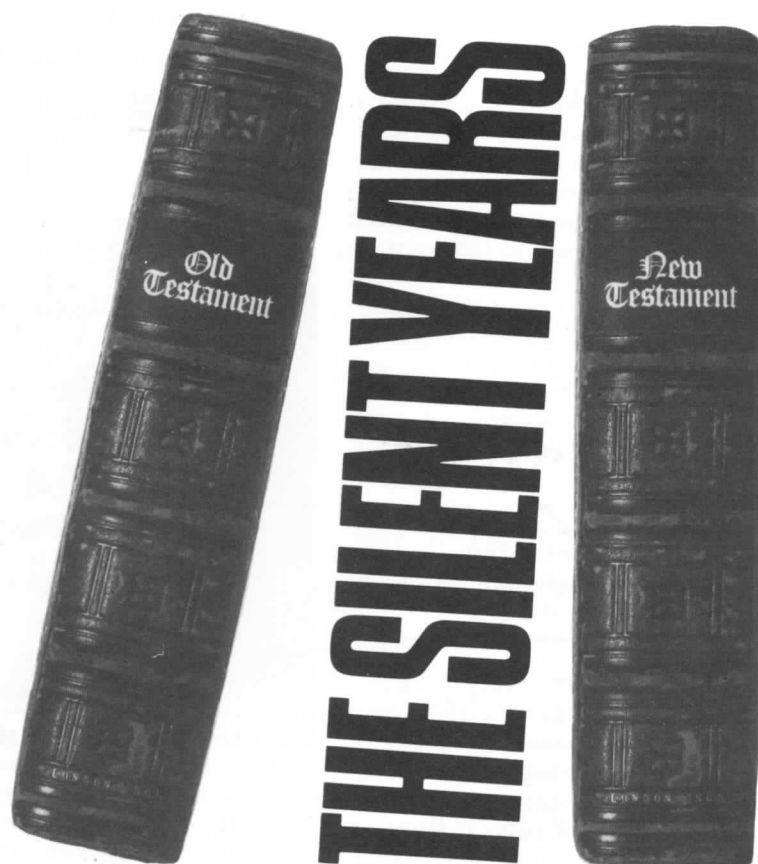
who have had little or no experience of them. Many readers of *Fulness* will know something of the suffering and sacrifice required, as well as the joy and fulfilment enjoyed, and it is a fault of *Master Plan* that it does not stress, indeed hardly mentions (in contrast to the New Testament), the costliness of commitment to God's restored covenant community.

The systematic nature of *Master Plan* also makes for a rigidity and inflexibility which fail to communicate the mystery of fellowship, the mystery of the Body of Christ. There is not, in this book, very much of the simplicity and warmth which seemed to come through in Ron Trudinger's earlier, and smaller *Cells for Life*. Nonetheless, with these limitations in mind, it is well worth reading, especially for those in leadership; indeed, it might even make a stimulating group study course for such. But if you are one of those 'restless ones' for whom *Master Plan* was avowedly written, it would perhaps be better if you first of all looked around for others to whom you could be joined in a fellowship of real mutual love and support, and then, together trusting the Lord, carefully use this book to lead you into a richer, deeper (and costlier) experience and commitment. And remember, a living, organic, experience doesn't always fit comfortably into the straight jacket of a rule book!

Ken Rose



# Graham Perrins examines prophecy between the Old and New Testaments



Malachi helped Ezra and Nehemiah to rebuild the community of Israel after the exile. At about the middle of the 5th century BC he brought Israel a message of hope and expectancy. 'Listen: I will send my messenger before me to prepare the way. And then the one you are looking for will come suddenly to his Temple . . .'

His book closes the Old Testament, and it must be admitted it would be hard to follow him or to suggest a more fitting finale. Anything else would be anti-climax. G. E Wright suggests, 'The period of excitement, urgency, is gone. Indeed it would seem that those who framed the canon of scripture were quite right in leaving the centuries between Ezra and John the Baptist very largely a blank. Only with the opening of the New Testament is the spirit of Old Testament prophecy again revived, and the Lord, who is about to do a new thing, is again known, this time in Jesus Christ. (*The Book of the Acts of God.*)

Harry Mowley in his *Guide to Old Testament Prophecy* states categorically 'Prophecy came to an end. We cannot put a firm date

upon this end, but we may say with some certainty that it came soon after 400BC.'

Before the 2nd century, the Jews had virtually closed their canon of Old Testament Scriptures. The great prophetic writings, including Malachi, had been gathered together and were viewed as the heights of revelation. From this time on any prophet or prophecy, however genuine, would be hard put to gain a hearing; would immediately be compared with the standard of the 'canon'; and the very collection of writings designed to preserve prophecy would silence it as a living voice within Israel.

The absence of the prophet was commented on at the time by the writer of 1 Maccabees (100 BC). Covering the events between 175-134 BC the author refers to the defiled stones of the altar of burnt offering which were stored away until a prophet should arise who could be consulted about them. He also comments that 'a terrible oppression began in Israel; there had been nothing like it since the disappearance of prophecy among them. 'Finally, 'The Jews

and the priests had agreed that Simon should be their perpetual leader and high priest until a trustworthy prophet should arise.'

The historian Josephus, looking back over 300 years to the exile, states, 'It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes, very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time.'

This dearth of the prophetic word was not a new thing for Israel. During Samuel's boyhood it was rare for God to speak, and visions were uncommon. After the Temple was destroyed the psalmist bemoaned that Israel had been 'deprived of signs, with no prophet left' (Psalm 74:9). Now it would seem that, once again, God had become mute.

Gerhard von Rad notes, 'There is, especially in Malachi, an impression that prophecy was flagging: but the subsequent silence inspires several questions . . . Did it indicate that the line of those who carried on the prophetic tradition had come to an end?' (*The Message of the Prophets.*)

At least three explanations have been given to explain this silence.

1. The nation of Israel was comparatively untouched by world events, and it was always in response to such events that the prophets operated.
2. The question mark always associated with unfulfilled prophecy. Many promises of judgment and blessing were still apparently unfulfilled after many years. This brought prophecy into doubt and disrepute.
3. With an emphasis on the Law and Temple, priestly authority was at its strongest, and the function of the prophet was undermined. God's will could be discovered by the scholar, or the priest.

The time between the Old and New Testaments clearly marks a crisis in the history of prophetic ministry. It was a time for an agonising re-appraisal of its nature and function. Was there any continuation or development of the prophetic gift during this time or was there a complete absence of such activity?

## The Essenes

The records suggest that the silence may not have been as total



as many have thought. There were certain groups and individuals who kept the prophetic flame alive, even in the midst of general decline. One such group, the Essenes, an important Jewish sect, flourished in the 1st century BC.

Josephus informs us that 'there are those among them who undertake to foretell things to come, by reading the holy books, and using several sorts of purifications, and being perpetually conversant in the discourses of the prophets, and it is but seldom that they miss in their predictions'.

He gives examples of the gift of prophecy amongst them. Judas (100 BC) had a number of disciples to whom he taught the art of foretelling, and it was said that he had never failed in his predictions. Having prophesied that a certain Antigonus would die on a particular day at Strato's Tower (in Caesarea) he was perplexed to see him on that specified day in Jerusalem some 60 miles from the supposed place of death, and as the day was already a few hours old it would seem the prophecy could not be fulfilled. The dejected prophet was later reassured as to the true nature of his gift when the death of Antigonus was announced at a nearby spot having the same name as the place in Caesarea.

During the reign of Augustus (27 BC-14 AD) Archelaus, the despised ethnarch of Judea, had a vision of 9 ears of corn, full and large, devoured by oxen. His diviners could not agree as to the interpretation, but Simon the Essene said that Archelaus would reign as many years as the ears of corn and then, passing through various fortunes, would die. Within 5 days of the interpretation Archelaus was called to trial by Augustus who ended his 9 year reign by sending him into exile, where he died 8 years later.

Another prophet, Manahem, saluted Herod as king of the Jews whilst he was yet a child at school. When he ultimately became king (37-4 BC) Herod sent for Manahem to have further conversation with him. As a result of these encounters Herod is said to have honoured all the Essenes.

Many scholars have identified the Qumran Community at the Dead Sea with the Essenes; this

group, we know, were careful students of prophecy, looking for the Prophet who was to come. Some have suggested that John the Baptist was also influenced by them in the early days of his ministry. There is little doubt that the Essenes helped to carry the torch of prophecy during this time.

The Pharisees also had prophetic groups and Josephus mentions some who were active in Herod's day as opponents of his government.

