

# THE VOICE



Mennonite Brethren Bible College  
Quarterly

OCTOBER, 1970

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MENNONITE BRETHREN BIBLE COLLEGE  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

# The Voice

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EDITOR: Victor Adrian

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Herbert Giesbrecht,  
Vernon Ratzlaff

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 COMMENTS

### ANABAPTIST OR EVANGELICAL?

by Victor Adrian

Over a century ago Soren Kierkegaard, in a land where all claimed to be Christian in virtue of having received infant baptism, asked the question: "How can I become a Christian?" In the midst of Anabaptists, who are such by Christian heritage, I frequently ask the question: "How can I become a true Anabaptist?" Is it possible to be an evangelical and also a true Anabaptist? I understand an evangelical to be one who has repented of his sins, who has received Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord, who believes in God's Word, and who is committed to serve Christ in proclaiming Him by word and through the ministry of love. I have known many such evangelicals who, however, are not Anabaptists. Must they become Anabaptists, and if they do, what precisely does that mean?

I have often wondered whether the Apostle Paul could be called an Anabaptist. I am convinced he was an evangelical. Must a Christian have some knowledge of the sixteenth century Anabaptist movement in order to be an Anabaptist? Must he be an expert in Anabaptist history and theology? Must he have written a Master's thesis or at least a few articles on the movement? Must he be very vocal about denouncing the U.S. involvement in Vietnam in order to qualify as a bona fide Anabaptist? Or can there be other equally qualifying characteristics, such as a concern for issues closer home: learning to love one's brother and seeking to reconcile breaches among brethren; concerning one's self with the sick, the rejected, and the impoverished in our inner city; sharing the Gospel with non-believers; or seeking to be Christian in one's occupation and calling, regarding it as God's service and seeking through it to minister to the needs of man. Is any one of these characteristics among the earmarks of an Anabaptist, and if so, who determines which criterion is to be applied?

Some of our Mennonite friends sometimes wonder whether the Mennonite Brethren are Anabaptist or evangelical. Historically, the Mennonite Brethren have sought close fellowship in association with the evangelicals. More recently they have participated in the National Association of Evangelicals (U.S.A.) and in the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada. Few in the Mennonite Brethren brotherhood have resisted such associations; many have encouraged it. During the heyday of theological liberalism, the Mennonite

Brethren identified to a large extent with the movement of fundamentalism, although not with extreme elements within it.

Some Anabaptist critics lament such an identification with evangelicals because of the greater or lesser degree to which the spirit of nationalism has penetrated their ranks, particularly in the U.S.A. These critics, in the name of neo-Anabaptism, abhor the support given to U.S. involvement in wars, particularly in Vietnam. The tension with Billy Graham, for example, is therefore intense. They regard him as a chaplain for U.S. presidents who sanction U.S. involvement in war. There are also a number who feel his evangelism consists too much of proclamation and too little of social involvement. (See Frank Epp's article in *The Canadian Mennonite*, September 25, 1970.) It is of interest to note that some of the Anabaptist critics of evangelicalism are less critical of similar denominations which have a truncated form of the Gospel or none at all, but which seek world peace or pacifism.

I believe that too frequently the heart of Anabaptism has been identified with its peace position among adherents of the Anabaptist fellowship. To me this means adopting a fundamentalist mentality. By this I mean that they have set us the peace witness as the criterion by which one is to judge bona fide Anabaptism. This was a tendency inherent in fundamentalism. They attempted to reduce the Christian revelation to a minimum core of doctrines on the basis of which one decided who was in or out. While I accept the judgement that liberalism had to be encountered on a number of points—many of which were singled out by the fundamentalists, and in that sense I regard the movement as having made a contribution to the defense of the true Gospel—it tended to reduce too much the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This tendency of virtually reducing the Christian Gospel to one or two points of doctrine on the basis of which fellowship and association or identification with other Christian bodies is to be determined, has plagued the Christian church in its history.

Was it right for Luther to cut himself off from fellowship with Anabaptists who repented of their sins, who received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who believed the Word of God, but rejected a state church? Was it right for Calvinists to cut themselves off from fellowship with Arminians who repented of their sins, who received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who believed the Word of God, but had a problem with irresistible grace? Is it right for Anabaptists to cut themselves off from fellowship with evangelicals who have repented of their sins, who have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who have believed the Word of God—but who have not accepted the doctrine of non-resistance? I think not!

Is not the basis for fellowship as well as denominational existence among Christians much greater than a distinctive aspect

of one's theology? Surely, a distinctive in one's theology ought not to be set up as a basic criterion for the judgment of another, either in terms of being Christian or being Anabaptist. Non-resistance is a distinctive in Anabaptist theology; if an Anabaptist, however, rejects Menno Simon's doctrine of regeneration, does he remain an Anabaptist, even though he believes in non-resistance? I would think not! It would seem to me that neither the doctrine of non-resistance, nor the Calvinistic doctrine of irresistible grace, nor the Arminian doctrine of human responsibility, nor the Wesleyan doctrine of personal holiness, nor the Pentecostal doctrine of speaking in tongues, ought to become the decisive doctrine on the basis of which one accepts or rejects fellowship with other members of the body of Christ.

At our recent inter-Mennonite (Anabaptist) theological consultation at Aspen, Colorado, there was a general consensus that Anabaptism is best defined in terms of its stance to the first century Christianity; Anabaptism is essentially a vision of the recovery of apostolic Christianity. To be an Anabaptist in the twentieth century does not, therefore, necessarily mean to find one's norm for Christian faith and life in sixteenth century Anabaptism and seek to glorify it. The new life and the guides for Christian living in the twentieth century are to emerge from the roots of Christian faith, namely the Word of God. If that is the case, then the stance of the Anabaptist and the evangelical are similar. Both would seek to draw their life from the living Christ, regarding the Word of God as absolutely reliable and trustworthy with respect to guidance for faith and conduct. Both could agree to the statement of faith published by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, which reads as follows:

"In unity with the historic creeds, we affirm that Jesus Christ is Lord and that His is a solitary throne. There is no rival to Jesus Christ; He reveals God the Father and He authenticates the Holy Scriptures. He is Saviour and Judge of men. His servants are called to be witnesses to Him and this is our only real mission. Yet, following Him, we share His concern for the suffering, the dispossessed, the outcast, the refugee, the poor, the helpless and the sinner.

Here is the affirmation we make.

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada believes . . .

- (1) That the Holy Scriptures as originally given by God are divinely inspired, infallible, and entirely trustworthy; and that they are the only supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.
- (2) That there is one God, eternally existent in three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- (3) That our Lord Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh and that belief in Him commands belief in His sinless life, His

divine miracles, His substitutionary death, His resurrection and ascension, His mediatorial work, and His personal return in power and glory.

- (4) That the salvation of lost and sinful man is won through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and apart from works; and that those who thus believe in Him are regenerate by the Holy Spirit.
- (5) That the Holy Spirit indwells all who believe in Christ and that only through His indwelling is the believer entitled to live a holy life and to witness and work for the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (6) That the Church of Jesus Christ is the unity of all true believers in Christ and by the Holy Spirit all such who believe are members of the Body of Christ.
- (7) That there will be a resurrection of all, both saved and lost, they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation."

My point is that the Anabaptist and evangelical have much in common. Both the Anabaptist and the evangelical need to learn from each other. Both will need to repent and remain repentant as they seek to make concrete the Christian life in this world. Humility, not arrogance, is to characterize the Christian in his relationship to others. Love and acceptance, not rejection, is to be the order of the day. The eye cannot say to the foot, I have no need of you. If one member suffers, all suffer. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are in Christ's universal church; it is as these are gratefully accepted by Christians as they minister one to another that one can expect a growth of maturity in Christ. There is a Biblical ecumenism which constrains the Christian to seek his brother. It is for this reason that I—an Anabaptist—wish to identify with evangelicals in our country as well as elsewhere.

