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It is impossible to describe the power of the Holy Spirit when he is doing a special work. The reforming work going on in unity and joy among so many of different backgrounds at the FIEL conference in Brazil was unique in my experience apart from some of the early reforming days at the Banner of Truth. Some would not notice anything special but many did. One pastor wrote to say that in 40 years in the ministry he had not seen anything equal to this. It is one thing to have doctrine in the head and another to have it in the heart. Photos cannot capture edification but the above photo of the venue of the FIEL Conference centre in the town of Aguas Lindoia and a picture of some of the conferees will act as a reminder of times of exceptional blessing. See report by Bill James.



Front cover: Trevor and Lucy Routley of Tandil, Argentina (see news)

Editorial

Creation in six literal days?

Bob Sheehan finds no reason to doubt the Genesis account of creation. He covers the subject in general. Readers who wish to pursue the theme in detail will find inspiration in Carl F Henry's magnificent work, *God, Revelation and Authority*. Henry devotes about 120 pages to creation and about 20 pages to the question of six days (vol 6 pages 108ff). He surveys contemporary literature on creation and evolution and points to the fact that very few are aware of the real battle at present taking place among scientists. The most serious objections have been raised against the theory of evolution by numerous biologists and other scientists of unimpeachable credentials. Henry states, 'It is therefore deplorably inaccurate from the standpoint of science to champion evolutionary theory as an incontrovertible theory - established dogma that one questions only on religious grounds... To dismiss objections to evolutionary theory as a kind of vestigial reverence for the Bible, rather than to recognise legitimate scientific and philosophical counter-criticism, betrays ignorance of the increasingly broad front of scientists who are boldly challenging long-regnant tenets of the theory. Some scholars, in fact, are questioning the entire evolutionary life sequence from amoeba to man because of unresolved theoretical inadequacies that have plagued the Darwinian hypothesis since its projection over a century ago.'

Henry, whose writing style always gives pleasure, concludes by affirming that evolutionism places a greater philosophical strain on reason than does creationism.

Ann Judson and pioneer missionary work

It is a matter of deep concern to the Christian world that from a missionary standpoint many unreached people groups of the world still receive the least attention. The main reason for this is the extremely daunting obstacles which impede the way to such a work, obstacles well illustrated in the experience of Ann Judson. In most instances this kind of pioneering can only be achieved by team-work such as pertained in the life work of Alfred Saker (see RT 135).

E F Kevan, Samuel Petto, and Covenant Theology

When we examine Hebrews 8:8-13 we note that fault was found with the Mosaic Covenant. That fault was the lack of disposition on the part of the Israelites to keep it. They broke that Covenant. The way of salvation, justification by faith (Romans chapter four), has always applied. In the Old Covenant that was implicit not explicit. Now it is no longer implicit but explicit as we see in John 1:12,13. The stress in Hebrews 8:8-13 on newness could hardly be more emphatic. The New Covenant is called NEW. It is new and living, being administered by a living,

News

A global tour



Wei En Li, pastor of Shalom Baptist Church, Singapore and pastor David Steere of Fressingfield

David and Joyce Steere have just completed travels round the world in which they have been able to encourage IFRB (*International Fellowship of Reformed Baptists*) churches. USA, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore were included. David Painter of Pennsylvania will be posting a descriptive newsletter to

IFRB members which will include observations and suggestions.

The Argentine

During September before going on to Brazil (see report by Bill James) I was in the Argentine where my main purpose was to encourage English missionary Trevor Routley. Trevor knows the Reformed Baptist movement in the UK well and has been subscribing to *Reformation Today* from its inception in 1970. We spent two weeks together, the first in the town of Tandil (population 150,000), where Trevor pastors a church of 35 members. The second week we spent in the very heart of the massive city of Buenos Aires (12 million). Trevor does not have a car so we travelled by bus and

glorious, all-powerful administrator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Every member of the New Covenant is alive in him by union. The Old Covenant administration is annihilated. The forms, types and rites of that Covenant are fulfilled in Christ. The nature of membership is no longer national but spiritual.

What about our children?

We do not have to practise infant baptism to provide for our children. Blessing is not conveyed through a one time application of water but through spiritual nurture. Every advantage of the Christian family and church belong to our offspring. The means of grace, prayer and teaching are exercised through the family and through the church family. It is for every one of our children to make good the invitations of the gospel and enter by the only living way which is justification by faith. This faith is a personal faith, not the faith of others. If it is objected that this is atomistic then we refer to our Lord's warning about discipleship (Matt 10:32-39). Whole families do come to faith. One such is described in the news section. Most Presbyterians maintain discipline in their churches in the same way as Baptists inasmuch as for membership they require a credible profession of faith from every applicant. When that takes place what is the initiation into the body of the Church? It is shocking to know that most Presbyterians accept the validity even of Roman Catholic infant baptism rather than practise believers' baptism in the New Testament way.

train. From Tandil we travelled by coach to Mar Del Plata (population 500,000), a coastal city, for a ministers' fraternal.