### The high priest

It was not only in particular groups that prophecy was encouraged. Josephus has some intriguing comments on John Hyrcanus who ruled as high priest between 134-104 BC. 'He it was who alone had three of the most desirable things in the world, the government of his nation, the high priesthood, and the gift of prophecy; for the Deity conversed with him and he was not ignorant of anything that was to come afterwards, insomuch that he foresaw and foretold that his two eldest sons would not continue masters of the government.'

One particular prophecy of his is recorded. During the last years of his reign, Hyrcanus fought against Syria, and on the day of a decisive battle he was in the Temple offering incense when he heard a voice saying that his sons had overcome Antiochus. On coming out of the Temple he declared this word openly to the multitude, and it proved to be true. A Jewish Targum also emphasises his prophetic character by linking him with Elijah, the model of the true prophet.

### The apocalyptic writings

One of the most interesting developments in the prophetic realm at this time came in the body of literature we know as 'apocalyptic'. R H Charles, a leading pioneer in this field, has pointed out that 'the view on these questions in the past, not only amongst the laity but also amongst scholars generally, was that to prophecy was due all or practically all the religious development of Israel, that between Malachi and the Christian era there was a period of silence, in which there was no inspiration and no prophet and no develop-

ment, and that Christianity practically leapt full grown into life at the beginning of the Christian era, un beholden to these so called years of silence. These ideas have been rudely shattered by the research of recent years and the vast services of apocalyptic, not only to Judaism but still more to Christianity, are now steadily coming into recognition.'

Apocalyptic (unveiling) is the name given to a certain kind of literature that describes in symbol and imagery the universal conflict between God and Satan at the end of time. These writings belong to the period 200 BC onwards.

Something of its style was anticipated in the Old Testament (eg Dan 2, Is 24-27, Ezek 38-39, Joel 3, Zech 9-14), but it was in the inter-testament period that it developed into a specialised form in such books as 1 and 2 Enoch, the Book of Jubilees and the Assumption of Moses. The book of Revelation is a New Testament example of such writing.

B W Anderson describes apocalyptic as 'prophecy in a new idiom'. Because of the ascendancy of the Law and the collection of the older prophetic books into a 'canon', the apocalyptic books were written under pseudonyms. Their authors probably felt they would never get a hearing, and penned their books under the names of past heroes such as Moses, Ezra, Enoch or Abraham. Some New Testament writings show familiarity with apocalyptic writings and Jude quotes directly from the Book of Enoch in verses 14 and 15 of his letter.

When Jesus looks back over history he does not, as the scribes, close the old prophetic era with Malachi but with John the Baptist. There is a continuity, for all the prophets and the Law prophesied up till the time of John (Matt 11:1-15).

We have seen, then, that certain literature, particular individuals and groups all made a prophetic contribution between the Testaments and, although there is little of prophetic earthquake, wind or fire during this period, we do have the gentle breeze, the still small voice. God was still speaking through his people and in the comparative quietness was preparing history for his ultimate Word.



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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*Pisteuo* means 'believe', *pistis* is 'faith', and together they introduce a vast subject in the New Testament, which is beyond the scope of a brief study. With this limitation in mind, I have provided brief notes under three headings, which may at least give a glimpse of the subject.

## Faith is . . .

Faith is seeing the unseen. It is having the substance and reality of God and his purpose before the time of its material manifestation (Heb 11:1). Faith is seeing beyond the exigencies and sufferings of the present, to God himself and the consummation of his purpose (Heb 11:10 and all Heb 11). Faith involves security and confidence in God, expressed in fellowship with him, and confident co-operation in his purpose (Rom 15:13; Mark 11:24; John 5:13-15). Faith is the confident response to God's word (Rom 10:17), which receives the word he speaks to us as a concrete event in our lives (Heb 4:2). Because faith sees beyond the visible, a mountain of an obstacle can be removed with a word (Mark 11:23, 24). Faith often requires confident action *before* visible result (like the lepers heading for the priest before their sores left them: Luke 11:14), but this is based on confidence in Christ and inner certainty, and is never a technique to force the hand of God.

Because faith sees the unseen, it is not threatened if there is a time delay before seeing a materially

visible result. In any case, since time is an aspect of what exists, delay may not be a hindrance or a barrier, but simply an integral part of manifestation! Faith sees what *is* in God (his desires, longings, purpose, and his power and ability to bring them to pass) and brings it into the material realm by the 'obedience of faith'. This obedience is not legalistic; it is the joyful, active response in life to the reality which is seen by faith.

## Faith and Christ

There have been dire warnings against a 'theology of prepositions', and I acknowledge the dangers. But the prepositions used in the New Testament to link 'faith' and 'Christ' can be instructive:

Faith *epi* (upon) Christ (Acts 16:31). Christ is our foundation. We have security before God, firm legal acceptance on the basis of his life, death and resurrection.

Faith *eis* (into) Christ (John 7:38). This preposition signifies movement into something. Faith is active. It causes us to move into the very person of Christ, to become a part of him.

Faith *en* (in) Christ (Eph 1:1, 15). *En*, and the case it governs, are called 'locative'; they speak of location. Faith *locates* us at rest in the person and completed work of Christ. He is our address!

Faith *dia* (through) Christ (Acts 3:16). Jesus is the means of true faith; his work provides for it!

Faith *pros* (towards) Christ (Phil 5). *Pros* speaks of movement towards something. The direction of faith

is always Christ, never creeds, doctrines or religious formulae.

## Faith and believism

Believism is a psychological technique, which purports to be faith, but is in reality a system of mental conditioning which ultimately robs the believer of what he seeks. It concentrates on 'victory verses' and fails to see that faith does not come from Bible reading, but comes by a *rhema* (spoken word) of Christ (Rom 10:17). In its emphasis on victory, it fails to acknowledge God's dealings with the individual; it implies that instant manifest perfection is ours now on the basis of Bible verses, and neglects the process of transformation taking place in us. In healing, it advocates a technique of 'ask, thank and you have' as a means of obtaining wholeness, and again neglects the necessity for God to speak his life-giving word, and for real faith (Matt 9:29; Mark 5:34; Heb 11:1) to be present. Believism lacks one of the fundamentals of faith — prophetic vision, seeing the unseen realm and the goal of everything. It is rooted in the present, is human and soulish. Its proponents are often very strong personalities who carry their audiences on the tide of their own strength, and leave them condemned when they fail to achieve similar apparent results.

No, we want faith, not believism, and faith is a warm, living response to the Christ of God, which gives us unseen reality, and life from God, and a secure destiny.

12th March 1980

DIARY OF A HEALING

Pains in both arms and chest for years.  
No answer to varied approaches to healing.  
Visited doctor.  
Hospital X-ray revealed arthritic neck  
Prescription: large collar and tablets.  
Delayed wearing collar, took tablets.  
Result: dizziness and nausea.  
Revisited doctor.  
Listed other possible side effects: fainting, coma, etc.  
Stopped tablets.

Lunching with my wife and a close friend.  
Very good atmosphere.  
Seeing eye to eye and feeling at one.  
Friend suggested prayer together.  
Held hands at the meal table.  
Friend started, 'I don't have much faith, Lord.'  
(That's all we need!)  
'But I do love Maurice very much.'  
(That's better.)  
Tears were flowing freely.  
My wife squeezed my hand.  
Seemed to be conveying, 'So do I.'  
Suddenly felt I had been touched inside.  
Knew I was healed.  
'Faith that works by love'?  
'2 or 3 agreed - Ask what you will?'  
Seemingly oblivious, prayer for healing continued.  
I stated, 'God has touched me.'  
Symptoms gradually disappeared.  
Within days, none left.

A year later all is well.  
Felt a twinge some months ago. (Aha!)  
Quite certain I had been healed and this was a lie.  
Declared this to be so and ignored the symptoms.  
They left.  
A pattern? No.  
An instance? Yes.  
Praise God? Indeed.

Maurice Smith

# Speaking

by Gerald Co



The restaurant staff nervously eyed me up and down; it had been a good week. Holiday with family and friends, warm sunny days, accidentally or should I say providentially, meeting folk who had been in various meetings I'd spoken at, even though we were 300 miles from home. Resting from local pressures, observing some of England's fabulous scenery, it deserved a song, and a song it got — in tongues. Well, it seemed the most natural thing to do, and with so many foreigners around in Britain, who is to know the difference?

