

## 6. Mission For Today

I once had the ticklish task of interviewing two churchmen, one from West Germany and the other from behind the Iron Curtain, both on the same television programme. The object of the exercise was to find out as much as I could in the half-hour at our disposal, about the life of the church in their respective countries. It seemed to me that a testing question would be, 'What does your Church do about Evangelism, about taking the Gospel to those who do not believe?' The German came first, a pleasant, stout bishop who seemed the personification of that good and affluent life with which his countrymen have replaced the ruins of Hitler's War.

'Ah!' he said, his eyes coming alight, 'we do so many things! Take television such as we are using at the moment. We make many religious programmes with skilled and able producers. It is the same with radio. We make films too which are shown in the commercial cinema. Then we employ fine photographers, writers and artists who can make attractive books for us to sell in our many bookshops throughout the country. Why, even at night, you can see a great neon sign up high in West Berlin with Gospel texts which change from time to time.' He paused, then added, 'Yes, we use all the Mass Media to the full for evangelism.'

I felt almost ashamed to turn to our other guest, the late Dr Josef Hromadka from Czechoslovakia, and began, half-apologetically, 'I don't suppose many of these things are possible for you, Doctor.' He smiled that most charming smile of his and said, 'No, none of them! You see, in my country we are only able to preach the Christian Gospel *inside* our churches. It is not permitted to do so outside them.' The smile vanished and he became deadly serious, 'And outside them we have only ourselves to out-Christian the

vividly said. What if he is further correct when he says we can only do this on our knees? Are we up to facing the discipline and the demands which the remaking of our minds, the transforming of our whole natures, will lay upon us? There is no short-cut to such painful discipleship. Yet it is the personal witness of Christians in the most forbidding of circumstances which wins the respect of those they are seeking to serve, rather than the preaching of sermons and the repeating of slogans which nevertheless have their place in the ideological struggles of our day.

It was something very like this which Jesus himself advocated in his Parable of the Leaven. That his men and women, his New Society, are upon this earth to sweeten it, to be a light for those who are lost, to be a ferment amongst all men and their activities, a ferment for goodness until the whole is leavened. The Josef Hromadkas of this world are without pride and self-seeking. They are gentle, merciful, peacemakers, pure in heart, yet with a surprising toughness of spirit when under pressure or even downright persecution. The quality of their living has to be, quite literally, Christ-like. When Jesus showed his goodness in what he said and did, the quisling Matthews left behind their desks of extortion and betrayal and went after him; similarly the Magdalenes their sordid living which made lust out of one of man's most wonderful instincts. The ordinary folk too, sick of their failures, their mistakes, their unhappiness in personal relations, sought him and his way of living. There was no need to preach at them, although there certainly was a measure of preaching. But chiefly, whether in his speaking or in his living, they at once became aware of being in the presence of Goodness. In that light, their own uncleanness was shown up and they turned to him for healing and renewal.

Men and women became Christians by the sheer quality of the lives of the first Christians as much as by any preaching. Those who showed forth this Christ-like quality in their daily living, had learned it at Christ's school. They themselves became the Leaven through which mankind was to be transformed. In Old Testament terms, they were the Remnant through which Israel was to be saved. Or in twentieth-century terms, they were the 'Creative

Minority', to use Toynbee's striking phrase, which has within it the ideological power to change society. How dramatically we have seen that secular power at work in our day and generation. Today, in our own land, it is endlessly at work through the dedicated Communist and leftist minorities who, against all the run of feelings, take power in trade unions. At General Elections, the people of Scotland and Britain reject overwhelmingly the Communist candidates. The same people, or the men amongst them, time after time, opt out of looking after their own affairs and give the power to this dedicated and ruthless minority. Did I say 'ruthless'? In ideological terms, yes; in practical terms they are the folk who care about their neighbours. They will give up the enjoying of the 'good life' to study, to read, to equip themselves to know the answers of the problems which are to their hands. They will give up leisure time to work long hours on union business and at union meetings. They will willingly accept office and sweat hard at it in order to win the cases of the inevitable injustices which appear in any large and complex organization of today. I envy them for Christ, for their daily work and witness is like unto that which his disciples should be carrying out. Indeed it is the same witness, which by a tragic contradiction, the same Communists are out to crush in the lives of the Hromadkas of the Iron Curtain countries. Yet, in practical terms, the Communist-cell which is at the heart of so much of our industrial discontents, is simply the secular application of Jesus' Strategy of the Leaven.

