

New Baptists, New Opportunities

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delivered at 18th Baptist World Congress, Melbourne, January 2000

The claim is commonly made that we are in a post-denominational age, which is to say that if Christians once gave their loyalties to certain sets of denominational doctrines and practices with a degree of intention and exclusiveness, they do so no more. Within certain broad categories, large numbers of committed and admirable believers are exceedingly tolerant about denominational labels, apparently able to worship and work happily in a variety of denominational settings and relatively indifferent to the particular forms of church order they are likely to encounter there. This is not to say that all differences have been obliterated, simply that they have been redistributed. If once the churches were distinguished from each other vertically, so that people belonged to specific denominational identities, they are now more apt to be distinguished horizontally. Across the denominations therefore there are Christians and churches that are generally charismatic in tone, or generally evangelical, or generally traditional. Those from one denomination are more likely to be in sympathy with those who share their charismatic, evangelical or traditional concerns and who happen to be in other denominations than with those in their own who do not.

Most ministers are familiar then with the phenomenon of churches which are substantially peopled by members from outside their own denomination. Indeed in the great majority of Baptist churches in the UK, I would claim, you are hard put (more than anywhere else in Europe I have observed) to find more than a handful who could or would describe themselves as 'cradle' or 'pedigree' Baptists. I include myself in this. It is this new freedom, or it could be an indifference, regarding specifically denominational values, that can be described as post-denominationalism. A few observations are in place before setting out some thinking concerning the renewal of specifically Baptist distinctives within our current context.

Responses to post-denominationalism

The first thing to be said about this new situation is, who could regret it? In essence, the breaking down of denominational barriers must surely be welcomed as a good and enriching thing. There is one Lord, one faith and one baptism and so for any kind of barrier to be broken down in the church of Christ must be counted a good thing. It is slightly paradoxical that often this new degree of interchange is to be found in that end of the church which is least concerned about formal ecumenism. It has been claimed that the charismatic movement is the most

ecumenical movement of the twentieth century. It overcomes the sticking points of formal ecumenism (its debates about mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist and ministry) simply by sidestepping them and proceeding directly to a shared communion based upon a common experience of a mutually recognisable Christ. For historic denominational differences to be relativised by a new awareness of the spiritual life we have in common is a good thing. All are one in Christ Jesus.

A second thing, hinted at in the first, would be to observe that denominations are a somewhat ambiguous phenomenon. As they tell their own stories it would be deduced that they originated in a major issue of principle with a host body, or as renewal movements within a moribund church which chose to reject their testimony, or as communities spontaneously gathered around some fresh light and truth that broke forth from God's Word. All these interpretations have integrity and could be multiplied indefinitely to give an account of the huge quantity of denominations now in existence. On the other hand they cover over other factors that have also been in play. Richard Niebuhr argued persuasively enough[1] that most denominations originated for socioeconomic rather than theological reasons as a protest against the gullible acceptance by the church of middle-class and stultifying values. Personality clashes, power-politics and the desire for self-aggrandisement have played, and do play, their part in the proliferation of sectarian groups. Separatism may sometimes be an inevitable option when the church becomes hopelessly compromised, but it is also frequently a symptom of the narrowness of the human mind and spirit. Theological rationalisation can usually be supplied to justify prejudice and animosity. Denominations are both necessary, and arguably useful, and to be regretted, a sign of that tendency towards factionalism that was already beginning to threaten the earliest church[2].

Thirdly, the relativising of denominations is in keeping with developments in biblical studies. It has become increasingly clear both in Old and New Testament studies that diversity is as much an aspect of the biblical canon as unity[3]. Within the NT writings various tendencies in the development of the church can be discerned whether in Catholic, charismatic or mystical directions (witness the Pastoral epistles, the Pauline writings and the epistles of John respectively) which when more fully developed will lend justification to varying ways of being church. Varied ecclesiologies might therefore be seen as pointing to aspects of the biblical witness, all with their own places and integrity within the total scheme of things. It becomes increasingly difficult to claim that any one way of being church is the right way.

Fouthly, this leads on to the point that we are in an age when it no longer seems feasible to claim that one theology and practice of the church is right and all others wrong. Instead there are differing ways of being church which are supported by competing theologies which each

has its own coherence and integrity. We may indeed wish to argue that one theology has the edge over others but we are likely to find that there are aspects to being church that any one model will overlook and as a consequence we need the enrichment of ecclesiologies which inform, challenge and to a degree complement each other. No one of our traditions is the true church. The true church is something we have yet to become and we need each other's assistance for it to become a reality.

