

# THE VOICE



Mennonite Brethren Bible College  
Quarterly

JULY, 1970

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MENNONITE BRETHREN BIBLE COLLEGE  
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# The Voice

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The Voice, founded in 1952, continues to serve its constituency each year by dealing with theological and church-related concerns and issues.

The Voice is a publication of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College. The M.B.B.C. was founded in 1944 as a school for pastors, missionaries, men and women interested in church-related ministries and Christian laymen, in order to assist the church to be an evangelical witness in Canada and abroad. It seeks to combine theology and arts in order to serve the needs of a broad spectrum of the church.

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### ARE WE A CHURCH IN MISSION?

The Canadian M.B. Church supports our foreign mission program with over half a million dollars per year. Home mission budgets in the provinces amount to about a quarter of a million per year. More recently we have increased the Canadian conference budget in evangelism.

Our history reflects a strong interest in missions. From its inception in 1860 the M.B. Church assumed the character of an evangelical missionary-minded church, despite the threat of economic and political sanctions. Bringing the Gospel to Russian villages (Ostrikov and surrounding villages) incurred government wrath and brought imprisonment and banishment (Gerhard Wieler) and loss of jobs (Aaron Lepp). Others were subjected to court action for having evangelized Russian workers and neighbors. Russian edicts forbidding the organization of foreign missionary societies did not prevent the M.B. Church from sending out six couples and eight single persons to India and Africa.

Are we today a church in mission? Do we form a membership which has a deep sense of mission in the world and has adopted a life-style which reflects a sense of "being sent" by God?

Our opportunities to be a church in mission are unprecedented in our generation. We no longer form tight ethnic centered communities as we did a generation ago. Like the Jerusalem church, we have been "scattered abroad" by economic pressures and opportunities, the urbanization pattern, and the drive for achievement in business, education, and professional life. Our membership is in touch with virtually every segment of our society. This is important! The question is, do we convey to those whose lives we touch a genuine sense of mission under the Lordship of Christ? By this I mean whether we have an overriding awareness of the presence and power of God's spirit with us, individually and corporately, keeping our main interests and expending of energies focused on Christ's Kingdom in this world.

I would suggest that the following form a minimum number of elements in each of our lives if we constitute Christ's fellowship in mission:

(1) That we are open, ready and active in communicating to others the good news in Jesus Christ (that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself).

(2) That we exercise a compassionate ministry among men (I was hungry and ye gave me food, I was thirsty, and ye gave

me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and ye clothed me, I was sick, and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came to me. Matt. 25:35-36).

(3) That we challenge false religions and philosophies of life which prevent men from seeing the truth in Christ (we destroy false arguments; we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey Christ — 2 Cor. 10:4-5).

(4) That we take seriously the cultural mandate — to subdue the earth and have dominion over it, to bring the living Christ into all our cultural efforts in daily life and activity (Gen. 1, Colossians 3).

(5) That each church provide opportunity for small fellowship groups to share together what being “a sent one” means in daily life and to seek help and understanding in executing more perfectly one’s mission; that there be koinonia groups from time to time during the year formed along interest lines (e.g. business men and laborers, doctors, secretaries, teachers, etc.) to map out strategies of fulfilling our mission with fellow colleagues and exploring ways of being a Christian in one’s particular field of work. It has been recognized that church growth at home or abroad proceeds largely along sociological lines. We do our best witnessing among those with whom we live and work and have most in common.

Our church membership is today in a situation of unprecedented opportunities to share the Gospel with others. The mandate is clear: As the Father sent me, so send I you! **We need, however, to adopt a more personal approach to train for mission, to encourage in mission, to pray for mission, to share of mission in our local congregations.** This activity in association with worship, and edification, should be central to the life of each congregation.

Victor Adrian

## CHURCH PLANTING IN THE INDIA M.B. FIELD

(A description)

by D. J. Arthur \*

It is my joy and pleasure to have this opportunity of sharing with the Canadian Conference this year something of the life and growth of the India M.B. Church. I would like to bring greetings to this Conference from the India brotherhood, and also a word of appreciation for all that has been done for India by the Canadian M.B. brotherhood in promoting the Gospel work there.

The work of the M.B. Mission in India has been in a period of transition since 1960. During the past eight years the principle of administration on the mission field has undergone a tremendous change. All field administrative authority and directives are being transferred to the national conference with the Mission personnel working in an advisory capacity and being integrated into the national conference.

It is evident that the M.B. Mission did not start its work in India with any clear-cut conception of a missionary method to be followed in planting an indigenous church. Transforming the church into a completely indigenous body was a later development which was the result of a study of missionary methods and the pressures of the fast changing political world. Though sent and supported by the Board, each missionary who arrived in India started and established his field work in his own way as he was inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit. In general, the work was committed by the Board to the individual missionary in charge. All the mission stations of the India Mission Field were started and developed by the individual missionaries. All the phases of mission work—evangelistic, educational and medical—in each field were planned and supervised by the missionary of that field. National workers were employed and the work of reaching people with the gospel was carried on through direct evangelism. The first national workers were borrowed from the Baptist Mission which had already established several stations in the Telugu area of the Hyderabad State. While the missionary family was usually engaged in outdoor evangelistic work in the surrounding villages, the single missionary sisters were busy working in the hospital and in an educational ministry on the mission station. Many sick people

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from the surrounding villages who flocked daily to the mission hospital were treated. A school was established almost simultaneously with a mission station for the children of the newly-converted Christians. Ninety-five percent of the present literate M.B. Christians received their grade-school education in the M.B. Mission schools.

It might be stated that at first M.B. missionaries followed the pattern of the Baptist missionaries who assisted them in selecting a field for their work. Touring evangelistic work by the missionary family, and educational and medical work by single missionary ladies on the mission station, was the general pattern of ministry followed by the Mission throughout its history in India. Realizing the need of training national workers for evangelism, church work, and teaching, the Mission began a Bible School in 1920. "The purpose of it was to give Biblical training to young men and young women who intended to prepare themselves for definite service for Christ. The instruction was designed to prepare students as preachers, evangelists, teachers and Bible women." The value of the printed page in mission effort was realized from the beginning. Since 1920 the Mission began its own monthly publication, "The Suvarthamani," that is, *The Messenger of Good News*. This periodical is the official organ of the Telugu M.B. Church. A small printing press was later installed by the Rev. D.F. Bergthold and this led to the beginning of publishing work in our mission. The Radio ministry as a channel of evangelism introduced recently has become another important aspect of the ministry.

#### *Church Planting Process:*

Church planting by the Mission in India went through three stages. Each Mission station began by establishing on the Mission station a 'mission church' (called by the natives 'mother church'). The missionary personnel, and the school and hospital workers were the members of this mission church. The first converts from the nearby villages also attended the church services on the mission station. A church building was constructed for the purpose which also served as a school building for many years before separate buildings were constructed for school facilities. This was the first stage. As more and more converts were won to Christ, it became necessary to open new churches in the villages to which they belonged. A sufficiently educated elder was placed in a village which had the greatest number of converts. He was put in charge of the Sunday school and worship service for the Christians of the village and for those of the nearby villages. Such centres of worship were established in several villages of the field as converts increased in numbers. These churches were not fully organized congregations. They were called the 'affiliated churches' of the Mission Church or of the Mother Church on the Mission Station. The missionary

or the Mission Church Pastor supervised the affiliated churches. The membership of the affiliated churches was with the Mission Church. The elder in charge of an affiliated church was responsible to the missionary. This was the second stage of the church planting process.