The restaurant staff were silently signalling one another that a nutter was on the premises. I ordered my meal, they were nice and smiled. We went and sat down. A few minutes later our meal was served and unknown to me the manageress stood behind my seat. She caught my wife's attention, nodded towards me and tapped her head with her index finger. My wife nodded back! The manageress leaned over my shoulder and quietly whispered in my ear, 'Would you like an aspirin, Sir?'

I declined and my wife roared with laughter. 'Crazy? Yes, he's crazy all right, but I have to put up with this every day!'

## A wedding gift

Well, frankly, she doesn't, not every day. I probably speak in tongues more than most, but not always in public! The gift of tongues, Paul says, is a gift given to edify oneself and, with all the pressures and drains on life, how much we need to edify ourselves. Fellowship with others isn't always at hand and even when it is needs aren't always met, but in tongues we can edify ourselves, praise God and intercede in the depths of our spirit. Every gift that we find in the New Testament can be found in the Old



# ng in tongues

## ates

except the gift of tongues. It was the gift of the bridegroom to the bride on the day of Pentecost. It gave her a language of intimacy where mysteries could be uttered. When we speak in tongues, not even the devil knows what we are talking about. Nowhere in the bible does it imply that the devil can read our minds. When we speak in tongues I believe we confuse the devil. He's confused us long enough; it's about time we confused him.

### Making it up?

A friend of mine who is now getting on in years once had a girl come to him. 'I think I've been baptised in the Spirit, and I think I'm speaking in tongues,' she said. My friend replied, 'What do you mean, you think you're speaking in tongues?' 'Well,' she said, 'the devil's told me I've made it up; what should I do?' My friend paused for a while, 'If I were you,' he pondered, 'I'd make some more up and confuse him.'

To me that's good advice. The Holy Spirit doesn't speak in tongues, we do. He is the energising force behind our speaking. The idea that God comes and waggles our tongues or blows through us like a drainpipe is wrong and has done a lot of damage in the church.

### Thinking and thanking

There is a vast difference between thinking and thanking. Many have precious thoughts towards the Lord and they are valid, for he knows our every thought, but it is expression that deepens impression. God has expressed himself to us, and that has impressed our hearts, minds and wills so much that, in responding to the gospel, our lives have been transformed. God has given us the gift of tongues so that we may express our own worship to him. This is not only therapeutic in itself, but will also more fully impress Christ and his body of our love, devotion and gratitude. In the course of serving

God and the church it is very easy to become hurt and resentful. Somebody once said, 'I've never known God to use an ungrateful man.' It is my considered opinion that everybody can speak in tongues of gratitude if they so wish. Tongues is not the evidence of being filled with the Spirit, but the glorious consequence. We may not all have a ministry of tongues. Paul said, 'Do all speak in tongues? Are all apostles?' the obvious answer being no; but we can all speak in tongues to edify ourselves.

### Tongues in the meeting

So besides tongues being given as a gift to edify ourselves and worship God, there is also a ministry of tongues and interpretations. The idea that speaking in tongues is for the immature in the light of the fact that now we have the bible, makes Paul's statement, 'I speak in tongues more than any of you,' absurd. Even the tongues-babbling church in Corinth he doesn't forbid to speak in tongues, but restricts them and says that it should be with interpretation; otherwise it's nonsense.

The important thing is that we do not simply seek to translate a tongue, but rather interpret the burden of the Lord as expressed in that tongue. There are many burdens which cannot be expressed in a native language; they are too deep, but spirit to spirit the tongue unlocks an interpretation. We're talking about a deep level of anointing, of spirits as well as word. Another point is that speaking in tongues is under the control of the speaker, as with speaking English. Many gabble away in tongues as if they are spilling out a dictionary or playing a tape at high speed. The welter of words pours out without any sense of order, and quite often the interpretation does as well!

When we speak in English there are commas, full stops and paragraphs,

and so it should be in tongues. God isn't panting away in heaven with one word stumbling over another. The gift does not become more authentic by giving it at bionic speed or by making it desperately passionate.

### Interpreting yourself

Addressing himself to those who speak in tongues, Paul says, 'Pray also that you may interpret.' This is not just interpreting someone else's tongue, but interpreting your own. Often we have a mentality whereby we expect one person to give a tongue and another to interpret it. There's nothing wrong or out of order with this, but we should be prepared to interpret any tongue we give in a meeting.

On one occasion I was the speaker at a large conference of leaders in America. I spoke every morning and evening, which is exhausting, even for me! It came to the last night; we'd had a good week, the word of God had flowed well and there was tremendous expectancy. I was under pressure because I sensed that I had nothing to say; I'd said it all. Perhaps I should have just said that, but instead I prayed. I remember sitting in a car on my own, praying away in tongues, asking God to help me share something from my heart. Back came the interpretation loud and clear. I took notes from my interpretation, went into the convention centre and preached on the interpretation I'd been given!

Those of us who are termed Charismatic are continually being criticised for making too much of tongues. Frankly I don't think we've made nearly enough of it in our preaching and teaching, and certainly in our exercising of the gift. So let's get on with it, bless the Lord, edify ourselves, expect there to be interpretation of quality and content, and allow the supernatural to mingle with the natural as an evidence that our God is with us.

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. I'm confused about the whole issue of speaking in tongues. I've been baptised in the Spirit and I have spoken in tongues, but I don't seem to have the same excitement and urge about the gift now.*

A. There could be a number of reasons why you are not speaking in tongues so much these days. The first possibility is guilt. Perhaps sin has come into your life and you've allowed it to find root in your heart, and so you find praise and worship difficult. The answer here is to seek God earnestly for a fresh experience of his forgiveness. There's nothing like a good dose of love to make you sing again.

The second reason could be plain, old-fashioned apathy. You've just got into a rut! If this is so then open up your life to God. Are you in the right place or job? Do you take the Lord into work, etc? A sense of his presence is vital in daily routine.

Thirdly, condemnation is a common enemy to speaking in tongues. The devil tells you you're not good enough or not spiritual enough, or that you don't love the Lord enough. When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, he always puts his finger clearly on the source, whilst the enemy brings general criticism or shows us high standards in order to prevent us getting back into a right relationship with God. So condemnation must be thrown off; praise God positively because there is no condemnation now, and let that praise be in tongues!

Finally, it may simply be that you feel that the gifts of the Spirit

can only operate in excitement or through emotional surges. Whilst this can be true, it is not always so. We don't have to be excited or have some strange feeling to speak to the Lord in English, so why should we insist on having such feelings before we speak in tongues? The supernatural gifts should operate quite naturally among God's people. Just as you choose to speak in English, so you may choose to speak in tongues, to edify yourself and nourish your spirit, or intercede on behalf of another.

Some people say that they don't get anything out of speaking in tongues. Generally this is because they don't put anything into it. They are often the people who don't get anything out of their worship in English either, for the same reason. Our Lord has asked us to love him first and foremost with all our hearts. As we direct our love to God by using tongues in praise and worship, we will experience a deeper knowledge of his love, and benefit ourselves from the use of the gift.

*Q. I have heard quite a lot of ministry recently stating that we need to hear the voice of the prophet yet again. I thought prophets went out with apostles, now we have the scriptures. I know you believe in apostles, but now we have a whole canon of scripture, do we really need prophets to foretell the future, when the bible foretells it anyway?*

A. Yes, there does seem to be a lot more interest in prophetic ministry these days. Before we answer your question we would like to say that we feel there is a

need of a strong, prophetic voice to the church before we can speak to the world. Many are speaking to the world, trying to get it in order, when our own house is in a state of total disarray. It is very much simpler to tell others what's wrong with them than to put our own communities, families and individual lives under the government and Kingdom of God.

Having said all that, Ephesians 4 states that our ascended Lord gave gifts of men to the church. First apostles, secondly prophets, and then pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc. This giving of gifts was after Calvary. Nowhere does it say they were given until the canon of scripture was completed. Paul tells us that we need a prophetic ministry to edify, exhort and comfort, not simply to open up the future, as this is only one aspect of prophetic ministry. More often than not the prophet of God is called to be prophetic by his life, to be a living, walking example of what God is saying. He is needed to lift our eyes away from our problems, away from the nitty gritty situations we face, envisioning us with fresh knowledge of God's ultimate purpose. He is also one of God's foundational ministries working together with the apostles to clear the ground for the house of the Lord to be built in every place to the glory of God.

We feel the prophetic ministry is vital. *Fulness*, vol. 9, deals with the scope of a prophet's ministry, his temperament, and how prophecy is related to music and worship. This will give you a much more comprehensive view.