Questions to and for 'post-denominationalism'

Having made these points which in their own way affirm the new mood of post-denominationalism, let me now raise some questions about our present situation.

Firstly, although we may be in a post-denominational age it should not be imagined that denominations are about to go out of existence. There are many reasons why this will not happen, not least financial and institutional. Institutions have an ability to endure through time and to adapt themselves, if only for reasons of survival, to new situations. Many of our churches find when it comes to do with survival that denominational structures are necessary and useful in providing both resources and legitimation in today's world. Indeed there are some compelling reasons why such structures should continue to exist and indeed to thrive. If one of the proper concerns of our generation is the way in which religion can become corrupt and abusive then structures which are capable of bringing a degree of regulation have an enhanced role to play in the future. If the age of post-denominationalism is to be a free-for-all in which without accountability or institutional connectedness religious entrepreneurs do their own thing, I would suggest we all have cause for anxiety. Abusive religion is too well-documented for us to countenance this possibility. New religious movements typically depend upon a charismatic entrepreneur operating with the least amount of objective and institutional safeguards. To obviate this, either we utilise existing institutional frameworks or we invent new ones. But to invent new ones is to admit precisely that we are not in a post-denominational age. If personally I have tended with age and experience to become more of a denominationalist it is largely because I have seen how energetic and enthusiastic movements, while vital for us, also have a tendency to become eccentric. What is required is more than personal accountability exercised through relationship since even here the potential for self-delusion is considerable. It is some form of institutional accountability in which objectively defined procedures provide a framework less liable to be manipulated.

Secondly, the post-denominational claim must take account of the fact that denominational structures still function with a high degree of vitality in the contemporary world and are able to gather and mobilise large numbers of people for valuable and productive purposes. The overall

situation may be different now but that does not mean that there are no further roles to be played or functions to be fulfilled.

Thirdly, new movements that define themselves as post-denominational often come to display characteristics that can clearly be described as denominational. This is true in England among what are called the 'new' or 'Restorationist' groups which originated out of a strong polemic against the denominations. In a more settled phase of their existence they are coming to assume the character of well-defined, culturally similar and corporately closely-allied networks. If these are not denominations it is merely because denominations are deemed to be legally incorporated entities which the new churches have so far avoided being. In internal terms however they display all the characteristics of the shift from sect to denomination to which Richard Niebuhr drew attention. More interestingly, they demonstrate that there are aspects of denominational existence which are deemed to be of continuing value. Churches, for instance, feel the benefit of belonging to a wider movement in which there are shared direction, shared convictions and commonly-owned values. They desire leaders who have credibility and charisma and who exercise leadership across the spectrum of churches ('translocally' is a word that has come to describe this) not least by pointing to creative ways forward into the future. They appreciate the capacity to draw upon resources of personnel and expertise from a wider pool of relationships and contacts. They benefit from a clear sense of identity and mission. In so far as these resources are made available through denominations those denominations have a continuing role in the future.

Fourthly, it needs to be affirmed that the issues and questions out of which denominations have emerged have not gone away. Within the charismatic movement it is indeed the case that the quality of a living spiritual experience can bring people together across theological divides and circumvent for a time the sticking points between denominational groups. However, the fundamental questions of theology never go away. They always abide and must be returned to. Beyond the glow of shared fellowship there are still the hard questions of theological discourse which will raise their heads again in due course. Integral to these are questions about the nature of the church itself which lie at the root of so much denominational proliferation. The 'new Baptists' in the title to this chapter is an indication that even as denominational boundaries become more porous a re-appropriation of basic denominational values and identities can be taking place. Of course, they will be being 're-imagined' since no one age is completely like another. But classical ideas, rather than transient ones, have the ability to reinvent themselves again and again. Baptists represent a classical position.

It appears therefore that if we are in a post-denominational age this does not mean an age in which denominations have no role to play. It is rather akin to a paradigm shift in which that role

is re-framed and reconceived according to the general shifts in perception which govern people's overall view of reality. The continuing contribution of denominations within this new paradigm is still to be made. It will be one in which we may gladly accept the relativisation of denominational positions and see the new appreciation of diversity as an opportunity for fruitful interaction in which we learn from those of other traditions and wherever possible allow ourselves to be enriched by their insights, incorporating these into our own way of being church. On the basis of this approach I would like in the remainder of this chapter to argue for at least one way in which the identity of the Baptist tradition needs to be modified, and then to outline ways in which this tradition can speak out of its history to the present with both integrity and attractiveness.

