

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION IN RELIGION  
OF THE THEOLOGICAL WRITING OF BISHOP JOHN ROBINSON.

Donald Anders-Richards.

Part I

of the thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D.  
of the University of Sheffield: Department of Biblical Studies.

July 1975.

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SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION IN RELIGION OF  
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PART I

SECTION A

The development of theological enquiry over the past 30 years is shown to have resulted in radical new insights into traditional Christian teaching and interpretation, in response to the dual challenges of relevance and secularity. The resultant "new" theology and "new" morality are outlined and examined, and this is followed by a detailed theological and philosophical analysis of the core notion of Christian agape - its nature, significance, and relevance to contemporary Christian faith and individual Christian practice.

SECTION B

With the writing of Bishop John Robinson as a foundation reference, six selected areas of traditional Christian belief and teaching are examined in the light of the newer theological approaches set out in the previous section. These fundamental and relevant areas are those of the Church, Prayer, Man, Sin, Death and Immortality, and Heaven and Hell. An attempt is made to explicate these areas in terms which are theologically and philosophically sound, and at the same time comprehensible to modern secular man.

SECTION C

Lastly, the relevance of this modern theology to present day education in religion is assessed. This task is followed through in two directions - first of all there is a detailed analysis of the present position of education in religion in state schools and a detailed presentation with commentary, of the whole range of the Church's present educational activity at Diocesan level. Finally, detailed suggestions are made for the future pattern of education in religion as it affects the two fundamental areas of Christian faith and Christian practice.

PART II

**A critical analysis of Robinson's work is presented, with particular emphasis on the notions of supranaturalism and transcendence. These two notions are further explored in the wider context of their significance for contemporary understanding of the concept of the reality of God.**

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am profoundly grateful to my supervisor Professor J. Atkinson, whose theological insight and pastoral concern have been the source of much encouragement in writing this thesis.

The second event was the Pope's address in St. Francis of Assisi on the occasion of the commencement of Holy Year 1975. In this address the Pope stressed the primacy of love as the key to the writings of the great saints in the world. "Love, which is charity, brings about reconciliation" he said. "It is a creative act in the web of human relations. Love overcomes discrimination, jealousy, dislike, age-old oppositions and these newly emerging. Love gives to peace its true rest, and business hypocrisy, uncertainty and anger. Love is the art of peace: it introduces a new kind of teaching, one that involves a total revision of approach". The third event was the publication of Professor Maurice Wiles' 1973 Helicon Lectures under the title The Reshaping of Christian Doctrine. As a basic premise of his rationale, Professor Wiles maintains that the most significant feature in the development of intellectual disciplines is that the most important changes occur when somebody succeeds in seeing the subject from a new perspective. It is a new frame of reference rather than new particular facts which is most productive of advance. Describing the approach as "change through alteration of perspective", Professor Wiles argues

## FOREWORD

During the period in which this study neared completion, there were three events which brought into clear perspective its declared objectives and necessity. Firstly the resignation from office was announced of Fr. Hugh Bishop, Superior of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield and Principal of its theological college when I myself was a student there. After some thirty years in monastic orders, Fr. Bishop declared that he had become "increasingly agnostic and dissatisfied with theological systems and ecclesiastical formularies", and that it would not make any difference to his religion if per impossibile it could be proved that Christ had never lived. The second event was the Pope's address in St. Peter's basilica Rome at the commencement of Holy Year 1975. In this address the Pope stressed the primacy of love as the key to the workings of true peace in the world. "Love, which is charity, brings about reconciliation" he said. "It is a creative act in the web of human relations. Love overcomes dissensions, jealousies, dislikes, age-old oppositions and those newly emerging. Love gives to peace its true root, and banishes hypocrisy, uncertainty and egoism. Love is the art of peace: it introduces a new kind of teaching, one that involves a total revision of approach". The third event was the publication of Professor Maurice Wiles' 1973 Hulsean Lectures under the title The Remaking of Christian Doctrine. As a basic premise of his rationale, Professor Wiles maintains that the most significant feature in the development of intellectual disciplines is that the most important changes occur when somebody succeeds in seeing the subject from a new perspective. It is a new frame of reference rather than new particular facts which is most productive of advance. Describing the approach as "change through alteration of perspective", Professor Wiles argues

that differing cultural and philosophical conditions require different understandings and articulation of the Christian faith. It is on this foundation that his own subsequent explication of contemporary Christian doctrine stands. Three events then, indicative of DOUBT - LOVE - REMAKING. These are areas with which this study is also primarily concerned as it considers the problems of interpreting, living and teaching Christ in a secular age.

CHAPTER 1 - THE SEARCH FOR CLARITY

    The search for clarity

    The search for clarity

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CHAPTER 2 - THE SEARCH FOR CLARITY

    The search for clarity

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SECTION 3

Traditional church doctrine and teaching in selected areas of contemporary interest and relevance, are re-examined in the light of the premises established in Section 2, with a view to generating interpretations which are intelligible to modern secular man.

CHAPTER 3 - THE SEARCH FOR CLARITY

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SECTION A

The "new" theology and the "new" morality are examined in terms of their particular significance for theological and philosophical notions of God, Jesus Christ, and agape. J. A. T. Robinson is taken as a key figure around which understanding of these notions may be crystallized.

"A fuller understanding of the nature of life-processes has resulted in a technological rather than an agrarian economy. But how meagre so far has been the contribution of Christian philosophers and liturgists to the reconceiving and redramatizing of the newly imagined life in sacramental terms. Yet this, it may be urged, is what the world needs. A new imaginative representation of the interlocking processes by which life is created, sustained, healed, fulfilled. If such a representation could be set forth in word and ritual, a reinterpretation of the living Christ as the paradigmatic being through whom the secrets of balanced and fruitful living are revealed, then this would be ministry indeed".

F. W. Dillistone in The Times  
February, 1974.

## CHAPTER 1

"NEW" THEOLOGY AND "NEW" MORALITY

## I.

It is a matter of real concern to many contemporary people, young and old alike, that their lives should have relevance<sup>(1)</sup>. Not for them the almost automatic criteria purveyed of old by family and school which dictated the way they should (or ought) to think and act - for the vast majority of the population of Britain, and in particular the young, reasons must be given and alternatives considered before a final commitment is made to specific courses of thought and action which will dictate the pattern of their lives. This constant striving towards personal autonomy, which is such a notable feature of present day life, is both commendable and encouraging, though it is not without its trials and tribulations. For personal autonomy is the chief aim of the educational process in its widest sense, within a society in which regard for the rights<sup>(2)</sup> of the individual is the cornerstone of the political and moral structure of that society. There is of course, no conflict with theology here - or rather with Christianity, which is a better way of putting it - for the model of Western civilisation down the ages has been that Judaeo-Christian ethic which has high regard for the dignity and potential of every

- (1) Lecturers and teachers will have no doubts about this observation - it is perhaps the commonest demand of students, particularly in the context of professional or vocational training.
- (2) The notion of "rights" is one that has occupied much attention lately. The debate centres largely upon the notion of respect for persons, which predetermines the nature of human rights and their significance. See in particular Downie R. S. and Telfer E. Respect for Persons, and also Melden A. I. Rights and Right Conduct et al.

human being made in the image of God (Genesis 1.26), and placed little lower than God, crowned with glory and honour (Psalms 8.5). Albert Dondeyne expresses the core of traditional Christian thought about the high order of man in the universe when he states:-

"There is, at the origin of Christian moral choice, a stable and unchanging vision. This is the constant and effective recognition of the great dignity of every human person, taken not only as an end in himself existing for himself, but also as a child of God, loved by God and called to possess Him. Christianity demands of Christians that this effective recognition, this constant and active preoccupation with the person and with everything that is necessary for his development, be the very breadth of their life, the unwavering inspiration of all their actions, the rule of their conduct everywhere and at all times"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The tremendous advance in man's conception of himself as an autonomous being is now a recognised feature of the times. It is shown in the increased partnership and sharing of opinion between individuals having a common objective, in many of the organisational forms of contemporary life; in the way in which men are wooed by the media; in the fact that in the approach to whatever situation may be the focus of attention today, one notion which is hardly ever considered is that which epitomised the disaster of Balaclava - "Theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do ....." . It is not surprising therefore, to find the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (who was executed by the Nazis in 1945) speaking of "men come of age" and of "a work come of age"<sup>(2)</sup>. Such

(1) Contemporary European Thought and Christian Faith p. 196

(2) V. Letters and Papers from Prison p. 118 and the exploration of Bonhoeffer's use and interpretation of these phrases in Appendix 1.

language was not brought to the attention of ordinary readers until the early 60's although it had been written some twenty years earlier. In those twenty years, as has been shown elsewhere<sup>(1)</sup>, the high social and moral expectations generated by the second world war which were based upon traditional theological belief and doctrine, remained staggeringly unrealised, and their initial rationale and foundations became increasingly suspect when their validity was considered in terms of relevance to the then contemporary society and situation. It would not be far from the truth to suggest that it was at this point of time that the now strong demand for relevance in all areas of man's concerns had its beginnings. What is quite certain is that so far as theology and spirituality were concerned, the time was ripe for something "new" which would speak to the uncertainties and insecurities which people felt about the traditional forms of religion, above all in terms of their relevance to the life of the individual and to the life of the global community of which they were a part.

## II.

This "something new" was undoubtedly J. A. T. Robinson's small book Honest to God (1963). It had an immediate and dramatic impact upon masses of people of diverse interests and background, upon Christians and non-Christians alike. The contents<sup>(2)</sup> surprised,

- (1) In my unpublished M.Ed. thesis (University of Leicester 1971) entitled "Traditional and Changing Attitudes towards Morality and Moral Education from the Education Act of 1944 to the Present Day pp. 3 - 47. To avoid constant repetition, I shall refer to this work as "M.Ed. thesis". An outline of the content and development of the thesis is given in Appendix 2 in the form of an article entitled "Moral and Religious Education". In Journal of Moral Education Vol. 1 no. 2 February 1972 pp. 103 - 8.
- (2) The summary of Robinson's position which follows in this chapter can be found in detail in my M.Ed. Thesis pp. 48 ff.

encouraged, and sometimes infuriated readers<sup>(1)</sup> - but it was a revelation in every sense of the word, not least because its author was a Bishop of the Anglican Church. Robinson has been described as one of the two most influential theologians writing in English<sup>(2)</sup>, so it is justifiable to take his book Honest to God as a paradigm of the work of the "new theologians", to relate its contents to the work of other writers holding similar views, and to make an attempt to assess its contribution to the interlinked fields of theology, philosophy and morality and the educational process - which is the central concern of this thesis.

It is immediately possible (as Robinson himself admits), to see the influence of three earlier and notable theologians upon his thought - Tillich, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer. Each of these was responsible for a specific aspect of Honest to God, and it is important to identify these aspects at the outset. The first concerns God as "the ground of being", that is, that from which man's being derives. This concept is taken from Tillich, who in a sermon entitled "The Depth of Existence"<sup>(3)</sup> which examined the deepest ground of our being and of all being, the depth of life itself, wrote:-

"The name of this infinite and inexhaustible depth and ground of all being is God. That depth is what the word God means"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) The fact that a much larger book The Honest to God Debate - Edited by Robinson and Edwards, was published within months of Honest to God indicates something of the furore which the latter caused.
- (2) W. Nicholls - Systematic and Philosophical Theology p. 317. The American theologian Harvey Cox is the other.
- (3) V. The Shaking of the Foundations pp. 59ff.
- (4) Ibid. p. 63.

(1) Robinson's Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting (1956) and Jesus Christ and Mythology (1958) et al. And of the "Baltimore school" Robert H. G. (Ed) Papers in Old Testament and Related Subjects and Robinson J. N. and Roth H. (Ed) The Bultmann School of Biblical Interpretation et al.

It is apparent that the traditional supranaturalistic concept of God as a being is not meant here, although it is worth noting that the basic notion is not entirely original - St. Thomas Aquinas in the Summa Theologica frequently spoke of God as "being itself"<sup>(1)</sup> (ipsum esse). Nevertheless, for Robinson, God is by definition "ultimate concern" or "ultimate reality" and it is impossible to argue about the existence of ultimate reality, the only grounds for examination are those which would seek to answer questions such as "What is ultimate concern?", "Is it/he to be described in personal or impersonal terms?" and so on<sup>(2)</sup>.

The second aspect which is shown in Honest to God derives from Bultmann. If theological tenets are to be meaningful to a world come of age, as Bonhoeffer puts it, then Christianity and with it doctrines of God, need to be detached from philosophically primitive mythological and supranaturalistic views. Thus Bultmann writes:-

"There is nothing specifically Christian in the mythological view of the world as such. It is simply the cosmology of a pre-scientific age"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Bultmann's declared aim to "demythologise" Christian belief can be seen both here and in his later work, as well as being clearly explicated in the writing of other theologians and biblical critics who have adopted his approach<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) Mascall E. elaborates on this point in The Secularisation of Christianity pp. 120ff.
- (2) There is a useful critique of the notion of God as ultimate concern in Kai Nielsen's essay in Hook S. (Ed) Religious Experience and Truth.
- (3) V. Bartsch H. W. (Ed) Kerygma and Myth Vol. i. p. 3.
- (4) V. Bultmann's Primitive Christianity in its Contemporary Setting (1956) and Jesus Christ and Mythology (1958) et al. And of the "Bultmann school" Hobbs E. C. (Ed) Papers in Old Testament and Related Subjects and Robinson J. M. and Noth M. (Eds) The Bultmann School of Biblical Interpretation et al.



However, although Bultmann's approach was considered radical, there were those who considered that it was not radical enough. Bonhoeffer was one such person and his work is the third aspect of influence upon Robinson.

Bonhoeffer considered that Bultmann's basic approach was at fault in that, as he stated:-

"It is not only the mythological conceptions, such as the miracles, the ascension and the like (which are not in principle separable from the conceptions of God, faith and so on) that are problematic, but the 'religious' conceptions themselves"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Hence he urged a "non-religious" interpretation of theology, and in line with his view of the world's coming of age, stressed that:-

"God is teaching us that we must live as men who can get along very well without him"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Such views as those above, inevitably led to the reconsideration of traditional Christian theology along several distinct lines of concern relating to theology, faith and philosophy of religion. In particular they led to reinterpretation of traditional thought in three crucial areas - those of theism, christology and morality. These areas will now be considered in turn in order to clarify the meaning and significance of the "new theology" and the "new morality" in philosophical terms, so that its relationship both to the need for and actual explication of religious belief within an educational context can later be seen.

### III.

It has already been stated that one of the foundation premises

(1) Letters and Papers from Prison p. 94.

(2) Ibid. p. 122.



of the new theologians, is the apparent abandonment of traditional theism - that is, of belief in God as a transcendent being. Robinson himself suggests that the contemporary Christian "must go through the mill of first being an atheist"<sup>(1)</sup>. There is of course, a special point to this process - it is to reach a position of faith which is only possible "through and out on the other side of, the atheist critique"<sup>(2)</sup>. The resultant position as regards the transcendence of God and his person is quite clear:-

"Ordinary theism has made God a heavenly, completely perfect person who resides above the world and mankind. The protest of atheism against such a highest person is correct"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Of course it is in the sphere of traditional religious arguments concerning both the existence and character of God as a divine being, that the greatest weight of philosophical argument has always been found, and it is particularly encouraging that largely due to Wittgenstein<sup>(4)</sup>, a longstanding gap between philosophers and theologians has been closed, thus leading to much fruitful dialogue between scholars working within these specialisms<sup>(5)</sup>. For as Sidney Hook so pertinently remarks:-

- (1) The New Reformation? p. 114. He refers to himself elsewhere (e.g. in But that I can't Believe!) as a "Christian agnostic".
- (2) The New Reformation? p. 106.
- (3) Tillich P. Systematic Theology Vol. 1 p. 271.
- (4) Particularly his modification of the "Verification Principle" v. Philosophical Investigations para. 43 - "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" - and his notion of "language games". The latter gave rise to such theological writing as Ramsey I. Religious Language and Macquarrie J. God Talk.
- (5) Typical of the results of this interchange is the Royal Philosophical Society's 1967/68 lectures entitled Talk of God.

"Of one thing theologians were certain. They had been using words all their lives and distinguishing between their proper and improper uses in theological contexts. They need now have no fear of linguistic analysis. On the contrary, it was a method which could be employed both to clarify theological usage and to preserve its autonomy against the "rude" requests from scientists and naturalists to talk sense as defined by the parochial criteria of the scientific and commonsensical mode of discourse. There is not a single language-game that can be laid down in advance as binding upon all who would speak, whether in storytelling, describing, commanding, or praying. Each mode of discourse has its own language, its own rules of sense, to be discovered by analysis, not settled by decree.

A perusal of theological periodicals and recent theological volumes will show to what extent the new doctrine of meaning was experienced as a liberating force. Its indisputable effect was to make the theologians no longer shy of confronting philosophers, and to revive a common interest in common problems concerning meaning and truth. The question of truth once more becomes of paramount importance"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Granted then these two significant contributions to the debate - the abandonment by the new theologians of traditional theism, and the bridging of the communications gap between theologians and philosophers, it is now appropriate to consider more precisely the implication of the "death of God" position as it relates to Robinson. It must be pointed out that Robinson is far from radical when compared with other theologians<sup>(2)</sup> whose writing is more truly representative of what has

(1) Religious Experience and Truth pp. xii - xiii.

(2) e.g. T. J. Altizer and W. Hamilton amongst others.

come to be called "Death of God theology". As was outlined earlier<sup>(1)</sup>, Robinson is greatly dependent upon Tillich's concept of God as the "ground" or "depth of being"<sup>(2)</sup>. He adds to this Bonhoeffer's notion of God as the "beyond in the midst of our life"<sup>(3)</sup>. So the resultant contrast is between God traditionally conceived of as a transcendent yet immanent person and God as personal that is, the claim is that reality at its deepest level is personal, and personality is of ultimate significance in the constitution of the universe. Thus in personal relationships, mankind is said to "touch the final meaning of existence as nowhere else"<sup>(4)</sup>. Indeed:-

"Belief in God then, is the well nigh incredible trust that to give ourselves to the uttermost in love is not to be confounded but to be 'accepted', that Love is the ground of being to which we ultimately 'come home'"<sup>(5)</sup>.

Theological statements thus become not descriptions of God, but "analyses of the depths of personal relationships, of all experience 'interpreted by love'"<sup>(6)</sup>. This analysis is made perfectly clear in the Christian gospel viz:-

"He who does not love, does not know God; for God is love"

(1 John 4.8).

"He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him"

(1 John 4.16).

- (1) V. supra p. 4.
- (2) Tillich's view is nicely summarised in Macquarrie J. Twentieth Century Religious Thought pp. 366ff. and <sup>in</sup> a record of Tillich's dialogues with his students, entitled Ultimate Concern which is also of value here.
- (3) Letters and Papers from Prison p. 93. Not a very satisfactory description.
- (4) Honest to God p. 49.
- (5) Loc. cit.
- (6) Loc. cit. "Love" here is of course the ἀγάπη of the New Testament and a full analysis of it is given in Chapter 2 pp.22 ff.

"Love is of God" ( $\epsilon\kappa$  Θεου - 1 John 4.7). That is, love has God as its source and ground, and its ultimate revelation is in Christ "the humanity of God"<sup>(1)</sup> rather than in the divinity of man<sup>(2)</sup>.

It is vitally important to see that Robinson has in fact re-interpreted the traditional notion of transcendence here. He states:-

"The man who acknowledges the transcendence of God is the man who in the conditioned relationships of life recognises the unconditional and responds to it in unconditional personal relationships"<sup>(3)</sup>.

The meaning of "transcendence" in this statement is further clarified by Tillich:-

"To call God transcendent in this sense does not mean that one must establish a 'superworld' of divine objects. It does mean that, within itself, the finite world points beyond itself. In other words it is self transcendent"<sup>(4)</sup>.

From Robinson's words quoted above, it is easy to see that he can identify himself with Bonhoeffer's "non-religious" understanding of God and with those who see God as encountered in man's love of man, and in man's deep and strictly biblical<sup>(5)</sup> concern for the material needs of his fellows - rather than in subjective "soul-searching" or in a religious "turning away from the world". Nevertheless, whilst God may be encountered in the secular, the power of the "new being" (Tillich) is manifested par excellence in the Christian community. For it is only in that community that man can:-

(1) Barth K. The Humanity of God pp. 37 - 65.

(2) For a detailed treatment of the Johannine concept see Anders Nygren "God is Agape". In Agape and Eros pp. 146 ff.

(3) Op. cit. p 55.

(4) Systematic Theology Vol. 2 p 8.

(5) Cf. Jeremiah 22.15 ff; Amos 5.21 ff; Matthew 25.31 ff. et al.

"..... know that love as the fount and goal of his own life in so far as the alienation from the ground of his being is overcome 'in Christ'. In traditional theological terms, it was declaring that the way to the 'Father' - to acknowledgment of the ultimacy of pure personal relationship, is only by the 'Son' - through the love of him in whom the human is completely open to the divine, and in the 'Spirit' - within the reconciling fellowship of the new community"<sup>(1)</sup>.

#### IV.

The second fundamental aspect of the new theology treated in considerable detail by Robinson, is that of christology. Once again this area has become the focus of intense interest at the present time. Robinson's latest book The Human Face of God (1973) is typical of many recent studies which are taking a fresh look at the person and significance of Christ. There is also a recent collection of essays by Cambridge theologians in print<sup>(2)</sup> and a new book on the same subject by Norman Pittenger<sup>(3)</sup>. D. M. McKinnon goes straight to the heart of the problem faced by Robinson and other theologians, as well as by many thinking Christians and agnostics alike, when he writes:-

"Finally however, if the Christian way of behaviour is to be liberated from the falsehoods and half truth which beset it at so many levels, it can so be set free only if the image of the crucified Lord, the author and finisher of our faith, is renewed<sup>(4)</sup>.

(1) Honest to God p. 63.

(2) Sykes S. W. and Clayton J. P. (Eds) Christ, Faith and History.

(3) Christology Reconsidered.

(4) In Vidler A. (Ed) Objections to Christian Belief p 32.

For Robinson, as for countless generations of Christians, Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, but there is not much else in his christology which would be recognised as traditional doctrine. The ultimate act of revelation is the Cross - the embodiment of God's decisive act. Here, in what is an ultimate act of surrender of self in love, Jesus is completely united to the ground of his being - in making himself nothing, in his utter surrender to others in love, Christ discloses and lays bare the ground of man's being as Love. H. A. Williams reinforces this analysis in a very powerful passage. He states:-

"Christ's total loss of the sense of his own value, which is ten thousand times worse than physical pain or death, was the stuff and substance which God raised up in glory. In Christ, God made it into the material of a full and satisfying communion with all that is. In Christ, God took inward agony and rage and torture, and made of them eternal life which is eternal love"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Robinson maintains that we are thus able to recognise the full relevance of what St. Paul means when he speaks of the "new creation" or the "new man in Christ". This is not so much a religious idea that is being put forward as the reality of the love of Christ, the "man for others", which unites us to the ground of our being and which works upon the unreconciled relationships of our existence. The Christian community exists to be the embodiment of this new being as love - in Bonhoeffer's phrase "to participate in the powerlessness of God in the world"<sup>(2)</sup>. Bonhoeffer continues:-

"Christians range themselves with God in his suffering, that is what distinguishes them from the heathen .... Man must therefore

(1) In Vidler A. (Ed) Soundings p. 97.

(2) Letters and Papers from Prison p. 124.

plunge himself into the life of a godless world, without attempting to gloss over its ungodliness with a veneer of religion or trying to transfigure it. He must live a "worldly" life and so participate in the suffering of God. He may live a worldly life as one emancipated from all false religions and obligations. To be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way, to cultivate some particular form of asceticism (as a sinner, a penitent or a saint), but to be a man. It is not some religious act which makes a Christian what he is, but participation in the suffering of God in the life of the world"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The bridge between these new theological interpretations of God and of Christ, and the third area of personal morality, can be found by examining the implications which these interpretations have for the life of the Christian in the world. This life is a "religionless Christianity"<sup>(2)</sup>, a life lived in the depth of the common. There is no sacred versus secular idea here, for the focus of Christian life and its meaning is placed clearly in the secular, with no thought of esoteric religious practice, withdrawal from the world or exclusiveness of any kind. For the secular is not a godless aspect of life but the world (as with the individual) alienated from its true depth. The meeting together of Christians should enable them to open themselves to a meeting with Christ in the common (i.e. in the sacramental elements of bread and wine - symbols of the common renewed and redeemed), and to focus, sharpen and deepen their response to the world beyond the point of proximate concern to that of ultimate concern. At the same

(1) Ibid. pp. 122 - 3.

(2) V. supra p. 6.

(3) Note that prayer too finds its material in the world - this is clearly indicated in Chapter 4 pp. 81ff.

(4) V. supra pp. 4-5.



time there should be an opportunity for a Christian to "purify and correct his love in the light of Christ's love", and in Christ, together with his fellow Christians, "find the grace and power to be the reconciled and reconciling community"<sup>(1)</sup>. This is the stuff of Christian worship, and at its heart is the eucharist - no mere religious rite, but the proclamation, the acknowledgement, the reception, the adoration of the holy in, with, and under the common<sup>(2)</sup>.

## V.

The third area of consideration, morality, has in the same way as notions of God and christological concerns, become increasingly important in contemporary theological and philosophical thought. Religious people down the ages have accepted various laws or codes as a basis for their way of life and relationships with others, which have had their foundation in an external supranaturalistic authority to which the individual is subject. The resultant ethic thus derives its norm externally, and sets objective moral values against subjective or relative assessment of situations. At an earlier point in this chapter<sup>(3)</sup> it was intimated that the concept of a supranaturalistic God will no longer satisfy contemporary man - it follows that neither will a supranaturalistic ethic. Indeed it may well be that it is from the starting point of an investigation of morality, that men may come to see the serious doubts raised by belief in a supranaturalistic God. It is after all, astonishing that within Christianity, heteronomous morality has exercised such a powerfully restricting influence, especially so in a religious context which has human freedom as the foundation of its gospel. In one sense the "new" theology is focussing

(1) Honest to God pp. 87 - 8.

(2) Note that prayer too finds its material in the world - this is clearly indicated in Chapter 4 pp. 81ff.

(3) V. supra pp. 4-5.



again upon something which has been the very foundation premise of Christian philosophy from the earliest times.

The core of the many problems which are associated with morality, is its source. If, as by the religious person, God is so described, then the question "How is God the source of morality?" must be asked. The answers which have been given to this question are many and varied and it is beyond the scope of this introduction to consider them in detail. There is one recent and able summary of the whole field by Graeme de Graaff which is worth attention<sup>(1)</sup>. In this essay de Graaff pulls out the essence of the theory which stems from what has been written so far in this chapter, namely, that from the sort of theistic and christological interpretation which has been presented above, it is possible to say that to be moral is to live agapeistically, and to live agapeistically is to believe in God (that is, when the term "God" is interpreted as "ground of being" or "ultimate concern"). de Graaff considers that a whole school of theologians would be shown to be making such a claim were it possible to philosophise their theology<sup>(2)</sup> - Robinson is one who has made the attempt. To the question "What ought I to do?" then, there is a stark and deceptively simple answer - "Love, and then what you will, do"<sup>(3)</sup>. Of course Robinson considers the position in much greater detail than this brief summary suggests. Contemporary ethics, he maintains, has taken its stand against any subordination of the individual situation to an alien, universalisable norm. Thus it is:-

(1) "God and Morality". In Ramsey I. (Ed) Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy pp. 31ff.

(2) Op. Cit. p. 36.

(3) St. Augustine uses this expression in his Epis. Joan. vii. 5 viz: Dilige, et quod vis fac.

"In ethics ..... accepting as the basis of moral judgements the actual concrete relationship in all its particularity, refusing to subordinate it to any universal norm, or to treat it merely as a case, but yet, in the depth of that unique relationship, meeting and responding to the claims of the sacred, the holy and the absolutely unconditional. For the Christian it means recognising as the ultimate ground of our being which is thus encountered, and as the basis of every living relationship and every decision, the unconditional love of Christ 'the man for others' ..... Life in Christ Jesus, in the new being, in the Spirit, means having no absolutes but his love, being totally uncommitted in every other respect, but totally committed in this"<sup>(1)</sup>.

This absolute is for Christians and non-Christians alike (v. Matthew 25.31ff), at once in that it stems from the ground of our being, removing any suggestion of external direction; and in allowing the situation itself, subject only to the law of love to be the key, removing any element of prescriptivity or command. So in the words of the American theologian Joseph Fletcher:-

"Christian ethics is not a scheme of codified conduct. It is a purposive effort to relate love to a world of relativities through a casuistry obedient to love"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Whilst accepting then, that it is through one's own experience and that of others that a working rule of "right" and "wrong" is generally

(1) Honest to God p. 114.

(2) "The New Look in Christian Ethics". In H.D.B. October 1959 p. 10.

(4) de Graaf is speaking here "imaginatively" as he puts it. Earlier he agrees that "We know that 'God' is the Being who would not give wicked commands ..... It is outside His nature to command evil things" ("God and Morality". In Reuven L. (Ed) op. cit. p. 33).

(5) Ibid. p. 33.

acquired, nevertheless it is the situational<sup>(1)</sup> claim of a given circumstance which is of paramount importance in moral decisions. It therefore follows that:-

"Whatever the pointers of the law to the demands of love, there can be for Christians no 'packaged' moral judgments ..... for persons are more important even than standards"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Such a view of morality as this leads to two further considerations. The first is that it establishes an "identity theory" of the relationship of God and morality i.e. God is inseparable from morality when morality is taken to be "committed to live agapeistically" and vice-versa. The second consideration is that this view embraces the notoriously difficult problem of the "good atheist"<sup>(3)</sup>, and it also offers a definition of morality - no mean achievement as any moral philosopher knows. What is more it possesses a considerable degree of unassailability, for as de Graaff points out:-

"While God's commands can be moral or immoral<sup>(4)</sup>, agapeism is morality in anybody's book, however secular the book may be ... Commands can go in any direction, but agapeism can only go in the direction of morality - the direction in which most 'moralities' have tended and which, at this time of day, we insist is morality proper"<sup>(5)</sup>.

- (1) Hence the use of the term "situation ethics" to describe the process of moral decision with agape as the chief referent. V. Fletcher's book Situation Ethics for a full account; also Ramsey P. Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics, and Robinson's chapter "The New Morality" in Honest to God pp. 105 ff.
- (2) Robinson op. cit. p. 120.
- (3) V. Kai Nielsen's opposing view "Is God so powerful that he doesn't even have to exist?". In Hook S. (Ed) Religious Experience and Truth pp. 270 ff.
- (4) de Graaff is speaking here "imaginatively" as he puts it. Earlier he agrees that "We know that 'God' is the Being who could not give wicked commands ..... It is outside his nature to command evil things" ("God and Morality". In Ramsey I. (Ed) op. cit. p. 33).
- (5) Ibid. p. 39.

It can be seen then, that a crucial referent in this first chapter is "agape". This is clearly the point at which the meaning, nature and significance of agape needs to be explored and elucidated. The chapter which follows meets this need.

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## CHAPTER 2

AGAPE

I.

Agape,<sup>(1)</sup> or the agapeistic life, has been referred to throughout the preceding chapter in differing contexts - as the source of belief in "God"<sup>(2)</sup> (and indeed the source of God<sup>(3)</sup>), and as the foundation principle of morality<sup>(4)</sup>. It is clearly a fundamental concept in every respect and this chapter will offer elaboration of its religious, moral and philosophical significance. Agape (ἀγάπη) is the Greek word for love, a word which is prevalent in the New Testament and, as Gene Outka surmises, is almost uniformly the referent for any alleged distinctiveness in Christian love<sup>(5)</sup>. The word "love" itself presents many problems of understanding today - problems which stem from its grammatical status<sup>(6)</sup> on the one hand and its "downgrading" in common usage on the other. This latter situation is a serious impediment to the proper understanding of agape, for as Aldous Huxley bitinglly wrote:-

- (1) A detailed exposition of the core subject matter of this chapter can be found in my M.Ed. thesis pp.106-128 and 148-153.
- (2) V. supra pps. 9-10; 15-16.
- (3) V. supra p. 10.
- (4) V. supra p. 16.
- (5) I shall be suggesting the nature of its distinctiveness in the pages which follow. It is notable that Outka's book Agape: An Ethical Analysis, is the only book which has been written by a philosopher on the subject. The book derives from Outka's Ph.D. thesis (Univ. of Yale 1967) entitled "The Characterization of Love in Contemporary Theological Ethics".
- (6) See my M.Ed. thesis p.106 for further explication of this point.



"Of all the worn, smudged dog-eared words in our vocabulary, "love" is surely the grubbiest, smelliest, slimiest. Bawled from a million pulpits, lasciviously crooned through hundreds of millions of loudspeakers, it has become an outrage to good taste and decent feeling, an obscenity which one hesitates to pronounce. And yet it has to be pronounced; for after all, Love is the last word<sup>(1)</sup>".

It is not surprising that when love is spoken of as ultimate concern, as the focus of the divine, as "god", people tend to be mystified by these notions and complain that they really do not understand the concept itself or its function as a moral referent<sup>(2)</sup>. Yet it is a concept which has a uniquely Christian source, and one which has profound implications for human behaviour.

It is sometimes suggested that the Greek word itself was invented by New Testament writers to be definitive of a new quality of life which came into the world with Christ. This is not so, for it was used by the compilers of the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible (called the Septuagint and usually designated by the numerals LXX), for the Hebrew word "love" (אָהַב). The Septuagint translators were anxious to avoid any suggestion that the love so described should be confused with the love of Greek mythology or pagan eroticism. New Testament writers did not want to be misunderstood either, so the Greek word agape, already in existence, suited their purpose admirably. It was then given a much more specific and exclusive significance to express the spiritual bond of love between God and man and between man and

(1) Adonis and the Alphabet and Other Essays p.72.

(2) My article "Love and Morality" in Journal of Moral Education Vol.3 no.2 (March 1974) given in Appendix 3 was written in answer to such statements by colleagues and students.

man, in Christ, which is the essence of Christianity.<sup>(1)</sup>

Clearly the English word "love" embraces many aspects of meaning. The Greeks used different words to denote these aspects, of which two are specially relevant to this analysis:-

(a)  $\phi\iota\lambda\iota\alpha$ <sup>(2)</sup> (philia) denoted friendship love, i.e. spontaneous, natural affection or social love. Such love as this might tend to be emotional or unreasoning.

(b)  $\epsilon\rho\omega\varsigma$  (eros) denoted sexual or romantic love. Such love as this is essentially egocentric, seeking its object for the sake of its own satisfaction, self-fulfilment, or self-enhancement.

By contrast,  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta$  (agape - the transliteration will be used from this point onwards) is other-directed love. That is, love which is outgoing, non-reciprocal and neighbour-regarding. "Neighbour" here means everyone else, including one's enemies (v. Luke 6.32-5).

Richard Niebuhr has written a beautifully descriptive account of neighbour-love:-

"Love is rejoicing over the existence of the beloved one; it is the desire that he be rather than not be; it is longing for his presence when he is absent; it is happiness in the thought of him; it is profound satisfaction over everything that makes him great and glorious. Love is gratitude: it is thankfulness for the existence of the beloved; it is the happy acceptance of everything that he gives without the jealous feeling that

- (1) A definitive study of agape in its biblical context is to be found in Professor V.P. Furnish's recent book The Love Command in the New Testament (S.C.M. Press 1973). In an extremely valuable and detailed appendix, the author also lists and examines "New Testament Words for Love" (pp.219ff).
- (2) It is easier to use the nouns rather than the verb roots, although in the New Testament the verb is the commonest form used.

the self ought to be able to do as much; it is a gratitude that does not seek equality; it is wonder over the other's gift of himself in companionship. Love is reverence: it keeps its distance even as it draws near; it does not seek to absorb the other in the self or want to be absorbed by it; it rejoices in the otherness of the other; it desires the beloved to be what he is and does not seek to refashion him into a replica of the self or to make him a means to the self's advancement. As reverence love is and seeks knowledge of the other, not by way of curiosity nor for the sake of gaining power but in rejoicing and in wonder. In all such love there is an element of that "holy fear" which is not a form of flight but rather deep respect for the otherness of the beloved and the profound unwillingness to violate his integrity. Love is loyalty; it is the willingness to let the self be destroyed rather than that the other cease to be; it is the commitment of the self by self-binding will to make the other great"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The essential character of agape is that it is the product of the will or disposition, and it is therefore neither unreasoned as philia might be, nor instinctive as is eros. Agape is an attitude of will<sup>(2)</sup>. It is not being suggested that agape is not found or exercised in friendship love or sexual love. But it can only be said that this may be the case. Agape clearly differs in meaning from both philia and eros, although there are certain New Testament passages where philia is used as a synonym for agape. Eros is not used at all in the New Testament - the word epithumia (ἐπιθυμία) is found in its place, but it might be said of eros that the love involved is the

(1) The Purpose of the Church and its Ministry p.35.

(2) Cf. Eric Fromm - "Love is not primarily a relationship to a specific person; it is an attitude, an orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole ....".  
The Art of Loving p.38.

result of the attractiveness of the object loved whereas agape includes love for the unloveable, the repellent, those who have offered nothing in return. The essential neutrality of agape is nicely brought out by Kierkegaard. He states:-

"Erotic love is determined by the object; friendship is determined by the object; only love to one's neighbour is determined by love. Since one's neighbour is every man, unconditionally every man, all distinctions are indeed removed from the object"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Further, agape is not something which men can develop themselves, - that is, it is not a natural virtue. Rather it is a "fruit" of being "in Christ" (ἐν Χριστῷ), an image which is used throughout the latter part of the Johannine Gospel<sup>(2)</sup> and in the Johannine Epistles. It reaches full expression in the concept of the Church as the "new Israel" living "in Christ" with agape as the fulfilment of the law (πληρωμα νομου - Romans 13.10 Cf. 13.8 et al.). St. Paul's classic exposition of agape is the well known account in 1 Corinthians 13 - its significance is more sharply portrayed in C.S.C. Williams's paraphrase than in the more familiar translation of the Authorised Version. Williams writes:-

"Without the gift of God's essence, self-giving Love, Paul maintains that any Christian sacrifice is valueless, like the resonant gongs and tinkling cymbals of pagan worship ..... Even the gift of preaching and of understanding all divine secret plans or having all sacred knowledge, and even the gift of faith that could move mountains (Mark 11.23), without Agape, is valueless. Even giving away all possessions piece by piece, including the body itself, is profitless without Agape. The characteristics of Agape are to be long-suffering, kindly disposed, not given to envy or to self-display, to conceit or mis-

(1) Works of Love.

(2) e.g. John 15.12 ff. et al.

behaviour, to self-seeking, rage or bitterness. Agape does not brood over wrongs, is pleased not with injustices but with truth and is always forgiving, trusting, hopeful and patient. Agape is indestructible. Prophecies, tongues, knowledge all perish but not Agape. They belong not to the mature but to the childhood stage. A metal mirror gives a dim reflection; in this life we see God's truth like that; but then we shall see clearly and know for certain as God knows us. Faith, hope and Agape remain in the new age which has already begun"<sup>(1)</sup>.

These expression of Christian love in the New Testament may be compared with what a writer of this century has to say about it. Anders Nygren's Agape and Eros is an examination of what he calls "motif research", that is, he examines the nomos (νομος - law) motif of Judaism and the eros motif of Hellenism to bring out the significance of the agape motif of Christianity. His purpose is to isolate that element which is specifically Christian, and which sets its mark on every aspect of genuine Christian life, making it a uniquely different religion<sup>(2)</sup>. Nygren insists that real religion involves concrete experience of the "eternal"<sup>(3)</sup> - an actual, living relationship with it, so that:-

"The love which he (the Christian) shows to his neighbour is God's agape in him"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) V. Peake's Commentary on the Bible Sec.840a p.962 and Cf. other important New Testament passages on agape - Acts 2.42, 46; 6; 20.7, 11; 2 Peter 2.13; Jude 12 and much of 1 John including the texts quoted on p.9f. in Chapter 1.
- (2) C.S.C. Williams op.cit. Col.840a p.962 remarks that Christian agape should be compared with the nearest Hindu parallel in the Ramayana of Tulsi Das bhakti, which falls far below the supreme Christian virtue of agape.
- (3) Nygren uses the expression "the eternal" rather than "God" because the latter has associations which are not common to all religion. The possibility of an atheist religion, or at least one in which the "eternal" is conceived of in impersonal terms, is left open.
- (4) Op.cit. Vol. I p.96.

Gustaf Aulén, Nygren's episcopal predecessor, also supports a view of the Christian faith which stresses the centrality of God as agape in Christ, and of agape as its fundamental motif<sup>(1)</sup>.

## II.

It follows then, that if the uniqueness of Christianity is focussed in agape, that agape perfectly shown in the life and death of Christ, the "man for others"<sup>(2)</sup>; then the logical outcome of agape in action is a situation ethic which has agape at the core of man's moral decision and moral action. To speak of moral decision and moral action helps to clarify the dual nature of agape - it is an attitude of mind which is sufficiently powerful to ensure that action of the will is brought to bear in the agapeistic situation, and that the situation itself is resolved without automatic recourse to "rules". In a sense, agape is both attitudinal and situational. It is in this dual sense that St. Augustine's words which were quoted earlier<sup>(3)</sup> - "Love and then what you will, do" - are to be understood. If Christians have the mind of Christ<sup>(4)</sup>, that is, Christ's attitude of thorough-going agape in every situation, then what they do will be right. St. Augustine does make this outcome perfectly clear, for he concludes this section of his commentary of the Epistle of John with the words:-

"Let love's root be within you, and from that root nothing but good can spring"<sup>(5)</sup>.

(1) In his book Christus Victor and elsewhere.

(2) V. supra p.12.

(3) V. supra p.15 footnote.3.

(4) V. Philippians 2.5; 1 Corinthians 2.16.

(5) Radix sit intus dilectionis, non potest de ista radice nisi bonum existere - Op. cit. vii 5.



Agape then is a vital referent in moral decision and moral action. There need be no difficulty for the agapeist in recognising a moral situation (this is one of the perennial "problems" of moral philosophy<sup>(1)</sup>), for it can be seen that all situations and problems which involve human relationships will be subject to the principle of agape because agape is a life style, it is living the Christlike life with total commitment.

The second important aspect of agape as a moral referent concerns the way a moral situation is actually resolved using the agapeistic principle. One thing needs to be said immediately, and that is that resolving a moral situation agapeistically does not mean doing or saying the first thing that enters one's head. For as Fletcher says, confronting a moral situation with one's loving will is:-

".... thoughtful love, careful as well as care-full. It is a matter of intelligence, not sentiment. Nothing is as complex and difficult as ethics, even Christian love ethics, once we have cut loose from law's over-simplifying pretailored rules, once we have become situational<sup>(2)</sup>".

In stressing the importance of applying agape situationally, (i.e. to each individual moral circumstance), agapeists reject the view that there are universal moral laws which are applicable to all identical or similar moral circumstances. Thus there is a unique element in situation ethics, namely, the admission of "exceptions"<sup>(3)</sup>,

(1) Useful references here are Wallace G. and Walker A.D.M. (Eds.) The Definition of Morality, and Foot P. (Ed.) Theories of Ethics.

(2) Situation Ethics p. 114.

(3) V. Wood G. "Situational Ethics". In Ramsey I.T. (Ed.) Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy pp. 336 ff. for a detailed consideration of this important concept.

and it is a vital element in distinguishing between "love" and "law" ethics. As has been seen, both Fletcher and Robinson stress this in their analysis of Christian moral activity<sup>(1)</sup>. So then, how does agape work in resolving moral dilemmas? The process has been misinterpreted by various critics; by Professor P. Hirst for example, who seems to think that what is being suggested is merely some form of moral "intuition"<sup>(2)</sup>; by W. Frankena, who as a result of his dissatisfaction as a philosopher with theological analyses of agape, has produced a detailed exposition of "agape in action" which is outlined in some detail in Appendix 3<sup>(3)</sup>. His purpose was to show that the agapeist is not bound to try and conjure up a moral solution from scratch on every occasion<sup>(4)</sup>, but can make use of "pure rules or principles", "summary rules or principles" as well as simply acting in love or combining<sup>(5)</sup> all these different approaches with the objective of reaching an agapeistic solution. This obviates the point which has sometimes been raised against agapeistic morality that it is altogether too burdensome for ordinary mortals.

A final consideration which is of great importance, relates to the specifically Christian significance of agape. The phrase

- (1) V. supra Chapter 1 pp. 15-16.
- (2) "The Foundations of Moral Judgement". In Macy C (Ed) Let's Teach Them Right p. 125.
- (3) In section 2 of my article "Love and Morality" - Journal of Moral Education Vol 3. no.2, March 1974 pp. 131f.
- (4) V. his article "Love and Principle in Christian Ethics". In Pahel K. and Schiller M. Readings in Contemporary Ethical Theory pp. 546 ff.
- (5) It is noteworthy that Paul Ramsey in Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics pp. 95-6, considers that Robinson's ethical position is one of "Act agapism (sic), Summary Rule Agapism and Rule Agapism", and that in his view such a combination is the most fruitful procedure "most in accord with the freedom of agape both to act through the firmest principles and to act if needbe without them".



"uniquely Christian" was in fact used of it earlier in this chapter<sup>(1)</sup>.

Does this imply that it is an exclusively Christian virtue? The answer to this question is to be found in the area of Christology which was surveyed in the first chapter. In living the moral life, a Christian is living that new life in Christ which is the mark of the committed religious person<sup>(2)</sup>. This way of living recognises in every situation involving people and as the basis of every living relationship and every decision:-

".... the unconditional love of Christ 'the man for others' ... Life in Christ Jesus, in the new being, in the Spirit, means having no absolutes but his love, being totally uncommitted in every other respect, but totally committed in this"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Christian agape then, is distinct from what the non-religious person might simply want to call "neighbour-love", for the committed Christian recognises Christ as its supreme promulgator, and the exemplary character and objective claim on all men, of his unique agapeistic life<sup>(4)</sup>. Thus the Christian sees the moral life within the particular context of Christ's teaching, and of the criterion and inspiration (not simply imitation) of Christ's life. But the nub of the difference between Christian and non-Christian love is the subjective fact that for the Christian, Christ in his agapeistic

(1) V. supra p.23.

(2) V. Chapter 1 p.12.

(3) V. Chapter 1 p.16.

(4) Tillich refers throughout his book Ultimate Concern to the notion of Christ's life on earth as the Kairos (καιρος) i.e. Christ is the "anointed one", he who brings the new aeon into being. Jesus' special relationship with "God" was that here in the centre of history, the highest human potentiality was fulfilled - potentiality of unbroken unity with "God" and consequently of agape. V. particularly his "Sixth Dialogue" on the kairos op.cit.p.125 ff.

life revealed a pattern which is the very truth of life, that is, the very nature of human life, of being itself, which is "God". In his revelation of and complete identification with love (so that love is "God" and "God" is revealed in the agapeistic situation), Christ is the motivatory source of Christian moral striving, and faith in him and identification with him, the dynamic element in Christian moral decision and action<sup>(1)</sup>. Thus in showing agape, the Christian at the same time commits himself to act out his moral decision - it was stated earlier in this chapter that agape is an attitude of will<sup>(2)</sup>. Above all though, "in Christ" and through faith in him, he is conscious:-

".... of being encountered, seized, held by a prevenient reality, undeniable in its objectivity, which seeks one out in grace and demand, and under the constraint of which a man finds himself judged and accepted for what he truly is. In traditional categories, while the reality is immanent, in that it speaks to him from his own deepest being, it is also transcendent, in that it is not his to command: it comes, as it were, from beyond him with an unconditioned claim upon his life. The fact that life is conceived as a relationship of openness, response, obedience to this overmastering reality is what distinguishes the man who is constrained to use the word "God" from the non-believing humanist"<sup>(3)</sup>.

In effect then love is not only what ought to be the ultimate reality,

- (1) I have given an extended treatment of this christology in my M.Ed. thesis pp. 158-163.
- (2) V. supra p. 25.
- (3) Robinson J.A.T. Exploration into God pp. 66-7.

but what is such. The whole of the Christian's life is response to that prevenient presence, of which Robinson speaks above, and to which the openness is all. This the difference between Christians and Humanists<sup>(1)</sup>.

### III.

In this final section it will be of value to specify and, with some selectivity, consider in more detail the treatment by philosophers of the concept of agape<sup>(2)</sup>, in both a theological context and,

- (1) See the further discussion of this subject in terms of Christian humanism infra. Chapter 5 "Man" pp. 101ff.
- (2) I am not concerned here with theological objections to or support of the "new theology" or the "new morality" per se. Typical material which indicated immediate positive or negative reaction to Honest to God is to be found in The Honest to God Debate (mentioned earlier supra Chapter 1 p. 4 footnote) and there has been a trickle of books and articles which argued for and against Robinson's views or those which were similar, since viz:-
- (a) In general against:-
- Image Old and New - Ramsey M.  
Up and Down in Adria - Mascall E.  
The Secularisation of Christianity - Mascall E.
- Phillips G. "The Case of the Lubricated Jellyfish". In Prism no. 98 June 1965 pp. 7ff.  
 Owen H.P. "The Later Theology of J.A.T Robinson". In Theology Vol. LXIII no.604 October 1970 pp. 449 ff.
- (b) In general support:-
- Four Anchors from the Stern - Richardson A. (Ed)  
Praying for Daylight - Neil-Smith J.C. (ed)  
The Ferment in the Church - Lloyd R.