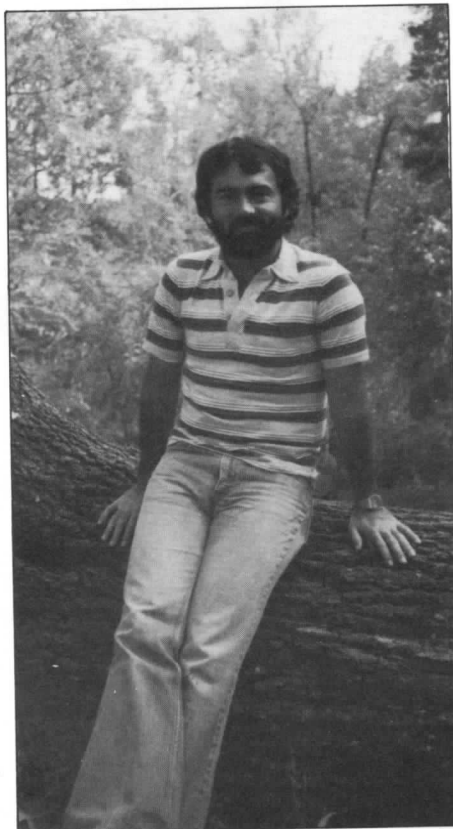
# The moods of a prophet

Ever wonder why men and women who prophesy, with at least a degree of regularity, seem to bounce from one extreme emotion to another? One prophecy may be given in such a positive, exhilarating way that it seems to shake the rafters as well as our souls. Another prophecy might seem to come from a man who is so low he appears to have just come from digging holes in the basement.

I have at times felt depression in the form of a foreboding sort of cloud hanging over me for days on end — and have not had a clue as to why. At other times I have found myself experiencing super highs of joy unspeakable for no apparent reason. Usually the feeling stays with me until I am moved to prophesy that which is stimulated by what I feel inside. Often the feelings arrive long before the word to be given is clearly understood.

The prophet Elijah was a man who had his share of varied emotions. In I Kings 18 we find a confident, taunting prophet standing alone before the 450 prophets of Baal. He is the picture of a man who is sure of who he is, what he is doing and where he is going. I Kings 19 opens with Elijah afraid and praying to die. 'I've had enough, Lord!' Elijah exclaims. Then upon hearing a gentle whisper from the Lord he is ready to face anything

## Wayne Drain



again. To the modern psychiatrist Elijah might appear a paranoid-schizophrenic with all the delusions and outbursts of emotion usually exhibited by such. From the heights of his triumph on mount Carmel to the depths of his

despondency under the juniper tree, we see Elijah exemplifying the varied emotional extremes that are often felt by men when God's burdens touch their lives.

Here in Russellville, the Lord has blessed me to share ministry with brothers whose emotional makeup serves to balance mine. Presently there are six elders functioning in our fellowship. Some of them enjoy strength in the areas of prophetic insight, directional vision and other intuitive gifts. Others have abilities in more logical and analytical thinking. These men can bring clarity or help in giving definition to prophetic leadings. For example, if I were the only leader, we might bounce from one thing to the next with little degree of cohesion. But if I were left out, we might become methodical in our movement — but would probably move with the pace of an anaemic snail.

These thoughts shouldn't give license for men and women to act or say whatever they fancy and not be responsible for their prophecies because they were 'caught up in the spirit'. With proper covering and solid relationships with other saints, prophetic men and women can act as a barometer for all of us, so that we can better hear and be touched by what Jesus is speaking to his church.

## Bernard Who?

Liz Ray

Hope Ethel Sprogett was a saint  
Whose life was sometimes drear,  
But there were high-spots too — in fact  
They came four times a year.

Ah Fulness! each new magazine  
Was proudly put on show  
So friends who called would nudge,  
and say,  
'She's going on, you know.'

She read the contents too, of course;  
It never failed to please,  
Though favourite, it must be said,  
Were Bernard Cope's ID's.

Now, being female (as she was),  
Our maiden curious grew  
To know just who this Bernard was;  
She'd asked, but no one knew.

Now was he tall and thin, or short  
And fat with specs, or what?  
And yet more crucial to this lass —  
A bachelor, or not?

With actual information scarce  
The daydreams soon began,  
'Dear Sprogett, were you wafted  
here?'  
Sighed Bernard, through his tan.

But then the name dispelled the  
dreams:

Hope Cope! — dear me, how grim!  
Then brightening up, she thought,  
'Maybe

He's used a pseudonym!

So now, with both her hero's looks  
And name uncertain too,  
She just admires his turn of phrase —  
Well, what's a girl to do?

So go on Fulness, have a heart,  
Enlighten Hope (and me!);  
Won't someone ID Bernard Cope,  
And solve the mystery?

In answer to our reader's query, we  
solve the mystery of Bernard Cope  
on page 22 of this issue.

# Authority to heal

The very mention of healing for many of us causes our blood pressure to rise. Some of us still read the glowing testimonies of others who have been healed. Others have simply concluded that 'God does not heal everyone' or 'I do not have enough faith'!

We may have been taught that 'Jesus heals today' and so have joined a healing line to have some famous evangelist pray for us. Whilst awaiting our turn we tried to think of all the relevant promises in scripture. We were next in the line and, at this point we summoned up all our reserves of faith. We reached out to God at the moment of prayer, only to be disappointed that we did not feel anything. The minister looked down at us to see our lack of reaction and yet more condemnation was heaped upon us. We compensated for this with a desire to be real and finally, in our confusion, criticised the one who was praying, for his lack of faith. For all this we are still reminded by the Holy Spirit that it is God's will to heal and that 'Jesus went around doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil'.

We can climb out of the abyss of confusion and unbelief into which we have consigned ourselves if we have an openness to the Holy Spirit and an unbiased look at the Scriptures.

In 1 Corinthians 12 verse 30 Paul asks, 'Have all the gifts of healing?' and verse 31 says, 'Covet earnestly the best gifts.' Rather than say to ourselves, 'See all do not have gifts of healing!' and leave the matter there we should search the scriptures to find out who does



by Ian Andrews

have gifts of healing and seek prayer. Not that we shall then need to strive to feel the faith for our healing, as before. This time we shall submit to God's government in our lives and receive our gift of healing.

The ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4 verse 11 all have access to the gifts of healing by virtue of their offices. Their task is for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

Apostles today should never be circumspect about praying for the sick in any new work which, under God, they build. Prophets in the old and new testaments have prayed for the sick as a result of the office or ministry being upon them. Evangelists are called as God's salesmen

for the Kingdom of God. Salesmen give out samples and the evangelist is given by his Head Office samples of gifts of healings to demonstrate that the Kingdom of God is a reality. When God's word is ministered expect to see God confirm it with signs following.

In Ezekiel 34 verses 1-4 the word of the Lord comes to Ezekiel. God is angry with the pastors that the sick have not been healed. He is a just person and only holds shepherds responsible for the health of their sheep if he gives them the ability to heal.

In James 5 verses 14 and 15 the onus is upon the one who is sick to call for the elders, who are then required by God to respond. They should anoint with oil and fulfil their responsibility of praying the prayer of faith. The Lord will then give to the sick person a 'gift of healing' and raise them up.

If we have sinned we should confess this and ask for forgiveness at this time. Often sin and sickness are linked when criticism of the leadership is involved.

Today the local church will often be broken up into smaller units. The group leader or local shepherd has access to the gifts of healing relative to those people whom God has placed in his care.

Parents also represent God's authority in the home and as such have the gift of healing. The husband, or in his absence the wife, should pray for any member of the household who is sick. Practically speaking, this will mean spending time in praise and worship and drawing near to God before prayer is offered. This will ensure

that the parent is praying out of his or her office and not with purely emotional interest for their loved ones.

In Mark 16 Jesus said, 'He that believeth in my Name shall lay hands on the sick.' Any member of Christ's church who has reached a level of faith where he or she feels that it is God's will to heal, should be prepared to 'step out in faith' and pray.

You will see from the foregoing examples that God is eager to see sick people healed. The numbers of categories of believers to whom he

promised to give gifts of healing should serve to remove from our thinking any double-mindedness or wrong thinking that the Church is not ready for such a move.