Modifications and assertions

Whatever the ambiguities of the existence of denominations there are two positives that are worth asserting: (1) They have often borne witness to important aspects of theological truth that the wider church was in danger of neglecting or denying. (2) They have provided opportunities for communion between individual congregations that have given meaning to the catholicity of the church. I am writing this book as a 'Baptist Christian'. That term for me is a useful one. It first gained currency in British Baptist circles as it was used by Dr David Russell, a former general secretary of the Union. He in turn borrowed it from the Russians, among whom it was common to refer to 'Christians-Baptists'. The use of the term indicates that this is one way, among other ways, of being a Christian. The other ways are to be respected. Being Christians has priority, being Baptist is a secondary variation on this theme. This is the relativisation of which I have already spoken. Furthermore, among people of this persuasion, and largely under the influence of James William McClendon, Jr [4], sometimes 'Baptist' has become 'baptist', in recognition of the fact that those who are called Baptist are in fact part of a broader 'baptist' movement in which common values and perspectives are widely shared although diversely expressed. Sometimes this has also been identified as the 'believers' church' tradition and once more seen as a broad spectrum of groups with commitments such as believers baptism, religious liberty, the separation of church and state and the self-governing congregation held in common[5]. In this chapter I shall from this point prefer the use of 'baptist' in order to place 'Baptist' identity within its broader context. It is my contention here both that this tradition is well-placed to contribute in mission to post-modern society and that it itself needs to learn from the wider tradition of the whole church in specific ways. In both these ways, by means of what it can give and what it can learn, as it undergoes renewal so its impact upon the contemporary world can be viewed with a degree of optimism.

Because radical and dissenting groups have often found themselves on the margins of society they have needed to seek solidarity with those who are like-minded in order to endure. For baptists in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this meant that the individual congregations springing up sought to build links of association with other such congregations. Associating and associations were therefore part of their life from an early date. Despite this, it is an enduring tendency of such groups that they fragment. In the debates that surrounded the Reformation the opponents of the Reformers, such as John Eck, quite quickly identified a potential weakness in the position of those like Luther who stressed the importance of individual interpretation of Scripture. Whereas there is a prophetic heroism in the cry, 'My conscience is captive to the Word of God. Here I stand I can do no other', it also opens the door to infinite fragmentation of the church according to idiosyncratic biblical interpretation and the sensitivity of individual consciences. Given this tendency, there are few theological safeguards in this tradition to prevent it happening. Because the local is affirmed as having priority over the catholic and the universal, the sense of the place of the local church within the life of the catholic church is easily lost once combined with the innate human tendency to neglect wider concerns (those things which concern the whole) when involved in the parochial (those things which concern me). It is an enduring and continually repeated flaw in this way of being church that autonomy becomes independency. Each church does what is right in its own eyes. This is sometimes flaunted as the 'Baptist way' and defended against those who want to 'meddle and interfere' in the life of the local church.

If there is any point at which the Baptist/baptist tradition needs to learn from the wider church it is in the recognition that we are part of a movement sweeping forward through time from Christ and his apostles in the power of the Spirit and that we are eccentric and potentially heretic in so far as we neglect the Body of Christ in all its dimensions. Fundamental openness to other churches is an essential quality for being church[6], even if each local church has within itself the competence to govern itself. This recognition ties in with what we have noted as one of the continuing potential contributions of denominations. They incarnate a way in which the catholicity of the church, our involvement with one another, may be expressed, provided they remain open to the wholeness of the church of Christ.

If it is the case that churches are at their healthiest when they know themselves to be part of a movement, bound together by common values, drawing upon each other for encouragement and resources, and looking to leaders who are gifted and qualified to fulfil their calling for the good of the whole, then rediscovering this dimension of church life is long overdue. Denominational leaders need to apply themselves to making it a reality. Its rationale is the same as that which baptists use to validate their understanding of the local Christian church. If the church comes into being and is empowered to be church by the presence of the Christ who

is in the midst of the twos or threes who come together in his name[7], then Christ is also present in the wider church whenever it gathers, in celebration or synod, and the local congregation needs to be effectively joined to this wider church. Relationships between the members of the churches are the means by which this happens. Denominational structures, in potential at least, provide a vehicle for such relating and should be seeking in their own renewal of their mission, to be bringing this to pass.