A quarter of a century ago, we devised a form of participatory radio broadcast called *The Word for Living*, a title still used in BBC-Scotland, although the form is different now. The original *Word for Living* was concerned with what we have already called a School for Discipleship. The attempt was to encourage listeners either to join with the group of lay people in the broadcast, or indeed to form such a group of their own. The pattern was simple. It assumed that the Bible did indeed contain God's Word for daily living, that his promises were to be trusted, that he would provide strength to live in his way to those who seriously sought so to do. A group of ordinary church members, never more than 20 and more usually around 12 in numbers, gathered

around a given passage of scripture with their minister. Broadcast No. 1 consisted of hearing them at Bible Study of this passage, of selecting the key text or promise or insight it offered. Having agreed upon this Bible Truth, they then went out into the new week, promising to try to live by its insight or promise. Broadcast No. 2 began with each member of the group saying, quite frankly, how they had got on in their attempt to live by the Word.

I shall not forget that second broadcast. For when the minister asked the question there was one of those long silences greatly disliked by BBC sound engineers. Then up spoke an elder who was also a bank manager. 'I've had a terrible week,' he said. 'The mere fact that I was trying to be a Christian has weighed me down. There's a lot of responsibility in my job and I do not suffer fools gladly. Time and time again I've been on the point of picking up my phone and blasting some fool, when something's said to me, "You can't do that! You're a Christian, remember?"' He paused and shook his head. 'If that's what being a Christian is about, I think I'll have to pack it in. It certainly has reduced my efficiency to zero.'

'That's the way I feel too,' said a young woman. 'I'm a nurse, and I'm in a ward where there's a lot of pain and real suffering. I'd come to terms with it, I think. But this last week has been awful. Somehow I've become so sensitive to people's pain that I can hardly do my job.'

You can imagine that thus far, I was beginning to become anxious too! I could see the prospect of any broadcast at all rapidly disappearing. Then up spoke a middle-aged woman. 'I've had a grand week!' she declared. 'I'm a housewife and from morning to night I've kept thinking about our Bible passage and what it says and that's led me on to think about my husband and my son and daughter at school and at work. Somehow or other the two have come together and my thoughts for them have been prayers based upon the meaning of the passage. It's been a grand week for I've been able to remember my family and, I believe from what they've told me, I've been able to win some help for them in difficult situations.' Then she turned to the nurse and said, 'I was a nurse before I married. Now I found that the

best way to face suffering in the ward was . . .' and so she passed on her much greater experience to her younger sister.

Then a remarkable thing happened. One by one, the difficulties and the problems of their daily living came out. But as they came out, they were problems shared. Some members of the group had had an easy time of it in comparison with the banker and the nurse. But soon those who were up against difficult living were told by the others, in effect, 'You won't be on your own next week. We'll all be with you, praying for you.' So corporate living and corporate prayer came, quite naturally, into being.

Over the next ten years, we did many series of this radio broadcast and attempted it more than once on television with not nearly the same amount of success on the more self-conscious medium. The Rev. Wilson Anderson led the first rural series from his parish of Aberfeldy. People still speak of its reality. Its effects duly led Wilson into my department where he served so faithfully for 15 years. A number of listening groups started up in parishes. Practically all the broadcasting groups became so excited and impressed with their own experiences as they worked out their Word for Living, that they insisted on carrying on their group-study-action long after the broadcasts were over. The Rev. Dr William Smellie, minister for over 30 years of the city-kirk of St John the Baptist, Perth, with all the civic and church responsibilities which such a charge involves, said to me, not long before he died in 1972, 'If ever I have been with Jesus in my lifetime, it has been in and through my congregational-study-action group which grew out of those *Word for Living* broadcasts so long ago'.

Such a group in every congregation, was at the heart of the Tell Scotland Movement of Evangelism which dominated the Scottish Church scene in the fifties. At the peak of the Movement, there were about 800 of them in existence. Many found the going difficult indeed and soon faded away, others broke through to the kind of experience which Dr Smellie described.

On a slightly larger scale, the Iona Community's conception of building Parish Mission upon the New Testament Mission of the Seventy, had many of the same elements. Beginning in his

Govan Parish days, George MacLeod worked out a Mission of Friendship whereby church volunteers visited every home, office and industrial concern within the parish area, bringing with them a simple greeting and message of friendship from the parish church, a practice now well established throughout the land. As the Seventy visited, they became bound together as a real fellowship.

