

The Christian church with all its resources and equipment must come to the help of all young parents. An ever increasing number of China's mothers are able to read. To this number the church can greatly add by fostering the study character movement.

Preparation for this work.

(1) Workers; Our workers must be trained for this work. They must be led to see the vision and forget a great deal of other things if necessary, in order to find time for this more important work. This task will belong to our training schools and it need not be developed here. Suffice it to say that the most important preparation will be to develop the proper mind which will mean undoing the thinking of many centuries.

(2) Literature. Along this line a great deal of good work has already been done by our Publishing societies and by the leaders of our church in the Home and the Young People's departments. I refer the reader to the report of "The advisory Conference on Christian Homemaking," held this year Feb. 8th to 11th, at Junghsien, Szechuan, to see what splendid material and training plans we already have.

Steps in doing the work.

The first step to take on the field of work, is to approach the village elder or elders. Lay the matter before them, enriching the home life of the community. Leave with each of them suitable literature presenting our objective for their consideration at leisure. Call again and get their reaction. Have patience, approach them as a fellow citizen and do not advertise your Christianity as these elders may only have seen a poor brand of it. Above all let us not use it as a means of proselytizing. If this work is done properly our difficulty will be to keep people out of the church.

Having secured the good will of the elders, the individual homes should be approached in the same way. Only literature suitable to introduce your work should be left until you have received their consent and good will.

To aim at helping every home in the village or community to provide mental food for character building, will seem to many an impossible task. A thousand difficulties in the way will spring to the minds of many, especially to the minds of those who lack courage. These difficulties do not need to be recorded here but it might be well to record some of the encouraging factors.

(1) This movement would be working through love, parental love. Most people love their children and as a rule cherish high hopes for them. This love is some thing to bank upon. It has made possible the "home," even before man appeared upon the scene, as I have said above. We surely can bank upon it to develop the higher phases of character and in time be able to build the New Jerusalem.

(2) The ever-growing number of mothers who can read and nearly all fathers can. Children to whom parents have read for six or eight years will in turn be able to read to the younger brothers and sisters. If the right spirit and pride is developed in this work it will carry itself.

(3) The splendid lot of literature that we already have in China for homes with children is most encouraging. Thank God for the publishers and Young People's workers who have put their hearts into this work. Books with pictures and simple stories are coming forth more and more.

(4) The local church could build up a little library where books could be borrowed and exchanged.

(5) Work of this kind would enable church members to find something practicable to do.

I sincerely hope the leaders and the executive bodies of all our denominations and local congregations will give more thought to the possibilities of work in the homes, not merely the Christian homes, but every home on the street.

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WHY I AM NOT A REUNIONIST

R. O. HALL

I HAVE chosen the title of this paper advisedly. I do not wish any brother Anglican to be committed by what I write. My view is not necessarily an Anglican point of view. I know that very many Anglican folk will disagree with me entirely.

I believe enormously in cooperation. I believe in a "guest rule" for Holy Communion. I believe that it is my duty as bishop to give permission from time to time for men who are not in the regular ministry of the church to preach when I believe that what they have to say will be of value to the congregation to whom it is said or to the church as a whole.

I do not believe in exchange of pulpits as a gesture or as a "symbol of unity." This I think is a sentimental notion. Not that sentiment should be ruled out entirely—when, for example, a minister of a another family is going away or a new minister arrives there is then I think a legitimate sentimental reason for inviting him to preach. Hereunder lies a philosophy of the pulpit which is perhaps Anglican. The pulpit is *not* in the centre in my conception of church worship: (The Table of the Lord's Supper is.)

More than this, I believe that hankering after reunion, reunion committees, reunion commissions, talks, conferences, quarterly more than quarterly, volumes and more volumes, are all devices of the devil to keep us from cooperating.

Nor can I ask God to be forgiven for the sin of our divisions, for I believe that God is in a sense responsible for those divisions. I believe God is responsible for these divisions in the same way that I think he is responsible for other limitations of human existence. He has made the world for example such that disease can come and does come. Disease is due very often to ignorance, to self seeking and stupidity. Many of these things are also present in our disunity, but the essential reason for our disunion does not lie in these things, but in the inexorable conditions of time and space. It is true that the late Mr. G. K. Chesterton once gave up his seat in a bus to three ladies. But even Mr. Chesterton could not give up his seat to three hundred ladies. Space just will not stretch even Mr. Chesterton's seat to three hundred. No, space will not stretch, nor will time stand still. They are what God made them. And we must accept the limitations they impose. Almost every form of church order, every major schism in the church, every Reformation from St. Francis of Assisi to John Wesley, from Martin Luther to the Latter Day Saints, has been conditioned by the limitations of time and space. The particular form taken even by the Roman Catholic Church, its organisation and much of its dogma, have been developed as answers to the problems of time and space.

The doctrine of the Christian Church is very precious, so is the conduct of Christians. Therefore a measure of central control, leadership and inspection very quickly became necessary. The control, inspection and correction of faults of a large number of people spread over a large area could only be achieved in the early middle ages by an autocratic papacy with all the prestige of divine infallibility. The Vatican was therefore the first answer of the Church to the problem God set Christian men and women, the problem of making

a living Christian community work under the inexorable conditions of time and space. I am prepared even to hazard a guess, though any guess dealing with the past is unreal. This guess would be that a church the size of the church when Luther broke away from obedience to the Pope, could have been controlled without this break happening if wireless, motor cars and aeroplanes had existed in that day. Luther would have had more direct contact with the best minds in the church and they would have had more direct contact with him. With a church the size that it was in Luther's day the break I believe would not have happened if they had had in those days the same devices for cheating time and space that we have acquired in our day.