## THE MENNONITE BRETHERN CHURCH IN INDIA TODAY—READY FOR MISSIONARY WITHDRAWAL?

(sequel to "Church Planting in the India M.B. Field," July, 1970)

by Peter Hamm\*

The recent decision of the Board of Missions and Services to withdraw missionaries from some of the fields has alerted the constituency to question the readiness of the national churches for such "retrenchment." Is the church in fact ready for such a withdrawal of missionary personnel? Will the church stand when financial and personnel assistance are no longer coming from abroad? A disclosure of where the Mennonite Brethren church in India stands after seventy years of missionary endeavour should help us judge, not so much whether or not the Board action is in keeping with our viewpoint, but where we ought to proceed from here. In order to view the state of the church today, we share some of the facts recently gleaned from a statistical survey of the India Mennonite Brethren field. The detailed statistics as they apply to individual villages, circuits, and fields can be found in **India Mennonite Brethren Church Statistical Report, 1970**, published in India in May of this year and available through the Chairman, M.B. Mission, Jadcherla, A. P., India.

### I. Examining the Facts

The following summary of facts is based upon a survey conducted by the author together with six Bible school students during the months of January to April of this year. Simply to report that there are about 20,000 baptized believers and 115 established churches served by 125 preachers does not give an adequate picture of our India M.B. church. A more intensive analysis is needed.

#### The distribution of our membership.

Our denomination has at least 18,933 baptized believers in 8,455 families scattered over 666 villages. But we cannot glibly speak of 8,500 "Christian families," for in many instances only a single person within a joint-family system has made profession of salvation and is baptized, while the family as a whole is still in Hinduism. While the average number of church members per family is 2.24, the total number in those families with M.B. church members is 43,689. This number, sometimes referred to as "Christian community," does indicate the size of the community that should come under direct Christian influence.

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\* Peter Hamm, long-time missionary in India under the MB Board of Missions and Services, has joined the Practical Theology department of MBBC.

The 18,933 believers represent nine fields of mission endeavor, the response varying from field to field. Gadwal, for example, has about one-half of these believers, while Shamshabad has only 512. Next to Gadwal field, Mahabubnagar and Deverakonda fields have the highest numbers, with about two thousand each. The remaining fields have about 1000 members each.

The following table, in which the fields are listed according to their membership, shows how large these groups of believers are in the individual villages and fields.

No. of baptized believers per village	500 or more	400-499	300-399	200-299	100-199	50-99	20-49	10-19	5-9	1-4	Total no. of villages with Christians
Villages in Gadwal	2	2	6	25	23	32	17	11	4		122
Villages in Mahabubnagar		1	1	3	3	15	12	9	33		77
Villages in Deverakonda				1		5	22	29	26	45	128
Villages in Narayanpet					3	3	10	12	14	28	70
Villages in Nagarturnool						5	12	13	17	33	80
Villages in Kalvakurthy						5	14	10	14	27	70
Villages in Wanaparthi				1		5	6	10	15	33	70
Villages in Hughestown	1					1	8	3	1		14
Villages in Shamshabad						1	9	7	5	13	35
Total no. of groups of believers	1	2	3	9	31	51	128	113	112	216	666

The table shows that there are only 46 groups whose memberships are over one hundred and only 97 where the memberships are fifty or more. If one counts all groups over twenty in number, there are 225 groups of such believers. In 441 villages, there are fewer than twenty members, and of these, 216 villages have four or less. The chart does not show that of the 666 villages, 49 have only one baptized believer (each) who is a member of the M.B. Church.

How many of these groups of believers represent organized churches? Officially, the fields recognize 116 established or organized churches, but this number does not reflect the true picture. In the Gadwal field, for example, there are thirty-five churches with memberships which exceed one hundred, yet only fifteen of these are listed as organized churches. In practice, all of these thirty-five churches are organized, since they have a body of elders who look after the worship service and manage all the affairs of the church. At the same time, each field contains such churches listed as organized, because recognition was given years ago, where today there may be few signs of life, since some of the members have died, and others have moved to cities, or even returned to Hinduism. Baptized believers can today be found in almost half the villages of that part of the state of Andhra Pradesh where the Mennonite Brethren witness is located.

### The background of our membership.

Examining the background of the baptized believers shows that a large percentage of our membership is the result of evangelistic outreach. Fifty-seven per cent of our membership had Hindu parents at the time of their baptism; they were not "born" Mennonites as is so often assumed. Kalvakurthy field has the largest percentage of members whose parents were not Christian when they were baptized, with 74 per cent, followed by Deverakonda with 62 per cent, and Narayanpet with 61 per cent of such members. Hughestown, which includes Hyderabad city, is the lowest, and this is explained by the fact that many who were born into Christian families and received training in mission schools have moved to the city.

The sensitivity about caste is obviously present. In the southern areas, namely, Gadwal, Wanaparthi, and Narayanpet, almost one hundred per cent of the Christians are of one subcaste background, namely Madiga. Deverakonda has the highest number of the other subcaste, the Malas, which caste constitutes about one-third of their membership. Only 213 of the total membership represent Christians of caste background other than Madiga or Mala. The Christian witness has thus merely begun to transcend caste boundaries.

### Facts about the Christian experience.

Whereas the Christian hospitals and schools have been greatly instrumental in leading many to a Christian experience, 67% of our members indicate the person who baptized them to be most influential in leading to their salvation experience. The fact that 93% were baptized in the same year as their salvation experience does not speak as much of a crisis experience followed shortly by baptism as it does of considering salvation and baptism to be almost synonymous. When asked about their salvation, most members at once referred to baptism. In fact, 137 of them stated that their knowledge of salvation came after baptism.

It is striking to note that apparently 12% were baptized when below the age of fifteen, 31% between fifteen and nineteen, and 40% between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine. After the age of thirty, the percentage rapidly decreases: 11% between thirty and thirty-nine, 4% between forty and forty-nine, and 2% after the age of fifty. Probably those baptized at an early age come from Christian homes and those later in life represent conversions from Hinduism. It is interesting to observe that whereas there are only 200 unmarried males and females in the Gadwal field at the present time, yet 989 took baptism before the age of fifteen and 2,868 took baptism between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. This strongly suggests that members took baptism and were married at once. In other words, not only were there many

child marriages in this field, but baptism has become a marriage requirement. We noticed especially in the Gadwal, Mahabubnagar, and Narayanpet fields that when we asked about the time of baptism or salvation, the answer unwittingly came, "At the time of marriage." This reflects a weakness in the teaching ministry of the church.

#### **Other Vital Statistics.**

The present age structure of our membership is as follows: less than one per cent are below the age of fifteen; 5.8% are in the upper teens, ages fifteen to nineteen; more than one-fourth of our membership ranges between the ages of twenty to twenty-nine; and one-half of our membership is between twenty and thirty-nine. While this suggests a picture of youth and vitality, it must not be forgotten that India's average life expectancy is about age forty-one, and almost one-half of its membership has passed this average. This should lead the church to stress even more its appeal to the young and to engage in Christian nurture of youth.

In all fields except Gadwal, there are more male than female members, the average being 52.6% male and 47.4% female. In the North and Northeast circuits of Deverakonda field, the percentage of males is 66.6 and 69.1, respectively; yet in the Gadwal field there are more women than men. Why this difference? Does this reflect something of the nature of the evangelistic ministry or some other sociological factor? In all fields the number of married men considerably exceeds the number of married women. Similarly, the number of unmarried-male members is usually double the number of unmarried female members, except for the city churches where the number of unmarried females exceeds the number of males. This may be explained by the number of educated single ladies who go to the cities for employment.