When we planned such a parish mission in my first and only charge of Trinity, Coatdyke, George MacLeod suggested to us that the volunteers should be prepared for their venture in much greater depth. In fact, in many churches, a great number of the members did not know each other, let alone strangers to be welcomed into their midst. Indeed, unless members did know each other, unless there was a recognizable and attractive fellowship within the church, what was the point of inviting any stranger to enter and join? So we spent a year on 'Mission to Ourselves', designed to help us all to get to know each other and to deepen our own Christian witness and fellowship, thus attempting to increase the friendship and the warmth into which we were hoping to welcome strangers.

In the event, it was a thoroughly worthwhile exercise. Indeed it would have been so without the outward-going Mission, but added to this limited objective, it gave an urgency and purpose to what we were attempting. Most important of all, when the two years of internal and external mission were past, many of the ordinary folk who had been involved in them had found the experience so stimulating and helpful to their daily Christian living that they asked for a continuation of the volunteer group, to carry out Bible Study and training for discipleship. In an entirely working-class congregation, centred on the iron and steel industry, this was a fascinating experience which revealed the complete inability of many to understand the meaning, and indeed many of the words, of the Authorized Version of the Bible. This frustration was highlighted for me when a tough, iron-worker elder came to my vestry in tears one day. He produced a battered little Bible, and told me his mother had given it to him when he joined the Army during the 1914-18 War. She had made him promise to read a chapter a day. 'I've kept my promise ever since,' he said

deeply moved, 'but I havenae understood whit it says. Ye see, it's no' written the way I think or speak.'

When I put this point to the group, three-quarters of them agreed with his devastating comment. We at once began to work with modern translations, such as Moffatt and Weymouth, and, of course, J. B. Phillips' *Letters to the Young Churches* which really arose from a similar need expressed to Canon Phillips by a Boys' Club with whom he worked. There have been many translations and paraphrases of the New Testament since then, notably the *New English Bible* on the one hand, and *The Living Bible* on the other. But what emerged through my group went further than my elder's confession. Even with the best of translations, in the simplest of English, there was still required a great deal of straightforward explanation and teaching from myself, the only person in the parish qualified so to do.

The more we looked at this problem, the more it affected, not only our exposition of Scripture, but also the language of liturgy, commonly used in worship. Again for most, it was equally a foreign tongue, despite the glories of the Collects and the superb language of the *Book of Common Prayer*, together with the rather more verbiage of our own *Book of Common Order*. The problem then became, how to express the adoration, the confession, the absolution, the intercession and thanksgiving, the dedication of common people in a common tongue, without sounding so banal and pedestrian that all the wonder and mystery and otherness of Common Worship was lost upon the worshippers. Some radical critics would say that it was precisely this 'religiousness' which Jesus came to abolish. I wonder. He obviously attended regularly and faithfully the worship of the synagogue until they put him out, while, in one sense, it was his loyalty to the Great Festivals of the Jewish Faith which brought him to Jerusalem for the last and fatal time.

From that day to this, there has been a demand for more teaching, more explanation by the layman, a demand which has taken many forms. Such movements as the Adult Christian Education Movement which still continues but now under the guise of Parish Education. The Scottish Christian Industrial

Order, that short-lived but lively emphasis; the late D. P. Thomson's Visitation Evangelism; the many forms of the House Church movement; all these with straight-forward Bible-Study groups have proliferated since the end of the Second World War. Yet quite clearly, they spell out two important lessons for us.

The first is that Bible-Study is not enough unless it is committed to showing the relevance of God's Word to everyday living, to the life of office, factory, school and home, which is the practical application of Jesus' own awesome words. 'Who so heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, shall be like a wise man.' It is a vital matter of both hearing and doing; the two cannot be separated in Christian faith and practice. The second point is the equally vital discovery that we do not struggle on to 'hear and do' as isolated individuals, but in company with other 'hearing and doing', struggling individuals. There is a mysterious alchemy at work as we so do. For we become part of each other. To use the historic word, we become welded into a *Koinonia*, a true fellowship which when properly in action, becomes the very Body of Christ upon earth, doing his mighty work of compassion and salvation.

