



Churches' Commission
on Mission

CONNECTIONS

Resourcing ecumenism and mission

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Editorial

'Only when the last tree is felled, the last river is poisoned, the last fish is caught, will you realise that one cannot eat money.'

In the 1980s this quote from Indian Chief Seattle, allegedly addressed to the US government in 1854 became highly popular as a student poster underneath the picture of a proud Red Indian standing on top of a hill vaguely looking into the distance, no doubt musing about his immediate and pure relationship with Mother Earth. Its popularity was undiminished by the soon widely publicised fact that the entire address was a purely fictional invention of 20th century ecologists emerging around 1970. In Germany ironically the most frequent place you saw the somewhat wordy quote was as a car bumper sticker, preferably on old run-down cars with visibly disastrous exhaust fume levels. This incited cynics to say: 'Everybody wants us back to nature but nobody wants to walk there.'



Good will is not good enough. The romanticisation of the past, the distant, the primal, the natural order which appears in Western thought from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's noble savage to Margaret Mead's fantasy-world anthropology is always a temptation but while they convey a certain motivation, their lack of sober analytical realism only lead to frustration and ultimately to childish responses to complex issues as you find in the militant anti-globalisation campaigners. Churches are not exempt from this temptation of idealising simplification when responding to complex issues like globalisation and others. But clearly the situation has changed and simple answers are less en vogue now.

While in the 1980s there seemed to be a disparity between the different emphases of the conciliar process for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) – the Northern churches under the influence of the East-West divide being

mostly concerned with peace questions and to a lesser extent ecology, the South focussing on the for them more immediate concern with economic justice. It long since became quite obvious that any division is futile. It is estimated that soon about half of all wars will be fought over the scarce natural resource of water, not to mention other natural resources. It is hard to deny the destructive implications of certain aspects of economic activity, that do not only further inequality but also have far-reaching ecological consequences, often not mainly for the perpetrators themselves. These again hit the poor hardest as I am sure you will be able to witness if in a year's time you compare the visible after-effects of the floods in Central Europe and in South Asia this summer.

What does all this have to do with 'mission'? A lot, as our contributions will explore: In this issue of CONNECTIONS the theme of ecology is addressed both from a theological and a practical perspective by David Pickering. The churches' responses to globalisation and its implications for mission, in itself one the greatest expressions of the age-old phenomenon of globalisation is tackled by Mary Bradford and Gordon Holmes respectively.

And finally Philip Lewis explores the question of mission (or rather *da'wa* in this case) and dialogue in Muslim thinking. How does the attempt to communicate to one's neighbour the truth in which one believes facilitate or hinder the long-term peaceful co-existence with the Other? The Bible suggests it has to do with attitude: 'Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you, but do it with gentleness and respect.' (1 Pet 3:15f).

Kai Funkschmidt

Inside this issue:

Philip Lewis: <i>da'wa</i> as dialogue or diatribe?	54
David Pickering: Church and Environment	58
Forum Reports	61
News Resources and Events	63
Mary Bradford: Trade Justice	70
Gordon Holmes: Mission and Globalisation	71
Book Reviews	72

Feature

Philip Lewis

Muslims and British society: *da'wa* as dialogue or diatribe?

Sometimes one hears that claim the Islam and Buddhism do 'not do mission' and this is meant to distinguish them favourably from Christianity that allegedly engages in this divisive activity. Apart from the fact that the claim itself is nonsense, Lewis here contends the notion that mission is detrimental to peaceful multicultural existence. This article is a contribution to the discussion of a missiological approach that sees mission as not only not contradicting inter-religious dialogue and multi-cultural societies but rather as a prerequisite for peaceful inter-cultural co-existence. On the issue see also www.ctbi.org.uk/ecom/documents/Funkschmidt_Mission_after_September_11th.doc.

Islam is a puzzle to Christians: a universal religion without an equivalent to the Great Commission or missionary organizations. As a distinguished British convert notes: 'while [Islam's] proselytising temper is one of the most significant constants of world history, it is still only inadequately understood'.¹ I want in this short paper to reflect briefly on what the Qur'an, theology and Islamic law says about *da'wa* (invitation to Islam), how Islam actually spread, and how, by whom and why its 'proselytising temper' has begun to be institutionalised in the twentieth century. Finally, what this means today in Britain: does the imperative to engage in *da'wa* generate dialogue or a diatribe *vis a vis* wider society and Christianity? This might also cast an oblique light on internal Christian debates about the relationship between mission and dialogue.

Conceptual developments within early Islamic history

The lexical meanings of *da'wa* encompass concepts of summoning, calling on, appealing to, invocation, prayer, propaganda, missionary activity and legal proceedings. *Da'wa* means mission when used with reference to the Prophets and others assigned such missions:

with the death of Muhammad *da'wa* came to be seen as a collective responsibility of the Muslim collectivity

Who is better in speech than one who *calls* (men) to God, works righteousness, and says, 'I am of those who bow in Islam?' (41:33)²

Let there arise out of you a band of people [*umma*] *inviting* to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: they are the ones to attain felicity. (3:104)

The Qur'an presupposes a line of prophets sent to a diversity of distinct peoples. So the Qur'an has Noah sent to his people and complaining: 'Oh my Lord! I have *called* to my people night and day, but my *calling* only increases [their] flight [from the right]'. (71:5-6). The addressee of *da'wa* is often a community and the invitation incorporates a summons to faith in God and an ethical demand to 'command right and forbid wrong'.

The Qur'an, then, prescribes *da'wa* as both an individual and collective duty. A famous *hadith* [tradition] has Muhammad explaining the scope of this duty, saying that a believer must correct evil by hand, or by tongue, and if neither are possible, at least they must condemn it in their own heart. 'The three levels in this *hadith* ...hand, tongue and heart, provided a basis for the doctrine [of]...priority in *da'wa*, as three levels or phases of Islamic mission in the following descending order: *jihad* (physical struggle), *da'wa* (communication) and *hijra* (abandoning, migration), respectively.'³

the shift to a majority Muslim population took between three and four hundred years

In early Islam the subject of *da'wa* was 'enjoining good and forbidding evil' as addressed to Muslim and non-Muslim. After the Muslim conquests theologians assumed that no one could any longer be ignorant of Islam. Therefore, *da'wa* was no longer an obligation. In *shari'a* [Islamic law] it formed a part of the classical doctrine of *jihad*. With regard to 'People of the Book' (S. 9:29) - Jews & Christians - political submission and payment of tribute was required. As the Islamic empire spread non-Muslims were offered a choice of one of three alternatives: acceptance of Islam; submission and payment of tribute or decision by battle. This provides the context for discussions of *da'wa* in *fiqh* literature as part of the doctrine of *jihad*. In times of war it was required as a form of legitimation.

Early in Islamic history, with the proliferation of sectarian groups *da'wa* became used in a politico-religious sense as a call to join this or that Muslim contender for the imamate/leadership of the Muslim community as the bearer of the authentic Islam and its concomitant righteousness: thus in 749 the 'Abbasid *da'wa* was proclaimed in contest with the Umayyads committing the 'Abbasids to a more self-consciously Islamic policy; the Isma'ili *da'wa* took different forms as an institution with missionary *da'wa* spreading their doctrine in 'Abbasid areas and seeking to capture leadership and power. This has been a recurrent motif in Islamic history: in Arabia the Wahhabi *da'wa* was proclaimed in the 18th century by Muhammad al-Wahhab

(1703-92) and reactivated in the 20th century by Ibn Sa'ud (d. 1953) who established his kingdom with the puritanical Wahhabi interpretation of Islam as official doctrine.

This begins to explain why no formal institutions for *da'wa* existed: firstly, it was considered, initially, a prophetic work; with the death of Muhammad, the last of the prophets, it came to be seen as a collective responsibility of the Muslim collectivity [*umma*]; secondly, as an aspect of *jihad* it was once again seen as a collective responsibility; finally, with its politicisation as a vehicle for legitimising opposition to reigning political dynasty, the state – if we may use an anachronistic term – sought to define and delimit *da'wa*: with regard to *jihad* the permission of the ruler was required; with regard to preaching, theologians and jurists then narrowed the responsibility down to the religious scholars – '*ulama* – albeit an activity still conditional on the ruler's permission.

It took a century for the shift from local languages – whether Coptic, Syriac or Greek – to Arabic. This meant that the Coptic and Syriac languages were progressively confined to the domestic and ecclesiastical realms.

Although, there is no shared Qur'anic equivalent to the Great Commission, in recent history a Qur'anic verse has been increasingly cited to validate the spread of Islam:

Invite/call [all] to the way of Thy Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious. (16:125)

As one western scholar of Islam noted:

This is an exhortation to Muhammad and refers to his opponents, but it has become a favourite text in support of the external mission of Islam. The missionary *da'wab* once followed military conquest, but it now bears no direct relationship to that method for the spread of the Islamic domain...[this text's] importance as a stimulus for missionary activities and also as a tool of interreligious apologetics cannot be underestimated.⁴

How Islam spread

Before, we consider the reasons for and nature of the institutionalisation of *da'wa* in the twentieth century, we need to ask how, in the absence of such missionary bodies, did Islam spread. Initially military conquest preceded conversion but did not make it obligatory, respecting the categorical Qur'anic imperative that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (S 2:256). If we focus on the shift from Christianity to Islam in the Arab East, we have to remember the time scale: an important monograph - *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*⁵ - makes clear that the shift to a majority Muslim population took between three and four hundred years e.g. Egypt became a majority Muslim country somewhere in the mid-ninth century.

There are a number of explanations which cumulatively explain this shift, although the exact significance of individual factors remains contested. Islamic conquests

created an Islamic milieu with accompanying social, political, religious institutions. In time this was accompanied by a splendid culture and civilisation which communicated confidence and prestige. Initially, many Christians in Egypt, Syria and Iraq – those outside the Chalcedonian orthodoxy of Byzantium – welcomed the Arab conquerors since Byzantine power had meant persecution and heavy taxation. As Islamic law was developed Christians became subject to a variety of demands and restraints on their freedom. As *dhimmi*, a protected group, had to pay an additional tax – *jizya* – levied on non-Muslims, in addition to a land tax paid by all. Muslim men could marry Christian women: while the latter could keep their religion, the children would be brought up as Muslims – Christian men could not marry Muslim women without becoming Muslim. Further, while Christians were free to become Muslims, Muslims were subject to draconian apostasy laws which prevented conversion to Christianity.

Also, the Qur'an is a post-Christian text and includes material on Christ and Christianity which was soon systematised into a plausible critique of Christianity which has persisted into the contemporary world. Another factor is the Arabicization of eastern Christianity conquered by the Muslim armies e.g. the spread of Arabic as the public language of business and administration. It took a century for the shift from local languages – whether Coptic, Syriac or Greek – to Arabic. This meant that the Coptic and Syriac languages were progressively confined to the domestic and ecclesiastical realms. Note the following poignant comment taken from a Christian in ninth century Islamic Spain:

at other times, especially under the Ottomans, Christians and Jews flourished numerically.

The Christians love to read the poems and romances of the Arabs; they study the Arab theologians and philosophers, not to refute them but to form a correct and elegant Arabic. Where is the layman who now reads the Latin commentaries on the Holy Scriptures, or who studies the Gospels, prophets or apostles? Alas! All talented young Christians read and study with enthusiasm the Arab books; they gather immense libraries at great expense; *they despise the Christian literature as unworthy of attention. They have forgotten their language.* For every one who can write a letter in Latin to a friend, there are a thousand who can express themselves in Arabic with elegance, and write better poems in this language than the Arabs themselves.⁶

Finally, Muslims as bearers of the final revelation which was deemed to have superseded Christianity could argue that their startling military success validated its truth. Interestingly, at other times, especially under the Ottomans, Christians and Jews flourished numerically.⁷

Outside the Islamic heartlands Islam generally spread through intermarriage, liberation of prisoners, and the personal witness of traders and *sufis*. The activities of the *sufi* orders were primarily concerned to make Muslims true

Muslims and involved education, welfare, and health in the form of charms, amulets and prayers. They also developed Islam's vernacular psalms in praise of God, the Prophet and his saints, whereby Islam was rooted in the hearts and minds of non-Arab speakers. Their shrines became alternative and accessible pilgrim sites to Mecca. In South Asia their activities were often distant from the political and military centres of the Muslim imperium. Yet such activities were seldom understood as *da'wa*. While they too drew into the orbit of their shrines many non-Muslims, this was often incidental to their care for Muslims.