As more converts were added to the Church and more preachers were trained for the ministry, the affiliated churches were fully organized into independent churches with their own memberships and pastors. Though the pastor was independent in managing the work of his church, he was still paid by the missionary and guided in his work by the missionary since the rural congregation was too poor to support its pastor. The Mission church pastor was generally the best qualified preacher on the field. After some time, the mission church pastor became responsible for supervising the work of the rural church pastors. He would guide them and assist them in planning their gospel work. For some time, he was the only one who would baptise the new converts reached by the rural preachers. The mission church pastor and the missionary would examine the converts and approve them for baptism. These fully organized rural churches are called *local churches*. This is the third stage in church planting.

I do think this procedure was in any way the consequence of the *principle of evolution*. I believe this development in the process of church planting by the M.B. Mission was purely the result of the guidance of the Holy Spirit and prayerful planning on the part of the missionaries. It is significant to note that none of the M.B. Missionaries encouraged the converts from the villages to leave their homes and move to the mission station for residence. Only the school and medical staff and mission station pastor's family lived on the mission compound. The converts from the villages have always stayed in their own rural community and never left their cultural setting. They always maintained their cultural relationships and occupations. This has been a very healthy sign in the growth of the native church. Today there are about 700 villages in the M.B. mission field with Christian congregations. With the exception of the pastors of the mission station churches, all the pastors and preachers live in their own villages and with their own congregations. Today all the churches are called local churches. There are no more mission churches or affiliated churches. All churches are independent and autonomous in their organization and ministry. But they constitute one M.B. Church of India in their relationship as a Conference and in their ministry on District or Field levels and on the Governing Council level. The M.B. Church in India today is an indigenous and living church, planted not by a missionary method, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

*Channels of Church Planting:*

Three areas of ministry by the mission contributed significantly to the work of church planting: The Ministry of public preaching, the ministry of teaching, and the ministry of training for ministry.

*Public preaching or evangelism:* Street preaching and personal conversation were involved in the method used by the mission throughout its history in India. The young church learned evangelism from its missionaries. "Those who know the first missionaries, know that, by and large, they were field men and zealous evangelists. Evangelism was their interest; evangelism was their work when out in the field or travelling; evangelism was their emphasis in their conferences and bi-monthly meetings or "nelasaries." They looked upon the church workers mainly as evangelists. This preaching method of propagating the Gospel is also accepted by the preachers of the national church." Winning souls to Christ was the first concern of the missionaries. The pioneer missionaries spent most of their time in the villages, camping and preaching together with their native evangelists. Souls thus brought to Christ were organized into churches in their own villages under the leadership of their own elders. Even today mass and personal evangelism is the method which is still the most fruitful strategy today.

*The teaching ministry:* The converts who were added to the church came mostly from the backward classes of Hindu society. They were not only poor but also illiterate. Unless they were educated, they would not have the required leadership for an indigenous church. Their children had to be educated for future leadership. Opening a school for them was a great necessity. Schools played a unique role in the work of church planting by the Mission. The present leadership of the India church is a result of the teaching ministry of the mission. The mission schools served two purposes. The children of the converts received not only general education but were brought up in Christian faith through a consistent program of Christian education. Christian schools not only educated the children of the converts and nurtured them in Christian faith but also raised the social status of the converts tremendously. The teaching ministry of the mission was as important as the evangelistic ministry.

*The training ministry.* The Mission station was the centre of another important activity. It was the centre not only for educating the children but also for training native workers for evangelism, church work, and teaching. The churches were increasing in number. Educated elders were needed to feed these churches. The most glorious time on a mission compound was that at which the preachers of the field gathered for their "nelasary" (bi-monthly meetings) with their missionary on the mission station. They would stay on the station for three days

for spiritual fellowship and instruction in the Word of God. The best training that any mission worker or preacher received was during these days of fellowship and instruction. The missionary would learn about their experiences from their reports on the first day. A time of prayer would then follow. Then the missionary would instruct the preachers for two days from the Word of God, and so solve the problems they had faced in their work and strengthen them in their faith and prepare them for further work in their villages. Those were the best days of the mission work—as I remember. The Bible school is meeting this need of training workers today.

#### *The Development of Indigenization:*

The need to transform the M.B. Church in India into a completely indigenous body was realized by the mission mostly during the last decade of its history, as we can see from the new principles published by the Board of Missions in 1962 under the title **MENNONITE BRETHREN MISSIONS TODAY**. The Board outlined the program for transferring the administration to the national Conferences on the fields: the mission is to constitute an advisory body, and the missionary Council is to become a non-legislative missionary fellowship, with the missionary no longer being a fraternal worker in a sister conference but a member who has identified himself with the national church.

However, we can see that certain unifying forces have been at work merging the churches of the nine M.B. fields into a conference of one brotherhood. The entire brotherhood met for the first time at a Convention in 1918, with a membership of 2100. It has since met annually and has become the organization through which the Telugu Mennonite Brethren Church of the whole mission field finds its expression. The next significant unifying step was taken when the Missionary Council and the Native Field Associations combined into a Joint Field Council in 1946. This brought into the native brotherhood a sense of responsibility and sharing in the common interests of the church and mission. The next and most important unifying factor that made the India M.B. Church completely indigenous was that of transforming the Joint Field Council into the Governing Council of the M.B. Churches of India. The Governing Council of the M.B. churches of India is a body fully indigenous and registered with the government of the State. Though a large share of the financial burden still is carried by the Mission, all the avenues of mission work have been made the responsibility of the indigenous church. All leading and administrative positions have been transferred to the national brethren. The director of evangelistic work is a national. The chairman of the administrative committee of the Bible school is a national. All the educational institutions are managed by nationals. The editor of

the Conference monthly periodical is a national. The radio pastor, the script writer for our broadcasting program, is a national. The manager of the printing press is a national.

Yes, the Church in India is indigenous! It is a living Church. The church has seriously taken upon itself the task of taking over every responsibility from the mission as early as possible. But this is only the beginning of the India M.B. Church. The Mission has succeeded in planting a church in India among the Telugu people. But the challenge confronting the church is great. India has 530 million people more than one-seventh of the world's population. Only 2.5 per cent of them are Christians. 530 million people are to be evangelized and won. There are 2 million people in the M.B. mission field and only 1 per cent of them are saved. Only one sheep out of a hundred has been saved. Ninety-nine sheep have yet to be reached for Christ. Almost all the caste people of India are yet to be evangelized. Only 10 per cent of our M.B. Christians are educated. A good percentage of them are to be educated if the Church is to be spiritually and economically strong. There are 700 congregations with very few leaders to guide them. A responsible lay ministry is the immediate answer. Lay forces have to be mobilized and strengthened and trained for church work. The congregations have to be strengthened and established in faith and witnessing life. There is a wide open door for the Mission to continue to work with the India M.B. Church for at least another 10 years. Yes, the Church is planted but it is only a plant and not yet a fully grown tree. The Mission has still its place in the life and growth of the Church among the Telugu people of India.

Yet, in spite of all planning and programs, we do not forget that the driving force is the Holy Spirit. The Church is Christ's. What Christ has begun, He will surely finish. One day the Mission may have to withdraw from the Field, but the Church will stay and grow until both are united at our Lord's coming. But let us remember the words of our Lord who said:

Behold, I say unto you, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." John 4:35-36.