Robinson's new publications arouse corresponding critiques in what might be described as "traditional" and "progressive" camps, with a humanist generally denying the relevance of his work altogether! In the case of his latest book The Human Face of God for instance, there is a negative addendum by Norman Anderson pp. 231 ff. in his book A Lawyer among Theologians; a positive review by David Edwards "Honest to Christ" in the Church Times 16th March, 1973 p.13; and a "debunking" review by Philip Toynbee "Out There or Down Here" in The Observer 18th March, 1973 p.36. What is certain is that Robinson never fails to arouse some response.

as a principle of normative ethics<sup>(1)</sup>, in an ethical context. In fact the written material available in neither of these areas is extensive, and with the exception of articles such as William Frankena's "Love and Principle in Christian Ethics", and Paul Ramsey's monograph Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics which were discussed earlier<sup>(2)</sup>, is limited to two books which have also been referred to passim in this chapter, Ian Ramsey's collection of essays Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy, and Gene Outka's book Agape: An Ethical Analysis.

One of the best known treatments of agape by a philosopher qua philosopher is that of R.B. Braithwaite - "An Empiricist's View of Religious Belief"<sup>(3)</sup>. In his Eddington memorial lecture of 1955 with this title, Braithwaite put forward a view which had as its core the interpretation of the story of Jesus in the New Testament as an inspiration for those who wished to follow the agapeistic life. One of the difficulties of this approach is that it leads to a series of reductionist premises relating to Christianity, and particularly to the way in which Christ and his centrality in Christian belief is understood. To put this simply, if the gospel narratives are merely "stories", whether inspirational or not, it follows that it would cease to matter whether or not the Christ of the Christian faith ever existed, as any similar exemplary figure would suit as the psychologically inspiring motivator for the person

(1) The core of the agapeistic analysis which has been put forward in my M.Ed. thesis, and summarised in the preceding chapter, is of course that of agape as the principle, rather than a principle of normative ethics.

(2) V. supra p.30 and p.30 footnote 5 respectively.

(3) In Ramsey I.T. (Ed). op.cit. pp.53 ff.

wishing to live the agapeistic life. Apart from this principal objection to Braithwaite's theory, it is very difficult to find in his approach any suggestion that agape is more than mere respect for persons. Of course this latter quality is a necessary condition of agape, but it is hoped that the earlier explication of Christian agape, and the christocentric features which are outlined there, <sup>(1)</sup> make it clear that agape is much more than simple humanism. Rather, it is a love, which is "God", in Christ, which is directed to and which permeates the whole of the Christian's experience. Further, and stemming from this latter point, the Christian's agapeistic life-style is not simply the result of commitment to neighbour-love. Again it is clear that such commitment is a necessary condition of the agapeistic life, but for the Christian there is also recognition that:-

"Christian faith means commitment, with ultimate concern, to that which came to expression in Jesus Christ ... 'God' is what we mean by taking as an ultimate concern that which came to expression in Jesus Christ <sup>(2)</sup>".

- (1) V. supra pp. 30 ff.
- (2) Kee A. The Way of Transcendence: Christian Faith Without Belief in God pp. 193 and 195. This is much more than the "psychological stimulus" notion of Professor Braithwaite viz. that Christians are motivated by belief that they are "doing the will of God and are supported by thinking about Christian stories". I find it significant that in one of the replies to Braithwaite's theory, by D.M. Mackinnon (there are other replies by J.N. Schofield and I.T. Ramsey - v. Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy pp. 74 ff.), the author maintains that Braithwaite "comes near identifying it (i.e. the agapeistic life) with something not unlike that universal benevolence which Butler agreed we could not regard as the whole of virtue" (op. cit. p.82). It should be clear that agape as set out in this and the preceding chapter could not possibly be considered as "universal benevolence". I think that Scheler emphasises this distinction when he speaks of Christian neighbour-love as loving humanity in general in order to avoid loving anybody in particular (The Rebel p.24 quoted by D.Z. Phillips in op.cit. p.319).

Kee emphasises the point being made here when he further states:-

"This is indeed a secular faith in Jesus Christ, though as we shall see, it is not a reductionist faith"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The other chapter<sup>(2)</sup> in Ramsey's collection which is particularly relevant from the philosophico-theological point of view, is that of D.Z. Phillips entitled "The Christian Concept of Love".

Phillips considers at the outset what it means to speak (as Christians rightly do) of love as a duty, particularly when this relates not to loving one's wife, children, parents or friends, but to loving one's fellow men, to neighbour-love. He decides that Christian love of others is particular, not because it is this person - i.e. wife, husband, child, parent, friend, - who is loved rather than others in general, but simply because others exist, they are. He quotes Kierkegaard in support:-

"The neighbour is your equal. The neighbour is not your beloved for whom you have a passionate partiality ... the neighbour is every man .... He is your neighbour through equality with you before God"<sup>(3)</sup>.

and again:-

"Belief in the existence of other human beings as such is love"<sup>(4)</sup>.

Phillips then goes on to specify what he considers are the moral and religious objections to the Christian concept of love, and suggests an interpretation which is free from such objections.

(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Apart that is, from Graeme de Graaf's "God and Morality", the essence of which was given in Chapter 1 pp. 15;17.

(3) Works of Love p.34.

(4) Weil S. Gravity and Grace p.56.



His objections are:-

(i) That Christians believe that "God" was specially revealed in Christ and are therefore committed to the task of getting all men to assent to this. How then do religions other than Christianity fare in such a view?

(ii) Is there in fact a "single" morality? Christian love has for instance, been given as an excuse for oppression many times in history with the Christian asserting that he has the truth and the other has nothing. Thus love of dogma replaces love of man, and the kind of religion one supports depends upon whether one loves dogma or man.

Phillips does not seem to do more on the first point than suggest the obvious, that:-

"When I do not understand ways of life and worship different from my own, I had better refrain from judging"<sup>(1)</sup>.

He is more subtle on the second point, and again calls in Simone Weil to support his contention that:-

"The religions which represent divinity as commanding wherever it has the power to do so are false. Even though they are monotheistic they are idolatrous"<sup>(2)</sup>.

True religion then, is that which manifests true love, and the key to this notion in terms of divinity is "the supernatural virtue of justice", i.e. the fact that on rare occasions we find a person not using his power, but instead, having compassion on the person to whom he stands in a relationship of inequality<sup>(3)</sup>. It is

(1) Op.cit. p.317. It has been suggested earlier (p. 27 footnote 2) that in comparative religion, the nearest (Hindu) parallel to agape falls far below it. Phillips follows up with Weil's view on this point (op.cit.p. 322 ff.).

(2) Waiting on God pp.98-9.

(3) Weil uses the story of the Athenians and the people of Melos to elucidate this point, maintaining that the Christian concept of love does not recognise any distinction between justice and charity. Hence the Christian behaves "exactly as though there were equality when one is the stronger in an unequal relationship" (op.cit. pp.320-1).

important to note that Simone Weil did not think it necessary that those who possessed love of neighbour should attribute it to God. However, she did think that such love is religious, and the result of divine activity. There would seem to be no contradiction here with what has already been put forward in this chapter as the nature, significance and operation of agape. However, it is valuable to note Phillips' reminder that:-

".... there is no one answer to the jungle of problems arising from the Christian concept of love ... these problems are more complex than we often suppose ..."(1).

The most recent treatment of the nature and significance of agape as a moral principle is Gene Outka's book Agape: An ethical analysis. This book stands alone in contemporary writing on agape in both the detail and depth of analysis which is brought to bear upon the concept. It stems, as was noted earlier<sup>(2)</sup>, from the author's Ph.D. thesis (University of Yale 1967) entitled The Characterisation of Love in Contemporary Theological Ethics, and it offers a critical treatment and analysis of many modern writers on the "love commandment"<sup>(3)</sup>, and also an exploration of the basic normative content of agape and the problems which are subsequently brought to light. It is this latter aspect of Outka's work which will be summarised in the remaining section of this chapter<sup>(4)</sup>, as he has a great deal to offer which supplements the explication of agape already given in this thesis, particularly the association of

(1) Ibid. p.328.

(2) V. supra p.22 footnote 5.

(3) The most important are Nygren, D'Arcy, Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Ramsey, Tillich and Karl Barth.

(4) Outka's book was not in print when my M.Ed. thesis was written. Hence the material which follows is being presented for the first time in any of my written work on agape.



agape and other related human virtues and problems of interpretation in these areas<sup>(1)</sup>. It needs to be made clear at the beginning that Outka supports the view put forward in earlier pages of this work, that the normative content most often ascribed to agape is that of equal regard<sup>(2)</sup>. Outka uses a simple statement made by Karl Barth to express its essence, and this has a familiar ring when set alongside the many passages quoted passim from Robinson, Fletcher and others in this present chapter and Chapter 1. It involves, Outka says:-

".... in Barth's words, 'identification with his (i.e. the neighbour's) interests in utter independence of the question of his attractiveness'<sup>(3)</sup>".

Such an approach is exemplified in the long quotation by Richard Niebuhr in the early part of this chapter<sup>(4)</sup>, and may be absolutely clarified by speaking about regard for <sup>the</sup> human dignity of every person without any consideration (evaluatively speaking) of the disparities in talent and achievement, and the inequalities in attractiveness and in social rank which differentiate men. There is a problem here of course, and it is that non-exclusiveness must be linked with uniqueness. People are not, as Outka calls it, "indifferently interchangeable" for it is clear that particular achievements furnish whatever content the notion of uniqueness possesses. It must be seen then, that agape can nevertheless work within this duality, in that equal regard demands that although they exist, such distinctions

(1) e.g. What is the nature and extent of equal regard of one's neighbour? How does it relate to self-interest? What is the extent of the self-giving or self-sacrifice involved? Ought I to allow myself to be exploited?

(2) V. op.cit. pp.9-24.

(3) Ibid. p. 260.

(4) V. supra pp. 24-5.

as achievement (or of course non-achievement) must never be a motivational consideration in the exercise of the agapeistic attitude. The agapeist then, tries to get behind those social, political and technical titles which create inequality in order to identify with the neighbour's point of view; he tries to identify with the neighbour's point of view, he tries to imagine what it is for him to live the life he does, to occupy the position he holds<sup>(1)</sup>. It is in this area of equal regard that Outka believes that religious views most effectively operate, and he cites three characteristics which appear the most, viz:-

(i) The God relation - that is, religious people exercising agape frequently see this as consciously promoting relationship with God. A quotation by Geach is used to elucidate this position:-

"That burning love of souls is what charity means, charity is not, as people often think nowadays, a fatuous amiability towards every vagary of misconduct and misbelief"<sup>(2)</sup>.

(ii) Meeting men's "psycho-physical" needs - that is the need for love itself, the need to communicate, to count socially etc. Agape considers the basic interests of others. Outka emphasises that such an approach was exemplified by Jesus himself (v. Matthew 25.33 ff; Mark 8.3 et al).

(iii) Respecting the same freedom of the individual that is shown by God towards his creation. This means not only avoiding the temptation to take their initiative and ability to act away from other people, but positively fostering their subjective identity and integrity.

(1) Williams B. "The Idea of Equality". In Philosophy, Politics and Society pp. 110-31.

(2) Geach P. God and the Soul pp. 115-6.

Finally in this area of equal regard, Outka asks what agape implies in the case of special moral relations such as obligations to one's husband, wife, children, friends, colleagues, fellow Christians (or any religionists), fellow countrymen etc., as distinct from general moral relations<sup>(1)</sup>. His conclusion is that the only restriction in scope of agape in such relations is the condition of finitude, i.e. the interaction of a given person with others is necessarily restricted in terms of all humanity. So that within the sphere of personal contacts, the most that can be required is equal consideration but not identical treatment, for people are incapable of enhancing the welfare of every neighbour with whom they have to do, in the same way or to the same extent. Thus all a neighbour's various wants might be considered but they cannot (and it must also be said, perhaps ought not) all be satisfied. Special relations then can remain - stabilized and integrated by agape based on the premise that if agapeists distribute their energies in the widest possible way, they might then have less chance of securing substantial benefits for others. Nevertheless:-

" .... at the very least special obligations ought to presuppose and never require less than agape requires. Agape is the guardian in rather than the direct inspiration of every special relation"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Greater attention has been given to this fundamental notion of agape as equal regard, because of its obvious link with the theological analysis already put forward in the preceding pages. The remaining

(1) Ibid. pp. 268 ff.

(2) Ibid. p. 274. I think that this view is somewhat distinct from that of D.Z. Phillips whose consideration of special relations was mentioned earlier in this chapter (supra p. 36).

aspects will be summarised in shorter form. Outka goes on to examine the relationship of agape and self-sacrifice<sup>(1)</sup>. He remarks that the feature of self-sacrifice in itself appears to provide no way of distinguishing between attention to another's needs and submission to his exploitation, and no warrant for resisting the latter. The additional principle of justice seems to be necessary if any such resistance is to be expressed. It is also important in this instance to consider the possibility that self-sacrifice has only "parasitic" meaning, i.e. that it would be self frustrating if everyone acted upon it. Outka subsequently considers that any view of self-sacrifice as the quintessence of agape (such as Reinhold Niebuhr's)<sup>(2)</sup>, needs considerable modification, notably by the fundamental emphasis inherent in the notion of agape as self-regard, a notion which is itself "the center of gravity"<sup>(3)</sup>, for it can be applied to the self-other relationship without exploitation of the self occurring, and it can also be applied to the several parties in a given transaction. Further it would not be self-frustrating if everyone acted upon it. So then rather than supporting Niebuhr's view that in every instance where one is regarding the interests of others he must eo ipso be sacrificing his own, Outka maintains that self-sacrifice should only be allowed instrumental warrant, that is, it must always be purposive in promoting the welfare of others and never simply expressive of something resident in the agent. It is simply one possible exemplification and by-product of devotion

(1) Ibid. pp. 274 ff.

(2) For elaboration of Niebuhr's view v. *ibid.* pp. 24 ff.

(3) Ibid. p. 277.

to others for their own sake<sup>(1)</sup>.

Outka's next consideration is that of mutuality. Without it he believes that agape is merely an occasion for disclosing the state of the agent. There is, he argues, a distinction between the independence of the existence of regard from a response, and regard manifested in a concern about states of others independent of concern about reciprocity. The fundamental thought here is that genuine regard for the neighbour's well-being involves concern that he should regard his neighbour; so that one test of such regard might be how the other reciprocates concern shown to him. It is mistaken therefore, to think that the agapeist should only be interested in a response which is actually an interest in self-aggrandizement, or that the outcome of other regard is simply confinement to the agent's inner state so that for example, a recluse might be said to love as fully and appropriately as a parent or statesman<sup>(2)</sup>. This analysis is followed up by a consideration of friendship in the context of mutuality, and Outka concludes that whilst equal regard is an unalterable principle between friends, the "degrees" of friendship - interests, particular attitudes, points of view, social attachments etc. - may, indeed most likely will fluctuate<sup>(3)</sup>.

- (1) Ibid. p. 279. Cf. Ramsey P. "Love is simply love, the genuine article; and it intends the good of the beloved one and not the response of mutuality; it intends the good of the other and not its own actual self-sacrifice or suffering. It is the neighbour and not mutuality or heedlessness of sacrifice or suffering, who stands before the eye of love" (Nine Modern Moralists p. 146).
- (2) Ibid. p. 281.
- (3) Outka later considers the "unalterability" of equal regard in terms of equalitarian justice, in much the same way. His point then is that whilst agape and equalitarian justice are deeply conjoined, they are not interchangeable. Agape is a more inclusive standard in that it applies where justice has far less relevance (V. ibid. pp. 311 ff).

One other consideration in relation to agape remains and that is self-love<sup>(1)</sup>. There are two important and distinct positions involved here - on the one hand to say that in agapeism some self-love is unavoidable, and on the other to say that it alone is always determinative of the other-regarding action. In Singer's words:-

"It is one thing to say that the agent is unable to love others without loving himself, another that loving them is simply a way of loving himself"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Outka notes that this second position, generally known as "psychological egoism", is a frequent feature in the literature on agape, but he considers that it is a false position in that the psychological egoist wrongly assumes that the more a person loves himself for his own sake, the less he can love others for theirs. In fact, those who actively love their neighbours will be found on examination always to love themselves as well. In support of this argument he cites Eric Fromm:

"Love of others and love of ourselves are not alternatives. On the contrary, an attitude of love towards themselves will be found in all those who are capable of loving others"<sup>(3)</sup>.

and Johann:-

".... a man must apprehend and be present to himself in his uniqueness if he is to cherish another"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) Ibid. pp. 285 ff. What follows here is a summary of the more detailed examination of the nature and relationship of self-love and agape presented in Appendix 4.
- (2) Quoted by Outka *ibid.* p.287.
- (3) The Art of Loving p. 59.
- (4) The Meaning of Love pp. 31-2.



Johann's statement does not of course, directly qualify the sense in which self-love is said to be unavoidable. However, sometimes the coincidence is simply left at that: a man is unable to love others unless he loves himself, but equally important, a man pursues a trivial and self-defeating policy when he remains in solitude. At other times, the coincidence contains only one kind of internal sequence: in order to love another, a man must first love himself. Self-love is then unavoidable in that neighbour-love is really derivative from it<sup>(1)</sup>. That self-regard and other-regard are not alternative options may be understood in at least two different senses. The first is that the agent's own private interests will be realised after all if he pursues a life of other-regard - these "interests" being generally understood as self-integration, personal identity and centredness etc. The second is that the objectives of the agapeistic life are never frustrated or rendered wholly pointless, though there will of course be unavoidable clashes of interest. This second instance may be said to apply for example, to the martyr whose violent death results in the growth of a non-violent community, or to the religious believer who holds that history will not prove finally unsupportive of the agapeistic life, as such a life is congruent with the character of providential action. Indeed, whatever the effect upon, or response from others, or the extent of material loss and personal cost to the agent, the life of love will come to be experienced by its exemplars as its own reward<sup>(2)</sup>.

The value of Outka's analysis of the aspects of the normative content of agape outlined above, will now be self-evident. It

(1) Agape: An Ethical Analysis pp. 288-9.

(2) Ibid. p. 290.



should be noted that in addition, he does devote a considerable and not unimportant section of his book to Situation Ethics per se which has not been included in this review<sup>(1)</sup> as it would make the chapter inordinately lengthy. As has been stated<sup>(2)</sup>, Outka's analysis of the chief normative content of agape as equal regard, endorses the view that has been put forward earlier in these introductory chapters. His various considerations<sup>(3)</sup> under this heading of the uniqueness of others, of special relations and of the religious motivation which people have in considering others with equal regard, give the agapeist interesting and useful explication of the problems and operation of agape in this context. In his treatment of self-sacrifice,<sup>(4)</sup> the notion that the agent should not be exploited is an important one, as is his view that a purposive emphasis in self-sacrifice will avoid a negative and subjective ascription of it to himself by the agent. As far as mutuality<sup>(5)</sup> is concerned, it is true that those who actively set out to try and love their neighbours tend sometimes to feel that their efforts have been unsuccessful in terms of their neighbours' response to them. This situation is often true in friendship. Outka shows that whilst mutuality may indeed seem to be present or absent in such cases,

(1) Ibid. pp. 93 ff. His conclusions are summarised on pp. 116-122 and I am inclined to think that although there are various caveats of which it is wise to take note here, some of his conclusions (e.g. that "It is wrong to demand unambiguous solutions in any situation, and it is also wrong to be sanguine about what is achieved", and "One must beware of the curative powers of unbridled love" - p. 122) do not accurately reflect the nature of agape as I see it in resolving moral situations, and are in fact a matter of opinion.

(2) V. supra p. 39.

(3) V. supra pp. 39-41.

(4) V. supra pp. 42-43.

(5) V. supra p. 43.

it is not always possible to declare this with certainty, for such mutual regard may be displayed to a person or persons other than the agent. Nevertheless, the expression of equal regard is always the stabilizing factor in such relationships. Finally, in showing<sup>(1)</sup> that self-love does not necessarily imply a condition of psychological egoism, and indeed, that **it is** consequential and purposive in directing the agapeist to the very core of the meaning and purpose of life, Outka supports and reiterates all that has been said in these introductory chapters about this very meaning and purpose, seen in the context of the Christian love commandment and its exemplar Jesus Christ.

#### IV.

This introduction has then served two important purposes. The first has been to present and explicate the foundation premises of the "new theology" and the "new morality", and to give an account of the way in which philosophical and theological thought has developed in these areas over the past decade. Much of this latter has crystallized around the writing of Bishop John Robinson as has been shown. The second purpose has been to examine in detail the concept of agape, to indicate its specifically Christian origins and meaning and its vital significance as a religious and moral referent in the area of contemporary philosophical and theological discussion. It is now time to move on to consider the way in which the particular viewpoints maintained in the first chapters, will if followed through, influence and necessarily lead to a reinterpretation of traditional

(1) V. supra pp. 44-45.



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20.7; 11	p. 27 footnote
Romans 13.8; 10	p. 26
1 Corinthians 2.16	p. 28 footnote
13.	p. 26
Philippians 2.5	p. 28 footnote
1 John	p. 27 footnote
2 Peter 2.13	p. 27 footnote
Jude 12.	p. 27 footnote

"There is a real spiritual struggle in the Christian faith because it has not proved to be intellectually satisfying generations reared on the belief that science is synonymous with truth. The first priority must therefore be to restore that credibility by expounding the nature of Christ's faith and communicating the fruits of God's love in terms which can be generally appreciated".

First leader in The Times

Aug 1974.



SECTION B

Traditional church doctrine and teaching in selected areas of contemporary interest and relevance, are re-examined in the light of the premises established in Section A, with a view to presenting reinterpretations which are intelligible to modern, secular man.

"There is now less widespread confidence in the Christian faith because it has not seemed to be intellectually sound to generations reared in the belief that science is synonymous with truth. The first priority must therefore be to restore that credibility by expounding the nature of Christ's faith and communicating the fruits of Christian scholarship in terms which can be generally appreciated".

First Leader in The Times

May 1974.

(1) I am indebted to Rev. F. J. Theological Dictionary pp. 221 ff. for much of what follows.

(2) V. G. G. in Handbook of the New Testament pp. 120-2 for the New Testament sources and use of the word, and under "Church" in Cross F. L. (ed) The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church p. 283 f. for a useful summary of its derivation and significance.

## CHAPTER 3

THE CHURCH

## I.

A great deal could obviously be written about the Church - even at this introductory stage of a simple explication of the traditional theological and dogmatic interpretation of the concept. It is a topic which by its very nature lends itself to detailed examination and historical search. As however, the sections of this chapter which deal with Robinson's notion of the Church and an exposition of the institution in the light of contemporary philosophical thought will inevitably be extensive in themselves, this initial resumé of the traditional doctrine of the Church will be very much simplified, and (it is hoped) quite succinct<sup>(1)</sup>.

The nature of the Church has been traditionally expressed in two specific ways - it is the ἑκκλησία<sup>(2)</sup> that is, the elect community called of God, and it is the Body of Christ, that is the mystical extension of Christ's glorified body, extending to men on earth the sanctifying grace of Christ. To become a member of the Church through baptism is to become a member of Christ's body. The Church is the external machinery of the Kingdom of God. Apart from these two fundamental characterisations of the Church, the ἑκκλησία and the body of Christ, other descriptions have been given it which reveal views of its nature in part. They are:-

- (1) I am indebted to Hall F. J. Theological Outlines pp. 221 ff. for much of what follows.
- (2) V. ἑκκλησία in Abbott-Smith G. Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament pp. 138 - 9 for the New Testament sources and use of the word, and under "Church" in Cross F. L. (Ed) The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church p. 283 f. for a useful summary of its derivation and significance.

- The "Bride of Christ"
- The "city of God"
- The "ark of the covenant"
- The "ark of safety"
- The "pillar and ground of truth"
- The "communion of saints"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The Church on earth is of course, a visible church and can be distinguished by visible marks. This "visibility" is apparent in its membership, organisation and institutions. The first of these marks, membership, is revealed in the visible rite of baptism which leads on to visible acts of communion and discipline (in the sense that members are subject to known officers). The Church's organisation is visible in that it was founded upon historically identifiable apostles and prophets, with Christ himself as the "chief cornerstone"<sup>(2)</sup>. Its continuing visible organisation is the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons in unbroken apostolic succession. The Church's institutions are noticeably visible - its sacraments, its public worship on the "Lord's Day", and its discipline. The emphasis which has been placed upon the visible Church down the ages has been rightly seen to stem from scriptural teaching, and a clear indication that the early apostles patently regarded it as such<sup>(3)</sup>. At various

(1) Hall F. J. op. cit. pp. 222 - 3.

(2) Ephesians 2.20.

(3) It is quite clear for example, that both St. Paul and St. John knew who was a member of the Church and who was not - v. 1 Corinthians 5.12-13; 12.12ff; 1 John 2.19 cf. 1 Timothy 1.20. A detailed examination of the organisation of the early Church can be found in the first part of Williston Walker's book A History of the Christian Church and in Whitham A. R. The History of the Christian Church.

times in history it has been found necessary to reiterate this position in response to interpretations of the Church which have suggested that it is a "secret" elect community<sup>(1)</sup> (that is, that its members are known only to God).

The final aspect of the traditional doctrine of the Church which demands consideration, is that of the so-called "marks" or "notes" of the Church. These are four in number - unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity. They are of course made specific in the clause of the Nicene creed in which a belief in "one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" is declared<sup>(2)</sup>. It should be noted that these "marks" have frequently been used as a test of the "true" Church. Whilst the Church is distinguished, and its genuine parts are identified by these marks,<sup>(3)</sup> it is generally maintained that they will not serve as a test of the true Church<sup>(4)</sup>. A brief account of the four marks follows:-

#### UNITY

The Church is one in essence and one organically - that is, there is one life which pervades its activity and which is derived from Christ its head. The organic unity of the Church is an important point to note. This means that the Church has a unity which is that of the family or the nation, not a unity which is contractual such as the kind of unity to be found in common membership of a recreational

- (1) Notably Calvin's (v. the Institutes).
- (2) V. the Anglican Book of Common Prayer p. 306.
- (3) V. Hall F. J. Theological Outlines p. 224.
- (4) V. Moss C. B. The Christian Faith p. 259. Moss has his own criteria - of Faith, Succession and Jurisdiction, which he outlines loc. cit.

or social club. The significance of this distinction is to make clear that the Church is not a contractual society where the members are prior to the society, but an organic society where the society exists prior to the members. Internally the Church is one, although it may be externally divided. It has "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God"<sup>(1)</sup>. Its members recite the same creeds and live by the same sacraments. It does however need to be understood that this notion of unity does not mean that the Church has the same traditions and customs everywhere, nor a single "governing body" etc. The unity characterised is a higher unity embracing as it were, a number of independent societies. Moss calls it "a society of societies"<sup>(2)</sup>.

#### HOLINESS

The Church is holy in that it is separated from the world and is filled with the Holy Spirit. Again history reveals many periods in which such holiness has, as it were, seemed to be in abeyance<sup>(3)</sup>. Nevertheless, the light of holiness has been kept burning by holy men and women even in the darkest days of the Church's existence<sup>(4)</sup>.

#### CATHOLICITY

The catholicity of the Church lies in the fact that it has a universal mission, not so much in that it has a universal membership, although it does of course, seek to bring all mankind into the fold. "Catholic" does not imply that the Church is liberal or tolerant of error except in so far as it is concerned with the salvation of every

(1) Ephesians 4.5-6.

(2) Ibid. p. 257.

(3) e.g. the period of the Inquisition, the Holy Wars etc.

(4) e.g. in the 10th Century St. Dunstan, 15th Century St. Thomas à Kempis, 18th Century William Law, amongst others.

soul. All men are indeed welcomed into the Catholic Church, but only in obedience to an acceptance of the Church's order, authority and discipline.

### APOSTOLICITY

The Church is apostolic in that it was founded by the apostles and has had uninterrupted continuity from apostolic times. The faith which it proclaims was received from the apostles and its authority is derived from the apostolic succession<sup>(1)</sup>. Through this latter also, the Church's original sacramental structure is preserved, and this includes apostolic forms of worship and liturgy.

It does not seem necessary in this outline of fundamental teaching, to elaborate upon the so-called "offices" of the Church i.e. the prophetic, the priestly and the kingly offices. A detailed account of these is to be found in various texts<sup>(2)</sup>. It is hoped that the summary above has presented the traditional view of the Church with which first of all, Robinson's ideas can be compared and contrasted, and then a reinterpretation in the light of the fundamental premises of this thesis can be attempted.

## II.

Robinson's view on the Church might be said to form the greatest part of his published work. This is not perhaps surprising in view of his experience first as parish priest, then as theological college lecturer, Cambridge Dean of College, and ultimately Bishop. It is

(1) V. numerous articles under this heading in the dictionaries, and also Jenkin C. and Mackenzie K. D. (Eds) Episcopacy Ancient and Modern.

(2) e.g. in Hall F. J. op. cit. pp. 232 ff.

particularly tempting to think that this latter experience must have been one of great challenge and tension considering his radical Christian approach to the whole notion of the Church in contemporary society. What is certain is that his return to academic life in 1969, a move to do theology "once more within a secular rather than an ecclesiastical framework"<sup>(1)</sup> as he describes it, had considerable significance as may be seen later in this chapter<sup>(2)</sup>. A very thorough consideration of this aspect of Robinson's thought up to 1966 has been undertaken by a Roman Catholic priest, Fr. Richard McBrien<sup>(3)</sup>, in a book which presents the main findings of his doctoral dissertation in Dogmatic Theology for the Gregorian University in Rome. McBrien's book has been of considerable assistance in preparing the outline of Robinson's thought on the Church which follows. A useful starting point is McBrien's claim<sup>(4)</sup> that the radical questions raised in such books as Honest to God and The New Reformation, emanate from a theological position that is quite conservative, and that it is in his treatment of the mission of the Church that Robinson has made his most distinctive contribution to the contemporary debate in ecclesiology<sup>(5)</sup>. Before examining what Robinson does have to say about the Church's mission, it is useful to be aware of his view concerning its nature. His explication of this aspect centres in the main around the notions of the Church as the Body of Christ and as the eschatological community.

It is in his book The Body: a Study in Pauline Theology, that Robinson most clearly expresses his view of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the introduction to this book shows considerable indebtedness

- (1) Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society p. 241.
- (2) V. infra pp. 63 ff. for the gist of the analysis suggested by this statement.
- (3) The Church in the Thought of Bishop John Robinson (SCM Press).
- (4) With which I am wholly in agreement.
- (5) Op. cit. p. xiv.



to his earlier and more detailed article "The Social Content of Salvation"<sup>(1)</sup>. In this article he maintains that man's salvation only becomes a reality in the concrete social situation in which he finds himself viz:-

"..... while the soul is eternally the same, its body is always changing. The particular ideal of life which in any age translates into a pattern of concrete social relationships the fulfilment of the human spirit in God, requires to be re-defined with every fundamental change in the structure of society"<sup>(2)</sup>.

This "salvation" spoken of is in fact "social salvation" i.e.

"..... a position in society in which a man really finds himself, where he counts, is of value, and can make a difference"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Robinson then analyses three historical forms of social development, and gives considerable attention to the third - the socialized society - in which he argues, mankind is at present involved. In this society man is "redeemed", "saved", "freed" through his interdependence within the community. Thus:-

"The content of social salvation for the modern man is to discover himself as a person, as one who freely chooses interdependence, because his nature is to be made for others, rather than one who is engulfed in it because the pressures of the age demand it. .... A man becomes a person when he discovers himself in the I - Thou relationship of community, and in actual

(1) Reprinted in On Being the Church in the World pp. 23ff.

(2) Ibid. p. 23.

(3) Loc. cit.

experience grasps with the total response of his being that

he has been made for, and has his centre in, other persons"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It follows that it is to this society that the Church must speak, to demonstrate the possibilities of truly becoming a person through Christianity. It can be seen that this view of the Church as the Body of Christ is very different from that outlined in the earlier part of this chapter where the institution precedes the individual who is at some point accepted into it<sup>(2)</sup>. For Robinson, Christians themselves are the Body of Christ<sup>(3)</sup>.

The second aspect of Robinson's thought regarding the Church, namely that it is an eschatological community, is of immense importance for it is from this notion that the whole of his later thought concerning the ministry, liturgy and mission of the Church has evolved. It is interesting to note in passing, that his book Jesus and His Coming consists in the main of New Testament exegesis, and does not offer much help in this current examination of the significance of the Church as an eschatological community per se. Nevertheless, it is possible to get a fairly clear picture of Robinson's thought in this fundamental area, through careful consideration of other aspects of his writing. There are two elements of his thought which are consequential:-

i. The Church is a community in history in that it is "the covenant people of the new order"<sup>(4)</sup>.

(1) Ibid. pp. 27 - 8.

(2) V. p. 57 supra.

(3) The argument which leads to this conclusion can be found in Chapter III of The Body pp. 49ff.

(4) The Body p. 72.

ii. It is also a community in the Spirit, because "that which most decisively marks the Church off from the old Israel, is its common possession of the Spirit"<sup>(1)</sup>. It is through the Spirit that Christians are included in the eschatological community, which is the resurrection body of Christ<sup>(2)</sup>, itself both a "present possession and a future hope"<sup>(3)</sup>.

The Church then is an eschatological community because it is a community in the Spirit, living between the times, in expectation of all things in Christ. But there is one important further qualification for Robinson - the Church is not only awaiting the Kingdom, it is the instrument of the Kingdom i.e. the instrument by which the whole of creation will eventually be restored and conformed to the image of Christ. It is not however the Kingdom of God on earth<sup>(4)</sup>, but a function of the Kingdom<sup>(5)</sup>, of the universal Lordship of God in Christ.

Having then illustrated the two foundation premises of Robinson's exegesis of the nature of the Church - as the Body of Christ and as the eschatological community, it is now possible to examine that aspect of the Church which follows on from these premises<sup>(6)</sup>, and with which Robinson has been increasingly concerned. For, as McBrien writes:-

- (1) Loc. cit.
- (2) Ibid. p. 78 and Cf. On Being the Church in the World pp. 40 - 42; 133 - 4 et al.
- (3) In the End God p. 108.
- (4) V. On Being the Church in the World p. 20. Cf. The Body pp. 71 - 2.
- (5) On Being the Church in the World pp. 7 - 8.
- (6) I do not think that it is necessary to go into detail here regarding Robinson's conception of the Ministry and Liturgy of the Church, although these aspects are neither peripheral nor inconsequential aspects of his thought. McBrien devotes a chapter in his book to both areas (pp. 73ff) and gives details in his footnotes and bibliography of their source in Robinson's writing.

"..... there has been a certain attrition in his doctrine of the Church over the past ten years or so. Robinson has become less concerned with the nature of the Church and more concerned with her mission. He has become disturbed by what he has described as much 'Church-centred' debate and too little stress on the primacy of the Kingdom<sup>(1)</sup>. Without retreating from the 'high doctrine' of The Body, he has directed his attention in recent years almost exclusively to the question of the Church's mission: her mission of service as the secular community ..... and her mission to preach the gospel to the modern, secularized, industrialized and urbanized world"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Robinson defines the Church in The New Reformation? as follows:-

"It is indeed the dedicated nucleus of those who actively acknowledge Jesus as Lord and have committed themselves to membership and mission within the visible sacramental fellowship of the Spirit"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Membership of the Church and fellowship in the Spirit have already been touched upon in the preceding pages. What is the content and significance of Robinson's views on the mission of the Church? This consideration seems to resolve itself into two distinct heads: the Church as the Secular Community and the Church as the Missionary Community.

Robinson's notion of the Church as a function or instrument of the Kingdom of God on earth, has already been noted<sup>(4)</sup>. Starting from

(1) Cf. The World that God Loves p. 4.

(2) The Church in the Thought of Bishop John Robinson p. 70.

(3) p. 48.

(4) V. p. 62 supra.

this premise, he develops a view of the Church as a secular community. That is, the Church exists in the world and for the world, with the clear purpose of furthering the Kingdom. So it is both the instrument of the Kingdom<sup>(1)</sup> and the servant of God in the world. Thus he writes:-

"..... the house of God is not the Church but the world. The Church is the servant, and the first characteristic of a servant is that he lives in someone else's house, not his own"<sup>(2)</sup>.

The Church is not however the only agent of God in the world (though Robinson adds that it is a perennial temptation of the Church to believe that it is)<sup>(3)</sup>. The Christian society must always be expecting God to be acting decisively outside its ranks<sup>(4)</sup>. The Church must see itself as "the world's deacon"<sup>(5)</sup> serving within rather than simply alongside the structures of the world<sup>(6)</sup>. Robinson uses a quotation of Albert van den Heuvel to clarify this statement:-

"Taking the form of a slave means letting the world have its own forms and filling those with the content of the gospel"<sup>(7)</sup>. Thus the Church is not concerned with a special world of its own but with the making sacred of the secular, so that Christ is met at the very centre of life, even in those areas where:-

"..... a religious sector can no longer be presupposed as a special point of entry or contact"<sup>(8)</sup>.

- (1) Cf. Honest to God p. 140.
- (2) The New Reformation? p. 92.
- (3) On Being the Church in the World p. 20.
- (4) Ibid. p. 21.
- (5) The World that God Loves p. 6.
- (6) The New Reformation? p. 27.
- (7) The Humiliation of the Church p. 57.
- (8) The Honest to God Debate p. 271.

Yet for great numbers of people, the Christian gospel is no longer the good news, and the Church as identified by "outsiders" has become progressively more irrelevant. The world's question "How can I find a gracious neighbour?" has the basis of an answer, not in established religious practices, but in human relationships. The Church must therefore resolve its plan of action within this context and the obvious starting-point is to focus upon Christ as the way to the Father - indeed the central text of the "new Reformation" is John 14.9 - "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". The very meaning of the Incarnation for Robinson, is that the divine enters through the stable door of ordinary human history and everyday experience<sup>(1)</sup>. Hence the central task of the Church is to enable people in their secular situation to meet Jesus once more as Son of Man<sup>(2)</sup>, just as the disciples met him on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24) or by the Galilean lake (John 21). It must therefore be an open society, an accepting community whose chief characteristic is that it is prepared to meet men where they are and accept them for what they are<sup>(3)</sup>. The Church then, is not a community of the elect gathered apart from and over against the world. Nor is it an organisation for the religious - rather its character is to be the servant of the world<sup>(4)</sup>. The distinction for our time therefore, is that of the "manifest" and "latent" Church, corresponding to the distinction between the Christ "acknowledged" and the Christ "incognito". So that wherever Christ is, where either Christ is, there is the Church<sup>(5)</sup>.

(1) The New Reformation? p. 36.

(2) Ibid. p. 37.

(3) Ibid. p. 46.

(4) Honest to God p. 134.

(5) The New Reformation? p. 47.

McBrien sums up Robinson's position as follows:-

"If the gospel is to become for men again the good news, they must be able to discover the gracious neighbour in the accepting community, whether latent or manifest. Christ must be allowed to confront them as the Son of Man through a Church which must be the servant of God in the world. As a consequence the Church must become genuinely and increasingly lay, not in the sense of abolishing its sacramental ministers, but rather in a sense that the laity is the laos or people of God in the world, for whom the things of this world have a meaning and value in themselves and not simply in terms of some higher reference"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It follows that the structural reform of the Church is an urgent necessity in the light of this theology of a servant Church. Reform does however need to be a response to a movement of the Holy Spirit rather than an unrelated attempt at reformation<sup>(2)</sup>. Its character will be that of a:-

"..... time of reticence, of stripping down, of travelling light. The Church will go through its baggage and discover how much it can better do without, alike in doctrine and in organisation"<sup>(3)</sup>.

This is a herculean task of course, but only by such a careful examination can the Church's true purpose and significance in the secular world be realised. Reformation will only be possible in fact if the Church "allows the forms of her renewed life to grow around the shapes of worldly need"<sup>(4)</sup> and this means local, national and worldly needs.

(1) On Being the Church in the World p. 105.

(2) The New Reformation? p. 16.

(3) Ibid. p. 20.

(4) Ibid. p. 91. Robinson is quoting Colin Williams here - Where in the World? p. 59.



So much for the brief explication of Robinson's concept of the Church as the Secular Community. What may be said concerning his notion of the Church as the Missionary Community? It needs to be realised at the outset that in this area Robinson is mainly concerned with the content of the Church's missionary preaching, and this is made quite explicit in Honest to God. His understanding of the Church as a missionary community can only be deduced from the book's implicit assumptions. A considerable amount has already been written earlier in this thesis<sup>(1)</sup> about Robinson's radical approach to traditional church teaching. He writes in Honest to God:-

"..... we stand on the brink of a period in which it is going to become increasingly difficult to know what the true defence of Christian truth requires ..... I believe we are being called, over the years ahead, to far more than a restating of traditional orthodoxy in modern terms ..... A much more radical recasting, I would judge, is demanded, in the process of which the most fundamental categories of our theology - of God, of the supernatural, and of religion itself - must go into the melting"<sup>(2)</sup>.

The influence of Bonhoeffer, Bultmann and Tillich upon Robinson has been noted at an earlier point<sup>(3)</sup>. He says himself that he was "struggling to think other people's thoughts after them"<sup>(4)</sup>. In Honest to God therefore, he writes around three fundamental questions, the answers to which lead to his new Christian apologetic. They are:-

1. Must Christianity be supranaturalist?

(1) V. supra pp. 6 ff.

(2) Op. cit. p. 7.

(3) V. supra pp. 4 ff. Robinson's indebtedness to Bonhoeffer is particularly evident in chapters 4 and 5.

(4) Honest to God p. 21.

2. Must Christianity be mythological?

3. Must Christianity be religious?

In formulating his "doctrine" he makes use of the thought of the three theologians mentioned above. It will suffice here to select a key notion of each which Robinson endorses, to express the core of the approach advocated. On "supranaturalism" Tillich's particular contribution is to have demonstrated:-

"..... that the Biblical faith in the reality of God can be stated in all its majesty and mystery, both of transcendence and immanence, without dependence on the supranaturalistic scheme"<sup>(1)</sup>.

On the mythological aspects of Christianity, Bultmann's response is endorsed viz:-

"There is nothing specifically Christian in the mythical view of the world as such. It is simply the cosmology of the pre-scientific age"<sup>(2)</sup>.

On "religionless Christianity" Bonhoeffer, who is perhaps the most consequential and powerful advocate of secular religion, wrote:-

"Man has learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis"<sup>(3)</sup>.

So far as Robinson is concerned with the Church as a missionary community, it can be seen from Honest to God that his attention is centred on the view that the Church need not, indeed often must not be committed to the traditional imagery and symbolism of the Bible or

(1) The Honest to God Debate p. 259.

(2) Honest to God p. 34.

(3) Ibid. p. 36. Robinson's indebtedness to Bonhoeffer is particularly evident in Chapters 4 and 5.

credal formulations. And since not all men are called to membership in the Church (i.e. the manifest Church - vide p. 65 supra), the result of its missionary preaching need not be thought of in terms of membership statistics or any other quantitative criterion of success. In The New Reformation? Robinson's ideas are presented more directly. The Church is the Son of Man on earth, and it is both a secular and a missionary community. In preaching the gospel it should witness to Christ the "gracious neighbour" and the "man for others". This is undoubtedly its primary task<sup>(1)</sup>. The characteristic of this missionary community is that it is prepared to meet men where they are and accept them for what they are<sup>(2)</sup>. The manifest Church is not a community gathered together in one place, but its members are seeds of light within the dark world, in themselves allowing Christ to be met as Son of Man incognito, that is:-

"..... in an utterly disinterested concern for persons for their own sake, and in relationships that have nothing distinctively religious about them"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Such an approach is not mere humanism or an abandonment to secularism, it is the only way to communicate with contemporary "secularized" men and women. Thus Robinson can say:-

"I am profoundly convinced that a truly contemporary person can be a Christian, but not if his acceptance of the Faith is necessarily tied to certain traditional thought forms - metaphysical, supranaturalistic, mythological and religious - against which secularisation marks a decisive revolt"<sup>(4)</sup>.

(1) Op. cit. p. 37.

(2) Ibid. p. 46.

(3) Ibid. p. 50.

(4) Ibid. p. 52.

No dilution of the gospel is involved in such an approach, rather the gospel is renewed, for by such means it is able once more to be proclaimed to contemporary men as "good news".

It can be seen then, that there is no fundamental disagreement between Robinson's view of the nature of the Church, and the traditional interpretation of this which was outlined earlier viz. as the ἐκκλησία and as the Body of Christ<sup>(1)</sup>. Indeed, as has been stated already, his basic position in this respect is a conservative one<sup>(2)</sup>. It is in his treatment of the mission of the Church that he offers such a startlingly different interpretation from the traditional one which sees men being drawn into the select ecclesiastical community as a result of the authoritative teaching and preaching of its members. Rather, for Robinson the Church is the servant<sup>(3)</sup> of secular man, exercising this office, and thereby presenting Christ incognito, through the lives of its members in the real, secular world; presenting Christ at the very centre of life. Since the publication of Honest to God in 1963, there

(1) V. p. 54 supra.

(2) V. p. 59 supra.

(3) This emphasis on the servant Church has been mentioned on numerous occasions passim in Chapter 1 of this thesis. It should be seen that this emphasis in the present day is in a sense, a reiteration of what has always been fundamental in Christian thought and activity beginning with the "charitable" acts of the early Christians and followed through in the Christian service of monastic institutions down the ages. I think that it is the more limited notion of "almsgiving" and "charity" of this sort, that the present theological emphasis on the "servant church" is intended to counteract. Cf. "Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church" in The Documents of Vatican II - "..... the Church must walk the same road which Christ walked: a road of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice to the death, from which death He came forth a victor by His resurrection" (Ch. 1 Sec. 5 p. 590 Ed. Abbott W. M.).

have been many critical attacks upon Robinson's position, the greater part of which were, at the outset, negative in character. On the other hand, there has also been much positive support for his analysis<sup>(1)</sup>, and a growing realisation over the ten years since the publication of Honest to God, that the Church must indeed be concerned with the relevance of its worship, doctrine and ministry to contemporary secular society, a relevance which is increasingly located in activities which clearly reflect the notions of Christian service in the world, and the building up of fellowship between men, of which Robinson was and is so powerful an advocate.

### III.

It is not surprising to find echoes of these fundamental notions in much contemporary writing on the process of secularisation and the modern Church. As van den Heuvel says, the developments in ecclesiology today are tremendous<sup>(2)</sup>. At this same point in his book he continues:-

"Since we are aware, in many parts of the world, that the old corpus Christianum has passed away and that we now have a totally new relationship between church and world in which the body of Christ finally becomes what her master has always been - a Servant - we discover that the church does not dictate the forms of the society, but that the society dictates the forms of the church"<sup>(3)</sup>.

- (1) McBrien gives a comprehensive list of writers who take up both of these positions in his book pp. 144 ff. See also his footnotes on p. 145.
- (2) The Humiliation of the Church p. 26. By this he is referring to the many different forms of ecclesiological structure, witness, service and worship, which are necessary for the continued existence of the church in a pluriform society. I have a tape-recording of a lecture given in California by Harvey Cox, in which he gives his analysis of some popular projections of "21st Century Religion". I have given a summary of its content in Appendix 5.
- (3) Ibid. loc. cit.

Apart from his contribution to the notion of the servant Church mentioned earlier<sup>(1)</sup>, van den Heuvel is particularly notable for his insistence, indicated in the passage above, that sociology is essential to the modern Church as a means of helping Christians to restructure the forms of the Church in contemporary society. It is much the same idea as that of Hans Storck who speaks of the Church functioning well in secular society only when "she synchronizes her calendar with the calendar of that society"<sup>(2)</sup>. Certainly there is cause for thinking that this important suggestion as it applies to Sunday worship, Sunday school, parochial systems, religious instruction, denominational division of manpower etc., is frequently neglected in favour of the old traditionalism and a rationale which would impose upon society rather than serve it. Jürgen Moltmann seems to be expressing the same notion of service in the contrast which he outlines between the ancient Church functioning as the crown of society (i.e. its healing centre, the incarnation of the divine and the elevation of the human) and the contemporary Church offering love in service, standing in the midst of the cross of society and thereby becoming its hope<sup>(3)</sup>. Thus he can castigate those Christians who would make the Church simply a sect; who through their hostility to new concepts, new liturgy, new dialogue etc. contribute to the "self-laceration of the Church" and to a growing "ghetto mentality" within its ranks<sup>(4)</sup>. For Moltmann the primary work of the Church is not simply "being-there-for-others" as he calls it, though this is an essential stage in the mission

1. V. supra p. 64.

2. Die Zeit drängt. Books are regularly appearing which take as their subject the "sociology" of the Church e.g. Catherwood H. F. R. The Christian Citizen, Höffner J. Fundamentals of Christian Sociology et al.

3. V. pp. 150 - 151 in his chapter "Rose in the Cross of the Present" - Hope and Planning.

4. Theology and Joy p. 77.



of the modern Church. Rather, the Church must be liberated, that is creatively free to pursue its purposes with a spontaneity which communicates to its members the vital notion of unauthoritarian brotherhood<sup>(1)</sup>. Thus worship itself (amongst other things) can become a source of this new spontaneity - as is the case in churches in the United States which Moltmann has visited<sup>(2)</sup> and to which J. A. T. Robinson also refers<sup>(3)</sup>. Thus through such spontaneity "~~being-there-for-others~~" becomes through vicarious love "~~being-there-with-others~~" in liberty, in the redeemed and liberated life. So he is able to write:-

"The Church therefore must not regard itself as just a means to an end, but it must demonstrate already in its present existence this free and redeemed being-with others which it seeks to serve. In this sense - and only in this sense - the church is already an end in itself, not as church complete with hierarchy and bureaucracy but as the congregation of the liberated. In that sense the church's function reaches beyond rendering assistance to a troubled world; it does already possess its own demonstrative value of being. In the remembered and hoped for liberty of Christ the church serves the liberation of men by demonstrating human freedom in its own life, and by manifesting its rejoicing in that freedom"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) Op. cit. p. 85.
- (2) Moltmann refers specifically here to the worship of the Glide Memorial Methodist Church in San Francisco, a church where I have myself attended morning worship. A typical example of the liturgy of this church is given in Appendix 6 and an account of my own reactions to it is contained in an article published in Christian Renewal Vol. 12 (Winter 1973/74) a copy of which is to be found in Appendix 7.
- (3) Cf. "Let the liturgy be free". In Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society pp. 183 ff.
- (4) Theology and Joy pp. 85 - 6.