Institutionalisation of *da'wa* in the 20th century

In the modern world *da'wa* has attained a new prominence expressed in a variety of novel forms as responses to a variety of perceived threats whether from Christian missionary activities; secularism/materialism or the seductive power of western ideologies.

- In the 1930s the apolitical *Tablighi Jama'at* [TJ] - the Preaching Party - was founded by the Indian scholar Maulana Ilyas (1885-1944): rooted in the reformed *sufi* tradition, Ilyas characterised TJ as 'a *khanqah* [*sufi* hospice] on the move' bringing religious and moral guidance to the Muslim masses hardly touched by the world of the *madaris* [Islamic seminaries] but exposed to revivalist Hinduism – Arya Samaj – and Christian missionaries. Ilyas saw personal piety as a precondition for any effective Islamic activity in public life. He stressed the need to conform to the five pillars of Islam and purge Indian Muslims of Hindu customs. Today TJ is a hugely successful transnational movement which can command crowds second only to the annual *hajj*.

Also conversion, too often, is seen as culturally assuming an alien ethnicity.

- If TJ was apolitical and sought to touch the ordinary Muslim masses the *Jama'at-i Islami* [JI] - the Islamic Party - founded in India in 1941 by Maulana Mawdudi (1903-79) was, initially, an elitist group seeking to capture political power to embody its Islamic system/ideology. Mawdudi worried about the counter attractions of western ideologies to India's Muslim intellectuals, whether nationalism, communism, secularism etc. For Mawdudi the supreme purpose of Islam was to establish God's sovereignty by means of an Islamic state with the JI as the vanguard of the Islamic revolution. The imperative was to convince the young by rational argument of the superiority of the Islamic system. JI is self-consciously part of the family of the Islamist movements across the world.
- From the 1960s *da'wa* was used as a vehicle of state ideology: in the 1960s Gamel Abdel Nasser (1918-70) with the help of al-Azhar established a *da'wa* network in the Middle East and Africa to promote Islam, the Arabic language and Arab nationalism. This led to the emergence of rival conservative Saudi initiatives – Medina University in 1961 and the Muslim World League in 1962: both vehicles of a conservative, anti-*Sufi* tradition. Further competing groups were formed in

1972 by the Libyans – the Islamic Call Society – and by the Iranians in 1979 – the Islamic Information Organization.

Continuity & discontinuity in modern usage

There has been a rediscovery of *da'wa* as an alternative political order. This is evident in many of the Islamist movements which rail against corrupt, westernised elites in Muslim nation-states - often characterised as embodiments of *jabiliyya* - the emotive term used to signify pre-Islamic 'ignorance', analogous to 'paganism' in the Christian tradition. At the same time, *da'wa* is understood as personal self-reformation married to a scepticism about re-imagining Islam as an ideology. Occasionally the state itself can co-opt the Islamists. This has been done in Pakistan with the establishment of the *Da'wah* Academy in 1982 as part of the International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Islamic law did not envisage the possibility of Muslims permanently leaving the House of Islam for economic reasons.

Transnational movements such as the Muslim World League [MWL] also represent a departure organizationally with the inclusion of social-welfare concerns in its *da'wa* programmes, modelled on Christian organizations (see Muhammad Khalid Masud, Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World). Another novelty is that the proponents of such *da'wa* tend to be outside the ranks of the '*ulama*, namely newly educated urban professionals in the case of the Islamists.

It is difficult to make an assessment of this activity. Its scale should not be exaggerated: the MWL in the mid 1980s had 'only 1,000 Islamic workers under contract (360 in Africa, 473 in Asia, and 167 in Europe and the Americas)'.⁸ However, if we focus on the impact of such self-conscious *da'wa* groups in the West their impact has been limited by a number of factors: a revivalist movement such as *Tablighi Jama'at* is concerned to reclaim Muslims who have gone astray rather than reach out to non-Muslims; Islamist groups such as *Jama'at-i Islami* have good youth movements but tend to be regarded with suspicion by Muslims shaped by the *sufi* tradition. The plethora of transnational groups are often seen as little more than vehicles for the rival Islamic ideologies of Saudi Arabia, Libya or Iran: such has vitiated attempts at co-operation across such groups. The limited impact of converts in many of these organizations continues to suggest their foreign provenance. Also conversion, too often, is seen as culturally assuming an alien ethnicity.⁹

The situation in Britain: *da'wa* and dialogue

The situation in Britain poses huge challenges for Muslims, 70 per cent of whom have origins in South Asia. They are having to learn a new set of skills to live as a minority with few guidelines available in Islamic law or history. Islamic law did not envisage the possibility of Muslims permanently leaving the House of Islam for economic reasons. One response to this reality within traditional South Asian Islam is most clearly seen in the *Deobandi* group, who have created 16 Islamic seminaries in Britain. They tend to be isolationist and their seminaries embody an ethos of maintaining

religious, social and cultural distance from British society: a tradition at ease with the emerging Muslim quarters in British cities.

Muslims find themselves in the same disorienting situation of Spanish Christians in the ninth century beguiled by the allure of a successful and self-confident Arabic civilisation with their own religion, language and culture little more than a sub-culture. Increasingly, British Muslims are literate in English rather than Arabic or Urdu, and are faced with a confident, even triumphalist western civilisation.

Within self-consciously Islamic institutions in Britain there are four responses to Christianity. For most Islamic seminaries, Christianity is simply invisible, part of non-Muslim society often painted in lurid colours as irredeemably corrupt. Institutions committed to *da'wa* often draw on and develop a rich anti-Christian polemical tradition. Radical groups have developed a rejectionist stance of all things western/Christian. Finally, a disparate group of organizations is beginning to respond to and create forums for those Muslim professionals, activists and academics who are prepared to co-operate with Christians on a range of pressing social issues.¹⁰

sufi tradition is a tradition which has historically been most hospitable to wider society and culture. This tradition also attracts British converts.

I want to mention three institutions for whom *da'wa* in Britain involves some engagement with Christians and Christianity. First, the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, which embodies a moderate Islamist stance: as an institution they produce, *Encounters, Journal of Inter-Cultural Perspectives*, a valuable conduit for contemporary Muslim reflection and debate on inter-civilisational and inter-faith issues. Some of their lecturers have studied Christianity from Christians. This is new. Further, they have been the main partner in an innovative dialogue with evangelical Christians on the public role of Christianity and Islam in Britain which began in 1998.

The second group are those graduates of traditional Islamic seminaries who have ventured outside the mosque culture and Muslim quarters to become chaplains in prisons and hospitals, as well others who have trained to become teachers, especially religious education teachers. This group, especially chaplains, are working collaboratively with Christian chaplains and in the process learning new social, intellectual and pastoral skills.

The third group are those within or part of the *sufi* tradition. This is a tradition which has historically been most hospitable to wider society and culture. This tradition also attracts British converts. Tim Winter, who lectures on Islam

at Cambridge University, is one such individual who embodies this more open stance towards Christianity. He has produced a range of interesting articles – many posted on the internet. Let me quote from one about the Trinity, a model of courteous and religiously serious reflection.

Medieval Islam knew much more about Christian doctrine than the doctors of the Church about Islam...most of them never quite 'got the point' about the Trinity. Their analysis can usually be faulted on grounds of insufficient familiarity with the complexities of Scholastics or Eastern trinitarian thinking. Often they merely tilt at windmills.¹¹

As with Christianity, those often most passionate about mission/*da'wa* are often the most open to the religious other. Once we recall that *da'wa* includes an ethical imperative - 'enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong' (3:104).

We should not be surprised to find Muslims and Christians beginning to explore where they can work together, in Christian terms, for the common good. Public and civic life becomes the new context for mission/*da'wa*.¹²

Notes

1 Tim Winter: 'Conversion as Nostalgia: some experiences of Islam', in: Martin Percy (ed): *Previous Convictions, Conversion in the Present Day*, 2000, SPCK, London.

2 For all translations of the Qur'an I have used the translation and commentary by A. Yusuf Ali, IPCI, Birmingham, n.d.

3 Muhammad Khalid Masud (ed): *Travellers in Faith, Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for faith Renewal*, 2000, Brill, Leiden.

4 P. Walker: article 'Da'wah: Qur'anic Concepts', in: J. L. Esposito (ed) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, vol 1, 1995. Oxford University Press.

5 R. Bulliett: *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period an essay in quantitative history*, 1979, Harvard University Press.

6 R.W Southern: *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages*, 1978 edition, Harvard University Press.

7 Y. Courbage & P. Fargues: *Christians and Jews under Islam*, 1997, I.B.Tauris, London.

8 R. Schulze: article 'Da'wah: institutionalisation', *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*.

9 L. Poston: *Islamic da'wah in the West: Muslim missionary activity and the dynamics of conversion to Islam*, 1992, Oxford University Press.

10 P Lewis: 'Depictions of Christianity in British Islamic Institutions', in L. Ridgeon (ed). *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity*, 2001, Curzon Press, London.

11 Ibid.

12 This suggestion converges with Duncan Forrester's argument – although he is not reflecting on inter-faith relations - in 'Christian political discourse as public confession', in: S. Barrow & G. Smith (eds) *Christian Mission in Western Society*, CTBI 2001.



David Pickering

What on earth has environment got to do with the church?

David Pickering is a minister with the United Reformed Church and from 1999 has developed and managed the ecumenical environmental programme Eco-Congregation. Why should the church bother to tackle environmental issues, what are the experiences of churches that have done it and how has this helped them to both tackle environmental issues and engage in mission? These are some of the questions raised in the following article. It is worth mentioning in this context that the WCC Central Committee in August 2002 called for 1 September to be declared a day of the environment by the churches in the world (see p.66).

Setting the scene

Whilst sitting on a very delayed train a fellow passenger, who was wearing a large cross and who could see the subject of my work, asked: 'What on earth have environmental issues got to do with the church?'

This article seeks to present a response to her question and as with many sermons, it has three parts. Part one outlines some environmental issues and gives an overview of some eco-theological ideas. Part two describes Eco-Congregation, an ecumenical environmental programme for local churches, and outlines some of the achievements of participants and part three explores the missionary facets of church environmental work. It starts by outlining the formulation known as the 'Five Marks of Mission', and draws on the experience of one Eco-Congregation church to identify mission-orientated aspects of the church environmental work. The article concludes that environmental issues are central and essential aspects of Christian discipleship and mission, which is food for thought for both my fellow passenger and all pilgrims.

1. Environmental issues and some theological reflections

Christian concern for the environment has become increasingly important in recent years. In part this is a response to the realisation of the seriousness of the impact that human activity is having on the environment, in part, because of the growing interest in green or eco-theology.

Passengers on planet earth are increasingly aware of environmental issues, whether relatively local/regional problems such as road congestion and air pollution or world wide challenges such as global warming, that is leading to changing climate and a rise in sea levels. Such issues are now widely accepted by the scientific community, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the United Nations and government leaders as witnessed by the attendance at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Passengers are also aware that the deterioration of aspects of the environment also impacts on people. For example, road congestion and atmospheric pollution are associated with the rapid rise in asthma and a significant number of early bronchial related deaths. Global warming is associated with the increase in precipitation in some temperate areas and a reduction in some semi-arid areas. Consequences include floods that can devastate lives and

communities, economies, national heritage and the environment, and drought with a reduction in food production leading to regional food shortages. The poor can suffer disproportionately, often being the victims of environmental ills. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu once said, 'justice and ecology are linked indissolubly'.

The church has responded to the seriousness of environmental issues in a variety of ways. The growing line of tomes in Christian and academic bookshops on environmental/creation care issues demonstrates the increasing interest in development of eco or green theologies. The following section draws on some perspectives from current writing.

The first covenant in Genesis is made by God to 'Noah and all living creatures', and not just humanity, and includes an environmentally themed promise

The Old Testament is a rich source for the development of green theologies. The first two chapters of Genesis record two different creation stories, both of which have roots in ancient myths. The first is the story of creation in six days, culminating with the Sabbath as a day of rest and celebration. This story was written to declare that everything is dependent for its existence and meaning upon the sovereign God, rather than as an ordered or scientific account of the origins of the cosmos. The crowning part of the story is the creation of humanity, with the expression 'made in the image' reflecting the privilege and responsibility given to humanity of overseeing God's rule on earth.