## THE COVENANT COMMUNITY AND MISSION

by David Ewert\*

To enquire into the mission of the covenant community is to raise the question of the nature of the church. The appellation "covenant community" is not, strictly speaking, a biblical phrase; the idea, however, is implicit in the concept of "the people of God." Whereas the image, "the body of Christ," emphasizes the corporate aspect of the people of God, "covenant community" stresses individual responsibility. Paul expresses both these aspects of the church when he says: "You are the body of Christ . . . and individually members of it" (I Cor. 12:27). And as in the case of the Old Testament people of God, where membership in the covenant community implied a priestly ministry (Exodus 19:6), so in the New Testament the members of the new covenant are "a royal priesthood"—called to proclaim *tas aretas* (virtues, praises, mighty deeds) of him who called them out of darkness into his marvelous light (I Peter 2:9). Obviously this proclamation is to take place not only behind church walls, but in the world.<sup>1</sup>

To speak, then, of the mission of the covenant community, is to discuss the meaning of "the priesthood of all believers." Unfortunately the latter phrase is accompanied by so many historical reminiscences that it is not always the best starting point for a discussion of the church's mission.<sup>2</sup> That this doctrine of the Reformers was later perverted into "an atomistic and naively anti-clerical sense should not blind us to its importance for Luther and for other Reformers."<sup>3</sup> Although the priesthood of all believers implied (among other things) that every believer was called to share the gospel with others, it was left to the Radical Reformation to express the implications of this priesthood in its strong missionary emphasis. G. H. Williams says of this movement: "In the stress upon personal accountability and explicit faith, the whole of the Radical Reformation pushed the Lutheran doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in the direction of a universal lay apostolate."<sup>4</sup> It is no secret that free Churches have been the greatest force in missions. But it is often overlooked that this is in part the result of a view of the church which obligates every baptized person to be a missionary.

To ask the question: How is mission related to the concept of "covenant community"? is to ask what it means to be the covenant community in the world. We begin, therefore, by reminding ourselves of the missionary calling of the church.

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## I. THE MISSIONARY CALLING OF THE CHURCH

### A. The Apostolic Character of the Church

The church is missionary or else it is not a church.<sup>5</sup> Only if we misunderstand both "church" and "mission" can these two be divorced one from the other. To participate in Christ is to share in his mission. "As the Father has sent me, so send I you" (John 20:21). There is no other kind of church, according to the New Testament, than the "apostolic," the "sent" church; and this does not mean that missions is the "hobby" of a few devout souls. The church is not engaged in missions as a wealthy man throwing crumbs to a beggar, but as a farmer who sows precious seed, fully aware that his very life depends on the harvest. Missions is not optional, but the life of the church withers without it.<sup>6</sup>

The *notae ecclesiae* which have become almost universally accepted in Protestantism are the Word and the Sacraments. Without minimizing their significance, and with full appreciation of their significance in the teaching of the Reformers as they stood in conflict with Rome, it should be stated that the church becomes primarily a cultic community, turned in on itself, if these become the only "marks" of the church. The early church's self-understanding (as seen in the opening chapters of *Acts*) is more comprehensive, for it includes not only "the sacraments" and "the ministry" (e.g., Acts 2:42), not only unity, holiness, and catholicity, but, as the Pentecost story as a whole suggests: "apostolicity."<sup>7</sup>

The missionary societies of the 18th and 19th centuries represented a reaction against the church's failure to understand herself as apostolic, and they did much to remind the church of her essential nature. Unfortunately, since they developed an activity *extra* to the church, they tended to represent a misunderstanding of the church's missionary vocation.<sup>8</sup> It led to the embarrassing division of the members of the church into those who were engaged in missions and those who were not—a division that at times tended to be almost as monstrous as the cleavage between clergy and laity in the Medieval Church. Missions became the concern of the "missionary minded" within the church, and on the Continent these *Missionsfreunde*, who frequently formed *koinonia* groups, tended to think of themselves as the "true," the "pure" church.<sup>9</sup> (One still senses, upon occasion, this holier-than-thou attitude on the part of some who are engaged in activities described as "missions.") Of course, the *missionslose* churches were as much to blame as were the *kirchenlose* missionary societies.<sup>10</sup> Nor does it necessarily follow that, when the church begins to understand that apostolicity is her very nature, she will then automatically become apostolic. Those of us who are tempted to boast in our forebears' insight, that obedience to the Great Commission was a mark of the *true*

church, need to repent that our *true* churches are not nearly as apostolic as they might be. Only the Holy Spirit can make a church truly apostolic, but this often follows when the Spirit can make it clear to the members of the church that apostolicity is part of being the church. I think it can be said that our Mennonite Brotherhood has put much emphasis on the need for the work of the Spirit, but at times this emphasis was one-sided: the reference was primarily to the work of the Spirit in sanctification and separation from the world, and not equally to the power of the Spirit in carrying out our mission in the world. To speak figuratively, the emphasis was primarily on the "holy," and less on the "spirit" (the dynamic of missions), and this tends to turn the church in on itself rather than out to the world.<sup>11</sup> When this happens, the church loses its apostolic character, and spends all her energy in her effort to keep the Christian community pure. On the other hand, "a church that knows that she is a function of the apostolate and that her very ground of existence lies in the proclamation of the Kingdom to the world, does not engage in missions, but she herself *becomes* mission, she becomes the living outreach of God to the world."<sup>12</sup>

Closely allied with the idea of the apostolicity of the church is the New Testament emphasis on the charismatic structure of the covenant community.

### B. The Charismatic Structure of the Church

The church is a foundation of the Spirit (God's eschatological gift for the "last days"). The whole church, as well as the individual communities (Eph. 2:17-22; I Cor. 3:16f.), are a creation of God's Spirit. By the Spirit the members of the Christian community are baptized into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). The Spirit dwells in the members of the church (Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 6:19-20). It is the Spirit which equips the believers for the work of the ministry (Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:4-11). "Charisms are not special marks of distinction belonging to a chosen few, whether on account of their enthusiasm or of their office in the Church, but a distinguishing mark of the whole Church, of the fellowship of all believers," says H. Küng.<sup>13</sup> Where only the ecclesiastical officials (church workers, ordained or unordained, usually paid by the church to devote their time to the service of the church), rather than all the members of the congregation, are active in missions, we have grave reason to wonder whether the Spirit has not been sacrificed along with its gifts.<sup>14</sup> The charisms of leadership in the early church did not produce a "ruling class"—an aristocracy of those endowed with the Spirit.<sup>15</sup> Every member of the Body of Christ was believed to be charismatically endowed, and this represented both the call to service and the ability to perform it. The Christian message spread with such speed in the first century of the Christian era because every member of the church (including women; e.g., I Peter 3:1)

shared his faith according to his ability and opportunity (Acts 4:31; 8:4; 11:19; I Thess. 1:8). If every member of the church is to serve with the charisma which he has received (I Peter 4:10), it is obvious that the mission of the church must be carried out by the church as a whole and not alone by representatives of the church. E. Schweizer makes the observation, that "the life or death of a church depends on how much its members are willing to proclaim the gospel to the world. If its ministers are satisfied merely with performing their functions and counseling religious people, if its members confess their faith just as far as it is socially acceptable, the church will grow more and more into a sterile institution that is far from the living church of the New Testament."<sup>16</sup>

This raises the thorny question of the place of the "separated" ministry in the church. In the Roman Catholic tradition "the ministry" was traditionally thought of as constituting the *esse* of the church (today voices of dissent are heard); in Protestantism there has been no agreement on this question. Either "the ministry" was thought of as receiving its authority from Christ or from the congregation (preferably from both). It is easier to show from the New Testament that the whole church has received authority from Christ to perform its service in the world, than it is to define the "ordained" ministry. The Reformers' emphasis on the priesthood of all believers did not prevent European Christianity from becoming cleric-centered. It was in the Left Wing of the Reformation that the laity assumed serious responsibility for carrying the faith to the world.<sup>17</sup> The coming of the "radicals" to America, and the separation of church and state in America, tended to make church members more responsible. Unfortunately much of American (including Canada) church life has become "program centered"—another subtle way of short-circuiting the mission of the church. When as many "laymen" of a local congregation as possible are involved in services within the church (building), they tend to lose sight of the church's mission in the world. Also, since most of such services are concerned with the operation of the local church program, there is a tendency to become clerical in outlook—they are then "the minister's" helpers. In larger churches, where a number of people are paid in order to assist the pastor, a "clericalized laity" tends to emerge. (If this does not happen on the local level, it happens on the conference level.) Hoekendijk says, "Where the layman is permitted to be only an "aid to the minister" (and then, inevitably, becomes a copy of the clergyman), where he is considered only as a more or less "active member," there he is pulled out of the world and loses his function as apostle. The result would be that our concept of the church becomes clericalized, and that from then on we can be engaged only in a somewhat peripheral mission."<sup>18</sup> Perhaps the crassest

example of a clericalized layman today is the deacon. Beginning as a servant of the needy, he "rose" to become the assistant to the bishop. From serving at tables he came to sit at the communion table. He still sits in our churches as a "respectable displaced person."<sup>19</sup>