In order to encourage people into the healing ministry I would urge all who have a burden in this area to attend to the following:

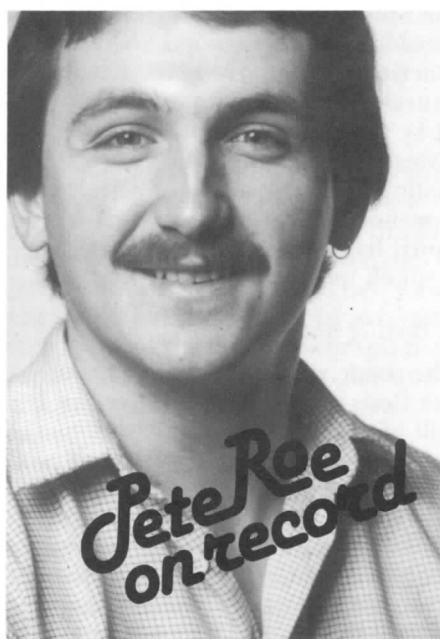
Familiarise yourself on the whole subject of healing from the scriptures. Read in particular the following verses:  
Exodus 15: 23-26; Numbers 21: 6-9; Prov 4: 20-22; Psalm 103: 1-4; Psalm 107: 20; Is 52: 1-5; Mal 4: 2;

Matt 8: 16-17; 1 Peter 2: 24; 3 John 2.

Give time to worship and praise so that God's presence overshadows you and enriches and deepens your spirit.

Pray in tongues often, as this will, in time, result in the renewal of your mind and the normal doubts will disappear.

Firmly believe that God's word is the last and ultimate word of authority. Show yourself faithful to God in praying for the sick. Faithfulness, not success, must be our aim.



The Bind Us Together album  
KMR 315

Three years ago the embryonic musical *Bind Us Together* visited our home town and I, along with the writers and singers, concluded that it needed a lot of improvement. It's had it! Improvement that is!!

Its praise and worship, narration, drama, old and new songs all smoothly dovetail together. The choir, who succeed in not sounding rigid are superbly complemented by the quality of the soloists. Dave and Pat Bilbrough feature often, Jo Dore and Dave Bryant make their separate recording debuts with real style, and producer John Pantry transforms 'Love me, Love my brother' with typical Pantry quality. The narration, difficult depending as it does on audience response, comes over really well with the right blend of brightness and sensitivity.

For me the music and crisp production are outstanding. On top of tight, well-balanced bass and

drums, come the magic and direction of John Menlove's piano, followed by strings, brass, electric guitars and synthesisers. The Menlove/Pantry partnership is an unprecedented success and should be built upon again. Although the choir don't come up to the standard of the music, and *Abba Father* is completely murdered, the combination of choir, soloists, narration and music really works well with best tracks being *Love me, love my brother*, *Father I love you*, and *Let us open up ourselves*.

When I questioned the idea of the album being launched six months before the nationwide tour, Nigel Coltman, Kingsway's marketing manager, told me the album had to stand in its own right as that's all people take home. *The Bind Us Together* album certainly does this.

**Chord of Love: All things new**  
Pilgrim 451 and PC 451

Two years separate this album from *Chord of Love's* first, and very important years they were. There really is no comparison: the similarity ends with the quality of the choir.

Although this is not a praise album the choir is excellent and is greatly improved by the addition of soloists. But the impressive feature is the music, not just backing the choir but standing in its own right, one track being completely instrumental. The piano and guitar are captivating and professional, and with a new drummer and the use of strings, a really good sound is produced as smooth as you'll hear on the radio or TV.

I now understand what impressed the friend who gave me this album to review. It's not just because their first album was praise and

this is more performance-orientated, but that the players have become musicians, the singers have made room for them, and that Chord of Love have sharpened their style to become a valid musical unit.

If every church's musicians and singers grew as fast as *Chord of Love*, it wouldn't be long before the Church had something vital to communicate in the music world.

**Cliff Richard: Rock 'n' roll juvenile**  
TC-EMC-3307

Twenty-one years is a very long time: I'd have had difficulty reviewing Cliff's first album — I was two. So where do I start with a singer who's second only to Elvis?

The cover: good photos of Cliff and a personal note are impressive, but the title is misleading. Although Cliff wrote the title track which is the best on side one, the album does not contain much rock 'n' roll. However, it does have energy, with Cliff's voice competently backed by his musicians, while dazzling Bryn Howarth, not to mention Peter Skellern and Tristian Fry, make all the difference musically.

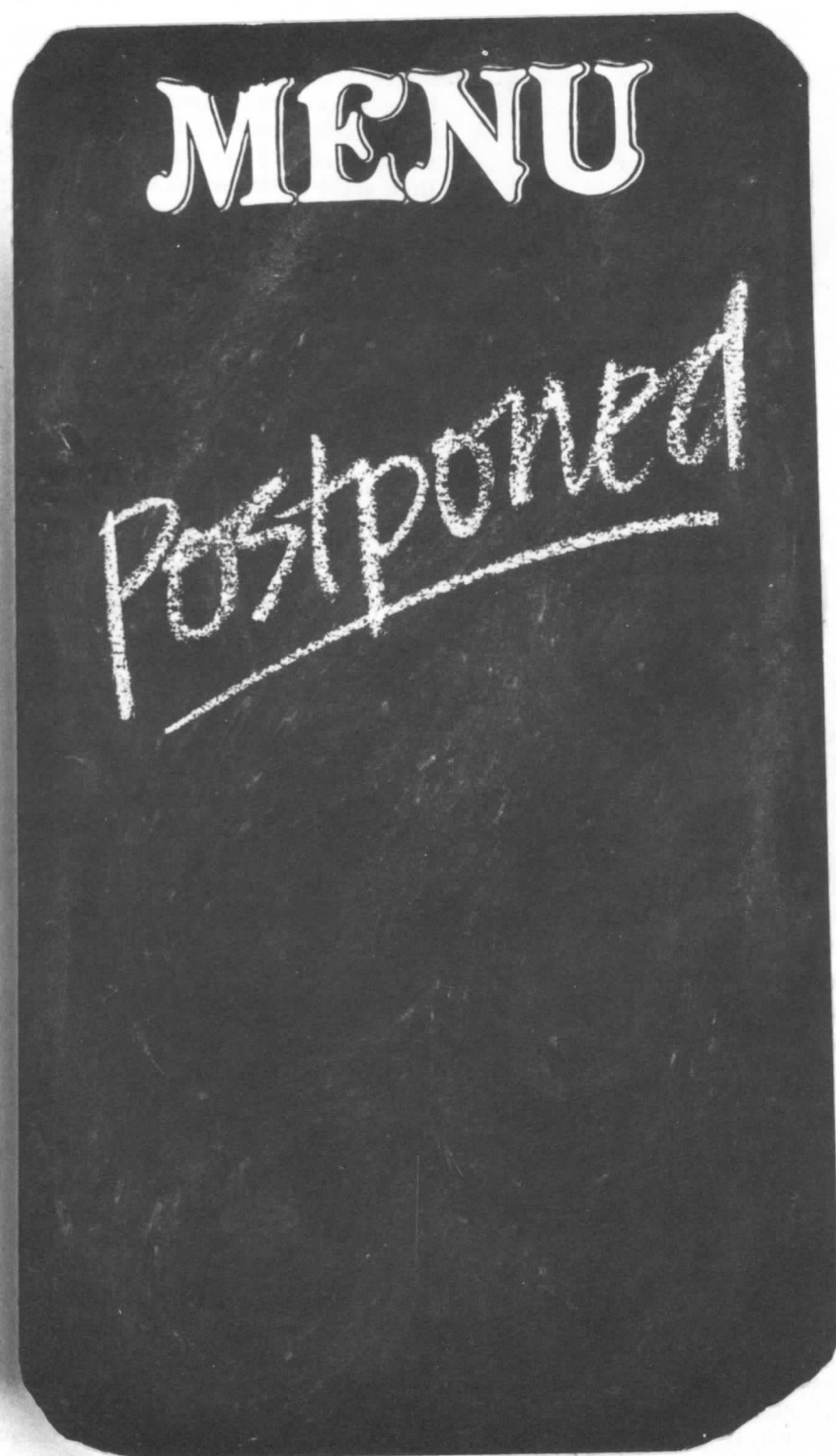
B.A. Robertson, of *Bang Bang* success and writer of many hits, teams with Terry Britten to make side two much the better side, with *Carrie* and *Hot Shot* standing out. The incredibly successful *We Don't Talk Any More*, which I still think is Cliff's best, was put on the album at the last minute.

A friend of mine commented that Cliff's enduring success is not due to one special feature, but to maintaining a high standard throughout every aspect of his profession. The album certainly bears this out.



# The absent Bridegroom

Author of 'God's Chosen Fast', Arthur Wallis makes a strong case for the practice of fasting today.