This demonstration of freedom in Christ would seem to be the most striking method by which Christians in contemporary society can show the relevance of their faith to that society. People are indeed seeking liberation today - liberation in a great many aspects of their lives but above all liberation to be themselves with others. To many, the traditional Church is an example of burdensome restriction, epitomising the "thou shalt nots" of all authorities down the ages, and singularly out of touch with modern man's increasing personal liberty in a permissive age. That the latter needs to be reminded of the "law of love", and needs constantly reminding at that, is not in dispute - it is certainly a function of the contemporary church to see that he is so reminded. But the Church must also share Christ's love in community; it must minister to the modern world when, where and how this can best be done. For what militates most of all against the Church's mission to bring the good news of liberation to men in the present day, is the demand that they come to find that good news and that liberation within the walls of the local church building. Of course there are many tensions inherent in any projection of Christian living which does not include the institutionalised church, with its specific forms of worship, as an important element of the prescriptive life-style of all who would call themselves Christians. Much of the discussion here would obviously impinge upon the Christian/Humanist dichotomy<sup>(1)</sup>, and it is important to recognise that there are many people who are neither Christians nor, if they be Christians, church-attenders perhaps, who:-

"..... cultivate beautiful qualities of the human spirit, but do not yet acknowledge the Source of these qualities"<sup>(2)</sup>.

(1) I have referred to this point in Chapter 5 particularly, on "Man" pp. 111 ff. and passim in this thesis.

(2) "The Church Today". In The Documents of Vatican II para. 92 p. 307.

Nevertheless, the great stumbling-block which the traditional, institutionalised Church presents to many of its members, quite apart from the great mass of those non-members outside its ranks, is that it is in fact institutional and authoritarian - a place of inhibitions, embarrassments and polite efforts, as Moltmann puts it<sup>(1)</sup>. In the concluding section of this thesis, a more detailed analysis will be attempted of what it means to speak of "liberation" in the context of religion and education in religion. There can be no doubt that both analysis and education are necessary, for unless a person has experienced for himself the "liberated church", it is difficult to appreciate what that is and what is being commended. The Archbishop of Canterbury has recently referred in differing contexts, to the notion of Christian liberation. The General Synod Board of Education's Report for 1973 quotes his speech at the University Chaplain's Conference at Durham in which he asked:-

"..... what do you liberate people into?".

His rhetorical answer was:-

"We claim that we are being liberated into the divine glory, here and hereafter"<sup>(2)</sup>.

A more precise indication of the Archbishop's notion of Christian liberation comes through in the initial lecture which he gave at the commencement of his tour in East Germany in May, 1974. Speaking in East Berlin, he said:-

"..... Thus Christ is the liberator. But the liberation which he brought was more radical than that of any political or social movement whether in his own day or in our own. He did not

(1) Op. cit. p. 85.

(2) Annual Report of the Board of Education: 1973 p. 32.

identify himself with any of the political movements of the time, for his deepest concern was with the liberation of man himself from selfishness and sin into the life of love and self-sacrifice which was and is his own gift to those who will receive it from him"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The Church must then change, and with it the traditional ecclesiastical projection of a bureaucratically organised and rule-governed institution. Rather it must become a community which emphasises that freedom of corporate activity and personal liberty which is the inheritance of each person "in Christ". Unless it does so, then Christians too will find themselves amongst the great mass of non-church members who with Nietzsche ask the question:-

"What are the churches now, if they are not the tombs and monuments of God?"<sup>(2)</sup>.

A lead into the further analysis of this question of liberation and the educative means of its achievement is further indicated in the General Synod Board of Education's Report mentioned above. After giving an account of the Archbishop's question and answer as quoted, it continues:-

"What do you liberate people into?" The task ahead for the educational agencies of the Church is to help people discover where, for them, the answer to this question is to be found"<sup>(3)</sup>.

It is the Church's success and organisation for this task that will be examined in Chapter 9<sup>(4)</sup>, and, as has been stated above, further analysis

(1) Quoted in the article "Dr. Ramsey analyses Christian conflict". In The Times 27th May, 1974.

(2) The Joyful Wisdom p. 169.

(3) Op. cit. p. 32.

(4) V. infra. pp. 183 ff.

of what it means to speak of Christian liberation in contemporary society, and recommendations regarding its likely achievement in the future, will be the principal concern of the final chapter of this thesis<sup>(1)</sup>.

(1) V. infra. pp. 215 ff.

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1 Timothy 1.20	p. 55 footnote
1 John 2.19	p. 55 footnote

(1) God and the World p. 98.

(2) Ibid. pp. 98 ff.

(3) Psalm 25: 1-4; 23.



## CHAPTER 4

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

## I.

It is both salutary and apt to begin this examination of prayer and worship in the light of the theological premises outlined in Section A of this thesis, by noting Hugo Meynell's warning about the dangers inherent in the use of "persuasive definitions"<sup>(1)</sup>. Particularly salutary and apt in that Meynell's warning is given in the context of a stricture upon D.Z. Phillips' alleged use of such a definition for apologetic purposes in his book The Concept of Prayer. Warnings apart however, Meynell begins his own chapter on prayer<sup>(2)</sup> with a useful and succinct summary of the concept as it is to be found in the Bible, which will serve admirably to provide a starting point from which a contemporary reinterpretation might evolve. He writes:-

"In prayer the individual and the community enjoy communion with their God. In Old Testament Israel prayer presupposed the conviction that God was among his people and was acting on their behalf; his presence invited a response from them in prayer and worship and in the conduct of life in general. Prayer was offered in confidence that God would listen, a confidence sometimes so firm that thanks would be offered in anticipation of God's granting his suppliant's request<sup>(3)</sup>. But often too, uncertainty on this score introduces a note

(1) God and the World p. 98.

(2) Ibid. pp. 98 ff.

(3) Psalm 25. 1-4; 23.

of anxiety and pleading; the unhappy soul as it wrestles with God<sup>(1)</sup>. There is prayer for spiritual blessings, but still more for temporal benefits; good health, long life and prosperity are asked for, as well as the joy of participating in worship of God<sup>(2)</sup>. The Israelites prayed for the preservation of true religion, but also for the triumphant vindication of their own nation and the punishment of its enemies. There was intercession for the King and for one's countrymen<sup>(3)</sup>.

Three main types of prayer may be distinguished: petition, thanksgiving and penitence. Petitions sometimes were accompanied by a summary of favours previously granted by God; in extreme cases this amounted to a review of Israel's history<sup>(4)</sup>. Penitential prayers typically consisted in admission of guilt, with a request for forgiveness and for remission of punishment. Sometimes they included a plea for deliverance from danger and the promise of amendment<sup>(5)</sup>. Prayers of thanksgiving usually included an admission of man's unworthiness to receive such favours at the hand of God<sup>(6)</sup>.

The Gospels, especially that of Luke, frequently describe Jesus as in Prayer<sup>(7)</sup>. He evidently prayed both publicly and privately before important acts or decisions<sup>(8)</sup>. But in virtue of his special relation with God the Father he is in the Fourth

(1) Cf. Jeremiah and Job.

(2) Psalms 54; 42; 67; 143.

(3) Psalms 108; 94. 5-6; 20.

(4) Psalms 105.

(5) 1 Samuel 12.10.

(6) Psalms 22.25.

(7) Luke 3.21; 5.16 et al.

(8) Matthew 14.23.

Gospel represented in effect as living in continual prayer<sup>(1)</sup>. He taught his disciples how to pray<sup>(2)</sup>. The requisites for prayer according to the New Testament view are perseverance, confidence in being heard, and absolute sincerity as opposed to external show<sup>(3)</sup>. Where prayer fulfils these conditions, its efficacy is unlimited<sup>(4)</sup>. Communal prayer is supposed to be particularly effective<sup>(5)</sup>. The prayers of the early Christians were dominated by spiritual values, though worldly blessings and trials were not left out of account<sup>(6)</sup>. Not only fellow Christians were objects of intercessory prayer but all men, especially those in authority, and even enemies and persecutors<sup>(7)</sup>.

Meynell continues:-

"The prayer of theists might be summarised as their response to God for what they believe he has done, and to what they hope he will do, on their behalf ..... In prayer the theist talks to his god; and the nature of the talk between man and God may be compared and contrasted with that between man and man<sup>(8)</sup>".

The accuracy of Meynell's summary of the biblical background and understanding of the traditional concept of prayer is beyond question, and a similar treatment is to be found in many of the

(1) John 8.29; 11.41-2.

(2) Matthew 6.9-13.

(3) Luke 17.5-6; Matthew 7.7-11; 6.5-8.

(4) Mark 11.24.

(5) Matthew 18.9-20.

(6) Acts 4.29-30; Romans 15.31-2; Ephesians 6.18-20.

(7) 1 Timothy 2.1-2; Matthew 5.44.

(8) Op.cit. pp. 99-100.

standard biblical commentaries<sup>(1)</sup>. The essential task of this present chapter will be to present a view of prayer which is utterly contrary to Meynell's second statement above, a statement which in itself highlights an interpretative view of prayer of great difficulty, namely, that it is "talking to God". For if the fundamental premises of this thesis with regard to "God" stand<sup>(2)</sup>, there is absolutely no "person", "being" or "he" to whom in any meaningful sense, it may be maintained it is possible to talk. In J.A.T. Robinson's words, what has come about is:-

".... that in this area the very word 'prayer' may be suffering for large numbers of people the same displacement and loss of reality as the word 'God' - and for the same reasons. For 'prayer' is equated with making contact with this Being who has ceased to be anything but peripheral to men's deepest sense of reality. Just as he is no longer the ens realissimum and, as God, is dead, so prayer has become a dead area for vast numbers of our contemporaries<sup>(3)</sup>."

This quotation obviously leads on to a consideration of the meaning and significance of prayer in Robinson's theology.

## II.

It is in his chapter "The Journey Inwards" in Exploration into God<sup>(4)</sup>, that Robinson's most detailed treatment of prayer is to be

- (1) See for example A. Maillot's article "Prayer". In Von Allmen J.J. (Ed) Vocabulary of the Bible pp. 329 ff; J.S. McEwen's article in Richardson A. (Ed) A Theological Word Book of the Bible pp. 169 ff. and articles in H.D.B. and E.R.E.
- (2) V. supra pp. 3 ff.
- (3) Exploration into God p. 111.
- (4) Loc. cit.

found. He begins with a consideration of the problem which has just been mentioned above, namely, that the word "prayer" in popular usage is taken to imply necessarily, the act of praying to a "being", who if not appearing to be completely unconnected with the matter in hand, seems to be concerned only on the periphery of that matter. Indeed, Robinson maintains, praying is far from being the "adventure" that it is frequently described as, for in the experience of most people, the invitation to pray seems to take them out of life rather than more deeply into it. In order to get things straight there are various points about prayer which need to be clarified right at the start, and the first is:-

".... that prayer has to do with life at its most personal - and that means not simply with relationships between persons, but with response to all reality as 'Thou'. It is the point at which all life (and the Bible has no hesitation in extending the attitude of 'worship' to the whole of creation) responds to the claim of the Voice, the Cry, the 'Thou', to live at the level of the spirit, to refuse to be content with the surface determinisms of the 'It' world, but to be open to the 'beyond', the creative 'interior' of love, at the centre of every-thing. Worship is the response to him who is 'above all and through all and in all',<sup>(1)</sup>. It is seeing all in God and God in all. Anything that discloses or penetrates through to this level of reality, whether corporately or in solitude, whether in talk or action or silence, is prayer. Prayer is opening oneself to the claim of the unconditional as it meets one in all the relationships of life. It is life at its most intimate, intense and demanding, requiring the response of the whole person. 'For the I of the primary-word I-Thou is a

(1) Ephesians 4.6.

different I from that of the primary-word I-It<sup>(1)</sup>. The pray-er is different from the user, the communer from the commuter. He is giving himself to reality at the level of the ultimate rather than of proximate concern. Such a relationship can only be described in categories of 'Thou' not of 'It'. And in human experience this is supremely defined in, though not confined to, response to another person"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Thus it is not surprising, Robinson considers, that religious people down the ages have seen their relationship to "God" in terms of response as if to another, though albeit transcendent "Being". The "as if" is of supreme importance to the argument, for if prayer comes to be defined as "talking to God"<sup>(3)</sup> instead of "as if talking to God", then the imagery for Robinson himself (and he would also hold this to be true for a great number of contemporary religious people) must become "more of a hindrance than a help"<sup>(4)</sup>. Indeed it is the prime cause of the situation where for many people, prayer, like God, is dead.

Certainly it seems most reasonable to the present writer, that Robinson, in suggesting that past generations of worshippers have thought of approaching God in terms of withdrawal from their everyday worldly and human concerns, is quite correct here. This "other-worldly" approach can indoubtedly be seen in much of the writing of the mystics for instance<sup>(5)</sup>. Perhaps too, our memories

- (1) Buber M. I and Thou p.3.
- (2) Op.cit. pp. 113-4. Cf. Karl Rahner's chapter "The Apostolate of Prayer". In Theological Investigations Vol. 3 pp. 209-215 which gives a similar exposition to that of Robinson.
- (3) V. supra pp. 83-4.
- (4) Op.cit. p.115.
- (5) V. for example, the writings of Meister Eckhart, Thomas à Kempis, St. John of the Cross which Robinson quotes in op.cit. p.119; and for a general study of the area F.C. Happold's anthology Mysticism: a study and anthology (Penguin 1963).



of formal religious worship in a new age of changing liturgical fashion and experiment have shortened, for essentially it is true that public worship (at least in the Established and ancient churches) has until comparatively recently been a matter of what Robinson pungently describes as:-

".... a face to back activity in which one can take part without really meeting or even speaking to anyone, and so-called 'Holy' Communion can become a substitute for real communion"<sup>(1)</sup>.

How often clergy have heard people speak in this way of "church going". Yet, Robinson continues:-

"The essence of prayer is opening ourselves to the grace and claim of the unconditional as it meets us in, through and under the finite relationships of life. It is allowing ourselves to be met and addressed by the 'Thou'. And common or corporate prayer, as the Christian understands it, is the sharing of this ultimate concern, exposing ourselves together to be sensitized, deepened, built up in awareness of agape-love as the ground of all our lives. It involves meeting, sharing at the deepest level, in the koinonia of Holy Spirit. It means listening and confessing to each other, making corporate response and commitment to that which encounters us in Christ. By its very nature it is a 'face to face' activity in which evasion of the 'Thou' is by definition impossible"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Such a view as this contrasts sharply with the common practice of much traditional prayer and worship ; the addressing of the unseen

(1) Op. cit. p. 116.

(2) Loc. cit.



Being who is "other and beyond", the "turning away to God" in prayer, above all the special diction of prayer<sup>(1)</sup> which reinforces the impression of it being an activity which is apparently far removed from the reality of the situation in which the pray-er finds himself. In truth, public prayer and worship can only be described as having been characterised by those elements which Robinson regards as having characterised a good deal of the Christian mystical tradition down the ages, namely, that it has been anti-historical, anti-temporal and a-cosmic<sup>(2)</sup>. He considers it absolutely fundamental in any conceptualisation of true prayer that:-

".... the road to holiness necessarily passes through the world of action"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Thus the Christian, caught up in the solidarity of involvement, is driven to:-

".... the asceticism of action in the world"<sup>(4)</sup>.

Such an analysis of prayer demands a corresponding reality and objectivity in the language which is employed to express its real significance and purpose, and Robinson finds it most ideally evidenced in the writing of the now well-known authors whose milieu is French-speaking Catholicism and American-speaking Protestantism, e.g. Michel Quoist<sup>(5)</sup>, Malcolm Boyd<sup>(6)</sup>, Robert Castle<sup>(7)</sup> et al. In

- (1) I have treated this specific aspect at some length in my Jubilee Prize Essay "The Prestige of Archaic Language" - University of Durham 1960.
- (2) Ibid. p. 119. Robinson does however point out the existence of another "cosmic mysticism" which he sees exemplified in the writing of Mother Julian, George Fox, Traherne, Teilhard de Chardin, Berdyaev and Petru Dumitriu amongst others - v. ibid. pp. 120-121.
- (3) Dag Hammarskjöld - Markings p. 108.
- (4) Berdyaev - Spirit and Reality p. 168.
- (5) Prayers of Life.
- (6) Are you Running with Me Jesus and Free to Live, Free to Die.
- (7) Litany for the Ghetto.

sum, and in his own words, his experience is that:-

"In spirituality as in theology I find myself returning to the utterly personal panentheism of the God dwelling incognito at the heart of all things. Indeed there is ultimately no line between a living theology and a 'whole spirituality'"<sup>(1)</sup>.

So then, with the traditional interpretation of prayer and Robinson's fundamentally existentialist approach to the activity clarified, it is possible to move on to examine its contemporary philosophical treatment at the hands of other writers, of whom the most notable is D.Z. Phillips.

### III.

An initial and useful consideration which concerns the overall interpretation of the activity of prayer is Phillips' reference to Wittgenstein's dictum concerning the "surface grammar" and the "depth grammar" of the language used to describe various activities, viz:-

"In the use of words one might distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'. What immediately impresses itself upon us about the use of a word is the way it is used in the construction of the sentence, the part of its use - one might say - that can be taken in by the ear .... And now compare the depth grammar .... with what its surface grammar would lead us to suspect. No wonder we find it difficult to know our way about"<sup>(2)</sup>.

(1) Op. cit. p. 129. I note that H.P. Owen in his article "The Later Theology of J.A.T. Robinson" (Theology Vol. LXXIII Oct. 1970., p. 454) considers that Robinson has still not clarified his concept of God.

(2) The Concept of Prayer p. 8 and v. Wittgenstein - Philosophical Investigations I.664.

Most philosophers Phillips considers, have in their critiques of religious activity and religious concepts, paid too much attention to the surface grammar of religious statements - they have mistakenly assumed that words used of God, of Christ, of religious experience, etc., are used in the same way in these areas as they are used of human beings or objects. Granted always that there must of course be a distinction between what is rational and what is irrational, the focus of interpretation of religious activity and concepts is the significance of this depth grammar i.e. it must be asked what can and what cannot be said about the activity or concept in question. In effect this means that:-

".... the criteria of the meaningful<sup>ness</sup> of religious concepts are to be found within religion itself, and that failure to observe this leads to misunderstanding"<sup>(1)</sup>.

In terms of prayer then, such an approach requires that some elucidation of what is meant by speaking of the "reality of God" is necessary at the outset and that a necessary further stage of the interpretation of the concept of prayer will be concerned not with what philosophers and theologians have said about prayer, but:-

".... in what men are doing when they talk to God"<sup>(2)</sup>.

As has already been indicated<sup>(3)</sup>, and if Wittgenstein's terminology might be applied to describe the position, the "surface grammar" of the concept of prayer as "talking to God" having been shown to contribute little to any clear understanding of what is going on in this area of religious activity, it is therefore relevant to examine

(1) Ibid. p. 12.

(2) Ibid. p. 23.

(3) V. supra p.84.

Phillips' interpretation of the significance of the "depth grammar" of prayer as "talking to God"<sup>(1)</sup>.

#### IV.

Certainly it becomes clear at the outset that Phillips is in no way thinking in completely traditional terms either of "God" or prayer, for he maintains that the latter cannot be understood as:-

".... praying to someone 'out there' who is 'there' in the way that the planets are there"<sup>(2)</sup>.

This is a statement which very much echoes Robinson's initial approach in Honest to God<sup>(3)</sup>. Nevertheless, he considers it essential for the believer to assert that he talks to someone other than himself when he prays, for:-

"A conviction that one is talking to oneself is the death of prayer"<sup>(4)</sup>.

On first sight, this particular qualification would seem to cast doubt upon the validity of interpretations of prayer such as that of Paul Van Buren who wishes to give significance to prayer as an activity in which the person "praying" meditates upon or contemplates various situations, possible activities, decisions etc., and as a result is led to follow a particular course of action<sup>(5)</sup>. What is obviously important here is to understand exactly how Phillips sees

(1) Accepting here Phillips' caveat that - "It is not the task of philosophy to settle the question of whether a man is talking to God or not, but to ask what it means to affirm or deny that a man is talking to God. The philosopher is guilty of a deep misunderstanding if he thinks that his task in discussing prayer is to try to determine whether contact is made with God; to understand prayer is to understand what it means to talk to God". Ibid. pp.37-38.

(2) Ibid. p. 41.

(3) See for example, p. 45 et al.

(4) Op.cit. p. 41.

(5) V. The Secular Meaning of the Gospel pp. 187 ff.

the believer talking to someone other than himself in prayer, what it means to him to speak of prayer as "talking to God".

He begins to elucidate his position with a statement which also throws an interesting light on his concept of God. This reads:-

"The God to whom one prays is said to be a person. The difficulty is that this suggests an idea of God as a finite individual. There is so much of what can be said about God which makes this suggestion absurd, that one wonders why it is made at all. One need only mention the ideas of God's omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence, to show how differently his reality is conceived from that of a finite individual. What, then, is the point of raising the issue? Simply this: the philosophical puzzle here takes the form, 'If not this, then what?'. It is a journey from the familiar to the unfamiliar. And yet, we know what we mean by 'God', the word is used frequently enough and meaningfully enough amongst us<sup>(1)</sup>. What eludes us is the grammar of the concept; we find it difficult to give an account of it"<sup>(2)</sup>.

It follows then, that in the light of this statement, an important consideration regarding prayer will be whether or not if one calls God a person, it follows that talking to him is like talking to any other person, i.e. (to use Phillips' terminology) Is God a participant in language?<sup>(3)</sup> Phillips' answer to this question is no - prayer is not a conversation and God does not participate in any language, but he is to be found in the language people learn when

(1) I feel that this is too facile a conclusion regarding common understanding of what is meant by "God". Wide-ranging discussion with many people seems to indicate real problems regarding the meaningfulness of the term.

(2) Op.cit. p. 43.

(3) Ibid. p. 45.

they come to learn about religion<sup>(1)</sup>. Of course such an analysis as this prompts the further question - How is it then possible to say anything to God, particularly so if omniscience is ascribed to him? What does it mean to talk to a God whom one does not understand, a God to whom one has to learn how to talk?

Phillips begins to answer these questions by analysing confessional prayer, for clearly this is an area where it would not make sense in terms of the position outlined above, for the believer to conceive of this prayer form as "telling God something he did not already know" or even as "telling God anything at all". Yet this is precisely what many people do imagine is happening in this particular instance. Phillips obviously considers that the situation is thus completely misread, for essentially:-

"One can begin to answer these questions by noting that although God does not come to know anything when one tells one's sins to Him, the person who confesses comes to know something about himself which he did not know before"<sup>(2)</sup>.

A person who might wish to argue nonetheless that to tell someone something that he knows already is a pointless activity could be directed to a parallel situation such as the pupil-teacher relationship. It follows therefore, that prayer is not pointless simply because it is uninformative, for:-

"God is told nothing, but in the telling the person who confesses is told something about the state of his soul"<sup>(3)</sup>.

In effect what is happening is that man prays to a God whom he does

(1) Ibid. pp. 50-51.

(2) Ibid. pp. 55-6.

(3) Ibid. p. 59.



not understand, a fact which for Phillips reflects the very nature of prayer, viz:-

"Telling God that one does not understand"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Yet in the act of telling, the "pray-er" reaches an understanding of himself, of his inadequacy and ignorance before God. Here again it might be possible to argue that men come to a knowledge of themselves by means of "methods" other than prayer (for example psychoanalysis or encounter techniques etc.), so might it not then be maintained that prayer is just such another "method"? Phillips considers that such a question is basically misconceived, and in a series of examples<sup>(2)</sup> he argues against the suggestion that the knowledge of oneself which one comes to in prayer is the same as self-knowledge arrived at via other means. The vital point of distinction is that in the context of confessional prayer, there is a crucial factor that is absent from other forms of acquiring self-knowledge, namely, a religious belief in man's dependence upon God. What then can be said about prayer and the concept of dependence upon God, the essence of which is fundamentally connected with the notion of thanking him for one's existence? Phillips' closely reasoned reply<sup>(3)</sup> is:-

".... that prayer, being an act of devotion, the dependence on God it entails is best understood in terms of that devotion. The dependence involved is not logical or causal, but religious dependence. The point of praising God is in the prayer itself, since without prayer, that devotion is not expressed. Just as we reveal what we are in what we say to each other, so we reveal what we are in what we say to God. There is this difference: in the latter case, it is to ourselves that

(1) Ibid. p. 61.

(2) Ibid. pp. 64 ff.

(3) Ibid. pp. 81 ff.



we reveal it. Prayer expresses a state of being, a state of soul"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Phillips follows this up with a detailed examination of the apparent problem which the notion of petitionary prayer presents in such an analysis. He concludes that in fact petitionary prayer is a means not of asking God to bring various things or situations about, but of telling him the strength of the petitioner's desires in respect of the things or situations<sup>(2)</sup>. This in no way detracts from the fundamental significance of such prayer which is that:-

"Praying to a God for whom all things are possible, is to love God in whatever is the case"<sup>(3)</sup>.

It further needs to be emphasised that any account of prayer as man's talking to God and God's talking to man, must be understood within the context of religious communities<sup>(4)</sup>.

Phillips' final chapter is concerned with "Praying to the True God", a subject which does not immediately concern the arguments of this present chapter of thesis. However, it does throw some light on the problem which was raised earlier<sup>(5)</sup> concerning the nature of Phillips' concept of God, for in speaking of what could be meant by "God answering prayer", he states:-

"Despite the enormous diversity of problems and questions which men bring to God in their prayers, the answer God is said to give cannot be anything an individual chooses to mention, since in order to be understood as God's answer,

(1) Ibid. pp. 109-110.

(2) Ibid. p. 121.

(3) Ibid. p. 130.

(4) Ibid. p. 148.

(5) V. supra p. 92 and footnote 1.

it must be compatible with the known will of God, that is, with the general nature of God as found in Christian tradition"<sup>(1)</sup>.

This manifestly traditional view of God's "response" to man's prayer is further reinforced by Phillips' comment on Simone Weil's criterion for calling false the religious view of the Athenians in their dealings with the men of Melos. Commenting upon this he writes:-

"By what criterion does Simone Weil call such religion false?

The answer is by comparing it with what she means by a supernatural<sup>(2)</sup> God, belief in whom I take as constituting true religion"<sup>(3)</sup>.

#### V.

It might be thought then from the preceding pages, that the exercise of prayer is an essentially subjective one, and to some readers this may seem a spiritually dangerous situation. This could only be so however, if the "pray-er" had no other point of reference in his prayer than himself, and it should have been made abundantly clear in this chapter that such is not the situation either delineated or envisaged. Certainly much emphasis is undoubtedly placed upon the individual himself when engaged in prayer. The purpose of such intensive self-scrutiny, indeed it may even be said of self-concern, is however firmly rooted in agape-love, i.e. the praying individual examines, analyses his own ultimate concerns in the light of that ultimate concern which is "God" and which was

(1) Ibid. p. 152.

(2) Phillips' own emphasis here.

(3) Ibid. p. 160.

perfectly revealed in Jesus. His private prayers of confession, listening, asking - as well as his public prayers which further include sharing, meeting, acting - are all directed towards one basic objective. This objective is aptly described by Robinson and he states that it is to be:-

".... sensitized, deepened, built up in awareness of agape-love as the ground of all our lives"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The common form of prayer, both public and private, in which "God" is addressed should not cause either surprise or misunderstanding. In one sense it might be suggested that only those believers who are "advanced" in the practice of prayer will find themselves able to discard the technique of addressing God as if they were addressing another person. The words "addressing God" here are of course meant to include all the various purposes of prayer which have been outlined in this present chapter, and the significance of the activity, as has been indicated, is to come face to face with those ultimate concerns which centre around the praying individual's agape-possession and agapeistic attitude.

(1) Exploration into God p. 116 and v. supra p. 87.

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(1) Expository - "In Christian R.L. Hamilton's 'Expository'".

(2) I am particularly indebted to F.J. Hall's Psychological Outlines for part of the general content of the summary which follows.

(3) V. M. Jandt's exposition of W. J. in his article "Man" - J.J. Van Almen (19) Vocabulary of the Bible p. 24 where he interprets "soul" as a "psycho-physical totality, corresponding to that which we mean when we talk of a living being and its different modes of expression".

## CHAPTER 5

MAN

## I.

The degree of attention which is being given today to man's activity and deep involvement in those concerns which are both personal and at the same time universal - technological advance, ecology and the environment, the whole quality of life - serves to indicate an increasing awareness that men are indeed "the masters of their fate". Whether in W.E. Henley's next line, they are also "captain of their souls"<sup>(1)</sup> is a question which is also of great importance to many people today and which will be a main consideration of this chapter. First of all however it will be useful to summarise briefly the principal aspects of the traditional biblical and doctrinal view of man<sup>(2)</sup> so that the lines of development of contemporary thought in this area can be clearly seen in contrast.

"Man" is essentially a rational creature, personal, self-conscious, free and moral. The human organism consists of body and soul<sup>(3)</sup> with their respective functions. Man's rationality, freedom and moral nature are closely related in that he is not free to act either irrationally or regardless of moral principle; his reason is by and large under his own control and subject to moral conditions, and his moral sense is conditioned by freedom and rational reflection.

There is a physical unity of the human race which is indicated

- (1) Echoes iv - "In memoriam R.T. Hamilton Bruce".
- (2) I am particularly indebted to F.J. Hall's Theological Outlines for much of the general content of the summary which follows.
- (3) V. Ed. Jacob's exposition of ψῆχῆ in his article "Man" - J.J. Von Allmen (Ed) Vocabulary of the Bible p. 248 where he interprets "soul" as a "psycho-physical totality, corresponding to that which we mean when we talk of a living being and its different modes of expression".



in the Old Testament by the use of the word  $\overline{\text{אָדָם}}$ , a usage which refers both to "man" as a human being (Genesis 2.5) and also to "mankind" as a collective species<sup>(1)</sup> (Genesis 1.26). This human solidarity in which men are united as springing from a common seed is an important consideration in the explication of both the doctrine of man's original sin (centred in Adam) and the doctrine of man's salvation (centred in the second Adam<sup>(2)</sup> - Jesus Christ).

Man is made in the image of God (Genesis 1.27) and in Adam's original state prior to the Fall, was a creature possessing "original righteousness"<sup>(3)</sup>, made as the psalmist writes in Psalms 8.5:-

".... but little lower than God"<sup>(4)</sup>.

Both Bicknell<sup>(5)</sup> and F.J. Hall point out that the scriptural doctrine of "original righteousness" insists that every part of man's material being is "good". Hall states:-

"The popular disparagement of man's material organism is a survival of Manichaeian error, fortified by protestant reaction from mediaeval caricatures of the sacramental principle. But the human body was made by God and is therefore good. It was made for the use of the spirit and its anti-spiritual influence

- (1) In the Genesis myth of course, it also becomes a proper name.
- (2) V. C.K. Barrett's From First Adam to Last and numerous commentaries on this aspect of Pauline theology (e.g. on Romans 5. 12-21; 1 Cor. 15.22; 45-49; Phil. 2.5-11 et al) and cf. Alan Richardson's article "Adam: Man" in his A Theological Word Book of the Bible p. 15. There is also a very succinct chapter "The New Adam - St. Paul's teaching" in Albert Gelin's book The Concept of Man in the Bible pp. 142 ff.
- (3) V. Bicknell E.J. The Thirty Nine Articles, especially the commentary on Articles IX-XI and XV-XVI - "The Nature of Man" pp. 171 ff. Also Hall op. cit. pp. 138 ff.
- (4) For the significance of this psalm in the worship and thought of ancient Israel see my Drama of the Psalms pp. 20 and 90.
- (5) Op. cit. p. 175.

arises from our spiritual weakness and failure to rule it rightly. Apart from the flesh man is dead, and his appointed spiritual destiny cannot be attained except through restoration of the body in the resurrection of the dead. The redemption of Christ and His resurrection make possible this resurrection and the ultimate subjection of our flesh to our spirits - the originally designed purpose of our creation<sup>(1)</sup>."

An interesting distinction is usually made in Christian doctrine between the divine "image" in man and the divine "likeness". In the case of the former it is considered that the divine image in man is ineffaceable, and that his nature contains functional capacities designed to be employed for spiritual development after the moral likeness of God. This development is dependent upon the gift of grace, a gift which does not subvert or alter human nature, but which nevertheless is a necessary factor in that nature achieving perfection. The likeness of God in man is what might be described as the glorification of human nature - an ultimate subjection of the "flesh" to the perfected spirit. This likeness is not indelible for it can be effaced by sin<sup>(2)</sup> and is then only recoverable as a result of repentance and renewal of grace.

One final point about man - his death is the result of sin, and the former supernatural aid which enabled him (as with Adam before the Fall) to overcome his natural inheritance of mortality, is now given not in a form which enables him to escape dying, but in the power of resurrection from the dead through Jesus Christ who

(1) F.J. Hall op.cit. p. 134. Cf. 1 Cor. 6.20; Romans 12.1 et al.

(2) A much more detailed treatment of sin - its nature and significance and its contribution to man's Fall - will be found in the next chapter.

became the first fruits of a redeemed humanity and revealed man's true nature as destined for eternal life with God.

So then, having given a simple outline of the main biblical and doctrinal aspects of the nature of man, it is possible to move on to consider these aspects in the light of present-day theological attitudes.

## II.

J.A.T. Robinson's view of man is not the easiest aspect of his work and thought to isolate - perhaps because it is so fundamental to his whole approach and is therefore implicit in his various theological and doctrinal positions rather than made explicit. One of his own statements (referring specifically in the first instance to his book Honest to God) does however give a reasonably clear indication of his overall commitment. He writes:-

"Indeed my book was born of the fact that I knew myself to be a man committed, without reservation to Christ, and a man committed, without possibility of return, to modern twentieth-century secular society. It was written out of the belief that both these convictions must be taken with equal seriousness and that they cannot be incompatible"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It has been constantly pointed out in the earlier section of this thesis, that Robinson owes much to Bonhoeffer's notion of modern man "come of age"<sup>(2)</sup>. The quotation above reinforces his concern for modern twentieth-century secular society. What then does he see as the distinctive features of man's nature and purpose in the contemporary analysis?

(1) Edwards D.L. (Ed) The Honest to God Debate p. 275.

(2) V. supra pp. 2 & 5 and see Appendix 1.

One of Robinson's key notions, which was considered in the earlier chapter on The Church<sup>(1)</sup>, is that of the Servant Church in the secular community<sup>(2)</sup>. Today's world is not asking the question of the Reformers "How can I find a gracious God?" (Luther), but rather "How can I find a gracious neighbour?". And people are beginning to look for an answer to this question not from the authoritative elect community of the Church but:-

".... from what the most representative collection of photographs of our time called 'the family<sup>of</sup> man'. It begins not from revelation, in which it has no prior confidence, but from relationships, which it is prepared to treat with a greater seriousness than any generation before it. It suspects deductive certainties presented with authority: it respects the validity of convictions, in science or in life, attained inductively from the evidence of experience"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Thus the primary task of theology (and of course the Church), is to enable the secular world to meet Christ incognito and in its secular human concerns rather than in the separate and as it were spiritually withdrawn communities of the established Churches, for:-

".... the Son of Man wills to be met in an utterly disinterested concern for persons for their own sake, and in relationships that have nothing distinctively religious about them"<sup>(4)</sup>.

(1) Supra pp. 64 ff.

(2) Richard McBrien gives an exhaustive analysis of Robinson's theology of the Servant Church in The Church in the Thought of Bishop John Robinson pp. 108 ff., noting in particular Robinson's indebtedness to Cullmann, Tillich and Bonhoeffer.

(3) The New Reformation? pp. 33-34.

(4) Ibid. p. 50.

It would seem then, that Robinson might be thought to fall into a category which might be broadly labelled "humanist". Indeed, he himself states (after qualifying his acceptance of the description "humanist"<sup>(1)</sup>):-

"But, in contrast with twenty years ago, I would now gladly accept the label (if label one must have) of Christian humanist"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Robinson's humanism is in fact that of Jacques Maritain, and a humanism which should be truly represented in Christianity viz:-

".... not the closed humanism of man shut up to his own resources and values, but the humanism of man open to God and the Spirit, of humanity finding its norm and fulfilment in Christ"<sup>(3)</sup>.

That this analysis is of great importance to Robinson is made very clear by the words which follow the above statement:-

"Indeed, I would now judge it to be of vital importance, without blurring the edge of distinctively Christian affirmation, to emphasise the solidarity of all those concerned for the humanity of man, whether or not they would base it on religious convictions. I should be far more open than I was to the positive contribution of non-Christian faiths and to the mystical tradition which flows across the boundaries of all religious organisations. Moreover, Bonhoeffer, with his talk of 'religionless' Christianity, has reminded us that there is likely to be as much affinity between the Christian estimate of man and secular humanisms of our day as between it

(1) V. In the End God p. 20.

(2) Loc. cit.

(3) Ibid. p. 21.

and religious systems in which the sense of our co-humanity is weaker. Indeed, one finds in practice more general ground for cooperation in the causes of social justice with secular humanists having a strong sense of responsibility for this age or saeculum than with other-worldly, individualistic, or non-politically minded Christians"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is at this point that Robinson's humanism is made quite clear as distinguished from traditional humanism per se - for he pleads for a truly open humanism, and describes his concept of such in words which, although they seem once again to imply notions of transcendentalism, in fact point clearly to the centrality of the concept of Ultimate Concern in his thought. He writes:-

"But in all this I would plead strongly for an 'open' humanism .... A naturalism humanism, in which man seeks to construct sand-castles of civilisation within the order of an alien, impersonal nature that must eventually sweep them all away, seems to me as uninviting as ever. Unless the human individual and human society are grounded in a reality that transcends the material life, then all our efforts are simply whistling to keep up our courage before the dark driftings of the cosmic weather engulf us once more. For, if man is on his own in the universe, then beyond a brief span of years for the individual or of millenia for the race, the future is intolerably bleak .... Unless human life is essentially response to a reality beyond itself from which not even death can separate, then I see no hope for humanism or for anything else .... What is new and creative is the recognition that there are indeed different

(1) Loc. cit.

'perspectives' in humanism. There must be dialogue here, and I believe that the Christian has a perspective which it is important that others should be able to see and share"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is not surprising therefore, to find that Robinson notes approvingly both Julian Huxley's and James Hemmings' support of what he himself describes as "human life .... constantly summoned to self-transcendence"<sup>(2)</sup>, quoting in particular the former's cryptic expression of belief in the concluding sentence of his book Religion Without Revelation viz. "I believe in transhumanism"<sup>(3)</sup>. It is Hemming though, who really makes the relationship of the various "humanisms" clear. He states:-

"Both scientific and religious viewpoints are, today, humanisms. But neither is only a humanism, because each accepts that existence itself is shrouded in mystery. Each may wish to put something different into that mystery. One group may put a personal God there; the other a question mark; but each will agree that the ground of man's being is humanism within a mystery. This is the new starting-point. It provides a vast unifying common ground in terms of human involvement and purpose"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) Ibid. pp. 21-22. Robinson is anxious at this point to refer his readers to the work of Teilhard de Chardin whom he considers to have "formulated this open humanism for our generation in terms which make it accessible to those most predisposed by their studies to interpret everything within the process of change and decay" (Loc. cit.).
- (2) Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society p. 131. Cf. also his approval of similar views expressed by the French Marxist Roger Garaudy - Ibid. p. 132.
- (3) Op. cit. p. 195.
- (4) Article: "Moral Education in Chaos". In New Society 5th. September, 1963.



There can be little doubt in anyone's mind, that "humanism within a mystery" aptly describes Robinson's own analysis and position in terms of both his theology and Christian activity.

To conclude this exposition of the nature of man in Robinson's thought, there remains one further aspect which needs to be mentioned and this is, of course, the stress on human autonomy to which the views outlined above inevitably lead. The title of Robinson's recent book Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society<sup>(1)</sup> focuses on this aspect and epitomises Robinson's concern for it. As the concept of agape and its vitally important place in both Robinson's thought and to the arguments advanced in this thesis have already been outlined in an earlier section<sup>(2)</sup>, it would be needlessly repetitive to go over the same ground again at this point. Suffice it to say that Robinson's "Christian humanism" has:-

".... above all, its pattern of life and hope and endurance  
 .... grounded in the overmastering constraint of a love  
 which, once sensed, changes everything. 'For the love of  
 Christ leaves us no choice, when once we have reached the  
 conclusion that one man died for all and therefore all man-  
 kind has died. His purpose in dying for all was that men,  
 while still in life, should cease to live for themselves,  
 and should live for him who for their sake died and was  
 raised to life. With us therefore worldly standards have  
 ceased to count in our estimate of any man; even if once they  
 counted in our understanding of Christ, they do so no longer.  
 When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the

(1) S.C.M. Press 1970.

(2) V. supra pp. 22 ff.

old world order has gone, and a new order has already begun' (2 Cor. 5.14-17: N.E.B.). Such is the distinctively Christian perspective and outlook on life"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Having then put Robinson's views of the nature of man into context, it will now be valuable to extend the range of the current examination of "man" to include contributions in this field from other contemporary theologians and philosophers.

### III.

It is the intention in this section to be concerned quite literally with present-day views concerning man. Accordingly, there will be no further treatment here of those writers to whom, as has already been indicated, Robinson is indebted for the development and support of his own "Christian humanism"<sup>(2)</sup>. It may seem then, that

(1) In the End God pp. 139-40.

(2) I am referring here to Tillich, Bonhoeffer, Cox, and van Buren amongst others. Detailed accounts of the work of the two former may be found as follows:-

Tillich - V. Kegley C.W. & Bretall R.W. The Theology of Paul Tillich.

Thomas H. Paul Tillich: an appraisal.

Bonhoeffer - V. Godsey J.D. The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Bethge E. "The challenge of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology". In Chicago Theol. Sem. Reg. Vol.11 (Feb. 1961)pp. 1 ff.

Robinson has spoken of his indebtedness to Tillich, Bonhoeffer and Bultmann in a seminar/address given at St. Mary's Church, Cambridge on 4th March 1973. The full text of this is given in Appendix 8.

There are excellent summaries of the thought and significance of this group of theologians as a whole in:-

D'Arcy M.C. Humanism and Christianity: Chapter 3 "The Secular City".

Macquarrie J. God and Secularity: Chapter 2 "The Theological Background" and passim.

Shinn R.L. Man: The New Humanism: Chapter 14 "Is man a religious being?" and passim.

the key notion detailed above, of autonomous man living and acting agapeistically in contemporary society, is the product of thought that can only be described at best as idealistic and at worst as presenting a picture of man's nature which is patently false when contrasted with the real life situation. Of course, if this were in fact the case, it would not necessarily be a denial that man has the potential to achieve such an obviously desirable state as that described by Robinson. Nevertheless it is important to attempt to make some assessment of whether or not contemporary man does in fact match up to the kind of analysis of his nature which has been presented in Section II above.

In the Western "free" world there can be little doubt that the autonomous status of the individual is steadily growing and increasing. Strong reaction against group pressures, both in society itself and also against the often rigid moral sanctions of social groups, have led to an increasing emphasis upon and respect for individual rights<sup>(1)</sup>. Thus there has come about a tolerance of virtually any activity or personal expression which is within the law<sup>(2)</sup>. Such tolerance is usually expressed in phrases such as "doing one's own thing" (a slang expression) or "exercising one's individuality". So, despite the evidence of recurrent national or

- (1) Although I am sure that many people find great difficulty in giving any clear explication of what they understand by terms such as this and why they understand it. This is certainly true of student groups I have met where the notion of "human rights" has been under discussion.
- (2) Indeed sometimes outside it too, as many current industrial disputes and much debated social issues indicate. It is salutary in this connection to find the writer of the Preface to the new edition of Crockford's Clerical Directory (1972-73) observing that for instance, the impression given by the so-called "quality" Sunday newspapers concerning Christian sexual morality is that this has been abandoned by all thinking people. V. Clifford Longley's article "Newspapers attacked on moral issue" - In The Times, 1st March 1973.

world crises man is seen as basically "liberated", at least in himself, and hopeful of his ability to establish brotherhood and peace among the nations. Thus William Hamilton (after some change of heart incidentally) speaks for many American theologians, putting himself on the side of:-

".... a willingness to count on the future and a belief in its real improvement"<sup>(1)</sup>.

He further defines the "new optimism" which is the subject of his essay as:-

".... an increased sense of the possibilities of human action, human happiness, human decency in this life"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Of course to describe man as having the potential to achieve national and international neighbourliness does not imply that he will achieve it. It would seem that the optimism of the secular humanist per se must essentially be based upon hope - hope that men will eventually arrive at a stage of being "men for others" as distinct from "men for themselves". But the really significant thing here is that such a hope without something else - something that can only be described as a means of achieving what is hoped for - is false. For man left to himself, his own efforts and the dictates of his "real" nature, tends to be wholly directed by principles of self-interest and self-concern<sup>(3)</sup>. The popular admonition to "practise what is preached" applies as much to humanists as to those who profess religious commitment of one sort or another. In a sense Christians and Humanists have no quarrel about the basic assumption that men have the potential to become other-directed - their quarrel is really to do with the way

(1) "The New Optimism - from Prufrock to Ringo". In Altizer T. and Hamilton W. Radical Theology and the Death of God p. 157.

(2) Ibid. p. 159.

(3) There is an extremely interesting paper on "The Concept of Beastliness", centred on ethological views of man, by Mary Midgley in Philosophy Vol. 48 no.184 (April 1973) pp. 111 ff.

in which this potential is to be realised and is in fact realised. Much more will be said in this connection in the chapter concerned with Sin which follows. Thus far however, there does not seem to be any serious objection to Robinson's revision of Bonhoeffer's description of man as "come of age" to that of man "having reached adolescence"<sup>(1)</sup>. There can be little doubt that this is an eminently reasonable revision for the secular humanist to adopt also, yet it remains necessary to point out that for neither Christian nor Humanist does such an analysis in itself solve the problem of man's inhumanity to man, whatever form this may take.

What then can be said about this vitally relevant question which will not need to be couched in supra-naturalistic terminology i.e. what sort of answer can be given which does not involve the use of statements or propositions containing such expressions as "the grace of God", the "gift of the Holy Spirit", or even the "power of the Risen Christ"<sup>(2)</sup>? The most profitable line of thought here may well be that of Hemming's "humanism within a mystery" mentioned earlier<sup>(3)</sup>. Not that the present writer would wish to put a personal God into that mystery as Hemming conjectures might be the case with religious people. Rather, that the mystery was in fact the existence in one man, Jesus, of total agape<sup>(4)</sup>. Thus the shattering nature of the mystery is something beyond the

- (1) V. Appendix 1 p. (iii).
- (2) I am aware of course, that this expression can be interpreted in a non-supranaturalistic way.
- (3) V. p. 108 supra.
- (4) I have elaborated on this theme in terms of the uniqueness of Christian agape and its revelation in Christ, in Chapter 2 pp. 30 ff., and have examined the question of the uniqueness of Christ's agapeistic life in detail in my M.Ed. thesis pp. 143 ff.

merely natural. As Robert Spike has written:-

"To be human is not to be natural. To be a man in the fullest sense is to be disturbed and intrigued by what we see in Christ"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Even this experience is not in itself sufficient to guarantee action<sup>(2)</sup>.

It is necessary for men to understand the significance of that disturbance and to take to themselves and exercise in their own life that "dynamism"<sup>(3)</sup> which is the compelling element in the person and life of Jesus. As a result of this act of will then:-

"As in him men meet God and their brothers, they also come to self-recognition"<sup>(4)</sup>.

This surely is what is meant by speaking of Christian humanism?

For as Robinson's correction of Bonhoeffer in the English edition makes plain:-

"To be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way .... but to be a man - not a type of man, but the man that Christ creates in us"<sup>(5)</sup>.

Robinson goes on:-

- (1) To Be a Man p. 123.
- (2) Although I share the view of one of my students who argued strongly in a recent seminar, that people must be made aware of both the situations which call for the exercise of human concern on their part, and also of the way in which they can act in such situations.
- (3) Is it stretching the New Testament word δυναμεις too far to interpret it in this way? J.V. Taylor in his book The Go-Between God seems to be speaking of the same thing which, he states - "... possessed and dominated the man Jesus Christ, making him the most aware and sensitive and open human being who has ever lived". Ibid. p. 17.
- (4) R.L. Shinn - Man: The New Humanism p. 181. It is interesting to find Bishop F.R. Barry in his article "Feeding the Multitude in a cultural waste land", stating that in his view the Church's task today is almost the opposite of what it once was, i.e. it must now try to evoke the faith that Christ brings us God - v. The Times, 31st March, 1973.
- (5) The Difference in Being a Christian Today p. 18.



"That is to say, the true dimension of humanness is not what we are when left to ourselves, but what we have it in us to become when taken out of ourselves into the full potential stature of humanity in Christ"<sup>(1)</sup>.

These quotations clearly explicate what it means to speak of the "dynamic of love"<sup>(2)</sup> revealed in Christ and in turn made available to Christians who themselves are in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ).

