

## INOFFENSIVE PUBLICITY

by I.L.

An expatriate church 'welcome' leaflet can be an effective means of explaining what Christians believe and do. This article explains how we produced and circulated an informative, non-threatening leaflet, despite all the limitations of Christian work in this country.

The first step was to define the intended readership:

1. *Local nationals*, some who might come to do a small research project for school or university, others who would just be curious to see a church for themselves. Some of these people would be very nervous about entering a church, perhaps from a belief that Islam did not permit it, that their friends and family would not approve, or that the church members themselves would not like the intrusion.
2. *Serious national inquirers*, who had somehow realised that they could meet real believers there.
3. *Expatriates of all persuasions*, both residents and tourists.
4. *The authorities of the country*.
5. *Roman Catholic Christians*. While I strongly disagree with many R.C. dogmas, I did not want them to feel attacked when they saw the leaflet.

The second step was to state the objectives, knowing that I would not achieve them all, but that by stating them in full I would have a clearer sense of direction when actually writing the leaflet. The objectives were as follows:

1. To educate by clearly stating certain Christian beliefs which are commonly misunderstood, such as
  - a) One becomes a true Christian by choice, not by mere birth.
  - b) We are saved by grace, not works.
  - c) God is Holy and hates evil.
  - d) True Christians are a community of saved rebels; there is no such thing as a Christian country.
  - e) A Christian has a personal relationship with God.
  - f) An explanation of the Trinity and the meaning of the term "Son of God."
  - g) The Bible is authentic and has not been corrupted.
  - h) It is by Jesus alone that we can be saved.
2. To state clearly that the church service is open to everyone who will respectfully listen and not interrupt [e.g. reserve questions for private discussion after the service].
3. To explain the components of the church service, especially the observance of the Holy Communion. Emphasize also the importance and place of praise, the place of teaching,

the role of the pastor, the place of prayer, and the participation of all, including women and children. I particularly sought to convey the holiness of God, His great love towards us, and the personal relationship we enjoy with Him.

It was possible to meet most of the objectives in a two-page leaflet, presented in a pleasant 'landscape' style, and printed and folded into three columns. I suggest that members of other expatriate churches in environments that are hostile to overt proclamation of the Gospel could do something similar.

[A photocopy of the leaflet is available upon request from the Seedbed editor.]

## BOOK REVIEWS

Kenneth Cragg. *TROUBLED BY TRUTH: Biographies in the Presence of Mystery*. Cleveland, The Pilgrim Press, 1994. Pp. 328, \$14.95 (Paper). Reviewer: Rev. Bassam Madany.

The back cover of this book informs us that "in this collection of thirteen faith-biographies of literary and religious individuals from Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Indian beliefs, Kenneth Cragg, widely acknowledged as the premier Western Islamicist in the world, tells these stories in ways that emphasize the importance of religious tolerance and respect for others."

We are introduced by the author to the inner lives of twelve men and one woman all striving to make sense out of human existence from within their particular faith-systems. To list them is to indicate the daunting task which Bishop Cragg undertook in guiding the reader in this intellectual and spiritual exploration. They are: Henry Martyn, Charles Freer Andrews, Constance E. Padwick, Elie Wiesel, James Parkes, Abraham J. Heschel, Isma'il al-Faruqi, Salman Rushdie, Salah al-Sabur, Asaf 'Ali Asghar Fyzee, Raimundo Panikkar, Arnold J. Toynbee and Wilfred Cantwell Smith.

According to the author, as a by-product of the pluralistic societies which now exist in the Western world an "inter-faith situation" has come into existence. This leads to dialogue between the followers of these different faiths. In these encounters, if they are to be authentic and sincere, the Scriptures of those engaged in dialogue assume a primary importance. Thus posited, Cragg begins his study by recounting the moving story of the pioneer missionary, Henry Martyn (178-1812).

Born into a Methodist family, Henry Martyn studied at Cambridge and was later ordained in the Church of England. He was greatly influenced by the writings of William Carey and the biography of David Brainerd. Having felt the call to be a missionary, Henry Martyn went to India. His main concern was the translation of the Bible into Urdu, Persian and Arabic. Even though he died at a young age in the mission field, he left us a great legacy which is described by Cragg in these memorable words:

*His quality of spirit made him the first of modern missionaries to know the painful perplexity of registering the sheer otherness of faiths. For he did not academicise the experience and seek refuge in study for*