We are not advocating the abolition of the "separated" ministry; nor do we wish to minimize the significance of the worship of the local community. We realize that the church can fulfill its mission in the world only if its faith is nourished by instruction, worship and fellowship. Nevertheless, ministers must realize that they are there for the purpose of equipping the saints "for the work of the ministry" (omitting the fateful comma) (Eph. 4:12). The ordained minister can do some directing, but primarily he is a prompter. The pulpit becomes the prompter's box.<sup>20</sup>

The congregation is not there for the sake of the minister (to assure him of a job—and of a salary). Moreover, the members of the local congregation must realize that they have not fulfilled their mission obligation by participating in the service of the "gathered" church.<sup>21</sup> By loading the faithful laity with "church jobs" (some of them a waste of energy), ministers with the best of intentions, make it impossible for these members to fulfill their proper mission in the world—not to mention the temptation for such "active" lay members to become a select laity.<sup>22</sup> Instead of clericalizing the laity, getting them interested in church activities (which often enervate and do not revitalize them), making them assistants to the clergy, we should realize that God has endowed the believers with charismata so that they can fulfill their apostolic callings. G. Williams points out that in the Radical Reformation one is impressed with "the mobility, the purposefulness, and the testimonial missionary urgency of every convert, whether a commissioned elder or a steadfast wife of a weaver evangelist."<sup>23</sup>

We need to recapture the original meaning of *laikos* (i.e., belonging to the *laos*, the people of God). More often than we care to admit, the layman is viewed as the one not competent in "spiritual things," since he does not have a theological degree,<sup>24</sup> and what is worse, he lives his life in a "secular" calling, in contrast to the man who has taken holy orders. If, on the other hand, we take the charismatic structure of the church seriously, the worship, fellowship, and teaching services of the congregation will be seen in their proper perspective; we will have a high view of the "separated" or "ordained" ministry; most of all, the whole membership (men, women, and children) will become more conscious of their missionary calling, and will be encouraged *to be the church* in the diaspora. But, as Tom Allan wrote (after first-hand experience): "The idea of the lay apostolate presents us with an inescapable challenge . . . because if it is

taken seriously, it will mean upheaval and revolution within the conventional framework of the church's life."<sup>25</sup>

### C. The Diaconic Spirit of the Church

In a sense the mission of the church has its roots in the incarnation of our Lord, who came "not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for man" (Mk. 10:45). Not only must the ordained ministers show the signs of the servant (and "ruling" laymen in a congregation can become just as guilty here as "ruling" ministers), but the church as a whole, and each congregation in particular, must learn to be a servant in the world. The deep desire to preserve certain institutional structures and patterns of church life may at times be merely a reflection of a church's self-interest. The inordinate craving that some church members (and pastors) have, to worship in costly and, if at all possible, large church edifices is not exactly the best manifestation of the servanthood of the church. It may be simply a sign that a congregation is suffering from a local "edifice complex."<sup>26</sup> Smaller denominations at times have a hankering for the external evidence of strength which they see in larger communions (e.g., the desire to have a large paid conference staff, possibly located in pretentious headquarters), but wearing Saul's armor leads to weariness. Patterns of church life which help to make the church a better servant in the world should, of course, be maintained and strengthened. C. Williams suggests that the opposite of "servanthood" is "pietism."<sup>27</sup> (He uses "pietism" here with the negative connotation, meaning that a church which becomes preoccupied with preserving its own values loses its mission in the world.) We all know that without the cultivation of genuine piety the church's mission in the world becomes completely ambiguous. Unless there is a significant difference between the church and the world, the church sinks to the level of a socio-religious club, with no missionary vocation to speak of.

It has been said that the church's vocation is to reflect Christ's prophetic priestly and kingly offices. No doubt this is a helpful doctrine, but in a sense all these "offices" were expressions of our Lord's servanthood. He was supremely the *diakonos*, indeed, a suffering servant<sup>28</sup> (Matt. 20:25-28; Luke 22:27; Phil. 2:7; John 13). "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Implied in this prayer of our Lord is that the church must carry on its mission in his spirit—the spirit of servanthood. But the mission of the church, if seen as an extension of the mission of Christ, must also learn from him how to serve and where to serve.

To these questions we turn next.

## II. THE EXPRESSION OF THE CHURCH'S APOSTOLICITY

It is not our intention to suggest new ways in which the church can express its missionary vocation. We should say,

however, that the Spirit is free in leading God's people into new avenues of witness from time to time. Our methods of witnessing also stand under the judgment of God, and we should always remember that in God's plan of redemption the means cannot be divorced from the goals. Implied in the charismatic structure of the church is the recognition that individual members of the Christian community will fulfill their missionary calling in different ways. Most of them will spend at least five days a week in "the world." They are a projection of the church (where Christ's Lordship is already confessed) into the world (where Christ is not acknowledged as Lord)—and we do well to remind ourselves that it was for the world that Christ died. If the church is to witness to Christ's love to the world, it will have to do so primarily through the members who are engaged in the life of the world, who work there.<sup>29</sup>

### A. The Informal Witness

Much of the witnessing of the "scattered" church will have to be done in an informal way. A question which arises at this point is, whether the daily work of the members of the church is a form of witness *per se*. Most Christians believe that their mundane daily tasks are in a sense sacralized when they give a portion of their income to the work of the Lord. But what about the work as such? When Paul encouraged the slaves to work honestly and heartily because they were serving the Lord Christ (Col. 3:24), who would reward them for their labors, was he not suggesting that the believer's daily work is a divine service? Stephen Neill has challenged this approach with the dictum: "When all is mission, nothing is mission," but this does not ring entirely true, it would appear to us. A. T. Hanson makes the observation that our daily "secular" work is our spiritual sacrifice to God, for we give our bodies (personalities) to it (cf. Rom. 12:1,2).<sup>30</sup> There is always a danger of defining Christian service only in relation to a local church, a denomination, or some Christian organization.

It is understood, of course, that a believer would not wish to be involved in work which contributes to man's ruin. On the other hand, the Christian layman should not feel that because he is not involved in church committee meetings, or because he cannot sing in the choir, that he is on a lower rung of the ladder, spiritually.

Eugene Nida points out that any real church growth depends on the life of the laity in the work-a-day world. "Formal communication is rarely as important as informal sharing—for example the casual remarks people make about their faith and the opinions and rumors that spread about the behavior of church members."<sup>31</sup> This leads us to suggest, that the manner of life of the individual church members at the place of work (as well as off work) is one of the most effective ways in which the church

fulfills its missionary vocation. Where, for example, a Christian factory worker gives evidence of the joy which comes from forgiveness, of the living hope which bears him up in trials, of moral integrity which comes out of commitment to Christ, and of a love which enables him to enter into the anxiety, loneliness and other needs of his fellow-laborers, he gives a mighty testimony to God's grace. "The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence in the world, next to the might of the Spirit of God," said Pascal. Unfortunately, Christians often appear just as victimized by circumstances and just as depressed about their lot as unbelievers. To be sure, Christian ethics are also a sign of the world's estrangement from God, and so the believer may have to bear the cross like his Lord, on account of his Christian life (another way of expressing the servanthood of the church).