#### **Literacy of our Membership.**

The literacy rate for the India M.B. Church members is 21.8%. This compares favourably with the literacy rate for Andhra Pradesh, which is 21.1%, but is still less than the national average of 24.0%. Only ten percent have a reading level sufficient to read the Bible, yet below that of elementary school completion. Only 4.3% have completed elementary school, yet have less than high school graduation. And 6.8% have completed high school or more. Further analysis of the illiteracy of the village groups produces alarming results. For example, Gadwal field members have an illiteracy rate of 88.8%, and half our total membership is in this field. In some of the villages, all the Christians are illiterate. For example, the villages of Pulikallu and Mididordi of the Gadwal field do not have a single church member who can read; yet, their memberships exceed one hundred. The villages of

Medikonda, Tumilla, and Sagidoni in the same field, with memberships of 225, 154, and 157, respectively, have only two literate members each who are capable of reading the Bible. The Christian community can do much to help the government in its struggle with illiteracy.

#### **Observing Christian disciplines.**

Church attendance can be a barometer of the spiritual vitality of the church. Twenty-five per cent of our membership indicates regular church attendance. Fifteen per cent indicate that they do not attend for want of a service conducted. But why do the remaining 60% not attend church regularly? Ninety-five per cent of our membership cannot attend Sunday School, because there is none. Where Sunday Schools are conducted, it is mainly the children, not yet members, who attend. Since many village Christians must work on Sundays, one can understand their inability to attend a morning service. For this very reason village services are usually conducted at night. So the challenge to pastors and Christian educators cannot be gainsaid. With such a low literacy rate and with such poor church attendance, it is not surprising that only 12% of our members observe family prayers and only 178 out of the 18,933 tithed. Most of our members are desperately in need of Christian nurture.

#### **The Leadership of the Church.**

The term *preacher* is most widely used to describe our church leaders. A total of 125 such preachers are on the recognized list, and this number includes pastors of larger churches, circuit leaders, evangelists, Bible School teachers, and some of the numerous lay or assistant preachers. Of these, forty-nine are circuit leaders, that is, preachers in charge of a central church with a cluster of neighbouring villages over which they have charge. In addition, there are seventy-six assistant preachers, who are usually in charge of one group of village Christians, but who may also participate in team evangelism organized by the field. Of the 125 preachers, twenty-six, mostly circuit leaders, evangelists, and Bible teachers, are ordained; but ordination itself does not necessarily promote them to a higher office administratively. In addition to these recognized preachers there are capable laymen and recent Bible school students, as yet not on the "preachers' list," who assist in the leadership of the church. These have their own "tent-making" occupations to provide for their livelihood. All the pastors and leaders of the local churches are either supported by the local church or serve without remuneration. Full-time evangelists, radio and literature workers, and Bible school teachers receive their support from foreign funds channeled through the central conference treasury via the respective committees of the national conference.

While several of our leading evangelists and Bible teachers have both secular and theological degrees, and a few of the younger pastors and teachers have Bible school or Bible college training, most preachers have little formal training,—at best elementary school, and possibly three years of Bible school. Consequently, they read few books and depend mainly upon such Christian periodicals as the denominational monthly, called **Suvarthamani**, for their source material in sermon preparation. A great encouragement for the leadership of our churches is the growing number of educated teachers and government employees who assist either as elders or preachers in the local churches. Such capable and spiritual lay leaders provide part of the answer to the church's leadership needs.

Statistics can be dull and even misleading. At the same time, they can alert one to realities often overlooked or substantiate trends one has suspected. Examining the statistical facts of the India M.B. Church today can greatly assist the national church in planning its future evangelistic outreach and program of church nurture. It can also help the sister conference abroad to assess its role of giving financial or personnel assistance.

## II. Reserving Our Judgment

Our assessment of the India Mennonite Brethren Church today and of our relationship to it in the future must consider the achievements of the past in addition to the trends of the present.

### Reviewing the achievements of the past.

1. **Extensive evangelism.** Hundreds of villages have heard the gospel because of the faithful proclamation of the Good News. Many tributes are gratefully given by our elder Christians to the loving service rendered by the early missionaries, as well as by later ones. Because of the patterns they provided, many have been inspired to become the torchbearers of the Gospel today. Evangelistic programs are continuing in all the fields today, and the success of these programs today is especially evident in the Deverakonda, Kalvakurthy, and Gadwal fields.

2. **Massive response.** Not only was the Good News preached, but thousands heard and received the message in faith. Especially in Gadwal, Mahabubnagar, and Narayanpet fields, masses responded simultaneously and received baptism. In other field—especially Deverakonda, Kalvakurthy, Nagarkurnool, and Wanaparthy—many small groups, sometimes individuals, responded in widely scattered places; and today there is at least a single Christian in almost half the villages of this area of India in which the Mennonite Brethren church is found. What a harvest for which to give God the glory!

3. **Leadership potential.** The Church has many leaders—simple, village Christians; dedicated, active laymen; experienced, capable leaders; and educated, youthful administrators. What a potential of leadership for which to be thankful! Many have already passed away to inherit their eternal award; many are struggling against the severest obstacles and remaining faithful in their service; and many are at the threshold of a life of service, which, if rendered in a self-giving spirit, can lead the church triumphantly through the vicissitudes of the future.

4. **Institutional growth.** The India Mennonite Brethren Church has made a great investment in property—in schools, hospitals, churches, and pastors' houses. This gift of God through the sacrificial giving of His people can be a great boon to the church, or, if abused, can spell its ruin. More important than mere property is the investment of know-how, experience, and organizational structure resulting from years of prayerful planning and gradual improvement of the management of these institutions. Such a foundation of the past can be a great help for the indigenous management of the institutions in the future. With the exception of two hospitals, these institutions are all nationally administered.

5. **Indigenous Church.** In 1851, Henry Venn of the Church Missionary Society set three criteria as marks of an independent, mature church: self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. Recently, in a booklet entitled **Mission with Integrity in India**, Mrs. Renuke Mukerji Somasekhar, former principal of Women's Christian College in Madras and first woman president of the Nation Christian Council of India, added a fourth dimension for a truly indigenous church: self-givingness. Dr. Somasekhar makes this statement about the independence of the India churches: "In actual practice, the India churches are, by and large, self-governing, but they continue to be heavily dependent on mission boards for funds and personnel; they show very little concern for self-propagation (evangelism), and their self-giving for others leaves much to be desired." How does the India Mennonite Brethren Church compare with this general picture of Indian churches? We have the confidence that, when all foreign personnel have been withdrawn and funds cut off, the India Mennonite Brethren Church will stand, since on a local church level neither foreign personnel nor foreign funds are being used. Gradually such support is being withdrawn from the institutions, although for Bible training, literature production, and radio evangelism, the church still depends heavily upon foreign financial support. The challenge to become independent to a much greater degree in terms of the last three of the four criteria stands before the church today. Nonetheless, the primary goal of overseas missions has largely been achieved: the proclamation of the Gospel with the subsequent establishment of national churches.

## Recognizing the trends of the present.

The India Church, including the Mennonite Brethren, has sometimes been frankly criticized as impotent. There are, of course, encouraging signs to the contrary. Yet, the following trends, which become evident in such a statistical study, help us to understand why such a judgment is made.