The second story, sometimes known as the 'garden' story, tells of the forming first of man and then of woman in the Garden of Eden and includes the story of the 'fall'. This story comes from a tradition concerned with providing answers to some fundamental questions facing the faith community of Israel, including the refusal of humanity to acknowledge the sovereignty of God and the consequences. It is notable that the move from a pre-historical state of harmony in creation to the fall is symbolised by an act of environmental disobedience.



These creation stories may be viewed as pictures portraying aspects of the relationship between God, humanity and the rest of the created order. Whilst they were written against the background of particular economic, social and political circumstances, they contain insights that are significant for our current situation.

Other parts of scripture build on this foundation. The first covenant in Genesis is made by God to 'Noah and all living creatures', and not just humanity, and includes an environmentally themed promise, that never again will God destroy creation. Creation care is present in the Torah, where, for example every seventh year the land is allowed to rest, not only to allow the poor to glean from the fields but also to allow the land to rest from production (Leviticus 25.1-7).

The Psalms also provide insight on the relationship of the people of Israel to God, land and the rest of the created order. Psalm 24 opens with the ascription 'The Earth belongs to the Lord'. Alongside the image of the Earth floating on the depths and anchored by God's subduing of the powers of chaos, is the affirmation that the earth is God's rather than belonging to humanity. This presents a strong challenge to the principles of ownership that have developed, particularly in western economics, and indicates that our relationship to God is more akin to a tenant occupying God's property, with the attendant privileges and responsibilities that this brings. Ps 8 provides another perspective, attributing humanity with the role of co-creator with God, with attendant privileges and responsibilities.

The centrality of Christ in creation is made clear in the New Testament where John's gospel, reflecting the opening words of Genesis, reveals that not only God but the Word was also present at the beginning in creation. When with the disciples on the storm-tossed boat on Galilee he revealed his mastery of creation by calming the storm. His actions also revealed that an appropriate motivation to exercise mastery was the well-being of his friends.

Eco-theological thinking is also derived from reason. The creeds set out some of the earliest Christian formulations including an understanding of the relationship between God and the created order. The Apostles Creed states: 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth...' and the Nicene Creed: 'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen...'



Creation thinking is also incorporated in doctrine. The Doctrine of Creation explores how the world and all that it contains comes from the free creative actions of a loving God. Whilst the doctrine may be interpreted in different ways, what is widely agreed is that God's involvement in creation is about producing something out of nothing.

For some this 'something' is the bricks and mortar of the planet, for others that God created the potential for the development of the cosmos. The Doctrine of Incarnation, which is in part informed by Col 1:15-16 'the image of the

invisible God, the firstborn of all creation... by whom and through whom all things were created', declares that ultimate reality is manifested in Jesus Christ who has a principal relationship to the created order.

The above pen sketch outlines aspects of eco-theological thinking, the following section outlines how some churches have sought to put into practice aspects of this thinking.

... not only God but the Word was also present at the beginning in creation.

2. Theology in action – drawing on the ecumenical Eco-Congregation Programme

Eco-Congregation is an ecumenical environmental programme that developed from a partnership between the secular environmental awareness charity ENCAMS and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The programme, entitled Eco-Congregation equips churches with resources, offers support and has an award scheme to help them weave environmental issues within their life and mission. The programme is free of charge to churches and within the first year over 100 churches participated in the programme and ten achieved the award.

Encouraged and resourced by Eco-Congregation, churches have undertaken inspiring initiatives including spiritual, practical and community activities. Spiritual activities include special services, creation focussed prayers and Bible studies. Examples of practical work are church-based recycling initiatives, undertaking and implementing environmental audits of premises, and churchyard projects including establishing wildlife areas and meadowland burial areas. Community oriented activities have included work with local schools, generating positive press, organizing and undertaking community litter picks and conservation work (contact details are listed below).

Feedback from participating churches reveals that churches undertook good environmental practice and found their projects enjoyable, stimulating and enhanced their profile and relationships in their community. One church reflected that their environmental work was as much a mission-focussed project as an environmental one. The final section includes the reflections of this particular church, Wakefield Baptist Church.

3. A Church Mission Model

In 1988 the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church developed a model of missionary work entitled the 'five key marks of mission'. These have been accepted and developed in other denominations and around the world including, in 1997, the Forum of Churches Together in England (CTE). The following version was adopted by CTE:

1. To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom;
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
3. To respond to human need in loving service;
4. To seek to transform the unjust structures of society;

- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of earth.

The marks, which are expressed in language which is readily understood by church-goers, are a useful tool for churches to help them assess their existing mission work and aid the formation of targets for more effective mission.

What on earth has environment got to do with the church?

Some may regard the incorporation of the 5th mark as an extra at the bottom of the core list, but the analysis of the then minister of Wakefield Baptist Church, Justin Dunne, affirmed the importance of environmental work within a holistic mission strategy.

Wakefield Baptist Church began their environmental work with an assessment of their situation and agreed a strategy with four key areas.

- Raising awareness: the production of posters and the use of worship sheets.
- Recycling: developing a recycling policy for consumables and providing recycling facilities for certain items including ink-jet cartridges and paper.
- Practical conservation work: with church members and their friends building a path and clearing a pond at a local park
- Witness: to their local community through events, press and advocacy

As their environmental ministry unfolded, their minister observed that it made the following contributions to church life:

- Aided their **evangelism** by giving new opportunities to convey the good news about Jesus Christ and the Kingdom values he calls us to follow
- Created a positive **image** of the church in their community
- Inviting friends and members of the community to activities provided a forum for the **sharing of faith**
- Promoting **good stewardship** resulting in a reduction in the consumption of consumables and a saving of financial resources
- A **better environment**, with tangible benefits to the local community



- The **releasing of gifts**, with members finding that their environmental concerns and gifts were valued by the church
- More **authentic church** – fulfilling its calling, building fellowship, and in worship listening to and responding to God's word in the light of new situations.

The experience of Wakefield Baptist Church is a practical affirmation of the place of creation care within church mission work.

Conclusion -: What on earth has environment got to do with the church?

We are all pilgrims together on planet earth and are all aware of the increasing impact that human activities are having on the environment and the serious consequences for current and future generations. We are also increasingly aware of the centrality of creation care within Christian thinking and action. By developing and applying theological analysis, churches may discover new and relevant ways of witnessing God's purpose to the world. Food for thought for any passenger whether on a train or spaceship planet earth.

For information on Eco-Congregation:

Email ecocongregation@encams.org Web: www.encams.org/ecocongregation

Selected references on environmental issues:

GEO: Global Environment Outlook 3. Past, present and future perspectives, Earthscan 2002, cf. www.unep.org

Reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at: www.ipcc.ch

Ecotheology Journal Publ. twice per year by Sheffield Academic Press

God and the Web of Creation by Ruth Page, 1996, SCM

God's Earth by Paul Collins. 1995, Gill & Hamilton

God is Green by Ian Bradley, 1990, DLT

The care of creation – focusing concern and action. Edited by R J Berry, 2000, Inter-Varsity Press

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To Care for the Earth by Sean McDonagh, 1986, Geoffrey Chapman

CCOM Forum Reports

General

In the spring the new *Forum Handbook* was introduced. It facilitates the workings of the various Forums by clarifying the respective roles of Forum officers, Forum members and the CCOM office, outlining structures and legal framework for easy reference. The Handbook is the result of a long process involving CCOM staff and the Forums' Focal Persons, trying to identify the needs for support, improvement and strengthening of the Forum work.

The need for it had been clear for a long time and the request to produce it came from the Steering Committee in 2000.

The new structures of CCOM and CTBI, introduced in 1990 brought some unclarity with them, for example re membership and representation of member bodies and non-member-organizations on Forums. Thus it happened that Forum members were neither aware that they represented a CCOM member body (or whether their organization was a CCOM/CTBI member) or even that the Forum was a CCOM platform. The Handbook outlines the somewhat dry and complicated structures of CTBI and CCOM in a diagram so that they can be grasped at one glance.

Another widespread problem in the past was the question of whether and how Forums were allowed to make public statements. The procedures for doing so had become more complicated under the Churches Together model in 1990 and this led to occasional misunderstandings. The new Handbook contains a section outlining step by step how public statements are produced.

A copy of the book was given to each Forum member. If you are a member of one of our Forums or are involved in appointing representatives to Forums but do not have the Handbook, please contact us at: ccom@ctbi.org.uk. The Handbook is also available online: www.geocities.com/ccom_ctbi/forum_handbook.doc.

KMF

Middle East

Recent months have seen intense speculation about the probability of an American-led war on Iraq. The UK is the closest and most important ally of the USA and unlikely to refuse to give support in such a war unless the nature of national opposition makes support politically impossible. The ethical arguments against the war were brought to the fore in the declaration promoted by Pax Christi and signed by a large number of church leaders.

Israel/Palestine is a major factor in the West's impact on the future of the whole of the Middle East and the Islamic world. There the downward spiral of anger, fear, repression and violence, revenge and counter-revenge, continues, with little sign of effective leadership locally or in the world community. The official USAID report on Palestine gives an alarming account of the destruction of a society and the pauperisation of a whole people. Moves to encourage more

democratisation and better human rights in the region could be welcomed if they were not severely compromised by the condoning of the denial of the most basic human rights of Palestinians through the occupation. Many in our churches are deeply concerned at the sense of abandonment felt in Palestine and Israel. The WCC Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme for Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is under way, and the Forum is working on how to enable people to participate in this ecumenical venture.

Talk of secularisation sounds strange in the Middle East where the crucial importance of religion keeps growing. Strands of Islam, Judaism and Christianity have all exacerbated dangerous conflict in the region, but there are signs of hope in the many who struggle to see more clearly how religion can be a force for peace and human dignity. The recent book by the British Chief Rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, is a notable example of this in his ambition to negate the possibility of a clash of civilisations. Peace-making, based as it must be on truth, justice and human dignity, is costly and a continuing challenge to our churches.

Colin Morton

Latin America/Caribbean

In the past year the economic crisis in Argentina has been at the forefront of the thinking of most mission agencies and churches in the region. For the present it has resulted in a common desire by the churches in the region to work at understanding how the crisis came about and speaking with one voice to condemn the forces that have created the situation. It is generally accepted that behind the perilous economic situation of many countries in the region is internal corruption and misadministration allied to the negative influence on ordinary people's lives of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Churches in the region accept that internally there has been a 'loss of internal values' for many years but this has been encouraged by the irresponsibility of northern capitalist institutions. The economic problems of the region are not just a problem for the region but for us all. The financial scandals in global corporations and collapse in stock markets in the north are an affirmation that the evils of globalisation create the greatest challenge to mission today.

The forum has met and shared understanding of the situation not only in Argentina but also that in Bolivia, and Central America with the Plan Puebla Panama (see below).

In May, Miss Penelope Pacheco Lopez, a doctoral student at the University of Kent, Canterbury spoke about the Plan Puebla Panama. This regional programme has to be scrutinised carefully and its purpose questioned. Is it indeed a plan for economic regeneration or a way of controlling economic migration into the United States without regard to the effects on culture and environment?

The situation of the Church in Cuba will receive the focus of attention in the coming year. There is established evidence that the Cuban state has a more tolerant attitude towards

faith communities. Churches are reporting significant increases in membership. How Cuba will develop in the future living under the influences and pressures of 11th September 2001 will be explored as well as providing some early analysis of the surge of interest in Cuba by external mission bodies and the reasons for the reported growth in membership.

Tom Quenet

Sri Lanka

In February 2002, an Agreement on a Ceasefire was signed by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). As I write, the ceasefire continues. In the South, people can now walk the streets without fear of suicide bombers; in the North, people do not have to keep their eyes and ears alert for aircraft on bombing missions. But it is an uneasy peace. The expected talks between the two sides, in Thailand, have not yet begun. Stories of human rights abuses on both sides have emerged: extortion and recruitment of child soldiers by the LTTE; torture and harassment of civilians by members of armed forces. And both sides are still acquiring arms.

The majority of the people, however, desperately want peace. Some Tamils fear that human rights will be sacrificed if the North and East comes under the sole, authoritarian leadership of the LTTE in the expected interim administration there; some Sinhala people utterly oppose even talks with the LTTE. But a return to war would have devastating consequences.

