

## THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND: REFLECTIONS ON A RECENT STUDY<sup>1</sup>

That the Church of England is the Conservative Party at prayer is a nineteenth-century apothegm which has lost much of its truth in our own day. Nevertheless, the use of the term "the Establishment" in modern England is an indirect tribute of dubious praise to the commanding position held by this established Church in England for so many centuries. Nor is the insidious, if inevitable, corruption of a religious and social position of effortless superiority without its evidences in the Church's recent annals. It is related that "Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang [of Canterbury] once remarked of his portrait, 'They say it makes me look proud, prelatical, and pompous,' only to receive the comment from another bishop, 'May I ask to which of the epithets Your Grace takes exception?'"<sup>2</sup> But, in truth, the Church of England has been transformed within the last two generations and, in fact, its development has much to offer to the thoughtful Christian of every denomination. Especially is this the case for Roman Catholics who are concerned about recent developments in the Roman Church; for the Church of England has retained much of its ancient Catholic heritage both in belief and in practice, and yet at the same time it has been seeking to adapt itself to modern needs in a practical but profoundly Christian way.

The publication, therefore, of Canon Roger Lloyd's study of the Church of England in the twentieth century offers an excellent opportunity to Roman Catholics for seeing how many of their post-Vatican II problems were being met and were, to some extent at least, being solved by the Anglican Church during the earlier years of this century. Problems like the position of the laity in the Church, the inadequacy of parish organizations to meet modern needs, the attitudes required for effective ecumenical relationships, the necessary sociological outlook for effective Christian evangelism, the encouragement and fitting development of the biblical, theological, and liturgical advances of our times have all been faced up to by the Church of England in ways which have useful insights to offer to the Church of Rome.

All these subjects and much more besides are dealt with in Canon Lloyd's interesting and valuable book. Nevertheless, he has not written a history of the Church of England during the first sixty-five years of this century, which provides the limits of his survey; for he calls his book "a Meditation on an Historical Theme. . . . The theme of this meditation is [The Church of England, 1900-1965]. . . . To read and think around [this theme] gradually

<sup>1</sup> Roger Lloyd, *The Church of England 1900-1965* (London: SCM Press, 1966).

<sup>2</sup> *The Baldwin Age*, ed. John Raymond (London, 1960) p. 151.

kindles a vision of what the characteristic mission of the Church of England in this century has been and must be."<sup>8</sup> In two previous books, Lloyd had studied the Church from 1900 to 1945; the present book represents a revision of those two books and the addition of a third part which carries the story to 1965. The result is a long book, well written and therefore easy to read, the product of one who was Sub-Dean of Winchester Cathedral and who writes with both knowledge and love of his subject.

For more than four hundred years the Church of England has influenced the English-speaking world, but it has only been continuously established as a state church within the limits of England. At various times it was established in Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and in overseas territories like Maryland and Virginia. Though its beginnings have been put in the Anglo-Saxon period by overenthusiastic writers who exaggerated the Romano-Celtic controversy, they are more properly found in the reigns of King Henry VIII and King Edward VI. The definitive statutory establishment of the Church of England, however, dates from the passing of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity by the first Parliament of Queen Elizabeth I at Eastertide in 1559. By these Acts the Crown was given complete authority over the Church, and the second Book of Common Prayer compiled by Archbishop Cranmer replaced the Missal of the ancient Catholic Church of England. This Prayer Book, the ordinal for ordination services and the like, and the Thirty-Nine Articles in their various editions have provided, in addition to the King James Bible, the chief sources of Anglican belief and worship from the sixteenth century to the present day.

In the first years of its existence this parliamentary-created Church lacked religiously-convinced supporters. Queen Elizabeth would have preferred the more Catholic first Book of Common Prayer, a vigorous and powerful minority in Parliament wanted a more thoroughly Protestant Church, and the mass of opinion both in Parliament and in the country as a whole either wished to maintain the Catholic settlement of religion achieved under Queen Mary Tudor or were religiously indifferent. As the decades went by, however, steady government support and the arguments and practical efforts of men like Archbishop Matthew Parker, Bishop John Jewel, and Richard Hooker helped to make the Church of England into a truly national Church, able in the seventeenth century to engage with some success in bitter struggles with numerous varieties of Puritanism. As a consequence of the series of acts of Parliament known as the Clarendon Code passed in the 1660's, the Church of England was decisively entrenched in the religious, social, and political life of England for the generations to come.