1. **Illiteracy.** Despite the mission schools which have been in operation for decades, and despite improved government schools, most church members are still illiterate. Moreover, many of those trained in mission schools are not presently contributing to the church, be it through their service, their finances, or even their presence. As long as our membership is illiterate, its understanding of the Bible will be limited and its vision of its responsibility to the world will be minimal. Through adult literacy programs a literate minority can assist the illiterate majority to learn to read the Bible. More of the children of our Christian families must be encouraged to attend school.
2. **Parochialism.** Resulting from illiteracy is a rural outlook, which, among villagers, is not surprising. Frequently one finds little knowledge and no real concern for the church's responsibilities on the circuit, field, or conference levels, let alone evangelistic or social concern for the non-Christian community. But neither are many of the literate Christians located on mission compounds or urban areas entirely exempt from parochialism. Too many feel sheltered and secure in Christian institutions and Christian colonies. Too many leave their membership in a village church, refusing to become closely involved in the fellowship and witness of a city church. Too many cliques develop as a result of family, village, or caste ties with the result that Christians from other villages, castes, and denominations do not feel welcome in our churches.
3. **Urbanization.** There is nothing inherently wrong in this trend as long as the church keeps pace with the changes that result from industrialization and increased educational opportunities. Along with urbanization, we should anticipate the mushrooming of city churches. Two trends are currently apparent in the Mennonite Brethren constituency. On the one hand, a certain number of those who drift to the cities for employment or educational opportunities attend our churches and in time may even join them. Thus, our few city churches are growing unusually large, but the responsibilities for administration and outreach of the church remain in the hands of a small, increasingly powerful nucleus. Instead, many of the capable and spiritual laymen, whose contributions to the expanding city church are severely restricted, could become the needed nuclei for new city churches. On the other hand, many who drift to the city for various reasons continue simply to drift when it comes to church responsibilities. They

relinquish their responsibilities to their own village churches, but do not remain in active fellowship at a single local church when they come to the city.

4. **Church loyalty.** In the past decade the India Mennonite Brethren Church has suffered a heavy loss in membership. Some have joined other denominations. Because of factors related to their employment, many have been transferred to areas where there is no opportunity to fellowship with a Christian community. As mentioned above, many have not maintained church affiliation when they moved to the cities. Most unfortunate of all, many have forsaken the Christian faith and returned to Hinduism.
5. **Paucity in leadership.** Despite the recognition that was earlier given to the potential of leadership, we must confess that there is still a great paucity, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the Gadwal field alone, at least two dozen sizeable Christian communities virtually begged us to send them pastors. In all the fields, Christians in isolated places complained that they were not being visited by circuit leaders. Most village churches do not have Sunday school, vacation Bible schools, Bible conferences or revival meetings, or even observe the Lord's Supper. If much of the church program depends upon the initiative of the pastor, and he has ten to twenty villages under his charge, the task becomes almost impossible. The India Mennonite Brethren Church has not yet fully tapped its most powerful resources, its laymen, who can teach and preach and administer without being dependent upon the church for support. What then is the role of the sister conference in helping the national church meet these urgent needs?

## Conclusion: Recommending action for the future.

The type of action we recommend for the future will determine largely to what extent foreign assistance is still needed. That the church can stand without either financial or personnel assistance is an indisputable fact. However, this fact does not necessarily absolve the sister conference of its responsibility to assist. Both conferences, the whole brotherhood, must share in the work of exhorting one another and extending the Christian witness to the whole world. Much remains to be done, and the question is one of priorities—determining whose responsibility it is to meet a particular need.

1. **Role of the Indian M.B. Church.** In India, the responsibility for church planting and Christian nurture of believers lies first and foremost with the India M.B. Church. Therefore, inasmuch as foreign funds and foreign personnel would discourage or dwarf the independent effort of the church, such assistance should be withdrawn. The India church must take the leading role in managing its own conference affairs, in mobilizing its material and human resources, in training intensively for church membership,

in providing Christian nurture to its many believers, and in continuing the education of church workers. Its sovereignty must rightfully be recognized by discreetly withdrawing where we infringe upon its selfhood.

**2. Role of the sister conference.** At the same time, because of the close historic and denominational ties with the India Mennonite Brethren Church, the North American conference has a very special responsibility. With all our know-how and access to current research and strategy, we need to provide the catalytic incentive for new dimensions in evangelistic outreach. With all our affluence, we need to support financially such specialized evangelistic and Bible training programs which we have begun in India and which the church is not yet capable of carrying by itself. With all our experience and professional skills, we need to send committed and competent personnel, who have been successful at home in church planting, Bible teaching, and conference work, for limited periods to offer counsel, technical instruction, and professional help. With all our needs for renewal at home, we need to invite national leaders from abroad to preach to us and teach us according to their understanding of the Word. We need to learn as well as offer the help of our knowledge and capabilities.

No, the changing policy of the Board must not discourage the missionary involvement of the church. Although the strategy changes, the needs are greater than ever. And our churches at home must demonstrate anew their commitment to missions, in order that the Board can rightfully shape its policies in view of the needs of the churches and world abroad, rather than let these policies be determined by financial crises at home. Perhaps the apparent "retrenchment" in missions of late is permitted by God to enable us to rethink our priorities in missions and recommit ourselves to the total mission of the church.

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## THE POWER OF INFLUENCE IN BUSINESS

by Henry J. Block\*

The object of this paper is to explore the opportunities of Christian influence in business. Parts two and three are intended to give a general Christian philosophy of work and wealth. The remaining parts are more specific and express the writer's personal opinion in many cases. It is hoped that this paper will serve to stimulate thought and encourage further debate and sharing.

### **The Power of Influence in Business is Felt in our Attitude to Work**

Our position is based on a conception of the nature of man which is unfolded not only in the teachings of our Lord, but throughout the Bible. The natural resources of the world as created by God are given to man for his use. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:26) "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: And have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. 1:28)

Man is a spiritual being, but has been put on earth to fulfill the purposes of God, and one of these primary purposes is that he should control and administer the natural resources of the world for the good of mankind. One of man's prime areas of witness to God's glory and purpose to those who do not believe lies in his obedience to this basic commandment.

If a Christian is to be true to these principles, he does not work simply to make money or support his family. He works because it is a divine command that he should work. Whatever our work is, we must do it with enthusiasm and not grudgingly or because we are driven to it.

"Study to be quiet and to do your business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that we may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing" (1 Thess. 4:11,12).

Not only must the Christian work, but he must work as if for God and he must work whole-heartedly. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all they might (Eccl. 9:10). Our Lord's parable of talents praises those who make maximum use of their

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\* Henry J. Block, prominent Canadian businessman and active in church work, read this paper at the Pastors'-Layman's Conference sponsored by MBBC in February of 1969.

resources and condemns the man who makes no use of his because they are limited.

It would be fair to conclude from this consideration of biblical teaching that it is the duty of the Christian to use his abilities to the limits of his physical and mental capacity. He cannot relax as soon as he has enough money or as soon as he has mastered his job. He has a duty to continue to develop himself academically and experimentally. When he has mastered one job or reached one plateau, he must not be content to administer, but should try to improve and even innovate. There is no allowance in God's plan for such as would only work 8 hours a day, 4½ days a week, and retire at 65 years of age.

Ultimately, each one of us must decide for himself upon the limits beyond which he cannot stretch his physical and mental powers. He must decide, too, how to apportion time and energy. Extremes are common but a correct balance is difficult to achieve.

It is not possible to achieve all these objectives at once without method and a fair degree of self-discipline.

It is the duty of each generation to re-examine its attitude by God's standards, and it is hoped that we, in our generation, may rediscover the sense of purpose which a Christian should have in his earthly vocation and sense of harmony which we should experience in the world which God created for our use.

The power of influence in business may be felt through a Christian businessman dedicated to his company who enthusiastically develops an organization to the maximum potential, offers opportunity to employees and a better product to his customers, and looks for an economic regulator to maximize his profits.

#### **The Power of Influence in Business Lies in our Attitude to Wealth**

A Christian attitude toward work often results in substantial increase in wealth. The Bible does not condemn wealth in itself. It is not money, but "the love of money" which is the root of all evil.

The teaching of the Bible would appear to be that it is not the amount of a man's wealth which matters; what matters is the method by which he acquires it, how he uses it, and his attitude of mind toward it. Paul tells Timothy, "Charge them that are rich in this world not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." (Tim. 6:17,18)

The temptation of having an un-Christian attitude toward wealth is common to the rich and poor alike. If we are poor, we must be wary of our attitude to those who have wealth, and our desire to obtain such. Throughout the Bible there are passages dealing with the wrongful acquisition of wealth.