The reverse process has surely been noticeable. The Pope can now speak to the world directly from the Vatican, his delegates can fly from Rome to the farthest point in under a fortnight, it is possible quickly and efficiently to send any young man who shows promise, enterprise and initiative to Rome. All these things are reflected in the increasing influence of the Roman Church. Improved communications have made this great organisation more sensitive to its constituency and to the world outside its constituency.

I do not believe, however, that these devices of ours to overcome time and space ever catch up completely with the problem. I do not believe that they have made a united church possible to-day where it was not possible before. Even with these devices the autocracy of the Vatican is still essential to hold the Roman church together. If that autocracy were removed and its various religious sanctions also removed, the Roman Church would show very quickly the same tendency to break up into group life that the non-Roman churches have shown in the last three hundred years.

DIVISIONS AND AUTOCRACY

The historic divisions of the churches are not, in my judgement, due to sin, nor fundamentally to doctrinal differences, but to time and space. These conditions necessarily limit fellowship and demand that unity beyond a certain point can only be secured by autocracy. In abandoning autocracy, we automatically abandoned unity. We have been far too slow to realise that this is so. Unity has a grandeur about it and an efficiency and a progress. To these things our human minds are drawn. Autocracy on the other hand is especially irksome to our human minds. So in the littleness of our human minds, having abandoned autocracy for its discomfort as well as for the untruth

we hanker still after unity, giving it a seeming truth and a seeming comfort, which belong not to unity, but to charity; not to the head, but to the heart.

I am not a reunionist because I will not pay the price Rome still must pay for unity. I believe rather that the answer given by the major reformed churches to the problems of space and time is the true answer. I believe the Roman answer is the wrong answer and must in time fail. I believe that the attempt to unify and control and direct in one great united body is a form of sin, an assertion of man's pride, whereas before God we know only that we are human, fallible and weak.

Moreover the common claim of re-unionists that a great united church would have more influence than a divided Christendom needs modification and examination. The influence of the church depends on its sensitiveness to the way of Christ. The influence of the Quakers at their best is a remarkable example of the truth that the influence of Christians in the world does not depend on size or organisation but on something much more subtle, much more delicate, much more humble. A vast re-united church will not necessarily be more influential. It will only necessarily be vast and re-united. It will quite likely be also clumsy, and indeterminate.

I believe the cause of Christ is well served by having Methodists intensely Methodist, in their enthusiasm, and their love of song and their disciplined organisation and control; in having Congregationalists intensely Congregationalist in their fellowship with one another in the Spirit; in having Presbyterians augustly Presbyterian in their wisdom, their thoroughness, their efficiency, their impossibility-of-being-wrong and their immensely conscientious theological colleges. And as for the Anglicans I believe there will always be a place for a church so ridiculously amateur, and intensely human, neither one thing nor the other, with a little bit of autocracy, a little bit of fellowship, a little bit of constitutionalism, but, pray God, always with a sense of humour. In a united church these distinctions become blurred. They can only be retained in cooperating churches which are not united. Just as we live in houses with the charm and distinctiveness of family life, so in the church of God there must be houses, families, groups. Each group can then take one of the great facets of the truth of God and underline it.

The mystery of the relation of God and man in Christ, the mystery of our fellowship with one another in the Church of God,

the mystery of evil and pain and disease, perhaps above all the mystery of worship, are such that we need variety and freedom to express them and to work them out over hundreds of years in Church groups and church cults, in differing organisations and ministries and systems. Let us remember how very young we are, and that God having some experience after all, and remembering the youth of the Church, is very patient with us. It is He who has given us these disturbing conditions of space and time. He makes it impossible for me to *whisper* to a thousand people at once, and equally impossible for us in days of widespread Christianity to keep in such intimate touch with one another as the early disciples could. The best and most active in mind cannot always get direct contact with the leaders of their church as St. Paul did at Jerusalem. The church has grown so that there isn't time, there isn't space for all to do so. Our fellowship with one another for all its beauty and its mystery and its joy is terribly limited. We get tired after a day of intense conversation even with two or three people. How can we have continual fellowship with thousands and thousands of folks?

No, we must accept the stern limits of time and space. For it is under these conditions that God has set us to live. And like so much else that comes from God, these stern conditions have their humorous side. They will keep us humble if we can see that the same God who made donkeys so lovably laughable, has made men also both lovable and laughable.

The Pride of a man's heart says: "How awful that we cannot all combine together into one church!" But laughter will have none of it. Laughter says: "No, man is not great enough for such an achievement!"

The unstretchable conditions of time and space hold human desires in chains. Our minds and our ambitions always outdistance our bodies. For our bodies are sleep and food dependent, time and space conditioned. And it is God who has made us so. Then perhaps it is God who has made us Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, or Methodists. God may even be responsible (remember his sense of humour) for the Anglican Church. It is the devil who offers us the apple of unity from the tree "Greatness" knowing well that if we take it it will become an apple of discord. And God half grieved, half smiling, at our fumbling ways, would have us, I believe forgo the appearance of unity in organisation for the reality of unity in charity and love, mutual understanding and forgiveness.