<sup>8</sup> Lloyd, *Preface*, pp. 11, 12.

In the eighteenth century, however, the Church developed a somewhat monotonous routine of Sunday services with little effective preaching; and Christian beliefs and practices as a result had a diminishing influence both on individuals and on public life. Archbishops and bishops owed their appointments largely to their political potentialities: they were expected to marshal political support in their dioceses on behalf of those who had promoted their advancement. As in France, there was a great social gulf between the wealth of the prelates and the poverty of the majority of the Anglican clergy. Two ideological influences, however, markedly affected the life of the Church in contrary ways. One was deism, which was the religious offspring of the scientific spirit, or what is called the Enlightenment, which led to a dilution of Christianity to meet profane demands and was characterized in different ways by the various movements known as Unitarianism, broad churchmanship, and Freemasonry. On the other hand, the incessant campaigns of the brothers John and Charles Wesley and of George Whitefield gave rise to a powerful and widespread religious revival which had a far deeper influence than the religious societies variously called Wesleyan or Methodist, to which it gave birth.

The predominant spirit, however, of the eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Church was one of spiritual stagnation. It was the age vividly depicted in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and in the drawings of Hogarth and Richardson. It was an age in which the gentry rode to hounds while the people went to the dogs.

Though the Methodists seceded from the Church and formed a new denomination, some of their spirit remained within Anglicanism to inspire the evangelical revival which has been a strong force in the Church of England for nearly two centuries. This Evangelicalism is a compound of what is called low churchmanship and a philanthropic zeal, which were powerful factors in the social revolution that occurred in nineteenth-century England. On another plane altogether was Tractarianism, or high churchmanship, which was the religious child of the European movement of thought called romanticism. This Tractarianism, signalized by its attempts to emphasize the continuity between the medieval Catholic Church and the Church of England and by its zeal for reviving Catholic ritual practices, was almost wholly a clerical movement until the twentieth century. The fact that many of its supporters, like John Henry Newman, Frederick William Faber, and W. G. Ward, became Roman Catholics only made the so-called dangers of high churchmanship more apparent to the Evangelicals and to the general English-speaking public. Right up to the present time, the terms "high church" and "low church" still distinguish the two chief divisions in belief and prac-

tice in the Church of England, though the term "high church" is frequently replaced nowadays by the term "Anglo-Catholic." In his account of twentieth-century Anglicanism, Lloyd indicates clearly his own Anglo-Catholic preferences, and he implies that its views predominate among both clergy and laity in modern England.

Increasingly in modern times social problems have been a major preoccupation with Anglican priests and theologians. Long before the days of Pope Leo XIII, Frederick Denison Maurice had been publicly campaigning for the application of Christian principles to social reform in mid-nineteenth-century England. For many years he had been deeply disturbed by the social miseries linked with the industrial revolution in England, but he had also been disturbed by the attempted solution of them by a ruthless Benthamite materialism. He found better promise in developing a Christian socialism to meet the economic needs of his day, and in 1854 he founded a Working Men's College in London to advance his ideas. He was not alone in this work in his own time and it was continued steadily after his death by others who were equally convinced of the essential link between sacramentalism and sociology, redemption and social reform.

Much the greatest figure, however, in the expression of Anglicanism's social consciousness was William Temple, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942. For many years he was a promoter of the Workers' Educational Association and of the Student Christian Movement. He enunciated his economic views in his *Christianity and Social Order*, which was published in paperback form in 1942. In his view the gospel of Jesus Christ must be offered to men as they are and in the circumstances in which they find themselves. Under modern conditions of life individual evangelism must take second place to a Christian concern which can show practical benefits for the social maladjustments of our time. According to Joseph Fletcher in his study of the Archbishop as a great twentieth-century Christian, Temple was convinced that "it will only be through the prophetic social passion of the biblical faith that men will be led back to a renewed belief in the need for individual conversion and dedication."<sup>4</sup> Fletcher then goes on to give a succinct summary of the Archbishop's views in eight short sentences:

- 1) some challenges to the Church are dominant over others from era to era; 2) renewed evangelism is the dominant thing in this era; 3) the core of evangelism is a call to men to respond to God's love as He showed it, in sacrificial and redemptive action; 4) the setting for today's evangelism is the sickness of society in need of the Christian remedy; 5) the Church's approach to social questions should emphasize

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph Fletcher, *William Temple: Twentieth-Century Christian* (New York, 1963) p. 138.

that fellowship is both the answer to the world's hunger and the goal of the Gospel; 6) all situations and proposals are to be tested by their hindrance to fellowship; 7) economic opportunity or sharing is the real test of fellowship; 8) the age group from 14 to 20 is the most important one for the new evangelism to reach.<sup>5</sup>

In Christian social action, Temple was convinced, the clergy must give place to the laity. As the Archbishop wrote in 1941:

It is quite impossible to leave the responsibility of Christian witness in respect of most practical problems to the clergy. They have not the requisite knowledge; but besides this, they have an outlook which is specialized in an irrelevant direction. Nonetheless, they have a real function in this connection; it is not to formulate policies, but to stimulate in the laity a sense of responsibility and remind them of the claims of their Christian faith in the various departments of life. But the actual leavening of the world's lump with the energies of the Kingdom of Heaven must be done by laymen.<sup>6</sup>

In his pages on the sociological views of Anglicans, Canon Lloyd distinguishes two periods or steps.

When the bench of bishops pronounces the principle that adequate wages are the first charge on industrial profits; when those, who in the name of Christ attack slum landlords, know that in this they have the mass of churchpeople behind them; and when the general body of the clergy and very many of the laity are no longer shocked by the statement that the Church has much to do with politics and economics, but rather take it as axiomatic—then the day has come when the Christian social movement has completed the first stage of its purpose and must be ready to pass over into the second and in many ways the more exacting stage. Insofar as it is ever possible to do more than give the vaguest date, it may be said that by 1918 the first part of the journey was completed. The second stage is that of research. The awakened Church must be told what is wrong with society and how it may be put right, and in this the thinkers and academicians of the movement came into their own.<sup>7</sup>

As part of this work of research, the study of Christian views of property edited by Dr. Charles Gore, a well-known and esteemed Bishop of Oxford, is outstanding. In this book, published in 1913, a division is made between property used as a means to power and property used for other purposes. The former provides a motive for ceaseless acquisition and is frequently inimical to the freedom of others. Property used for other ends, however,

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> William Temple, *Citizen and Churchman* (London, 1941) p. 61; quoted in Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>7</sup> Lloyd, p. 300.

generally benefits both the owner and his fellow citizens, and indeed is the social basis of freedom. "But if property exists for the sake of freedom and not for the sake of power, one needs hold but little of it."<sup>8</sup> Since the purpose of the state is to preserve the freedom of its citizens, in order that they may have every opportunity to develop their potentialities, then it is proper for the state to restrict those accumulations of property whose chief purpose is to ensure power over others. It is not difficult to see how far-reaching can be the effects of the application of such views to public life.

What is the result of Christian principles being brought to bear on public life? In 1941 Archbishop Temple, surveying the twenty years between the two World Wars, offered a summary answer to this question:

Between the two wars three great changes took place in England: the penal system was reformed in a wholly Christian direction; there was a vast extension of secondary education; and the proper housing of the people was at last undertaken on a great scale. I call that a good deal to happen in twenty years. It is true that no one can say just how much the Church or specifically Christian principles had to do with it. But the Church was solidly behind all these reforms.<sup>9</sup>

For centuries, both by custom and by law, Church of England parishes have come under a great deal of lay control, for the parish has usually been a unit of both ecclesiastical and civil administration throughout most of English history. The existence of the traditional parson's freehold, however, gave the pastor a fixity of tenure in practice almost completely proof against any efforts of his bishop or his parishioners to oust him. The ancient clerical parliaments, namely the Convocations of Canterbury and York, which began in Anglo-Saxon times, and which were brought to life in the nineteenth century after a century of abrogation, were afforded by a House of Laymen in 1885; but the greatest participation of the laity in Anglican Church government as a whole was legally made possible when Parliament passed the Church of England Assembly (Powers) Act in 1919. Since the Anglican Church is statutorily established, legally-binding changes in its beliefs and discipline are only possible by authority of an act of Parliament. By this Enabling Act of 1919 the Church of England became what Lloyd calls "a tempered democracy."<sup>10</sup> The need for this Enabling Act is shown by the fact that out of 217 bills brought before Parliament between 1888 and 1913 to deal with church affairs, only fifteen per cent were passed into law;

<sup>8</sup> Lloyd, p. 301.