At this point it may help to recap on the argument that we have been advancing. First of all we have welcomed post-denominationalism in so far as it points to a new, larger and more humble awareness of our belonging together as the people of God. Secondly we have argued that within a post-denominational paradigm denominations will still have a constructive role to play and need to adapt to this, not least by a more active learning from each other. This role will consist of the continuing functions of those denominations in the service of the churches and their particular witness or charism as regards their theology and practice. Thirdly, as far as the baptist or believers church tradition is concerned, the most significant weakness in theology relates to a larger sense of the church catholic within which distinct congregations are to be nurtured. To rediscover this sense of being a relational, missionary movement is both theologically necessary and practically functional. It is for the health of churches that they know themselves to be part of a movement with shared convictions and values. In a so-called post-denominational world the more active provision of this dimension is one of the primary ways in which denominations will adapt to the new paradigm. With this in mind I now wish to return to the theological distinctives of the baptist tradition and argue for their viability in post-modern society.

The vitality of distinctives

Denominations have usually stood for some aspect or aspects of the total truth of Christianity which has or have been neglected by the wider church. They have often played a prophetic role, reminding the church of part of its legacy. I here advance the claim, which some might regard as pretentious, that a further reason why denominational boundaries have been being superceded is because by default or design the church at large has begun to adopt values for which baptist Christians have historically stood. It follows that if the reasons for holding a separate identity begin to be removed, then barriers and boundaries will be eroded and re-negotiated.

I refer at this point to an article written by Martin Marty in 1983 which makes the point rather succinctly: 'Baptistification takes over'[8]. His argument was that across the board the churches have tended to assume baptistic positions. Similar points are made at even higher theological

levels. Free churches are spoken of as the churches of the future[9]. Baptistification means still being Catholic, Anglican or Lutheran but in different ways. Marty is clearly not persuaded that this is a good thing, and if the process involves assuming baptist bad points we should sympathise with this judgement. However, overall it is hard to feel regretful that values for which one's own tradition has struggled have gained wider acceptance. It may help to pass some of these values in review.

For instance, we are hard put today to find Western church bodies that deny full religious liberty to the citizens of earth. It is a regrettable fact of post-Communist times that in Eastern Europe many of the traditionally established Orthodox churches are demonstrating an unreconstructed territorialism. Even in countries such as Belgium, France and Israel, threats to religious freedom exist at this present time. The argument has clearly not been won in all places and religious freedom is a commitment that needs to be explicitly re-awakened, and advocated, in the spectrum of baptist convictions. However, church bodies that were once the very deniers of the liberty they sought now present themselves as though this is a human right for which they have always struggled. The Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, explicitly since Vatican II, would now see themselves in the vanguard of those who work for religious liberty. If this is 'baptistification' it is long overdue.

Historically this is a shift for which Baptists can with integrity claim some credit. Although the granting of religious liberty has more than a little to do with the religiously sceptical values of the Enlightenment, these themselves owe something to the general trajectory of Protestant thought and to that tradition which goes back to the Anabaptists in the sixteenth and the Baptists at the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. It was here that the call for religious freedom was first of all articulated and advocated and this freedom, to worship and believe without let or hindrance, is surely the root of all the other freedoms we have come to enjoy. Coming from this tradition equips those who are in it to speak meaningfully and with integrity about the maintenance of this fundamental freedom and its protection against all ideologies, whether religious, anti-religious or irreligious. It is a fundamentally political voice. The fact that others have come to agree with us is an encouragement.