Members of the Sri Lanka Relations Committee therefore are currently working, in different ways, with partners in Sri Lanka and Britain to give support to the peace process. We are in touch with the International Working Group on Sri Lanka, for instance, which is presently hoping to facilitate the establishment of civil society human rights monitoring in the country. Peter Bowling, its director, addressed the June meeting. As a result of this and correspondence with the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, the Committee sent letters to the LTTE and the government of Sri Lanka, with the agreement of CTBI. These expressed support for the peace process, but urged that human rights, particularly the rights of children, should be safeguarded throughout the peace process.

Many expatriate Sri Lankan Tamils are making return visits to Sri Lanka, seizing the opportunity presented by the ceasefire. Flights to Sri Lanka are usually fully booked. Children are being taken to meet relatives they have never seen. Yet there are a good number of expatriates, Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim, who remain sceptical about the peace process. Over the years, partners in Sri Lanka have suggested to the Committee that it could do something to facilitate reflection and reconciliation within the expatriate community. No definite action has been taken on this but a link has been made with the Corrymeela Community. A meeting of Sri Lankan youth there is a possibility that the Committee is considering.

Elizabeth J Harris

Africa

Discussion about theological education, with particular reference to both HIV/AIDS and Islam, continued at the 24 June meeting of the Africa Forum. This followed from the Africa Forum Consultation addressed by Revd Prof Kenneth Ross, General Secretary, Board for World Mission, Church of Scotland, Revd Dr Nyambura Njoroge, a Kenyan theologian on the staff of the World Council of Churches and Revd Prof David Kerr, Director of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, Faculty of Divinity, Edinburgh University. Some papers from the consultation are available on the CCOM web site.

Members have been invited to share good examples of good practice in answer to the question: 'What programmes in theological education concerned with Islam and HIV/AIDS, which you think are good practice, does your organization support in empowering churches to initiate action which frees them up from the past?' At the request of the consultation participants, a bibliography of Africa theologians is being prepared. So important are these themes seen to be that they will be given further consideration at the next meeting on November 18th. There will then also be a focus the Democratic Republic of the Congo where, hopefully, there is the prospect of an end to the many years of conflict.

The next annual consultation is to be in Hamburg, 24 – 27 April 2003, at the invitation of partner German mission agencies and in co-operation with them.

Gordon Holmes

Pacific

[ACNS 3103] The Solomon Islands is not the place it used to be before the ethnic tension in 1997, especially on Malaita and Guadalcanal where much of the fighting and criminal activity has taken place. At the end of May this year, when the government amnesty for those in possession of firearms and stolen property such as motor vehicles expired, life has been slowly returning to normal. No more gunshots are heard; theft, drunkenness and the demanding of compensation have all reduced dramatically.

The change has come about mainly through the surrender of guns to the Peace Monitoring Teams. The Melanesian Brotherhood has played a crucial role in bringing about the relative calm which now exists. The first phase of their mission was to meet with the warring factions, seeking to bring an end to the killing and destruction. Now they have entered their second phase – also a pastoral approach – seeking to persuade militants to give up their arms and find peace.

The police are slowly gaining control in Honiara and Auki and there is much less crime and vandalism as time goes by. The whole nation has suffered and people now want peace and reconciliation. Talks are beginning for the reopening of Gold Ridge mine and the Palm Oil industry which were the backbone of the nation's economy in pre-conflict days, but there is a realisation that it is going to be many years before the economy recovers.

News, Resources and Events

Obituary of Fergus MacPherson

We are very sorry to report the death of Revd Dr Fergus Macpherson, the former Executive Secretary of the Conference for World Mission of the British Council of Churches (CCOM's predecessor). Fergus was an extraordinary man and one of the great missionary figures of his age. He played an important practical role during the time of the independence struggle that led to the creation of Zambia. He was involved in key debates about models for mission in the modern era. He is equally well known in the churches in Malawi. His books included a highly rated biography of President Kenneth Kaunda (of whom he was a friend, though never an uncritical one), *One Blood* (Neczam, Zambia, 1981), *North of the Zambezi* (Continuum, 1998) and a more recent autobiographical work. He was an obituarist of Dr Hastings Banda, whom he also knew. Fergus will be remembered for his canny Scottish wit and humour, for the breadth of his learning and experience, for the many lives he touched so profoundly (mine included) and for the formative influence he had on missionary and ecumenical practice. We send our prayers and love to Myra and to the family.

Simon Barrow

WCC Assembly 2006 in Brazil

[WCC PR-02-23.09e] The Ninth Assembly of the 342 member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) will be in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2006, the Central Committee decided on 2 September. The delegates made their decision by paper ballot after a recommending committee split three ways on possible venues. Churches in Korea and Cyprus also invited the Council to hold its assembly in Seoul and Nicosia.

According to the Revd Inamar Correa de Souza (Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil), the churches of Porto Alegre have a strong ecumenical commitment and work closely with the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostals, something which is not self-evident everywhere in Latin America.

The invitation to Porto Alegre came from the National Council of Churches in Brazil (CONIC) in Brasilia. The WCC has never held an Assembly in Latin America although the continent contributed some of the most influential theological thinking to the ecumenical movement in the last decades.

A site visit affirmed that the city has ample infrastructure to support and house a meeting that will be attended by as many as 3,500 people from around the world. Porto Alegre was the least expensive of the three cities under consideration, a point of particular relevance considering the current financial crisis that the WCC is facing. The precise meeting date for the 2006 meeting will be decided later.

European Missiologists Meet

Halle, the historic German city that has played a major role in European mission history and missiology (as well as being part of the former GDR) was the location for the second European missiology conference, 21-26 August 2002. It was sponsored by the International Association of Mission Studies and hosted generously by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Missionswissenschaft. The consultation looked at the context and content of mission in Postmodern Europe – including ideology, spirituality, multicultural and multireligious life, new ecclesiologies, the bridges and barriers between East and West, the encounter with Islam and the view from the South (in this case, India). Fuller reports will follow on the CCOM website. The papers from the gathering will be summarized on the web and contained in full in the journal *Swedish Mission Themes* (SMT) which will be made available in Britain and Ireland.

Believing without belonging?

Sociologist Grace Davie's famous phrase provided the focus for an international consultation 'in search of new paradigms of church and mission in secularized and postmodern contexts' held by the WCC in Breklum from 26 June – 2 July. The papers will be published in the first issue of the *International Review of Mission* in 2003.

Simon Barrow

Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women

The heavy floods which left a trail of destruction in large areas in Central Europe affected the VI General Assembly of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women (www.efecw.org) which met in Čelákovice (Czech Republic) from 25 August to 1 September. British participants travelling there had to avoid Dresden. Their hosts-to-be were the Diakonissenhaus on the banks of the Elbe, a place four fifths destroyed in February 1945. It had then continued to function as a hospital with only emergency structural repairs being done until 1965 when the first group of young people from Coventry Cathedral went to remove rubble, clean bricks, paint window frames etc. But the mostly elderly Diakonissen had to be evacuated at short notice and the building was flooded and severely damaged. The organizers in the Czech Republic, too, had to cope with massive problems in preparing the conference that was eventually able to go ahead.

The conference message (slightly abridged) reads:

'Compassion and freedom are a gift of God, to women and men, said Bishop Jana Šilerová of the Czech Hussite Church. Dr Gret Haller, from Switzerland, Human Rights Ombudsperson for OSCE to Bosnia Herzegovina, urged women to participate fully in politics and in the whole life of the state, in order to help shape the future of Europe.'

She said that our contribution could challenge existing patterns, which were often one-sided and male dominated. The senator of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, Jaroslava Moserová drew attention to the duty and power of women, in their capacity as mothers and educators, to break the vicious cycle of hate, which passes from generation to generation. A paradigmatic view of relationship and community came from the Bible Study on Philippians 2:1-5 by Carmen Marquez, a Spanish theologian. The image of the Triune God provides a pattern for human communities, through unity in diversity.

160 women from 30 countries and a wide range of Christian traditions gathered in Čelákovice, Czech Republic, for the sixth General Assembly of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women.

The theme was, 'Called to Compassion and Freedom - Christian Women Shaping the Future of Europe'. This formed the background not only to our keynote lectures, workshops and Bible study, but also to our business sessions, worship and cultural events. A special highlight of the Assembly was the celebration of the Forum's twentieth anniversary. We recognised that, through the experience of so many years, the organization has become a competent network of Christian women in Europe.

In discussion, and in our response to other speakers, there was a strong feeling that we women should have the right to determine our own roles in church and society and the freedom to carry them out. The Forum was so moved by the damage caused by floods in Prague that a group of women took part in the clean-up operation for a day. The recent floods throughout Central Europe focused our concern on global and environmental issues.

Workshops covered a number of issues, which are of particular concern to women.

- We support the aims of the United Nations conference in Johannesburg to establish world-wide conditions for sustainable lifestyles which allow all human beings to live in dignity. We commit ourselves to promote the responsible use of biotechnology. *The 'copyright' of creation is the Creator's!*
- The Forum should represent as many minorities as possible and stand in solidarity with Christians of different ethnic background and colour in Europe, for example, the large Roma community. The Forum should join the struggle against racism in our churches and schools and in society in general.
- In conflict and post-conflict situations, prayer and action are equally important and sustain each other.
- Spirituality ought to be an indispensable part of Christian life, interacting with everyday situations and contributing to the enrichment of life. It is there where God's healing and renewal are experienced, and where borders of denomination and tradition can be overcome.
- We learn from interfaith women's organizations within our network the importance of reciprocal respect for persons of other cultures and faiths. This experience enables us to become agents of positive religious education in transmitting love, peace and reconciliation in the face of fundamentalisms.

- Violence against and trafficking in women and children are major problems in all our countries. They destroy lives and corrupt relationships. We commit ourselves to work for their prevention, through consciousness-raising, education and training, especially among church leaders. The issue should be raised at the Conference of European Churches Assembly in Trondheim and within the Conference of Catholic Bishops' Conferences in Europe (CCEE), with a view to taking it into the European Union structures and moving it beyond the borders of Europe.
- The young women challenge the Forum to greater respect for people of different ages and denominations and both genders. Through the Young Women's Leadership Training Course, they enjoyed working together across cultures and traditions.

Together with our sisters from the Czech Republic we acknowledge that Europe is going through great economic, social and spiritual changes, to which the Forum ought to pay appropriate attention. They, in turn, are happy to bring their gifts and strengths into the European search for new values.

Full text available on: www.efecw.org.

Inter-faith Encounter vs Mission? A Study Day in Dublin

On Wednesday, 23 October the Irish Missionary Union and the World Mission Committee of the Irish Council of Churches jointly organize a conference on the theme *Inter-faith Dialogue and Encounter – How do Christians dialogue and work with others?* It will explore the issue primarily in an international/global context but also consider the issues at home. The perspective of the conference is to be Christian rather than inter-faith. Speakers include Fr Oliver Crilly from Ardmore, Sr Rebecca Conlon, a Columban with several years experience in Pakistan, Katherine Meyer from Trinity College, Dublin and Desmond Sinnamon from Taney, Dundrum. Further information is available from IMU (01-4965433 / 4971770) or ICC (028-90663145).

Israel Detains Senior Greek Orthodox Church official

Israeli occupation forces on 20 August detained a senior official of the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem on suspicion he expressed support for resistance organizations in Syria and Lebanon.

Archimandrite Atallah Hanna, spokesman for the church, was taken from his home in the Old City to the Israeli police headquarters in occupied Jerusalem. Christian and Muslim leaders called for Hanna's immediate release, saying the detention was a violation of rights to religious freedom and free speech.

Israel is embroiled in a dispute with the Greek Orthodox Church and has refused to recognise the church's patriarch for the Holy Land, Eireneos I, who was elected a year ago. Under Holy Land traditions going back centuries, a new patriarch has to be vetted by the rulers of the areas where

his flock lives - in Eireneos' case Israel, the Palestinian National Authority and Jordan. Without the recognition, the patriarch cannot represent the church in dealings with the host country. Jordan and the PNA recognised Eireneos shortly after his election.

Church officials say one of the reasons for the dispute with Israel is the patriarch's refusal to meet Israeli demands to fire Hanna, whom Israel considers to be close to the PNA. Israel and the Greek Orthodox Church are also at odds over some of the vast land holdings of the Jerusalem patriarchate. Some of the land had been leased to Israel, and the church refuses to extend the leases.

Israeli police spokesman Gil Kleiman said Hanna was being questioned on suspicion of showing support for resistance organizations fighting Israeli occupation of Arab lands and for illegally entering Lebanon and Syria.