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(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Fr. Mark Gibbard's recent book entitled Dynamic of Love further explores this notion.



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1 Corinthians 15.22	p. 102 footnote
15.45-49	p. 102 footnote
6.20	p. 103 footnote
2 Corinthians 5.14-17	p. 110
Philippians 2.5-11	p. 102 footnote

(1) "Paradise Lost" Book I lines 1-3. In Paradise Lost, ed. John Milton, (1946) p. 7.

(2) Gilbert F., "The Marks of Man's Enslavement and the Cosmos of Man". In Systematic Theology Vol. II p. 24.

(3) I am using the term "myth" here in the sense that Wittgenstein would use it viz. as "rigidly the knowledge of a conventionalized age" - cf. Wittgenstein L.W. (197) Language and World Vol. 1 p. 11. Harold Stead gives a simple but excellent statement of the meaning of the term in religion in his pamphlet "The Psychological Dimension". In The Religious Dimension of Existence pp. 18-19.

(4) V. Devinny Chapter 3 for the original biblical context.

## CHAPTER 6

SIN

## I.

"Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit  
 Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
 Brought death into the World, and all our woe,  
 With loss of Eden, till one greater Man  
 Restore us, and regain the blissful seat ...."

Thus John Milton bade the Heavenly Muse sing in the opening lines of his long poem "Paradise Lost"<sup>(1)</sup>. This chapter will be primarily concerned with presenting an analysis of sin - its nature and its place in human life today. It is obvious that such an analysis is hardly possible without reference to notions of sin which see it on the one hand as being the "estrangement" of man from the ground of his being, from other beings and from himself<sup>(2)</sup>, and on the other hand as having causal factors which are described in the mythical<sup>(3)</sup> language of the Fall<sup>(4)</sup> used by Milton in the lines from "Paradise Lost" quoted above. At the outset of this study

- (1) "Paradise Lost" Book I lines 1-5. In Poetical Works of John Milton: Everyman Edition (1946) p. 9.
- (2) Tillich P. "The Marks of Man's Estrangement and the Concept of Sin". In Systematic Theology Vol. II p. 51.
- (3) I am using the term "myth" here in the sense that Bultmann would use it viz. as "simply the cosmology of a prescientific age" - v. Bartsch H.W. (Ed) Kerygma and Myth Vol. i p. 3. Ninian Smart gives a simple but succinct statement of the meaning of the term in religion in his paragraph "The Mythological Dimension". In the Religious Experience of Mankind pp. 18-19.
- (4) V. Genesis Chapter 3 for the original biblical account.

however, the main concern will be to see what the Christian religion has traditionally believed and taught about sin so that it will be possible later on to make this a frame of reference to which contemporary approaches to the subject can be related. The initial outline here will necessarily be brief as it is meant to be a starting-point for the analysis of the concept and not a detailed theological treatment of it.

It is worth mentioning at once that the Christian doctrine of man has maintained a balance between views which in literature have often polarised around two extremes, namely the view that man is naturally kind and good (this was Rousseau's belief for example) or that he is basically a savage and uncivilised creature (Hobbes fits this category). The Christian doctrine is neither optimistic nor pessimistic in that it is maintained that man was created wholly good, and although he became a fallen creature by his own doing, he is not totally corrupt but has an inherent tendency to stray from "the paths of righteousness"<sup>(1)</sup>. Even so the extent of his "fall" was so great that God's plan of redemption<sup>(2)</sup> became necessary to effect a reconciliation.

Sin then, became a part of human nature through the Fall.

This is defined according to C.B. Moss as:-

- (1) A more detailed consideration of the theological significance of speaking of man's sinfulness in and through Adam, is to be found in Chapter 3 on "Man" - supra pp. 101 ff.
- (2) I do not propose to extend this aspect in discussion here. Ample examination of the notion can be found in theological literature under this heading and under the linked doctrines such as the Atonement et al.

"Deliberate conscious disobedience to God. Therefore it can only exist in the will of a person: it is not any kind of material taint. And there could be no sin if there were no free will"<sup>(1)(2)</sup>.

As there could be no sin without free will, so there could be no free will without the power to sin. Free will and both sin and the power to sin appear in experience to be universal and it is evident that men find wrongdoing easier than doing right.

The Church, following St. Paul's teaching<sup>(3)</sup>, has always held that men are born with a tendency to sin i.e. a weakness of will<sup>(4)</sup> which if not checked, will result in sinfulness of thought, word or deed. The traditional name given to this weakness by the Latin Fathers was originale peccatum - translated "original sin". As Moss rightly points out, this term is not a very accurate one as the original sin spoken of is in fact not really sin at all but a weakness which leads to sin<sup>(5)</sup>. This weakness is also hereditary as St. Paul makes clear:-

"Therefore as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; so death passed to all men, for that all sinned ...."<sup>(6)</sup>.

- (1) V. p. 122 ff. infra. for further explication of "free will".
- (2) "What sin is". In The Christian Faith: An introduction to Dogmatic Theology pp. 146-47.
- (3) V. New Testament Commentaries for explication of St. Paul's exposition of original sin and its significance in his teaching notably:  
Barrett C.K. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.  
Whiteley D.E. The Theology of St. Paul et al.
- (4) A philosophical examination of weakness of will is ably presented in a variety of essays in Mortimore G.W. (Ed) Weakness of Will.
- (5) Op.cit. p. 149.
- (6) Romans 5.12.

It is also subject to growth in relation to the sinful conditions of varying times and places and the sinful situations and influences to which people are exposed, as well as attacks of the "Devil". Hence the clause in the baptismal liturgy which asks the candidate (or his sponsors) to renounce:-

".... the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all the covetous desires of the flesh .... "(1)

It should be noted that within the Christian Church, the means of healing this fundamental human weakness is the grace or power of God conveyed sacramentally in baptism - a grace achieved initially through the death and resurrection of Jesus, i.e. through his redemptive activity<sup>(2)</sup>.

The last aspect of the traditional doctrinal view of sin which must be mentioned, is the problem of the conflict which has always been seen to exist between the two notions of the omnipotence of God and the free will of man. Historical attempts to provide a solution to this problem have tended to result in extreme positions - typical of two opposing doctrines in this connection are the views of Pelagius<sup>(3)</sup> and Augustine<sup>(4)</sup>. Perhaps one of the most useful analyses of the problem presented by notions of God's omnipotence on the one hand and man's free will on the other hand, is the middle ground position taken by N.P. Williams in his classic book Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin<sup>(5)</sup>. C.B. Moss (op. cit. p. 153) gives an admirably simplified version of Williams' seven propositions:-

- (1) "The Ministration of Public Baptism of Infants". In the Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662).
- (2) V. footnote 1 p. 120 supra.
- (3) For amplification of this heresy v. "The doctrine of Pelagius". In Kelly J.N.D. Early Christian Doctrines pp. 357 ff.
- (4) A survey of Augustine's teaching can be found in the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, that against Pelagius on p. 107. V. also Augustine's De Spir. et litt. passim.
- (5) Pp. 452-460.



"(1) God is perfectly good, and there is no evil in anything which he has made.

(2) The origin of evil is to be sought in the voluntary rebellion of created wills, not only of human wills, but those of devils also.

(3) Man, when he first appeared, was weak, imperfect, ignorant, and non-moral, but possessed self-consciousness and free will as a starting-point for progress towards union with God.

(4) Man, as his moral ideas grew, disobeyed God, and thereby threw in his lot with the devils and diverged from the path marked out for him by God: this is called the Fall.

(5) Ever since the Fall, human nature has shown an inherent weakness of will, or defective control of the lower nature by the higher.

(7) This weakness of will is hereditary and not merely due to environment; it is inherited by every child from its parents".

This brief sketch of the traditional doctrine of sin and its relation to the fall of man and man's nature,<sup>(1)</sup> will serve as a model with which Robinson's understanding of the concept of sin may be usefully contrasted.

## II.

A relatively traditional picture of the world's sinful state and the place of Jesus in God's plan for its salvation,<sup>(2)</sup> is to be

(1) The particular relationship indicated here was mentioned in the previous chapter on Man - v. Ch. 5 p. 103f. supra.

(2) For a detailed study of "salvation" see any of the many accounts under this heading in the theological word-books - e.g. Von Allmen, Richardson et al.

found in an early exegesis by Robinson of the Temptation narrative.<sup>(1)</sup>  
 A brief quotation from this work will indicate his line of thought.  
 Having noted the failure of the Old Israel to meet the pattern of  
 life demanded by God, he continues:-

"The world was to be redeemed by the new Israel 'repeating'  
 that divinely ordained pattern, but this time giving the  
 answer it had been chosen to make. In modern times, we  
 might say that in his attack on the world in sin God had  
 devised a plan of assault which was to be decisive for the  
 issue of the war - Operation 'Salvation', to use the current  
 jargon ..... The concern of the Church was, first, to pro-  
 claim that Jesus, as the true representative of God's people,  
 had in fact carried out and completed that operation without  
 failure, and, secondly, to call its members to repeat the  
 pattern in their own lives"<sup>(2)</sup>.

There is nothing here which appears to need any special comment or  
 qualification, or which is not reinforced by Robinson's traditional  
 view of human nature and its sinfulness as revealed in the Genesis  
 myths, in other places in his writing.<sup>(3)</sup> Nor does his interpre-  
 tation of Christ's saving work give much cause for query except to  
 note the characteristic way in which he relates this to the experi-  
 ence of present-day mankind viz:-

- (1) "The Temptations". In Twelve New Testament Studies pp. 53-60.  
 Cf. G.H.P. Thompson's article "Called - Proved - Obedient: a  
 study in the Baptism and Temptation Narratives of Matthew and  
 Luke". In J.T.S. NS xi. (1960) pp. 1-12.
- (2) Ibid. pp. 59-60. Cf. a similar short account of Christ's  
 obedience and sinlessness in Robinson's chapter "The Body of  
 Christ" In The Body p. 39 section (ii) and passim.
- (3) e.g. in his chapter "Adam and Eve" - But that I can't believe!  
 pp. 19 ff.

".... Satan falls from heaven as each man decides for the Gospel, and in the finished work of Christ the Prince of this world has been judged; the last judgement is being wrought out in every moment of choice and decision; Christ is all in all, since all things have been reconciled in him"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Elsewhere, Robinson stresses the clear existence of evil in the world, and argues for a method of convincing people of its existence which does not rely on such personifications as "the Devil", but rather on the necessity of demythologising in this area, thus making clear:

".... the reality in human experience which the myths have been describing - and one may then remythologize, as the psychologists do, though without any suggestion that these figures and archetypes 'exist' in the psyche or elsewhere"<sup>(2)</sup>.

In a vivid passage in Exploration Into God in which Robinson again puts forward his panentheistic<sup>(3)</sup> view and makes clear his firm support for "explorations" of God such as those of Petru Dumitriu<sup>(4)</sup> and Teilhard de Chardin<sup>(5)</sup>, there is an important consideration of the problem of evil. Noting that classical treatments of this problem have tended to push the answer either back to a primaeval past or forward to an eschatological future, Robinson admits to thinking that neither really provides the answer and that the problem lies in how we relate evil to our conception of God in the present.

(1) In the End God p. 77.

(2) Exploration Into God p. 41. It is salutary though, to realise that by no means all theologians have discarded the ontological status of the Devil. My brother's recent book But Deliver Us From Evil: An introduction to the demonic dimension in pastoral care makes this point very clear.

(3) Ibid. pp. 83 ff.

(4) In his novel Incognito. See Robinson's further support for the notion of God dwelling "incognito" and the significance of this view for contemporary Christians, in his chapter "Starting from the other end" in The New Reformation? pp. 32 ff.

(5) Particularly in Le Milieu Divin and The Phenomenon of Man.

Here he attacks the absurdity of popular thought which sees the will of God revealed in personal tragedy or large-scale disasters. He writes:-

"God is in the cancer as he is in the sunset, and is to be met and responded to in each. Both are among the faces of God, the one terrible, the other beautiful. Neither as such is the face of love, but, as in the Cross for the Christian, even the worst can be transformed and 'vanquished'. The 'problem' of evil is not how God can will it (that is not even touched on in Romans 8), but its power to threaten meaninglessness and separation, to sever and to sour, and to darken our capacity to make the response of 'Thou'"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Thus, he maintains, theology should be restating the problem rather than attempting to find a solution, declaring to the atheist who finds a God who is personally responsible for suffering morally intolerable, that such a conception of God is both inaccurate and unchristian. The way in to the problem of evil is yet again to:-

".... start from the other end .... Taking the immanence, the incarnation of God seriously, as the form or field of his transcendence, as the panentheistic projection does, means that the categories of intentionality and the like are relevant only when the Divine is operating through personality. In the dense world of sub-personal relationships (which includes all but the self-conscious tip of human life, as well as the rest of nature), the purposiveness of love works itself out through "blinder" categories. There is no intention in an earthquake or an accident. But in and through each it is still possible to respond to the 'Thou' that claims even this

(1) Exploration Into God p. 109.

for meaning and personal purpose. Everything can be taken up and transformed rather than allowed to build up into a dark patch of loveless resentment and meaningless futility"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Having emphasised that the panentheistic view stands against the duality of theism, moral as well as metaphysical, and having insisted upon the fact that such a view shows nothing of the indifferentism of pantheism which has to maintain that evil is in some way illusory or unreal, Robinson ends his chapter with a powerful restatement of the notion of God as agape in action, even in circumstances of evil viz:-

"The evil in the world is indeed terrifyingly real, both at the sub-personal and at the personal level, but it is still part of the face of God. That is to say, love is there to be met and to be created through it and out of it. It is not without purpose: meaning can be wrested from it even at the cost of crucifixion. It is not separate from the face of love, and therefore cannot separate from it. That is the saving grace: God is not outside evil any more than he is outside anything else, and the promise is that he 'will be all in all' as love'"<sup>(2)</sup>.

It is not necessary to discuss in any great detail here the basic position which Robinson takes (which is so vividly illustrated in the passages above and which has been examined in such detail at an earlier point in this thesis<sup>(3)</sup>) regarding Christian morals and the freedom of the individual in the contemporary situation. It does however need to be seen that there is great relevance between this

(1) Ibid. p. 110.

(2) Ibid. loc. cit.

(3) V. supra pp. 14 ff. and Chapter 2 passim.

and the consideration of sin and evil in the world - what is recognised as sinful and evil, how the Christian reacts to such situations, how he can achieve consistency in his personal life and relationships, all these reflect aspects of the nature of man and of the nature of sin. Suffice it to say at this point, that for Robinson, agape holds the key - to the way in which the Christian will decide<sup>(1)</sup> what is the most loving act in any given situation; to the way in which he will react to what is evil and sinful in the world and indeed, how he will recognise this; to the way in which 'God' is made known; to the way in which the redemptive pattern of the agape-istic life of Christ is repeated afresh in the lives of his followers, transforming, healing and strengthening against that other power which is the power of evil and which leads men to sin<sup>(2)</sup>.

### III.

A good deal of recent writing in the field of philosophy of religion still centres around the problem of evil and its relation to the existence of God. This is a criticism which many opponents of theism feel has been unsatisfactorily answered by theists and non-theists alike. It can be stated very simply in three propositions:-

- (1) As is true of much of Robinson's work, there is a strong anthropocentric emphasis here. I am of course aware of the traditional theocentric notion of God's "disturbance" in man's activities and decisions.
- (2) Many references to these aspects of Robinson's thought have already been given passim. It is worth noting two of his most recent works in this connection viz:- Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society and The Difference in Being a Christian Today, both of which contain an extensive elaboration of the contemporary moral situation and modern Christian attitudes towards it.



1. God is omnipotent.
2. God is wholly good.
3. Evil exists.

As J.L. Mackie points out in his well-known article "Evil and Omnipotence"<sup>(1)</sup>:-

"There seems to be some contradiction between these three propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false"<sup>(2)</sup>.

This contradiction of course requires some additional premises to make it absolutely plain, i.e. that good is opposed to evil in such a way that a good thing always eliminates evil as far as it can, and that there are no limits to what an omnipotent thing or person can do. Thus it follows:-

".... that a good omnipotent thing eliminates evil completely and then the proposition that a good omnipotent thing exists and that evil exists, are incompatible"<sup>(3)</sup>.

H.J. McCloskey, in an equally-well known article "God and Evil"<sup>(4)</sup> goes over much the same ground as Mackie. His conclusion is:-

".... that God, were He all-powerful and perfectly good, would have created a world in which there was no unnecessary evil. It has not been argued that God ought to have created a perfect world, nor that He should have made one that is in any way logically impossible. It has simply been argued that a benevolent God could, and would have created a world devoid of superfluous evil. It has been contended that there

(1) In Pike N (Ed). God and Evil: Readings on the Theological problem of evil pp. 46 ff.

(2) Ibid. p. 47.

(3) Loc. cit.

(4) In op. cit. pp. 61 ff.



is evil in this world - unnecessary evil - and that the more popular and philosophically more significant of the many attempts to explain this evil are completely unsatisfactory. Hence we must conclude from the existence of evil that there cannot be an omnipotent, benevolent God"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Examination of further sources which deal with this aspect of the problem of evil, follow generally similar lines<sup>(2)</sup>.

One of the most recent philosophical studies in this area by M.B. Ahern<sup>(3)</sup> reviews some of the most noteworthy contributions to the "God and Evil" debate over the past twenty years or so (e.g. those of Hick, Leibnitz, Campbell et al<sup>(4)</sup>) and arrives at two general conclusions viz:-

"(1) Apart from positive proofs of God's existence, it cannot be shown that the world's evil is logically compatible with the existence of a wholly good, omnipotent being, or that the conditions for compatibility are in fact met.

(2) It cannot be shown that the world's evil is logically incompatible with God's existence, or that the conditions for compatibility are not in fact met"<sup>(5)</sup>.

That is, none of the problems about logical compatibility raised for theism by evil, are decisive. It is worth noting finally, that

(1) Ibid. p. 84.

(2) e.g. Hick J. Evil and the God of Love.  
Petit F. The Problem of Evil et al.

and Flew A. "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom" and "Theology and Falsification" In Flew A & MacIntyre A (Eds) New Essays in Philosophical Theology.

Crane S.A. "On Evil and Omnipotence". In Mind Vol. LXV (1956) et al.

(3) The Problem of Evil.

(4) Ibid. pp. 53 ff.

(5) Ibid. p. 78.

Ahern believes that these indefinite conclusions which have been reached in his book, are consistent with Judaism and Christianity in that neither of these faiths offer solutions to the intellectual problems raised by evil - he quotes in particular Job Chapters 38-42 and Romans 11.33-5 in support of this claim.

It seemed to the present writer, that these traditional studies of the problem of God and evil needed some explication in the context of any study of sin. Nevertheless it must be emphasised that such problems and objections do not present any stumbling-block to the theistic position already expounded in this thesis. The argument that "God" is agape, and the consequent abandonment of the traditional supernaturalistic projection of "God" which this position entails, effectively disposes of the incompatibility of Mackie's three propositions outlined on page 129 supra. If these were rewritten accordingly viz:-

1. agape is omnipotent.
2. agape is wholly good.
3. Evil exists.

it can be seen that the first proposition becomes a nonsense<sup>(1)</sup> and must be discarded, and that the second and third propositions then stand independently without any inherent contradiction. This chapter

(1) I say that it is a "nonsense" here in that it is not possible to make this replacement and still keep Mackie's original sense. There is nevertheless, a strong case for maintaining that agape is "all powerful" in a metaphorical sense. It seems to me that this is what is implied by the various commendations of agape in the New Testament, and by statements such as that of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13.13 viz. "But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love" (for "love" in this verse, the Greek word is ἀγάπη - agape).

is however, concerned with sin and evil as it affects man and his ability to live in an agapeistic relationship with his fellows. The existence of evil is not an issue which can be seriously questioned, and the mythical narrative of the Fall and the notion of original sin<sup>(1)</sup>, would seem to enshrine something of the fundamental truth of man's situation and nature as a being whose natural inclination is towards sin<sup>(2)</sup>. It is no new thing either, to suggest that it is man's egotism which is at the heart of his sinfulness and which prevents or hinders him from reaching human fulfilment in the agapeistic life, or to put it another way, that this same sinful inclination renders man's progress towards the ideal agapeistic life-style so fully demonstrated in the life of Christ, painfully slow.

- (1) V. p. 123 supra. R.S. Lee has produced an unusual interpretation of the Genesis account of the Fall in his chapter "Human Nature and the Fall" - in Kemp E.W. (Ed) Man: Fallen and Free (Oxford Essays on the Condition of Man) pp. 33 ff. The line of thought taken here is indicated by the sub-title of one of the sections viz:- "The Fall or the Rise of Man" (pp. 49 ff.) Lee examines the psychological significance of the two major facts which underlie the doctrine of the Fall - man's sense of having sinned, with its concomitant feeling of guilt, and his sense of unworthiness. Their presence in man, he believes, is not indicative of wrong human development but of man's growth towards the attainment of full human personality. Hence his final sentence - "Adam ate, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and he became able to choose good deliberately and became more godlike in consequence" (p. 58). It is most interesting to note also, that Lee makes much use in his analysis in this section, of the agapeistic model, so that expressions such as "the driving power of love", "the supremacy and finality of love" etc. are found passim (e.g. on page 58).
- (2) This consequential aspect of the nature of man was outlined on pages 112-113 supra.

## IV.

In this final section an attempt will be made to present a brief analysis of the nature and significance of sin which stems from the basic premises already outlined as foundational to this thesis<sup>(1)</sup>. Perhaps the most consequential aspect from which to begin is the contention that love (agape) is the supreme moral excellence. That is, that man is fully himself, is truly fulfilled, when displaying complete devotion to the well-being of others. That this is a truly Christian contention is undeniable - it is implicit in the so-called "golden rule" (Matthew 22.34 ff; Mark 12.28 ff; Luke 10.25 ff.) and in many of the activities (e.g. Mark 6.30-44 and parallels) and parables of Jesus (e.g. Luke 10.25-37 et al). The law of love is explicitly recalled in the Epistles (e.g. Romans 13.8-10; Galatians 5.14; Colossians 1.4; 1Thessalonians 4.9; Philemon 5), and is presented as the authentic seal of the Christian life in all its fullness, in the Johannine writings (e.g. 1 John 2.10; 4.12 and passim). However, as has been shown throughout this present chapter, the primary obstacle to man's fulfilment qua man is his own sinfulness, a condition which brings about his estrangement from the ultimate moral demand, described above as agape. This estrangement is supremely characterised in man's self-interest and self-concern, i.e. a state which is completely opposite to one<sup>of</sup> supreme moral excellence.

It might seem then, that man's situation is hopeless and that he is condemned to an endless and fruitless attempt to achieve self-fulfilment. If, in Bonhoeffer's words, the only completely innocent

(1) These premises are outlined in detail in Chapter 1 supra.

man is one who is completely revealed and surrendered to others with no particle of selfishness remaining,<sup>(1)</sup> then it does seem almost impossible that estranged humanity could ever approach such innocence. Nevertheless, the Christian claim is that Jesus Christ did reveal both this innocence and this perfection of agape in his own life. Furthermore, in and through that life, Christians who have acknowledged Christ and who have accepted the reality of his "saving work"<sup>(2)</sup> in their lives, find the estrangement from the ground of their being gradually lessened and their corresponding awareness of sin and resolve in face of it, strengthened. Thus the ethic of Christian agape is of vital significance to contemporary man, and the difference between it and a straightforward humanist philosophy, quite clear and distinct. Man cannot of himself bridge the gap of his alienation from the ground of his being - his very nature renders such a task impossible. The recognition of his inadequacy here is in itself the beginning of man's healing, and a point at which the Christian dynamic can begin to operate. For:-

".... I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth<sup>(3)</sup> in me" (Galatians 2.20).

- (1) Sanctorum Communio pp. 118 f.
- (2) I am referring here to Christ living in and through Christians in the sense that his redemptive work continues in the lives of committed believers, shaping and refining those lives to the pattern of his own. St. Paul catches the real significance of this notion when he speaks of the mystery which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1.27).
- (3) I am particularly fond of Temple Gairdner's transposition of this text which so effectively captures the ethos of this thesis exposition. He is said to have changed St. Paul's words in Galatians from "Christ liveth in me" to "Christ loveth in me".

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## CHAPTER 7

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

## I.

In the light of the interpretations of "God", Christian agape and personal morality which have been outlined and espoused in the earlier sections of this thesis<sup>(1)</sup>, the reader might well conclude that of all the various doctrines which are now being examined, that of death and immortality offers least hope of any substantial reinterpretation. Not so much in that the finality of death itself presents philosophical or theological problems which are insuperable, as that the whole direction of thought in this thesis has been closely bound up with the existential approach, with an emphasis upon the life and thought of the individual confronted by and active in the immediate situation. Thus "God" is to be located in those situations which are characterised by ultimate concern<sup>(2)</sup>, a person's moral judgement or decision is taken as a result of confronting that situation with one's loving will<sup>(3)</sup> - and so on. Does death do away with all of this? If the individual no longer exists, can anything of relevance be said concerning a person who no longer exists qua person? What place if any, does the traditional Christian doctrine have in such a discussion? Has the kind of philosophical treatment which has characterised this

(1) v. supra pp. 1 ff.

(2) v. supra pp. 4-5.

(3) v. supra pp. 28 ff.

thesis thus far any relevance at all in the area under consideration, indeed, has it any guidelines to offer which may help resolve these important questions? It is proposed first of all, to give the usual brief summary of traditional theology relative to the area in question, then to consider some important philosophical interpretations and objections, and finally to indicate ways in which contemporary theological and philosophical discussion may assist in clarification of the related concepts of death and immortality in a way which can be seen to be essentially endemic to the thesis as a whole.

## II.

In the main, Christianity has little to say about the event of death itself. This should not come as a surprise for Christian theology assumes, rather than argues the existence of a state beyond death as it does the survival of the individual person in that state. This is not to say that there are clear indications of the precise nature either of the state itself or of the individual person. That there is such a state in which individual people may be found and recognised is a tenet of Christian doctrine. It will be seen later on that from a philosophical point of view, one of the most fundamental objections is to this very assumption, but that will become clear in due course. Death is therefore, in Christian theology, a necessary transitional event, an event which marks the clear transference of the person<sup>(1)</sup> concerned from this life to the next, from the mortal state to the non-mortal. It might

(1) I am begging the question at this stage, of precisely who or what is transferred, though this too will be seen later to be of considerable philosophical significance.

thus he said that although death is a final event in terms of each person's mortal existence, it is by no means an ultimate event in the total existence of the individual persons<sup>(1)</sup>. It is not surprising then, that as Christian doctrine is forward-looking in so far as the so called "after-life" or "life after death" is concerned, that Christian writing - liturgy, hymnology, scripture etc. - abounds with references such as:-

"Jesus lives! henceforth is death

But the gate of life immortal"<sup>(2)</sup>

and:-

"Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity: We give thee hearty thanks, for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinful world ...."<sup>(3)</sup>

and even the Old Testament crux text:-

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And although after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God ...."<sup>(4)</sup>

- (1) Primitive Old Testament belief seems on the whole to characterise death as a final event common to all men - Cf. 2 Sam. 14.14: "For we must needs die, and are as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again". The concept of "Sheol" was however, progressively refined from a very early and simple concept as the abode of the dead (v. Gen. 15.15; Deut. 31.16 et al), to that of a place from which the dead would be resurrected at the last judgement (v. Daniel 12.12). It should be noted also that faith in the resurrection of the dead was an article of Pharisaic belief (v. Acts 23.6-8).
- (2) Easter hymn of C.F. Gellert (1715-69). English Hymnal 134.
- (3) Prayer at the burial of the dead - Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662).
- (4) Job 19.25-6. For the validity of this interpretation of the text v. W.A. Irwin's commentary on Job. In Peake's Commentary on the Bible para. 346 p. 399.

In every quotation above, either directly or by implication, it can be seen that the Christian doctrine of life after death is itself dependent upon the linked doctrine of resurrection, the whole stemming from belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus. As Alan Richardson puts it:-

"The Christian Church lived in the new and triumphant experience of victory over death; the common lot of humanity had been exchanged ('as in Adam all die') for the experience of resurrection through Christ ('even so in Christ shall all be made alive') 1 Cor. 15.22 and Cf. Rom. 5.12-21"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The point here about resurrection (i.e. of the body) is an important one, for as C.R. Moss points out, what Christians believe in this matter is clearly stated in the Apostles' Creed viz:-

"I believe in .... the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Moss goes on to reiterate:-

"What we believe in, as Christians, is not the 'immortality of the soul', but the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting"<sup>(3)</sup>.

In this general context, it is worth recording that D.Z. Phillips, whose philosophical treatment of the specific Christian doctrines under discussion in this section has been of such clear relevance, insists upon making a distinction between survival after death and immortality. He writes:-

- (1) Article on "Death". In A Theological Word Book of the Bible Ed. Richardson A. p. 60.
- (2) "The Apostles' Creed". In Anglican Book of Common Prayer - Morning and Evening Prayer.
- (3) The Christian Faith: an intro. to dogmatic theology p. 436.

"It is important to distinguish between survival after death and immortality. The latter is a religious question"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is not quite clear in context why Phillips is so anxious to make this qualification.

In conclusion then, as far as the Christian doctrine of death and immortality is concerned, this can be summarised in four clear statements:-

"1. Death is the penalty for sin. This does not mean that man is naturally exempt from death, apart from sin; but that the grace wherewith he was originally endowed would have enabled him to live forever, if sin had not deprived him of it, so as to reduce him to mortality of his unassisted nature.

The fall has brought death upon all men, and the sins to which we are naturally inclined give to death its penal sting.

2. Death separates the soul from the flesh, and dissolves the flesh. The result is that the soul 'sleeps' in relation to activities that require the use of the body. But it remains conscious, and remembers, and is affected by, its previous carnal experiences. If rightly disposed, it is susceptible of being purified, and of advancing in spiritual knowledge and holiness.

3. In view of the truth that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, we may not consider that the body ceases to exist after death. But its material particles are no longer retained in living unity by an inhabiting spirit, and dissolution of the bodily frame ensues, and a reunion of the

(1) The Concept of Prayer p. 34 footnote 1.

same particles in the resurrection is neither de fide nor credible. What remains and serves to preserve the continuity of the flesh with the resurrection of body, is revealed to us only in figurative terms of the seed.

4. Death ends probation, for the deeds done in the body constitute the data of final judgement. But it does not end opportunity of growth on the lines initiated in this life. Because of redemption, the work which God begins in us before we die is completed in an intermediate state between death and our final reward"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is now possible to move on to consider philosophical treatment of death and immortality, and some objections which have been raised against the Christian doctrine outlined above. It is particularly salutary at this point in the discussion, to note Hall's reminder that:-

"The subject of Eschatology has been developed on speculative lines far beyond the range of revealed knowledge. Such development is allowable, provided it is controlled by Christian certainties .... It is needful, however, to remember that our sure knowledge of the things after death is confined to severe limits"<sup>(2)</sup>.

It is nevertheless important also to note that Hall's statement does little to encourage confidence regarding future enlightenment, for it is the "Christian certainties" to which he refers which are now, paradoxically, the subject of uncertainty.

(1) "Death". In Hall F.J. (Revised Hallock F.H.) Theological Outlines pp. 283-4.

(2) Ibid. p. 283.



## III.

In many ways it can be rightly said that philosophical critiques of the concepts of death and immortality have centred in the main around exposition of the ways in which Hall's comment above has been considered an accurate assessment of the situation. As there is no empirical technique by which the theories either of the existence of a life after death or a description of the state of that existence may be assumed, philosophers have contented themselves with discussion of theoretical possibilities related to the area and with critical analysis of the claims of Christianity regarding it<sup>(1)</sup>. Such discussion has taken as its principal issue the likely or possible nature of the body which survives death, assuming the feasibility of such a doctrine. So it is to this topic which consideration will now be given, though with mention first of all, of some explicatory philosophical notions concerning death itself. A frequent starting-point for discussion of death has been Wittgenstein's statement in the Tractatus:-

"So too at death the world does not alter, but comes to an end.

Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death"<sup>(2)</sup>.

D.Z. Phillips develops this point with characteristically sharp illustration. He writes:-

- (1) Cf. J.A.T. Robinson: In the End God p. 17 - "So many of the theological propositions to which one is asked if one assents seem, increasingly, incapable of empirical verification one way or the other, and therefore devoid of much meaning".
- (2) Trans. Pears D.F. and McGuinness B.F. Secn. 6.431; 6.4311. Wittgenstein continues - "If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present", a statement which has considerable relevance to the concept of immortality as will be seen later.

"If one were asked what one meant by saying that so-and-so was dead, one might reply by saying that such-and-such organisms had ceased to function in him, that he died of certain ailments, that he will no longer be seen walking, talking, carrying on his business etc. Here death is spoken of <sup>in</sup> the third person. Death is an event in someone's world; an event of the greatest importance perhaps, or maybe an event of no importance at all. But when this death is my death, it is not an event in the world for me. And hence it is radically different from the thousands of events that happen to me - my toothache, my accident, my marriage etc. etc. .... My death is not an event in the world for me, but the end of the world. Death is not an experience, but the end of all experience, and one cannot experience the end of experience"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Such considerations as these have led M. Schlick<sup>(2)</sup> and more recently, A.G.N. Flew<sup>(3)</sup> to question the meaningfulness of any talk of "survival after death" or "living through death" with the ultimate intention of showing both the logical inadequacy and self-contradiction of such "pictures". D.Z. Phillips, considering Flew's analysis maintains (using the familiar Wittgensteinian example of "God sees everything") that Flew in so far as he thinks that we cannot imagine ourselves witnessing our own funerals:-

".... is like a man who every time he hears God's eye mentioned insists on talking about God's eyebrows. The pictures were

- (1) Death and Immortality p. 13.
- (2) "Meaning and Verification". In The Philosophical Review 45. (1936).
- (3) "Can a man witness his own funeral?" In Hibbert Journal liv. (1955-6).

not meant to be used in this way"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Nevertheless, it would seem quite reasonable to maintain that the majority of people today, whether they be Christian or non-Christian, take the essence of Christian teaching about death, to be the belief that the individual person will in fact survive his own<sup>(2)</sup>. Even if it is granted that objections such as that of Flew are in fact misconceived, as D.Z. Phillips suggests, what is to be said of the nature and character of that which is said to survive death in the case of a human being? It is at this point that Hall's "speculative lines"<sup>(3)</sup> begin to become apparent. There are two main areas of discussion:-

1. That after death, what lives on is some kind of non-material body of the sort so beloved of spiritualists and those who dabble in occultism. It hardly needs arguing that if someone believes in the existence of such non-material bodies, then he must need to be able to give a satisfactory account of the conditions under which his belief is maintained. Qualifications of the claim in terms of the non-physical character of such bodies merely reduce the original notion to Flew's "death by a thousand qualifications"<sup>(4)</sup>. Nor does the notion of the existence of so-called "subtle bodies" fare much better<sup>(5)</sup>.

(1) op. cit. p. 65.

(2) This is clearly the foundation premise of Flew in his article "Death". In Flew A.G.N. and MacIntyre A (Eds) New Essays in Philosophical Theology pp. 267 ff. Also that of W.H. Poterat in his article "I will die". In Phillips D.Z. (Ed) Religion and Understanding pp. 199 ff.

(3) v. supra p. 143.

(4) "Theology and Falsification". In New Essays in Phil. Theol. p.97.

(5) V. Geach P. God and the Soul p. 18.

2. That in fact, the individual person can really be regarded as being of a dualist nature viz. that he has a physical body which as it were encapsulates his essential self (described variously as the mind, soul or spirit<sup>(1)</sup>). At death the physical body is subject to dissolution but the soul, the essential self, survives. However attractive the dualist view may be, and however useful a concept for poets or liturgologists, it cannot be given any cash value in real terms. Would it not be true to say that only the most unusual people might be regarded as reflecting not their real selves but some inner reality or inner persona? People are essentially what they are seen to be, and they display their essential selves to the world. The occasional "Jekyl and Hyde" personality is surely the exception rather than the rule? If people were not on the whole what they appear to be, then relationships would be completely chaotic. Indeed, as D.Z. Phillips points out, unless there were a common life which people share, there could be no notion of a "person" at all. What it means to be a person cannot be divorced from the common features of human life<sup>(2)</sup>.

Further, there is a powerful philosophical argument against the doctrine of the survival after death of the soul as distinct from the body, which is focussed upon the question of the identity of such a soul thus divorced from its human form or framework. The only

(1) The roots of this analysis are of course to be found in the twofold Hebraic division of man into "soul" and "flesh", and the threefold Greek division into "body", "soul" and "spirit". V. H. Mehl-Koehnkin's article on "Man". In J.J. Von Allmen (Ed) Vocabulary of the Bible pp. 247 ff.

(2) Death and Immortality pp. 5-6.

possible theory which would avoid the logical problem of there being several "soul candidates" for the identity of Mr. X is, as Geach rightly maintains, that there must be a one to one relationship between the material bodies involved in the two spans of existence. Thus:-

".... unless a man comes to life again by resurrection, he does not live again after death"<sup>(1)</sup>.

As regards the kind of life in which the believer is considered to participate after death, little need be said. No doubt many people do hold the presupposition that it is a continuance both of the individuals involved and also of the forms of life in which they formerly participated. A striking observation in this connexion is Jesus' reply to the Sadducees concerning the question of marriage in the future life. He said:-

"Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Clearly, if in the context of life after death such relationships as that of marriage are meaningless (and there are of course many other human relationships of a similar kind), then it would be similarly meaningless to speak of "knowing", "recognising", "remembering" in that context. There are obvious logical difficulties here concerning the nature of the after-life which are at least as great as those related to actual survival after death itself.

(1) op.cit. p.28.

(2) Matth. 22.29-30.

## IV.

So much then for some of the more important theological and philosophical considerations which relate to death and immortality. The philosophical considerations, as have been shown, are largely concerned with what have usually been considered to be the necessary presuppositions of belief in this context, but that there is reason to think that the assumption itself is open to question, will be demonstrated later. For the present it is appropriate to consider what contribution newer theological insights have made to our understanding of the area. In his rather slight book But that I can't believe!<sup>(1)</sup> J.A.T. Robinson devotes some three pages to the subject of life after death which vigorously reflect a position which he himself describes on the final page viz:-

"As a Christian, I know my life to be grounded in a love which will not let me go. It comes to me as something unconditional. If it could really be put an end to by a bus on the way home it would not have the quality I know it to have.

From such a love neither cancer nor the H-bomb can separate. Death cannot have the last word. and 'this is the victory - even our faith'.

For the rest, with so many of my generation, I am prepared to be agnostic. I just can't imagine an after-life, and it doesn't help much to try"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Robinson follows up this statement by one which is equally vigorous

(1) Collins Fontana (1967).

(2) Ibid. p. 46. It is only fair to say that elsewhere Robinson is at pains to point out that he is a Christian agnostic - v. for example In the End God pp. 18 and 23.



and relevant to the enquiries of this section of thesis:-

"To express convictions going beyond sight and touch, the Bible, like all ancient literature, projects pictures (not of course, intended to be taken literally) of 'another world' to which people 'go' when they die. Subsequent Christian tradition has elaborated these - and often distorted them.

The pictures themselves are simply ways of trying to make the spiritual truth real and vivid to the imagination. If they help, well and good. But a lot of people today find it difficult to visualise anything after death. I am among them.

But our commitment to Christ is not for that reason in doubt. OUR CONCERN IS WITH WORKING OUT THAT COMMITMENT HERE AND NOW, WITH WHAT ETERNAL LIFE - REAL LIFE - MEANS IN THIS SITUATION"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Robinson's final sentence unequivocally directs the attention to an existential interpretation of "eternal life". Before this line of thought is followed up, it is worth noting his claim of agnosticism, particularly in the light of D.Z. Phillips' strictures on such a claim. Phillips states:-

"At this point a philosophical and popular agnosticism is likely to be introduced into the argument. Someone is likely to say that we just do not know what happens to a human being after he dies"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Happily, unlike the agnostic Phillips envisages, who does not recognise that the question of the adequacy of our language to express

(1) Loc. cit. My capitals in the final sentence.

(2) Death and Immortality p. 14.



what is meant by a life beyond the grave is of little relevance to the central issue of whether it means anything to talk of life after death, Robinson provides a comprehensive rationale of the views stated above, in his eschatological treatise In the End God, a book well summarised by the end cover quotation:-

"Christian eschatology is neither a tentative guess at how in distant ages the evolutionary process may work out; nor is it a specific programme of immediate catastrophe. It is the lighting up of a new dimension of life now"<sup>(1)</sup>.

This quotation does indicate very clearly Robinson's overall position, a position which is grounded in the theological concept of "realised eschatology"<sup>(2)</sup> and which views all theological assertions about the beginning and end of things as derived from present awareness of God. Thus:-

"Every truth about eschatology is ipso facto a truth about God. That is valid for all religion. But for the Judaeo-Christian religion the converse is also true; namely, that every statement about God is ipso facto an assertion about the end, a truth about eschatology"<sup>(3)</sup>.

There can be little doubt that Robinson provides a much needed existential clarification and emphasis here at a time when many people gain the impression that Christians (at least in so far as their worship and belief are concerned) are little concerned with the significance of their faith in or for the present-day world.

(1) This quotation is in fact extracted from the text itself op. cit. p. 135.

(2) Ibid. p. 69 footnote 2.

(3) Ibid. pp 85 ff.

Because of his declared position, Robinson sees the core of Christian eschatology as being located in the doctrine of resurrection, and he argues against doctrines of both survival after death and immortality<sup>(1)</sup>. For him, the doctrine of resurrection is expressive of a Christian hope which does not rest in anything human but in the unchangeable relationship of love in which men are created and held. The distinction between the Christian view of resurrection and death and immortality, may be summarised as follows<sup>(2)</sup>:-

- a. The Christian hope of eternal life rests solely on its doctrine of God and not on its doctrine of man. Man in himself is nothing (Cf. 1 Peter 1.24 quoting Isaiah 40.6), but God will not allow his loved ones to "see corruption" - rather he will claim for them a life of eternal fellowship with himself after death.
- b. Since Christianity rests its doctrine of eternal life entirely on God and not on man, it has no place for any view of conditional immortality.
- c. All men will be raised from the dead; the relationship which makes humanity human is indestructible. Eternal life is however, essentially and ineluctably to know God and to be with him. Thus there is an element of judgement<sup>(3)</sup> involved - no escape from God is possible.
- d. The whole man will be raised, i.e. the Christian doctrine (as has already been noted above<sup>(4)</sup>) is a doctrine which speaks of the resurrection of man's body not of the survival of his "soul" or "spirit".

(1) Ibid. pp. 85 ff.

(2) Ibid. pp. 91 ff.

(3) Cf. also Robinson's Chapter "Preaching Judgement". In On Being the Church in the World pp. 135 ff.

(4) v. supra p. 141.

Detailed treatment of this concept is of course to be found in Robinson's earlier work The Body: a study in Pauline Theology<sup>(1)</sup>. There are two points to note of fundamental importance regarding his interpretation of this doctrine:-

1. The doctrine of bodily resurrection is not a forecast but a myth<sup>(2)</sup>, that is it is:-

".... the representation, in this as the most scientific form, of a truth which is integral to the total biblical understanding of God's relationship to man; the truth, namely, that the whole of God's workmanship is of eternal value to himself and cannot ultimately be lost"<sup>(3)</sup>

Any view of the resurrection body which sees it as the literally resurrected human body is one which is speculatively misplaced, and which forms no part of the Christian doctrine of the Last Things.

For:-

".... in the myth, the relation between this present body and that of the resurrection must be represented both as one of non-identity and yet of continuity. On the one hand, the resurrection body cannot be pictured simply as the present body going on - and yet it must be this body, this personality, transformed, and not another, if continuity of full personal existence is to be preserved (and not lost or interrupted, as, for instance, in theories of absorption or incarnation)"<sup>(4)</sup>.

(1) S.C.M. Press (1952).

(2) The interpretation of this term in a theological context has been outlined earlier - v. In the End God pp. 74 ff.

(3) Ibid. p. 101.

(4) Ibid. pp. 102-3. I have drawn attention to Geach's insistence on this point in the philosophical argument v. pp. 147-8 supra.

2. The dual nature of the original (and largely Pauline) doctrine must not be lost sight of, i.e. its positing of two resurrections, of Christians to a temporary Messianic kingdom on earth, and of a later and general ultimate resurrection of all men to judgement<sup>(1)</sup>.

The real significance then for Robinson of the doctrine of resurrection, lies in the fact that it is, like the whole of the eschatological myth, descriptive of something that is both a present possession and an ultimate hope. He is decisive in declaring that:-

"The one thing it (i.e. the doctrine of resurrection) does not describe is something that is going to be acquired upon the moment of death .... It is only in the last day when all things are restored that the new corporality will be complete"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Now lest it be thought that despite all these various clarifications, Robinson's ultimate position is still essentially open to philosophical objection of the kind indicated at an earlier point in this chapter, it should be noted that he places the doctrine of resurrection itself within the whole process of man's redemption which is:-

".... the process of a building up of the body of Christ .... Each individual, when and as he comes into Christ, begins to put on the new man. The resurrection of the body begins, not at death, but at baptism (cf. 1 Cor. 15.29). What happens at death does not concern the new body, but the old. For it is then that this latter, representing the dissolving solidarity of the present order, is finally stripped away. The natural

(1) Ibid. p. 105.

(2) Ibid. p. 108-9.

man at present sees all men 'according to the flesh' in Adam, and in the comforting solidarity which that provides. God sees all men in Christ, and only in so far as they are in the solidarity of his body will they be 'at home' (2 Cor. 5.8).

For ultimately there will be no other: the body of Christ is the only corporeity which is 'eternal in the heavens'. Not till a man has put on that will he know salvation; and not till all have found themselves in it, and everything is finally summed up in Christ, will this salvation be complete for any"<sup>(1)</sup>.

In summary, Robinson's main contribution to the discussion, is to show the inadequacy, indeed mistakenness of any concept of Christian eschatology which interprets the mythical picture-language of the New Testament and doctrinal terminology as if it were literal and scientific forecasting. Essentially his emphasis is on the present ground of all eschatological statements, and few would deny the value of such an emphasis or its validity. One of the greatest difficulties of his treatment, however, is his continuous use of phrases such as that in the quotation directly above:-

"God sees all men in Christ ...."

That is, there are in his writing, frequent occasions where it is difficult to see any clear indication of difference in his use of the term "God" from traditional, supranaturalistic conceptions. This despite his avowal of panentheism, of the "end of God" as traditionally understood in his opening chapter, and the God = Love (agape) = Christ equation, which pervades this particular book as it does most of his other and later works. Nevertheless, the clear direction of eschatological concern "to a now and for a now" does mean that the philosophical examination begun earlier in this chapter can

(1) Ibid. p. 109.

be continued in terms of teasing out some existential interpretation of death and immortality as it relates to the individual's life in the present. It is to this task that attention will now be given.

V.

The most promising philosophical explication of death and immortality in the existential context, that is as it relates to and affects men in their everyday lives, is that suggested by D.Z. Phillips in his monograph Death and Immortality to which reference has been made earlier. Phillips suggests that the concept of immortality as it concerns the believer is one that has operational significance, i.e. it is a religious picture by which his whole life style is regulated. His argument is basically clear and straightforward and it begins with the premise that neither the believer nor the unbeliever survive their deaths. This position is of course, utterly antithetical to the traditional Christian doctrine, with its clear statement of belief in the "resurrection of the body" which was outlined and discussed at an earlier stage in the present chapter<sup>(1)</sup>. It has also been noted that Robinson, whilst rejecting a literal resurrection of the body, and, in the present author's view rightly stressing the vital relationship of Christian eschatology to the Christian life now, nevertheless holds out a hope of ultimate resurrection, about which he can only describe himself as an agnostic, and which is itself centred and validated in the love of God in Christ<sup>(2)</sup>.

(1) v. supra pp. 141 ff.

(2) v. supra pp. 151 f. and p. 154 in particular. I have drawn attention to Robinson's tendency to use traditional theological statements somewhat randomly and without qualification, when in fact he does not intend them to be read traditionally. There is however, no doubt that the phrase "the love of God in Christ" can be given considerable existential significance, indeed a great deal of our understanding of the God = agape = Christ discussion turns upon this very point as has been indicated at an earlier stage (v. supra pp. 22-28 and passim).



There does seem to be an unbridgeable gap between the two approaches, and an impasse which cannot in any way be resolved in the individually conceived of area of human hope regarding resurrection. Robinson possesses such a hope, Phillips does not. Nevertheless the difference in interpretation of the concept of death and immortality is by no means so wide - clearly nothing like that which would exist between say, a traditional catholic theologian and Phillips!

Neither the believer then nor the unbeliever survive their deaths. Both however, live distinct lives of their own, and in the case of the believer, the "picture" that he holds of immortality - it includes all the various aspects making up that picture, e.g. the meeting with loved ones, God's judgement, family reunions and so on - has a significant effect upon the kind of life he lives. It is as if these "pictures" were mirrors in which he sees his own way of life reflected and judged. Thus:-

"Philosophical discussion of the immortality of the soul can now be something other than attempts to find out whether we do or do not live on after death; they can be attempts to appreciate the contexts in which talk about eternal life has moral and religious significance"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Such moral and religious significance lies in specific areas of concern. In the sphere of morality for instance, it is eminently reasonable to say that when phrases such as "losing one's soul", "selling one's soul", "damning one's soul" are used in ordinary speech, they are understood as being descriptive of the kind of life

(1) Phillips op. cit. p. 48.



the person concerned is living, not as precise indications of the state of some part of the body which is the "soul". Nor is the context of the soul's immortality to do with the extent of time which a person will survive, particularly after death, but with the "reality of goodness", i.e. that in terms of which human life is to be assessed. Phillips' argument is completed by an explication of this latter statement, the believer assesses the state of his own soul:-

".... in the light of its relationship to beliefs in the Fatherhood and Love of God. The notions of the fatherhood and love of God constitute eternal life, the life of God, towards which the soul aspires"<sup>(1)</sup>.