We are forbidden to increase our wealth by means of the oppression of those whose poverty makes them defenseless. The possession of wealth has traditionally given power to its possessors. Where there is no alternative employment, those who are without means must work on the terms offered by the wealthy. I would consider it equally wrong to accumulate wealth with the purpose of improving one's own economic bargaining position as an employer, or to take steps which would weaken the independence of one's labour force. There are many examples one could recite. It is sufficient to say that the opportunity of Christian influence in business finds one outlet through the attitude toward wealth.

#### **The Power of Influence in Business Through the Employer**

The most severe test of a Christian and his influence in business is his relationship with partners in business (employees). The Christian business man must offer fair opportunity with respect to competitive industry. The matters that first come to mind are wages, group insurance benefits and possibly working conditions. It is the writer's opinion that benefits such as mentioned are essential in our society because union organizations offer them in most cases. The area in which Christian influence is clearly recognized is that in which the employer offers more than do his competitors, not necessarily in the area of remuneration or group protection but in regard to something that I will refer to as "self." The employer's interest in his employees' personal needs will establish a relationship that pleases God. Five or ten minutes spent showing interest in him personally and his family, in one's office, not across the desk, but sitting next to him, is one's greatest opportunity to use one's influence as an employer.

It is the writer's opinion that a most valuable relationship can be established when the employee recognizes a genuine interest on the employer's part in his personal affairs, which are most important to him.

The opportunity for one to share the Lord will come at some later time. Christianity in action is much more effective and should precede verbal witness.

A Christian employer is not only obliged to offer fair employment but also to fulfill God's complete purpose in his life: "But ye are my witnesses." When Christ walked on earth, he had time and showed concern for the individual and his needs.

May I once again refer to personal experiences . . . Some of my greatest rewards in business have come because I took out time to show interest in someone else. It was just a short time ago when I had the opportunity to summon one of our employees into my office. He appeared nervous when he first sat down. After I had ordered a cup of coffee, he relaxed and we enjoyed a time of good fellowship. I found out that he had some years ago attended church, and he seemed to regret the day he left the

church. He soon opened his heart to me and shared some of his very personal concerns. Before he left my office we knelt down and prayed that God would restore him to fellowship.

Just because I took ten minutes out of my busy day, I have gained a most faithful employee, but more important, we became good friends.

If I talk to one employee a day with the sole purpose of showing interest in his affairs, I am able to talk to most of our employees during a given year.

The Christian businessman has a great mission field with advantages beyond those of the pastor or almost any other person in introducing his employees to Jesus Christ in a very practical and acceptable way.

#### **The Power of Influence in Business Through Ownership**

The majority of men in business are interested in the exercise of personal power in their own company. They want security, freedom of action and the least number of awkward questions. In public companies, with capital exceeding millions, personal wealth is normally too small to be a factor in the balance of power within the company. At the other extreme, the private company is directly controlled by its owners. In between is a growing area where directors hold a minority interest and, by means of these personal holdings, control the company.

Regardless of the kind of organizational structure, the trust and power remain our responsibility and privilege where Christian principles should be the foundation of all decisions.

The power of our Christian influence in business becomes obvious to the world in which we operate. Company policies, our attitude toward employees, and the position of trust we hold, become the power of our influence.

#### **The Power of Influence in Business Involved in Stock Exchange**

Most Christians will agree that institutions, financial or otherwise, should have a useful social function. Most Christians would probably also agree that a useful social function should not be carried out in a way which has anti-social consequences, direct or indirect.

There can be little doubt that, in a market economy, the stock exchange fulfills a necessary function. The underlying purpose of all financial institutions is to put savings to their most productive use. The stock market is also a place where the economic worth of one investment against another is assessed. The professional name for those who specialize in this area is "Investment Analysts." The stock exchange is, therefore, just another financial institution as is the bank, whose service you and I use at our own discretion. The stock exchange cannot and will not become our moral judge as to the social consequences of our

investments. If there is a demand for cigarettes and beer, it will direct money very efficiently in that direction. If there is a demand for ice-cream, the market will supply the money.

Behind the stockbroker is the investor, and although the former can plead that he is only part of a mechanism serving society, the latter cannot do so. He is responsible for the morality as well as the mechanics of every transaction he makes. Investment is, in general, of high social value. It is by saving and investing instead of spending that we can raise living standards in our own country and elsewhere. Investments provide jobs and make work less back-breaking. To serve fellowmen through wise investments is good. But the Christian should be more concerned than most men with the social influence of his investments. He should operate with clear-cut ground rules in mind.

The Christian investor should be concerned:

- (A) About the major activity of the company in which he invests.
- (B) About the directors and their attitudes toward social responsibility.
- (C) He should be present at annual meetings of the companies to confirm his impressions.
- (D) He should be interested in more than just profit.

It is God's purpose for man to administer, be creative, and help develop the natural resources for the good of mankind. Putting our thoughts into rather idealistic terms, we would say that if one were considering investing in a mine, one's first consideration should be what type of product is being mined, and who will benefit. The profits which one hopes to derive from this investment should be secondary consideration.

My influence in business will be inferred from my attitude to investments. I wish to share a personal experience here.

A few months ago a stock brokerage firm offered our company an opportunity to amalgamate with another organization related to our business. They offered what seemed to be a substantial financial benefit to my brother and myself. Our decision was negative because the other company derived some of its income from alcoholic beverages. I believe God was honoured through our decision.

#### **The Executive and his Power of Influence in Business**

We must emphasize that the Christian businessman's most effective and telling witness is his true motive. Why am I in this business? Why am I investing in this stock? Why would I take time to talk to an employee? Our true motives will always be recognized! Nature responds positively to an honest motive and despises insincerity.

As a pastor's motive in serving a certain church is felt and

recognized by his congregation, so it is with employees and the public whom we serve in business.

The Christian executive must also be extra-conscious of the opinions others hold of him. They may not be just or fair but nevertheless their opinions are often an indication of how they are influencing those who observe his life. With a close ear to the ground, many times the executive discovers that much of the opinion held by even his critics is held honestly, but is the result of incomplete or even distorted information.

The Christian executive must, insofar as he is in control of the situation, insist that the corporate image compliments his personal image. The very best influence a Christian executive has is his personal contacts with the public even though they might be very infrequent.

When Gladstone died, the streets of London were lined with huge crowds to watch his funeral procession. As Prime Minister of England, he was, without doubt, a very busy man. Yet in those great crowds who paid him homage were hundreds of common folk to whom this great man had personally witnessed concerning the claims of Christ. We will be remembered by most people, not by what we accomplished, but by what we meant to them personally, however remote our contacts seem to have been.

The Christian executive who actually controls the entire operation of his company and thus has the last word in what is to be, ought to make sure that all contracts and rules that have to do with his employees are fair and just.

I am not always (most often not) in sympathy with the Trade Union movement but do feel that many employers exploit those who are in their employ. Perhaps the Christian employer has to go that extra mile in order to protect his Christian witness.

#### **My Personal Experience in Opportunity of Christian Influence in Business**

A Christian business will as a rule be successful, find respect in the business community, and, in our case, afford us many opportunities to meet and speak to people in every walk of life. Due to our position in the company, in many cases, our background is known. We have always enjoyed the highest respect for our convictions and at no time have other businesses called upon us to compromise.

We look at our station in life as a great challenge, not to disappoint the Lord in the first instance, but also not to disappoint the world, the people we meet at all levels, who in many cases may have heard that we are Christians. The need is not to become identified with Christ, but not to discredit the Lord and Christianity as the world judges it.

It is also our concern that we would be good stewards and

share our opportunities with others. It was our privilege to share part of our company with our employees and associates.

It was just this past week that we had the opportunity to share with all our employees an opportunity where through investment and wise planning all participants will enjoy a gain of possibly \$5.00 for every \$1.00 invested. Why do I mention this? I'm simply saying that it is not only the privilege of the employer but also his duty to share with those whom he employs.