'He made statements on television in those countries showing support for terror organizations and for attacks against Israeli civilians,' Kleiman said. Israel also believes that Hanna called on Christians to participate in the Palestinian uprising against occupation, according to Israel Radio. Kleiman said Hanna holds Israeli citizenship and that Israelis are not allowed to enter neighbouring Lebanon and Syria, with whom Israel is technically still at war.

Marwan Toubasi, the spokesman of the Greek Orthodox community in the West Bank, said Hanna's detention was 'part of the Israeli attacks on the religious freedom for Christian and Muslim religious men.'

'(It is) an attempt to silence the voice that expresses the pains of his community which is part of the Palestinian people,' he said. Sheikh Ikrema Sabri, the top Muslim cleric in Jerusalem and a close associate of Hanna said: 'There are a lot of Israeli rabbis who have extreme opinions against Arabs and the Palestinians and they have been never detained by the Israeli police.' (Jordan Times 23/8/02)

Conferences Marking 11 September

The British and Irish Association for Mission Studies (BIAMS) is holding a day conference **'Faith in the World after 11th September'** on the anniversary of the twin-towers attack. It will include moments for commemoration, but also consider the changing profile of religion as a component in world events in the year since the disaster.

The main paper will be delivered by Professor Antonie Wessels, and this will be followed by a panel - Canon Andrew Wingate, Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra and Rabbi Dr Margaret Jacobi - looking at inter-religious issues in this country.

Recent startling and disturbing predictions by Philip Jenkins, an American professor of history and religious studies, suggest that by 2050 almost 20 of the largest nations will be predominantly or entirely Christian or Muslim. He surmises that at least 10 will be sites of intense political and military confrontation.

Whether this projection is valid or not, plainly serious attention must be given to the way in which the global faiths view each other. This Conference, to be held at Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham, on Wednesday 11 September is an attempt to further that process by scholars and

supporters of Christian mission. Details can be obtained from: BIAMS Tel. 01223-741.088.; acc34@cam.ac.uk

'Following Jesus in the Face of Terror: Christian Responses to the War on Terrorism' is the title of a conference on 21 September organized by Simon Barrow, Jonathan Bartley, Chris Cole, Haddon Willmer et al. 'From the first, it was not at all clear what would count as victory in this engagement. The abolition of terrorism? No doubt, but what possible guarantee could there be that this had been achieved?' (Rowan Williams)

Jesus calls those who follow him to live as citizens in a new kingdom, to 'seek the welfare of the city' (Jer 29:7) where we live, and to be advocates and builders of peaceful systems and institutions. This way of living includes finding ways to love those we see as enemies and refusing to participate in war or killing. How can we stand against a culture of violence and witness against war preparation, enemy demonisation and the use of massive military force to solve complex global problems? Are there realistic alternatives to the war against terrorism that will balance the need for both justice and security? This day of reflection, which includes plenary presentations and workshops, will address these issues from theological, political and activist perspectives.

Fee: £18 (£9 unwaged) includes VAT; lunch provided. Prior booking required. Further information: Jane Collett, London Mennonite Centre, 14 Shepherds Hill, London N6 5AQ. Tel: 020-8340 8775; email: jcollett@menno.org.uk.

2003 BIAMS Conference on Overcoming Violence

'Reconciling Mission - Overcoming Violence' is the theme of the 2003 BIAMS conference, to be held 23-26 June in Edinburgh University's New College. Speakers include Rober Schreiter (Universities of Chicago and Nijmegen), Ceceila Clegg (Irish School of Ecumenics), Jacques Matthey (WCC, Geneva) and others.

Further information can be obtained from BIAMS, Westminster College, Cambridge CB3 0AA, Tel. 01223 741088, Emmawild-wood@lineone.net.

Churches Forced to Move Regional Peace Conference in Indonesia

(ENI-02-0224) A conference aimed at promoting regional peace, organized by the United Evangelical Mission (UEM), was forced to move to another location on the island of Java after it received threats from Muslim extremists, says a UEM spokesperson in Germany.

The conference, with the theme 'Overcoming violence and promoting a culture of peace', was scheduled to have met in Solo from 2 to 8 August, but was forced to move to Yogyakarta, 100 kilometres from its original location in central Java, Indonesia's most heavily populated island.

'We do not really know why this happened', Ute Dilg, spokesperson of UEM based in Wuppertal, Germany, said. She noted that there was a campaign in a local newspaper which accused Christian churches of having taken part in massacres in Ambon, Poso on the Moluccan islands in

eastern Indonesia, an area where there is an almost equal number of Christians and Muslims. 'But,' said Dilg, 'there are no UEM member churches there.'

Some 88 percent of Indonesia's 225 million people are generally described as being followers of Islam, while about 8 per cent are Christians.

Church members said extremist Muslim groups like Jumduallah and Hizbollah hounded people at the hotel in Solo where the conference was to be held. The UEM then held talks with 10 other Islamic organizations, ascertaining that they did not feel threatened by the Christian-sponsored conference. Those organizations nevertheless advised the Christians to move the conference out of Solo to a safer place.

Moving the conference had delayed its start to Saturday 3 August and it was to adjourn on Thursday 8 August as planned. A total of 107 delegates from UEM member churches in Asia, observers and guests as well as employees of the local churches and of UEM are discussing their work in Asia.

Such conferences are held regularly in each UEM region and delegates decide on activities and policy in the region. Regional conferences meet in between plenary assemblies which meet every four years. Prior to the peace conference, gatherings for women and for youth have been held in Solo without any interference from extremists.

The UEM is an association of 34 Christian churches from Asia, Africa and Germany which co-ordinates missionary activities.

French Protestantism Mostly Operating Illegally

The French state's hunt for all things considered 'sects' has led to an absurd situation. Since the introduction of Article 6 III of the new finance law 2002 in France 80 percent of French Protestant congregations operate illegally (the Roman Catholic Church, organized differently, is apparently not affected). The law, an updating of the 1901 law on voluntary associations (later complemented by the famous 1905 law regulating religious associations), stipulates that associations who have a paid person on their governing body must have an annual budget of at least € 200,000 (€ 500,000 if there are two paid employees, € 1 million for three etc). This figure is not reached by most protestant congregations who however have a paid employee on their governing body, namely their minister on the parish council. When the law was being prepared the *Fédération protestante de France* (FpF) asked for talks with the responsible people in government but were not granted these. Interventions in writing, arguing that pastors are not paid because they serve on the parish council but that they are on the council because they are the pastor failed to convince.

Although government officials now see the problem and concede that this was an unintentional side-effect, the law will remain unaltered for at least this year. So far no action has been taken against the suddenly illegal congregations. But the Revd Christian Seytre, General Secretary of the FpF (those who attended the CTBI Assembly in February 2002 will remember him), does not so much fear action of this kind but, for example, that in case of legacies left to congregations

discontented relatives might successfully challenge such wills. He also points out that if protestant churches had to fundamentally change their structures in order to be in accordance with the law, this case would render absurd the idea of the separation of state and church in France. French Protestantism has always been a staunch defender of the French model of separating church and state by supporting the secularist republican idea of *laïcité*.

This year incidentally also marks the 300th anniversary of the Camisard wars in the Cevennes (1702-04, see www.camisards.net), when young protestant peasants, in response to the heavy persecution that followed the revocation of the *Edit de Nantes* in 1685, took up arms against the royal army. Over the past few months the protestant press has been full of debate about whether or not this historical date should be commemorated and if so how.

KMF

Action on Mistreatment of Religious Minorities

CCOM has played a role in forging an informal alliance with a range of church and church-related organizations concerned about violence and mistreatment directed towards Christians and others throughout the world. Bishop Mano Rumlshah, General Secretary of USPG has been a key figure in the creation of the Christian Forum in Support of Persecuted Religious Minorities Worldwide. Other participants include CMS, Christians Aware, the International Reconciliation Centre at Coventry Cathedral, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and the Barnabas Fund. Full details can be found at: <http://www.ctbi.org.uk/news/2002/nrcbti0228.htm>

A detailed article on the subject will appear in a future issue of Connections and on the CCOM website.

Simon Barrow

WCC calls for day of prayer for the environment

Churches should set apart the first day of September each year as a day of prayer for the environment, the World Council of Churches has proclaimed.

The call to make 1 September 'a day of prayer for creation and its sustainability' was made in August at a meeting in Geneva of the central committee of the WCC, the ecumenical organization's main governing body. The request echoed an earlier appeal made by Bartholomeos I, ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople, to Christians world-wide to celebrate 1 September as Creation Day.

New UCA Mission Programme

The United College of the Ascension (a USPG sponsored institution in Selly Oak, Birmingham) has launched UCAMP (United College of the Ascension Mission Programme). UCAMP is a programme of mission preparation, reflection and exposure for anyone crossing boundaries in mission in

any direction, cultural, religious or geographical. It draws on the expertise and resources of the College of the Ascension itself, of Selly Oak and of the local context of Birmingham. It is a residential programme that may be taken over a year, over one or two terms, or in short modules (Mon-Thurs) during which participants taste the international, ecumenical community that is UCA. Further information and brochures can be obtained from Ruth Padley (r.padley@bham.ac.uk, 0121-415 6826)

Middle East: Detering Suicide Killers

Israel should, by 'targeted assassinations' or other means, be free promptly to execute the immediate relatives of suicide bombers. This suggestion of US lawyer Nathan Lewin has triggered a debate in the US's legal scene, Jewish community and media.

Lewin, who teaches law at George Washington School of Law, is not just anybody in the US. He repeatedly pleaded before the Supreme Court and is himself a hot candidate for a post in a federal court. He is president of the 'International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists' and vice-president of the 'Orthodox Union'.

He rests his argument on the Torah's prescription of the extinction of certain hostile nations that threaten Israel's survival (Amalek being one example) and finds that other proposals such as national identity cards (compared by many to the South African pass laws) and the automatic destruction of entire Palestinian villages in retaliation for bombings are 'extremely modest' and nothing but 'the proverbial use of aspirin to treat brain cancer'.

He recommends not to be concerned about international opinion and refutes the comparison to Nazi methods. Whereas Nazis executed many civilians in retaliation for partisan attacks on 'evil Nazi generals' he pleads for killing people who support the murder of children, women and other civilians.

Lewin's article was criticised by Jewish clerics, mainly from the liberal tradition, but he also got a lot of support from orthodox and extreme-right Jewish thinkers. His article was published by *Shma* magazine together with one article by Arthur Green arguing against it.

No action has been taken by professional legal bodies in the US against Nathan Lewin.

Both articles: <http://www.shma.com/may02/nathan.htm>. The site also contains a huge discussion forum on the issue.

KMF

Ecumenical Visit to the USA

A report has been published by CTBI on an ecumenical visit to the USA in March 2002 – six months after '9/11'. The authors, Paul Renshaw (CTBI International Affairs Desk), Jennifer Potter (Secretary for International Affairs, Methodist Church) and David Sinclair (Church of Scotland). The report is available from global@ctbi.org.uk for £2.50 incl. p&sp.

Church of Scotland withdraws staff from Pakistan

The Asia Committee of the Board of World Mission of the Church of Scotland met on Thursday 15 August and a major part of its agenda was to consider the situation in Pakistan, particularly in relation to the presence of their mission partners. After an intensive discussion, it was decided unanimously that we would instruct our mission partners together with their family members to make the necessary arrangements and return to Scotland as soon as possible.

The Committee, when communicating the decision to the ecumenical partners both here and overseas, spoke of the deep regret it felt at having to take this decision. It will mean a time of great change for the staff. They called their partners to pray for the staff concerned and for the partner church, the Church of Pakistan and their Partner Institutions: Gujranwala Theological Seminary, United Bible Training Centre and Murree Christian School - as they come to terms with this change.

The church declared that its commitment to these long-cherished links and partnerships remained and it assured them of their commitment to future co-operation and support, but without the presence of mission partners.

The situation of tension, anxiety and insecurity continues for the whole Christian Community in Pakistan. Through the Moderator, Rt Revd Dr Finlay Macdonald the Church has written to the President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf and to the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, to urge that greater effort be made to protect the rights and security of Minority Groups in Pakistan.