In the sphere of the specifically religious significance of the notion of immortality, this is seen at its deepest level in what is signified by the believer's "dying to himself", that is in his ceasing to see himself as the centre of his own world, his recognition (rather a difficult concept this) that he has no claims on the way things go, his realisation that his own life is not a necessity<sup>(2)</sup>. All this is symbolised by the event of death itself - but paradoxically, eternal life for the believer is:-

".... participation in the life of God, and this life has to do with dying to the self, seeing that all things are a gift from God, that nothing is ours by right or necessity"<sup>(3)</sup>.

(1) op. cit. p. 45.

(2) Ibid. pp. 52-3. Cf. Weil S. Waiting on God p. 151, and H.A. Williams' instancing of this in the life of Jesus in his book True Resurrection pp. 8-9.

(3) Ibid. p. 55. The fundamentally existential interpretation of "God's reality" should be noted here. Phillips makes this quite clear in his next statement - "In learning by contemplation, attention, renunciation, what forgiving, thanking, loving etc. mean in these contexts, the believer is participating in the reality of God; this is what we mean by God's reality".

Phillips follows up this basic interpretation by a somewhat complex exposition of its relationship to the ascription of "eternal predicates" to the dead<sup>(1)</sup>.

In essence then, the believer lives his life in the light of prescriptive "religious pictures", of which the picture of death and immortality is one. To ask him whether the pictures are true are not, as if they were empirical propositions capable of proof, is an entirely mistaken approach, for:-

"It is of the utmost philosophical importance to recognise that for the believers these pictures constitute truths, truths which form the essence of life's meaning for them. To ask someone whether he thinks these beliefs are true is not to ask him to produce evidence for them, but rather to ask him whether he can live by them, whether he can digest them, whether they constitute food for him. If the answer is in the affirmative then no doubt there will be factual consequences for him. If a man does believe that death has no dominion over the unity of the family, that the family are one in heaven, he will make decisions and react in ways very unlike the man who holds ideas such as that everyone has his own life to live, that the old have had their chance and should make way for the young, that no one should stand in anyone else's way, and so on. In this way, belief may not simply determine one's reaction to events that befall one, but actually determine what one takes the alternatives to be"<sup>(2)</sup>.

(1) Ibid. pp. 56 ff.

(2) Ibid. p. 71.

It would seem that Phillips' fundamental interpretation throughout, of theological statements as "pictures" bears some affinity to the position of R.B. Braithwaite, which is expressed in his familiar article "An Empiricist's View of Religious Belief"<sup>(1)</sup>. It is however only an assumption that he uses such expressions as "the Fatherhood of God", "a gift from God" in this way, and there is no doubt that elsewhere he is critical of Braithwaite, describing his account of religious belief as "hopelessly inadequate"<sup>(2)</sup>. It would thus seem necessary also to assume that along with the "picture" there is given some sort of "divine grace"<sup>(3)</sup>, and this appears to be more closely related to a traditional supranaturalistic conception of divine grace than to its existential interpretation as motivation and stimulation of the human will, based on commitment to the agape-istic life of Jesus. There is a sense in which Phillips gives the impression of holding both conceptions together in a way which defies precise analysis, although much of the emphasis in the argument lies in the relationship of the theological statements or beliefs to the day to day life of the believer, rather than to traditional supranaturalistic concepts. Obviously it would be of considerable value and interest if Phillips' precise explication of his concept of God were known.

## VI.

To sum up, an attempt has been made in this chapter to set to rights the imbalance that occurs when, to use H.A. Williams' words,

- (1) In Ramsey I.T. (Ed) Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy pp. 53 ff.
- (2) The Concept of Prayer p. 68.
- (3) Ibid. loc.cit.

consideration of the concept of resurrection is naturally assumed:-

".... to be a discussion either about what can be held to have happened in the environs of Jerusalem and Galilee on the third day after Jesus was crucified, or about what can be held to be in store for us after our own death"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Williams does not of course deny that such considerations are relevant in the areas of either theology or philosophy. What he wishes to make absolutely clear (and it is hoped that this chapter has been equally clear in this respect), is that to limit discussion purely to these areas, involves a process which "pushes resurrection out of the present into the past and future"<sup>(2)</sup>. The result is that explorations of the existential significance of the concepts of death and immortality such as those which have been explicated here, are not pursued, for:-

".... this banishing of the resurrection to past and future .... saves us from a lot of reality and delivers us from a great deal of fear. It has, in short, the advantage of safeguarding us from life"<sup>(3)</sup>.

The key to the meaningfulness of the concept of resurrection and immortality, has in this present study, been shown to be their relationship to and significance for contemporary personal experience - that is, the present possibility of resurrection of body and mind revealed in a life style which transcends the drabness and mediocrity which is characteristic of the lives of many people today in respect both of their work situations and their personal hopes and aspirations.

(1) True Resurrection p. 4.

(2) Ibid. p. 8.

(3) Ibid. loc. cit.

Such a transformation as that envisaged here is firmly centred in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the "man for others", whose personal life and whose ultimate triumph in that life serve to motivate and assure us in a similar process of regeneration. As Dr. Alec Vidler has aptly written<sup>(1)</sup> of H.A. Williams' book, all the emphasis in True Resurrection is on the second clause of the Easter hymn:-

"Christ is risen; WE are risen"<sup>(2)</sup>.

This clause might well be said to encapsulate the arguments of the present chapter regarding death and immortality. Indeed, paradoxically, instead of relating the traditional sentence which follows only to the service for the Burial of the Dead, it can be seen that it also expresses as fittingly the true significance of day to day Christian experience, and the true meaningfulness of the Christian "way":-

"In the midst of life we are in death"<sup>(3)</sup>.

- (1) "Resurrection as a matter of personal experience". Times article 1st April, 1972.
- (2) Bishop Christopher Wordsworth (1807-85). English Hymnal no. 127. my capitals.
- (3) Prayer "At the Burial of the Dead". Anglican Book of Common Prayer (1662).



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Daniel 12.12	p. 140	footnote
Job 19. 25-6	p. 140	footnote
Isaiah 40.6	p. 152	
Matthew 22.29-30	p. 148	footnote
Acts 23.6-8	p. 140	footnote
Romans 5.12-21	p. 141	
1 Corinthians 15.22	p. 141	
15.29	p. 154	
2 Corinthians 5.8	p. 155	
1 Peter 1.24	p. 152	

## CHAPTER 8

HEAVEN AND HELL

I.

"He descended into hell ..... he ascended into Heaven".

Thus Christians speak in the Apostles' Creed of the action of Jesus, as they recount the events of his saving ministry. It is not unnatural that heaven and hell are frequently classed together - they are after all, antithetical "places" or "states". It was with some surprise nevertheless, that the present writer, looking up "heaven" in Alan Richardson's Theological Word Book of the Bible, found the cryptic instruction:-

"HEAVEN (S) v. HELL" (1)

At the outset of this attempt to tease out newer philosophical insights into these obviously closely-related and initially eschatological concepts, it is important to understand something of their traditional and historical significance in the field of religious thought.

"Hell", originally the "hidden" place (v. Hel or Hela - the Norse Goddess of the Dead<sup>(2)</sup>) is used in the English version of the New Testament to translate two words: Hades and Gehenna. For a clear understanding of the New Testament texts it is important to note in which sense the word is used:-

HADES was the name of the Greek god of the dead and the word came to mean also the place of the god's abode. In the Bible it seems a reasonable progression that it came to be used as a synonym

(1) Op. cit. p. 105.

(2) V. Encyclopaedia Britannica p. 392 et al.

for the Hebrew word "Sheol" (שְׁאוֹל) viz. the place beneath the earth, the underworld, to which the ancient Hebrews believed their "spirit" would go after death<sup>(1)</sup>. The New Testament significance of the word was thus to describe a state of the dead between death itself and the final judgement. It is used eight times<sup>(2)</sup>.

GEHENNA on the other hand, was originally the name for the valley of Hinnom on the western side of Jerusalem. Because of its use as a rubbish dump, and the fact that fires were constantly burning there, the word became descriptive of the place of abode of the Devil, his angels, and condemned spirits - who were believed to reside in a place of everlasting fire. The New Testament has some seven references to Gehenna<sup>(3)</sup>.

In turning to consider the traditional Christian doctrine of Heaven and Hell, it is immediately apparent that one of the most important formatory influences on this doctrine is that of Man's free will. That is, that although God's purpose for man is salvation and the reward of eternal life<sup>(4)</sup>, no one will be required to fulfil this purpose against their will. Thus each person possessing free will also possesses the potential to be disobedient to God's will and the capacity to remain impenitent. Such disobedience and impenitence is rightly described in Christian terms as being in a state of "hell", and the converse - obedience to God's will and penitence in his sight - as being in a state of "heaven". An analysis such as this finds a good deal of support in the New Testament viz:-

- (1) V. Oesterley W. O. E. and Robinson T. H. Hebrew Religion: Its Origin and Development pp. 358 ff. for elaboration of this belief.
- (2) e.g. The Parable of Dives and Lazarus: Luke 16.23 ff. and v. Abbott-Smith - Manual Greek Lexicon of the N.T. under ᾠδης for further instances.
- (3) e.g. Mark 9.47 (Cf. Matth. 5.22) and v. Abbott-Smith *ibid.* under γέεννα for other instances.
- (4) V. John 3.16 - 19; 1 Tim. 2.4; 2 Peter 3.9 et al.

"It is good for thee to enter into life maimed rather than having thy two hands to go into hell into the unquenchable fire" (Mark 9.43).

or

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25.41).

The parable of the Wheat and the Tares and its explanation (Matthew 13.41) lends further support to this view of hell. Similarly such texts as Jesus' words to the penitent thief:-

"Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise"<sup>(1)</sup> (Luke 23.43).

or his words to his disciples:-

"In my Father's house are many mansions ....." (John 14.2)

give substance to this view of heaven.

One further point which it is instructive to note at this initial stage of the discussion of heaven and hell, is made by C. B. Moss. Moss points out that it is important to examine beliefs in heaven and hell with the aim of clarifying these concepts in terms of the non-inclusion in their meaning of notions which do not necessarily belong to them e.g. the notion of men being condemned though they were ignorant of the Gospel, or of hell as eternal physical torture etc.<sup>(2)</sup>. The account which Moss gives of the traditional belief concerning heaven is worth quoting in full as it gives an excellent picture of the salient points which will form an introduction to the newer treatment of the subject which follows. He writes:-

(1) ὁ παράδεισος - another New Testament word for the abode of the (blessed) dead: v. Abbott-Smith *ibid.* pp. 338 - 9.

(2) V. Moss C. B. - The Christian Faith p. 452 f.

"Those who will be acquitted in the General Judgement (which will confirm and make public the decision already given in the Particular Judgement) will be those who have been forgiven. The "righteous" are not those who have not sinned, for there are no such persons, but those who have been freed from sin and reconciled to God through Our Lord Jesus Christ. St. Matt. xxv.22 shows that these will include many who in this life were outside the covenant of God (τὰ ἅπαντα τὰ ἔθνη , all the nations), but who, having lived according to the knowledge that they had, will have been saved through Jesus Christ, though they did not know him (Acts iv.12: cf. Isa. xlv.4).

The eternal life which Our Lord promised is not something which is to begin after the end of this world; it begins already in this life. It is union with God, which grows more and more here and in the intermediate state, to be made complete when the Resurrection of the Body and the General Judgement are followed by admission into Heaven. It is not absorption: we are to continue for ever as persons: Heaven is not the Nirvana of the Buddhists, because the Buddha offered men escape from life, whereas our Lord came that they might have life and might have it more abundantly (St. John x.10). Union with God will include union with our fellow men; we expect that every society of men, of every kind, which has in this life helped to fulfil God's purpose will be found in Heaven in a completely satisfying and eternal form; as Browning says in "Abt Vogler"<sup>(1)</sup>.

(1) Browning's words are:-

"There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live  
as before;

The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound.  
What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much  
good more;

On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect  
round".

Above all, eternal life will bring us to the Beatific Vision, to the full enjoyment and worship of God, and the employment therein of all our powers. This is the purpose for which we were made, and is therefore the environment to which every part of us will be completely adapted. In our present existence we cannot imagine this, and it is useless to speculate about it. The symbolical language of the Revelation and other parts of the Bible about Heaven is not to be taken literally; the reality is such as no human language could possibly express.

The love, by our capacity for which we see most clearly that we are made in the image of God, will be completely satisfied; and therefore we shall be wholly occupied in the worship and the service of God. We shall no longer be capable of the slightest opposition to His Will: and for that reason, the condition of changelessness, which seems to us now so difficult to reconcile with happiness, will be the condition of perfect joy; for St. Augustine's words will have been fulfilled, and our heart will be no longer restless, because it will have found rest in the Beatific Vision of the Trinity in Unity"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Such traditional doctrinal language as this might well be thought to present a view with which J. A. T. Robinson would find himself at variance. It is therefore to his contemporary explication of the concepts of heaven and hell that attention will now be turned.

(1) Moss C. B. - *ibid.* pp. 454 - 5.

## II.

A useful starting point for a consideration of Robinson's views is his somewhat blunt statement that many people have in their minds a misconception of the biblical usage of "heaven". He writes:-

"'Heaven' is never in fact used in the Bible for the destination of the dying: it stands for the dwelling-place of God and of Christ and of those who even now share his eternal life"<sup>(1)</sup>.

This point is further emphasised in his chapter on "Life after Death" in But that I can't believe! where he states:-

"To express convictions going beyond sight and touch, the Bible, like all ancient literature, projects pictures (not of course, intended to be taken literally) of 'another world' to which people 'go' when they die. Subsequent Christian tradition has elaborated these - and often distorted them.

The pictures are simply ways of trying to make the spiritual truth real and vivid to the imagination. If they help, well and good. But a lot of people today find it difficult to visualize anything after death. I am among them"<sup>(2)</sup>.

It seems then, as if Robinson has little to offer here other than these brief and rather negative observations on the subject of heaven. The quotation above does however suggest that behind the imagery of the Bible there is in fact a "spiritual truth" about heaven which is discernible, so it is useful to try and find out what in Robinson's view, this truth is. Detailed examination of his writing with this purpose in mind seemed in the end to focus upon his exposition of Philippians 3.20 - 21<sup>(3)</sup> in On Being the Church in the World:- He makes three

(1) In the End God pp. 104 - 5.

(2) Op. cit. p. 46.

(3) The text reads: "For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself".



relevant and important points:-

"(1) First, our commonwealth or citizenship is in heaven. Whatever else that means, it means that heaven is where we already belong. 'Passports for heaven' is a phrase which sums up one whole way of thinking about Christianity. But if the Christian holds a passport, it is not a passport to get him to heaven (at death), but a passport from heaven to live within this world as the representative and ambassador of a foreign style of life. In Moffatt's inspired rendering, the Church's function is to be a colony of heaven - because its members are already by baptism citizens of heaven. If they only became so as they migrated from this world they would be a lot of good in this world!

(2) The second point is that the Christian hope is not so much a hope for heaven as a hope from heaven: for 'from it we await a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ'. The heart of the Christian hope is not that the housing committee of the celestial city council will one day move us from this slum to that 'other country' of Cecil Spring-Rice's hymn, 'whose shining bounds increase' as 'soul by soul and silently' death transfers from earth to heaven those who are on its list. The heart of the Christian hope is rather that the life of God (heaven) will so penetrate the life of man (earth) that God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Of that movement from God to man the Incarnation is the pledge, the Parousia is the promise. For with the complete coming of Christ into everything, there is promised that new heaven and new earth which, as the Seer saw, must also come down out of heaven from God.

(3) But thirdly, what is the relation of the new to the old? This is the crucial point for our attitude to all the things of this world - to politics, economics and everything else. And,

contrary to what is usually supposed, this is where the resurrection of the body comes in - not with death but with drains. According to a dominant, if not the dominant, Christian tradition, the world is regarded as a vast transit camp, in which the Church's job is to issue tickets for heaven and pack people off to paradise, leaving this old collection of Nissen butts to tumble and decay. But according to the Christian gospel God has prepared some better thing for the work of his hands. The gospel of the reign of God is not the salvaging of souls from a mass of perdition, but the 'redemption of the body', that is, the reintegration of the whole man in all his relationships, physical and spiritual, in a new solidarity which creates personality rather than destroys it. And the gospel goes on to insist that this new man has already been created, in the body of Christ, and that within the life of the Church the new God-given structure of existence has even now begun to penetrate and transform the world. Into that new structure of existence the whole body of our present life is ultimately to be taken up and conformed to his glorious body, 'by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself'.

Such is the Christian's goal, the new world order, of which within this world he is the ambassador and agent. And he will no more think it irrelevant to his life here than the Communist will lose sight of his ideal and (as he believes) coming society. What is irrelevant is that particular breaking point in the old order which we call death, and the pagan notion, endorsed by so much Christian spirituality, that life is the preparation for death.

- (1) Concentration on that is what really takes the Christian's eye off the ball and makes him spiritually self-centred and politically

futile. As if for risen men whose real death is behind them, the moment of physical death can any longer be the focus of their gaze! Our gaze as Christians is not at death, nor even beyond it at the skies, but at God's world from the other side of it. And from there, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, 'O death, where is thy victory? O grave, where is thy sting?'"(1).

In brief, Robinson's "spiritual truth" is also firmly material - the traditional imagery of heaven refers to a present world and its peoples gradually transformed into "Christlikeness". It is not therefore a matter of sacred and secular concerns in opposition, but the secular transformed by the sacred. As St. Paul puts it:-

"..... be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12.2).

### III.

The "spiritual truth" at the heart of the traditional images of hell is subject to roughly the same treatment as that of heaven in Robinson's book But that I can't believe! Here, in a short chapter, he sets the tone of the examination by an opening question:-

"Whatever has happened to hell?"(2)

and follows it with a swinging attack upon "popular" presentations of hell which he considers to be blatant appeals to horror and violence. Church murals depicting hell were, he states:-

(1) Ibid. pp. 132 ff.

(2) p. 47.

"..... the horror comics of the day - published by the Church. And the worst were positively sadistic"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Nevertheless, although the Church (and even Billy Graham!) may have stopped preaching a doctrine of hell-fire and damnation, Robinson notes that the word and its accompanying imagery still retains a place in the secular world - in the titles of films and books and in newspaper headlines. The context of such expressions is usually a portrayal of events which characterise the "dark side", the "shadow side" of life, and the existence of this latter cannot be ignored. The kind of experiences to which such expressions refer are usually these:-

- "1. Experiences of suffering, frightfulness and torture - physical or mental. Some things are so ghastly that they can only be described as 'hell on earth' or 'a living hell'.
2. Experiences of madness - when reality, or the loss of reality, becomes unendurable. Many representations of hell have in fact been psychotic - descriptions of a nightmare world.
3. Experiences of alienation - of being up against it in a relationship from which one cannot get away. A marriage can be 'sheer hell'. 'Hell' says Sartre in one of his plays, 'is other people'"<sup>(2)</sup>.

For Robinson then, the imagery of both heaven and hell is the same: being with God for ever. Some people will find that is heaven, some will find it hell. For most people "it's a bit of both"<sup>(3)</sup>. What is of great importance here is what Robinson really means by "being with God for ever" and this is to some extent clarified by the passage which follows:-

(1) Loc. cit.

(2) Ibid. p. 48.

(3) Ibid. p. 49.

"The Christian believes that life has a grain running through it. The world is made a certain way - for love. To try to live one's life across it is ultimately hell: there is no peace that way.

But the grain is not like something in wood. It's more like something in a person. And to be across a person in whom one lives and moves and has one's being is a most ghastly prospect. It is Sartre's 'hell is other people' only more so.

People have experienced hell in different ways. Some have felt it as sheer dereliction, as dropping out of God's love into a dark and meaningless abyss. Hence those ladders in the murals.

Others have found the reality they cannot tolerate only too close. It burns them up. It lacerates them.

I do not believe in a God who is content for any finally to live with him and find it hell. But I cannot take the love of God - or for that matter human love - seriously without taking the agony of it equally seriously.

In that sense I believe in hell. It's no kindness to encourage anyone to think that life can be lived at any depth without the shadows. Being in love - and that's what the Christian thinks is our ultimate element is a searing process"<sup>(1)</sup>.

Despite the reappearance yet again in this passage of what appears to be supranaturalistic terminology e.g. "a dropping out of God's love" or "a God who is content for any finally to live with him", it seems clear that Robinson is describing the states of heaven and hell as the degree to which human beings relate to the ultimate reality which is love. So there is no fundamental inconsistency in his position here from that

(1) Loc. cit.

outlined in the earlier section of this thesis<sup>(1)</sup> - despite the fact that he still uses traditional terminology to express the basic truth which is for him inherent in the concepts of heaven and hell.

Robinson also finds support in the thought of Jürgen Moltmann who writes about the significance of traditional eschatological images in the following way:-

"..... the question is no longer what these traditional images seek to communicate about the future, but rather what it is they express about human nature"<sup>(2)</sup>.

A similar (although rather more metaphysical) view is put forward by Karl Rahner, who in his chapter "The life of the Dead" in Theological Investigations Vol. 4<sup>(3)</sup>, is particularly concerned with the temporal significance of traditional terminology relating to the states of heaven and hell within the context of "eternity". He writes:-

"In reality, it is in time, as its own mature fruit, that 'eternity' comes about. It does not come 'after' the time we experienced, in order to prolong time; it eliminates time by being released from the time that was for a while so that the definitive could come about in freedom. Eternity is not an immeasurably long-lasting mode of pure time, but a mode of the spirit and freedom which are fulfilled in time, and hence can only be comprehended in the light of the correct understanding of spirit and freedom"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) V. supra. Chapters 1 and 2 *passim*.
- (2) V. his chapter "The End of History" - in Hope and Planning p. 168 and Cf. also his chapter "Exodus Church: Observations on the Eschatological Understanding of Christianity in Modern Society" in Theology of Hope pp. 304 ff. Norman Pittenger takes a similar view in his article "Beyond the fashion of this present world" (The Times 25th November, 1972) and notes that the eschatological motif "..... cannot be taken literally; but it can and should be taken seriously".
- (3) pp. 347 ff.
- (4) Ibid. p. 348.



Thus Rahner maintains:-

"..... we meet the living dead, even when they are those who are loved by us, in faith, hope and love, that is, when we open our hearts to the silent calm of God himself, in which they live; not by calling them back to where we are, but by descending into the silent eternity of our own hearts, and through faith in the risen Lord, creating in time the eternity which they have brought for ever"<sup>(1)</sup>.

#### IV.

In the previous chapter concerned with Death and Immortality, it was pointed out that J. A. T. Robinson's overall approach to the question of the significance of Christian eschatology is firmly rooted in the theological concept of "realised eschatology". For Robinson:-

"Christian eschatology ..... is the lighting up of a new dimension of life now"<sup>(2)</sup>.

The traditional eschatological doctrines of Heaven and Hell take their place in such a scheme of contemporary human enlightenment. "Extricationist" theology no longer has any validity in present day Christian thought, and the old view of Heaven and Hell as "places" to which man's body, soul or spirit is consigned after death, has been shown in this chapter to be a notion which is neither meaningful nor theologically acceptable to "man come of age" (to use Dietrich Bonhoeffer's phrase). There is indeed, as Bishop F. R. Barry has recently suggested:-

"..... something wrong with an otherworldliness which appears to empty this present life of meaning"<sup>(3)</sup>.

(1) Ibid. pp. 353 - 4.

(2) V. supra p. 151.

(3) Article: "Understanding the real meaning of salvation". In The Times 11th November, 1972.



Hell then is that state of man's alienation from the ground of his being which is Love - in whatever situation such alienation comes about<sup>(1)</sup>. As Bishop Barry again so aptly puts it:-

"The stench of hell is only too familiar to us"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Heaven on the other hand, is that state of right relationship between men which may be described as Christocentric, that is, a relationship which is Christ-like in nature, and one in which agape is manifestly revealed. Viewed in the light of this interpretative key, the last verse of J. G. Whittier's famous hymn is a powerful analysis of man's everyday experience:-

"Alone, O Love ineffable,

Thy saving name is given;

To turn aside from thee is hell,

To walk with thee is heaven"<sup>(3)</sup>.

(1) I have already given a fairly extensive list of such situations in the quotation from Robinson's work on p.176 supra.

(2) The Times loc. cit.

(3) English Hymnal 408.

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1 Timothy 2.4	p. 167 footnote.
2 Peter 3.9	p. 167 footnote.

SECTION C

The significance of the contemporary theological and philosophical positions outlined thus far, and their particular relevance to the present day understanding of traditional church teaching shown in Section B, are explored in the light of their implications for present and future education in religion.

"Just as in Switzerland there is only a small professional army whose sole task is to train a large territorial militia, so theologians should also form only a small professional army in the Church, with the task of creating a large body of theological territorials".

(1) I do not wish to embark upon a lengthy exegesis of these territorial ideas. I have outlined the importance of the concept for education at the beginning of this thesis (pp. 1 ff) and have referred to it previously. I have also considered the "ecclesiological" dimension of many of Heinz Zahrnt - The Question of God p. 12. My knowledge has been built up on the subject of Zahrnt and similar writers, to which reference has also been made frequently by my M.Ed. thesis project. This includes such representation works as:-

- De Vries, The Secular City.
- MacIntyre A. Secularisation and Moral Change.
- MacCall N. The Secularisation of Christianity.
- Pratt V. Religion and Secularisation.
- van Buren P. The Secular Meaning of the Gospel.
- Wilson B. Religion in Secular Society.

Discussion of religion and secularisation is also an inherent part of much of the "Death of God" thought e.g.:-

- Altizer T.C.J. and Hamilton W. Radical Theology and the Death of God.
- Folz W. and L. God is No More et al.

and, as has been indicated throughout, is central in the thought of Tillich, Schubert-Kelch and Robinson.

## CHAPTER 9

EDUCATION IN RELIGION: A CONTEMPORARY REVIEW

## I.

It is now necessary to set down in detail the way in which any future pattern of education in religion, based upon the agapeistic principle which has been the core referent of this thesis, could be implemented. Before doing so however, it is appropriate to look at the present state of education in religion in Britain with a view to exposing some of the difficulties that face religious educators, whether they are concerned in this process either within established teaching institutions of schools and colleges, or in the denominational context of the Churches. Whatever the teaching situation, one of the main problems for educators and students (of any kind) has been that of coming to terms with the increasing secularity of contemporary society brought about by the rapid pace of industrial and societal change since the second world war, and the demand that religion should be relevant to everyday life<sup>(1)</sup>. Change

- (1) I do not want here, to embark upon a lengthy sociological analysis of these developments. I have outlined the importance of the demand for relevance at the beginning of this thesis (pp. 1 ff) and have referred to it passim. I have also considered the "sacred/secular" dichotomy at many points in my M.Ed. thesis. A considerable body of knowledge has been built up on the subject of religion and secularisation, to which reference has also been made frequently in my M.Ed. thesis passim. This includes such representative works as:-

Cox H.	<u>The Secular City.</u>
MacIntyre A.	<u>Secularization and Moral Change.</u>
Mascall E.	<u>The Secularization of Christianity.</u>
Pratt V.	<u>Religion and Secularization.</u>
van Buren P.	<u>The Secular Meaning of the Gospel.</u>
Wilson B.	<u>Religion in Secular Society.</u>

et al.

Discussion of religion and secularisation is also an inherent part of much of the "Death of God" thought e.g. in:-

Altizer T.J.J. and Hamilton W.	<u>Radical Theology and the Death of God.</u>
Pelz W. and L.	<u>God is No More</u> et al.

and, as has been indicated throughout, is seminal in the thought of Tillich, Bonhoeffer and Robinson.

itself is inevitable and should neither surprise nor confuse people to the extent that it does. Tennyson perceptively wrote in his Idylls of the King:-

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new, And God  
fulfils himself in many ways ....."

No doubt many people today, as a result of their experiences in contemporary society, are better able to adapt to change and are better able to cope with it as a continuing influence in their lives, than were their predecessors. Indeed "education for change" has become a necessary part of both professional and personal education at the present time, and it covers a wide range of human concerns and activity. Unfortunately education in religion has not on the whole seemed capable of achieving the same degree of accommodation of secular doubts and problems as have other forms of knowledge. It is of course true, as has been maintained earlier<sup>(1)</sup>, that it is only in the past decade and commencing with Robinson's work, that the product of contemporary theological debate and discussion has been made available in England to people at large via "popular" theological writing<sup>(2)</sup> and the media - notable television. Ten years is a very short time indeed for any noticeable effect to be felt in general education, but the real disaster of our times for education in religion, is that of lost opportunity in that so few qualified teachers of religion are now available to fill the enormous gap between the supply and demand for specialist teachers of religious education in

(1) V. Chapter 1 supra pp. 3ff.

(2) I was interested to discover that R. S. Paul, speaking of the confusion in the Church and endeavouring to locate its cause, says, "For the answer to this question we must turn not to the tomes of major theologians, but to those who wrote the paperbacks and captured the headlines" - The Church in Search of Itself p. 201.

schools<sup>(1)</sup>. This seems to indicate the inability of students (not to mention the millions of people in all walks of life who have no **commitment** at all to any established form of religion) to accept that traditional religious belief and teaching make any substantive claim upon their lives, or give any sort of relevance to the latter at the present time. What is also apparent to lecturers in colleges of education and university departments of education, is that a very large number of students and teachers even though they are sympathetic to religious education, find themselves quite confused and often at a loss when they face the immediate teaching situation in school. This often appears to be because they are unable to articulate their faith with conviction in a teaching context, even though they may be committed religious people. An even more subtle and negative analysis is that there are many people who profess to be committed, and who may even be regular churchgoers, who are unable to articulate their faith to themselves. Thus a massive re-education programme faces teachers in both Church and secular levels of education if religious belief and practice (and the principal referent of this thesis is of course Christian belief and practice) is to be equal to the strong challenge of secularity and relevance.

- (1) Any edition of the Times Educational Supplement will prove my point in terms of the availability of such posts. The urgency of the situation at professional training level is illustrated by a paragraph from the 1974 Prospectus of Bede College, Durham, one of the oldest church colleges. Speaking of the Religious Studies Department it states:-

"The department welcomes any student whose wish is to deepen his knowledge and understanding of religion, whether he feels committed to teaching Religious Studies or not. However, we urge all who are drawn to these studies to consider carefully the great need which schools have for specialists in the subject, and the opportunities presented" (op. cit. pp. 22 - 3).



## II.

An account has been given elsewhere of the development of the teaching of religious education in schools from the 1944 Education Act to the early 1970's<sup>(1)</sup>. This account describes the gradual decline of religion in both its moral and educational aspects over this period, and the complete and almost immediate non-realisation of the high hopes which the parliamentary legislators of the Act had for a new Britain grounded in traditional Christian religious belief and morality. Some early Agreed Syllabuses, which certainly in themselves marked a decisive step forward in denominational co-operation as well as educational value, are set out and examined in the account<sup>(2)</sup>, and some indications and sources are given of the considerable alarm which was felt at the deteriorating conduct of young people in schools and their elders outside, during the decade 1950 - 1960<sup>(3)</sup>. What is vitally important to recognise is that by 1960 the "permissive society" was indeed a reality and that a very large part of the population of Britain, young and old alike, had no frame of reference at all for its morality and conduct, due largely to the declining influence of the Christian Churches<sup>(4)</sup>. Thus religion continued to be taught in schools, and the school day still began with a religious assembly (both of these aspects being legally compulsory), despite the ever-widening gap between the traditional content of the religious education given and its relationship to the attitudes, problems, and increasingly permissive life-styles seen in and adopted by society as a whole.

(2) Ibid. pp. 3 - 17.

(1) V. my M.Ed. thesis pp. 1 - 47.

(2) Ibid. pp. 17 - 26.

(3) Ibid. pp. 27 - 47.

(4) Ibid. pp. 44 - 47.

As has been stated earlier<sup>(1)</sup>, it was at this point early in the 1960's that the "new theology" and its attendant "new morality" came into being, initially through the immediately popular and controversial writing of J. A. T. Robinson. Honest to God was an attempt to bridge the gap mentioned above between traditional religion and contemporary secular man, and its vital significance in the process of reinterpretation in the areas of theism, christology and morality has been clearly delineated<sup>(2)</sup>. By the time the newer revised Syllabuses of Religious Education were being published (starting around 1967), much contemporary religious thought had been incorporated in these documents and they showed a much greater awareness of the realities and problems of modern life than their predecessors<sup>(3)</sup>. They had also been modelled on contemporary educational principles, most notably theories of children's cognitive development which have influenced so much modern educational practice and which has largely stemmed from the work of Piaget and other developmental psychologists. These syllabuses, with a few exceptions, significantly reflect the centrality of the agapeistic principle in Christian belief and practice and some are quite admirable<sup>(4)</sup>, though there are many signs of the "theological course" about them. One of the most progressive syllabuses in terms of its open approach to religious education and its recognition of the need for relevance in religious teaching, is that of the Inner London

- (1) V. supra p. 3.
- (2) Supra pp. 3 - 17.
- (3) The review which follows summarises my detailed findings - v. my M.Ed. thesis pp. 129 - 143.
- (4) I have reviewed selected syllabuses in my M.Ed. thesis pp. 131 ff., indicating the degree of attention paid to the "new theology" and the "new morality", and noting specifically the points at which the agapeistic principle is explicitly mentioned.

Education Authority entitled Learning for Life<sup>(1)</sup> (1968). The Lancashire Education Committee's syllabus Religion and Life (1968) and the Essex Education Authority's syllabus Interchange (presently being revised) are equally commendable. In nearly all the syllabuses there is a great deal of evidence which suggests that the greater emphasis on personal relationships which is a feature of the rationale of several of them, has led to an equivalent emphasis on the agapeistic principle. This is particularly apparent in the Primary sections of the syllabuses which are largely concerned with inculcating attitudes basic to the concept of agape - "loving", "caring", "kindness", "forgiveness", "other people", "neighbours", are amongst those singled out for thematic treatment. In the Secondary sections also, considerable attention is devoted to the encouragement of an agapeistic attitude, but there is still a need for greater emphasis on agape as a life-style, and for clarification of the word "love" which is ubiquitously present in all the syllabuses. Bearing in mind the problem which this word presents in both theological and popular usage<sup>(2)</sup>, the fact that most syllabuses assume that the concept of Christian love is self-explanatory is somewhat discouraging. What has been said about agape in this thesis reinforces the view that such an assumption can by no means be assured - indeed, there is a strong case for suggesting that the concept itself and its implications for a resultant life-style, together with the full range of possibilities for its teaching (which will be considered later on), should be the focal point of any course of training involving teachers of religious education in schools and colleges. With regard to the personal morality which will result from commitment to agape, the syllabuses do not go far enough in specifying the precise

(1) There is an excellent supplement to this syllabus entitled Living and Loving.

(2) V. supra pp. 22 ff.

relationship of the principle of agapeistic love to moral thought and action. Again, as in the Primary sections, there are many disseminated references to "caring", "personal relationships", "loving" etc. which would be given coherence if the agapeistic principle was clearly defined and understood. For it is important that whereas at the Primary stage, the cultivation of a loving attitude is best served by wide-ranging experiences and activities such as those suggested by nearly all the modern syllabuses, at the Secondary stage agape needs to be shown, seen and understood for what it is - the root of Christian practice and the key to Christian morality.

So then, whilst it is encouraging that so much progress has been made in the content and provision of religious education in schools, both in the context of the spiritual needs of today's young people and the nature of the society in which they live, a great deal more has still to be done. It is now generally agreed that religious education does have a place in schools but that it should be "open" education - in keeping with the diversity of man's religious experience and the increasingly multi-racial character of many of our educational institutions<sup>(1)</sup>. There is also a fair measure of agreement that such education ought to have a Christian foundation, but that it should not be seen as a process which has as its declared intention that of producing committed Christians<sup>(2)</sup>. The various aspects of criticism voiced above, which centre in particular upon the need for the extension of the agapeistic principle as a life-

(1) A full account of this debate can be found in my M.Ed. thesis pp. 153 ff. For a more detailed account of the rationale of religious education in relationship to everyday life and its problems see my monograph Religious Education (1972: Co-author P. J. Street, County Adviser in R.E., Essex County Education Authority), a copy of which is appended to this thesis.

(2) I have briefly considered this point in my M.Ed. thesis pp. 160 - 5.

style, will be explored in detail later. Before that however, something needs to be said about the position and role of the Christian Churches in contemporary education in religion.

### III.

There is then in England, an overall goodwill towards the notion of "open" education in religion in state schools based on the Christian tradition. However there is also considerable opposition on the part of Christians and non-Christians to the provisions of the 1944 Education Act which designate religious education and a daily religious assembly in schools as legally compulsory<sup>(1)</sup>. In western society at least, there are few people who would wish to deny children the right to be educated in religion with a view to their acquiring a sympathetic understanding of a religious approach to life. The Agreed Syllabuses have virtually eradicated the old bogey of denominationalism which used to be such a divisive factor in discussion of religious education in schools. However the requirement of the 1944 Act that there be a daily religious assembly at the commencement of the school day, is widely ignored, and school staffs at both primary and secondary levels have adopted a flexibility towards this occasion which is often wholly admirable and specifically relevant to their own particular circumstances. There is a strong belief amongst many educators and interested parties, that the abolition of these legal requirements would be a good thing, as they are undoubtedly a restricting influence in state schools in the general run of things, and are an embarrassment to those particularly

(1) The most thorough and detailed study of the whole area of religious education in state schools and its relationship to the Church, is to be found in The Fourth R: the Durham Report on Religious Education (1970).

concerned with the organisation, administration and teaching of religion in that setting. A succinct and useful statement of the present-day position in this area is given in the Social Morality Council's monograph Moral and Religious Education in County Schools (1970) pp. 9 f., mentioned here because the working party which composed the report consisted of a mixed group of eminent Christians, Jews and Humanists. However, Sir William Alexander in his book Towards a New Education Act (1969) is not of the opinion that any change in the status quo is desirable. He writes:-

"For myself, I believe that the problems of the dual system have been largely, if not wholly, resolved, and personally I would take the view that the provisions of the 1944 Act could well be consolidated without major change"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The previous Secretary of State for Education, Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, herself emphasised in 1971 that in her view the present time was the least suitable time for reducing the responsibility that Parliament takes for the demands of the 1944 Act relating to religious instruction<sup>(2)</sup>. So it seems likely that the contradiction between requirement and reality will remain - to the frustration of many people actually involved with religious teaching and assemblies in state schools who feel that the legal strictures are inhibiting to their educative function in the present day climate of opinion.

It is apparent, following the outline of the pattern of religious education in state schools given in Section II above, that it must fall to the Churches themselves to provide specifically denominational education in religion. This task is approached from two directions -

(1) Op. cit. p. 65.

(2) V. my M.Ed. thesis pp. 155 - 6 for her full statement in context.



education in those Voluntary schools which are still able to retain considerable denominational independence under the Dual System<sup>(1)</sup>, and passage through the wide range of activities which characterise the educational work of the denominational Churches in a parochial context. So far as organisation is concerned, these two areas are not by any means regarded as exclusive areas. In 1971 the Carlisle Commission published its report which examines and makes recommendations upon the whole structure of Diocesan education in religion. The function of the Commission, as its chairman, the Bishop of Carlisle wrote in the foreword to the Report, was to meet the need for:-

"..... a searching inquiry into the Church's place and function within the whole field of education today - among adults as among young people and children, with the statutory as with the voluntary agencies"<sup>(2)</sup>.

The report certainly presents a lucid account of the very varied patterns of organisation and structure which existed at the time of the inquiry, in the 49 Dioceses in England and Wales. This section itself makes interesting reading (Chapter 2 pp. 19 ff) and gives substance to the proposals for the uniformity of structure and organisation which is later recommended (Chapter 9 pp. 124 ff). A diagram which illustrates the work

- (1) For the exact legal provisions relating to Voluntary Schools and their autonomy, see Wells M. M. and Taylor P. S. The New Law of Education (5th Edition 1961) Section 15 pp. 118 ff., and Section 25 pp. 141 ff. I am not concerned here with the independent sector of education which has always had strong religious connexions. The Carlisle Report mentioned infra. includes a lengthy section on these schools (Section 77 pp. 45 ff), and one of the most contemporary treatments of the state of religion in such schools is to be found in the published conclusions of the Bloxham Research Project - Richardson R. and Chapman J.: Images of Life: Problems of religious belief and human relations in schools (S.C.M. 1973).
- (2) Partners in Education: The Role of the Diocese p. viii.



of what is regarded as the key organisation responsible for educational work at Diocesan level, the Diocesan Education Committee, is reproduced from the Report in Appendix 9 . So too is an equally valuable and informative diagram of the internal structure of the Diocesan Education Committee. It is the pattern of structure and educational concern which is indicated in this latter diagram which will be taken as the means of conveying the information relevant to this present thesis section, namely, how the educative function of the Church is being pursued in the areas of Church schools; Youth work; and Adult, Further and Higher Education.

In 1972 the National Society published figures<sup>(1)</sup> which indicated that there were at that time in England and Wales, some 6,000 primary schools and about 200 secondary schools which had Voluntary status. These figures represent 26% of all primary and 4% of all secondary schools which were in existence in that year, and it is evident that they catered for about a million pupils in all. The total school population at that time was almost  $8\frac{1}{2}$  millions<sup>(2)</sup>, so the number of children being taught either in Voluntary Aided or Controlled schools is not insignificant. It is useful at the outset, to say something about the rationale which is advanced by the Church for the continued existence of denominational schools within the contemporary state system, bearing in mind the fact that the Church and Church schools were at one time virtually the sole

(1) V. its pamphlet Church Schools Today.

(2) The exact figures were 30,288 primary and secondary schools with a total pupil population of 8,495,816 - V. Statistics in Education: Schools (1973) issued by the Dept. of Educ. and Science and published by H.M.S.O.

purveyors of mass education in England<sup>(1)</sup>. That the need for a rationale has been felt in Church educational circles, is evident from the fact that a number of Diocesan religious education syllabuses have been produced over the past two or three years which either supplement or are intended to replace entirely the Agreed Syllabus adopted for use in the County Schools of that particular area. Thus the 1971 Guildford Diocesan Syllabus (which, as is often the case with many of the Agreed Syllabuses, has been adopted by other Dioceses, Ripon for example) states:-

"This syllabus is intended for experimental use in Church of England Aided Schools in the Diocese of Guildford, not merely as an appendage to the Surrey Syllabus of Religious Education, but as an alternative to it"<sup>(2)</sup>.

There are two directions which the rationales tend to take, and which are important as an indication of the line of thought which is behind them - on the one hand statements which defend the existence of Church schools within the national education system as a whole, and on the other hand, statements which analyse the specific denominational significance of the approach to religious education recommended in individual Diocesan syllabuses. On the first point, the Carlisle Report notes that an extensive treatment of the theological, educational and economic arguments for retaining church schools had been presented at length in

- (1) V. Burgess H. J. Enterprise in Education (a study of church influence in education up to 1870), and Cruikshank M. Church and State in English Education: 1870 to the Present Day, for a full historical survey of church education. Canon Burgess has also produced a recent monograph which outlines the policies, principles and benefits of church schools in contemporary society entitled The School In The Parish (Falcon 1974).
- (2) Op. cit. p. 1.

the Durham Report<sup>(1)</sup>. It gives its own summary of the arguments under the heading "Why Church Schools?" viz:-

"(a) The Christian doctrine of man is of cardinal importance for education; the church schools should exemplify - and are in a position specially to exemplify - that significance and its practical application for living.

(b) The church schools are an inheritance from the past, a moral trust, which in our day it is our duty to honour in a way appropriate to current educational requirements. They are also subject to the terms of legal trusts.

(c) Their relationship to the Church should make them specially sensitive to the Christian origins of our culture.

(d) Their Church foundation, and the provisions which are made in law for their management/government and for the appointment of staff, guarantee conditions making for a Christian ethos.

(e) Their existence offers, at least in some places, the opportunity for the exercise of parental choice (at present in accordance with section 76 of the Education Act 1944).

(f) In religious education and worship the relationship of the schools with the Church provides an immediate link with a believing and worshipping community. This gives to them a particular illustration of the life of a Christian body, and offers special possibilities of 'bringing alive' the meaning of Christian faith and worship (to say which is in no way to deny the importance, and indeed the need, for ecumenical projects).

(1) The Fourth R paras. 462 - 506 pp. 217 - 44.

(g) The church schools are a visible token of the Church's concern for education, exhibiting its engagement in that important human endeavour, and constituting one proper fulfilment of commitment to a theology of Incarnation. The existence of church schools, far from implying a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular, signifies their inseparability.

(h) If the Church, as part of its service to the community, claims to offer a contribution to thinking about education, it is better fitted to do so if it is engaged in that enterprise, sharing both its achievements and frustrations and bearing some of the attendant responsibilities.

(i) The voluntary sector provides a fruitful variety in the national system and offers special opportunities for educational pioneering (not least in the field of religious education) and, through provisions for appointment of managers/governors, for local involvement in the life and work of the schools"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It is tempting to embark upon a detailed consideration of these clauses in the light of the actual situations which are to be found today, in terms of their contribution to the educational and religious status quo, and the realisation of the high ideals which are expressed in the statement. This would however, be too great a task for this survey. It should be pointed out nevertheless, that there are specific clauses here, notably (a), (f) and (g) which relate directly to the central concern of this thesis, namely, the nature, significance and application of Christian agape. Whether this theoretical account is followed through in practice will be indicated indirectly in the description of the content of the Diocesan syllabuses which follows and in the overall review of the Church's educational work. A specific critique will be attempted in conclusion.

(1) Op. cit. pp. 44 - 5.

Regarding the second direction of rationale, namely, an explanation of the specific denominational contribution which the Diocesan syllabuses are intended to make, several of the syllabuses offer clarification. The draft syllabus of the Diocese of Derby is probably the most succinct on this matter, and offers the following statement under a consideration of the omissions in the Agreed Syllabuses which need to be included in a denominational syllabus, vis:-

- "(1) Teaching about the Church of England - buildings - worship - ministry - structure etc.
- (2) Teaching about Christian hope - dealing with the problems of pain, death and the life to come.
- (3) Teaching about grace and the sacraments.
- (4) Teaching about vocation"<sup>(1)</sup>.

It would be impossible here, to examine the ways in which the above criteria are worked out in the syllabuses in any sort of detail. Again, the significance of the aspects mentioned in relationship to agape and an agapeistic interpretation of Christian life and belief will be commented upon at a later stage. Two of the Diocesan syllabuses considered here, the Guildford Syllabus and the Derby Draft Syllabus are appended to this thesis, and a simple parallel summary of their contents has been reproduced on the following pages. It is clear that a good deal of attention has been given to ensuring that the Diocesan syllabuses are not "theological courses". Indeed, the degree of sensitivity towards contemporary principles of child development which are encapsulated in the methodology recommended<sup>(2)</sup>, and the emphasis upon experiential activities

(1) Church Teaching Syllabus (1973) p. 2.

(2) V. the Guildford syllabus pp. 2 - 14 and passim, and the Derby syllabus passim, where there are constant references to children's cognitive and conceptual ability to deal with specific topics.

and open discussion of feelings and attitudes in the exploration of what is "religious"<sup>(1)</sup>, are wholly commendable, and have a direct bearing upon the plea which was made at an earlier point in this chapter for recognition of the vital significance of human relationships and the growth of knowledge of self in relation to others, as a foundation premise of religious development and understanding and as giving relevance to a religious approach to contemporary life<sup>(2)</sup>. The total range of work connected with the Voluntary Church day schools in a diocese, is generally the responsibility of the Diocesan Director of Education in addition to his overall responsibility for the whole area of church educational activity. Diocesan policy is formulated in discussion with the Diocesan Education Committee, and carried out by an advisory team<sup>(3)</sup>

- (1) For example, in the Guildford syllabus p. 27 (exploring aesthetic experience) and p. 37 (exploring creativity in oneself) and some lively ideas about worship - pp. 45 ff. Similarly in the Derby syllabus pp. 3 ff (areas of exploration) and pp. 11 ff (thankfulness), as well as the section on worship pp. 22 ff.
- (2) V. supra pp. 187 ff. In this connection the latest Syllabus which I have seen - Lincoln Diocesan Education Committee's Growing With The Church (1974) - pursues this objective by means of carefully structured themes in the Junior School, e.g. J1 Year : MYSELF (linked with the doctrine of God as Creator and the Sacrament of Baptism).  
J2 Year : THE FAMILY (linked with the doctrine of God the Creator and Father and the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony).
- (3) This procedure and structure is extant in the Diocese of Sheffield, and I am grateful to the Director, Canon H. Burgess and his education team of Youth Organiser, Adult, Further and Higher Education Adviser, and R. E. Adviser, for giving me the opportunity to attend their team staff-meeting, to discuss their work with them, and for the source of much of the information about their responsibilities and problems that I have been able to incorporate into this review section. The communication link between the education team and the parishes is the monthly journal Horizon (copy appended), which gives details of all the activities of the team members and contains articles relevant to their work. Cf. the Ripon Diocesan journal Education in the Diocese of Ripon, and Wakefield Diocese's journal Tom Tom.



GUILDFORD DIOCESAN SYLLABUS OF REL. EDUC.

(1971)

INFANTS.A. COMING TO KNOW GOD.