<sup>9</sup> *Malvern 1941: The Proceedings of the Archbishop of York's Conference* (London, 1941) p. 217; quoted in Lloyd, p. 308.

<sup>10</sup> Lloyd, p. 238.

the failure of the rest was attributed to a lack of parliamentary time to deal with them.<sup>11</sup>

As a consequence of the 1919 Act, parsons have had to contribute to their own pension funds and to church repairs, their appointments to their incumbency have in a large measure come up against what amounts in practice to a right of veto by the churchwardens on behalf of the parishioners, and the financial affairs both of the parish and of the diocese have been made more responsive to the needs of the times. Lloyd sums up the results of the Act as follows:

The Enabling Act provided for statutory councils on which the laity were to be fully represented at every level of the Church's life. Through Church Assembly, Diocesan Conferences, Ruridecanal Conferences, and Parochial Church Councils, all of which were forced by law to meet at regular intervals, every geographical area and district of spiritual competence was provided with its representative, responsible body which must be consulted, and on which lay people were fully represented by democratic election. They were given wide powers and responsibilities. So far from weakening, it greatly strengthened the hands of the clergy by putting them in a far stronger position to request and even require the help of their lay people. Co-operation, made legally inevitable, was practically inescapable, and became so settled a habit that today it is everywhere regarded as the normal state of affairs. But in the long perspectives of the life of the Church, it is an unremarked novelty and it has worked almost wholly for good.<sup>12</sup>

In the Church of Rome the achievement of the Second Vatican Council has been succinctly described as the democratization of the Church. This being so, it would seem imperative that the recent experiences of the Church of England in its development should be carefully scrutinized to discover suggestions towards the most effective procedures. Judging at least from the events of modern history, the Anglo-Saxon world has much to teach the ecclesiastical world about the art of self-government.

Linked with the position of the laity in the Church of England is the adequacy for modern needs of its centuries-old organization into parishes. During the twentieth century it has become increasingly obvious in England that fewer and fewer people can expect to be born and to live throughout the major part of their lives in any single parish. Individual and family mobility is characteristic of our times. This transiency, according to Lloyd, has fostered "the malaise of a deep discontent . . . and made many of the pre-suppositions of the Book of Common Prayer exceedingly irrelevant. The people as a whole [after 1945] had become psychologically and socially

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Lloyd, p. 345.

<sup>12</sup> Lloyd, p. 346.

difficult for a parochially organized Church to serve, and even to reach; and the parochial system had become too irrelevant to too many lives for it to be possible to work it at more than half strength."<sup>13</sup> Lloyd admits that up to 1943 he held far different views. Indeed, in the earlier part of his book, which had been written some years before, he had stressed the importance of the parish: "The Church of England is always parochial in the sense that all its ministries of every kind and in every place depend in the last resort on the worship offered and the teaching given in the parish church. . . . The Church of England remains fundamentally parochial."<sup>14</sup> When, however, he wrote the concluding pages, his tone was somber and uncertain: "Today we have come to the point when it has been seriously proposed that we should abandon the parochial system altogether, close most of the parish churches, concentrate our resources on a small number of strategically-placed centers of worship, and send the parochial clergy to earn their living in various kinds of welfare jobs in the world."<sup>15</sup> While the shortage of clergy that has proved so persistent in recent years has hastened the demise of the parish, it is even more the consequence of the complete disinterest in religion in what seem to be the majority of Englishmen and women of today.