The opportunity of using the power of influence of a Christian businessman to honour the Lord in an unmistakable way is given to every businessman from time to time. It has also been our privilege to become involved in community affairs, civic affairs, on a provincial as well as federal level. We see our responsibility as one which also extends to the influencing of governmental bodies in respect to needs where our knowledge may be of help.

#### **The Christian Businessman and Pastor Relationship**

The spiritual needs of the Christian businessman are met in fellowship with God's people and his word; at least this is what we say. May I suggest that due to the nature of the businessman's involvement, many questions remain unanswered and develop into difficult spiritual problems, and engender doubt and emptiness in his relationship with God and the church.

Where can a Christian businessman go for help? To his pastor? May I respectfully suggest that in many cases the pastor is unable to help the businessman in the complicated and involved decisions or questions he faces. The pastor often has very little in common with the businessman aside from mutual faith in God. Allow me to voice an opinion as to why this situation exists, and will continue to exist, unless the pastor's role in the church changes. Each pastor is blessed with 24 hours in each day. In most cases, his activities are regulated by the attitude of the Church Council, Board of Deacons or the congregation. The pastor's duties include visiting the sick, the widows and members who have been missing for some time, etc. But much of his time is spent in his office and concerned with administration of church business. Many times the pastor is found turning the handle of a duplicator when he should be better employed in something for which he has been called and trained.

I suggest that we free our pastors from all administrative routine responsibilities and allow them time to meet and live in the world where his congregation lives. Our pastors are unable to help us in business ethics and morals relating to our faith unless they have the opportunity to become involved and to understand the businessman's world.

There was a time when it was thought highly improper for our evangelical pastors to become involved in the community or

in so-called secular activities. Fortunately, this attitude is changing. We are reminded of a time when the businessman was taboo in our churches. We sometimes wonder why that was so—has the church now changed its attitude? If so—Why? or, has the businessman changed? The change of attitude has never been explained satisfactorily to my knowledge. I suggest that even today we are not sure why this change has taken place.

In my opinion the pastors have not been given the opportunity to examine the world in which the businessman lives. I do not wish to leave the impression that this is the fault of the church. I'm simply trying to advise this conference that "two worlds" do exist. Such circumstances have resulted in lack of confidence between pastor and businessman. If the businessman faces difficult and ethical business questions, the pastor will not understand; he continues on his way with unanswered problems which issue in spiritual difficulties.

We suggest that churches give their pastors the opportunity to live in the world that they serve. Our pastors do not wish to preach in a vacuum but must interpret the Christian message in the framework of political, economic, social and educational structures of our day.

#### Conclusion

The Christian businessman has responsibilities that set him apart from most other professions. He, due to the nature of business, is in contact with more people and at times charged with the behaviour of other people. He is open for public inspection in his day-to-day activities. His true purpose in life cannot be concealed. His motives are recognized by individuals and by the community. He is a leader of men and that, not in terms of words only but by example. Because of the democratic and free enterprise society in which we live, the Christian businessman is always on trial and the public is the jury. In his position as head of an organization, business philosophy and policies become his responsibility. The result of such leadership is charged to his influence upon the community. He may well be the unappointed ambassador of his local church. While all these responsibilities lie heavy on the Christian businessman, he looks to his fellow believers and his pastor for encouragement, understanding and, at times, direction.

In the final end, the Christian businessman must learn to rely upon and seek his wisdom from God himself. God is a God of wisdom. He is a just God. He is the supreme judge.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ἡ λέξις,  
καὶ ἡ λέξις ἦν πρὸς  
τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν  
ἡ λέξις. οὗτος ἦν ἐν  
ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.  
πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο,  
καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐγένετο  
οὐθέν τι ἢ γέγονεν.

## THE PREACHING LAB

conducted by J. Regehr

Suddenly an old text comes to life again. I remember it from childhood days, but have never preached upon it.

Tet: Matthew 11:28-30. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

A. The text speaks pointedly and immediately to my own situation. Amid the wheels within wheels of pressure and the intermingling calls to duty, I need rest. Those in my congregation share my need, I'm sure. Can I identify with them?

1. The call appears to be "evangelistic," and the danger is that I will categorize the call and single out the "unsaved." But I, too, must come for a) forgiveness because my sin destroys me; I, too, need b) grace to replace my sick striving to earn God's approval; I, too, need c) mercy that turns judgment into fatherly discipline.

2. However, the more immediate and more painful need for rest may stem from my relationships to people. Always there is a) the gnawing question: "Do they like me?" and b) the bitter query: "Do I have any real worth?" Always c) the driving urge reappears: "Will I be successful?" Always d) the difficult masquerades as the impossible: "I can't take any more!" Through and above all these the invitation persists: "Come to me, and I will give you rest." (The repetition of this truth for each point under 1 and 2 may prove very effective.)

3. The invitation is to Jesus personally. a) Whatever sense of security is created by established creed, by time-honored practice, or ritualized religion, none of these can give rest. b) Jesus does.

B. Coming for rest involves a risk. 1) He who comes is fitted for a yoke. (Describe this so that an 8-year-old can understand. A contemporary analogy may be the fitting of a football player for the game.) a) The yoke is made to measure, fitted so he can work without damage to himself, and so he can accomplish his specified task. b) The yoke is Jesus' yoke. The task is the one Jesus came

to perform. That means the risk is no less than the "cross." (Watch the shifting image.)

2. He who comes is signed up for training. Rest does not mean inactivity. a) To learn of Jesus, to be "discipled," is to become like him: i) gentle, not pushing one's way over people, and ii) lowly, not asserting one's ego or demanding that one be served by others. b) Such an attitude leads to rest: I need pull only my own load, and need not worry about prestige, praise, or promotion.

C. The repetition gives added reassurance, 1) The yoke is easy. It fits. We can accomplish our job without getting sore. We break down when we add to the yoke with which Jesus fitted us, another which is hooked up to the wagon of our own ego advancement. A horse can't pull in two directions at the same time.

2. The burden is light because of love. a) To love Jesus and the people with whom he is working, is to make the task light. b) To be assured of the love of Jesus makes it easy for us to refuse responsibly those tasks which people want to thrust on us but which are in excess of the yoke with which Jesus fitted us. A wife who loves her husband will find her duties light, but if she is sure of his love, she will be able to decline responsibility if his demands are too great. (Note the limited point of contact in the analogy). A committed Christian will serve Christ gladly in the church, but will be able to decline the yoke which the church may seek to bind on him through its profusion of programs.

#### **Painful Pointers**

1. A sermon of this nature helps us to understand more deeply what Jesus means to us. The preparation becomes a true encounter, and the proclamation becomes first-hand witness.

2. The preacher will find release in his own confession of sin. Careful now! No display!



## **BOOK REVIEWS**

Harold J. Haas, **Pastoral Counseling with People in Distress.**

St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970. Pp. 193. \$5.45.

In his preface the author sets his goal for the book by stating what he considers to be two basic needs of pastors: "a point of view about how to meet people in trouble, and a reasonably concrete set of ideas about the methods they can use in counseling."

The first of these goals is achieved in part by the very useful distinction Haas makes between pastoral care and pastoral counseling. The first of these he sees as the broad designation. "It covers all helping contacts between pastor and people." Haas explains that pastoral care is obligatory for men in the ministry. They are to enter in where there is distress and bring God's resources to bear upon the situation.

The major portion of the book deals with pastoral counseling, a specialty within the broader field of pastoral care. It denotes a special kind of pastoral relation.

The author insists that only pastors with special training should undertake the ministry of pastoral counseling. Indeed he suggests that some pastors are well-advised to let it be.

Yet the book outlines a simple and serviceable approach which takes account of the understanding that the pastor is a man of God. Pastors will do well to examine the methodology and incorporate it into their own relationships with persons who under their guidance are seeking to understand themselves and their emotional problems.