Jill Hughes

Ecumenical companions in Israel/Palestine

(WCC PR-08) The first group of ecumenical companions began work in Palestine and Israel in August. Ten Europeans joined local churches, church-related humanitarian organizations and Palestinian and Israeli health, peace and human rights organizations to provide international solidarity to organizations struggling to ensure daily services and a peace witness in the midst of the conflict. They are the first official participants in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), coordinated by the World Council of Churches (WCC). The participants are sponsored by the Church of Sweden and Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, EED (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst), and DanChurchAid.

Ranging in age from 23 to 67, the companions completed a three-week training and local orientation before moving into the field. The first group anticipates staying in Palestine and Israel for periods ranging from three to six months.

The concept of an accompaniment programme was approved in September 2001 by the WCC Executive Committee within the framework of an Ecumenical Campaign to End the Illegal Occupation of Palestine: Support a Just Peace in the Middle East. The Programme's mission is the 'accompaniment of Palestinians and Israelis in

non-violent actions and concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation'. The accompaniers will work with local churches and Palestinian and Israeli peace and human rights organizations on a number of tasks, including human rights monitoring, advocacy, and supporting non-violent resistance.

A pilot Christian Accompaniment project carried by Danish and Icelandic church aid agencies ran from March to July this year. The Christian Peacemaker Team, based in Hebron since 1995, was another model for the programme.

Regular reports from the accompaniers will be on the web site: www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/palestine/cap.html

Floresca Karanasou, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, reports on their accompaniment programme in Israel/Palestine. Their observers' pieces are now posted on the web: <http://quaker.org.uk/peace/current.html>.

CCOM's Middle East Forum is currently exploring possibilities to join in this ecumenical venture.

French Protestants re-establish warm relations with Taizé community

[ENI-02-0199] French Protestant church leaders have signalled a 'new era of relations' with one of the best-known ecumenical religious communities in Europe.

For the first time in more than a decade, a delegation from the French Protestant Federation (FpF) earlier this month paid an official visit to Taizé, the French ecumenical community that each year welcomes more than 100,000 youth from around the world for prayer and study.

The visit was 'a way of saying that a new era of relations can begin', Gill Daude, head of the FpF's ecumenical service, said. The last time an FpF president visited the hilltop community in Burgundy was in 1989.

The relations between the FpF and Taizé started to deteriorate in the 1970s, when several events offended Protestant sensitivities: a stand taken in favour of priestly celibacy by Brother Roger, the founder of the community, as well as his ties to successive popes, and the conversion to Catholicism and ordination to the Catholic priesthood of Max Thurian - a Protestant and the right hand of Brother Roger - in 1987.

But in spite of the breach that developed between the FpF and Taizé, groups of young French Protestants continued to frequent the community. Taizé has also always maintained strong ties with foreign Protestant and Anglican churches. This summer, for example, several Lutheran bishops from Sweden and Anglican bishops from Great Britain will be staying at the community.

'The meeting with the FpF was warm and characterised by a spirit of fraternity,' Brother Emile, head of Taizé's external relations, told ENI. Beyond the wish to mark the rapprochement of the two bodies in some way, the leaders of the FpF also wanted to exchange ideas with leaders of the Taizé community on youth pastoral ministry. 'Taizé occupies a particular place in the religious landscape,' stressed Daude. 'At Taizé, young people experience faith in

an ecumenical setting. They discover as it were the universal church.'

A sort of laboratory for the transmission of spiritual experience and faith, Taizé continues to intrigue observers by its success with youth. In this, its success poses a challenge to many church leaders.

'We also are concerned with training a new generation committed to ecumenism,' Daude continued. 'After the first generation of builders, a new one is, for the moment, not yet in sight.'

Church leaders comment on possible attack on Iraq

The Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has invited the Kirk's 40,000 Guild members to write to their MPs, expressing concern at the prospect of a military strike against Iraq.

Addressing the Guild's annual meeting in the Royal Concert Hall, Glasgow, on 31 August the Rt Revd Dr Finlay Macdonald, said he had written to Prime Minister Tony Blair three weeks ago, 'urging him to use his influence in Washington to counsel restraint and certainly not to commit British troops without a clear UN mandate and the support of Parliament.'

'There are different kinds of power,' said the Moderator, 'political, military, economic and spiritual power. I have been reflecting on the fact that as that ominous date 11 September comes round again, the earth summit has been meeting in South Africa. So we have on the one hand, the so-called war on terrorism and the prospect of a military strike against Iraq, perhaps involving British troops, while on the other hand the earth summit reminds us of those vicious and deadly enemies - hunger, lack of clean water, disease, lack of medical care.

'How are we to use our power? Certainly what happened last 11 September was a dreadful evil and on the anniversary day (and on other days) it is right we should remember those who died, those who bear mental and physical scars, those who mourn. But as well as fighting terrorism we need to fight the roots and underlying injustices which give rise to terrorism. We have the economic power to do that. Do we have the political will? Do we have the spiritual strength?'

The Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, thinks that a war would have grave consequences, possibly setting the Arab world against the West. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has also raised his concerns in a private letter to the Prime Minister.

Their interventions are the latest in a number by bishops opposed to military action against Iraq, a stance that apparently increasingly irritates the Government.

The cardinal received swift backing from Catholic bishops and theologians both here and abroad. Dr Eamon Duffy, Fellow and President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and president of the Catholic Theological Association, urged Mr Blair and President Bush to take heed of the cardinal's comments, which he described as a shrewd counsel of prudence and an urgent call to morality.

'If the democratic West is to retain moral credibility and if we are to avoid a murderous confrontation with an Islamic world radicalised by poverty and resentment of Western imperialism, then we have to move beyond defending our interests and punishing our enemies. We need to demonstrate our desire to share the freedoms and prosperities we enjoy with the world's poor.'

But the Bishop of Rochester, the Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali, said that military action against Iraq would be legitimate if there was persuasive evidence that Saddam Hussein was developing weapons of mass destruction.

American and British church representatives published at a WCC Central Committee meeting in Geneva: *A Call to Stop the Rush to War*: 'Our knowledge of and links with church partners in the Middle East and our unity in Christ with Christians there make us very sensitive to the destabilizing potential of a war against Iraq for the whole region. There is

no support among the Arab nations for such a war and very little support in Europe and elsewhere. Christian-Muslim relations would be further harmed by such a war, and the possibility of such an action triggering direct military confrontation in Israel cannot be ignored. Further, the forces of extremism and terrorism would be strengthened rather than diminished.

As Christians, we are concerned by the likely human costs of war with Iraq, particularly for civilians. We are unconvinced that the gain for humanity would be proportionate to the loss. Neither are we convinced that it has been publicly demonstrated that all reasonable alternative means of containing Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction have been exhausted. We call upon our governments to pursue these diplomatic means in active cooperation with the United Nations and to stop the apparent rush to war. 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.' (Matthew 5:9)

David Wood:

Poet, priest and prophet: the life and thought of Bishop John V. Taylor

Does Christian evangelism promote sectarianism and violence or can it contribute to harmony and peace in the global village? Can Christians extol the true significance of Jesus Christ without demeaning others? Who is God and how does God's nature shape ours? This book tackles these and other vital issues by giving the first major account of the life and thought of one of the twentieth century's greatest religious thinkers, John V. Taylor.

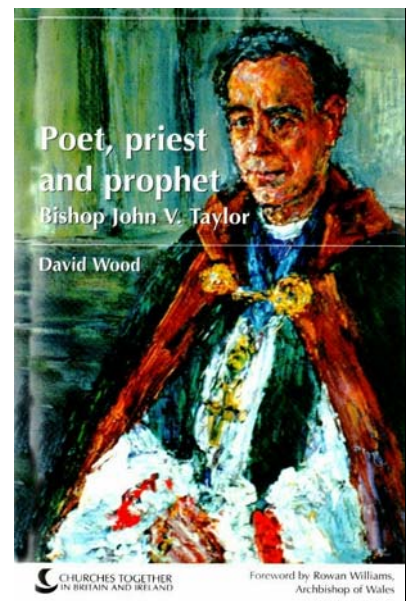
Taylor was a missionary statesman, ecumenist, Africanist, sometime General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, and later Anglican Bishop of Winchester. His work offers a theology and practice of Christian mission which is faithful to Scripture while fully facing the facts of the contemporary world at the beginning of the third millennium. Taylor sought to live out the truths he discovered in his daily ministry as poet, priest and prophet – inviting those around him to share the way of Christ.



The author David Wood

In his Foreword the Most Revd Dr Rowan Williams, currently Archbishop of Wales, describes Bishop Taylor as 'a great saint and thinker. This book will not only keep a memory alive but hopefully rekindle the vision he brought to such fullness', he says.

The author, Dr David Wood, an Anglican priest from Australia, at the occasion of the book launch at the Church of England synod in York in July 2002 said that Bishop Taylor - internationally recognised for such groundbreaking books as *The Go-Between God* (on the Holy Spirit) and *The Christlike God* - was a very human church leader who 'made Christian orthodoxy seem like our native air, so that to live in such an atmosphere is the most desirable thing in the world.'



Wood's fascinating account of John V. Taylor's life and work serves as an example and a challenge to all those in ministry today. **'Poet, priest and prophet: the life and thought of Bishop John V. Taylor'**, published by CTBI, ISBN 0-85169-272-9, costs £14.95.

See also the review by Martin Conway on p.72.

Focus... Focus... Focus... Focus...

Mary Bradford

Trade Justice

You might not have heard of the Trade Justice campaign yet, but I'd like to predict that you will soon. On Wednesday 19 June, 12,000 peaceful activists converged on Westminster to lobby their members of Parliament in the biggest event of its kind. A new movement has come of age.

The Trade Justice campaign has emerged as a growing coalition of agencies and churches over the last two years. It has a twin inheritance: on one side its roots lie firmly in the fairtrade movement – where 'fairly traded' items like coffee and bananas guarantee the producer a fair price, and the consumer a clear conscience. Like fairtrade, the new campaign has something positive to say: trade can be good, if only the current system is changed.

But it goes much further than fairly traded products. Building on its second inheritance from the Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt cancellation, it believes in aiming high. While both the fairtrade movement and the campaign for debt cancellation continue – and it is essential that they do so – the new Trade Justice campaign calls not just for a better deal for producers, but for root and branch structural change to the world's trading system.

And just as Jubilee 2000 took the relatively obscure economic issue of international debt and turned it into a popular crusade for pop stars and the pope – not to mention millions of grass roots activists world-wide – the Trade Justice campaign wants to make the injustice of global trade the issue of the moment. Many of the organizations at the heart of Jubilee 2000 – Christian Aid, CAFOD and the World Development Movement among others – form the core of the new Trade Justice Movement, alongside the Fairtrade Foundation and Traidcraft, and environmental groups like Friends of the Earth.

'I'm doing my bit, I'm actually doing something about what I believe in!'

At the June event, over 340 MPs were lobbied in person by campaigners calling for radical change in the way global trade operates. Campaigners want the rules and practices of international trade re-written with poverty reduction and environmental protection recognised as their highest priorities. This has clear consequences: poor countries must be allowed to protect and support their most vulnerable producers and favour the development of domestic industries that may help them claw their way out of poverty. Alongside this the rich world must open up its markets to goods from the poor and curb the power of its massive corporations, which urgently require regulating.

But the significance of the event is even more far reaching than its policy aims. In an age where interest in party politics is at an all time low, and the churches in decline, Trade Justice campaigners are bucking the trend.

These are people who believe in the political process. As Max Khanna, a 30-year-old campaigner from Bristol says: 'I've never done anything like this before, but now that I'm about to go and see my MP, I feel really excited about it. I'm doing my bit, I'm actually doing something about what I believe in!'. The focus on MPs is not accidental: it deliberately differentiates the Trade Justice campaign from anti-capitalist groups who refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the structures of government. As with Jubilee 2000, for many in the campaign the motivation comes strongly from faith. They are united by a passion for justice and a determination for change.

The support of the churches has been vital to the growth of the campaign. Across the country churches in over 140 local constituencies have collected signed pledges of support for the campaign and arranged presentations to their MP. During Christian Aid Week, over twenty-six thousand campaign postcards calling for trade justice were sent to the Prime Minister. Backing for the campaign has come from the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and the Church of Scotland. The Archbishop of Canterbury sent a message of support for the mass lobby.

Ultimately people are motivated by an understanding that poverty is not just caused by misfortune or the will of God, but by economic and political structures which need to undergo profound change.