The inadequacy of the Church of England to meet many of the needs of our times and to exercise an effective evangelism has been attributed to the restricting influence of its structural fundamentalism. This outlook has been analyzed by a recent writer as follows:

By fundamentalism we usually mean an especially dogmatic position which makes no allowance whatsoever for an historical understanding of the Bible and Christian doctrine. . . . "Structural fundamentalism" is a parallel phenomenon which consciously, or more often unconsciously, removes *morphe*, the form or structure of the congregation from the realm of historical consideration and questioning. In so doing it rejects the possibility of changes and growth in structure. Perhaps it is wrong to speak of rejection as such, since the phenomenon of "structural fundamentalism" is not as well articulated as its exegetical and dogmatic parallel; moreover, cases of explicit rejection are difficult to find. Rather it seems to involve a widespread but dormant fundamentalism in which structural problems involving Church and congregation are not to be decisive questions for the Church. For this reason, this kind of fundamentalism is both more persistent and more understandable; it is present innocently in situations where the historicity of faith and of Christian existence is otherwise recognized and accepted.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lloyd, p. 486.

<sup>14</sup> Lloyd, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Lloyd, p. 517.

<sup>16</sup> Hans Margull, in an unpublished paper quoted in Colin W. Williams, *Where in the World* (New York, 1963) p. 12, n. 12.



This evangelistic arteriosclerosis has been clearly described by Colin Williams:

Since the Industrial Revolution, vast changes have been occurring in social structures. By a powerful centrifugal force, huge sectors of life have been spun away from the residence community. Industry, commerce, higher education, health institutions, politics, mass communications, leisure, have separated off into "worlds" of their own. And, in fact, this separation has now gone so far that sociologists distinguish between the "public" sphere and the "private". What is left in the residence community as such, is the "private" world of the family, with local politics and early education; while the vast "public" world of business, industry, politics, communications and the rest has now developed its massive institutional structures in separation from the life of the home. The church, having kept its primary congregational form in the community of residence, is discovering that it has isolated itself at the periphery of a large part of life by being separated from the vast "public" segment of existence.<sup>17</sup>

The nature of modern life in the contrast between the city and suburbia has been succinctly put in the declaration that people no longer live where they live. The real lives of large segments of the population are developed in offices and in institutions, while their homes and apartments are little more than places to sleep. For such people the end of the week frequently means an extended sojourn at the beach. The medieval institution of the parish has little relevance to the lives of such people. It represents a closed world of unattractive interests. As has been said:

The average congregation is apt to be an introverted community which does not think primarily of its obligation to bring the knowledge of Christ to its whole neighborhood and to the whole world, and this introversion is apt to mark the life, thought and leadership of the whole Church . . . Even where the obligation is acknowledged and acted upon, such actions tend to take the form of a separate "mission" supported by the congregation but not regarded as the responsibility of every member.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, in the expanding suburbs of today's cities the setting up of new parishes promotes a religious and cultural segregation which is strongly opposed to the Christian and social needs of our times. These suburban congregations manifest a tight unity of social, financial, and ethnic interests which creates the affluent ghetto of our age, at the same time as their desertion of the city churches promotes the slum parishes and the ethnic ghettos of customary experience. The segregation of affluence and the seg-

<sup>17</sup> Colin W. Williams, *What in the World* (New York, 1964) p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Williams, *Where in the World*, p. 61, note.

regation of race or poverty as they are found in modern city-life tend to become both unchristian and unjust.

One scheme to remedy the plight of center-city parishes has been attempted in London within the last few years. It is described within the pages of Lloyd's book, from which the following information about it is obtained. In 1950 it was announced that within the square mile of the ancient City of London, which in modern times is mostly composed of large office-buildings, and in which some half a million people work each day in contrast to the merely five thousand who live there, it was no longer possible to maintain the forty-six ancient Anglican parish churches in the traditional way. Some had been built in the Middle Ages, many were the work of Sir Christopher Wren, the eminent architect of the later Stuart period; but the German bombers in the Second World War had done great havoc among them. This damage might have been repaired if it had not been compounded by a lack both of parishioners and of clergy to make use of them. A solution to the problem was found through the City of London (Guild Churches) Act of Parliament, which became law in 1952. Advantage was taken of the fact that many London city churches have been linked for centuries with individual City of London guilds and that these guilds founded in medieval times still dominate the political and financial life of the City.

By means of the Act, half of the churches ceased to be parish churches; instead, sixteen of them became guild churches and the other chapels of ease.