Most people don't exactly take to fasting as a duck to water. In fact, it is a real comfort to the flesh to find some good reasons why we shouldn't. Before the movement of the Spirit, bible-believing Christians would remind us about the harmful ascetic practices of the medieval church, and therefore prefer to obey the spirit rather than the letter of Christ's teaching about fasting by the practice of self-denial. For most of us the movement of the Spirit has changed that, and fasting is much more commonly practised.

Is fasting necessary?

The scene may have changed, but the flesh hasn't. Natural aversion is still with us; it is just that the arguments against, expressed or unexpressed, have shifted ground. 'The Spirit has come. We have been anointed with the oil of joy. It is a time to dance, not to mourn; to feast, not to fast. Furthermore, we are not under law but under grace. We are no longer bound by old rules and disciplines. All that is required is that we give free reign to the new life within. Lay upon us a burden of fasting and you will rob us of the spontaneity of the spirit.'

There is some truth here and I can identify with the underlying fear. However, facts are stubborn things, and they face us on the page of scripture. If we are prepared to let our lives be governed by the truth, we will find that the truth will set us free from our fears, for they are groundless. If my freedom in the Spirit is liable to evaporate if I exercise self-discipline, either I am not yet fully under grace, or the self-discipline I am seeking to exercise is legal, not spiritual.

Fasting for new covenant people?

'How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.' (Matt. 9:15)

This was our Lord's answer to the disciples of John who were inquiring why they and the Pharisees fasted, but Christ's disciples did not. The Messiah had come and the sons of Israel were being drawn into union with him. This was a wedding celebration. How could they be expected to fast?

These guests of the bridegroom were the people of the new covenant. They could not live, like the disciples of John or the Pharisees, under the principles of the old covenant. Jesus went on to explain. They were not a new patch for the old garment; they were in themselves a brand new garment. They were God's glorious new wine, and could not be contained by the old Judaistic wineskin. But our Lord was predicting that this glorious time of inauguration and celebration would give way to another phase—'the days will come'—when these people of the new garment and the new wine would engage in fasting. So fasting was not incompatible with the new order that he was then inaugurating.

Evidently the fasting to which Jesus referred would not involve a return to the kind of fasting that obtained under the old covenant. The old order with its rites and ceremonies had gone forever. His picture of the garment and the wineskin made that clear. Though his followers would fast again, it would be for different reasons and in a different spirit from the fasting of John's disciples and of the Pharisees. But nevertheless they would fast. He was not suggesting that they would back-slide into fasting, or lapse into it in a fit of melancholia because he had left them. He was implying that it would be a right and proper thing to do, even for men in the blessing of the new covenant.

#### When the bridegroom has gone

The fasting of which Jesus spoke would not be a thing of habit or of ritual. It was to be associated with the bridegroom being 'taken away'.

I can find nothing in the Greek word used here to suggest 'violent removal', as some have suggested. It would seem foreign to the figure Christ is using. It is not normal for a wedding to end with the 'violent removal' of the bridegroom. Of course we know that his arrest and crucifixion were to follow, but these events were only to effect a separation of three or four days before he would return to them in resurrection. It was his ascension to heaven that would truly effect the physical separation of the Bridegroom from the wedding guests. The primary meaning of 'taken away', and only found in this statement of our Lord, is 'to lift off'. (Vine's Expos. Dict.) You couldn't have anything more accurate to describe what happened on Mount Olivet.

Jesus had explained to them that though he was going away he would send the Holy Spirit. It was his ascension to the Father and his sending of the Spirit that inaugurated the era of the absent Bridegroom. In another parable, that of the Ten Virgins, he explained how this era would terminate: 'At midnight the cry rang out: "Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!"' The coming (*Gk parousia*) of Christ means literally his presence, and so contrasts with his absence in this present age. Therefore so long as our Bridegroom is personally absent, it is right and proper to fast. But why? What purpose should we have in view?

This linking by our Lord of our fasting with his absence seems to imply that we fast with a view to his return. Peter tells us to 'look forward to the day of God and speed its coming' (2 Pet. 3:12). Fasting surely has a part to play here. But when should we fast? Solomon tells us there is a time for every purpose. There is a time to fast, and — if we want to survive — a time not to fast! there are many situations that call for fasting, but I am only sharing

one, based on a spiritual interpretation of these words of Jesus.

#### Absent or present?

When we speak, as we have been doing, of the absent Bridegroom it is only true in a limited sense. In connection with his departure to the Father he had said to them, 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.' He was of course referring to Pentecost. On that day he returned to them and continued with them by the Holy Spirit, so that Mark's gospel concludes with the Lord working with them and confirming his word by the signs that followed. Though physically absent he was spiritually and powerfully present. Unfortunately not every child of God, not every church knows Christ spiritually and powerfully present. His manifested presence may be conspicuous by its absence. 'Return to me, and I will return to you' is not just an O.T. concept. James says the same thing in different words (4:8). How should we return? Joel tells us, 'With all your heart, with fasting' (2:12)

This is not only a word to backsliders, or to those who have never known the Lord's presence in the baptism in the Spirit. Most of us go through periods of spiritual deadness, a winter time of the soul, when the leaves have fallen from the tree, and the sap of the Spirit is not rising. The bride of Solomon's song described such a time: 'My beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone' (Song 5:6). We may still go through the motions of our spiritual exercises, but it is hard work to keep the wheels turning. Our praise is without feeling, our prayers without faith, and our reading of the Word without the warming and feeding of the soul. Is it not all too obvious that we suffer from an absence of the Bridegroom, and that we need to seek him with fasting? How do we tell whether or not the Lord is with us?



**I've got joy—or have I?**

Whenever we are consciously experiencing the presence of the Lord the well of joy is springing up within. We may be out of touch with God and still put on 'a spiritual front'. We may talk animatedly, smile graciously, come up with a 'Hallelujah' or a 'Praise the Lord', but our faces in repose will usually give the game away. Or a sudden negative turn of events will show that what we had was 'happiness', dependent on happenings, and not the joy of the Lord that abides. Of course an absence of a sense of Christ's presence and the joy that accompanies it may be, as Peter reminds us, because of heaviness through numerous temptations. But the remedy is the same.

The wedding feast, with every one decked out in wedding finery, with the wine of banquet flowing freely, and the bridegroom the centre of attention, was a time of unsullied joy for the whole community. What about your spiritual community? Is it really celebrating the presence of the Bridegroom, or is it in the spiritual doldrums? Is there a joyous sparkle about the worship or is it samey and flat? If the latter, then it is time to call the community to fast for the return of the Bridegroom. And when he returns the joy will return too.

**The anointing abides — or does it?**

The presence of Christ ensures the anointing. 'Anointing' is a word that may be constantly on our lips. We speak of someone's preaching, praying, or ministering as being 'anointed'. But what do we mean? This is not easily answered. As the old Scottish lady said about her salvation, 'It is better felt than telt.' We know at once when it is present. Without it there is a straining and a striving and yet an inability to produce. With it there is an ease, a freedom, a flow, and a sense of fulfilment. We may face difficulty or opposition that without the anointing would have a serious if not disastrous effect on the situa-

tion, but moving under the anointing we get through with scarcely a spiritual hiccup.

Then there is the faith element. If the anointing is there faith is there too. Whether the anointing brings the faith or the faith brings the anointing may not be clear. 'Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?' I would think that anointing and faith stand together and minister to each other. It's like the cartoon that showed two cows standing side by side but facing in opposite directions, so that each used his tail to flick the flies from the nose of the other. And the caption read, 'Cow-operation'! When we are moving in faith, or moving under the anointing it often seems as though God is there doing it, and we are simply spectators. 'It's easy when God does it', but mighty hard when he leaves us to get on with it. If he is not there, if we have lost the anointing and the faith, it is a challenge to fast and pray.

**The sternest test of all**

The final and conclusive test of whether the Lord is with us is not subjective, as the others we have mentioned. It is wholly pragmatic. It is the test of the end-product.

What is there to show? Where is the fruit? I am not asking what were the immediate effects. These may sometimes be produced without the Lord, by natural gift or human charisma. But what is left six months later? If the ministry was the spoken word, was it God's word? If so, God himself guarantees the result (Is. 55:11).

The dramatic story of Joseph vividly illustrates the same principle.

Whether a slave in Potiphar's house or an inmate of the king's prison we read, like a sweet refrain, 'The Lord was with Joseph.' Was that just for comfort? No, it was the explanation of his success. 'The Lord was with Joseph and he prospered . . . the Lord gave him success in everything that he did.' It was the same in the prison, 'The Lord was with him; he showed him kindness and granted

him favour in the eyes of the prison warder . . . the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.'