In February, addressing the Ghanaian parliament during his tour of Africa, Tony Blair called for more support for the continent, and a huge public campaign along the lines of Jubilee 2000. 'It would be good if civil society was out campaigning for this,' he said.

If the Prime Minister's call was serious, he should take the growing Trade Justice campaign seriously too. If he is to make a reality of his speech to the Labour Party Conference that 'power, wealth and opportunity must be in the hands of the many, not the few' in the global economy, then he will have to address the calls of those gathered outside Westminster on 19 June.

Addressing a meeting of the Christian Socialist Movement last year, Tony Blair recounted an incident from one of the G8 summits. Alarmed by the 'human chain' of debt campaigners outside the summit, one of the G8 leaders asked his colleagues what they were going to do about the protesters. 'It's even worse than that,' said another leader, 'They aren't just protesters – there are priests out there!'

Well, on 19 June the priests were back. Mr Blair called for a campaign, and here it is. Thousands of people who are passionate for a fairer world are coming onto the streets calling for change. A new movement has arrived.

Gordon Holmes

Global Connections: Sharing Mission Responses to Globalisation

'If we do not learn from others, what is the cost of doing it wrong?... There is an awful cost to doing mission badly; we cannot afford to be isolationist.' (Stanley Davies, Executive Director, Global Connections)

Stanley Davies was speaking at the Global Connections annual conference, 3-5 July 2002, held at The Hayes, Swanwick. He reminded the 220 participants, mostly drawn from evangelical inter-denominational mission societies and agencies, that there is much to share. It was good to be there representing CCOM, and in the context of the joint actions that have been undertaken by these two separate mission networks. The welcome was warm and the openness of the discussions rewarding.

There is an irony in the theme of the CCOM Annual Commission Meeting in September being 'Globalisation and Mission', when the theme for the Global Connections conference was 'Globalisation, Mission and the Kingdom of God'. It does mean that CCOM has access to the Global Connections conference papers which are to be found on www.globalconnections.co.uk/oneworld.asp. What follows comes from the personal experience of one participant and is not a comprehensive review.

Asking what God is doing through globalisation was a question that recurred. Globalisation is a word with many definitions. It can be about global economic integration or about many different kinds of global interconnectedness, happening with increasing speed and impact. 'Think global, act local' makes for a useful tag. Another is 'anything, anywhere affects everything'. Depending on the circumstances, it can be something to be feared or welcomed.

The need to talk together about the impact of the global western culture on the peoples of the world was emphasised by Dewi Hughes of Tearfund in a workshop on ethnicity. Christians, he said, should work towards the preservation of diversity. Wanyeki Mahiaini of the Philip Project, speaking at a workshop on Africa, said that globalisation is another mugging for Africa, other muggings including slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. The love of riches and the things of this world, he said, were evident in globalisation; it has led to 'deafness to the cries of the poor'. On the other hand, African Christianity is becoming representative of Christianity world wide and therefore cannot now be ignored. Indeed he sees the evangelical agenda 'will be set more and more by the church in the Southern Hemisphere'. Each aspect of globalisation needs to be seen 'through the prism of the cross'. Other regional workshops included ones on Latin America, China and the Buddhist and Hindu worlds.

The two Bible studies, given by Kang San Tang of OMF Malaysia (OMF=Overseas Missionary Fellowship, ex China Inland Mission), focussed on the Kingdom of God with respect to world history and to mission. For mission the starting place is all-important. 'Mission began with God', he said, 'not the church, nor the world', and is a privilege, not a duty. In responding to globalisation there is a need for conversion, 'not to a cause nor a task, but to a Person'. Given that Jesus is 'the showcase of the Kingdom', Kang San Tang asked if the church was a pain-bearing community and if we

should 'pursue the redemption of social structures or only individuals'. The Kingdom of God, he said, is broader than the Church, with which it must not be equated, for the Holy Spirit is active elsewhere such as in non-Christian religions.

In a workshop on Globalisation and Islam, under the title 'Concession or Conflict', Martin Hall of Operation Mobilisation advocated identifying with what was common between Christianity and Islam. He spoke of St Paul's building of bridges with those worshipping an unknown God. Dialogue did not mean concession. While first hand experiences of conflict were shared, reference was also made to the work of the Programme for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), particularly in Nigeria. Ron George of World in Need pointed to changes taking place within Islam and recommended patience and, when making generalisations, caution.

... he said that globalisation is another mugging for Africa, after slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Focussing on the international mission agencies, Peter Nicoll of Operation Mobilisation expressed the need for the two-thirds world stakeholders to be taken seriously. He advocated multi-cultural teams not only 'in the field but also in mission agency national offices'. Separately, Peter Kennedy of CMS pointed to good practice drawn out of the experience of doing that. In another session a list of over 150 web sites about mission resources was provided, with the help of others, by Tony Whittaker of SOON Ministries and is available on the Global Connections web site (www.globalconnections.co.uk/pdfs/owtechnologywhittaker.pdf).

Other papers included ones on economics and poverty, youth culture and religious fundamentalism. In presenting a paper on globalisation and healthcare mission Steve Fouch of MMA HealthServe spoke of AIDS, malaria and TB being endemic world-wide and now hitting the UK. In facing this and other healthcare matters he asked how we can try to tackle the root causes. Also, what role is there for Christian Mission in confronting the issues of economic injustice that contribute to ill health? In closing he further asked both for examples to be shared from situations in which work is done that might encourage and inform others facing similar situations, and if there is a wider strategic response that could be taken.

With global mission challenges being so great the sharing of questions, of resources, when practicable, and of providing opportunities to meet are for me signs of the Kingdom.

Papers of the conference are available at www.globalconnections.co.uk

Book Reviews

Theological Exploring with Bishop

John Taylor

David Wood, *Poet, Priest and Prophet - Bishop John V. Taylor*, London: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 2002, ISBN 0-85169-272-9, £ 14.95, with a Foreword by Rowan Williams, Archbishop.

Among British Christians in the 20th century, John Vernon Taylor, who died in January 2001, was undoubtedly one of the great saints and thinkers. For me it was a high privilege to have had a fair amount to do with him, professionally - and inevitably, through that, personally - over some 40 years, from an early reading of his 1957 Penguin *Christianity and Politics in Africa*, through several inspiring encounters with him as Africa and then General Secretary of the CMS, learning much from, and greatly enjoying his successive books, as well as in significant episodes at major conferences of the WCC, in welcoming him into an Honorary Fellowship at the Selly Oak Colleges, and above all in Oxford these last five years, sharing as a neighbour alike in the service to celebrate 60 years of married love with Peggy and, too soon after, in the funeral service to which John in no little pain had devoted his unique combination of inter-human sensitivity, God-directed faith and winsome poetry - 'every word', said Peggy, 'except those of the preacher, written by John'.

This large, rich and reasonably priced study of John Taylor's living, believing, serving and exploring deserves many readers among those who have known him, and still more among those who may have heard no more than a phrase - 'the go-between God', most likely, or perhaps 'enough is enough' - or of his inspiring leadership as Bishop of Winchester from 1974-85. It is a generous treasure house. For me, above all for the poems, virtually none of which I had come across before, not least the two - of some six or seven he had been struggling to perfect in his last few days of earthly life - first read aloud at his memorial service in Winchester Cathedral (p.182). Hardly less for the amazingly profound feast of theological insight and pilgrimage in which the Australian author passionately accompanies John through the major stages and discoveries of his life.

The first chapter takes us immediately into the debate about the nature of mission between such giants as Hendrik Kraemer, Max Warren, Lesslie Newbigin and David Bosch, with the subsequently oft recurring struggle to find the appropriate way for Christians to relate in friendship and respect with people of other faith communities. So also the last, 40 page long chapter is a sustained exploration into how John's writings from his first book to his last, including his three great 'classics' *The Primal Vision - Christian Presence amid African Religion* (1963), *The Go-Between God: The Holy Spirit and the Christian Mission* (1972), and *The Christlike God* (1992), all centre on how the nature, purposes and characteristic behaviour of the ever-mysterious God are factually, historically revealed and to be known and followed in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, recognised as the Christ.

The chapters in between include other substantial theological explorations, whether in the account of what Bonhoeffer's writings meant to John in the bleak months after his wholly unplanned and unwelcome return from Africa to Britain in the mid-1950s (p.51ff.), his moving exposition of the shapes and meanings of the Chapel of the Living Water in the new offices the CMS staff moved into in 1966 (p.98ff.), or the theme of humble and serving presence as the key, characteristic mark of true Christlike mission (p.127f., 212f.). As an 'intellectual biography', a term Wood more or less borrows from Kenneth Cragg (see p.12ff.), in which the author himself is exploring no less excitedly and devotedly than his teacher, the book includes sensitive accounts of the disappointments and difficulties involved in the return from Africa, as of several unusual features of John's way of being a diocesan bishop, some of them rather less than 'successful' (p.151ff.) and of his long, deeply rewarding relationship with Max Warren, his mentor from Cambridge student days onward and predecessor as CMS General Secretary.

At the same time I cannot but remark on several important - and at least to me dismaying - gaps in the record. One is that of some of the exact dates: neither that of the beginning of his time at Mukono, Uganda (while the Second World War was still raging), nor that of his sad departure from there is chronicled; a small gap perhaps yet which adds an unnecessary impression of vagueness quite unlike John or Peggy! More acute is that of any account of his later work in and for Africa; we learn not a little of the theology set out in *The Primal Vision*, but no more than a brief factual mention of the months spent in research for his two big books: *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (1958) and *Christians of the Copperbelt* (1961). Still more worrying is the absence of African names: neither the Index, nor the Bibliography, nor the long list of people whose help is acknowledged by the author include names of African Christians and writers who John must have known and appreciated - not even that of John Mbiti. I suspect that in the long run this book will be known as the 'white, Anglo-Saxon' view of John Taylor!

Again, as one who knew something, if by no means all, of his profoundly important contributions over many years to the life and work of the World Council of Churches, it is surprising, to put it mildly, that none of these are carefully described. A few lines on p.69/70, seriously inaccurate as well as wholly inadequate, mention the project 'World Studies of Churches in Mission' to which John contributed enormously, alike at its outset in 1954 by writing a long and impressive memo outlining what was to become a major, innovative and still echoing set of studies, and at its 'completion' as a member of the five-person team struggling in 1968/9 towards their revolutionary conclusions that have been far too widely ignored. These centre on what God can have meant by the virtually ungraspable diversity of the 'results' of mission in the 15 different situations studied, in which John's by then strong faith in the never-fully-graspable purposes of the God who is known in Jesus is all too recognisable in the team's intriguing report *Can Churches Be Compared?* His vital, reconciling role at the WCC's tumultuous Uppsala Assembly of 1968 is briefly summarised from John's

own published account (p.108), yet without adequate attention to the virulence of the disagreements in the background, let alone to the subsequent history of those disputes, while his magisterial, thoroughly down to earth and profoundly challenging paper to the Melbourne World Mission Conference of 1980 on the relation of Church to Kingdom in God's purposes is no more than a line in the list of his writings (pp.254-6).

So please buy, read, re-read and treasure this book, learn all you can from it and pursue your own disciplined explorations in the friendship and intercession of this unforgettable man. But look forward too to whoever can research and lay out all the riches in his living and loving that still await their chronicler.

Martin Conway

Your Key to Successful Lobbying

Your Key to Successful Lobbying. An essential handbook for campaigners, ed. by the Africa-Europe Faith & Justice Network, Brussels 2002, 34 pages, £2 available from aefjn@village.uu.net.be or via www.aefjn.org

This publication springs from a network of religious communities, and has been made available 'to all who will join us in working towards a future where the resources of the world are shared more evenly'. It is a short booklet (just 34 pages) and ambitious in scope. It covers a wide range of issues related to lobbying, including why groups should be involved, how to manage lobbying campaigns, detailed sections on UK and European law making, and practicalities of contacting decision-makers and the media.

Its comprehensiveness is its main weakness: it was not quite clear to me what kind of campaigner or lobbying group the authors had in mind. The section on working with the media, for example, would be very useful for a local group, but such groups are perhaps less likely to have the resources to undertake the kind of multilevel campaign described in 'How to manage a lobbying campaign'.

As a resource to dip into, this booklet has some very useful nuggets. But as an 'essential handbook' it lacks rootedness. It would have been strengthened considerably by some practical examples and case studies.