The minister in charge of a guild church. . . is appointed for five years, with the possibility at the end of that time of an extension of not more than three years, and the extension can be renewed indefinitely at intervals of three years or else not renewed at all. A guild church vicar has a weekday ministry to the City workers and to others which he may exercise just as he thinks fit. He has no statutory obligation to hold services in his church on Sundays. But he is expected to have some specialist qualification through which he and his church can serve the Church as a whole at that point of its need. To take just one example, the guild church of St. Katherine Cree has become the centre of the whole Church's mission to industry, and its vicar has always been the director of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, and his church its headquarters and its worshipping home.<sup>19</sup>

A remarkable article entitled "The Decline of the Church in England," by the Reverend Nicolas Stacey, was published in *Harper's Magazine* in March, 1966. Stacey provides statistical evidence for this decline in all areas of the Church's life, and he is greatly disturbed by the average Englishman's indifference to the Church and by the openly expressed hostility

<sup>19</sup> Lloyd, p. 529.

to religion of much of Britain's intelligentsia. In contrast, however, he remarks on the great publicity value of some aspects of the Church's life and teaching and on the fact that though "less than 10 per cent of the population regularly attends worship, there is compulsory religious instruction and worship in all state schools" and that a public-opinion poll showed 90 per cent of the people in favor of this undenominational teaching in the schools.<sup>20</sup>

In consequence of this situation, Mr. Stacey summarizes the gist of his article in declaring that "the question that confronts the Church is: How can interest and searching be transformed into committed Christian discipleship? The answer may be nothing less than to dispossess the Church and turn it out into the world—by ridding it of its lands and buildings, by forcing its clergy to take secular jobs, and by a simplification and stripping down of its theology. The physical death of the Church may have to precede its spiritual resurrection."<sup>21</sup>

Service in the British Navy and a visit to Hiroshima after its atomic bombing preceded Stacey's decision to seek ordination in the Anglican Church. An invitation to become the pastor of a large, attractively-situated church at Woolwich, a suburb of London, on the south bank of the River Thames, extended to him by the then recently-appointed Bishop of Woolwich, Dr. John Robinson, of the famed *Honest to God* debate, led to his yeoman efforts to revivify Christianity in a nonchurchgoing parish. Supported by four assistant ministers with excellent qualifications and in a Christian atmosphere influenced by "the theological school of Christian radicalism emanating largely from Cambridge University and the south London diocese of Southwark and drawing heavily on Rudolph Bultman [*sic*], Paul Tillich, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer,"<sup>22</sup> he set to work.

Despite the ingenuity and tireless efforts of Stacey and his associates over three years, the regular congregation of the church has only gone from fifty to a hundred; and most of the newcomers live outside the parish. As part of their campaign, the parish ministers undertook two hours of prayer together each day, and they readapted the church building to modern needs. Thus, their large parish church was divided up in such a way that a coffee-house and a lounge were set up and space was made for various local needs. "That part of the experiment more than justified itself," writes Stacey. "1,500 people now use the church building every week for everything from eating to private prayer, personal counselling to worship. For months a gang

<sup>20</sup> Nicolas Stacey, "The Decline of the Church of England," *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1966, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Stacey, *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Stacey, *ibid.*

of the roughest hoodlums in town made the coffeehouse their evening headquarters."<sup>22</sup>

Most interesting and instructive is the effort that Stacey's staff made to emphasize and explain the significance of the sacrament of baptism. They first went to the home of the parents and made friends with them. If they found that the christening was only being sought out of a sense of habit or through the pressure of relatives, they tried to persuade the parents not to proceed to baptism, though no request for baptism was refused.

Then a week before the christening we had all the parents and godparents to coffee in our restaurant, with a film afterwards and discussion on the meaning of it all and a rehearsal of the service. (The christening service we rewrote in simple language, for the present [Book of Common Prayer] service is literally nonsense.) We hold christenings only four times a year, with the whole congregation present. Our new home-made service in a packed church, with the mothers entering in procession proudly carrying their babies after the service has started, is a poignant association. The parents may not understand (who does?) the theology of christening, but our hope has been that they are left with the impression that something important has happened to their babies. A few days after the christening we call again with a plush christening card and every year for the five subsequent years a member of the congregation calls with a card on the anniversary of the christening. But this effort has hardly been more successful than our house-to-house visits: only one lot of parents of the hundreds of babies we have christened are now Church members.<sup>24</sup>