We once filmed a House Church in action in a shipyard parish in the Lower Clyde. About a dozen folk were gathered together, shipyard workers and their wives. Three of them never went near a church and one was, for reasons best known to himself, a professing Communist. The group began by reading the Ten Commandments which they were seeking to study. An elder was in charge, the minister was simply there to explain and expound—and for the rest of the time, to keep silent, an exceedingly difficult role for any minister! The Commandment under scrutiny was 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy'. In no time they were up to the eyes in earthy discussion about Sunday work and overtime in a society which paid, in those days, low basic wages, and got more work out of the workers by offering extra time for Sundays and overtime. The formula for reasonable living at an economic wage was, 'Two nights and a Sunday', i.e. two extra nights' work plus Sunday work was necessary to produce a living wage. Wives and husbands joined fully and articulately into that discussion in language which everyone understood, even

the minister. They saw no solution except a more just society which could only be brought about through their own hard work within the trade union movement and political parties.

Then they stopped for a tea-break, but a tea-break with a purpose. During the noisy chatter which ensued, they discussed the news of their street, the folk in it and their problems. Old Mrs Broon had been taken ill and was in hospital. That left her daughter, Jessie, alone, and Jessie was not quite all there, mentally. So they laid their plans to visit Mrs Broon and to keep an eye on Jessie, taking her to hospital and seeing that she was able to look after herself. Then Jimmie McIver had lost his job, and that put an extra strain on his wife, a particularly proud person, as she sought to hold home and family—there were four children—together. The men would try to 'speak for Jimmie' in quarters which might produce a job for him, the women would try to help his wife without appearing to patronise or give charity.

At this point in a fascinating evening, my senior cameraman brought me back to the stern realities of trade union hours and overtime, pointing out that we still had to return to base in Glasgow and our time was up. Sadly, I informed the House Church accordingly. 'We're no' finished yet!' said the elder-in-charge. 'We've still to pray.' He then quite brilliantly gathered up the problems and the people which had been their concern all evening, and laid them before the Lord in the simplest of terms. 'We believe you're going to help us and them, Lord,' he said. My cameraman said as we drove back to the city, 'If there's anything in prayer, the Lord will help them!'

Professor A. M. Hunter has reminded us that Leaven which looks so innocently inactive to the eye, and therefore, sadly, closely resembles most members of the Christian Church, reveals a fantastic activity when it is seen through a microscope. It seems to me that what the church needs more than anything else today, if she is to recapture her vision and to become truly missionary again, is to have fistfuls of leaven at work, in congregational groups, in house churches, in all her organizational life, beginning with the key group in any Reformed Church, the eldership. For, truth to tell, many congregations have become pathetic groups of

one-day-a-week Christians, coming along Sunday by Sunday, often battered and limp from the stresses and the strains of modern living, hoping vaguely for some kind of spiritual shot-in-the-arm which will buck them up and help them to struggle through another week of turmoil. They come to get; they do not come to give, except the faithful few who know what it is all about, the Remnant in every congregation in the land, who must be helped to fulfil their true function and destiny.

This means a reordering of our congregational life, a new set of priorities. For most folk in this generation have become Biblically illiterate. Few read the Bible regularly or even spasmodically. They do not know their way about its pages as is very evident when a minor, or even major Prophet is announced for the Old Testament lesson, and anywhere outside Matthew, Mark, Luke and John in the New Testament becomes an embarrassment. 'Schools for Discipleship' would seem to be Priority No. 1. There is no set pattern for these groups of the 'creative minority', these fistfuls of leaven. They can meet and function in a wide variety of ways, both inside and outside the actual church buildings. They can take the form of the basic Bible-Study-Christian-Action group, which, as in the 'Word for Living Group' and the shipyard workers' House Church already referred to, is concerned both to understand the Word for Today and to seek to apply it, out where it is most important and most difficult, amongst the affairs, the work, the lives of those other human beings with whom they share daily living. House churches, properly organized, are in the best position, strategically, to effect this, particularly when their numbers include both committed Christians and seekers of goodwill.