We will have to take much more seriously the possibilities of Christian mission in the course of living and working in the world. Nor must we overlook the great opportunities that offer themselves in the "workless days." There is a crying need for a theology of leisure which takes into account the missionary vocation of the church.

Naturally, not all work which the believers perform in the world is of the same type. There are some professions which by their very nature bring the professional man closer to the needs of men than others, and which afford rewarding avenues of service in the world. We might think of the so-called "helping ministries," as medicine, psychiatry, social work, etc. The ministry of compassion is, of course, mandatory for every believer in every occupation, but we should encourage young people to enter professions which bring them close to people's needs.

We should, however, not underestimate the numerous occasions which present themselves to the Christian witness outside of the course of his daily calling. For these we must all be made sensitive by God's Spirit.

The manner in which we carry out our mission may vary all the way from Christian courtesy to the verbal sharing of the good news with friends and neighbors. Perhaps one of the most potent instruments of the church's mission is the Christian family, which is a kind of microcosm of the church in the world.

B. The Formal Witness

Besides the informal, the incidental ways of witnessing to our faith, there are the more formal expressions of our witness.

There are needs in the world which at times assume such proportions that only the corporate Christian community can effectively deal with them. In the ministry of compassion, for example, the individual is often limited by his means, and here a brotherhood approach can be very effective. The ministry of

compassion is, as we know, not accepted by all believers as a valid expression of Christian mission, but is at best a means to an end. Just a year ago a medical missionary complained that his work as a doctor was valued only as it served as a means to the salvation of souls; it was not valued as a ministry of love as such. Granted, that a silent witness can be quite neutral, it is hard to separate word and deed. Both the preaching of the word and the deeds of love must have an authenticity of themselves. It is often overlooked by those who take Paul as the supreme example of what a missionary ought to be, that Paul was not only a missionary, but also a *diakonos*, who appears upon the church scene in *Acts* as a bearer of famine relief and who throughout his ministry as "foreign missionary" was concerned with collecting money for the poor. L. E. Cooke makes this observation: "Wenn die Verkündigung des Reiches, Proklamation seiner souveränen Herrschaft ist, sind die Dienste der Liebe und Solidarität die sichtbaren Zeichen dieser Herrschaft und seines Wohnens unter uns."<sup>32</sup>

In the proclamation of the gospel in word the individual members of the Christian community will take an active part as opportunity comes their way in the course of their daily tasks. This makes it imperative that the local congregation have a meaningful education program so that the church be properly instructed in the faith. The pulpit ministry can accomplish much in this respect, but other occasions will have to be found to supplement this teaching ministry.

Also, the worship and teaching services of the church should be structured in such a way (at least some of them), that interested inquirers do not feel entirely out of place in our church services. Where a congregation is seriously concerned about its mission, it will do all it can to make outsiders feel welcome. If the church is to function as a community of reconciliation, there must be evidence of genuine love among its members. The church should be the one *koinonia* in the community in which race, color, and culture do not drive men apart. Here both men and women, the children and the aged, the poor and the affluent should feel wanted. When an urban congregation is comprised largely of members of the same income bracket and of such who have the same cultural background, one wonders whether such a church is fulfilling its missionary calling. In their daily life, these same members will cross racial, color, and economic bars, and the church should also reflect the crossing of such divisions of mankind. Members of the local congregation, however, should not think that their main duty in the course of their daily work, when they make contacts with unbelievers, is to invite them to church. This may happen as the result of a witness by deed and word; and then the decision to attend the church of the one who witnessed to them can be very

effective—certainly more so than the “invitation campaigns” that are sometimes carried out in a very artificial manner.

The ministry of sharing our earthly possessions with those in need of both the earthly and the spiritual bread can be carried out informally by individual believers, but it may also call for corporate efforts. It is in this ministry that the servanthood of the church is often put to the test. A congregation which encourages sacrificial giving, but spends most of the monies received from the members on costly church edifices and expensive church-centered programs, needs to ask herself seriously whether she is fulfilling her missionary calling in the world.

Let me mention one other way in which the church’s missionary vocation can express itself; in unity! It was with reference to the church’s mission in the world that our Lord prayed for the unity of the believers (John 17:21). This is a unity that the world is to see. Standing amidst the broken homes, hopes, and ideals, the world must be able to observe one fellowship in which there is no brokenness.<sup>33</sup> The unity of the church is a great missionary instrument given to the church. It is not enough to see this unity realized in a local congregation (although it is often put to the severest test right there), nor is it sufficient to confess that all true believers (the “invisible church,” if you please) are one in Christ, but serious efforts must be made by all communions to express their unity in Christ. Nowhere is there greater need for this than in the so-called “mission fields.” But we must make more serious efforts at home, too. In some of our urban communities we hardly know that other churches (of other denominations) exist—unless we just happen to have some joint project. Joint evangelistic efforts, joint ministries of compassion, perhaps also more inter-denominational pulpit exchange would be a good beginning. (I am not overlooking all the good efforts that are being made.)

Having suggested some ways in which the church’s apostolicity expresses itself, we next ask the questions: Where and when does the church fulfil its missionary calling?

### III. THE LOCUS OF THE CHURCH’S MISSIONARY LIFE

#### A. The Geographical Locus

Part of the answer to the question Where? is implicit in all that we have said thus far: there where the members of the church live, where they work, and worship. But what of the commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel? The early church took this command seriously. The great pioneer in this field, the apostle Paul, saw in the church’s world-mission the fulfilment of God’s plan of universal redemption. We need not rehearse the causes which led to the blurring of the church’s vision for world-evangelism in the post-Constantinian period until

post-Reformation times. When through renewal movements (e.g., Pietism, Methodism, etc.) small circles of awakened believers (usually laymen) recaptured the spirit of world-missions, they made themselves the unauthorized proxies of missions for the official church bodies who were not ready to carry out the great commission. This led to the forming of the great Protestant missionary societies in the western world. Whereas in Europe this meant a divorce between church and mission, in America there was a greater tendency to incorporate the “mission society” into the denominations. “Since the time of Constantine, un-missionary churches and un-churchly missions have been the rule rather than the exception.”<sup>34</sup> Although the missionary society is, scripturally, an abnormality, it has been a blessed abnormality in that it did what the church as a whole was neglecting to do.

We should, of course, not comfort ourselves with the thought, that since we have preferred to do foreign missions through our denominational mission boards, who, presumably, represent the church, we have been entirely true to the New Testament pattern of missions. In the first place, as in the case of the free mission societies, we have too often satisfied ourselves by carrying out world missions by proxy. Moreover, our denominational mission boards have quite often functioned as autonomously as the independent mission societies. There is no reason why a mission board should not endeavor to draw the churches which it represents more fully into its confidence, thereby making itself more completely a true instrument of the church.<sup>35</sup>

In spite of these and other weaknesses, the Christian church is found in most parts of the world today. This raises the question: What does it mean today to “go into all the world?” The division of the world between white-western-Christendom and dark-eastern-heathenism is gone.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, the command to go into all the world applies to the younger churches of non-western lands as much as it does to the western churches. It sounds a bit ridiculous to say that what we do in Tokyo is “foreign” missions, but what we are doing in Chicago is not. Does it then boil down to the question of where the money is found? The church which has the wealth can send missionaries to the ends of the earth, and those who do not must be content to fulfil their mission at home. This may be a completely wrong approach, but we must agree that the “ends of the earth” can no longer be defined geographically. “Distance” is no longer significant; “the ends of the earth” are there where men do not yet confess Jesus as Lord. Perhaps the best approach in the future will be to develop a partnership with the churches in other lands by sharing with them our wealth and man-power where it is needed. The theological necessity to preach Christ where he is not yet named remains, but the historical situation

has changed.<sup>37</sup> Both the younger churches of the East and the older churches of the West are called to carry out their mission "in all the world." We should, however, be very careful not to measure a church's missionary obedience by the number of representatives its mission board has placed in other lands or by the size of the foreign missions budget. One must also take into account what this sending church is doing at home. (Although, as a rule, the church which sends few people abroad does little at home.)