Among the numerous ways in which they attempted "to train the congregation to be the body of Christ in the community" was the plugging of the gaps in the locality's social services. "An example of this was our Suicide Samaritan Branch, with some sixty volunteers on telephone alert in rotation twenty-four hours a day so that souls contemplating ending their lives could ring them. Another scheme provided accommodation for young people thrown out of their homes." After a recital of these and other social and charitable services undertaken by Stacey and his assistants, there comes the laconic statement: "And yet after all this the response in church-going terms was almost nonexistent."<sup>25</sup>

The ventilation of these experiences in the press brought Stacey a public rebuke from the Archbishop of Canterbury: success in religious terms was not to be measured chiefly in the size of church attendance. Be that as it may, Stacey is convinced that any reformation, no matter how radical, of the Church of England's traditional institutions and practices is inadequate

<sup>22</sup> Stacey, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Stacey, *ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Stacey, p. 68.

to face the religious needs of modern England. Though he regards these needs as urgent, he predicts a continued decline in Church membership. "Though God is desperately needed, I can see little chance of our capturing people's imagination for him by the traditional methods, however lovingly, vigorously, and imaginatively applied, over however long a period. Indeed, I believe things will get harder still as the residue of formal Christianity disappears and the secularization of society is completed." The solution, as he sees it, lies in a complete transformation of the life, and therefore the appearance, of the Church. "I am convinced that the only hope for eventual resurrection of the Church lies in its voluntary stripping itself down."<sup>26</sup>

Prominent in this metamorphosis is the clergy's need to rely for their livelihood not on church support but on self-support by undertaking full-time secular jobs. Stacey argues that the normal daily work of the modern clergyman has little of clerical specialization about it and could be better done by qualified laymen. "The level at which most people want our help—'Can you fix an abortion for my daughter?'; 'Have you got any pull with the National Assistance Board?'; 'I have been caught shop-lifting—can you keep my name out of the local paper?'—is more appropriate to the citizens' information centers."<sup>27</sup> In Stacey's experience, he and his staff are rarely asked for specifically priestly help or advice, and their secondary services duplicate what is to be had elsewhere. "Citizens' advice bureau workers, youth-employment officers, welfare officers, personnel service workers, personnel service managers, and probation officers are all doing more counselling work in depth than the vast majority of the clergy."<sup>28</sup>

Much of the organization and many of the buildings of the present-day Church of England are thus regarded as an obstacle to the real needs of the Christian life of today. To Stacey and his associates, the priest needs to break out of his traditional ghetto and seek out the people in the places where their real lives are led. "For the Church to come alive there is a need for Sacramental duties to be performed in every office, factory and street. This can be done only by the priest who works within these situations."<sup>29</sup>

These emphases of Stacey's article serve to give contemporary relevance to Lloyd's book. Moreover, they are being matched by similar articles in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States. An early and strong statement in these directions was made by Bishop John King Mussio of Steubenville, Ohio, as reported in the *New York Times* (March 9, 1964) and

<sup>26</sup> Stacey, *ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Stacey, *ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Stacey, p. 69.

<sup>29</sup> Stacey, *ibid.*

fully in *Ave Maria* (March 7, 1964). He believes, according to the summary of his articles given by Colin W. Williams,<sup>80</sup> that

The modern parish is "hopelessly outdated" and in dire need of "complete, radical" restructuring. He insists that because of the changes in the living habits of people brought by modern social and economic change, the church must change its structures to match the structures of contemporary human need. To remedy the situation Bishop Mussio suggests that large clergy centers be constructed to supplant the big central parish plants. The priests would "fan out" to provide "a concentrated spiritual service to their flocks" by establishing worship places and instruction centers. He continues: "these could be the parlor in a Catholic home, the ballroom of a downtown hotel, or a suburban theater auditorium . . ." According to the Bishop, working deacons and trained laymen would carry on the routine duties of the parish, such as bill paying and preparing of reports. Schools would cease to be parochial, but become regional, the Bishop notes, and the priest (would be more) free to perform his main tasks of teaching, sanctifying and bringing Christ to his people.

The Church of England in the twentieth century has much valuable experience to bring to the new Christianity which is taking shape in our time. It has worked hard in the fields of liturgical development and is continuing to do so. It has had numerous scholars and divines who have adapted and developed the thought of recent German thinkers, though none have made such an impact as did Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his disciple John Robinson, the Bishop of Woolwich, with his *Honest to God*.