The most disastrous thing that can happen to any of these groups, and there is always serious pressure in that direction, is that they should become pious groups of folk, seeking 'inspiration' from Bible-Study in a manner unrelated to everyday living, and in particular, to their neighbour. This is an easy temptation to which to succumb. For the Bible is full of the most marvellous material to lead those who study it up side-tracks, even such as promise the salvation of the individual soul. Always, the emphasis must be outward-looking or we turn away from man in his

suffering need. The groups should consist of men and women who know they must share with others, perhaps even sharing the sufferings of this world, determined not only to take the 'Word for Living' out there to be a light, as Jesus commands, but also to be the Word itself. Thus they become Christ's Body amongst men, his risen and triumphant Presence always being, quite literally, in the midst. Little by little the members of the group discover their corporate oneness, and indeed, more miraculous than that, that the strength, the purpose, ultimately the 'Christlikeness' of the group is a stronger and more durable quality than that exhibited by even the strongest individual amongst them.

Churches should give over Sunday evenings for such schools. It is high time the second service on Sundays ceased to be a gentle repetition of the first. Television, and religious television in particular, is blamed for small evening congregations. The truth is that there were small congregations long before television was invented. Indeed, in the years 1928-31, I attended the great city charge of St Mary's, Dundee, when there were never more than 30 people at evening service. A few churches had evening services packed to the door, chiefly because of special preachers, but the vast majority of evening services suffered irreparable damage from the First World War and the anti-religious climate which succeeded it. The first Conference-Retreat I attended after ordination, in 1938, had as its evening topic for discussion, 'The Problem of the Evening Service', during which Dr Nevile Davidson led us to think of more adventurous ways of using Sunday evenings.

There is a tremendous opportunity here for religious broadcasting to serve the needs of the church. For religious broadcasting can bring to the cameras and microphones the leaders of Christian teaching and thought and make them immediately available to the whole country. Dr Nelson Gray of STV's series *Signs of Life* is precisely the kind of thing I mean. For four months, any congregational group or house church could have seen in its varied broadcasts, Christian people like themselves, describing the new life they were experiencing.

At the beginning of this lecture I told how Josef Hromadka

said, 'In my country we are only able to preach the Christian Gospel inside our churches'. This with impressive and remarkable results in the lives both of the Christians and of those with whom they lived and moved and had their beings. If Sunday evenings should be given over to discipleship schools, then what of the normal morning services? If there is to be a multiplicity of groups, each working in its own way, within and outwith the church, more than ever the whole People of God will require the unifying and comprehensive worship of God. On the *Lord's Day*, the weekly Easter, the church should be positively and with great joy and certainty, affirming the Resurrection of her Lord and Master. This is the fundamental conviction she requires to recapture for our day and age.

It is the one, *super-natural*, quality which separates her and her people from all the other groups and societies of this world who are concerned with caring for others and indeed with sharing a common ethos. If there be no Resurrection, then we are of all men, the most deluded. We have no uniqueness, save in this one, central fact of our Faith. It is high time, therefore, that we laid hold upon it with conviction and joyously exulted in it, both in our daily living, and in the weekly celebration of Jesus' Rising Again which constitutes our great Sunday Common Worship. It is a marvellous experience when men and women come together after a week of living out there, out in the world. There, under Christ, they have been trying hard to be his people, there they have often failed, yet risen again, knowing that the final victory is with him. It is this living in his world which they bring together, to offer up to him. To rejoice with great joy for the victories won; to confess with deep penitence the battles which were lost; to receive the assurance of his forgiveness and renewal, all of which prepares them in heart and mind to 'Hear the Word of God'. And having heard, to respond like Isaiah of old with 'Here am I, send me'. Then to go forth into Christ's world in peace, to be afraid of nothing, to be full of courage and hope, loving one another and knowing that Christ goes with them. For that is what true Common Worship consists of and that is how it renews men and women for the daily living which is a constant response to be

Christ's Light, his Salt for Society, his disciples seeking to serve and to save those who are lost.

Ministers should be trained to lead in these matters. Trained, that is to say, to be able to teach their flock the rudiments of Christian Discipleship; to set about seeking out the truth that is in the Bible, how to interpret it, how to think, pray and act out the Christian life. The comparatively new Schools of Selection which choose candidates for the Christian Ministry, should always be looking for leader-potential. A leader-potential, what is more, that will adjust to whatever the nature of the congregation where the ministry is being worked out. For there will be some congregations, with a low educational standard and a hesitancy about personal commitment where there is no alternative to leading 'from the front'. Without doubt our best men should be directed to such parishes; there they are needed most, their parishioners are often up against the toughest working, community and housing conditions, and consequently the most demanding. The weight of leadership is often heavy and unremitting in such circumstances, but equally the 'job-satisfaction', to use the modern jargon, is immense for those who can and do stay the course.