Of those first Christians, scattered by persecution, some went to Antioch and witnessed to the Greeks. We read, 'The Lord's hand was with them' — so what? — 'a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord' (Acts 11:21). God wants us to be successful — not in the estimate of man, but in the estimate of heaven. He is glorified when we bear much fruit — fruit that abides. This is the ultimate test of whether the Lord is truly with us.

**He is with us — or is he?**

Our Bridegroom does not announce his departure with a fanfare of trumpets. It is usually with a grieved heart that he slips away quietly into the night. Samson, shorn of his hair and stripped of his consecration, 'did not know that the Lord had left him' until he found himself overpowered by the Philistines. It is all too easy to make the same mistake as Joseph and Mary after attending the Passover feast in Jerusalem with the boy Jesus. On their return journey, 'thinking he was in their company they travelled on for a day'. For some of us, as churches or individual believers, we travel on our weary way for weeks or months, clocking up the spiritual miles, scarcely aware that Christ is no longer 'in the company'.

What value do we set on his presence? 'If your presence does not go with us,' cried Moses, 'do not send us up from here.' He could not contemplate taking a single step without an assurance that God was with him. Fasting, whatever else it means, is giving God notice that we are seeking him with all our hearts. It is a signal to heaven that we cannot and will not proceed until he rejoins our company. If we have lost him he gives us this pledge, 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.'

## From a doctor's casebook

I must have been a fool not to have seen it before. How come the answer has to be staring me in the face before I see it? Susan had been up various times about this problem. But I had never begun to understand its source. Now her chance remark about the associate pastor's comment made it so clear - and made me hopping mad!

To take the story back a little. I had been in the practice only a short time when I first met Susan. She seemed a typical unmarried Mum, with a small boy who was proving quite a handful. On looking at her notes I saw that she was an epileptic, on treatment with a number of drugs as advised by the local teaching hospital.

On this occasion Sue dropped in to talk about some of the problems that she was having at home. She had become a Christian about one year previously, but had had a very chequered career since then. Recently she had begun going to one of the local churches, and a deacon there had taken a real interest in her. His family often helped her out in practical ways.

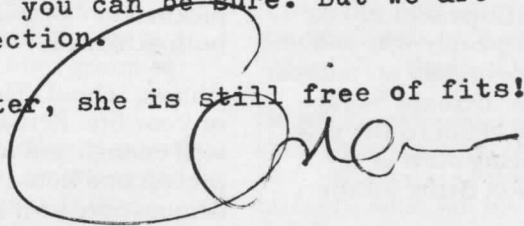
After the last Sunday morning service, Sue had been talking to the associate pastor. She had wanted to know why the church did not seem to expect Jesus to heal today, after all, one of Sue's friends had recently been to a meeting where people had been healed. The associate pastor did not seem to be very forthcoming. When she pressed the subject he challenged her, 'Well, if you are so sure that Jesus wants to heal, then why doesn't he heal your epilepsy?'

Ouch! I was furious. How could he say that to such a young Christian. She was only trying to learn. It made me determined to see the Lord heal her! A few questions, 'When did your epilepsy begin?...What does the boy's father do?...Was he involved in the occult?...' quickly led to 'Have you been prayed for to be filled with the Holy Spirit?'

'People have tried to pray with me in the past, but I always get a fit when they begin to pray. So nothing happens.' Now it is becoming clear. The source of her epilepsy is obviously demonic.

Five minutes later, with a smile on her face, she left the surgery praising God in tongues - and free. There will be plenty more problems, you can be sure. But we are moving in the right direction.

Now, five months later, she is still free of fits!



February 1980

# I.D.

## Nick Butterworth puts a face to the name of Bernard Cope

Some time ago a friend and I were invited to address a group of art students at a college in Maidstone. My friend was a graphic designer (and I have been called worse), and came the day we dutifully set off for our appointment armed with specimens of our design work from which we would illustrate our talk. We arrived at the college a little late and so we were ushered with all haste around various corridors until we came to a large room where quite a number of students were expectantly assembled.

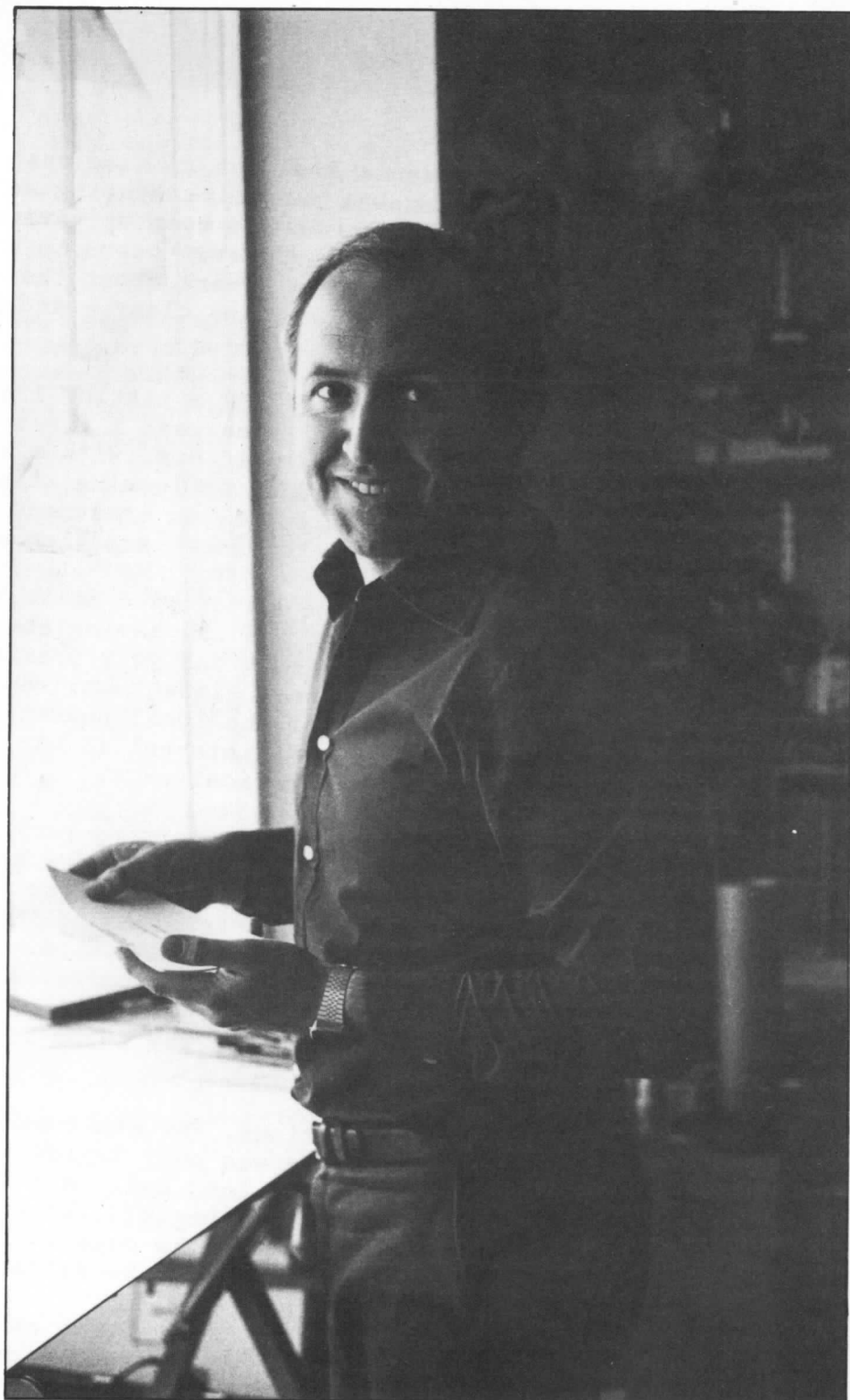
My friend took the bull by the horns and, with a minimum of fuss and just enough apology for lateness, launched into an impressive address in which he related to graphic design the principles of God's creativity which he had observed in creation.

After three quarters of an hour, with the major points covered, my friend drew to a conclusion. Sitting down he asked, 'Are there any questions?' 'Yes,' said one student with an enquiring look. 'Who are you?'

The short answer to the question is of course, Bernard Cope. But who is Bernard Cope? Regular *Fulness* readers will be familiar with his name as the more usual compiler of the I.D. feature. But let me try a slightly longer answer.

