

## *The Tyndale Fellowship*

Two factors have converged to make it desirable to reorganize the Tyndale Fellowship. There has been a very welcome growth in the number of well-wishers and general supporters. At the same time, there has been some blurring of the distinction between those actually engaged in biblical research and those whose primary interest lies in receiving the results. As time has gone on the Fellowship has gathered under its hospitable umbrella both research workers and such valuable workers in their own fields as parish clergy, school teachers (especially those engaged in religious instruction), specialists in religious education and others. These latter were chiefly concerned to keep up to date and to increase their effectiveness in teaching. The Tyndale Fellowship was originally designed, however, to unite those *actually engaged* in biblical research and it was beginning to lose its character as such.

Doubtless this position has had some good results. It has meant that a large number of people were interested in promoting Evangelical research and in learning something of what was being done. But it also meant that the more advanced scholars in the Fellowship tended to feel frustrated. The annual Study Groups had originally been organized so that members with the necessary basic training might be stimulated into serious research. But in fact some who were not technically equipped attended and thus a promising discussion might from time to time be wrecked because a non-specialist asked questions not strictly relevant or made contributions not applicable to the subject on hand.

Accordingly it has now been decided to re-group the membership so that those who are actively engaged in the work of research will work more closely together, while those whose studies are concerned with the actual findings can compare notes. It is hoped that the arrangements will be to the benefit of both groups. It is a sincere effort to do two things: to ensure that the real research of the Tyndale Fellowship goes ahead unhindered, and, at the same time, to make provision for the needs of those interested in research, but who lack the time or the equipment to pursue it.

Conditions of membership of the Study Groups are therefore being made more stringent. For example, membership of the Old Testament Group will in future be limited to the following:

1. Those who hold an Honours Degree in Semitic Languages, or a related subject, of a recognized university.
2. Members of the teaching staff in O.T. Studies of a University, Theological College or Training College.
3. Those who have a knowledge of Hebrew and O.T. studies up to degree standard.
4. Others who have some scholarly contribution to make by special invitation of the Fellowship

The requirements for the other Groups are similar, varying, of course, according to the special requirements of the individual Groups. This should ensure that those who attend the Groups are active members.

Since the aim of the Tyndale Fellowship is to do *biblical* research, and the Historical Theology Group has developed into what will now be called the Church History Group, the new arrangement has been made for its liaison with other committees. It will become a separate group of the Graduates' Fellowship, having equal status with the Tyndale Fellowship. The hope is that this will have a twofold effect. It will free the Church History Group to engage in any research (within the full range of Church History) and at the same time it will underline the determination of the Tyndale Fellowship to concentrate on its specific field, that of biblical research. This does not mean any alteration of the essential character of the developing Church History Group. It is still to be a research group.

But the question arises, what of those who do not qualify for membership in the Groups so far mentioned? It is hoped that the new arrangements will work out to their benefit also. A new group is to be formed within the Graduates' Fellowship, probably with the name 'Theological Studies Group'. In addition to G.F. Members who have been asking for something of the kind, this Group is meant to comprise all those former members of the Tyndale Fellowship who, while not claiming to be specialists and researchers, are yet deeply interested in the results of research. They contain in their numbers many who want to know the results of the work of the Research Groups and to discuss among themselves their findings. It is hoped that it will be possible to run a summer school or conference annually for those in this category in order to stimulate their thinking and to inform them of what is going on in the research groups. Speakers from the research groups will be there to acquaint them with contemporary work in the various fields and to assist in applying the results to the problems faced by members. If any reader has a suggestion as to the form such conferences should take, the Warden of Tyndale House would be interested to hear from him. We hope to see the result of the reorganization in more vigorous and active study groups and in a wider dissemination of the results.

Finally, for the sake of clarity, we append a list of the relevant organizations within the Graduates' Fellowship to show the new grouping.

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1. The Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research, comprising
  - (a) The Old Testament Study Group
  - (b) The New Testament Study Group
  - (c) The Biblical Theology Study Group
  - (d) The Biblical Archaeology Study Group
2. The Church History Research Group.
3. The Theological Studies Group.