#### B. The Locus of Time

The command to preach the gospel in all the world carries with it the promise of Christ's presence to the end of the age. "To the ends of the earth" and "to the end of time" express the church's calling. The church's mission is eschatological in nature. The return of Christ has always been a powerful incentive for evangelism. The charge that the blessed hope paralyzes mission effort cannot be sustained. In a sense, the end has already come in Christ, and the presence of the Spirit is the assurance that the end has begun. On the other hand, the end is delayed, so that the church can carry out its mission. The imminence of the end makes missions urgent, but it must never become a matter of anxiety, as if the end were dependent on our faithfulness in performing our task.<sup>38</sup> Human success in missions does not determine the time when the eternal kingdom will dawn. That we leave to God. But, while it is day, we must offer God's grace to all men, and this with the conviction that Christ has already conquered and that we are participating in his victory in this world, as we carry out our mission through success and failure.<sup>39</sup>

#### IV. IMPLICATIONS FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

In conclusion we should ask whether there are any implications in what we have said for missionary education. Historically, in Protestantism, missiology's first task was to prove that missions was a legitimate venture on the part of the church. Theologians of missions were basically interested in undergirding "theologically" the phenomena of the free mission societies.<sup>40</sup> They did the church great service. Today missiology is more concerned to show that the whole church is apostolic, and this means a grappling with the concept of the church. This raises the question of the place of missions departments in theological schools. These have at times been little more than the "overseas department" of theological schools—often accentuating the cleavage between the church and missions. G. Warneck, a pioneer in missiology, doubted if missions could properly be taught by establishing missions' "chairs." He argued that they should be integrated into other theological disciplines. He himself taught missions swinging his Greek New Testament in his hand.<sup>41</sup> J. Glazik says. "So lange

Mission in die allgemeine Theologie nicht integriert ist, so lange wird Mission von Kirche unterschieden und nicht nur im Denken der Theologen ein Leben an der Peripherie führen, sondern auch im Bewusstsein der Gläubigen."<sup>42</sup>

Our concept of the church and its mission should be reflected in the way we teach missions in our theological schools. In the first place, missions must be taught as an integral part of practical theology—supported by the other disciplines. Moreover, we must get away from the idea that mission has to do only with work in foreign countries; missions courses must represent our reflection on the work of the church "in all the world." Although it is imperative that there be a missions "expert" on a theological faculty, missions cannot be taught properly merely by appointing one or two such experts to the faculty. The whole faculty, in all its departments, must be engaged in the apostolic vocation of the church. The schools themselves must be involved in ways in which the church is supposed to be involved. Schools can be just as introverted as the churches which they serve, especially if they are satisfied merely to train students to operate within the existing patterns of church life. Somehow theological study and missions must be combined. Perhaps our major concern today ought to be to train teachers of the Word who have an understanding for the mission of the church, and who will give themselves "to equip the saints for the work of the ministry." If our churches as a whole—those vast "frozen assets" of the church, as Kraemer spoke of it—were to become more conscious of the church's mission in the world, we should not be lacking those who would be willing to share with our brothers in other lands their means and their lives.

1. J. Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1962), p. 122.
2. H. Kraemer, *A Theology of the Laity* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 94.
3. E. G. Rupp, "The Age of the Reformation, 1500-1648," in *The Layman in Christian History*, eds. S. C. Neill and H. R. Weber (London: SCM Press, 1963), p. 139.
4. G. H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), p. 845.
5. Blauw, op. cit., p. 120.
6. O. Piper, quoted by R. C. Guy, "Directed Conservation," in *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, ed. D. A. McGavran (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1965), p. 195.
7. H. R. Boer suggests that Pentecost provided the church with (a) a temporary linguistic endowment for evangelistic purposes; (b) a symbol of the universalism of the gospel; (c) a spiritual empowerment for missionary witness; (d) an eschatologically qualified missionary task (the Spirit was the sign of the end). *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1961), pp. 48-64.

8. C. W. Williams, *Where In the World?* (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ, 1963), p. 46.
9. G. Hoffmann, "Gedanken zum Problem der Integration von Kirche u. Mission in Deutschland," *EMZ*, 4 (1968), p. 202.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 206
11. F. W. Dillistone, "The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission," in *The Theology of the Christian Mission*, ed. G. H. Anderson (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1961), p. 279.
12. J. C. Hoedendijk, *The Church Inside Out*, trans. J. C. Rottenberg (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 43.
13. H. Küng, *The Church*, trans. Ray and Rosaleen Ockenden (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), p. 187.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
15. The New Testament avoids the secular terms of office—*arche*, *time*, *telos*—because these express a relationship of rulers to ruled. Instead it speaks of *charismata* and *diakonai*.
16. E. Schweizer, "The Church as the Missionary Body of Christ," in *Neotestamentica* (Zürich: Zwingli Verlag, 1963), p. 317.
17. H. Grimes, *The Rebirth of the Laity* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1872), pp. 52ff.
18. Hoedendijk, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 149.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
21. And they should participate more than they do. Our services also tend to be completely minister-centered.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
23. G. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 845.
24. Kraemer, *op. cit.*, p. 102
25. Quoted by Kelly, *op. cit.*, p. 23
26. C. W. Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 77
28. Kraemer, *op. cit.*, p. 144.
29. St. Neill, *Christian Missions* (Penguin Books, 1964), p. 573.
30. A. T. Hanson, *The Church of the Servant* (London: SCM Press, 1962), p. 97.
31. E. Nida, "Dynamics of Church Growth," in *Church Growth and Christian Mission*, ed. D. A. McGavran (New York: Harper and Row, Publ., 1965), p. 180.
32. L. E. Cooke, "Auf dem Wege zu einer Theologie zwischenkirchlicher Hilfe," *EMM*, 111 (1967), p. 51.
33. Boer, *op. cit.*, p. 203.
34. J. A. Scherer, *Missionary, Go Home!* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 50.
35. Boer, *op. cit.*, p. 216.
36. Scherer, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
37. Blauw, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
38. A. L. Moore, *The Parousia in the New Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966), p. 218.
39. O. Cullmann, "Eschatology and Missions in the New Testament," in *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*, eds., W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: University Press, 1956), pp. 410ff.
40. Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
41. Hoffmann, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

42. J. Glazik, "Aufgabe und Ort der Missionswissenschaft Heute," *EMZ*, 3 (1968), p. 125.

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Ἐν ἑρχῇ τοῦ λόγου.  
καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ,  
καὶ Θεὸς ὁ λόγος, οὐρανὸν ἐκ  
ἑρχόμενος πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.  
πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένεον,  
καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ οὐθέν ἐγένεον.  
οὐκ ἦν ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τοῦ γήινου.

## THE PREACHING LAB

conducted by John Regehr\*

The "Christian Year" is a worthwhile arrangement for the church. The preacher can use religious seasons as opportunities to focus on great truths. At times, however, the comfort of (or the bondage to) the routine should be disturbed. Please do not do it by ignoring the great redemptive truths at those times when people are predisposed to hear them, but by preaching those great truths at other times as well.

The great truth of "Immanuel" is appropriate throughout the year. It had better be! The truth is somewhat revised in Romans 8:28-39: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."

What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies; who is to condemn? Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Two Pivotal Points emerge in the text:

- A. v. 28 - God is with us.
- B. v. 31 - God is for us.
- A. How is God with me?

1) He is a God of action, of mighty works. 2) His action is redemptive; he works for my good, i.e. my being conformed to the

image of Jesus Christ. 3) This work of God goes on in every situation in which I am, in every sequence and every crowding of events.

How can I be sure?