At the other end of the educational and social spectrum, there are congregations, wholly middle-class, consisting of professional and business people who are used to leading and leadership in their everyday avocations. Here the leadership is more subtle and indeed in the early stages, delicate. The minister *suggests* in this situation, but suggests with a moral imperative in his suggestion. His people must be shown the necessity and the urgency for mission, but they are more capable of initiating it themselves than in most other types of congregations. The potential in this kind of parish, throughout the whole church, is terrific. It is all too easy to sneer cheaply at the Kirk for being middle-class and middle-aged. So what! Take away the middle-classes within the mid-life age-span, and you take away the very cement which holds society together—the teachers, the doctors, the lawyers, the business men, the shop-keepers, the farmers, the merchants—those who, by their professional and business skills direct what happens in the everyday world around us. Their problem, church-wise, is that they tend to

be completely happy coming along, Sunday by Sunday, to have their batteries recharged for the exhausting and stress-filled life which awaits them from Monday at least to Friday. They judge their minister and their congregation largely by their abilities to recharge them. And that is not enough from people of their potential. *They themselves* should be leading, forming groups, bringing their experience and know-how to bear, not only on the local situation, but also where they carry out their vocations. And when they do just that, the advance of Christ's Kingdom is easily discernible. Ultimately their minister has the task of activating them, by remote control, if necessary.

Some lead from neither the front nor the rear, but from the middle. This may be a matter of individual temperament as much as by social mixture. But *all* must lead from the most strategic position. The whole church under this leadership has to become geared up for showing forth the Good News, for showing it by silent action, by compassionate caring, by the acceptance of responsibility where others opt out for the so-called 'good life' of our times. The Vision, the Spring, the Power to carry this out is the responsibility of the local congregation. It is the base for action; it is where the ammunition in this spiritual warfare is prepared, where recruits are trained and sent out to fight the good fight of the faith in company with the experienced soldiers. All that it plans and does should be ruthlessly examined in the light of its competence to carry out its evangelical task.

Many a minister or layman, reading these words may well be snorting in protest and saying, 'Little does he know *my* congregation!' This was precisely the reaction of many such during 1952-53, the early years of the Tell Scotland Movement. But as time went on, more and more men became uncomfortably aware of the fact that however difficult the local scene, that was no excuse for falling down on the church's primary concern for evangelism. Nothing could excuse turning the back to the Lord's final commission of 'Go and make disciples of all nations. . . .' Little by little this conviction laid hold upon people, until at the height of the Movement, those 800 Bible-Study-Action groups were at work throughout the land, representing well over a third

of the actual congregations. Tell Scotland had its weaknesses. Indeed it was the departure from its original principles which led eventually to the collapse of the Movement. But I still believe its three fundamental principles are timeless and imperative so long as Christian congregations exist in our land. They were:

- (1) That the local congregation is the Agent of Mission.
- (2) That Mission must not be a spasmodic effort but a continuous engagement.
- (3) That the place of the layman in Mission is crucial.

Three self-evident truths which bring life to men and to churches when they are applied, and ultimately death through spiritual-starvation when they are neglected.

Yet Tell Scotland was the best part of 20 years ago. We live in a changed world with the promise, or the threat, according to one's point of view, of even greater changes before the twentieth century runs to its end, especially here in Scotland. When Alastair Hetherington, then editor of *The Guardian* was offered the job of BBC Controller, Scotland, he accepted because, he said, 'The BBC's offer coincides with major changes in Scottish affairs and a new vitality in Scottish life. The opportunity to share in these developments and to help in shaping them, is the one I welcome most.' Here is a statement matching the hour and revealing that enthusiasm and confidence without which there can be no leadership.

That is why the Kirk must recover her nerve and her Gospel in this situation so that she shows forth a like enthusiasm and confidence. We seem to plod faithfully along our normal, un-inspired way without showing any real understanding of the momentous times in which our country finds herself. It is unthinkable that the new, more independent Scotland which is emerging, should not have a Christian soul. The Church was wholly committed to the struggle for independence in the fourteenth century. It was her Gospel which produced the sixteenth-century's revolution we call the Reformation. The

whole of our people watched, suffered and committed themselves three centuries later when Disruption burst from the struggle for religious independence. The Kirk has always been a Church of the People, leading, challenging, guiding, shepherding. Is she to fail now, to wither away with a wringing of hands as our country once more enters into a new phase of Independence and return to full Nationhood?