In the realm of ecumenicity, the negotiations leading up to the formation of the Church of South India a few years ago, the recent announcement of a plan for the union of the Church of England with the Methodist Church in England by 1970, and the setting up of an Anglican representative at the papal court are but three items in a long list of increasingly vigorous attempts to promote Christian unity which has come to mark the tenures of office of recent Archbishops of Canterbury. This activity has met with appropriate response from other Christian bodies, of which perhaps one of the more interesting is the dedication of the German Benedictine Abbey of St. Matthias at Trier in the Rhineland, under Abbot Laurentius Klein, to a wholehearted concentration of its resources on the promotion of unity between the Churches of England and of Rome.

In the realm of English literature, however, is possibly to be found one of the most effective services which the Church of England has contributed to contemporary Christianity in the English-speaking worlds. It is a commonplace to recall the massive influence which the King James translation of the

<sup>80</sup> Colin W. Williams, *What in the World* (New York, 1965) p. xiv.

Bible has had on the development of the English language. What is more the concern of our own day, however, is the apparently increasing difficulty of communicating the good news of Christianity in an effective way to the modern generation of citizens. It is a continuing problem, but one at which six members of the Church of England have been conspicuously successful in recent years. They are three men and three women. In the general field of Christian humanism two of the men had outstanding success: T. S. Eliot and C. S. Lewis. Indeed, so notable was their fame that one feels that titles like *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Screwtape Letters* will be familiar to all educated men and women. Not less effective in the contrasting fields of popular theology and the detective story was Dorothy Sayers. Her famous study of the life of Christ, put out in the form of broadcast plays, *The Man Born to Be King*, was but one of her excellent literary achievements.

Beyond the popular theology and the apologetics of these three writers lie the more difficult subjects of Christian prayer and Christian mysticism; and yet again there were three writers who made this supernatural terrain the ground of their exploration. Chief among them was Charles Williams, one of the great interpreters of the action of the Holy Spirit in the vicissitudes of personal life. Of him Lloyd writes:

The power of Charles Williams, a romantic theologian, i.e., one who is theological about romance, was very great upon those who understood him. He was a towering figure as a poet, a critic, and a writer of celestial romances; and as a person his quality was such that when he died C. S. Lewis said of him, "No event has so corroborated my faith in the next world as Williams did simply by dying. When the idea of death and the idea of Williams thus met in my mind, it was the idea of death that was changed." For Williams was "a masculine angel," a spirit burning with intelligence and charity.<sup>21</sup>

The other two writers were both women, but their quality is not revealed by Lloyd; indeed, he only writes about one of them, Evelyn Underhill, and apparently never even mentions the other, Rose Macaulay. It is Evelyn Underhill's constantly resisted attraction to Catholicism which occupies Lloyd, but he does acknowledge the great importance of her famous book *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*, which was first published in 1911. The difficult subject taken up by Evelyn Underhill was matched by another subject difficult to write effectively about, though surely not difficult to practise, namely, the subject of prayer, which was Rose Macaulay's personal interest. The recent publication

<sup>21</sup> Lloyd, p. 252, quoting from *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* (London, 1947) pp. xiv and ix.

of her letters brought her preoccupation with this subject to public attention, though her Christian interests had been evident from her books.

From all these points of view which have been surveyed in this appreciation of Lloyd's book, it is hardly possible not to conclude that Christianity, in the English-speaking world at least, has much to learn from the experiences and life of the Church of England. There is little doubt, too, that the same judgment would be made of the branches of the Episcopalian family wherever they are to be found. The words of the Canon offer a suitable conclusion of this essay:

The Church, being composed of human beings, is never unaffected by the current motions of the world, but shares them in its own revolution, but it has far still to go. By A.D. 2000 our successors may know if the revolution in the Church amounts to a new Reformation—to the only kind of Reformation worth having in which, in the words of *Alice in Wonderland*, everybody has won and all shall have prizes, and the road to the goal is not littered by broken hearts and maimed spirit. In any event Anglican Christians cannot expect a quiet and peaceable life during the next thirty years, and it is probably not the desire of the Holy Spirit that they should wish for it.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lloyd, p. 612.