In the normal developmental process and crises of growth and learning (both in childhood and adolescence) it is not difficult to see that God is working for my good. But in times of disaster, accident, failure and illness, one feels as if God has backed off.

1) But I can be sure because God is the kind of God he is.  
a) He foreknew everything. Nothing takes him by surprise, either in regard to events or in regard to myself. b) In the light of this knowledge he has made some decisions about me. He knows what he wants to accomplish with me, and toward this good he works in every situation. If he is God at all, he must know all, and he must be able to make decisions which he can carry out.

2) I can be sure also because I have seen God at work.  
i) In Israel's experience, ii) in the history of people I know, iii) and even in my own experience God has proven himself to be one a) who calls, b) who justifies, and c) who glorifies, i.e., who transforms men into the image of Jesus Christ.

B. The truth is, then, so immense that I must restate it simply as a truth for me: **God is for me.**

1 If he were not, I should despair, since Satan seeks to defeat God by destroying me. But I love God, and he is for me.

2) Incredible? Then look to Bethlehem. Here is the guarantee that God stops at nothing to work for my good. Indeed, in that gift (and with it) all things will be given that are necessary to achieve God's purpose for me.

3) Even when the mess I am in, is one of my own making? (I am a sinful being, you know.) Yes, I can accept forgiveness and stop laying charges against myself.

4) But the condition is love. What if my love wavers and fails? It is God who loves, and no power can stop that!

C. Therefore, I can trust the love of God, can respond to it, and can know that God is working for my good in every situation, even in the present painful one.

Did you notice?

- 1. We neither evaded nor got hung up on the irresolvable philosophical-theological issue of predestination and free will.
- 2. The comfort we offered was a comfort resting on God himself—he knows, he makes decisions, he forgives, he works. Such preaching is pastoral.
- 3. Pastoral preaching also requires that one give courage to go on. We did that, in that we offered a hope that rests in God.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE CHURCH BETWEEN THE TEMPLE AND MOSQUE,

by J. H. Bavinck.

Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1966. Pp. 206. \$2.95.

Written by a man who spent twenty years as missionary (Indonesia) and twenty-five in a Chair of Missions (Free University of Amsterdam), *The Church* is an excellent introduction to understanding the issues faced when the Christian realizes he is an adherent of one religion among many others, some of them older than his own, several much larger. The three most important aspects of the book are the following: Bavinck's brief introduction to comparative religion, his exegesis of Romans 1, his suggestion for our attitude to those of other faiths.

Instead of adopting some of the basic classificatory schemes of religion, Bavinck points out their limitations: "Every classification is to a certain extent justifiable, but it runs the risk of becoming a distortion or at least an overemphasis of aspects which are not as central as they seem to be . . . . I proceed from what may be called the "universal religious consciousness" (p. 29). This consciousness is characterized by attitudes or feelings: sense of a cosmic relationship, awareness of religious norms, riddle of man's existence, craving for salvation, reality behind reality ("something" beyond matter). Those who accept Judaeo-Christian presuppositions should expect to find features common to all religions, for they accept man's monogenetic origin.

In his exegesis of Romans 1, Bavinck holds that verse 21 refers to a process which has already been effected, i.e. it is historically descriptive of what has *in fact* happened: "man has turned away from God and now God has vanished out of his sight" (p. 124), but it is a history which repeats itself with each person, who suppresses his uneasiness when "God reminds him again and again that responsibility and guilt do exist" (p. 124). The most that man can do, Bavinck claims, is grope toward "a philosophical notion of God as the first cause."

What should be our attitude to those of other faiths? There must be a sense of humility: "As long as I laugh at what I

regard as being foolish superstition in other religions, I look down upon the adherents of them" (p. 200). There must be a confrontation with that which others, according to Romans 1 suppress: God's breaking into history with the Logos. "The message of the kingdom is to a certain extent an unmasking it reveals the very deep processes of repression and substitution . . . . This message has only one powerful weapon, namely, that its messengers know that if they bring it obediently and honestly, trusting in God's help and in His Spirit, it will somehow touch the heart of man . . . . something deep within his heart may be touched" (p. 206).

*The Church* is excellent for a general understanding of religion, apologetics and the relationship of Christianity to other faiths.

Vernon Ratzlaff

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### Soldiers of Compassion by Urie Bender.

Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1969. Pp. 319. \$5.20.

In *Soldiers of Compassion* Urie Bender has presented us with a unique and wonderful book. It is unique because for the first time those young Mennonites who have added to our Christian witness that new dimension—the PAX service—are introduced to the public by a very able writer. It is a wonderful book because of its thrilling content. The rich experience of hundreds of Mennonite Pax boys in many countries of the world is unfolded before the reader. These men have carried Pax to Germany and Hong-kong, to Greece and Vietnam, to Paris and Algeria, to Jerusalem and Karachi, to Austria and Bolivia, to Christian and to Moslem—to "where they were needed" and to "whoever was in need."

While this book will be appreciated by all who care for their fellow men and who search for meaningful ways of doing something about our present mountains of problems, it should find its way into every Mennonite home. Why so? To inspire our young generation to join those who accepted the challenge of 'applied' Christianity and served in a most effective way. To let our young people know that there is an alternative to violence and that this alternative is more demanding, but also more rewarding, than occasional 'street-involvement'. Our older generation should read this book to appreciate the tremendous contribution of another generation of Mennonites.

By now I may have cautioned some readers not to bother about this book, because it sounds like another volume of dry information on what the Church has done. If this is your feeling,

you will have a pleasant surprise. This is an extremely well written and fascinating book dealing with colourful people: the Pax boys, Greek Orthodox bishops, Berbers and Pakistanis, Germans, Cretans and Vietnamese . . . . Reading this book combines pleasure with learning experience. As these Pax boys discover individuals rather than categories in their fellow Pax men, as well as in the people whom they meet in Germany, Greece, Algeria, Israel, in the Congo and in Pakistan and wherever they go, you too will gain more insight and understanding as you travel with them through the book. You will discover that these Pax men matured and changed while they were living among poor strangers whose language they did not understand at first and whose friends they became inevitably. "Yes, Pax changed us," these men confess.

But the author does not stop with the experiences of the Pax men; he himself visited many of the Pax projects and interviewed the people whom Pax tried to help in one way or another. He asks the very crucial question: "How is Pax accepted by those whom it is supposed to serve? What impact does it make on the world?" Father Georgis, a Greek Orthodox bishop, surprises us with his evaluation of this Mennonite effort: "These were good boys. They helped me greatly in my work (!) even though they may not have known it. More people came to church . . . . The Pax boys were good examples . . . . At first I was hesitant. They called themselves Christians. After a while we could see they were Christians . . . . I would tell my congregation to live like Christ; the Pax boys would show them how . . . they came with love." Bender includes this interview not to make us feel once more how "good" we are, but rather to indicate the acceptance of our boys by the Greek Orthodox community, in spite of differences in our approach to faith.

**Soldiers of Compassion** is informative and that in a fascinating way. Author and publisher ought to be congratulated for making this book available to us.

G. Epp

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**The Uyo Story** by Edwin and Irene Weaver.

Elkhart: Mennonite Board of Missions, 1970. Pp. 127 (ppr.).

In 1959, a group of independent churches in Nigeria adopted the name "Mennonite" and asked the Mennonite Board of Missions ("Old" Mennonite) to send missionaries to serve them.

As a result of the call, the Weavers, with missionary experience in India, were sent to investigate and to aid the some fifty

congregations clustered around Uyo (a town in the eastern region of Nigeria). But questions relating to their work quickly came: why had these fifty congregations splintered from the established mission churches? "why had they kept on changing so quickly from one church to another until they became Mormons? . . . why had they made the change from Mormon to Mennonite? what did they really want?" (p. 13) And why did they request church buildings, hospitals and schools when the area was well supplied with hospitals, maternity clinics, schools and church buildings (e.g. there were 75 church buildings within a five-mile radius of Uyo!)?