In addition to the very practical methodology which Haas outlines for structured counseling, the book makes two very significant contributions to the pastor:

1) In a day when the clinical psychologist and the psychiatrist have achieved depth understandings of man, the pastor is inclined to wonder whether he has a contribution to make that is unique, or even worthwhile. Haas will give the pastor a sense of call and a confidence in his special ministry.

2) In simple terms and in brief scope the book outlines the basic psychiatric approaches and describes the varieties of mental illness, both of which are outside the pastor's field. Haas encourages

pastors humbly to acknowledge the limits of their calling and to seek co-operative relationships with other professions.

The book gives valuable insights, demonstrates a workable methodology, and instills in the pastor both confidence and humility.

John Regehr

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**Leonard Verduin, *Somewhat Less Than God: The Biblical View of Man*.**

Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1970. Pp. 168. \$2.95 (ppr).

"What are you? . . . Man is man's greatest problem . . . Unless man learns again to see what he is and to act in harmony with the kind of being he is, there is no hope for him on the planet." These remarks, lifted out of the preface, hint at the focus of interest in this study. There too it is also noted that some of the chapters were delivered as lectures before various student and ministerial groups. A careful reader is now adequately prepared for the topic (not a concern of modern theology such as God's self-disclosure) and the style (not a foot-noted treatise in layman's language).

The two words, redefinition and vocabulary, sum up the most striking characteristics of Pastor Verduin's Biblical and theological study of man. Under the umbrella of "authentic Christianity" the relevant Biblical data is exposed and woven again into a neat theological system. At no point can the author be faulted for concentrating too much on the "warp" and ignoring the "woof" of an argument. If there is a fault it lies in the choice of too many exotic "threads." The danger of fixating on the propaedeutic, an anthropogeny, or an ictus rather than seeing the whole pattern, may be serious but not fatal for most. Franklin Littell's hope that this book will have a wide reading seems naive, but at least teachers of theology and very serious Bible students who are looking for "tip-toe" reading will stretch for this volume.

Of the eight chapters the first on man as "A Created Being" is the most provocative and controversial. The concept of creation out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) is neatly replaced within the probable problem of time and eternity by a creative act of God from the invisible to the visible and an understanding of the endlessness of the created order as we look forward and backward. Traditional theology is also in for a rough time in its concept of creation as a sudden (*ictic*) deed rather than a process. The Genesis picture of the "Spirit of God brooding" and the creative enterprise as "Let the earth (waters) bring forth" are understood as an aversion to pure *icticism* in favour of the idea of process.

Lest he be faulted as an evolutionist by Christian creationists, Mr. Verduin carefully turns the focus on "event" or "deed" in the historic process of creation rather than the question of process. Finally, we can contemplate the meaning of man as a creature of God. Since man is put in the company of other land animals as the last paragraph in the story of their creation two questions must be answered: "What was new?" and "To what was it added?" The Biblical expressions "in God's image" and "dust" provide the essential answers. However, the interpretation of these terms depends on whether one sees the language as pointing to *ictus* rather than to process. Pastor Verduin deals seriously with the Biblical material to come to his answer, and for good measure suggests an answer to the riddle of Genesis 6:1-8 on the basis of these conclusions.

The subject of the second chapter arises out of the understanding that what is definitive of man is spelled out "in his image"—the ability of dominion-having. For those familiar with the theology of work of the Christian Reformed church, the formulations here are the usual. One is tempted though to see shades of the "ugly American" in the claim that "peoples all over the world would like to duplicate what took place here" (p.33); or to misread the need for a theology of grace to balance the view that "the kind of abundant life (as in America) the 'undeveloped' countries covet . . . came . . . unbelievably hard . . . Hard work is part of the heritage and the 'undeveloped countries' must not for one moment think they or anyone else can slide easily into the abundant life" (p. 46). The statements on the question of sex-for-procreation or sex-for-companionship are directed for the most part against a Roman Catholic apology.

Chapters three and four wrestle with the definition of man as a moral creature and a creature of modalities. The former focuses on the problem of conscience and the latter on the story of the "Fall." Both lean heavily on the understanding that man as a moral being is capable of choosing between right and wrong, and is able so to fasten his will upon a situation as to do good or evil, or to determine his own destiny (pp. 63, 83). The final chapters enlarge on these themes with many practical applications to present-day problems. So, in considering man's ability to choose, the thesis that "decision determines destiny" is applied with varying degrees of success in such questions as baptism, capital punishment, and minority groups. Likewise in looking at man as a creature of speech, culture and nurture, the problems of preaching and communication, intermarriage and civil war, and of course, education and generation gap, receive their due. In all cases the themes are relevant and the attempts at re-definition are exciting, but the unnecessarily complicated vocabulary may finally discourage even the most accomplished "tip-toe" readers.

Herb Swartz

THE PATTERN OF NEW TESTAMENT TRUTH, by G. E. Ladd.

Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1968. Pp. 119. \$3.75.

Since the 1930's there has been a movement in New Testament studies to find the unity of the Biblical message, rather than emphasize its diversity. Dr. Ladd's treatment follows this new tendency. His thesis is that the unity of the New Testament theology is found in a view of God "who visits man in history to effect the salvation of both man, the world, and history" (p. 41). The diversity in the New Testament (e.g. The teaching of the Synoptic Gospels, John, and Paul) consists of several interpretations of this major redemptive event in Christ.

The background for this pattern of New Testament truth Ladd finds in the Old Testament, not the Greek view which formed the historical environment of the New Testament. Ladd, therefore, specifically opposes Bultman's contention that Gnosticism was a pre-Christian syncretistic mythology that distinctly influenced New Testament thought (p. 12). The Old Testament view of God as a personal being who visits man to establish fellowship with himself rather than the Greek view, "That God can be known only by the flight of the soul from the world and history," is the background of New Testament thought.

The New Testament pattern of truth is developed in separate chapters devoted to the Synoptic Kingdom of God, the Johannine theme of eternal life, and the Pauline pattern of justification and the life of the Spirit. Each of these concepts are found to share a common theological perspective, standing in continuity with the Old Testament—that God invaded history in Jesus Christ to redeem man and unite him to himself.

The "Kingdom of God" concept, at the center of our Lord's teaching is a fulfillment of the Old Testament promise in the event of the person, word and deeds of Jesus Christ (p. 54). The Kingdom of God has come, even though not in its full eschatological sense. The concept of eternal life in John is the affirmation of "a live present among men in the presence of Jesus Christ, to be received and lived here and now" (p. 64). Paul sees the divine intervention in history more in terms of Christ's incarnation, of his death, resurrection, and ascension: "Jesus proclaims the divine message in terms of his earthly life and teaching; Paul in terms of his total person and mission" (p. 89). The believer may now through faith share in the life and righteousness of Christ being united to him in his death and resurrection. The life now enjoyed will be brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6).

The basic reason Ladd gives for the differences in the concepts used by Jesus, John and Paul, is that Jesus spoke to a Jewish

audience, while the others addressed themselves more to a Hellenistic audience. It would have been interesting if Ladd had pointed out what it was in the Hellenistic world that required or elicited this adaptation. Was it merely a borrowing of familiar terms or was it also a point of contact with some existing perspectives. Some New Testament scholars see some influence of the thoughts and terms of the Qumran community and the Johannine writings.

We ought to be grateful for the number of evangelicals engaged in Biblical scholarship, whose writings make an important contribution to the understanding of biblical truth. Ladd's treatment of some of the major New Testament concepts should be of interest to pastors and laymen who are looking for a concise statement of the unifying ideas of the New Testament.

Victor Adrian

THE PAROUSIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, by A. L.

Moore. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966. Pp. 248.