1. Coming to know God
  - through exploring the natural world
  - through exploring aesthetic experience and exercise of value judgement
  - through stories (factual and fictional). 75%
2. Coming to know God through meeting other people:
  - getting to know the people in the Church. 10%
3. Learning about Jesus
  - through the Church Year (Christmas, Easter)
  - through classroom situations. 15%

B. RESPONDING TO GOD: FOLLOWING JESUS.

4. Through worship (including visits to Church) Occasional & spontaneous.
5. Through concern/caring for others. Constant reference.

LOWER JUNIORS: UPPER FIRST (7 - 8 years).A. COMING TO KNOW GOD.

1. Coming to know God through exploring the world
  - through exploring aesthetic experience and exercise of value judgement
  - through stories (factual and fictional). 20%
2. Coming to know God through meeting other people:
  - getting to know the people in the Church 5%
  - studying the family of the Church 30%

DERBY DIOCESAN SYLLABUS OF REL. EDUC.

(1973)

INFANTS.

- AREAS OF EXPLORATION:
1. Creation
  2. Families
  3. Jesus
  4. The Church

JUNIORS: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (7 - 8 years)

1. The Life of Jesus
  - The Church
  - Prayer
  - Life in Bible times
  - Caring.





3. The impact of Jesus

on contemporaries 15%

on us. 15%

B. RESPONDING TO GOD: FOLLOWING JESUS.

4. Through worship (including visits to Church) Daily and weekly.

5. Through concern/caring for others Constant reference.

6. Living together 25%

Demands of family life

Demands of world family

Battle against evil.

WORSHIP.

NOTE: The % figure indicates the balance of time to be spent on that aspect.

JUNIORS: PRE-ADOLESCENCE (10 - 11 years).

Forgiveness

What do Christians believe?

What is the Church of England?

What is the "Anglican Communion"?

Other Religions.

WORSHIP.

NOTE: The straightforward listing of topics in this syllabus gives it an impression of presenting a "theological course". In fact this is not so - the considerable flexibility of the work is indicated in the detailed development although by comparison with the Guildford syllabus it is much more formally conceived.

(see the diagram in Appendix 9 ). Assistance with the development of parish educational work with children is likely to be the main responsibility of the Religious Education Adviser, and this particular area of concern is usually focussed upon Sunday Schools, confirmation classes, Junior Church, or any of the many forms of chosen organisations which individual parishes adopt. Thus the R.E. adviser's job is to motivate, train, offer help with new materials and techniques etc., to lay people, many of whom have no professional teacher-training qualifications. Hence the emphasis of the R.E. adviser's approach is on courses and conferences which are geared to training parish leaders for a Diocesan Certificate of proficiency in teaching, the main content being study of child development and teaching techniques related specifically to education in religion. Help is also given to individual parishes and their needs, and the R.E. Adviser runs study courses for Sunday School teachers and leaders, and disseminates information on educational aids and resources<sup>(1)</sup>.

The work of the Youth Organiser is also largely related to individual parish requirements. Training, leaders' meetings, experimental worship and parish visits are all part of his ongoing work. In the Diocese of Sheffield, the Youth Organiser has close links with ecumenical organisations and works as a staff member of a training team related both to this and local authority youth work. He has a particular interest in folk singing, and uses this as an approach to contacts of all kinds with young people throughout the Diocese<sup>(2)</sup>. The Youth Service Development Council's Report Youth and Community Work in the 70's (1969), produced

- (1) V. Horizon (April 1974) p. 7 for an indication of these activities.
- (2) A detailed review of the Sheffield Diocesan Youth Organiser's work is given in Horizon pp. 15 ff.

under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science when Mr. Edward Short was then Secretary of State for Education, has been of particular interest to all youth workers. It is a very detailed and far-reaching document, but the Conservative Government of the day failed to implement its recommendation beyond certain financial provisions of a limited nature. There is a section in the Report which is of great significance for the Church and for its educative function amongst young people at the present time. This will be clearly seen to have an important bearing upon both the theological<sup>(1)</sup> and human relationship aspects of concern which have been reiterated in this thesis as being central to a contemporary understanding of, and provision for, man's nature and potential in an educative context. Sections 219 - 222 of the Report states:-

"219. We do not wish to tread too firmly on theological and ecclesiastical ground. Yet we venture to suggest that there are three marked trends today in the churches themselves which affirm rather than deny the central theme of our report. The first is theological. In the post-war period the churches have been impressed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer's stress on 'man's coming of age' (a free translation of a German phrase which literally means 'having a mouth of his own'). One clear implication of this emphasis is that it is not inconsistent with a Christian view of the world to see man in the twentieth century as called upon to solve more and more of his own problems. The second is reflection upon the area of Christian concern and obedience. More and more Christians are talking about 'involvement in the secular situation' and this at least means serving God and man in the community and not merely or even primarily in the religious organisation. A popular religious book of the past decade described the

(1) Notice that both Bonhoeffer and Robinson are referred to in the first section.

religious quest today as for 'the gracious neighbour',<sup>(1)</sup>. The third trend is the ecumenical movement which looks with less and less favour on narrow denominational loyalties which in the past have operated to isolate religious organisations from each other and the community. Further, in some places the Anglican church is practising group and team ministries which often involve trained full-time lay workers and is preparing to implement the Church Assembly motion to establish part-time clergy.

220. The logic of these trends is that the Churches should consider their role in relation to the task and opportunities of community development. How far is it consistent with their faith - indeed in the twentieth century how far is it an inevitable consequence of their faith - that they should put a large part of their effort into the encouragement of people to identify their own needs, develop their own resources to meet them and thus (almost in the language of faith) to attain their true status and dignity in the Universe by learning to govern themselves more and more? In particular there are implications here for the work of the Churches among young people. But there would be further implications in the training of clergy and others for religious organisations and the outlook of local churches. We would like to invite the churches to give serious consideration to the issue we have raised.

221. Two further points are important. One is that the churches are poised to make a major contribution since they are relatively well-provided with man-power and premises. Secondly, though we have used the Christian Churches as our example we have similar hopes of other religions in the land.

(1) The New Reformation? J. A. T. Robinson (p. 48). Penguin (sic) 1965. I have referred to Robinson's use of this phrase in Chapter 5 on "Man" p.105 .



222. We conclude that the Churches should:

(a) Consider their work in relation to the theory and opportunities of community development.

(b) Study the implications of this approach for the training of the clergy, part-time clergy and laity, and for the practice of group and team ministries.

(c) Consider means of sharing more widely their provision and personnel with the community as a whole"<sup>(1)</sup>.

The recommendations set down here speak for themselves, and most perceptively, in terms of the analysis and educational direction of work with youth (and training for that work) in the Christian Churches.

Again a detailed consideration of this analysis and the recommendations themselves, will be considered in the final chapter of this thesis which will attempt to specify the precise pattern of education that, if accepted, the analysis and recommendations would involve, particularly in relationship to the premises of religious belief itself which have been advocated in the first two sections.

Finally, to complete this survey of the Church's educational work, it is necessary to look at the area of adult, further and higher education. In many ways this is a difficult area to describe with any degree of precision. This is partly because the area is so broad - there are young people and ..... everyone else! But it presents difficulties also, because the sources of demand for, possibilities of, and nature of such education are more dependent upon individual parish circumstances than either of the other two aspects of diocesan educational work - day and Sunday schools, and youth activities. However the role of the Adult Education Adviser provides some indication of what is being done in this

(1) Op. cit. pp. 83 - 4. *The Role of the Diocesan A. E. A.*

field. On the whole it seems that it is the clergy and a limited number of lay people (e.g. leaders of house groups, P.C.C. members etc.) in parishes who are the focus of the Adult Adviser's attention. The latter disseminates information about courses and resources<sup>(1)</sup> for adult participation which originates either in Church or secular spheres (i.e. Further Education via Local Authority organisation), and in the Diocese of Sheffield for instance, he joins the complete education team in organising "training days" in parishes which invite them. On these occasions such themes as "communication", "fellowship", "community" have been considered in relation to the Christian life and work of those present - the day's events are described in Horizon pp. 13 - 14. It is apparent that the wide range of theological positions and outlook held by the clergy and people in different parishes, and the fact that church members are themselves of widely differing education background and experience, renders the Adult Adviser's task difficult, and one that can only be successfully implemented on an ad hoc basis. The Sheffield Adult Adviser further emphasised the vital role which he had of providing motivation for learning to the majority of adult church members in the parishes. There is some indication here of the truth of the Carlisle Report's comment on Adult Education viz:-

"It is in this general field that the Church's relationships with the education service are at their weakest and that attitudes so often appear unformed or ambiguous"<sup>(2)</sup>.

As with youth work and the Department of Education and Science Report mentioned in that connection, there is an equivalent (though not so

(1) These may be at Diocesan or General Synod Board of Education level. V. Horizon pp. 5 - 6 and the General Synod's programme Leadership, Education and Training in the Church (1974: Appended) respectively.

(2) Partners in Education: The Role of the Diocese p. 78.



lengthy) document, specifically church-orientated, which is of much interest to Adult Education. This is the General Synod's pamphlet Education and Training (1972: Appended). This publication examines the nature, function and education of the "laos" in the Church in some detail and with appropriate recommendations. There is a particular section which reiterates the questions which have been posed at an earlier point in this thesis on the relevance of Christian belief and the Christian Church to the contemporary secular situation, viz:-

"It is not surprising in this age of rapid change that both clergy and laity who are sensitive to what is happening around them should be affected by a double crisis - a crisis of belief which leaves them bewildered and unhappy about their doubts and uncertainties and a crisis of loyalty because the Church seems to have so little relevance to their own and the world's real needs. The challenge and opportunity to think theologically will save them from drifting away and will lead to a reorientation of the Church's ministry in the world.

'If theology today is to make sense, it must be forged in a constant running conversation between the tradition of faith - our biblical and theological heritage - and the contemporary situation' (R. Shaull)<sup>(1)</sup>.

The pamphlet gives a very useful summary of some of the more important situations and issues which come within the range of lay training, under the headings of:-

"(1) General and global issues:

Moral dilemma of science - which cannot be solved by scientists alone, or scientists and politicians, or for that matter scientists and theologians. Environmental crisis.

(1) Op. cit. p. 8.

World development. Race. International justice and prevention of war. Education, communications and mass media.

(2) Parenthood and family life:

- a sphere in which North American churches are very active.

(3) Neighbourhood/Community/Region:

Regional planning - urban renewal - rural problems. Community development. Community care and coping with crisis situations (drugs, mental health, bereavement, prisoners etc.).

(4) Work:

Individual problems e.g. honesty, fair-play, relationships, decision making. Group problems e.g. industrial relations. Unemployment and redundancy.

(5) Political and public affairs:

The politician, civil servant, local government officials. Parties and pressure groups. Conflict of loyalties. Identifying social goals and helping to formulate public and political opinion on the great social and moral issues of the day.

(6) Leisure:

Use of time.  
Ethics of sport.  
Tourism.

(7) Church responsibilities within its institutional life:

Church administration.  
Church renewal.  
Sunday school teaching and youth leadership<sup>(1)</sup>.

(1) Ibid. p. 10.

Finally, the conclusion of the Report on lay training is given below in full as its significance for the practical working out of adult education in religion will be explored in the final chapter of this thesis. It states:-

"There is an increased awareness today that the Church's ministry to the world occurs, if it occurs at all, away from the Church's buildings and apart from its organised activities. It depends upon the 99 per cent of its members who inevitably spend most of their time in worldly occupations.

Much money is spent by the churches in the training of clergy and their lay helpers. This is indeed very important. But should not at least as much money be spent in the equipment of those Christians who try to fulfil their Christian vocation in secular roles?

The local church seldom meets this need. A layman wanting to bring insights to bear on his daily problems and decisions finds little in the typical parish structure to encourage and assist him. He may be tempted therefore, to leave the church - and so increase its ineffectiveness. But his efforts to be a Christian on his own will eventually wither, as the gathering with other Christians for worship and mutual education is essential to a vital faith.

New structures are urgently called for, supplementing the parish structures, designed to help the layman in his work in the world rather than to draw him into the organised activities of the Church as an institution. Models are provided by industrial missions and lay colleges: their activities should be extended, but even so they will cover only a small section of the total field. We need new developments, but are held up by the shortage of

people, ordained and lay, with the competence to initiate them. A first step to relieve this shortage would be the establishment of more specialised ministries (such as that in Durham Diocese) 'to help develop ecumenical cadres of people, both clergy and laity, who can stimulate theological thinking in secular settings'.

However much lip service is paid to the Limuru<sup>(1)</sup> call to the churches to strengthen their lay training programmes, nothing will happen unless in unmistakable terms the enterprise is made the primary responsibility of people appointed to foster the work at every level of church life and the resources are made available to enable them to carry out their task"<sup>(2)</sup>.

It is evident from all that has been put forward in this descriptive commentary on the present state of education in religion in the Churches, that there is a keen and urgent awareness amongst Church leaders, that education is the key to the very survival of the Church, certainly to the survival of the Christian faith, in the immediate years ahead. The presentation of material in this chapter was begun by the writer, with the assumption that the Church was, to say the least, blithely unconcerned about the need to translate Christian belief and practice into forms which met the desperate intellectual, social and practical needs of present-day Christians. That this assumption was wholly incorrect has been illustrated by the tenor of the Diocesan religious education syllabuses examined, and by the specific comments of the Carlisle Report<sup>(3)</sup>, the Department of Education and Science's Report on Youth Work<sup>(4)</sup>, and

(1) The Anglican Consultative Council which produced the original Report to which the General Synod responded in Education and Training, originally met at Limuru in 1971.

(2) Op. cit. p. 15.

(3) V. supra pp. 195 - 6 and the report passim.

(4) V. supra pp. 203 - 5 and the report passim.

the General Synod's Report Education and Training<sup>(1)</sup>. Nor do these specific reports present the whole extent of the thought which the Church is giving to patterns of future education in religion<sup>(2)</sup>. Yet the vital question remains - what is being done to put the various recommendations into practice, to make theology today comprehensible to contemporary Christians in relationship to their daily lives, to ensure at all levels of Church membership and education the "running conversation between the tradition of faith and the contemporary situation" of which R. Shaull speaks<sup>(3)</sup>? The greater part of this thesis has been concerned to present a view of theological interpretation which is in line with Shaull's objective. It is now necessary to encapsulate the ideas, aims and interpretations which have been set down thus far, into a scheme upon which the future pattern of education in religion might be based. For, as Professor R. P. C. Hanson has recently warned:-

"The abyss which yawns today between the experts on the one hand and the faithful on the other is dangerous, and not enough efforts are being made to bridge it"<sup>(4)</sup>.

- (1) V. supra p.206f. and pp. 207-210.
- (2) An overall view of the Church's concerns in education is given in the General Synod Board of Education's Report for 1973 - a very succinct presentation. I have devoted space elsewhere to providing information on the work of the Church Colleges of Education - an uncertain area at the present time - and also some details of the Church's educative work which does not readily fit into the Diocesan educational structure which has been my principal concern in this chapter. See Appendix 10 for these details.
- (3) V. supra p.207.
- (4) V. his article "The dangerous gulf between pulpit and pew". In The Times 11th May, 1974.

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FUTURE EDUCATION IN RELIGION

I.

It is apparent that the two-directional model of analysis in terms of cognition and behaviour, which has been used earlier in this thesis as a means of examining past and present education in religion, will serve equally well to indicate possible future patterns of education in this field, for it is equally true of the religious as of other aspects of life, that success in achieving a specific life style primarily depends upon the harmonisation of a person's thought and action. Such harmonisation is of course the end product of many different emotional, intellectual, social and moral processes, all of which play their part in the extremely complex developmental pattern through which ideally the individual becomes autonomous. Education in these processes must take into account contemporary knowledge and research which elucidate the manner in which such learning takes place<sup>(1)</sup> - but above all, what is learned has itself to possess relevance if the learner is to perceive its significance and make it his own. This final chapter of thesis will, therefore be concerned with looking afresh at the function of the two primary sources of education in religion - the school and the Church - in the light of those various deficiencies which have been noted passim in this thesis in the areas of traditional and present-day educational practice,

- (1) The widespread influence of Piaget's research into children's cognition, applied to their religious development by Ronald Goldman, is an example of this. V. my M.Ed. thesis pp. 135-6 for specific references noting the incorporation of such thought into the Agreed Syllabuses.

and in the light of that fundamental premise which, it has been argued, gives meaningfulness to life, namely the Christian love ethic. It is particularly important that the claims for the latter be fully understood at a time when it is becoming popular<sup>(1)</sup> to re-emphasise the value of a rule-governed way of life in the face of the many challenges to traditional social order which are spotlighted in contemporary national and international events.

## II.

What then is to be said about the cognitive aspect of the Christian faith in an educational context? That there is a very considerable problem here in terms of the need to restore its intellectual credibility in the present - day scientifically and truth-orientated climate of debate, is undeniable. It does not help the situation that traditional religious belief and practice is seen by the majority of people to be irrelevant to their lives in secular society. On the other hand it is equally undeniable that religious interest, as revealed by the immensely wide concern of many people with non-Christian religious forms and areas of experiential activity such as drug taking or personal spiritual analysis (Transcendental Meditation for example), seems as strong as ever<sup>(2)</sup>. For the traditionalist this pluralistic approach is a worrying feature of contemporary religious life, especially when it is set alongside the dec-

- (1) The recent pronouncement of the Archbishop of York on a "return to the ten commandments" is a case in point. This led to a vigorous debate in letters to The Times during the month of June 1974.
- (2) A particularly valuable account of such wide-ranging interests is to be found in Kenneth Leech's recent book Youthquake. Cf. also Harvey Cox's chapter "The search for a New Church" in The Seduction of the Spirit pp. 226 ff., and for an account of more deviant "religious" interest at the present time, J.S. Richards' chapter "The Occult Explosion" in But Deliver Us From Evil pp. 19 ff.

lining influence of traditional Christian faith and the Christian Churches. Yet the educational value of such approaches must be acknowledged, for they are all part of the process which leads to a person's ultimate religious autonomy, and need to be seen as a corrective against the too narrowly orientated specific "denominational" religious teaching which has been instrumental in producing education in religion which has had great difficulty in surviving the ongoing and rapid changes in social order and the increased secularisation of contemporary society.

Turning first of all to the cognitive area of religious teaching in state schools, it must be said that there is very little to quarrel with here as regards the approaches which the Agreed Syllabuses offer at Infant and Junior level. As has already been noted<sup>(1)</sup>, the syllabuses are invariably modelled on sound theoretical awareness of the way in which children learn<sup>(2)</sup>, and much of both the teaching per se and the religious activity which takes place, is geared to the practical concern of building up a loving, caring community<sup>(3)</sup>. This central objective, combined with the various thematic treatments and integration of the religious teaching with other subjects - notably the creative and performing arts - provides in many schools a sound foundation for the later development of religious concepts and the cultivation of an agapeistic attitude relevant to the school society itself and ultimately to the wider

(1) V. supra pp. 187.

(2) Many of the syllabuses incorporate some discussion of these (largely Piagetian) principles as a part of their rationale e.g. The Lancashire Syllabus pp. 21 ff., London Syllabus pp. 32 ff. Wiltshire Syllabus pp. 33 ff. et al.

(3) V. my M.Ed. thesis pp. 131-2 for a detailed review of some six of the most recent Agreed Syllabuses and a clear indication of their agapeistic content.

society outside and the children's personal moral development and activity as members of that society. It is generally true also, that the religious assembly in Infant and Junior schools is given considerable weight as an occasion when the school "family" meets to share together in a variety of academic, spiritual and social concerns which integrate its individual members with the daily life of the school and with its corporate ideals and objectives<sup>(1)</sup>. In some areas there is the additional advantage of a school being situated in an area which has a mixed immigrant population and where children are thus able to learn about and experience different religious traditions and faiths<sup>(2)</sup>.

So much then for the Primary stage in state school education in religion - it is generally well conceived and implemented, handling the conceptual and experiential aspects of religious education in a manner which is appropriate both to the children's cognitive development and to their specific social and experiential interests at this stage. The Secondary stage is by no means as satisfactory and suffers from the dual deficiencies of secondary education in England as a whole, namely, over formalisation in organisation and over specialisation in subject matter. Clearly the size of many secondary schools poses a problem for the relatively individual and flexible education of individual pupils, and is a serious handicap to any attempt to implement humanistic principles<sup>(3)</sup> in such schools. Another factor which militates against successful education in religion, which has already been mentioned<sup>(4)</sup>, is the desperate shortage of

(1) This is certainly true of primary schools in Sheffield of which I have detailed and professional experience in the field of Religious Education.

(2) I have visited schools in Huddersfield and Birmingham where this has been the case.

(3) The humanistic approach is described in detail infra pp. 228 ff.

(4) V. supra pp. 184-5.

teachers of Religious Education. Thus it comes about that in the absence of such specialists, religious education becomes the responsibility of teachers who may not only have an inadequate knowledge of the subject, but who may sometimes be quite unsympathetic towards it. In such circumstances it is not surprising that both the quality of teaching and the response of pupils to it, are far from ideal. A situation such as this is not easy to remedy but it needs to be seen that such attitudes as those indicated: apathy, ignorance, disinterest or the ascription to religious education of irrelevance, stem from past inadequacies in understanding the real meaning and significance of education in religion in a contemporary age. Unless this negative cycle is broken by real attempts to examine the nature, significance and relevance of Christianity to the lives of present-day secondary school pupils in terms related to agape as the focus of religion and of "God" and its subsequent operational significance in the religious life of Christians, such as those presented in the first two sections of this thesis<sup>(1)</sup>, it is hard to see how the situation can be remedied. Indeed there can only be further decline in the influence of traditional religious teaching and belief upon the lives of those future adults who are at present pupils in our schools if such a reappraisal is not urgently made.

A final and more specific criticism of aspects of the Agreed Syllabuses at secondary level, relates to their treatment of agape. The difficulties which are presented by the word "love" in common speech, have been referred to earlier<sup>(2)</sup> and it is absolutely essential that the high order principle of Christian agape is given much more

(1) It is hardly necessary by now to stress the fundamentally different nature of these interpretations from those of traditional religious teaching.

(2) V. Chapter 2 supra pp. 22-3.



prominence and expository treatment throughout than is at present the case. Granted the experiential knowledge and practice of the primary school in terms of the cultivation of an agapeistic attitude, there ought to be no reason why agape as a central principle of loving human relationships should not be placed before secondary pupils as the means of achieving self-fulfilment and purpose in all aspects of their lives. Of course discussion<sup>(1)</sup> of all kinds will go hand in hand with the practice of Christian agape - for instance with the wide variety of social service activities which are becoming increasingly a part of secondary school practice - with a view to building up the children's concept of agape itself, not merely as a virtue to be acquired and cultivated, but as a real and dynamic element which enhances the lives of those who practise it and rubs off on the lives of those with whom they come into contact. In other words, the ultimate objective would be to explore and cultivate Christian agape as a life style, and this would therefore not only involve the kind of exposition and discussion mentioned above, but also the consideration of the relationship of agape to morality and of the principle established elsewhere<sup>(2)</sup> and reiterated in this thesis<sup>(3)</sup> that the agapeistic life is the moral life. Naturally such an approach would involve practical considerations of moral choice and decision, and the building up of autonomous moral activity based upon Situation Ethics<sup>(4)</sup>.

Clearly wide-ranging discussion of contemporary moral problems and the

(1) It is not of course my intention to suggest that religious education at any level, be it school or church directed, should be confined to the examination and experience of agape alone. Reading and study of the Christian faith - its origins, development and significance - will form an important ongoing part of children's religious understanding and learning at every stage.

(2) In my M.Ed. thesis passim.

(3) V. Chapters 1 and 2 supra.

(4) See my M.Ed. thesis pp. 65 ff., and pp. 113 ff.



resolving of simulated moral situations such as those which form the core of the Schools' Council Moral Education Project Lifeline material will be of considerable value here. However it is important that the cardinal principle of Situations Ethics, namely, that it is a style of moral resolution which allows the situation to be the key, is fully understood, particularly in its relationship to other rule-governed criteria of moral decision.<sup>(1)</sup>

The overall deficiency of the secondary level Agreed Syllabuses is that they do not at present put forward a scheme of education in religion which is sufficiently dynamic to motivate children either to see the value of religion in their lives or to want to live the religious life (i.e. the agapeistic life). Clearly the relevance criterion is a vital one which must be thought through if state school education in religion is to be meaningful either to the life of the school as a community or to the lives of its individual members both in school and outside in the secular world. Part of the answer to this problem is suggested by the kind of reinterpretation of the traditional content of the religious belief and education which has formed the main part of this thesis. The other aspect which needs urgent attention is the whole quality of personal relationships in schools at secondary level. It is here that a dynamic approach is most necessary - pointing to the depth and authenticity which agape gives to personal relationships as also to its motivational significance in achieving a happy and meaningful personal life. Such an outcome is only possible through the practical exploration of self in relation to others, and a vital and challenging aid to this process which it

(1) This relationship is fully discussed in my article "Love and Morality" p. 131 f. in Appendix 3.

(2) See my comments in this respect supra p. 151 footnote 1, and cf. the new Sheffield Diocesan Syllabus: A Handbook of Religious Education for Secondary Schools (1974).

(3) See J. supra pp. 125-6.

will be argued is basically linked with the operational effectiveness of agapeism, is the technique of group dynamics. The value and function of this technique as it relates both to the educational work of the church and to secondary school education in religion, is considered in detail in Section IV of this present chapter<sup>(1)</sup>.

### III.

Having made recommendations as to the ways in which the content of state school education in religion must necessarily be re-examined to satisfy the needs of pupils in meeting the challenge of secularity and relevance presented by modern society, it is now time to look at the Church's educative function from a similar standpoint. Certainly the newer revisions of the Diocesan Syllabuses of Religious Education, examples of which were considered and set out in the preceding chapter<sup>(2)</sup>, show an equally commendable approach at Primary level to the cultivation of a loving, caring attitude towards one another as do the Agreed Syllabuses. This is particularly true of the Guildford Syllabus which has been outlined in detail earlier<sup>(3)</sup> and which has been adopted by other Dioceses. The Lincoln Diocesan Syllabus is also impressive in the degree of attention which it gives to exploration of self in relation to others<sup>(4)</sup>. When the syllabuses are examined in conjunction with the arguments of the Carlisle Report for the retention of church schools<sup>(5)</sup>, there emerges a convincing picture at the primary stage of the relationship of the schools to their

(1) V. infra pp. 228 ff.

(2) V. supra pp. 194 ff.

(3) V. supra pp. 199-201.

(4) See my comments in this respect supra p. 198 footnote 1, and cf. the new Sheffield Diocesan Syllabus: A Handbook of Suggestions for Church Schools (1974).

(5) V. supra pp. 195-6 .

respective churches which should ideally result in the sort of harmonisation of teaching and practice which is necessary to reinforce the basic Christian attitudes to life which are in fact the reason for the existence of such schools. It can be assumed also for the most part, that children attend the church schools as a result of parental choice, and thus have motivation at home to cultivate Christian attitudes and a Christian life-style (though there will of course be exceptions to this generalisation). As with the Primary Agreed Syllabuses then, there is little to quarrel with educationally in the approach of the Diocesan Syllabuses - they are rooted in sound educational principles regarding the way children learn, and are able at the primary stage to begin the process of conceptualisation in religion based upon appropriate ideas and interpersonal relations.

Unfortunately, and despite extensive enquiries, it has proved impossible to obtain any indication of the content of Diocesan Syllabuses of Religious Education at secondary level. The absence of such material is partly accounted for by that fact that, as was stated earlier<sup>(1)</sup>, the number of secondary voluntary schools in England and Wales totals only about 200 whereas there are 6,000 voluntary <sup>primary</sup> schools. What little information there is seems to suggest that dioceses with secondary schools are following the recommendations of the Agreed Syllabuses at this level. The only other indication of the position comes from the Diocese of Lincoln which in its primary syllabus states that it is proposed to issue separate sections for use in the Secondary or High School at a later stage. There would appear to be a serious gap in continuity here between the primary and secondary stages of the voluntary schools, which cannot help pupils

(1) V. supra p. 193.

to acquire a coherent school education in religion in so far as the link between cognitive and experiential aspects of church-orientated education is concerned.

Looking at the Youth work of the Church, it is difficult to imagine any way forward at the present time which does not envisage the Church's resources and manpower in this field thrown open to the wider community. This was one of the main recommendations of the Youth Service Development Council's Report (1969) which was considered in detail earlier<sup>(1)</sup>, and it is based upon contemporary theological notions of "man come of age" and of man's increasing responsibility for identifying his own needs and seeking the means to meet them in community. Such an approach is completely in harmony with the central premises of this thesis, but it requires considerable implementation at the present time as much of the Church's youth work is still confined to local parish organisation and to church members only. It is true that opening up facilities to non-church members presents the Church with considerable problems related to manpower and finance. Nevertheless funds are available from outside sources such as the local education authorities, and church members need to be educated in attitudes which see such "open" organisation as the means of showing Christian love and concern for others regardless of their religious belief or affiliation<sup>(2)</sup>. Indeed it is in these areas that the Church has most to gain from the abandonment of exclusive attitudes and the creation of welcoming and caring Christlike service to others in community<sup>(3)</sup>. The educative function of the Diocesan Youth Officer

(1) V. supra pp. 202 ff.

(2) I have myself been responsible for the running of an "open" youth club within a parish which had these same objectives.

(3) This emphasis is a principle feature of the chapter on The Church - supra pp. 54 ff.

will be crucial in such a process, not only in that he will provide the basic "know-how" of organisation and procedure, but in that he will need to ensure that the full significance of such work is understood by church members as being Christ's work for the neighbour. Then too clergy and people alike must be made aware of the problems and needs of young people in their area, and need to be encouraged to seek out ways in which these needs can be met. All too often there are "generation" (or other) gaps in church life between parents and children and young people and adults. The Diocesan Youth Officer in Sheffield Diocese emphasises the vital nature of bridging such gaps which in his opinion, not only hinder the development of community because people and groups are at cross purposes, but which may be directly harmful to the Christian image of goodwill and neighbourliness. Hence he believes that it is useless to train young people for adult membership or confirmation in the Church if the local congregation is "cold, unfriendly and sometimes hostile", and that perhaps a starting point would be education of adult members of the Church in what it means to be a Christian fellowship<sup>(1)</sup>. Again the furtherance of those attitudes of Christian agape espoused here are most likely to be achieved as a result of the sort of depth discussion and exploration of the problems and situations presented in individual parish circumstances in a climate of authentic and dynamic relationships such as those described in Section IV which follows. This same technique is also relevant to the interest which is expressed in the

(1) This view is taken from a questionnaire response - showing the Diocesan Youth Officer's own emphasis. This is one way of "bridging the gaps". Other ways which he employs are those of residential interdenominational week ends for discussion and fellowship, folk festivals for people of all ages, and special holidays abroad for the 16-30 age group which he considers is a group largely ignored by the Churches as they fall between youth groups on the one hand and adult fellowships on the other.

General Synod Board of Education's Report for 1973<sup>(1)</sup> in the communal meeting together of young people which has become a feature of contemporary life in different parts of the world. This includes the commune movements both religious and secular, as well as the more transient community activities such as folk and pop festivals. Clearly the attempt to clarify the motivation behind such group activity, and to analyse its significance in the life and thought of individual young people, will be of considerable value to those whose work brings them into contact with youth in the contemporary situation so that satisfactory relationships and organisation within that situation may be achieved. Interpersonal analysis in groups will obviously be an important part of this process.

The remaining area of the Church's future educative work which demands comment, is of course that of Adult, Further and Higher Education. The quotation from the General Synod's pamphlet Education and Training (1972) which was mentioned earlier<sup>(2)</sup>, reiterates the fact that in the present climate of rapid change churchpeople are suffering from a double crisis of belief and loyalty which has led to the doubts and uncertainties regarding faith and practice which are evident in the Churches at the present time. The very comprehensive list of situations and issues which are considered important for adequate future training of lay men and women in the Church, can only be given relevance in the context of the theological and moral reinterpretations which have been put forward in Sections A and B of this thesis. Accordingly it is essential that parish study groups are formed (with careful attention to the widely varied theological outlooks and positions held by clergy and people, and also the differing

(1) See Appendix 10 pp. xx ff.

(2) V. supra p. 207.



individual intellectual and social background of church members) which will be able to make inroads into these problems in a way which will reinforce attitudes of Christian concern and social relevance. What is of crucial importance here is that an honest and authentic attempt is made to explore these areas, an attempt which is not based upon the objective of somehow persuading people that traditional theological and religious approaches are still absolute guides to contemporary faith and practice. Above all, as the Sheffield Diocesan Adult Education Officer remarks<sup>(1)</sup>, it is necessary to motivate the vast majority of adult church members to move into such areas of discussion and reinterpretation and this is a difficult task. It would seem that in order to achieve results here, a dynamic approach in which people can truthfully explore their doubts, uncertainties and indeed their positive attitudes and feelings in a religious context, is essential. Again, therefore, the group dynamic technique which is outlined in Section IV which follows, is a vital means to achieving real and authentic relationships and a significant outcome. If such a climate of discussion and relationships are in fact proved possible, both within local parish structures and in meetings which cross traditional boundaries, then this will surely strengthen and extend the Christian witness of individual Church members both inside and outside local parish boundaries in a way which will render their lives in the secular world much more religiously meaningful and which will at the same time contribute to a proper contemporary theology of Incarnation - of Christ incognito - in whatever situation they find themselves. Such a position will certainly be achieved by the development of "ecumenical cadres of

(1) In a questionnaire response on the problems which face Diocesan Adult Education Officers in their work.



people, both clergy and laity, who can stimulate theological thinking in secular settings" as the Synod pamphlet states<sup>(1)</sup>. A first stage in this sort of development must necessarily be the training of individual clergy and lay people in dynamic relationships on the one hand and in techniques of theological exploration on the other. It is highly significant that the General Synod Board of Education's course list for 1974<sup>(2)</sup> reveals a considerable emphasis on small and large group working, interpersonal techniques and other group "creativity" approaches. Similar approaches have for some time formed part of the Grubb Institute management courses which have been offered to those people specially concerned with Diocesan and parish organisation<sup>(3)</sup>. They are also an inherent part of workshops which are being set up at Diocesan level for the benefit of individual clergy participation<sup>(4)</sup>. That this is seen as the way ahead in Adult education is clearly indicated in the Annual Report of the Board of Education (1973) which has been referred to in this same context of group dynamics and human relationships in Appendix 10 Section C pp. xxiii.

#### IV.

The penultimate section of this chapter will then be concerned with exploring the nature of group dynamic technique and its significance for education in religion in all those aspects which have been categorised and examined previously, namely, state and church school

(1) V. supra p. 210.

(2) Appended to this thesis.

(3) See for instance the Institute's course list "Advanced Study of group behaviour within institutions - A working conference for the churches" (September 1971 et al).

(4) e.g. in the Diocese of Derby for example.

practice and the varied areas of church and parish Diocesan education. First of all it is necessary to set the group dynamic technique within its overall context in the field of psychology, and to give a brief descriptive account of its origin and development. The most common descriptive term given to the whole field is that of the human potential movement - a movement which had its origins in the United States of America. It is an approach which is firmly rooted in the broader area of what has come to be known as "humanistic psychology"<sup>(1)</sup>. Its adherents see it as a third force in psychology in contrast to the psychological approaches of mechanistic behaviourism and deterministic psychoanalysis. Its purpose is to disclose man as a human being rather than as an organism or machine - indeed, it is a psychology that aims to enrich man's experience and enlarge his ability for personal freedom and autonomy. There is little doubt that the movement both in the United States and in England, has had its roots in the dissatisfaction which people have felt towards traditional societal and organisational structures which have been seen as repressing the individual and swallowing him up in bureaucratic procedures and traditional social structures and expectations. It is important to note here that reasons such as these are often given for the dissatisfaction which its members feel towards the Church, as an organisation exercising

(1) A selection of standard works in the field is:-

Allport G.W.	<u>Becoming: Basic considerations for a Psychology of Personality.</u>
Bugental J. (Ed)	<u>Challenges of Humanistic Psychology.</u>
Buhler C. & Allen M.	<u>Introduction into Humanistic Psychology.</u>
Hausachek D.E. (Ed)	<u>The Self in Growth, Teaching and Learning.</u>
Maslow A.	<u>Towards a Psychology of Being.</u>
Severin F. (Ed)	<u>Humanistic Viewpoints in Psychology.</u>

these same restrictive approaches. The new humanistic emphasis is in fact a reiteration of the importance of people and individuals in modern society, and it has profound significance both for the way societal groups organise themselves and for the education of the members of such groups<sup>(1)</sup>.

One of the most important approaches to the development of the individual in the human potential movement is that of self-awareness. Hence humanistic psychologists are extremely critical of conventional psychologies, considering them both naive and an over-simplification of the human personality. Professor Sidney Jourard, at a recent meeting of the International Conference of Humanistic Psychologists in Paris, stated that in traditional psychology:-

"There is no support for a psychology which will enrich man's experience and enlarge his ability for personal freedom. Through growth (people changing themselves when their self proves inappropriate), humanistic psychology seeks to give people their own courage, imagination and strength when circumstances in life encourage them to believe that they don't have any of these things"<sup>(2)</sup>.

Jourard's statement indicates quite clearly the method by which people are able to find the enrichment of experience and personal freedom spoken of - namely, through growth. However most people are aware that the problems of personality which confront them, and the limitations which they find in themselves of expression, action and personal freedom, cannot just be wished away. The familiar Pauline verse in Romans spotlights another aspect of the problem:-

- (1) I do not want to pursue the sociological analysis and significance of groups in society here. The fact that people belong to widely varied groups and are continually involved in group structures, pressures and attitudes, is self-evident. Such texts as W.H.J. Sprott's Human Groups provide a simple introduction to this area.
- (2) In Bob Doe's article "Humanistic Psychology: a Third Force". In The Times Educational Supplement 21st September, 1973 p.11.

"For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise" (7.19).

If people are to grow rather than mark time in states of being which they find profoundly dissatisfying, then they must take steps to become aware of themselves, of their behaviour patterns, of the way in which others regard them etc., and then they must find the will to change.

Hence there has grown up in America in some strength, and latterly in embryo in England, a means of effecting the self-analysis and bringing about the process of growth mentioned above. This means is the Encounter Group or Sensitivity Group<sup>(1)</sup>. The most eminent psychologist and practitioner of group analysis in the United States is Dr. Carl Rogers. He describes the Encounter Group as:-

".... relatively, unstructured, providing a climate of maximum freedom for personal expression, exploration of feelings, and interpersonal communication. Emphasis is upon the interactions among the group members, in an atmosphere which encourages each to drop his defences and facades and thus enables the person to recognise and change self-defeating attitudes, test out and adopt more innovative and constructive behaviours, and subsequently to relate more adequately to others in his everyday life"<sup>(2)</sup>.

- (1) It should be pointed out that such groups are also used for specific psychological and medical therapeutic purposes, e.g. with drug addicts (cf. The Synanons in U.S.A.) and other deviant groups.
- (2) From the data sheet of the La Jolla Program, San Diego, California where Dr. Rogers is a Director and which specialises in group technique training for clergy, counsellors and the helping professions generally.

A very much simplified<sup>(1)</sup> pattern of what happens in a group is that an individual member slowly grows to trust his fellow members, is helped by them to analyse and understand his own projected images and relationships with others, can then move progressively to a position of complete honesty with himself and the group, and finally finds himself able to take "risks" of behaviour, expression and admission of character, attitude or guilt<sup>(2)</sup> which lead to the testing out of and possible adoption of more innovative and constructive behaviours, with the resultant more effective and satisfying relationships of which Dr. Rogers speaks. It is clear that these techniques have considerable significance for general educational practice. Much research has already been carried out in Californian schools over the past five years or so, which has the essence of the approaches mentioned above as its guiding principle<sup>(3)</sup>. The specific relevance of humanistic psychology and human potential notions to the development of good human relations in any educational context cannot be emphasised too strongly, particularly at a time when educational institutions are becoming bigger and bigger<sup>(4)</sup> and the needs of the individual members of such institutions are becoming secondary to

- (1) A more detailed account may be found in Dr. Roger's book Encounter Groups, now in a Penguin edition. See also Appendix 11 for an extensive bibliography and list of tapes on encounter group technique.
- (2) This may be compared with the confessional situation where the penitent accepts his own responsibility and faults.
- (3) V. George Isaac Brown's book Human Teaching for Human Learning, an account of the first few years of the Ford Esalen research programme in confluent education, which is being undertaken at University of California, Santa Barbara under Brown's direction.
- (4) It is worth noting that the great size and resultant impersonality of large educational institutions played an important part in the student unrest of the late 60's in U.S.A. V. J. Searle's The Campus War passim.



organisational and administrative concerns<sup>(1)</sup>. However, it is the application of group encounter techniques to education in religion which is the special concern of this section, and this will now be explored with reference also to the training of individuals to direct and apply such techniques in this context.

The key premises of this thesis have been the presentation of agape and the agapeistic life as the source of belief in God (indeed the source of God) and as the foundation principle of morality<sup>(2)</sup>. In the light of these premises fundamental areas of traditional belief have been re-examined with the object of providing theological and philosophical restatements which are intellectually viable and consonant with a contemporary faith<sup>(3)</sup>. Finally, in this last section, the present position of education in religion in state schools and in the varied educational work of the Churches has been analysed in terms of the emphasis which is given to the nature, significance and necessity of understanding and cultivating agape as a life-style, thereby providing the means of achieving dynamic human relationships and that concern and love for the neighbour which is the essence of Christian religious commitment. The argument now about to be advocated at this point is that the opportunity for the analysis of self in relation to others provided by group encounter techniques, is a new and vitally relevant means whereby an individual is able to move into a positive operational agapeistic life-style. Confessing Christians are particularly vulnerable to the charge that they do not

(1) We might note the misgivings that are being expressed about large comprehensive schools, and large organisations about to be created in higher education reorganisation.

(2) V. supra Chapters 1-2 passim.

(3) V. supra Chapters 3-8.

practise what they preach or confess. Of course it would be an impossible task to categorise all the different situations, attitudes or circumstances which might give rise to such a charge. However, it is possible to highlight what is a common experience in the lives of many people whether they are Christians or not, namely, a tendency to withdraw or not to reveal themselves to others in any sort of depth in human relationships. It is this insularity, particularly of individuals within the Christian Churches themselves and in their secular relationships outside also, that is so damaging to the Christian image. For no matter what explanations are made for unChristian behaviour and attitudes in particular circumstances, the New Testament presents committed Christians not only with the exemplary life of Christ as a paradigm for their own lives, but with a love command which must be observed in respect of the neighbour. The problem then becomes in spiritual terms, how to overcome the barriers of self-interest and self-concern which hamper and restrict the exercise of love of one's neighbour, and in psychological terms, how to achieve authentic and depth relationships with others which will lead to the individual's self-fulfilment in community. The encounter group technique provides one answer to these questions in that it presents an opportunity for individual members of the group to explore their own attitudes, feelings, impressions etc. in relation to others in a situation of encounter as the name suggests. Thus by this means, a person comes to know what sort of a person he is, what positive as well as negative qualities are revealed to other members of the group, what he can do to remedy the position, above all how other people react to the risks which he learns to take in relationships. The outcome of such experience is growth in self-knowledge, together with a practically acquired awareness of a wide variety of human reactions



and some account of the factors which cause them. What is more, it is the common experience of groups which meet in encounter situations such as those described, that a warm and loving concern for each other is built up as the group sessions proceed, and that this is an experience which is repeated and confirmed over and over again.

When the significance of the encounter group technique is examined in relationship to education in religion, it becomes immediately obvious that it will be important to have leaders/directors/teachers trained in the technique itself. Facilities for such training will be explored later. The overall value of the technique can only be expressed here in terms of its general application in an educational context<sup>(1)</sup>, as the field itself is such a burgeoning one that it would demand a thesis in its own right to provide a detailed educational analysis. From the infant school onwards, with varying degrees of effectiveness and significance, the relationship, integrity and authenticity of the teacher will vitally affect the quality of what is learned by pupils. In many aspects of life, people conceal their real selves behind masks and official roles - this is especially true of schools and colleges. Group encounter techniques teach people to respect others as persons, to be sensitive (hence the alternative description of such groups as "sensitivity groups") to the attitudes, feelings and opinions of others, to try and account for these rather than reacting to them in a purely subjective way, and of course in addition, to be sensitive to the nature and source of one's own reactions! All these considerations in the area of relationships will

(1) Specific and detailed treatment of the relevance of the techniques described in this section for the promotion of human relationships in all aspects of school and college life, are to be found in the texts listed in Appendix 12 published under the aegis of the Center for Study of the Person, La Jolla, California.

affect what is taught and how it is taught, and in the sphere of religious teaching it will be a vital criterion for success or failure. Hence it is hoped that children, pupils and students of all ages would be encouraged to cultivate and practise in their own lives that same authenticity of self in relationship to others<sup>(1)</sup> that they have experienced with their teachers. This what is meant by speaking earlier of the operational rather than the theoretical significance of agape in action. Alongside this open relationship would go at appropriate cognitive level, the free discussion and exploration of religious concepts and of children's and students' problems in this connection<sup>(2)</sup>, the whole approach leading up to an ideally autonomous outlook which would give reality to the notion of a person "educated in religion" in the present age, and at the same time able to practise one of its universal tenets, love for one's neighbour. Such a process is the means of acquiring what has been referred to constantly in this thesis as an agapeistic life-style.

It follows then, that as all educative work involves interpersonal relationships, the same sensitivity to people as persons in their own right, and a corresponding ability to cultivate and extend personal contacts in widely varied individual and group situations, will be necessary qualities of all those involved in the Church's educational activity. There is a strong element of thought these days which demands honest and authentic responses, both in relationships

- (1) In American analysis this is described as being a "self-authenticating" person.
- (2) One of the very few accounts of such an approach which has actually been tried in English schools, is to be found in A.J. Grainger's book The Bullring: a classroom experiment in Moral Education, an account of the author's group dynamic practice in a Leicestershire High School.

and in attitudes towards and exploration of contemporary problems, difficulties and spiritual concerns, from the leaders of Church activity. As has already been noted<sup>(1)</sup>, it is crucial to mature Christian growth in today's society, that Church members should be able to discuss and articulate their faith in an atmosphere of open exploration, and that they should find such an approach reciprocated by those from whom they are seeking help and support. It is here that a dynamic relationship is of most consequence and it is with this aim in mind that the kind of group dynamic/encounter training outlined above, is recommended for all clergy, lay leaders and Diocesan staff. It is particularly necessary for parish clergy as it is on the parish priest that the greatest weight of sustaining supportive and encouraging relationships in faith and practice depend. That the importance of this technique is already being recognised, is indicated by the fact that organisations such as the Grubb Institute<sup>(2)</sup> have been providing courses for Church personnel for a number of years using group dynamic techniques, albeit primarily related to management. However, as has already been noted<sup>(3)</sup>, recent innovations in clergy training in the Diocese of Derby for example, include two-week group encounter sessions for selected clergy at the Diocesan Retreat House, and the General Synod Board of Education's list of training courses include practical experience of working in small and large groups, of inter-group behaviour, staff development (based on group

- (1) V. supra p. 227.
- (2) Mentioned supra p. 228 footnote 3.
- (3) V. loc.cit and the Derby Diocesan Council of Education list Training Events 1974.

techniques), and exploration of family life with a view to the formation of alternative communities<sup>(1)</sup>.

It can be seen then, that considerable emphasis is being placed on analysis in groups and group dynamic/encounter techniques at the present time. A passage from the data sheet of one of the first Dept. of Education and Science courses<sup>(2)</sup> to be organised in this area (significantly for those involved with religious education or pastoral care in schools and Colleges of Education) epitomises the nature and value of such an approach viz:-

"The course aims to provide opportunities for learning more about the inter-personal and inter-group relations which exist in educational groups and institutions. The learning is offered not by lectures, but by experiencing. It is thought to be of particular use to those engaged in religious education and in pastoral care, since both of these involve teachers and pupils in an interchange where issues of personal authority and leadership cannot be handled in terms of book knowledge, status, or qualifications. The 'subject matter' is often the elusive one of feelings, attitudes, values, beliefs and fantasies, which, though individually held, are subject to the pressures of groups and institutions.

This course will give members the opportunity to increase their knowledge about behaviour in groups and institutions by direct experience of small groups, large groups, and inter-group situations. Application groups will relate the learning to the work settings of the members.

- (1) V. the 1974 Programme appended.
- (2) Other independent sources of similar training are the Richmond Fellowship, The Institute of Group Analysis and the Tavistock Institute - all based in London. The D.E.S. course referred to was held at Bangor, N. Wales at Easter 1974.

The programme and method has been well-tried with religious educators in several educational and Church settings in this country, in Ireland and in the United States"<sup>(1)</sup>.

This mention of the United States leads to the further possibility of individuals attending training courses in encounter or sensitivity techniques based in that country at two particularly well-known centres in California - the Esalen Institute at Big Sur, and the Center for Study of the Person at La Jolla. The former is vividly described in a chapter entitled "Naked Revival: Theology and the Human Potential Movement" in Harvey Cox's recent book The Seduction of the Spirit (pp. 197 ff), in which Cox, a member of Faculty of the Harvard Divinity School, gives an account<sup>(2)</sup> of his own participation in encounter sessions at what is perhaps the best known of such institutions in the U.S.A. The Center for Study of the Person at La Jolla is a similar, though more academically orientated institution, which has Dr. Carl Rogers as one of its resident fellows, and its training programme known as the La Jolla Programme<sup>(3)</sup>, is described in a chapter by that name in Rogers' book Encounter Groups<sup>(4)</sup> which was referred to earlier<sup>(5)</sup>.