Related to this is the issue of voluntarism, the belief that religious acts derive their value from being freely chosen rather than compelled. It is always necessary at this point to distinguish the differing qualities of 'freedom'. From a Christian perspective, rooted in a recognition of human spiritual inability, we are not free to choose God: we become free when we are set free by the prevenient approach and grace of God. However, because this is God's work and God's work alone it cannot be prescribed or compelled by powers political or ecclesiastical. A commitment to religious liberty has as its corollary the belief that people and communities should be allowed

space within which they may make their own responses, choices and decisions. Believers baptism as part of participation in a believers church has been the symbol of this in contrast with infant baptism, which is seen as overriding or omitting an aspect of baptism which is fundamental to its sacramental significance: personal response to and appropriation of divine grace through faith. A series of developments in a baptist direction are worth noting here ranging from the critique of infant baptism by that towering Reformed theological genius Karl Barth[10], to the advocacy of 'responsible baptism' by Jürgen Moltmann (also Reformed)[11], to the recognition in the ecumenical discussion document Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry that believers baptism should be seen as the normative mode of baptism, to the widespread calls in the Church of England for the reform of infant baptism and even its abandonment. Indeed the Alternative Service Book of the Church of England makes provision for services of infant baptism and of child presentation, along the lines of the service of dedication and blessing used in Baptist circles. Parents may choose.

Once more, its commitment to voluntarism positions the baptist tradition well in a post-modern world which is so highly individualised that it rejects anybody's right to determine the direction of someone else's life. In explaining Baptist core convictions it is often the case that believers baptism is quickly understood by ordinary people to be coherent and appropriate. It may be objected that this is accommodation to the individualist spirit of the age. But there is an individualism that is inherent in original Christianity. Jesus called individuals to the decisive choice of discipleship. When stressing that the way to life is 'narrow'[12] he meant not least that only one can pass along it at a time. We enter the kingdom of God one by one and not en masse or on someone else's ticket.

Out of the commitment to freedom and voluntarism comes the commitment to evangelism. If it cannot be taken for granted that people are born as believers (as with the older territorial churches) and if people must come to a place of decision and commitment on their own account, it follows that the primary role of the church is to bear witness to Christ in life and in word so that people may come to faith and be gathered into the church. Increasingly the churches of the West have abandoned the idea of belonging to a uniform Christendom in which all are Christians and in which the church's call is to be a pastoral church supporting from cradle to grave those who are already deemed to be in the faith. The concept of the missionary church has come to the fore, even in the European homelands of modern missionary societies and even in those churches which formerly saw mission as something that could only be done overseas. In this shift contemporary churches are once more following that already made several centuries ago when the baptist churches emerged out of the rejection of the Christendom assumption. It is to be noted that while Luther and Calvin and their followers rejected much in the medieval church they did not abandon the idea of Christendom or of the

corpus christianum. As a consequence their missionary strategy was not aimed at converting the lost but at winning to their side those who controlled society, whether this be the prince (as in the case of Luther) or the town council (as in the case of Calvin). On the principle cuius regio eius religio (whoever ruled determined the religion of their territory), the strategy proceeded by imposition rather than persuasion. By contrast the Anabaptists, once they had embraced the believers church and believers baptism, and having rejected the notion that all of Europe was Christian, set out intentionally to win converts and to plant churches. They were enormously successful, despite the odds ranged against them. Their theological assumptions prepared them for their mission since they believed that the majority of people were not truly Christians and that their evangelism could not and should not rely upon secular power to make them so. They needed to hear the message, be persuaded by the Spirit of God and believe. Neither is it surprising that within the baptist traditions in particular there has been an enormous energy for mission which has led to rapid church growth in many parts of the world, to the point that Christianity is now more a religion of the southern hemisphere than of the north.

Within the contemporary world a resistance has grown up to the idea and the practice of evangelism which might seem to put those committed to it at a disadvantage. People do not wish to be 'preached to' and the idea that anybody has a monopoly on the truth has become more and more unacceptable to them. Strident voices, in particular the purveyors of religion, are often perceived as being in all probability corrupt, hypocritical, imperialistic and manipulative. It is this kind of reaction that we were responding to in speaking of the courage to be modest. On the other hand the baptist tradition gains credibility in the modern world for a number of reasons. It does not look for any privileged position in society but accords equal freedoms to other voices, simply asking for itself the same freedoms enjoyed by others. It recognises that to be effective it must speak intelligently and persuasively to this generation and that it cannot rely upon capital accumulated from the past. Above all it relies upon the content of its message for its very survival and is not prepared for reasons of survival to take the position of a sect, a mystery religion, a new age therapy or an interest group. Its message is for everyone without favour towards colour, ethnicity, class, status or gender.

Here we can identify a further distinctive, that of equality. Although baptists within their congregations may honour those who hold office among them it is understood that those who so lead are drawn from among the people and are of one stuff with them. Their calling is to service among the people not domination over them. It is therefore true that the baptist way of being church is a contributory factor in the emergence of democratic societies in which people are not treated unequally by virtue of caste, status or birth. Baptists are therefore unlikely to be people who show excessive deference or who are overly impressed by those who hold power.