All campaigns are different, and lobbying strategies need to be reactive and flexible. What works in one situation will not work in another. For example, the successful and high profile Jubilee 2000 campaign for debt cancellation did very little parliamentary campaigning, deciding to focus directly on the government instead.

For a group wanting to get involved in lobbying, this booklet would be a useful starting point, but no substitute for talking to people involved in a couple of contrasting campaigns, and learning directly from those with practical experience.

Martin Drewry

Seasons With The Spirit

Seasons with the Spirit. A compilation of prayers and meditations from 'All Year Round', Compiled and edited by Ruth Harvey, London: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, 212 pages, £9.95 ISBN 085169-267-2

When I first received this book I opened it casually and found myself looking at a piece entitled 'Aspiration' that began:

"That we may learn

to listen until we understand

before replying;

to read right to the end

before reviewing;

to see all sides

before judging –

I felt suitably humbled, and read faithfully through until the very end!! It has been well worth it, and I am grateful for my admonishment.

I had never heard of 'All Year Round'. Apparently it has been issued four times a year since 1987, as a means of circulating to a wider audience, prayers, meditations etc, which have been written locally. If this selection is anything to go by, then 'All Year Round' is something I must get myself organized to receive.

Here we have almost 130 different pieces of prose, ordered into sections on Creation and beginnings; Advent to Epiphany; Lent and Passion; Easter; Pentecost and the life of the Church; Harvest; Endings and peace; and Prayers for everyday life. I thought that I'd try some out on my Sunday morning congregation, as a sort of litmus test, but found it pretty much impossible to reduce my favourites to an appropriately small selection!

So I would defy anybody to buy this and not find at least a handful of previously unknown gems, both for their own edification and for corporate use. There's a wide range of authors, most of whom I'd never heard of. Hopefully this book will be an encouragement and affirmation to each of them, as well as a gift to the rest of us. My guess is that like me you'll be signing up for future issues of 'All Year Round'.

Henry Morgan

Churches and Europe

Churches and Europe. A Reader, ed. by the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches, Geneva May 2002, 26 pages

In ten illustrated chapters (entitled: Some facts and figures; Political organizations and institutions; Ecumenical movement and organizations; Conflict, peace and reconciliation; Churches and mission; Human rights and religious freedom; A heart and soul for Europe? etc.) the booklet intends to give an overview of political life and history of the European continent, an introduction to the



churches and ecumenical instruments and their role in the continent with its main focus on the 20th century.

The targeted readership is both the churches (most of whom still need increased awareness of the European project) and the secular public who need increased awareness of the spiritual aspects of Europe's past and future. Part of the motivation is the churches' interest in highlighting their role in a secular age in which the political forces occasionally out of mere ignorance, and on other occasions out of anti-religious ill-will make life hard for them. But it is also the conviction that the 'legacy of totalitarian regimes and the confrontations of the Cold War have left profound scars and divided memories within Europe, [...] require new efforts by the churches to highlight the age-old and contemporary Christian experience of reconciliation, truth and justice in Europe.' (p.5)

It is part of the nature of such condensed publications that their strength lies in conveying factual information rather than elaborate reasoning and analysis as to causes, effects and connections of events, cultural patterns and future tasks. Therefore three short but highly informative lists of a) resources used, b) recommended further reading and c) relevant internet sites direct the reader to further sources of information and reflection.

There is a general introduction to the ecumenical instruments and their emergence but it is regrettable that although the various political European institutions are introduced (an information which is obtainable in many places), there is no comprehensive explanation of how the churches' ecumenical instruments relate to those dispersed political elements in Brussels, Luxembourg, Strasbourg etc., a piece of information much harder to obtain even for the church insider. The co-operation of CEC and WCC re European questions, and the distinction as to what is whose responsibility is a difficult question and consequently this publication sometimes crosses the border and sometimes doesn't. On the one hand the worldwide Women's World Day of Prayer is not mentioned but the valuable, yet ecumenically not nearly as influential Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women is. On the other hand the WCC's Europe-related activities are described in some detail and there is even a mention of the criticism the WCC encountered re its role in Human Rights debates during the Cold War (p.14).

There are unfortunately a number of errors in detail which make one doubt the accuracy of all other such details. Thus a picture allegedly showing the modern Christian martyrs in Westminster Abbey in fact shows empty niches (p.13), the German Kirchentag is repeatedly but incorrectly referred to as an annual rather than biennial event (p.12.20) and the total population of Europe is variously given as '791 million' or '690 million', 'over 700 million' and '720 million' (p.6.7.12), the year of the Willingen World Mission Conference is given as 1954 instead of 1952 (p.19).

Despite such little mistakes the publication as a whole seems valuable and is successful in conveying a surprising amount of information and reflection within limited space and readable language.

KMF

Hauerwas: With the Grain of the Universe

Stanley Hauerwas: With the Grain of the Universe: The church's witness and natural theology, SCM Press [ISBN 0 334 02864 7], £13.95.

In his typically erudite 2001 Gifford Lectures Stanley Hauerwas, Gilbert T. Rowe Professor of Theological Ethics at Duke University in the USA, pursues the challenging idea that natural theology *is* revealed theology, rightly understood. That is, it depends upon a full doctrine of God. His critique of attenuated and accommodating forms of faith takes Hauerwas into a reassessment of major past Gifford lecturers -- notably William James, Reinhold Niebuhr and Karl Barth.

For him Barth, above all, shows what 'natural theology' can be after Christendom and beyond the intellectual mistakes of modernity. God is made known through witness, through the truthful lives and speech of Christians and through the 'correlative politics' of church, not through epistemology. The world can only really know itself when it knows the God who called it into being, who is revealed transformingly in Jesus Christ. Knowledge is *metanoia*, which enables us to speak truthfully of the world. There are no other 'foundations' to be had.

This is classic Hauerwas. There is much in his writing and in the provocation and good-humoured polemicism of his style that I like. He is absolutely right to say that the Gospel proposes a new *theo*-logical way of relating to the world disclosed in Jesus Christ, and that the church is at a loss when it fails to live and articulate this. However for me he ends up being far too dismissive of post/modernity and secularity, like Milbank and others of a neo-Barthian or Radical Orthodox temperament.

Let me suggest another way of seeing. Suppose God called the universe into being in freedom for the purposes of love, as I believe the lived Christian narrative suggests. We would then expect that *both* the zone of freedom (the *saeculum*) and the zone of love (the divine kingdom) would together exhibit God, not least in their tension and in the fulfilment of the former by the latter.

If this is so then being destined in the image of God means that we are apart from God as well as with God, and that our ultimate hope is that we can be united to God through a redemption which does not obliterate self and otherness but brings it into free relation.

On this basis I would contend that the secular and the religious other (barely mentioned by Hauerwas) may be seen as positively experimental plots in their own right, in communication and struggle with a Church that signifies the Body of Christ in the world. They are not simply examples of rebellion and confusion, as Hauerwas seems mostly to end up portraying them.

So while there is a necessary specificity and vocation to 'being church' (I am wholly at one with Hauerwas' counter-cultural vision of *ecclesia*, and his conviction that non-violent enemy love truthfully reveals the victory of the Lamb who was slain), there is also a necessity for otherness, independence and plurality in the world. The church needs the world's autonomy to avoid its own temptations to power and evasion, and the world needs

the transformation made visible in Christ through his companions.

Niebuhr assumed that the truth of Christianity consisted in the confirmation of universal and timeless truths about the human condition that made Christianity available to anyone without witness, says Hauerwas. He is absolutely right to criticise such cosy assumptions, whether we think he is being wholly fair to Niebuhr or not. But the alternative is not the absorption of the world into the church. Rather it is a conversation, involving strong witness and argument, countervailance and vicarious availability.

William James rightly says that there is no scientific or other method by which human beings can steer safely between the opposite dangers of believing too little or too much. This is also true of theological method, in a way that Hauerwas does not always seem to recognise. At one point he lovingly chastises his mentor, the moral philosopher Alasdair McIntyre, for saying that his return to Catholic faith was mediated by a prior philosophical turn in his thinking. This offends Hauerwas' ferocious commitment to the epistemic privilege of his kind of theology. Not that he acknowledges its roots as epistemological, of course.

One is tempted to say (in the polemical style beloved of the man) that a better theological framework would see less of a problem here than Hauerwas seems to perceive! Reading Barth through Bonhoeffer, for whom committed discipleship and radical questioning became natural allies for thoroughly *theo*-logical reasons, might suggest a more world affirming way forward for the church than Hauerwas allows. With God and for God we live in the world without God, and so on.

None of this gainsays my agreement with Hauerwas that testimony is at the heart of truth, and that the story of a crucified God who loves and changes us in, through and beyond suffering and death is 'what it is all about.' But surely the key point is that this vision goes *against* the grain of a universe that, far from conforming to the divine, is the open -- and therefore terrifyingly contingent -- space in which the purposes of love can be experienced without compulsion through knowing subjects, so that its creator can take all the values the cosmos has realised through them and ensure that they are developed for ever in the divine personality (Keith Ward).

Maybe the issue here -- thrown up by recent confusions over 'creationism' and evolutionary theory in public education -- is that Hauerwas and theologians of his ilk think exclusively in personalist and almost never in cosmological terms. It is ironic that an otherwise hugely stimulating set of essays bearing the title *With the Grain of the Universe* speaks of science so fitfully. We need a theology that recognizes fruitful human investigation as enriching and effective for its discourse. Far from constraining theology, that is part of its capacity to speak truthfully. As Colin Morris once said, the world without God is a terrifying mess, but God without the world is a hopeless abstraction.

There are many other riches in this book that I have not begun to do justice to. Hauerwas' reading of Barth is one of the most persuasive I have read, for example, though I remain un-persuaded at certain critical junctures. He occasionally lapses into bizarre idealisations. It would be interesting to know what Leonardo Boff would make of the extraordinarily disincarnate claim that John Paul II is the first non-Constantinian pope, for example! But the main point about Hauerwas is that he always makes you think, and he always returns you to the core of what faith means. For that we should all be abidingly grateful.

Simon Barrow

Received for Review

Inclusion in this section does not necessarily imply that a book will be reviewed in CONNECTIONS.

A Time to Heal. Perspectives on Reconciliation, Belfast: Faith and Politics Group, 2002, 48 pp. £2.50 www.fpireland.org

Irene M Plum and Elza Kuyk: Relations With Migrant Churches. Experiences and Perspectives, Utrecht : Uniting Protestant Churches in the Netherlands, 2002, 72 pp., €4 www.kerkinactien.nl

Anthony O'Maboney and Ataullah Siddiqui: Christians and Muslims in the Commonwealth. A Dynamic Role in the Future, London: Altajir World of Islam Trust , 330 pp., ISBN: 1 901 435 08 3, £. 15

Kenneth Cragg: Am I Not Your Lord? Human Meaning in Divine Question, London: Melisende, 2002, 256 pp., ISBN: 1 901764 21 4, £. 15



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For reflection

'I am haunted by a new version of the parable, when the priest, the Levite and the Samaritan travel again down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. This time all three notice the fellow half-dead at the roadside. The priest sees a frightened man facing death and in the name of Christ tries to bring him the things that transcend death. The Levite sees a confused and bewildered man and in the name of Christ tries to explain what is happening to him so that he can find some meaning and take a grip of the situation. The Good Samaritan sees a typical victim and, while binding up his wounds, planning in the name of Christ a campaign to clean up the police force. Because each of them claims priority and the greater relevance they tear the poor man apart. They tear him apart, body or mind or spirit, individual or incorporate, because none of them sees all of these as a single whole, none of them sees Man. [...] I return to the main theological issue – the apparent opposition between the gospel of personal conversion and the gospel of social responsibility. If we persist in maintaining this 'either/or', the things we say on both sides will be naïve and will sound more and more phoney. We must face the issue and think it through to a synthesis, not a compromise.'

John V. Taylor introducing the Report The Missionary Structure of the Congregation at Uppsala 1968 in N. Goodall: The Uppsala Report 1968, Geneva: WCC, 1968 pp. 22-24

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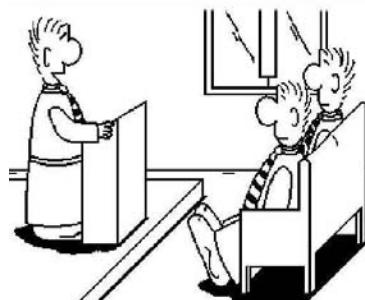
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The last word



"And so.....to make a short sermon long....."