Very soon the Weavers began to find why they had been requested to come. When churches splintered on the mission field (for reasons such as "discipline, money and leadership"), they lost the prestige and benefits which the established churches had, and thought by gaining their **own** missionary, their **own** building their **own** school, their **own** hospital, they would have the required status. (How well they have learned the little kingdom-building programs of our western churches!)

For the Weavers, then, "missionary" work was pioneer work in a new setting: work which attempted to heal breaches among independent churches in a region considered 95% Christian, pioneering that had "to be in a new approach commensurate with the complicated, confused Uyo church situation" (p. 50). One of the major achievements was the establishing of a Bible school, used by some 200 independent congregations by the time the Weavers left in 1967 at the beginning of the civil-war. Another achievement lay in the congregations working out their leadership pattern in keeping with New Testament hints (I Cor. 12:28) as conditioned by local circumstances. Missionary work also involved their becoming Presbyterian missionaries in order to remain in Nigeria when visa problems arose!

**The Uyo Story** is a fascinating example of the need for flexibility in mission strategy. While the writing tends to be disjointed, and continuity between the too-short chapters suffers (there are too many that are only two pages in length), the basic thrust of a sympathetic approach to the church problems in other countries comes through clearly. A book on church-work abroad well worth our consideration.

Vern Ratzlaff

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**The Whole Person in a Broken World**, by Paul Tournier.

New York: Harper & Row, 1964, 180 pp.

Paul Tournier is a well known Swiss psychiatrist with definite Christian convictions, who has focused his attention increasingly

on the mental, emotional, and moral forces that are operative in various types of illnesses. Behind the scene of the physical symptoms of an illness lies a conflict between moral convictions, emotional preferences, and man's own rationality. In Tournier's judgement, modern medicine has given insufficient credence to this invisible conflict and therefore, has neglected adequately to investigate its impact on human health.

In this book modern man is compared to an adolescent who is in the process of being emancipated from parental domination, but doesn't as yet know how to handle this newly-acquired freedom responsibly and to his own benefit. He believes that he is free and yet he doubts it. "To prove [mostly to himself] that he is free, he does just the opposite of what he has hitherto done as a docile child" (p. 4). But this more than likely will reap for him the disapproval of those who formerly controlled him and thereby intensify his doubts about his own freedom, which in turn will call for more defiant actions on his part. He is caught in a vicious circle, in which his very attempts to be free serve to undermine the certainty of his freedom.

Modern man, according to Tournier, finds himself in a similar situation. Various factors, most predominantly the ascendancy of science and technology, have served to impress man with the idea that he is in control of his own destiny, and freed from the restraints of tradition and religion. He therefore definitely rejects moral and creedal demands. But this leaves a vacuum in his total being, because he has a moral as well as a spiritual component. Consequently, a "muffled discontent" emerges in him, the origin and nature of which he may not be aware. He tries to dissipate his moral and spiritual uneasiness by blaming it on the remaining vestiges of traditional morality, only to find that the anguish of his emptiness increases.

Having described and illustrated modern man's dilemma, Tournier then directs attention to the responsibility of the Christian Church to make man understand the nature and source of his "discontent" and guide him to the place where he can become a "Whole Person in a Broken World."

Henry J. Regehr

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**Equipping for Ministry** by Paul Miller.

Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1969. Pp. 231, (ppr). \$2.75.

Do you agree with the following? Rising unemployment is making our youth uneasy about vocational futures; the secular

climate is making the church's attempts at communication more difficult; the status of the minister's role—and thus his ability to be listened to seriously—is declining in the community; theological training tends to be irrelevant to current needs, and remote from present crises; ministers spend too little time on sermon preparation and too much on administration (e.g. travel). If you agree that the preceding describe your own reaction to the church in society today, then Miller has listed concerns for the continuing task of the ministry which mirror these reactions. The strange thing is that while Miller touches on these concerns—and many more—in **Equipping for Ministry**, he writes **Equipping** on the basis of studies made in East Africa, for East African churches. We're not so much different from others after all, and his discussion here has great relevance for our Canadian church life.

Miller, Professor of Practical Theology at Goshen Biblical Seminary, spent a year in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya at the invitation of the nine-member Association of East African Theological Colleges (three other colleges also cooperated) in researching the direction the ministry of their churches should take. **Equipping for Ministry** is the result of questionnaires, conversations and studies involving more than 1600 persons.

The twelve chapters comprise three sections: "Some Emergent Patterns of Ministry," "Existing Patterns of Ministry," "The Consensus of Discussions."

In the first section, Miller talks about three major patterns. One of these is the East African Revival Fellowship, an inter-denominational grouping which emphasizes strengthening through prayer, testimony and confession of individuals taking part; which promotes major revival campaigns; etc. A second is that of the independent churches which have tended to become extremely pro- or pan-African, and refuse other advice or assistance. Their nationalism may turn out to be a betrayal of the wider claims of the Christian faith. A third movement which is having great impact is the "tent-maker pattern," where lay-leaders are ordained to officiate at the Lord's Supper, to preach, etc. (This appears to be a re-emphasis of the lay- and multiple-ministry which was one of the anabaptist-mennonite strengths for so long.)

To analyze what directions "equipping for ministry" might take, studies and surveys were conducted to determine vocational choices of Christian youth (attending colleges, university, etc.); insights from relevant literature (some 70 books and articles were precised); programmes of the twelve theological colleges; denominational preferences and convictions (as articulated by Anglican, Mennonite, Presbyterian, Church of God, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Church of Christ in Africa church leaders); actual work-module distribution of the colleges' graduates (in their roles as pastors); consensus of discussions at congregational level (over

800 laymen were involved); views of civic, governmental leaders; results of discussions between leaders of church and state; insights from a study of Scriptural passages.

While each chapter has fascinating material which helps establish the direction in which the East African church's training pattern might be nudged, I could not escape the feeling that the views presented have a much wider audience, and deserve our attention for our situation. When Miller writes that

"One congregational group was in an area where nine out of ten are nominally Christian, and another group was in an area where only one out of ten are nominally Christian, but no difference could be detected in the degree of evangelistic urgency implicit in the discussions of the two groups" (p. 153)

he is describing not only the church in East Africa but also that in Winnipeg, Vancouver, Clearbrook, Steinbach. When he talks of their congregational meetings, commenting that

" . . . The African lay leaders could be observed practising, although unwittingly, many of the finest aspects of wholesome group process and group dynamics. They can stand somewhat aloof from their own pet idea and suspend judgment until discussion has made its full impact. They practise "deep listening," giving intent and intense attention to one another. They try to help the timid or faltering member to 'get it said'. They will not allow a timid member to be cut short or crowded out. They seem to have found a principle of fair play which is more effective than parliamentary procedure" (p. 418)

then surely we can learn much. When he discusses the problems of the colleges, relating to objectives, curriculum, class hours, teaching methodology, relationship to the churches, continuing-education program (and de-centralizing program to reach into local congregations), "how to prepare leaders who . . . do not merely keep a machine ticking . . .", then he is discussing issues which mirror our own faculty's concerns.

A few editorial errors or short-comings slip in: "Difined," p. 60; "visitation," p. 147. A Table of Contents that would include page numbers would be helpful; no standard format is used for bibliographical material, so that varying entries become minor annoyances.

But **Equipping for Ministry** is a fascinating study of the direction in which the church of East Africa may have to go in order to speak to its society. It is also a book which asks of us in Canada what patterns will be most helpful for us to remain the covenant community in mission; Miller's probing will be helpful in our search.

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## *Coming in the October, 1970 Issue*

- "Man" in Contemporary Literature ..... *David Duerksen*  
"Who is 'man' that You are mindful of him?" ..... *Victor Adrian*