This monograph, published as Supplement XIII to *Novum Testamentum*, represents a serious effort to come to grips with a doctrine that is a skandalon to many modern Bible readers, namely, the Parousia. This doctrine has suffered as much from practical neglect on the part of those who accept it as an essential doctrine of the New Testament, as it has from Biblical criticism and the efforts of some scholars to recast it into the moulds of either ancient or modern philosophies. Underlying Moore's thesis is the conviction, that a real and extensive impoverishment of the Church's life follows from a weak or indifferent Parousia hope—not to mention the catastrophic consequences of its abandonment altogether. Moore has undertaken to pose and to probe again the question of the authenticity of the Parousia hope in the New Testament.

The book begins with a survey of the hopes of the people of God in the Old Testament and in inter-testamental Judaism. In chaps. 3-5 Moore examines the 'Consistent Eschatology' of Albert Schweitzer (and his modern confreres), the 'Realised Eschatology' of C. H. Dodd (and his followers), and 'Continental Demythologizing', as it is found in Rudolf Bultmann and his disciples. All of these views are subjected to a thorough-going criticism.

In chaps. 6-11 Moore argues that the Parousia hope belongs to the very warp and woof of the New Testament. He recognizes that the most critical question in this teaching is the apparent insistence of the New Testament on the *nearness* of the end, and he deals with the various mistaken attempts to resolve the problem of imminence. Moore comes to the conclusion that although both Jesus and the early Church stress the imminence of the

Parousia, nowhere is a delimitation of time for the interval between the cross and the Parousia indicated. It cannot be proved, argues Moore, that either Jesus or his apostles expected the Parousia within a fixed, short number of years.

The New Testament hope of the Parousia was not born out of disappointed hopes when the Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus 'failed to emerge', but rather, it rests, on the twofold foundation: (a) that with Christ's death and resurrection the Kingdom of God did indeed come; the last age was here; and (b) on the fact that the Holy Spirit, the gift of the messianic age, anticipated by the prophets, was present in the Church. The Spirit is both the sign of the end and also the assurance that the Kingdom which is still veiled will be fully manifested in the future, says Moore. The eschatology of the New Testament is characterized by this polarity of the 'already' and the 'not yet'.

In the final chapter (12), our author underscores the significance of the hope of the Parousia for the life of the Church today. Because the New Testament writers (who held to the imminence of the Parousia) refused to set dates, and accepted the 'interval' between the Christ-event and the Parousia, as time in which man may repent and accept God's mercy, it is not necessary for us to abandon an outmoded eschatology, nor to demythologize it. The end is being held back by God, and no one can dictate to God how long his patience with mankind is to last. Therefore, the Church must hold out to all men God's offer of pardon, and in this way share in the patience and grace of God, while waiting for the Parousia, which is always near. The mission of the Church represents the tension between eschatology (the hope for the Parousia) and the grace of God (the day of salvation, extended already for two millennia and still not past—at least not till today). Grace-time, however, though not temporally delimited, is not unending: the end waits to break in. Never must the time of the end be delimited by political, cosmic or domestic situations; even the 'bomb psychosis' is but a form of secular apocalypticism. The length of the interval is determined by God.

In a day in which materialism does little to encourage the Church to re-affirm its hope in the Parousia; a day in which secular philosophies of history threaten to shake the Church's confidence in the living hope; in a day in which even in those circles where the Parousia is not questioned doctrinally, the implications of the doctrine of the end have not been integrated into daily life, Moore's book is a good tonic.

Let me conclude, however, by saying that this monograph is no weak tea to be consumed in an easy chair. This is sturdy theology, and many readers may find themselves out of their depth. Those who are looking for an opportunity to wrestle seriously with the question of the Parousia, will find Moore's book a challenge.

*David Ewert*

## THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL,

by Sherwood Eliot Wirt.

New York: Harper and Row Pub., 1968. \$5.75.

A typical reader when selecting a book is most likely first attracted by the title, identifies the author, then glances at the format, and finally, if well satisfied, dares to dream of a quiet evening profitably spent in dialogue with new ideas.

The dust jacket on this volume is austere. Only the title, author, and publisher are obvious. A problem of conscience related to the social sphere, and applied specifically to one whose theological perspective can be labelled evangelical, is immediately tantalizing. The recent practical merger of missions and services in our denomination is a case in point. Our hang-up on witnessing as meaningfully possible only in a proclamation of the Word, has given way to an understanding of the importance of the deed in sharing Christ with men. But how this applies in the specific problem areas of race or birth control is not quite as easily legislated. Perhaps Dr. Wirt will have something to say about this?

The author's name is well known to those acquainted with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association as the editor of "Decision." Dr. Wirt is an ordained minister and holds a Ph. D. from Edinburgh University. Some may remember another book by the same author, "Not Me, God," a devotional dialogue between man and God. The foreword is, as one would expect, by an associate, Leighton Ford. He reacts, again as one would expect, "My friend and colleague, Sherwood Wirt, has given us an exciting evangelical perspective on social responsibility, and he has done it with candor, with courage, and with grace." Carl (incorrectly identified as Carr) F. H. Henry's imprimatur appears on the dustjacket. He is always worth hearing: "A wide window on social concern in the authentic evangelical spirit, Sherwood Wirt has given us one of the finest books of the year a pleasure to read, a stimulus to action, a reinforcement of the evangelical task in the world. A mood-book more than a text-book, its power and pungency as a statement of evangelical Christian concerns make it required reading for every churchgoer."

The format suggests what Dr. Wirt claims in the preface. He is a journalist, and so there are fourteen chapters in 155 pages. The chapter headings are appealingly colourful—e.g. "Humanity in Galilean Homespun," "Plumb Bob on the Saints," and "The Horse and the Cart." There are, however, ten pages of footnotes, mostly scripture references, a selected bibliography with proper evangelical asterisks; and a five page index more author-centered than topic oriented.

So let's put another log on the fire, fill the bowl with

peanuts and the glass with ginger ale; it's time to "go where the action is."

While this is not a novel, or a mystery story, the last chapter is helpful in unravelling the plot. The following quotation is a fair statement of the author's perspective:

"Today's evangelicals cannot pretend to a superior nobility of character, or a tenderer social compassion, or a vaster knowledge of metaphysics; nor can they use any other yardstick by which men grade themselves above their fellows. At the same time they are not necessarily worse than other men, more callous to human need or more hypocritical in their attitudes and behavior. What is important for the record is that many of them are now dissatisfied with what has been done and left undone in their relations with society, and they intend to spend the rest of the twentieth century amending and balancing the account" (p. 153).

It would seem that the Christian is supposed to be ready to take off his shirt in order to take the punishment which is rightfully his, but to keep his pants on because he is as other men are.

This is the crux of the matter. What does it mean to be a Christian in this world? How is the Christian different from the moral man in a free society? In what ways is the Church other than the socio-economic-political world in which it exists?

As dangerous as labels might be Dr. Wirt is obviously an American, a neo-evangelical, and a disturbed human being—in that order. Chapter twelve, "Blessed are the Peacemakers" illustrates the first label. In dealing with the question of war in general and Vietnam in particular, he sets forth the free world's eight options as valid for the evangelical who "wants to protect his nation's good against those who seem so eager to take it away for something better." And even though lip-service is paid to the Biblical understanding of the sinfulness of human nature, Dr. Wirt asserts that the Vietnam question must be considered in the framework of human freedom. "Will a man fight for his freedom? Because if he won't, in a sinful planet he will not have it long."

Chapter nine, "God Made a Colorful World," deals with the problems of prejudice in race and colour. Here the new evangelical voice is loud. The law of love is the basis for human relationships, that is, a love which requires a law with teeth in it. The implications for every consideration of social injustice are frightening. Dr. Wirt is right, what is needed is a baptism of love, period.

The depth of a human being's disturbance is most easily caught as a mood. Perhaps Dr. Henry is right, this is a mood-book more than a text-book. Long after the peanuts and ginger ale are gone, and only glowing embers remain, you may wonder as I did, now that I'm in the mood, who can help me to think deeply about these issues?

*Herbert L. Swartz*