Bernard's advent came on Christmas Eve 1945, a not unexpected present for Mr and Mrs Cope senior, two Salvation Army people whose home in Romford is definitely an outpost of the Kingdom. Bernard has at least a technical claim to the title of 'cockney', being born at the Clapton Salvation Army Mothers Hospital.

Although his parents were not, to quote Bernard, 'Army Barmy', nevertheless the Salvation Army did dominate much of his early years.



Being a musical chap, he found himself playing tuba in the band, which probably accounts for his powerful chest and maybe why he was nicknamed 'Tank' at the school we both attended.

Ah yes, school. The happiest days of your life. Bernard enjoyed his well enough and his elevation to prefect and house captain serve to demonstrate how much at home he felt there. Alas, this wasn't to be the case when he left to attend art school.

He found it increasingly difficult

to reconcile his involvement with the Salvation Army to the climate of thought prevailing within the college, and the anacronism of the Army's presentation of itself was becoming something of an embarrassment.

Wisely, his parents resisted the temptation to pressurise him, and Bern's dad offered to accompany him to other churches in the area. Bern accepted. 'I was too cowardly to forsake God altogether,' he says. They tried the Methodists.

Then Bern's younger brother Ken,



who was feeling much the same as Bernard, suggested they might try the Baptist Church. (Apparently there was a young lady there with whom Ken was hoping to become better acquainted!)

And that, four years after last seeing him at school, was where I met up with Bernard again. Bern was helping to lead a lively and healthily restless young people's group and I pitched in gladly and we became firm friends.

The tension between college life and his involvement in the church was still around, but now his feet were more firmly on the rock and so, in the parting of the ways, it was the art school that had to go. With 'A' levels in Art and Economics it is perhaps not so strange that he left the art school to take a job with the Midland Bank. However, this was not to prove his vocation either and before long he was working for a local pharmaceutical company. At Macarthy's Bern gained experience on the marketing and sales side as well as in the realm of packaging and advertising design.

In August 1969 he took the plunge and joined me in an embryonic freelance design business. We broke a chair in our solicitor's office as we discussed a partnership agreement. I seem to remember we were pretending to be at the dentist. Our solicitor friend roared with laughter at our antics, whilst carefully making a mental note to add fifteen pounds to the bill. The next time we kept an appointment with him it was his paperweight-penholder that came to grief. 'It just came away in my hand . . .'

The business began to flourish, as did the young people's group in which we were involved. That year, whilst on holiday in Switzerland, Bernard decided to abandon the holiday aspect of the trip in favour of a prolonged stay at L'Abri, the Christian community in the Alps founded by Francis Schaeffer. Three things happened. He discovered that the gospel has intellectual integrity, became infatuated with a certain American young lady, and fell in love with Americans in general.

The inevitable trip to the States the following year served to curtail the infatuation and confirm the love affair.

On his return we were treated to impressive slide shows and hours of Bill Cosby on record.

By now another love affair had sprung to life. Bernard was courting Mary like a gentleman. No distance was too much for his gallant spirit and several times a week he eagerly drove the 40 miles to where Mary was at teacher training college. Perhaps it was a little over-eagerness that caused him to end up one dark night with our company car in a ditch, wrapped round a tree!

Bernard was undaunted by the setback. 'Where there's a wheel there's a way' became his motto and on the 31st July 1971, Bernard married Mary, the young lady with whom brother Ken had been hoping to get better acquainted!

The new Mr and Mrs Cope spent their first year in a flat, picturesquely overlooking a railway. Despite three flights of stairs and no lift, Mary began to put on weight. The exercise was having no effect and so, anticipating difficulties in the future, they moved to a rented house in central Romford. Happily, the problem of Mary's weight was solved overnight and Benjamin James joined the family.

It was about then that Bern and Mary took the traumatic decision to leave the Baptist Church in order to become more involved with a few of us who had already begun to explore 'the church-in-the-house'. It was particularly difficult for Mary, whose family had been represented in the Baptist Church for five generations.

They threw their lot in with us and the group blossomed, not least through Bernard's highly entertaining readings from *The Wind in the Willows*. Each week, thirty or more people would festoon our living room and silence would reign, broken only by the movement of blazing coals in the grate and Bernard's original characterisation of Ratty Mole, the Toad, and all the others. The Lord continued to add to our number and soon it became obvious that we would have to divide down, a move made possible by Bern's willingness to take responsibility for a group of folk.

Before long, a new fellowship with its own identity was emerging as they met together first at the rented house and then, as the house was repossessed by its owners, at the home of Mr and Mrs Cope senior, who invited the junior Copes to live with them.

Mary's old trouble returned, this time more severely, but in a matter of months it had cleared up and Danny and Matthew, beautiful bouncing twins, were added to the family. Completed it actually, according to Mary.

Now they really needed their own place. It would perhaps be easiest to say that because of the availability of property and the desire to build on particular relationships Bern and Mary moved the two miles out of central Romford to Collier Row. This was certainly true, but it is probably also true to say that because of our close relationship, Bern needed a little more room to get established than he had with me breathing down his neck. The wisdom of John Noble's suggestion to make the move has since been proved as Bern and his team have gone from strength to strength. Bern now functions as one of the elders in the Collier Row church, helping to relieve John Noble and Maurice Smith of much of the general oversight of what has grown to be quite a large community.

I still see quite a lot of Bern, especially in his capacity as a designer. He's a good designer and has a well earned reputation with several national and some international organisations. His forte is typography, and a trip to your local post office is almost certain to reveal several examples of his designs for posters and leaflets, etc.

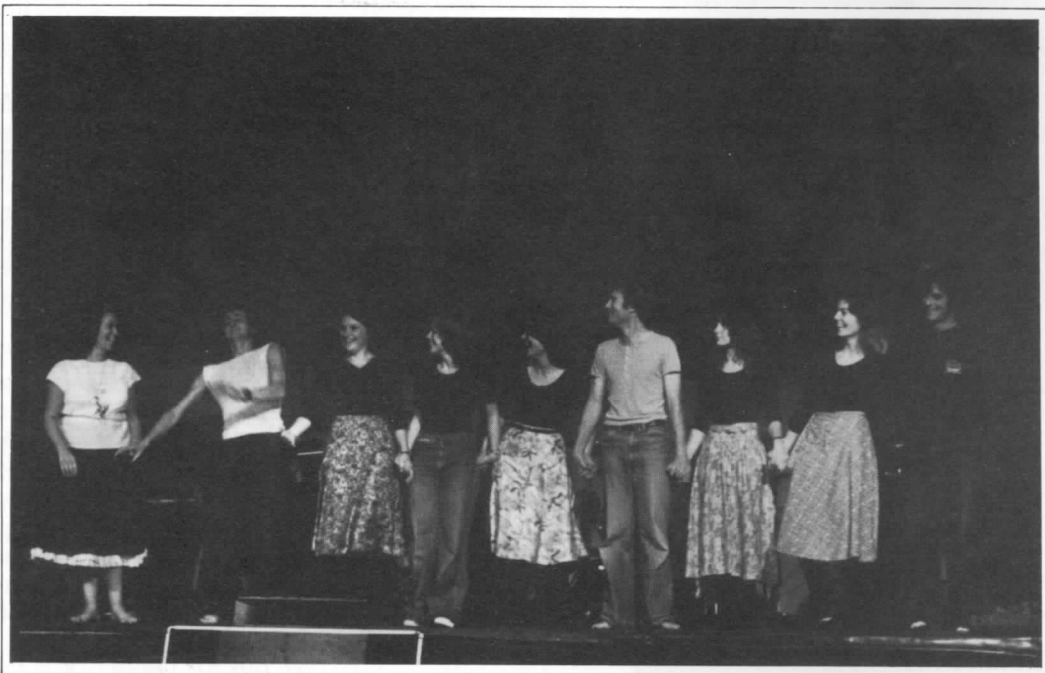
But his creativity goes further. He has an ability to draw which I have secretly admired since he drew trees that 'actually look like trees' at school. He has a musical talent. (He claims that Sir Henry Wood was at least a great uncle and possibly even greater). Not only does he play E<sup>b</sup> bass, but he has a tuneful voice and an instinctive feel for harmonies that makes me covetous. And he can write. His I.D. articles in *Fulness* have served to illustrate to readers the ability I first saw in his business letters, where he weeded out every vestige of, 'I refer to your letter of the third instant', replacing it with, 'Dear John, thanks for writing . . .'

He has an individual wit, which extends to claiming that his unrealised potential is fantastic. Into this category must fall his unfulfilled ambition to rise above a packed defence and nod one in. Personally I like him as he is. And so it is my pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, to introduce to you: Bernard Cope.

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