

## Editorial / Focus - July 1977

### Community

The humanist and optimistic philosophers who hoped society would become an intellectual, social and moral paradise are viewing our generation with growing disillusionment. It shows no sign of betterment, rather increasing signs of disintegration. Every town and city is being encouraged to make new efforts to benefit the community. In this aim many churches have lost their sense of true identity. They believe God wants them to be a 'good influence in the community', and therefore view the church programmes as geared to this end. By winning young people to Christ we would cut down purposeless vandalism. By winning men and women we will save marriages from falling apart; winning parents enables hope for the future generation. All this is commendable in its desired outcome, but misses the central issue. The church programmes will not save society or convert the community — we need to see the Church as God's community. The community is not where the church lives — it is what the church is. Becoming a Christian does not mean I now aim to better the community, it means I have just become part of a totally new community. The one around us is already judged and found wanting; it is based on wrong foundations. Its hope lies in the values and morals of natural men; however, man without Christ cannot stop the seeds of envy, jealousy, greed, war from germinating. Therefore, the hope of a better community for the future must lie in a new community with a new foundation. The Church is such — God's alternative society, with new values, morality, objectives . a community of people whose whole life springs from its leader, Jesus Christ. This issue explains the nature, purpose and practical life-style of God's community. Not in its future, one day, some day, but the here and now.