In societies which are deeply committed to such equality they are able to point to a history which has consistently stood for such a view.

A peculiarity of the baptist tradition has been to do with the use and abuse of power. It is under this heading that we may group a cluster of beliefs and practices that come here to the fore. While its commitment to religious liberty and its insistence upon the rights of individual conscience may be seen as a rejection of totalitarian government, this has been paralleled in the internal life of congregations by understandings of how churches should be governed. The monarchical rule of prince bishops was unambiguously rejected, its corruptions actual and potential being all too obvious. Similarly the oligarchical tendencies of Presbyterianism were rejected in favour of the self-government of each congregation. As noted, wrongly understood this is one of the potential weaknesses of the tradition, but rightly understood and practised, that is with due reference to the wider communion of churches which has spiritual and moral if not legal authority, it is also one of its great strengths. At its best, church government is exercised by the people, closest to their own situation and with maximum ownership of decisions made. Such flexibility grants church members a high degree of involvement in their own destinies. Properly understood although the outward form of such government is democratic its intention is christocracy, the rule of Christ who is head of the church.

Once more it is significant to note how within those churches against which the baptist tradition was a protest forms of government have undergone change. This is least clear in the Roman Catholic tradition, although even here there is a clear shift away from the prelacy and ultramontanism of pre-conciliar Catholicism with its focus upon the rule of the papacy towards the recognition of the pastoral authority of each bishop in his diocese, that authority emerging from the pastoral care of the churches. Within other traditions, the desire to play down the element of hierarchical rule in favour of values of mutuality and enabling has become the watchword.

In relation to wider society, it is a strength of the baptist tradition that we have pioneered and hatched some of the formative ideas and practices that have come to be part of our standard expectation in democratic societies. Whereas I would not wish to engage in the ideological eulogising of democracy that goes on (even in democracies it basically comes down to the majority being ruled by a privileged minority), so far in organised human experience this is the least worst way we have found of doing things. Some of the credit for that must go to our own forerunners in the faith and this gives us the credibility to speak not only about personal salvation but to the powers of our day and of our world about what makes for good, corporate and political existence.

Concluding reflections

The point to which we have now come is one in which we can affirm that out of this tradition the values of this tradition are worth speaking and worth hearing in our contemporary world. It needs to be stressed that any reasons for sustaining a denominational identity of any kind should not be merely for form's sake or to preserve the past. As a recent publication asserts, 'A focus on the preservation of relics from the past or an exercise in mere denominationalism is the worst and duller form of fundamentalism'[13]. However, to be able to speak both to the wider church and to the world out of a tradition that has been consistent, and out of a living community that to the best of its ability is seeking to live by the values of that tradition, is to speak with greater authority than if we were speaking only from ourselves and for ourselves. The voice has the greater authority because the content of our speech makes for human dignity and freedom. It has been said that a movement that does not have a past does not have a future. Those of us who are Baptist Christians have a past, and are drawn towards an even better future. Our past reaches back to Abraham and Moses, to Jesus and to Paul, to Luther and to Calvin, to Conrad Grebel and to Felix Manz, to John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, to Billy Graham and Martin Luther King. Because we stand in the living trajectory that arises from them we have things that are worth saying and that should be said. It may be in a post-denominational, post-modern and indeed post-Christian age that they are said. But they are worth saying. And they demand voices.

[1] The Social Sources of Denominationalism (1929).

[2] 1 Corinthians 1: 12 – 5.

[3] E.g. J. D. G. Dunn, Unity and Diversity in the New Testament (London: SCM, 2nd edition 1990).

[4] Systematic Theology: Ethics (Nashville: Abingdon 1986), 19 – 20.

[5] Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believers Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism (London: Macmillan 1968).

[6] Miroslav Volf, After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1998), 156.

[7] Matthew 18: 18 – 20.

[8] Christianity Today, September 2 1983, 32-6.

[9] For further summary see Volf, After Our Likeness, 11 – 8.

[10] The Teaching of the Church Regarding Baptism (London: SCM Press 1948).

[11] The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Eschatology (London: SCM Press 1977), 240.

[12] Matthew 7: 14.

[13] R.L Kidd, ed., *Something to Declare* , 54.