To speak like this, of course, is to suggest that we are a dormant church with nothing happening of any genuine evangelical note. That is not the case. The work of our Home Board, to take the Committee upon which the General Assembly lays the task of Home Mission, is wide-ranging and imaginative. Much of its work is not newsworthy in terms of the media. Lay missionaries in highlands and islands, remote regions most of them, thinly populated yet with some of the richest reservoirs of spiritual strength in our whole Church and Nation. Church Extension in the heavily populated new areas and towns which seem for ever to be emerging, together with the staffs of ministers, deaconesses and youth workers, and now community ministers who make sense of them all. The ever-increasing development of specialist ministries—chaplaincies in hospitals, in prisons, lodging houses, universities and industrial establishments, including special work in the new oil development areas of the north. The many-sided activities of the Iona Community amongst the young, the underprivileged, the homeless and the tougher sections of those involved in heavy industry. Old churches in city centres without a resident parish population turn to the shops and offices around them and seek to serve their workers and visitors. There is the training of the young in centres such as St Ninian's, Crieff and Carberry Towers and the laity with them. There is the astonishing surge forward, even in these days of inflation and depression, in the sale of Christian literature in our Department of Publications' modern bookshops from Aberdeen to Dumfries. All this and more is already happening. But only, I would suggest, holding the fort. Perhaps in a 'John the Baptist', preparatory way. But there are few signs of dynamic advance to match both the need and the opportunity of the hour. Still no clarion-call from the orchestra,

to use Archie Craig's metaphor; only muted strings and quiet harmonies.

Grey-heads like myself tend to look backwards and sigh for the leadership of the great ones of old. In the first decade after the War, there were at least a dozen mighty men who, when they rose to speak, could pack the house within minutes. The great ones, from John White, through John Baillie, James Pitt-Watson, George Gunn and Hutchison Cockburn to George MacLeod, still with us. Now the glory has departed, we say; there is nothing left but conscientious, but uninspired mediocrity. It is certainly a serious matter if the Kirk is not breeding leadership at the national level. For such men, especially in the day of the mass media, can command audiences which embrace our whole people. How curious that the fewer survivors of the holocaust which was World War I should have provided so many more dynamic leaders than the much greater numbers who survived World War II. Was there something about the prolonged agonies and bloodshed of Flanders Field which became a crucible for greatness? Speculation is of little help to us now. We have to work with what we have, not what we would wish.

But what if the true leadership of Kirk and Nation is away from the pulpit and into the pew? The struggle for the future, for the soul of Scotland is out there in the industries of our land, old and new. It is in the rapidly growing new complexes with Giant Oil at their heart. It is in the new local government set-up, in the Scottish Assembly which will shortly renew our national independence. It is in the trade unions, the professional associations and all our commerce and our industries. It is in our schools and universities, our colleges and our marvellous new centres of learning and culture. We have just been describing the areas of our common life in which Christian men and women live and work. They have to be trained and inspired to take them over, in the revolutionary spirit of Christ's love and power. They are all there already! The Leaven. That is what the Church's Mission is all about in this day and age—simply helping the Leaven truly and thoroughly to be the Leaven. Only the Lord Christ Himself can inspire this transformation.

We finish where we began; with the vision of the 'Whole Jesus', the Total Christ who is reigning and triumphing from his Cross of Resurrection power. We cannot turn into reality any of the dreams we are dreaming unless he takes possession of us. He has promised he will, if we let him.

These lectures have been delivered in the most modern University Communication Centre in Britain. In its television studios, each word, gesture and expression is recorded on video-tape and sound-tape for those across the world who wish to study them and share in them. All around us stretch the new buildings of the arts and sciences of a university which has multiplied its numbers six-fold since the days when I studied under the old Crown of King's College. Yet that Crown still stands at the centre of all the newness. At the heart of all the modernity is an ancient house of prayer which has meant much to us, night and morning, as we have gathered to worship as five centuries of students and teachers have done in this place before us. I see in that a Vision for the future. That just as this complex of learning is surmounted by the Crown of Christ the King, so we must all put ourselves under the rule of that Crown and seek to raise it above our Land of Scotland once more, as she comes to a new and exciting birth. That is the only way forward of health and peace and wholeness.