

What Has Gone Wrong?

BY REV. HAROLD MARTIN, ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF GEORGETOWN AND GLEN WILLIAMS

The early Christian communicators were described as the people who were turning the world upside down. The first name they were given was Followers of the Way. They were people who were engaged in change. And they communicated this change and this life to the world.

The way was the way of Christ. When He went to the sick it was to heal them. When He went to the needy it was to meet their needs. To the proud it was to challenge their pretensions. To the rich, to insist on justice. And to the authorities, to challenge their use of power for the good of all. His message was simple: "Follow Me."

What has gone wrong? The idea in Christian communication is the mobile truth, living, active, and leading us into more of the truth. But whenever this has been replaced by a static, resemblance of the truth, codified and made orthodox, the movement has been halted and the truth falsified.

The form is the shared life. But whenever this has been replaced by institutional self-centredness, struggling to save its own life, the life has died.

The impact is the way of change in the direction of fulfillment. But whenever this has been blocked by authority, respectability, and insistence on the status quo, the way has been lost. Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life". So they crucified Him. They? Or we? Or the Church?

Do we really communicate the new life, or the old death? Are we hot on the trail in the search for meaning among all the new truths which are opening up before us? Is the Church taking upon itself the form of a servant and giving its life for the many? Are we communicating movement, action, change for the better? Where now is the body of Christ, so that all may see, and touch, and handle the word of life?

NOT NECESSARILY

We have, perhaps, too easily assumed that the Church is the body of Christ. That our organized denominations - or worse still, our own particular denomination - are the Church. But this is not necessarily so. The Body of Christ is wherever He is communicated. Once again, the reality is not in the noun but in the verb. And the tragedy of the Church is that it seems to obscure Christ more than it communicates Him.

Have we now reached the point when we should leave the Church behind and concentrate on the communication of Christ elsewhere? I am tempted to say yes. But I know it to be impossible. Wherever Christ is communicated, He draws men to Himself and each other - and there is the Church. The Church will live among us as long as there is a rainbow in the sky and people here to see it. This is the reality of the Church. But the label "Church", and the denominational organizations as they are now, and even denominational organizations of any kind - that is a different matter.

There was a time when the ecclesiastical organizations formed the principal medium of communication in the world. They linked up the local set-up with the world wide body. They educated and informed - and, to a surprising extent, entertained. Today the world has been turned into a single neighbourhood, and other media of communication have taken first place in people's attention. The responsibilities which the Church long taught have now been taken by men on their own shoulders. For this the Church should be glad. But still the commission remains - to communicate the faith given to us by Christ.

A NEW POSSIBILITY

A new possibility is beginning to emerge. The possibility of saying to all men everywhere, "You are the body of Christ". The phrase was never meant to describe an ecclesiastical organization. It describes a particular kind of action. It is prophetic, in that the act of communicating its meaning plays an active part in its realization. Our task now is to put the verb first, and then look for the nouns that will fit. This is the way for the Church to blaze new trails in its own life and structure, and so become able to communicate the way of change to others.

You are the body of Christ. Though these words convey entirely on how much of the meaning the words depend in any particular situation. But the meaning behind the words is what we were born to become. It requires change. In the World. In the Church. In ourselves. What we now need is the imagination to penetrate every medium, every form, and every action with this meaning.

To Approve Contentious Proposal Would Be Stuffing It Down Throats Board Told

Georgetown High School teacher Tom Ramautarsingh, told the Halton Board of Education last Thursday night that according to a survey conducted among Halton secondary teachers by the federation, 85 percent of the teachers were opposed to the proposal for staff organization and differentiated staffing; and 51 percent of the teachers felt insecure in their jobs.

Tom Ramautarsingh, president of District 9 of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, and Mrs. Joan Thibault, president of the Halton Elementary Teachers' Association had been asked by the board to give further input on the topic of Staff Organization and Differentiated Staffing as it was proposed January 25 by James Singleton, director of education.

This feeling of insecurity will affect the learning environment, said Mr. Ramautarsingh; the students will suffer the most. He also asked the board to ponder if it would be wise with 85 percent of the teachers opposed to the proposal, to "stuff it down their throats."

He stated that the principals were to insure they had support of the staff under the new proposal. However, Mr. Ramautarsingh said the only way to attain this without intimidation is to use the secret ballot. He added that the secret ballot is taught in the schools, and is used by the board of education, yet in regard to teacher support within the school there is no secret ballot.

CLARIFIER

Mrs. Joan Thibault spoke to the board prior to Mr. Ramautarsingh, stating the Halton elementary school teachers' view of proposals 1 through 24. The final consensus of the proposal was one of having them more clearly defined as to purpose and what they would curtail, also that resources be provided in cases where they are warranted.

Mrs. Thibault stated that the elementary teachers would accept recommendations 20-24 provided that staff members and the community are involved in the decision-making process regarding the implementation of structures involving the use of paraprofessionals; that any change in the staffing pattern be made by local school initiative; and that common role descriptions be determined by the Executive Committee in consultation with the affiliates.

A five member committee of secondary teachers and two member committee of elementary school teachers were then introduced to the board to answer questions concerning the two briefs prepared by the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation and the Halton Elementary Teachers' Association. However Mr. Ramautarsingh received the brunt of the questions.

REPRIMAND

Trustee Tom Watson reprimanded Mr. Ramautarsingh for again coming to the board with statistics based on a survey and then not presenting the questions asked, to the board. Mr. Ramautarsingh replied that he could send them copies of the questions if that was the request.

James Singleton, Director of Education, then questioned Tom Ramautarsingh's reading of letters out of context. He also added that the class room environment could go up and up depending on the circumstance of reference.

Trustee Ivan Armstrong questioned the committee as to whether headships and executive positions in the schools were a means of getting unwarranted time off from regular teaching duties. A committee member of the secondary school teachers' federation replied that a teacher head taught five out of six periods and the chairman of a department taught quarter of the regular teachers timetable.

LESS CONTENTIOUS The board then moved to action on recommendation 14, 15, and 16 through 19. These issues are some of the less contentious issues, and were termed "Motherhood" issues by Georgetown trustee Ernie Budnar.

Recommendation 14 that consultants be returned in the classroom periodically on a full-time basis because of the special value this experience brings to the role, was lost.

That a constant watch be kept on the numbers and roles of consultants in order that the consulting staff continue to serve the needs of classroom teachers as excellently as they have in the past, recommendation 15. This recommendation was then

unanimously deleted, this having the same effect as never having existed, said chairman William Priestner.

Recommendation 16, that the staff in attendance counselling the social work be reduced to three and appropriate adjustments be made in job descriptions was also deleted.

REMEDIAL READING

Recommendation 17 was that a special study be made of the remedial reading arrangements in order to make them more effective. James Singleton explained that several teachers at Georgetown District High School were involved in up to 35 hours a week of remedial reading after school. The recommendation was carried.

Recommendation 18 was that the Board approach the Halton County Health Unit and its governing committee with a view to re-establishing the role of public health nurses in the school. The recommendation was carried.

Georgetown Firm Makes Car-Camper

Jetty Products Canada Ltd. of Georgetown, has announced that it will be moving into the car-camper market with the introduction of the Conestoga Camper - the comfortable camper designed with the compact car in mind. The camper gets its name from the Conestoga Wagons, used to cross North America in years gone by.

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