- (1) One of the most specific texts which deals with the significance and application of group technique to religious growth is Kemp C.G. Small Groups and Self-Renewal (New York: Seabury Press 1971). I have given examples of the kind of material available for group use in U.S.A. in Appendix 13.
- (2) Cf. my article "Human Potential" in the Magazine of the Speakers' Society Spring 1973 (Totley-Thornbridge College of Education) pp. 3 ff. which gives an account of my own visit to Esalen in the summer of 1972.
- (3) I have been a member of this training programme both as a participant (1973) and as a staff facilitator (1974). A brief description of my experiences there is to be found in my article "Life is not just words in a book but flesh and body, action and revolution" in Christian Renewal no. 12 Winter 1973 p. 12 (V. Appendix 7). A copy of the La Jolla Programme course outline, which gives details of the nature of the course and its content, can be found in Appendix 14.
- (4) Chapter 9 - "Building Facilitative Skills" pp. 151 ff.
- (5) V. supra p.232 footnote 1.



## V.

It only remains then, to summarise the theological position which has been maintained in this thesis relating to the challenges of secularity and relevance - challenges which have been shown to present considerable problems for the future of the Church and the extension of the Christian faith in contemporary society. As Heinz Zahrnt points out in his book The Question of God, the Christian proclamation in its traditional form at least, no longer provides the majority of men today with a valid answer to the questions they ask about God, and consequently fails to provide them with an adequate way of understanding their position in the world and of mastering their lives meaningfully.<sup>(1)</sup> This thesis has been an attempt to resolve this situation - on the one hand by seeking to explicate a contemporary Christian faith, and on the other hand by suggesting means by which people might be educated to understand and to practise such a faith in today's world. Sometimes it is suggested that theology, and indeed people also, tend to move towards one of two extreme positions in approaching the contemporary secular situation - either to withdraw from it completely into religious isolationism, or to become utterly absorbed by and involved in it. Such dichotomies have not been uncommon in many other aspects of man's relationship with his fellows and with his environment. In the sphere of religion the traditional dichotomies have been between God and the world, Church and State<sup>(2)</sup>, private and public morality. According to which position is taken it has been further assumed that some

(1) Op. cit. pp. 11-12.

(2) V. for instance, Zahrnt op.cit. pp. 177 ff., for an account of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms and its relationship to contemporary theological positions.

specific moral position goes with it - uncompromising moral demands by the "other-worldly", more compromising and accommodating demands by the "secularists". Such a view is of course oversimplified and as likely as not, a misrepresentation. However the important point to be made here is that the theological position taken in this thesis, albeit one which attempts to come to terms with the modern secular world and to seek a harmonisation of theological outlook and practical worldly concerns, nevertheless offers no compromise on the fundamental Christian demand for the exercise by all men of the Law of Love. Nor is the theological focus of this thesis to be found anywhere other than in the Christian religion. It has been constantly maintained *passim* that agape has specifically Christian significance in that it expresses the spiritual bond of love between man and man in Christ which is the essence of Christianity, and that it is uniquely dynamic and motivatory in the lives of committed Christians<sup>(1)</sup>. As St. Paul aptly wrote to the Thessalonians:-

"Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it"

(1. Thessalonians 5.24).

Here may be seen par excellence the difference between the Christian and the secular humanist. Thus in maintaining this fundamental Christian focus, as in advocating means by which present and future generations might be educated to live agapeistically in their respective societies, it is believed that this thesis is faithful to the claim made upon all men by Christ himself who:-

".... having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13.1b).

(1) Note particularly Chapter 2, pp. 23 & 26 and the fuller Christological exposition of the Christian dynamic in the same chapter pp. 30-33.





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c. Biblical References

John 13.1b	p. 241
Romans 7.19	p. 231
1 Thessalonians 5.24	p. 241

APPENDICES

a. Reference to the Bible

From the beginning, J. A. R. Robinson and others have used the phrase "has come of age" in place of "a world come of age". There does not seem to be any logical objection to this phrase which is assumed to carry the same meaning. Robinson is almost correct when he speaks of Hirschberger writing "we be done of 'has come of age'" (Keeping in Touch with Theology p. 43) although Hirschberger, so far as I have been able to check, only uses this latter phrase once and with the plural "men" viz:-

"The world's coming of age is then no longer possible for polemic and apologetic, but it is really better understood than it understands itself, namely, in the light of the Gospel, and in the light of Christ" (p. 110).

"I agree by saying that God is being increasingly edged out of the world, not that it has come of age" (p. 116).

See also pp. 115, 117 and 121.

b. Reference by other writers.

From the beginning, J. A. R. Robinson and others have used the phrase "has come of age" in place of "a world come of age". There does not seem to be any logical objection to this phrase which is assumed to carry the same meaning. Robinson is almost correct when he speaks of Hirschberger writing "we be done of 'has come of age'" (Keeping in Touch with Theology p. 43) although Hirschberger, so far as I have been able to check, only uses this latter phrase once and with the plural "men" viz:-

APPENDIX 1

THE INTERPRETATION OF BONHOEFFER'S PHRASES "A WORLD COME  
OF AGE" and "MEN HAVE COME OF AGE".

a. Text References.

These are spread over some twenty pages of Letters and Papers from Prison e.g.:-

"The attack by Christian apologetic upon the adulthood of the world I consider to be in the first place pointless, in the second place ignoble, and in the third unchristian" (p. 108).

"The world's coming of age is then no longer occasion for polemics and apologetics, but it is really better understood than it understands itself, namely on the basis of the Gospel, and in the light of Christ" (p. 110).

"I began by saying that God is being increasingly edged out of the world, not that it has come of age" (p. 114).

v. also pps. 115, 122 and 124.

b. Rephrasing by other writers.

From the beginning, J. A. T. Robinson and others have used the phrase "man come of age" in place of "a world come of age". There does not seem to be any logical objection to this phrase which is assumed to carry the same meaning. Robinson is almost correct when he speaks of Bonhoeffer writing "as he does of 'man come of age'" (Keeping in Touch with Theology p. 4) although Bonhoeffer, so far as I have been able to check, only uses this latter phrase once and with the plural "men" viz:-

"..... we should frankly recognise that the world and men have come of age" (op. cit. p. 118).

c. Meaning and Significance

I think that Bonhoeffer's own exposition (op. cit. pp. 114 - 115) of the way in which the world has come of age is clear enough. He summarises it thus:-

"To this extent we may say that the process which we have described by which the world came of age, was an abandonment of a false conception of God, and a clearing of the decks for the God of the Bible who conquers power and space in the world by his weakness" (p. 122).

It is important to realise that Bonhoeffer was by no means suggesting that a world come of age was either a world that had arrived or a world that was saved or fulfilled (v. David Jenkins in his chapter "Man, alienated and of age" in Kemp E. W. (Ed) Man, Fallen and Free p. 176). For, as Robinson writes:-

"The phrase is perhaps unfortunate in so far as it suggests an emotional or moral maturity, which Bonhoeffer never implied (least of all his captors!). 'When we speak of God in a non-religious way' he said, 'we must not gloss over the ungodliness of the world, but expose it in a new light. Now that it has come of age, the world is more godless, and perhaps it is for that reason nearer to God than ever before' (op. cit. p. 167). For the educated minority, this 'coming of age' does indeed imply an intellectual maturity, but in most merely a psychological state of development in which religion and its attempt to keep man in strings is dismissed as childish. But it is none the less real for that" (Honest to God p. 104 footnote).

It is worth noting that later, Robinson protests that the phrase

"man's coming of age" has been endlessly misunderstood, despite the above footnote in Honest to God. He continues:-

"I should be perfectly prepared to accept in its place the notion that man has reached adolescence" (The Honest to God Debate p. 270 footnote).

My own reading of Bonhoeffer suggests that he would have approved of Robinson's apt rephrasing here.

It seems then, that although the present is a time of humanism in which men, women and children are now valued more highly for themselves (v. David Edwards in his chapter "Religion and the World's Coming of Age" - Religion and Change p. 25), neither Bonhoeffer nor any other contemporary writer would wish to suggest that the notion of man's coming of age refers to anything other than the beginning and promise of man's possible achievement, rather than its ultimate fulfilment. Contemporary events between individuals and nations leave us in little doubt that in none of the fundamental aspects of man's being or activity - his intellect, morality, religion, autonomy etc. and resultant culture, technology etc. - could there be said to be any sort of ultimate fruition. Furthermore it is important to remember that although we tend these days to speak globally about "man", there are widely divergent levels of development in its broadest sense, between different national and cultural groups. Thus, speaking of the sense in which man is at the door of human progress, David Edwards writes:-

"New powers stir; they can lead either to fantastic progress or to utter catastrophe. That is the thrill, and when things go wrong that is the poignancy. 'Coming of age' is the beginning of battle, not the consummation of victory; it is promise, not perfection. The power



is there; if disaster comes, it will be because the power was not used in a sufficiently intelligent plan. The great transition into modernity comes through the loss of that sense of intellectual and physical powerlessness which in the past accompanied man's dependence on God or the gods. Now that man is powerfully - and perhaps tragically - mature, there is no going back to any Paradise which existed before man defied the divine prohibition and ate the fruit of knowledge" (op. cit. p. 26).

Here again is a reinforcement of the specific way in which the phrase "man's coming of age" has been given essentially religious connotation in terms of his freedom from what were restricting notions of God/man relationships as exemplified for instance in the Genesis myth to which Edwards here refers.

It remains to add that whilst this is no place to speculate upon what man's coming of age might mean in ultimate terms, I find Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the "Omega Point" extremely interesting, namely, that divine centre of convergence which embraces autonomy, actuality, irreversibility and finally transcendence (v. The Phenomenon of Man and The Future of Man passim).

APPENDIX 2

ARTICLE OUTLINING THE CONTENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF MY M.ED.  
THESIS (1971) ON MORALITY AND MORAL EDUCATION.

*Journal of Moral Education* Vol 1 No 2, pp 103-107  
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DONALD ANDERS-RICHARDS

### Moral and Religious Education

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For one who is about to propound an existential approach to morality, it may seem paradoxical to begin considerations in this area with a criticism of people who take no account of the past! Nevertheless, it is a criticism which stands, for far too many educationists and philosophers when they come to discuss moral and religious education, take the present situation in schools and present-day attitudes as their jumping-off ground, with little or no thought for the attitudes and approaches toward these two areas which characterized the aims and aspirations of educationists and legislators of nearly 30 years ago. It is not that one wishes to *evaluate* such attitudes and approaches after the event so to speak, but rather to elucidate the causal factors which have contributed to the present situation, so as to be able to state how and why present circumstances call for a change of the status quo, if change there must be.

#### The Post-War Years

Having this requirement in mind, the present writer began his research<sup>1</sup> with an examination of the feelings and attitudes toward the future, and especially toward the future education of the young, which found expression in the Education Act of 1944. Of many such expressions, the words of the Earl of Selborne, moving the passage of the Bill in the House of Lords, were typical. It was the beginning of a pilgrimage, which, he said, would lead to

... an England which avows as never before the principles of liberty, justice, toleration and discipline on which this realm depends and which themselves are founded on the teaching of the Church of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The connection assumed here between the moral virtues enumerated and Christianity should be noticed, and it is met continually in other official speeches and documents of the period. Further clear evidence of the way in which moral education was seen to be logically dependent upon religious instruction, is seen in the

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various Agreed Syllabuses of the period. Yet another interesting and detailed example of this same attitude is found in Spencer Leeson's Bampton Lectures for 1944 entitled *Christian Education* (Longmans, 1947).

It comes as something of a shock therefore, to find that as early as 1953, the King George's Jubilee Trust was setting up no less than four separate committees, staffed by people of considerable educational eminence, to investigate the causes of 'shortcomings in the educational system, juvenile delinquency, and the lamentable apathy and lack of purpose in life'<sup>3</sup> of many boys and girls. Detailed discussion of the Trust's findings is not possible here, but the findings themselves were alarmingly clear. For quite apart from the physical defects of the system — overcrowded classes, too few teachers, obsolescent schools, and so on — the Trust report observed:

A. That there was considerable unease about the discipline and character training in schools, as a result of the conduct of some children. The schools were considered to be the chief means of inculcating right attitudes in children.

B. Negative moral situations such as irresponsible behaviour, idleness and delinquency in young people, were seen to reflect the condition and attitudes of society as a whole.

C. These problems were directly traced to a decline in religious belief and observance and the weakening of the authority of the Churches. Reaffirmation of moral standards based on the Christian way of life was held to be an essential corrective to this state of affairs.

D. Parents did not, either by example, or teaching, help their children to assimilate moral principles which would lead to right conduct.

Whilst the Trust thus reiterated the same basic faith of people of the early 1940's in religion (Christianity of course) as a means of rectifying this sad state of affairs, other assessors were beginning to stress the need for new approaches to moral education which recognized the increasingly 'secular' nature of society. The inevitable conclusion by 1960, could only be that the nation and the nation's schools had failed to implant in children those high ideals of personal morality, and conduct firmly rooted in Christian belief and action, which was the hope and aspiration of the legislators of the 1944 Act. This failure can be ascribed to two primary factors which militated against the success of 'education for citizenship' as the child's moral and social training was frequently entitled during this period. They were:

1. The fact that personal morality was wholly viewed as having its frame of reference in the Christian ethic, and thus its support and foundation in the Christian Churches. When, at a suitably mature level, reference was made back to the latter by individuals, they were found unable to reinforce the attitudes toward morality and religion which had been engendered in the schools, because they themselves had failed to keep pace with the developing society and its problems. Young adults looked for relevance and conviction in the Christian churches and appeared to find neither.

2. The general mass of society, as represented by parents, had no frame of reference at all for its morality or conduct. This was the result either of the casting off or the complete loss of the Christian ethic. Thus they were unable to offer any reasoned explanation of it to their children, or to exercise any authority which was respected by the latter, in the matter of its observance.

The New Theology and the New Morality of the 1960's

In 1963 John Robinson's book *Honest to God* burst upon the theological scene, and it is fair to say that things have not been the same since. Again, readers must be referred to the present writer's full thesis for a detailed examination of the theological background and significance of the writings of Bultmann, Tillich, Bonhoeffer *et al* to which Robinson is indebted, as well as to the treatment of Robinson's own work. What is vitally important is the re-interpretation which Robinson presents, of traditional Christian theism, and his central concept of 'God' as 'ultimate reality', 'ultimate concern', or 'ground of being' leading on to the premise that theological statements are not descriptions of 'God' but:

... analyses of the depths of personal relationships, of *all* experiences interpreted by love. (*Honest to God*, p 49.)

Further, love, having 'God' as its source and ground, is ultimately revealed in Christ, the 'man for others'. Christians therefore recognize:

... as the ultimate ground of our being which is thus encountered, and as the basis of every living relationship and every decision, the unconditional love of Christ . . . Life in Christ Jesus, in the new being, in the Spirit, means having no absolutes but his love, being totally uncommitted in every other respect, but totally committed in this. (*ibid*, p 114.)

This absolute is for Christian and non-Christian alike, at once in stemming from the personal ground of our being, removing any suggestion of external direction; and in allowing the situation itself, subject only to the law of love to be the key, removing any element of prescriptivity or command. A person committed to such a way of life as this is said to be living 'agapeistically' and to practise a situation-ethic.

The Contemporary Educational Significance of Agapeism and Situation-Ethics  
If then, the moral life is conceived of as being 'committed to live agapeistically', it follows that a moral decision or act or judgment, quite simply involves the exercise of agape in any or every situation. Thus the moral agent does not need to ask himself 'Is this a moral situation?' or 'What characterises morality?' or even (to a certain degree) 'Why should I be moral?' All morality and manifestations of morality are subsumed by the single universalisable and prescriptive precept of St Augustine, 'Love and then what you will, do'. That there is something to be said for emphasizing the fact that morality is not solely a matter of making decisions has recently been argued at length by E. Pincoffs.<sup>4</sup> Agapeism and situation ethics takes this fact into account, for the agapeistic life is ideally a life-style which is wholly governed by the exercise of altruistic neighbour-love, rather than by its relevance as a moral principle to specifically identifiable 'moral situations' only.

Readers will have noticed the use of the term 'ideally' here. This usage carries with it acceptance of the fact that one of the most difficult problems in morality is 'akrasia' or weakness of will. The condition is succinctly described in St Paul's well-known words:

The good that I would I do not, the evil that I would not, that I do. (Romans, 7, 19.)

It is at this point that the *religious* significance of agapeism becomes clear. It is the agapeistic life of Christ which is both exemplary and motivatory for those who

would adopt it. So the essence of religious education in so far as its specifically Christian element is concerned, is the life of Christ, and the relevance of that life for those who would commit themselves to it, to their person and to their own involvement in and with the contemporary world. Thus there is both a motivatory stimulus to live the moral life involved, and also a strong supportive and guarantory implication that the moral (ie agapeistic) life-style will be adopted, and that moral (ie agapeistic) actions, judgments, decisions etc will in fact be carried through to their intended conclusion.

Thus a logical identification is made between morality and religion: morality is living the agapeistic life of Christ. It follows then, that the religious education of children in school which is advocated by the author, will be centrally concerned with presenting to them *the person of Jesus Christ, his life, work and teaching*. The aim of such teaching in State schools will be the cultivation of the agapeistic attitude. This proposal will be seen to be radically reductionist if compared with the present Agreed Syllabuses of religious education, many of which are still 'theological courses', albeit in the case of certain of them showing gradual improvement in this respect.

Further, readers who are familiar with for instance, the recent work of John Wilson, William Kay, and others will have noticed at once the way in which the proposals outlined in this paper complement the view of moral education as the teaching and encouragement of certain defined *attitudes*, which is a significant aspect of these writers' approach to the subject. The agapeistic attitude commended here also envelopes and clarifies those attitudes which have become demonstrable and reportable features of peoples' everyday lives and interests (notably those of young people), and which are characterized by words such as 'loving', 'caring', 'concern for others' etc.

A short article such as this, intended as it is merely to explicate the lines of thought of a particular thesis position, will not support the weight of a detailed examination or account of the theological aspects and philosophy of religion which is involved in the view of the Person of Christ presented here. Suffice it to say that in accordance with the re-interpretations mentioned earlier, there will be no place for traditional transcendental truths and dogma in the content of the religious education which is envisaged. The whole approach may in fact be described as one of 'Christian humanism', its essential referent being the agapeistic life of the man Jesus, and the morality which it advocates being firmly centred in the exercise of Christian agape in the existential situation. In this particular context the present author feels too, that he has gone some way toward providing a situation which would allow for a religious education syllabus which, in the words of a recent DES Report, would be 'less Christian in an authoritarian sense', and which also respects the right of the individual to choose his way of life and eventually to exercise autonomy in his personal morality. For it might be assumed that if a programme of Christian religious education such as that envisaged in this paper was implemented in schools, the result might be that the response would be wide-ranging: from full commitment to live the agapeistic life of Christ (with or without further involvement in 'organized religion' outside school) at one end of the scale, to simple acquaintance with that life at the other. The important thing though, is

that whatever the response, it would be the result of the individual's freedom of choice, and the recognition of and respect for his right to autonomy of commitment on the part of his teachers.

To bring the paper to full circle, it will be helpful to compare the positions of the relationship of religious education and morality as conceived of in the 1944 Education Act with which it began, and as conceived of in the thesis to which this paper is a short introduction. These relationships can be set down in the form of a simple schema viz:

(a) The relationship of morality and religious education

1944 EDUCATION ACT

Morality is logically dependent upon religious education, ie religious education is the essentially prior source of moral education.

AUTHOR'S THESIS

Morality is logically identified with religious education, ie the agapeistic life of Christ *is* the moral life.

(b) Psychological aspects

Moral actions are related to traditional religious notions of reward and punishment in this world or the next.

Commitment to the agapeistic life of Christ is dynamically motivating in the sphere of moral action. The personal decision or choice involved in such commitment possesses inherent moral worth.

(c) Rationale of the function of moral and religious education in State schools

The dependence theory in (a) above is weak in itself and denies the possibility of morality being autonomous.

The identity theory in (a) above offers a stronger and more convincing rationale, and emphasizes the autonomous nature of morality.

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APPENDIX 3

ARTICLE REPLYING TO SPECIFIC CRITICISM OF MY M.ED. THESIS  
 POSITION REGARDING AGAPE, ITS MORAL OPERATION, AND CONTEMPORARY  
 THEOLOGY.

129

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DONALD ANDERS-RICHARDS

**Love and Morality**

In an earlier issue of this Journal (Vol 1 Number 2 — February 1972, pp 103ff), I argued for the identification of morality and religion when religion is interpreted as 'committed to live the agapeistic life'. Graeme de Graaf sums up the basic position on which this argument stands, in a succinct paragraph in Ian Ramsey's collection of papers *Christian Ethics and Contemporary Philosophy* (p 38). He writes:

In its identity-theory form the account looks exciting. As I have mentioned, it would seem to harbour an elegant little proof of God's existence. If to live agapeistically, provided only that one is committed to live agapeistically, is all that there is at the heart of Christianity, then for these Christians the question 'Does God exist?' can only mean: Is it possible to commit oneself to agapeism? Some people find that the answer is 'Yes'. What is more, they find that with the adoption of agapeism come accompanying forms of the traditional religious phenomena. For them the existence of God is proved, not simply experientially but in logic. Agapeism exists, therefore God exists.

This, in essence, is the nub of the 'Christian Humanist' position that I outlined in my article. Since its publication, and as a result of the response to my various lectures and published work in this field, I have discovered that there are three specific points which are raised fairly consistently about the theory, which it seemed worthwhile to explicate with a view to offering a more exact account of the position maintained. These three points often take the form of three queries viz:

What is agape?

How does agape work in resolving moral issues?

Is the position you have outlined really Christian?

1 *What is agape?*

Aldous Huxley, in his book *Adonis and the Alphabet and Other Essays* (p 72)

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wrote:

Of all the worn, smudged, dog-eared words in our vocabulary, 'Love' is surely the grubbiest, smelliest, slimiest. Bawled from a million pulpits, lasciviously crooned through hundreds of millions of loudspeakers, it has become an outrage to good taste and decent feeling, an obscenity which one hesitates to pronounce. And yet it has to be pronounced; for after all, Love is the last word.

In 1973 'love' is little better understood than in Huxley's day, though it is undoubtedly even more widely used. It not only forms the theme of much popular music as in Huxley's day, but it also appears continuously in the media — in drama, general entertainment or simple advertising. Its wide usage is certainly an indication of its compelling nature and interest. Yet despite all this, we are left with no clear impression as to the meaning of the word other than the emotional response that it might arouse. All the more reason then, to make an attempt to state as precisely as possible what agape-love is. In the common Greek of Jesus' time in which the New Testament books were written, three quite distinct words were used to express specific aspects of the overall concept of love. They were:

*philia* (φιλία) or friendship-love. This word denoted spontaneous, natural affection, social love, the affection of friends. Such love as this might be emotional or un-reasoning.

*eros* (έρως) or sexual love. Such love as this is essentially egocentric, seeking its object for the sake of its own satisfaction, self-fulfilment, or self-enhancement.

*agape* (άγαπη) or other-directed love. That is, a love which is outgoing and neighbour-regarding. The essential character of *agape* is that it is the product of the will or disposition and it is therefore neither unreasoned as *philia* might be, nor instinctive as is *eros*. *Agape* is in fact, an attitude of will.

Of course any analysis of this nature runs the risk of appearing arbitrary. However, it is easy to see that *agape* does, to the modern mind, cover loving relationships with friends and also sexual relationships with others. It is not the categorization which is important here, so much as the *quality* of love which is being spoken of. This may sound evaluative and even priggish, but is it not the fundamental point of our concern in human relationships today? To take simple examples — one might regard the precept 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend' as being a good example of *agape* in friendship-love, and the sexual act between two persons which results in complete self-fulfilment of both, as equally indicative of *agape* in sexual love. Contrary examples would be where a friend takes a selfish advantage over you, or where people simply use sexual relations for self-gratification. I cannot see that anyone would want to say that love comes into either of these latter activities (unless it is self-love), although the opportunity for *agape* is inherent but unfulfilled.

I would maintain therefore, that a quite precise answer can be given to the question 'What is *agape*?'. It is that quality of love which is other-directed, and which overrides the barriers of self-interest, self-concern, and self-advantage in human relationships.

## 2 How does *agape* work in resolving moral issues?<sup>1</sup>

The second problem that I have met may well stem from the first — that is, from an inadequate knowledge of what is meant by exercising agape in moral situations if one is not clear about the meaning of agape itself. Merely to tell someone to be 'loving' in a moral situation does seem to be vague to a fault. However, this is not the real situation at all, as will be shown. Another partly complementary objection, is that to tell people to do the most loving act in a moral situation imposes an intolerable burden upon them in making a decision. Furthermore, how can you be sure that your decision is the right one? I am of the opinion that this latter objection is something of a red herring, for it seems to me virtually impossible to declare with absolute certainty that one's solution to a moral problem is the *right* solution. Nevertheless, if a person has really worked on that problem, thought it out, endeavoured to foresee the future consequences of his decision etc, then this does seem to me to be a more genuinely moral decision than merely abiding by a general rule eg, 'Doing *x* is wrong and must be punished'.

As regards the operation of agape in moral situations, to imagine that each situation has to be approached entirely from scratch in terms of moral reasoning, is quite mistaken. Such a process in every case *would* be extremely burdensome. Actually this sort of view stems from an erroneous notion that in exercising agape all previous experiences of moral judgment and decision are of no account, a notion of agapeistic reasoning which is much too inflexible and rigid. It may also stem from the quite correct notion that the agapeist, in his moral reasoning, always holds that each moral situation is unique in the sense that it demands possible consideration with a view to an 'exceptional' decision being made in that particular case. It may clarify what I am getting at here, to remind readers of our use of the expression 'an exception to the rule'. The agapeist is open to such exceptions in *any* moral situation. One of the clearest attempts to analyse the operational activity of the agapeist, is to be found in Paul Ramsey's *Deeds and Rules in Christian Ethics* (pp 93ff). Ramsey classifies 'pure agapeism' (as distinct from 'mixed agapeism' which is agapeism combined with natural or rational morality, and 'non-agapeism' which is morality claimed to be the result of 'faith', 'experience of God', 'God's commands' etc) as follows:

*i.* Pure act agapeism. That is, those actions which best express love in the circumstances. The individual confronts his loving will with the facts of the situation and makes his moral decision accordingly.

*ii.* Summary rule, or modified act agapeism. Here the person concerned in the moral situation refers back to summary rules which have been shown to reflect agape in the past (eg, in the 10 commandments, professional codes of conduct etc).

*iii.* Pure rule agapeism. That is, the question asked is which rules best or most fully embody agape.

*iv.* Combinations of any or all of the positions outlined in *i-iii* above. It is interesting that Ramsey considers that J. A. T. Robinson's<sup>2</sup> ultimate ethical position is a combination of all three, and in this connection he states (op cit pp 95-6):

It would seem in fact, that if a Christian ethicist is going to be a Pure Agapeist (sic), he would find this fourth possibility to be the most fruitful one, and most in accord with the freedom of agape both to act through the finest principles and to act if need be without them.



So then a person faced with a moral problem and wishing to solve that problem agapeistically, is not *automatically* committed to a course of pure agapeism. That is, it does not follow that he must spend great effort in working out the solution to that problem from scratch. Nevertheless the overriding consideration will still be what is the most loving act in that particular situation, and for that person etc. Hence the use of the term 'situation ethics' to describe this kind of moral decision. I cannot believe therefore, that the actual operation of agape in a situation requiring moral decision is either too vague a notion altogether, or overburdensome as some would maintain.

### 3 *Is the position you have outlined really Christian?*

The third and final problem I have met in expounding the theory of agapeistic morality has been one which, rather ironically, has been raised in the main by non-Christians. The objection is that the religion which is left after traditional supra-naturalistic aspects and projections are removed (pp 105-107 of my original article in this Journal make the position quite clear) does not then resemble the Christian religion as they have always understood it. In some ways my experience of tackling this question has proved quite salutary in that I have begun to see how easy it is for a 'communication gap' to exist between theologians and non-theologians. One of the problems here is that every articulate person seems to claim a right to legislate on the subject of religion. I frequently discover that arguments against my stated position are based upon religious instruction and doctrinal tenets learned by the person concerned at school or at Sunday school. In other words, there is no appreciation and no understanding of the trends of contemporary theological thought. The result is that attempts to answer questions such as those which relate to notions of 'God' as agape or as 'ground of being' or 'ultimate concern' (vide Paul Tillich), are met with complete incomprehension or stony traditionalism. God is still 'out there' or 'up there', to use Robinson's now famous expressions in *Honest to God*, for a great number of people. Small wonder then, that such writers as Alistair Kee would have us get rid of the word 'God' completely in religious language.<sup>3</sup> What I am saying is that there is often an assumption on the part of my critics that religion and religious belief are completely static, and that a person's belief, practice, and thought, should be governed only by traditional and historic formulations and concepts. I think that Robinson has a very powerful point to make when he says (*On Being the Church in the World*, p 23):

... while the soul is eternally the same, its body is always changing. The particular ideal of life which in any age translates into a pattern of concrete social relationships the fulfilment of the human spirit in God, requires to be redefined with every fundamental change in the structure of society.

It is to modern, secularized society that the 'God' = agape = ultimate concern = Christ equation speaks, but quite apart from the many arguments which have been mustered for the 'secularization' of religion in the present age,<sup>4</sup> I find the notion of the agapeistic life as being both the religious and moral life, entirely consistent with the Christian gospel, with the life of Christ, and with the ultimate concern of Church and individual alike. For, as Huxley rightly said, 'Love *is* (my italics) the last word'.

### Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup> I have given a much more detailed account of the nature and function of agape in my University of Leicester M.Ed thesis (1971) 'Traditional and changing attitudes towards morality and moral education from the Education Act of 1944 to the present day'.
- <sup>2</sup> Robinson's views played an important part in my original M.Ed research, and are noted at length in the thesis *passim*. My present Ph.D thesis (University of Sheffield) entitled 'Some implications for education in religion of the theological writing of Bishop John Robinson' further explores his position.
- <sup>3</sup> *The Way of Transcendence: Christian Faith without Belief in God*, pp 224ff.
- <sup>4</sup> These are very well explored in such works as those of Harvey Cox — *The Secular City*, and Paul van Buren — *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*, amongst others.

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APPENDIX 4

## ON THE NATURE AND RELATIONSHIP OF SELF-LOVE AND AGAPE.

The purpose of this appendix is to elaborate upon the position maintained in Chapter 2 pp. 44 ff. that it is possible (and indeed to some degree necessary) for a person both to love himself and also to be an agapeist. At first sight it would seem that there is a contradiction here - how can a person love others and love himself? It can be shown that there are various ways of looking at this seeming contradiction which throw light upon the situation in ways which do not immediately meet the eye.

Outka in his book Agape: An ethical analysis, to which reference has been frequently made in Chapter 2 of this thesis, spends a good deal of time looking at this particular problem (pp. 55 - 74 in his Chapter entitled "Agape and Self-Love"). He explores four value judgements of self-love analytically and I have set these down in brief below with the intention of illustrating that, to my mind, the notion of self-love does in fact have a place both within an analysis of agape and the agapeistic attitude, and also within a theological framework based on the New Testament references to "loving oneself".

1. Self-love as wholly nefarious.

This is the most extreme view of self-love, and one frequently held by theological writers (we might cite here Nygren's identification of "Eros-religion" and "Eros-ethics" which, it is maintained, exemplify negative self-love in that a person's activities, interests and attitudes are wholly governed by acquisitive self-seeking. V. Agape and Eros pp. 208 ff. for example). Acquisitiveness is used as an "umbrella"

term to encompass all the negative aspects of nefarious self-love revealed in human relationships. Such a view inevitably centres on what has been described in Chapter 2 as "psychological egoism" that is, acquisitive self-love which constitutes de facto the sole spring of behaviour. Men pursue their own individual and private satisfaction and they cannot help pursuing it. Even when their behaviour appears to be altruistic, this is not the case, for the altruism is simply disguised acquisitiveness.

## 2. Self-love as normal, reasonable and prudent.

The core of this view is that self-love is not especially praiseworthy, but neither is it necessarily blameworthy. That is, a person is reasonably entitled to find his way in life by adopting an attitude of prudential self-regard. Outka believes that it is this view of self-love which stands behind the clause in the second great commandment "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (which I shall treat later on in this exegesis). There are two further senses in which self-love is held to be a natural state of affairs and not blameworthy. The first holds that one's own interests serve as the paradigm of all others; they are the most adequate index of what other-regard means. The second is that self-love has been taken to be the standard for treatment of others in the sense of the golden rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Thus self-love in accordance with the golden rule may be the source of more specific judgements of what counts as other-regard. There is a final sense in which self-love may be held not to be blameworthy, in that it is possible to recognise blessing or fruition to the self which may have its source in other-regard. Outka cites Reinhold Niebuhr (Man's Nature and His Communities pp. 106 - 7) and Kierkegaard (Works of Love p. 262) as expressing views which concur with this latter analysis (op. cit. pp. 66 - 7).

### 3. Self-love as justifiably derived from other-regard.

In this sense, self-love is taken to be necessary in that a person must look after himself, and has a responsibility for the development and use of his natural capacities etc. Thus one's own state of contentment and satisfaction is morally relevant, as it enhances the prospects of serving ends beyond such satisfaction. A simple example of this would be that a person finding himself depressed as a result of say dwelling upon his disappointments, seeing the unhappiness which he causes to others by such negative attitudes, tells himself to cheer up and thereby cease to cause that unhappiness to others. I believe that this third view stands behind the argument advanced in Chapter 2 p.45, and comments such as Johann's on p.44.

### 4. Self-love as a definite obligation.

Finally, self-love may be seen as a definite obligation - that is, where allowance is made for the positive value of considerations linked with the notion of self-respect. Outka believes that a view which sees this aspect as one that is opposed to the notion of Christian humility is mistaken, and he quotes a powerful passage written by Elizabeth Telfer in support of this view:-

"Humility is ... the recognition that there is infinite room for improvement, and that the minimum standard which is connected with self-respect is no great achievement" (In Philosophical Quarterly Vol. 18 April 1968 p. 121).

In summary, Outka states his own view, which is:-

"Self-love is a manifest obligation, yet its proper and enlightened pursuit is never an alternative to neighbour-love, but is rather correlative. Any attempt to oppose them denies in fact the constituted

nature of the relationship: I cannot choose to love the other simply in addition to loving myself or even as much as I love myself. Rather I am not fully myself until I am present and open to the other; I only love myself when I am able to love him, just as I love him only when I overcome acquisitiveness. Enlightened self-love is impossible apart from love for God and neighbour" (op. cit. p. 73).

This leads on to a specifically theological rather than philosophical reference in Professor Furnish's excellent book The Love Command in the New Testament to which reference has been made earlier in this thesis (Chapter 2 p. 24 footnote 1). I believe that this supports the view stated in 2 above of self-love as normal, reasonable and prudent, leading on to benefit one's neighbour in a sense that includes aspects of the analysis in both 3 and 4 above. Professor Furnish is commenting initially here on the absence of "as yourself" from the quotation of Leviticus 19.18 ("..... but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ..... ") in Matthew 5.43. He writes about "as yourself":-

"Where it does occur (in the original Old Testament commandment and in all New Testament citations of it except the present one) it is not part of the command per se, as if the admonition were to 'Love your neighbour and love yourself'. In the command, self love is presumed as the 'natural condition' of man, and he is commanded to love the neighbour as he already loves himself without any need to be commanded to do so. As several commentators have pointed out, the best exegesis of 'as yourself' comes in the parable of the Good Samaritan which artfully causes each hearer of the parable to identify himself with the hapless victim by the roadside. Finding himself in that place, one really discovers what 'as yourself' means. It means that the neighbour can be no more avoided than one's own self, that the neighbour is as present and as real as one's own ego" (op. cit. p. 50).



I cannot therefore see any contradiction between the notion of self-love and the agapeistic attitude, such as is sometimes maintained. Provided of course, that self-love is not seen as an alternative to neighbour-love. Rather it is correlative to neighbour-love as Outka's quotation on the previous page makes abundantly clear.

In the last few years I have been reading a number of books on the future of religion. One of the most interesting is by G. C. Oakes and presents some very interesting views on the future of religion in the 21st Century:-

1. Religion will have disappeared entirely.

Such a projection can be its basis the view that the disappearance of religion will have come about largely as a result of the development of rationality in mankind and as a result of the spread of Marxism or scientific atheism.

Cor notes that the contemporary facts are that there has been increased interest in religion in universities rather than a decline, although there can be little doubt that there is a declining interest in institutionalized religion e.g. the churches. He quotes as just one example, the fact that in the U.S.A. in 1968, the 50th anniversary number of Survey was devoted entirely to religion in Russia, with analyses of religious themes in the writing of younger poets - the new prophets.

2. There will be a syncretistic world faith.

The Bahai temple in Illinois is given as an example of this possibility. On the other hand, there are strong indications that the very opposite of syncretism will take place, for individual religions flourish, notably Eastern religions - Buddhism and the Islamic

APPENDIX 5

A SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT OF A LECTURE GIVEN BY HARVEY COX AT  
 THE ESALEN INSTITUTE, BIG, SUR, CALIFORNIA 1970 ON "21st  
 CENTURY RELIGION".

In this lecture (which I have in my library in live tape-recording form) Cox examines and comments upon 5 popular projections of the future of religion in the 21st Century:-

1. Religion will have disappeared entirely.

Such a projection has as its basis the views that the disappearance of religion will have come about largely as a result of the development of rationality in mankind and as a result of the spread of Marxism or scientific atheism.

Cox notes that the contemporary facts are that there has been increased interest in religion in universities rather than a decline, although there can be little doubt that there is a declining interest in institutionalised religion e.g. the churches. He quotes as just one example, the fact that in the U.S.S.R. in 1968, the 50th anniversary number of Survey was devoted entirely to religion in Russia, with analyses of religious themes in the writing of younger poets - the new prophets.

2. There will be a syncretistic world faith.

The Bahai temple in Illinois is quoted as an example of this possibility. On the other hand, there are strong indications that the very opposite of syncretism will take place, for individual religions flourish, notably Eastern religions - Buddhism and the Islamic



faith for example. (We should note the proliferation of "religions" in England too at the present time - again largely influenced by the East).

3. Christianity will be a unifying world religion.

This view is based upon the fact that it is Christianity which has been associated with the immensely rapid technological advance of western civilisation. However Cox points out that there is counter-evidence to this view in the case of Japan, and he notes that it was in 1945 that the Emperor announced that he was not God! Christianity is still a miniscule faith in Japan and outbreaks of new religions abound.

If the position of Christianity in advanced technological society is further examined, there are doubts that it has succeeded in integrating racial groups for instance - this is a notable failure.

4. A brand-new, unprecedented religion will emerge.

What is overlooked in this projection is the fact that most world religion, notably Christianity and Judaism for instance, have developed over many hundreds of years. This fact is also true of Eastern religions. At different points in time, new charismatic leaders may appear but the basic continuity of the particular faith remains.

5. There will be a situation of intensified pluralism.

Cox believes that it will be utterly impossible to find any insular religion in the 21st Century - indeed, people will not be considered "educated" in religion unless they have basic experimental knowledge of at least one other religion besides their own. This does not just mean comparative factual knowledge, but actual experience of the other religion. On the other hand he warns that pluralism can lead to either closed authoritarianism in the face of multi-options in religion, or at another extreme to indifferentism about any form of religious belief.

QUESTIONS.

After his lecture Cox answered several questions from his audience (which was predominantly a student audience):-

i. On the rise and spread of Maoism as a "religion". Cox said that the data about this was sparse, but that there are indications of the elevation of Chairman Mao as a divine figure. On the other hand, in Russia, there have been many indications in recent years that the cult of personalities is both outmoded and out of favour. Further, aspects of traditional Chinese religion do still persist in China itself.

ii. On the future of religion in technological society. Cox quotes his own engagement in research at Harvard in a multi-disciplinary context in this field. He feels that the most fruitful way of tackling the problem of rapidly developing technology is to examine the objectives of such development, and this leads directly back to "theological" questions based on examination of ends rather than means. He supports Michael Harrington here, who said that in his opinion the golden age of religion might well come when everyone is clothed, fed and materially provided for. Then the focus of attention will be turned to fundamental religious questions, and metaphysical issues.

iii. On the universality of Christ, "making all things new". This is not a claim for the universality of Christ~~ianity~~, but for the universality of Christ himself. Religions could certainly be integrated in this way. It is a serious error to limit Christ's meaning and significance to institutionalised forms of the Church, although it is difficult, because men are social beings, to see any viable religious forms existing outside some kind of social organisation.

iv. On the "bridge" period between the present state of the churches and future religious projections. Cox feels that there is likely to be less and less value in the ecumenical movement as a means of advance and influence. He does not consider either, that spontaneous, charismatic movements which are largely transitory, are likely to have any long-term effects upon the general trends of religious development. What he himself would like to see would be some kind of organisational and spiritual mixture such as a combination of Quaker and Greek Orthodox traditions (the former with its emphasis on the small, mobile, concern-orientated group and the latter's big, liturgical celebrative, festive aspect).

"Human Liberation Next Time"

GUIDE MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST

CHURCH

Taylor and Ellis, San Francisco

"Coke"

Let all the people participate in the  
Celebration of Jerusalem

"HUMAN LIBERATION NEXT TIME"

by

2001 A. E. ...

...

The ...

...

...

...

APPENDIX 6

THE LITURGY OF THE GLIDE MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH,

SAN FRANCISCO: MORNING SERVICE SUNDAY AUGUST 26th 1973.

# "Human Liberation Next Time"

GLIDE MEMORIAL UNITED METHODIST  
CHURCH

Taylor and Ellis, San Francisco

"COME!"

Let all the people participate in the  
Celebration of Liberation!

"HUMAN LIBERATION NEXT TIME"

by

REV. A. CECIL WILLIAMS

with

TOGETHERNESS

THE EDWARDS GENERATION

GLIDE ENSEMBLE

RED LANTERN LIGHT SHOW

A Time for Coming Together

*Leader:* We have come here to celebrate "Life"!

*People:* Yes! We are celebrating in spite of the conditions we live under—war, racism, poverty, greed, sexism, exploitation, repression, guilt and loneliness.

*Leader:* We have come here to share an experience of "Life" together.

*People:* Yes! We have come together and accept our differences—Black, White, Red, Brown, Yellow, women, men, children, poor, rich, middle-class, young, old, homosexuals, straight, and hip.

*Leader:* We have come here to decide to live.

*People:* Yes! Yes! Living is a righteous experience.  
Live on, brother.  
Live on, sister.  
Live on, children.

The Time for Confronting our Hang-ups. (The time for confronting our hang-ups is an invitation to be who we really are.)

*Leader:*

Life is you and me and everyone else.  
Life is always growing, always reaching.  
Life is having roots in the past,  
being nourished by the present,  
budding through to the new.  
Life comes in all colours—all beautiful!

Life is groovy.  
Life is loving—and being loved.  
Life is free to be who we were meant to be.  
Life is enough food to eat.  
Life is work you're proud to do.

Life is clothing to wear when you need it.  
Life is keepin' de wolf and de hawk away from ya.  
(Dat means bad weather, y'all.)  
Life is health care for everybody who needs it.  
Life is free child care for the mamas who need it.

Life is the exciting unknown. Life is hope!  
Life is spontaneity.  
Life is being where you have to be when it's happening.  
Life is surviving even though the odds are against you.

Life is saying Hey Man! Hey Woman! 'cause you're you.  
Life is making mistakes, admitting them, and movin' on!  
Life is anger and telling it like it is.  
Life is laughter and joy.

Life is confrontation and letting it all hang out.  
Life is sadness and loneliness.  
Life is being who you are:  
Black, White, Yellow, Red, Brown, rich, middle-class, poor, young, old, homosexual, straight, and hip.  
Life is the children.

Life is feeding the hungry,  
clothing the naked,  
freeing the prisoners.  
Life is freedom for all people—  
in the ghettos,  
in the barrios,  
in the reservations—NO MORE WOUNDED KNEES!  
in the prisons of people's minds.  
Life is being heard and hearing others.  
Life is knowing you are somebody.

Life is being concerned for people,  
not because it's good politics, nor good business;  
not because it's good religion, nor good strategy,  
not because it's good seduction,  
but because you really care for someone.  
Life is openness,  
Life is not just words in a Book,  
but flesh, and body, action, and revolution!  
(From *Youth Magazine*, editing by JMM)

A Time for Crying Out (the time for crying out is a statement of self-affirmation).

*Community:*

LAWD!!! THEY SAY THAT THE JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING! JEEEEEEZUS CHRIIIIST! JUDGMENT DAY IS HERE!!!

NOW I MUST DECIDE WHO I AM.  
NOW I MUST DECIDE TO CHOOSE!  
NOW I'M GONNA PUT DOWN MY OLD-TIME  
RELIGION.

NOW I'M GONNA STOP PUTTING OFF TO-  
MORROW WHAT I CAN DO TODAY . . .  
LIKE GETTIN' RID OF SOME OF MY HANG-  
UPS.

NOW I'M GONNA STOP FEELING SORRY FOR  
MYSELF WHEN I GET REJECTED.

NOW I'M GONNA WAKE UP IN THE MORNING  
UNAFRAID TO FACE WHAT'S COMING  
DOWN!

NOW I'M GONNA START LETTING A LITTLE  
LOVE BECOME A LOT OF LOVE.

YEAH! JUDGMENT DAY MEANS TO DECIDE!  
JUDGMENT DAY IS HERE! AND I NEVER  
THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS, 'CAUSE  
THE BROTHERS AND THE SISTERS AND THE  
CHILDREN ARE ALL COMING TOGETHER  
SINGING, "GLORY, GLORY HALLELUJAH! HIS  
TRUTH IS MARCHING ON!"

SOUL POWER HAS TAKEN OVER MY LIFE!

THE END IS NOW!

AMEN!  
HALLELUJAH!  
RIGHT ON!

(By A. Cecil Williams)

\*Let's Rejoice

"GOD'S GOIN' TO TROUBLE THE WATER"

*Chorus:* Wade in the water,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.  
Wade in the water, children,  
Wade in the water,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.

See that host all dressed in white,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.  
The leader looks like the Israelite,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.

(Chorus)

See that band all dressed in red,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.  
Looks like the band that Moses led,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.

(Chorus)

See that band all dressed in black,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.  
Looks like they're pushin' racism back,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.

(Chorus)

See that band all dressed in yellow,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.  
Hand in hand with all Third World people,  
God's goin' to trouble the water.

(Chorus)

"LET IT BE"

When I find myself in times of trouble  
Mother Mary comes to me.  
Speaking words of wisdom—Let it be.  
And in my hour of darkness  
She is standing right in front of me.  
Speaking words of wisdom—Let it be.

Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be,  
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be.

And when the broken hearted people  
Living in the world agree  
There will be an answer—Let it be.  
For though they may be parted  
There is still a chance that they will see.  
There will be an answer—Let it be.

Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be,  
There will be an answer, let it be.

And when the night is cloudy  
There is still a light that shines on me  
Shine until tomorrow—Let it be.  
I wake up to the sound of music  
Mother Mary comes to me,  
Speaking words of wisdom—Let it be.

Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be,  
There will be an answer, let it be.



"MINE EYES HAVE SEEN THE GLORY"

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the  
Lord ;  
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of  
wrath are stored ;  
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible  
swift sword,  
His truth is marching on!

*Refrain:* Glory, Glory, Hallelujah  
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah  
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah  
His truth is marching on!

I have seen him in the watchfires of a hundred circling  
camps ;  
They have builded him an altar in the evening dews  
and damps ;  
I can read his righteous sentence by the dim and  
flaring lamps ;  
His day is marching on!

(Refrain)

He has sounded forth the trumpet that will never call  
retreat ;  
He is sifting out the hearts of men beside his judgment  
seat ;  
O, be swift, my soul, to answer him ; Be jubilant my  
feet ;  
Our God is marching on!

(Refrain)

In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the  
sea ;  
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me.  
As he died to make men holy, let us live to make men  
free:  
While God is marching on!

(Refrain)

He is coming like the glory of the morning on the wave ;  
He is wisdom to the mighty ; he is honour to the brave.  
So the world shall be his footstool, and the soul of  
wrong his slave ;  
Our God is marching on!

(Refrain)

"WE SHALL OVERCOME"

We shall overcome,  
We shall overcome,  
We shall overcome, today.  
O, deep in my heart,  
I do believe  
That we shall overcome today.

We'll walk hand in hand,  
We'll walk hand in hand,  
We'll walk hand in hand, today.  
O, deep in my heart,  
I do believe  
That we shall overcome today.

We are not afraid, etc. . . .

We shall live in peace, etc. . . .

The truth will make us free, etc. . . .

We are liberated, etc. . . .

We shall overcome, etc. . . .



APPENDIX 7

MY ARTICLE DESCRIBING THE LA JOLLA PROGRAMME, AND MY REACTION  
TO THIS AND VARIOUS CHURCH SERVICES ATTENDED IN CALIFORNIA

(Published in Christian Renewal No. 12 Winter 1973/4).

# "Life is not Just Words in a Book, but Flesh and Body, Action and Revolution!"

These are words from the zippiest and zingiest morning service I have ever experienced, and formed the last line of the liturgy in a "Celebration of Liberation" which I attended at the Glide Memorial United Methodist Church in San Francisco one Sunday in late August this year. I have used them to start off this article because they encapsulate so much of the whole atmosphere and ultimate significance of my time in California on this occasion. This is how.

I have been interested for some time in what is now being called in America "humanistic psychology".<sup>1</sup> This is seen as a third force in psychology which is developing its own methods of study to disclose man as a human being rather than an organism or machine—in contrast that is, to mechanistic behaviourism and deterministic psychoanalysis. Its basic objective is to enrich a man's experience and enlarge his ability for personal freedom. Thus through "growth" (people changing themselves when their self proves inappropriate), a person can acquire his own courage, imagination and strength when circumstances in life encourage him to believe he does not have any of these things. My first meeting with this area of thought was at the Esalen Institute at Big Sur, California a couple of years ago when I was researching in morality and moral education. I felt earlier this year, after reading several of the Esalen authors (Carl Rogers, Fritz Perls, William Schutz, Bernard Gunther and others<sup>2</sup>), and what seemed a continuous meeting with Rogerian principles and related techniques in the field of counselling and group dynamics, that I must get personal experience of group encounter in depth. I saw this as a means to initiating personal "growth" in the sense used above, and also as a direct means of enabling me to break through the barrier of self-concern and personal inadequacy which I had thought impeded my personal relationships and rendered ineffective the exercise of outgoing neighbour-love (*agape*) about which I have written so much in recent years, and which is the core of my notions of "God" and the foundation of my Christian life.

So . . . I applied for, and was extremely fortunate in obtaining, a place on the La Jolla Programme<sup>3</sup> at the University of California, San Diego. This three-week programme, in fact a series of four three-week programmes, in group encounter or sensitivity training as the co-directors prefer to call it, is organised by the Centre for the Study of the Person, La Jolla, a body which numbers amongst its resident members Dr. Carl Rogers himself, and many other eminent psychologists and analysts. It was a case of jumping in at the deep end, but my experience there was one of almost indescribable delight, joy, yes—and pain. For the process of self-discovery and analysis which was a principal

feature of the Programme was at times very painful indeed for all members of the group. The whole course is based upon depth encounter (up to 12 hours a day), in small groups, which in Dr. Roger's words are:—

" . . . relatively unstructured, providing a climate of maximum freedom for personal expression, exploration of feelings, and interpersonal communication. Emphasis is upon the interactions among the group members, in an atmosphere which encourages each to drop his defences and facades and thus enables the person to recognise and change self-defeating attitudes, test out and adopt more innovative and constructive behaviours, and subsequently to relate more adequately to others in his everyday life."

A very much simplified pattern of what happens in a group is that an individual member slowly grows to trust his fellow members, is helped by them to analyse and understand his own projected images and relationships with others, can then move progressively to a position of complete honesty with himself and the group, and finally finds himself able to take "risks" which lead to the testing out and adoption of the "more innovative and constructive behaviours" and the subsequent relating "more adequately and effectively to others in his everyday life" of which Dr. Rogers speaks. This is exactly what happened in my various groups, and it was true also of the outside week-end groups which members of the Programme "facilitated" (a term which deliberately avoids the notion of authoritative leadership or direction) as part of their training in sensitivity and awareness. Of course the personal details of group events are wholly private. I can only say that the experience of the dynamic and encounter situations in small groups and also in the large community group which met in an encounter situation each day (100 or so people—priests, psychologists, lecturers, teachers, housewives, etc.) and the constantly widening and deepening relationships which I had with members of the Programme was truly "flesh and body, action and revolution!" The course fulfilled all, and indeed much more than my initial expectations, and both in the time which immediately followed it as now when I am back again in England, I was in constant touch with my American friends, still able to share with them a depth of understanding and identification which was the result of our time together at La Jolla. As for my own present relationships, I have been able to consolidate the breakthrough initiated by the Programme, and I am confident that the process of growth will continue for the rest of my life. I truly believe that La Jolla was a conversion experience of enormous significance to me, as a person and as a Christian person, for I have been able to relate to others in a totally new way, and have also discovered some-

thing of the real joy of encounter with them which the New Testament describes as "neighbour love". In America, and in California particularly, there are many church groups which function in the way that I have described, and which supply the needs of the various people who make up individual congregations—from young to old and with topics which range from adolescent sexuality to the problems of living alone in retirement. There are really immense possibilities in the encounter movement for the strengthening of church life and Christian witness in England, and I am much concerned that its potential is hardly recognised here as yet, even that is, if it is known at all.

One final word. It was sheer delight to attend mass (R.C.) Sunday by Sunday at the university church in La Jolla. The liturgy was relaxed and informal, and the whole atmosphere one of friendly welcome and caring. There were lively young instrumentalists accompanying the singing on guitars and clarinet, and the priest stood in front of the small altar at the communion with chalice and wafer-dish, with a friendly word for each member of the congregation as they came up to take and intinct the wafer-bread. Christian love was there in abundance. So too at the Glide Memorial Church in San Francisco,

absolutely packed to the doors at 11 a.m. for the "Celebration of Liberation" which I mentioned at the beginning. There were two rock groups and an item by a well-known television harmonica player (who just happened to turn up in the congregation), the "Red Lantern Light Show", a powerfully relevant address on intentionality and actuality in Christian behaviour by the negro minister (in kaftan)—and even a resident Rabbi! So it wasn't surprising then, that towards the end of my visit I had begun to wonder if my experiences were real. But sober reflection tells me that they were in fact the very stuff of life, for as the Glide liturgy further reminded us: "Life comes in all colours—all beautiful. Life is being who you are."

#### References

- <sup>1</sup> There was a useful descriptive article in this connection, entitled "Human Psychology as a Third Force" in the *Times Educational Supplement* of 21st September 1973.
- <sup>2</sup> I can provide any interested reader with a full bibliography which includes the growing literature available in England as well as in the U.S.A.
- <sup>3</sup> Dr. Rogers has a chapter on the La Jolla Programme in his book *Encounter Groups* published by Penguin in June 1973. He also gives in this book a complete description of both the techniques and operation of group encounter.

DONALD ANDERS-RICHARDS

APPENDIX 8

TEXT OF J. A. T. ROBINSON'S SEMINAR/ADDRESS AT ST. MARY'S  
CHURCH, CAMBRIDGE ON 4th MARCH 1973.



# A SERMON PREACHED AT GREAT ST. MARY'S THE UNIVERSITY CHURCH · CAMBRIDGE

## "'HONEST TO GOD' - TEN YEARS AFTER"

Rt Revd J.A.T. Robinson  
Dean of Chapel, Trinity College

8.30 p.m. 4th March, 1973

First of all let me assure you that I am not here to preach a sermon tonight though I have discovered a splendid text for this occasion were I wishing to do so. I discovered from the 4th Chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians the other day these two verses, "It was bodily illness that originally led me to speak to you. Have I now made myself your enemy by being honest with you". You may remember that I wrote 'Honest to God' during a spell of illness and St Paul obviously had it too!

Now it is the tenth anniversary of this event and ten years is a very short time in theology, but it is a very long time in a student's life. In fact, it is horrifying to think that many of you were only nine or ten and you may well be asking, "What on earth was all the fuss about." Sometimes I ask myself that question too, as it never set out to be a controversial book, or a popular book, let alone a best-seller. And yet, somehow, it hit a nerve or perhaps I stumbled on a trip-wire that set off alarms all over the world. It was not just, I think, a nine-days wonder created by the press, although the press had something to do with it for good and for ill. As a result of this, theology became a more secular subject; we even had theological articles in Playboy! But if it had merely been that, I think it would have died away very quickly. Certainly the letters I got back made me realise that quite inadvertently, I had articulated a lot of questions which obviously in an inarticulate form people were asking at a deep level. The two words that came through the correspondence more than any others were 'release' and 'relief'. "Thank God, you said it," and "Thank God, you're a bishop because I can't be quite as bad as I thought".

But the title of the book (which I resisted I may say for some time because I thought it was just flippant until my wife told me that I had to have it), was after all to do with honesty. I think that this had a good deal to do with its effect because just before 'Honest to God' was published, Alec Vidler, who was then Dean of King's, got into enormous trouble in the Church by saying over television, "We've got a very big leeway to make up because there has been so much suppression of real deep thought and intellectual alertness and integrity in the Church". Now I think that has actually changed. There is much less talk of clergy being mere hypocrites, or simply saying it because they are paid to do so. It is perhaps because we are paid so much less that people realise we couldn't possibly be in it for the money! But also there has been a great clearing of cobwebs and a removal of many of the stumbling blocks which have resulted from a basic feeling that you could not be a Christian and retain your integrity. And my purpose was frankly simply to try to be honest to myself. I wasn't attempting to be iconoclastic or destructive. In fact, my first chapter was called 'Reluctant Revolution' and I was indeed hardly a revolutionary.

I distinguished between three attitudes - that of the reformist who holds to the tradition but seeks to update it, that of the revolutionary who regards the tradition as irreformable and places himself outside it, and that of the radical who goes to the root of his tradition and asks what it is for. I was attempting to be radical - to go deep down to what still was genuine and real for me and to be prepared to shed a good deal of the rest. I tried to do this exercise in a very superficial way - with doctrine, with morals, with prayer and worship, with church structures.

But of course, the book was called 'Honest to God' and it was about what I subsequently described as "the displacement effect of so much Christian language that made God something unreal and remote rather than the most real thing at the heart of life". I used the analogy of the projection which you get in a school atlas, Mercator's projection, which depicts the poles only off the top and the bottom of the map, and it seemed to me that that is what had happened to God in a great deal



of Christian language.

There were three main ways it seemed to me in which God-language was being made unreal for people to-day. The first was as a result of what I call the supranaturalist projection. In other words, locating what was most real in a supranatural realm or layer of being above or beyond this world in a God who was up there or out there. Now that location of reality corresponded to something perfectly true and valid for many people, indeed most people, in the past. I was acutely aware of the fact that it was having a 'displacement effect' for me and a great many of my contemporaries and making God merely unreal and remote - something that came in merely over and above all the vital connections of life. It was in this connection that I invoked the thinking of Paul Tillich.

But then secondly it seemed to me that so much Christian truth was being banished to a world of myth like the Christmas story, being made totally unreal for many people. They were very confused as to what they were really expected in this to take as solid history and what was all part of a sort of fairy-tale world which for people in the past may have been real and vivid to the imagination but to-day merely had again had the effect of making it incredible. And to sort that one out I invoked the help of Rudolph Bultmann.

Then, finally and perhaps most pervasively of all, it seemed to me that God, and God-language, and Christianity were being relegated to the religious ghetto. The effect of secularisation in our world which I take to be basically a neutral process which is the result of the scientific and technological revolution, was gradually narrowing down that slot or sector in life in which traditionally religious language had operated. God as it were was being squeezed out of his universe and everything could be taken over by secular explanation or control. The Church seemed to be fighting a rearguard action against this process, and against that I invoked the thinking of Dietrich Bonhoeffer which was then fairly unknown. He had declared that if Christ was going to be Lord of our century at all, he had to be Lord of a genuinely secular world which basically accepted this process as God-given as rather than simply Lord of the religious ghetto. And so I tried to bring these three thinkers together. In fact perhaps about the only original thing 'Honest to God' did was to bring them together, because up until then they had never really been spoken of in one breath. Now they are almost invariably spoken of in one breath. I was not in the slightest saying they were saying the same things but they seemed to me to be aspects of the same process. Well now, I think that at this point I am going to stop because the creative thing to-night will be come out of questions, coming not so much from ten years ago but from the situation to-day. The Vicar is going to throw some at me, and ones that he doesn't ask, we can deal with in the session at the end.

VICAR: Could I ask you first of all do you feel that the concerns of 'Honest to God' ten years ago and in particular the thought of these three thinkers Tillich, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer are still relevant to our situation now or do you believe that this is a stage that has now passed?

DR. ROBINSON: Well, one of the things that has happened in my view is that they have absorbed into the system in a way that they certainly never were. This is particularly true of the Church of England. In fact, one of the real charges against me was that I was giving people in the pews things that people in the pulpit had never read and they felt threatened. But to-day, partly because of the paper-back revolution, this kind of thinking has really soaked much deeper in and personally I very seldom refer to these three now. In fact, I very seldom referred to these three before I wrote 'Honest to God'. It was for me in a sense a passing phase because they happened to highlight points I wanted to make. I think that they still have a profound contribution to make and in particular I would say Bonhoeffer. We still haven't really absorbed the revolutionary seeds that he sowed in his prison cell nearly a quarter of a century ago. But I would not want to go on harping on the thought of these three men in particular.

VICAR: One point which your critics would make is this. Presumably you wrote 'Honest

to God' with an evangelistic intent in the sense that you wished the Christian faith, deeply meaningful to yourself, to be meaningful to other people too and you felt that they were being kept away from this by this supranaturalistic framework and other factors which you described in 'Honest to God'. Can you point to any evidence that it has in fact helped to make Christianity more credible to the man in the street?

DR. ROBINSON: I have often asked myself whether I have done more harm than good and I don't know. God alone knows. But I comfort myself constantly by the way in which still after ten years, one gets a trickle of letters the whole time, saying, "Thank God for what you gave me because this has enabled me to hang on", or "not to go out of the Church" or "to discover something which I thought was quite out". And I am impressed on the whole and humbled by the way that this has happened. A great many people were of course shaken. But perhaps they were much more shaken than they should have been if they had not had such fundamentalist attitudes to so many of these questions. Then they wouldn't have found this process such a dangerous one.

VICAR: The figures seem to show however, that our churches are emptier than ten years ago, and that organised religion has continued to decline. Would you regard this as relevant?

DR. ROBINSON: I think it is very relevant, though which is cause and which is effect is another question. The kind of thinking that 'Honest to God' represented was only part of a much bigger movement that was happening at that time. It was represented, for instance, by Soundings published the year before in this University and a good many other things, particularly in America. All these were symptoms of a situation which had been recognised to come extent by the theologians who had their ear to the ground shortly before the pews really began to empty quite so dramatically. Which causes which I don't know. But it all indicates today as then the irrelevance of a lot of institutional Christianity unless it is really prepared to go through the mill and have its foundations shaken.

VICAR: Now if we accept this paradox that a lot of people are now finding a greater meaning in these new concepts and yet at the same time the churches are empty, what about the Christian churches to-day - God speaking and working through them, and their contribution to mankind? Do you feel optimistic or pessimistic about them?

DR. ROBINSON: I don't think I would want to use either word. I don't think either of them are Biblical words. I believe in hope, often hope against hope. The forces apparently at work, or rather the absence of certain forces in the Church, are often so depressing that if it were simply left to the human assessment of the situation one sees around one, one would be very depressed. But in the cracking of the containers at so many points whether institutional or financial or legal or denominational or doctrinal or moral I see these things as far from being just negative signs of death. There are constantly signs of something that is pushing up "through the crevices". So I don't by any means feel depressed in that sense. In fact one of the really astonishing things to me is the number of people I meet who have a tremendous and exhilarating faith to-day precisely because so many of the old securities have gone and this is a much more exciting situation for them. But I am perfectly aware that for the churches it is also if one is honest a very depressing situation. Trevor Beeson who is here tonight has just written a book called, "The Church of England crisis", and I would very warmly recommend you to read it because it tells us a great many home truths about the Church of England. If we go on complacently, we do not deserve to survive.

VICAR: You have travelled around the world a good deal since 'Honest to God', to the United States, Europe and other areas. Can you point to any significant developments you have seen in the thinking of Western people about God? Do you see any significance in Jesus Movements or trends of this kind?



DR. ROBINSON: Well, of course, the immediate follow-up of 'Honest to God' was largely on the other side of the Atlantic almost again without any apparent connection. In about the same month as my book appeared, Paul Van Buren's 'The Secular Meaning of the Gospel' was published and that was seen by many people as the beginning of the 'death of God movement'. And also very shortly afterwards Harvey Cox's book 'The Secular City' appeared. Both of those were very significant contributions, and there was a great deal of a shake-up particularly of religious language and of the relation of the understanding of Christianity to secularism. This was a very permanent contribution though so many movements have in fact fizzled out. Certainly in America a lot has happened, in this area, and much has been very creative. I think for example of a book such as Peter Berger's 'A Rumour of Angels' - a significant book which is now available in a paperback in this country. In this country another paperback which is to some extent a fruit of all this ferment, was Alastair Kee's book 'The Way of Transcendence'. This made me think furiously, even when I disagreed. Then surely my predecessor Harry William's book, 'True Resurrection' has been significant. I think there are quite a lot of things coming up though no mass movement that I can see is leading in any particular direction.

VICAR: We are accustomed in the Christian churches to think of the important thing being the defence of the Christian faith and the explanation of Christian faith to those outside the churches. Would you see a change in emphasis coming at this point - a much greater lining up with people who care about human values, in different traditions and not only in Christianity?

DR. ROBINSON: Yes. This was the positive significance in Alastair Kee's 'The Way of Transcendence'. The real line comes between those who are to some extent seized by the need for going beyond, for refusing to sell-out, for refusing to close with the natural and are constantly agitated by the need for changing the world, for the passion of justice and love and concern and those who are not. This certainly is where one finds one's fellow travellers and what denomination they belong to, or whether they are in the church or not, is a secondary question. This has certainly happened, in the Ecumenical Movement over the last ten years. It used to be concerned with what is called 'institutional ecumenism' - getting the churches together, and one normally despairs of this. But on the other hand a sort of secular ecumenism which turns the churches out to the world and enables Christians to go into the secular structures and work together with all sorts of people for common aims, this is a very healthy development.

VICAR: What would you say to those Christians who would be very worried about losing the uniqueness of the Christian revelation, or diluting the Christian Gospel in any way because of this type of approach?

DR. ROBINSON: I would just say that you have to lose your soul in order to find it. If you are really so concerned with preserving all this purity of doctrine, I think that it will simply go sour on you. You can only learn love, which is presumably the heart of what it is all about, by being prepared to spend and be spent. This is the Gospel and if we try to preserve it in any other way, we shall find it has gone from us.

VICAR: Can we come back to the question of how we conceive of God and how God can be meaningful to us in our own situation? I think you touched on this when you described some of the letters you have had since the publication of 'Honest to God'. In the light of your experience during these past ten years, do you feel that the way of conceiving God as "the ground of our being" has been more meaningful to people than the 'out there' type of concept which you felt was hindering Christian understanding?

DR. ROBINSON: I have got myself into a great deal of trouble for using this phrase "ground of being". In fact I practically never use it now because people immediately assume you are talking about something impersonal. There is nothing more impersonal

about it than the traditional use of the term 'substance' - 'of one substance with the Father' with which the church has always operated. All that I was trying to do was to say, "Well, try and experiment. If the sort of 'up there' language simply seems to make God remote, see whether it has more reality if you turn it upside down". Most people to-day do in fact locate what is most real, not in what is highest above them but in what is profoundest, what is most deeply true, and so on. And I think this does enable the language to come home to people. There is obviously nothing wrong or nothing right about any of these spacial metaphors. It is simply cultural conditioning which determines where instinctively we locate that which is most truly and deeply real for us. I don't want to go back on this at all, but if I had had then any idea of the range of people that it would touch, I would have been more careful in some of the language and also in say some of the language about the word 'myth' which is an absolute red-rag to most Englishmen.

VICAR: These days quite large numbers of people turn up to hear addresses on very traditional Christian lines or find an appeal in a mystical type of approach. Some would point to this phenomenon particularly among young people and say, that this shows that the way of presenting Christianity by trying to find these new and more meaningful images, is not necessarily the right way to communicate. People will still apparently come along and hear the Christian faith presented in a much more traditional way. Would you have any comment on that?

DR. ROBINSON: Well I said right from the beginning in 'Honest to God' that this was not an "either/or" at all, I was not in the slightest concerned to depreciate or to knock the kind of people who were coming to faith through the traditional terms and I am basically bi-lingual. I can use both approaches quite happily in worship or indeed in preaching because they are both meaningful to me. But I was concerned with the very many people to whom traditional approaches are not meaningful. But when we talked about the Jesus people, we might have considered one of the things that has happened in the last ten years - namely an immense recovery and I think a wholly enriching recovery of mysticism. Now I am personally convinced that for a great many people, it has to be some kind of secular mysticism or at any rate a non-theistic mysticism because so much of the God-language appears to them to be a belittling of what they feel is at the heart of all this. I don't think they are necessarily right. But the interest in other religions and in the Eastern religions and non-theistic religions is very significant at this point. We have all got a tremendous amount to learn from it by really listening in dialogue to what is happening. But there are also some movements which are a sort of back-lash and I am not sure that there are aspects of the Jesus Movement and aspects of the Festival of Light, etc. which I might not categorise in that way. I certainly would not want to write off what people are finding in this or in the Pentecostal movements and so on. But I am not certain that simply taken by themselves, these are the movements that really have the future with them. The reason is that we have got to come to terms with this total cultural revolution through which we are living at such speed. I think they can be dangerous movements from that point of view.

VICAR: In the introduction to 'Honest to God' you said this speaking of the changes in thought of a hundred years ago: "When we consider the distance we have all moved since then, we can see that almost everything said from within the Church at the time has since proved too conservative. What I have tried to say, in a tentative and exploratory way, may seem to be radical, and doubtless to many heretical. The one thing of which I am fairly sure is that, in retrospect, it will be seen to have erred in not being nearly radical enough". Now that is only ten years ago. It may be that the time scale is too short, but would you stand by this to-day?

DR. ROBINSON: I would and I don't think the time scale is too short because ten years now is roughly equivalent to a hundred years then. This is a measure of the speed with which one is moving. And indeed, we have been through and out the other side of so much already. We may be beginning to see ourselves out of the end of the tunnel on certain things. I imagine that immediately after the Copernican Revolution, those who accepted the truth of what Copernicus was saying would immediately have concluded that

all the old language was out, that we could no longer talk about the sun 'rising' or the sun 'setting' and we would have to find new ways of putting it all. Well, somehow after 400 years or so, we are still talking about the sun 'rising' and the sun 'setting'. We know inside us that this does not mean what the words say and we have come to terms with the revolution, the intellectual revolution, and yet we are able to make this language our own. Unless we can do this within the Church, with the Biblical language, the language of Liturgy and so on, we are going to be deeply impoverished, I don't want to throw it out at all. Some images may have to go at any rate for the time being before they can be reborn. But I think this is a process which one is beginning to see. Some of this 'God-language' may, as it were, come alive again after being dead. And that this has already happened within ten years.

VICAR: So no regrets on writing 'Honest to God'?

DR. ROBINSON: No. Certainly not.

DR. ROBINSON: Well I don't regret from the beginning in 'Honest to God' that this was not an "either/or" at all. I was not in the slightest concerned to depreciate or to knock the kind of people who were coming to faith through the traditional terms and I am basically bilingual. I can use both approaches quite happily in worship or indeed in preaching because they are both meaningful to me. But I was concerned with the very many people to whom traditional approaches are not meaningful. But when we talked about the Jesus people, we might have considered one of the things that has happened in the last ten years - namely an immense recovery and I think a wholly exciting recovery of mysticism. Now I am personally convinced that for a great many people, it has to be some kind of secular mysticism or at any rate a non-theistic mysticism because so much of the God-language appears to them to be a belittling of what they feel is at the heart of all this. I don't think they are necessarily right but the interest in other religions and in the Eastern religions and non-theistic religions is very significant at this point. We have all got a tremendous amount to learn from it by really listening in dialogue to what is happening. But there are also some movements which are a sort of back-lash and I am not sure that there are aspects of the Jesus movement and aspects of the festival of light, etc. which I might not categorise in that way. I certainly would not want to write off what people are finding in this or in the Pentecostal movements and so on. But I am not certain that simply taken by themselves, these are the movements that really have the future with them. The reason is that we have got to come to terms with this total cultural revolution through which we are living at such speed. I think they can be dangerous movements from that point of view.

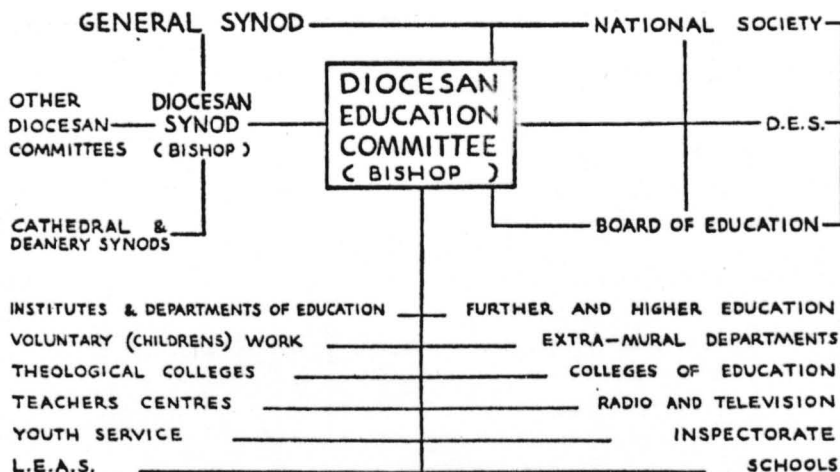
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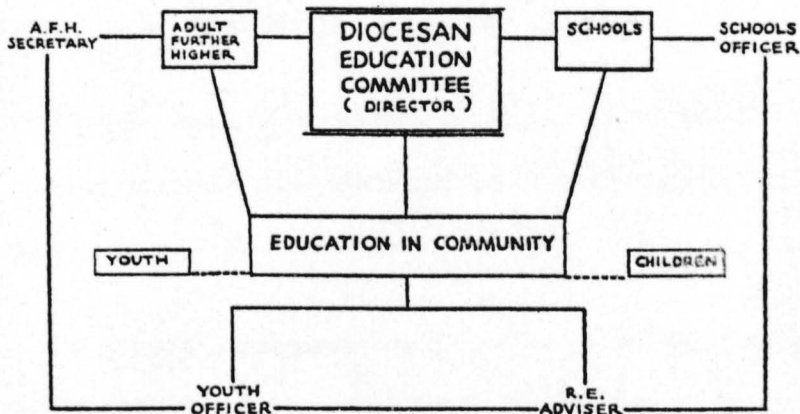
APPENDIX 9

DIAGRAMMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE FUNCTION OF THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND OF THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE (Carlisle Report 1971).

THE WORK OF THE DIOCESAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND ITS RELATION TO OTHER AGENCIES IN THE CHURCH



INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF D.E.C.: COMMITTEES AND STAFF





APPENDIX 10

THE PRESENT POSITION (1974) OF THE CHURCH COLLEGES OF  
EDUCATION AND OTHER EXTRA-DIOCESAN EDUCATIONAL CONCERNS.

A. CHURCH COLLEGES OF EDUCATION.

It would present an incomplete picture of the Church's educational concern if nothing was to be said in this thesis about its colleges of education. Like many of the older church schools, some of the colleges were first in the field of teacher-training in the early 19th Century. At present there are 27 Anglican colleges, with a total student population in November 1973 of almost 19,000. This is one sixth of the total number of students in all colleges of education and it is rather discouraging, in the light of the earlier observation on the desperate need for teachers of R.E., to find that only 1,439 of these 19,000 are studying main level theology in their college course.

In the light of the James Report Teacher Education and Training (1972) and the D.E.S. White Paper Education: A Framework for Expansion (1972) setting out radical plans for the reorganisation of higher education in the non-university sector, three features will influence the future of all colleges of education viz:-

1. The number of places for intending teachers will be reduced and a student need not pledge himself to teaching in order to be accepted.

2. The places previously taken up by intending teachers will be made available to students taking courses leading to degrees in a variety of subjects or to a new, two-year qualification, the Diploma in Higher Education.

3. In order to have the resources to provide this wider variety of options, larger units will be needed, and colleges other than those which are already large will be expected either to amalgamate, or to link themselves in some federal scheme, with other appropriate institutions.

These factors have meant that few colleges will be able to retain their individual existence as in the past, particularly the church colleges, and that very detailed schemes for amalgamation, federation or other forms of reorganisation, have had to be set in motion. At the time of writing, this process is continuing, and in many cases only theoretical patterns have been established as a basis for future planning.

A very detailed review of the position as it affects individual church colleges and their tentative plans, are set down in <sup>the</sup> General Synod Board of Education's monograph The Future of the Church Colleges of Education (1974). It would be neither possible nor necessary to reproduce this highly complex document here, but it is important, in the light of the core concern of this thesis for future patterns of education in religion, to summarise briefly the part the ultimately reorganised church colleges will play in this process. Fortunately this can be extracted quite succinctly from the Board's Report, which in its final section, indicating a move away from the traditional denominational notions of training church teachers for church schools, rather sees the future role of the church colleges as:-

- a. Establishing a bridgehead into the higher education of a society which is becoming increasingly secularised.
- b. Offering an opportunity of mission to many generations of students for whom the life of the church would otherwise be only a marginal influence.

c. Being places where young people may "waken to a vision which the church is unable to communicate through any other means" (op. cit. p. 23).

It can be seen that these statements are in fact future aims which it is hoped the colleges will achieve. Their implicit content is that there will be behind them, the exercise of Christian faith and influence. In view of the very uncertain state of affairs, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect precise and explicit statements of the immediate objectives of the church colleges within a reorganised system - that is, clear details of how the aims mentioned above will actually be achieved. Nevertheless, such an account must be given - in practical terms such as those indicated by the analysis of the religious/secular dichotomy of the Voluntary/Maintained school's position within the state day-school system<sup>(1)</sup>. At the moment no such precise analysis has been documented, and this situation and the challenge that is presented by it as regards future patterns of education in religion, is considered in the final recommendatory chapter of this thesis<sup>(2)</sup>.

## B. NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Two areas of exploratory work are mentioned in the Board of Education's Report for 1973 which are interesting and which have exciting possibilities for future education in religion. The first relates to the Church's Youth work and concerns styles of living and learning i.e. the coming together of young people for a variety of purposes which have become a feature of modern life - in communes, semi-religious communities, for folk festivals and "pop" concerts etc. The Board's adviser (Revd. R. Yeomans) is specially interested in trying to determine:-

(1) V. Chapter 9 pp. 197ff. supra.

(2) V. Chapter 10 pp. 215 ff. supra.

a. What are the constant elements in community life which lead to integration rather than disintegration.

b. What is the value of community living to the individual and to the group in terms of inter-relationship and personal and inter-personal development.

c. How what is learned from a. and b. above, can be applied to community and individual development in a secular/Christian context<sup>(1)</sup>.

There is an important link here with the notions of personal analysis and interpersonal relationships, together with theories of group dynamics and human potential, that have been mentioned passim throughout this thesis. This area and its significance will again be considered in the final chapter<sup>(2)</sup>.

#### C. TRAINING INSTITUTES: ADULT EDUCATION

This area is closely linked with B. above, in that the same basic notions of group behaviour and dynamics is being examined as it relates to organisation development, marriage, staff development (i.e. "training of trainers") and team working such as team ministries or Diocesan teams such as the Education team described in Section C, Chapter 9. This investigation too will be pursued in terms of its significance to contemporary education in religion, and its relationship to the central themes of this thesis in the final chapter<sup>(3)</sup>.

(1) Annual Report of the Board of Education (1973) pp. 22 - 6.

(2) V. Chapter 10 pp. 215 ff.

(3) V. Chapter 10 pp. 215 ff.

APPENDIX 11

- B. TAP'S RECORDATION WITH ENCOUNTER GROUPS AND TECHNIQUES  
(American).
- A. COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF BOOKS ON ENCOUNTER GROUPS AND TECHNIQUES  
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\* We put this out only to share some favorite or key works. Please don't feel you should "cover it," particularly before you get to La Jolla.



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B. TAPE RECORDINGS WHICH RELATE TO ENCOUNTER GROUPS AND TECHNIQUES  
(American).

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21st Century Religion.

Recorded at the Esalen Institute,  
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2. George Leonard.

Ecstasy in Education.

Recorded at the Esalen Institute,  
Big Sur, California.

3. Peter Marin.

The Captive Child.

Recorded at the Center for the  
Study of Democratic Institutions,  
Santa Barbara, California.

4. Carl Rogers.

The Intensive Group.

Recorded at the Esalen Institute,  
Big Sur, California.

5. William Schutz.

Principles and Philosophy  
of Open Encounter.

Recorded at the Esalen Institute,  
Big Sur, California.



APPENDIX 12

SELECT LIST OF BOOKS (AMERICAN) WHICH RELATE TO THE APPLICATION  
 OF HUMANISTIC TEACHING AND ENCOUNTER GROUP TECHNIQUE TO  
 SCHOOL AND COLLEGE EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES:

NOTE: These texts are all published under the aegis of the Center for Study of the Person, La Jolla, California under the joint editorship of Dr. Carl Rogers and Dr. William Coulson - with whom I have worked as a staff member at La Jolla (v. Chapter 10 p. 239 footnote 3).

All are published in the series "Studies of the Person" by the Chas. E. Merrill Co., Columbus, Ohio and are available in the Totley-Thornbridge College of Education Library, Sheffield.

- Clark D. H. and Kadis A. L. Humanistic Teaching.
- Corey G. F. Teachers Can Make a Difference.
- \*\* Coulson W. R. A Sense of Community.
- \*\* Dillon J. T. Personal Teaching.
- Lyon H. C. Learning to Feel - Feeling to Learn.
- Rogers C. R. Freedom to Learn.
- Romey W. D. Risk-Trust-Love: Learning in a Humane Environment.

APPENDIX 13

SELECT LIST OF TEACHING MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN U.S.A. RELATING  
SPECIFICALLY TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS AWARENESS  
THROUGH GROUP ENCOUNTER TECHNIQUES (with examples).

A. BIBLIOGRAPHY

One of the best-known series of books in U.S.A. written by Lyman Coleman and dealing with the application of group techniques to the growth of religious awareness, is published by Word Inc., Waco, Texas with 12 titles viz:-

<u>Acts Alive</u>	:	a mini course in creative expression.
<u>Man Alive</u>	:	" " " " Christian communication.
<u>Festival</u>	:	" " " " film making.
<u>Celebration</u>	:	" " " " personal awareness.
<u>Kaleidoscope</u>	:	" " " " multi-media.
<u>Rap</u>	:	" " " " personal lifestyle.
<u>Breaking Free</u>	:	" " " " Christian liberation.
<u>Beginnings</u>	:	" " " " personal Bible study.
<u>Groups in Action</u>	:	" " " " small groups.
<u>Discovery</u>	:	" " " " Christian community.
<u>Serendipity</u>	:	" " " " personal relationships.
<u>Coffee House Itch</u>	:	" " " " coffee houses.

These books, published from 1968 onwards are described by the publishers as:-

"..... a new concept in religious education combining the sacred and the secular in a series of person-centred mini courses, based on the latest ideas in self-discovery, process learning and group dynamics.

The moment a student selects a course, he becomes a part of a team that works together in a series of fast-moving learning activities



small-group encounters.

Each course is open to all ages - from ninth grade to senior citizen. Control and leadership are exercised by the class itself. The teacher acts as a resource person.

The workbooks provide easy to follow instructions for each session, with special instructions for the leader".

## B. EXAMPLES OF CONTENT

Rap - a mini course in personal lifestyle has been taken here as an example of the kind of treatment which is to be found in the series. In this book there are 3 parallel tracks of group activity which offer the option of 3 different levels of relationships to choose from depending upon the interest and concern of the group viz:-

### Track 1 : RELATIONAL LABS.

- Lab. 1 - Getting Acquainted.
- 2 - What makes me Tick.
- 3 - My Family Portrait.
- 4 - A Fantasy Trip.
- 5 - Give a Vacation.
- 6 - An Appreciation Party.

### Track 2 : SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTERS.

- Encounter 1 - Evaluating My Attitudes.
- 2 - Evaluating My Objectives.
- 3 - Evaluating My Relationships.
- 4 - Evaluating My Ethics.
- 5 - Evaluating My Priorities.
- 6 - Evaluating My Lifestyle.

Track 3 : ENABLING SESSIONS.

- Session 1 - Making Right My Attitudes.
- 2 - Making Right My Objectives.
- 3 - Making Right My Relationships.
- 4 - Making Right My Ethics.
- 5 - Making Right My Priorities.
- 6 - Making Right My Lifestyle.

On the 3 following pages, examples are given of the approach to each of the tracks, taking the first session in each case viz:-

Relational Lab. 1 - Getting Acquainted.

Spiritual Encounter 1 - Evaluating My Attitudes.

Enabling Session 1 - Making Right my Attitudes.

## RELATIONAL LAB ONE

# Getting Acquainted

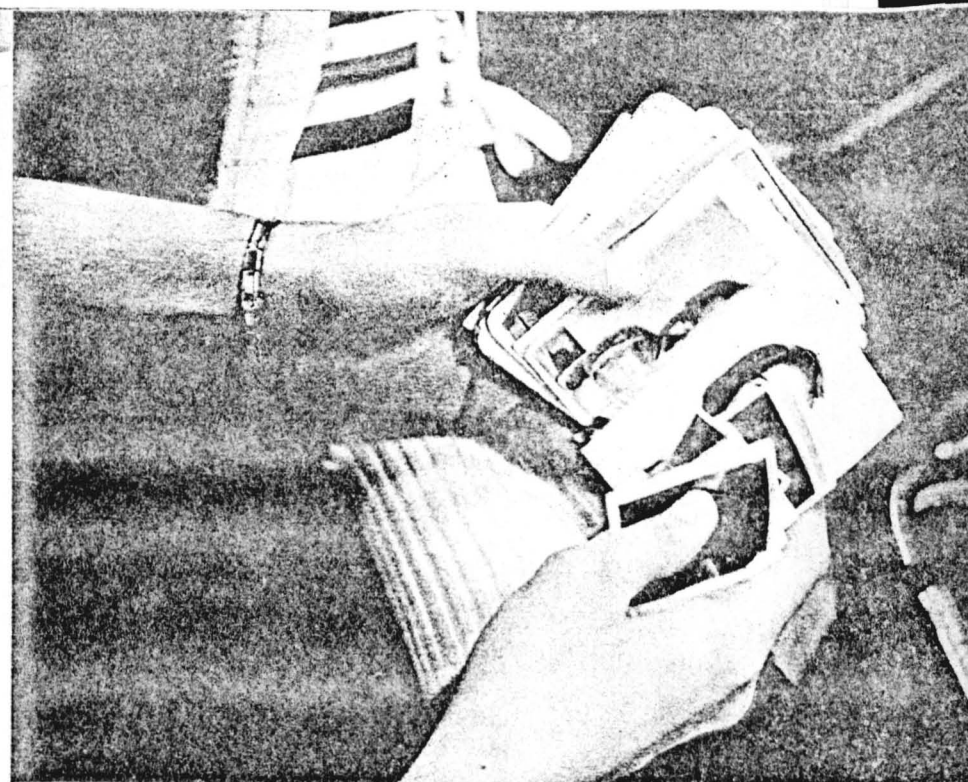
**Purpose:** To enable you to get acquainted in small groups and start building relationships of trust and confidence that will prove invaluable in later sessions.

**Setting:** A casual, informal atmosphere, with people sitting on the floor or in chairs that can be moved close together for groups of two, four, eight.

**Time:** 45 to 60 minutes, with a free period at the close for groups who want to continue a little longer. If you are able to give 90 minutes to this session, you may be able to include Spiritual Encounter 1 (see page 36).

**Materials required:** A workbook and pencil for everyone.

**Leadership:** The role of leader should rotate within the class to a different



person for each session. He should be assigned the week before so that he will be prepared to explain the procedure in his own words, model examples from his own life and collect any materials needed.

## PROCEDURE

The session is divided into three "group building" sharing exercises: (1) Pearls of Great Price — with everyone working individually and then in groups of two, with people who do not know each other getting together, (2) Swap Game — for groups of four, with each group of two finding a group they do not know, (3) Two Questions — in groups of four or eight, with each group of four doubling, if possible, with a group they do not know.

Time limits are suggested for each exercise, but play it by ear here; if there is not time for the third exercise, it is okay.

### Pearls of Great Price (15 minutes)

The object of this exercise is to enable you to explain to one other person the significant possessions and values in your present lifestyle.

1. In silence, look over the possessions you have with you (or on you) and select three things that you would classify as "very valuable" to you either in themselves or as symbols of your lifestyle. For instance, you might pick a *picture* of your girl friend as a symbol of relationships in your life; a *key* to your motorcycle as a symbol of ego satisfaction; one of your *sandles* as a symbol of your lifestyle of freedom.
2. The leader will call time in three minutes.
3. Explain your selection, including the *why*, to someone you do not know very well. The *why* is very important. For instance, you might select a *prayer medal* as one of your most valuable

possessions — not because it is valuable in itself, but because it symbolizes the significance of God in your lifestyle.

If there is time, rank the items in order of priority in your life; 1, 2, 3.

### Swap Game (15 minutes)

Here you evaluate your present lifestyle and share two things: (a) something you would like to add to your lifestyle, (b) something you would like to subtract from your present lifestyle.

1. Each team of two joins another team, preferably persons they do not know very well.
2. Close your eyes for a couple of minutes and imagine yourself stepping into a huge department store that specializes in every area of lifestyle: attitudes, values, relationships, vocation, habits. Pretend that the store manager says to you, *Select one thing in this store for yourself. It can be anything. But there is a condition. You must leave something that you presently have.*  
For instance, you might visit the attitudes department and pick up a box marked *Enthusiasm*. Or, you might stop at the values department and pick out a box labeled *People First*. Or, you might go to the relationships department and choose a large package of *Openness*.
3. Then you might decide to leave a *fear of nonconformity*, or, a *sense of personal inadequacy*, or, a *hot temper*.
4. In the groups, each person in turn

shares the swap he made at the store.

*Note: It will be very effective if the leader shares with the entire class what he would swap — in all honesty. This will set the pace for openness.*

### Two Questions (15 to 30 minutes)

In this exercise you pinpoint the motivating forces in your life and relate your insights to others.

1. If only 15 minutes are left, stay in groups of four; if there are 30 minutes or more, double up to make groups of eight.
2. In each group, pause a moment and think over how you would finish this statement: *The thing in my life that gives me the most satisfaction at the moment is . . . because . . .* Then, go around your group and let everyone explain what came to mind.  
For instance, one person might say, *My children, because they give me a sense of fulfillment*. Another person might say, *Working at the hospital as a volunteer, because I get a sense of joy in helping others*. Another person might say in all honesty, *Making money gives me the greatest satisfaction, because . . .*
3. If there is time left over, go around a second time so that everyone can finish this sentence, *The thing that I long for in my life at the moment is . . . because . . .*

*Note: Decide what you want to do at the next session — whether to take Lab 2 or move into the Spiritual Encounter track — and who is to be the leader.*



SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER 1 - EVALUATING MY ATTITUDES

*Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor:  
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!*

*Happy are those who mourn:  
God will comfort them!*

*Happy are the meek:  
they will receive what God has promised!*

*Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires:  
God will satisfy them fully!*

*Happy are those who show mercy to others:  
God will show mercy to them!*

*Happy are the pure in heart:  
they will see God!*

*Happy are those who work for peace among men:  
God will call them his sons!*

*Happy are those who suffer persecution because they do what God requires:  
the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them!*

MATTHEW 5 : 3 - 10 GNFM

# Evaluating My Attitudes

## PROCEDURE

The teacher divides the class into small groups.

## SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER ONE

(2) small groups

**Purpose:** To enable you to evaluate your attitudes about your present circumstances in the light of Scripture and share your results with a small group.

**Setting:** A casual, informal atmosphere, with people sitting on the floor or in chairs that can be moved closely together.

**Time:** 45 to 60 minutes, with a free

*"Happy are those who. . ."*



period following for groups who want to continue a little longer.

**Materials required:** A workbook and pencil for everyone.

**Leadership:** The role of leader should rotate within the class to a different person each session. He should be assigned the week before so that he can be prepared to explain the instructions in his own words.

The instructions for all six of the Spiritual Encounters — Track Two — are the same. If the class decides to switch tracks and go on to one of the Relational Labs or Enabling Sessions, the leader will need to become acquainted with the particular steps of the one chosen.

## PROCEDURE

The session is divided into three parts: (1) preliminary exercise — with each person working on his own, (2) small-group interaction — with everyone belonging to a group of four, (3) celebration — with each small group remaining the same or combining with another to make a group of eight.

### Preliminary exercise (10 minutes)

You will reflect over your life in view of the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

1. The Scripture passage on page 36 (also known as the Beatitudes) deals with the radical lifestyle of the followers of Jesus as far as their attitude or outlook on life is concerned. Read it slowly, pausing along the way to think about the meaning of each phrase for your own situation.

2. When you are through, look at page 39 and fill out the Reflection Questionnaire. Phase One deals with the Scripture passage. Phase Two deals with you. The Questionnaire is not a test of skill. There is no right or wrong and no grade at the close. It is simply a tool to focus your thoughts.

### Small-group interaction (15 minutes)

1. Move into groups of four persons each, preferably with others whom you do not know very well.

*Note: For a feeling of "community" it is important that each small group sit close together.*

2. To get started, everyone, in turn, shares what he circled for the first point in Phase One of the Questionnaire and explains why. The *why* will force you to deal with the reason behind the response — which is more important than the response itself.

3. Then everyone shares his thinking on the second point, etc., until you have gone through all of Phase One.

### Celebration (20 to 30 minutes)

The object of this part of the session is to celebrate life together. In a word, to "be" a real Christian Community — caring, sharing, bearing up each other in love, trust and acceptance.

1. Pause a few minutes to allow those who did not finish Phase Two of the Questionnaire to do so.

2. Depending upon the time schedule, you can decide to stay in groups of four or move into groups of eight. If you have only 20 minutes left, stay in groups of four. If you have 30 minutes or more, move into groups of eight.

3. Each person, in turn, explains how he would complete the first point in Phase Two. Then everyone explains the second point, etc., until the exercise is completed. Here is the heart of the session. Up to this point, everything has been theory. Now, it is for real.

*Note: The leader may want to share his own responses to Phase Two with the entire class. This will set the pace for honesty and openness.*

4. At the close, join together in a circle of love and celebrate your experience together in either song, word or prayer. (If there are several small groups meeting, each group should dismiss itself quietly and slip out without disturbing the others.)

*P.S. Don't forget to appoint a leader for the next session.*

ENABLING SESSION 1 - MAKING RIGHT MY ATTITUDES

FOR YOUR PARAPHRASE

FOR YOUR APPLICATION

1. In all honesty, what is the greatest "trial" you are facing at the moment?
2. What alternatives do you have for dealing with the problem?
3. Do you feel that you can trust the others in your small group to help you in dealing with the situation?

ENABLING SESSION

I

# Making Right My Attitudes

2. *My brothers, whenever you have to face trials of many kinds, count yourselves supremely happy . . .*
3. *. . . in the knowledge that such testing of your faith breeds fortitude,*
4. *and if you give fortitude full play you will go on to complete a balanced character that will fall short in nothing.*
5. *If any of you falls short in wisdom, he should ask God for it and it will be given him, for God is a generous giver who neither refuses nor reproaches anyone.*

JAMES 1 : 2-5 NEB



APPENDIX 14

DATA SHEET OF THE LA JOLLA PROGRAMME: TRAINING IN GROUP  
ENCOUNTER/SENSITIVITY TECHNIQUES (University of California,  
San Diego, Summer 1974).

# The La Jolla Program

Dr. Bruce Meador  
CO-DIRECTOR

Rev. Douglas Land  
CO-DIRECTOR

Dr. William Coulson  
CO-DIRECTOR

Dr. Carl R. Rogers  
CONSULTANT

## 1974 SUMMER INSTITUTE

The La Jolla Program of the Center for Studies of the Person announces its eighth summer of institutes for individuals interested in the application of group process to their own settings. Four institutes will be held in summer, 1974, on the campus of the University of California at San Diego: June 22 to July 8; July 13 to July 29; August 3 to August 19; August 24 to September 9.

The major emphasis of the program will be on directly experiencing the kind of group that is suggested by Dr. Rogers when he writes:

"It usually consists of ten to fifteen persons and a facilitator or leader. It is relatively unstructured, providing a climate of maximum freedom for personal expression, exploration of feelings, and interpersonal communication. Emphasis is upon the interactions among the group members, in an atmosphere which encourages each to drop his defenses and facades and thus enables the person to recognize and change self-defeating attitudes, test out and adopt more innovative and constructive behaviors, and subsequently to relate more adequately and effectively to others in his everyday life. . ."

Characteristic of the La Jolla Program, emphasis during the institute will be on direct experience in small groups (with staff facilitators) and an opportunity for institute participants themselves to facilitate weekend groups. In addition, there is growing emphasis on the importance of frequent, minimally-structured meetings of the entire institute community. Permeating the program — in the style of leadership exemplified by the majority of the staff and also offered in the community meetings — is a person-centered philosophy of group leadership, a view which emphasizes that there is maximum growth for both group and facilitator when the facilitator participates as a whole person rather than as a technical expert. The program is essentially for persons interested in experience with this philosophy of leadership.

Faculty of the program will include the co-directors and other facilitators — and, for an afternoon, Dr. Rogers. Participants can be expected to be from a variety of vocational backgrounds, including education, religion, counseling, and health.

Tuition is \$300.00. Room cost is \$6.50 per night per person for a double room (includes breakfast) and \$8.25 per night per person for a single room (includes breakfast).

Application should be made by letter, should include a \$25.00 application fee (non-refundable if accepted, and in addition to the \$300.00 tuition), and should contain the following information: name, address, telephone, sex, age, marital status, amount of previous group experience, and a brief statement of the applicant's vocational activities and reason for wanting to attend. Early application is suggested.

Participants wishing academic credit can receive their choice of three or six quarter units in connection with the summer institute, through the University of California Extension. The fee, payable to the Regents of the University of California, is \$7.50 per unit.



1125 Torrey Pines Road | La Jolla, California 92037 | Area Code (714) 459-3861

1974 Summer Institute dates: June 22 to July 8, July 13 to July 29, August 3 to August 19, August 24 to September 9

*An affiliated program of the Center for Studies of the Person, a non-profit corporation*

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