Trevor is married to Lucy, daughter of pioneer missionary John Rolls. Rolls was born in 1908 and lived to the age of 70. He was a church planter. There are now 62 churches in that grouping. During the last year of his life, as John Rolls was dying of cancer, he still maintained one day a week of prayer and fasting. He concentrated in particular on prayer for revival in China. He surely was inspired in that. The more we hear from those who have been in mainland China the more evidence we have of very extensive spiritual awakening there.

In Buenos Aires Trevor and I were guests of Willie and Ruth Robertson. Willie was in the airline business most of his life and knew Jack Cullum the founder of *The Banner of Truth*. Willie was greatly influenced by Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones. He studied for the ministry and now teaches in the main seminary and also pastors the historic St Andrews Presbyterian Church which has a cosmopolitan congregation right in the heart of the city. The week was very full visiting seminaries, leading a day of ministers' fraternal and preaching in churches.

One evening Trevor and I travelled by train to La Plata where a church of young people has been gathered and continues to grow. This has mainly taken place through the efforts of the lady warden of a students' home. Now there is an urgent need for a pastor to take over and consolidate the work.

We had the opportunity to watch a video of Claudio Freidson who until two years ago was a Baptist pastor. Then he was influenced by Benny Hinn. Freidson now specialises in 'slaying in the spirit'. His



Willie and Ruth Robertson of Buenos Aires

meetings attended by about 5,000 last about four hours. There is much rocking to music and dancing about. Sections of the audience are 'slain in the spirit' by a wave of Freidson's hand. Groups fall down and seem to enjoy it. Groups of pastors are invited forward to fall down at the sweep of Freidson's hand. One large gentleman went to the platform and fell down about five times, his copious form being caught and cushioned on each occasion by two assistants.

Freidson says he can blow 'the spirit' to individuals through the microphone. (I have used a small s in spirit because the Spirit described by our Lord in John 3 blows where he wills and is not subject to human control). Many evangelicals including Baptists (some think more than Pentecostals) have been deceived by Freidson's claims. When Isaiah fell before the Lord it was out of a fear of the holiness of God but falling under Freidson seems to be great fun. I was informed that where this euphoria takes over, interest in Scripture wanes.

The falling down excited by Freidson may be symbolical of falling into appalling superficiality.

This highlights the urgent need in Argentina for a lively Reformed movement. As far as we know there never has been such a thing in that country.

Creation in Six Days?

Bob Sheehan

The physical universe has long fascinated man. Its origins and development have been a constant source of wonder to him. However, historically, the origins of the universe were not shrouded in mystery for those living in a post-Reformation Christianised world. The Bible gave, in its early chapters, and in the later commentary on those chapters, the undisputed account of the origins of man and the universe in which he had been placed.

From those Scriptures continuing generations learned that the physical universe was created:

1. By the activity of the Triune God

The general statement with which the Scriptures open, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' was expanded by the prophet Isaiah into a clear declaration of divine independence. He alone was Creator, having made all things with the help of no one else. He had stretched out the heavens and spread out the earth by himself.¹

The LORD alone who made the universe was not simply the Lord considered as Father but also the LORD considered as Son. John affirms that nothing has come into existence without the activity of the Word of God in whom is all life and light. Paul asserts that everything which has been created has been made by Christ and for him.²

Nor should creative activity be confined to the Father and the Son. It was the Holy Spirit of God who hovered over the face of the waters in the early hours of creation as an eagle hovers over her young in the nest with superintending and protective care.³

Creation is a consequence of the activity of the Triune God, not merely in its initial phases, but in every stage of its development. The creative Father, the protective Spirit and the light and life-imparting Christ are not mere initiators of creation but vitally and constantly involved in it. The Scriptures do not present the Creator as some clockmaker who has wound up the watch of the world and left it to run down without interference. The Creator is constantly involved in his world.

2. By an act of divine will

God did not have to create a universe as though without it he would be lonely and deficient. Paul reminded the Athenian philosophers that God is dependent on no one and nothing, but all is dependent on him. The whole creation ought to confess that God created all things by his own will and that they continue according to that will. Not necessity, but choice, determined the existence of the universe.⁴

3. As something distinct from the Creator

From time to time philosophers and theorists have promoted pantheism, the idea

that God is all and all is God, and that, therefore the creation is merely an extension and expression of God. Ancient Eastern religions and modern New Ageism combine in this assertion.

The Scriptures, on the other hand, are at pains to emphasise the distinction between the Creator and the things created. The everlasting God existed before the creation. The ever-living God will exist when the heavens have been rolled up like a garment and discarded. The kingdom of the Lord rules over all but the King is not confused with his kingdom.⁵

4. As an act of self-glorification

As God is the greatest Being that exists, there can be no higher reason for any activity than to do it for the glory of God. What is true of the created is also true of the Creator. His highest motivation is self-glorification. Therefore everything that is of him and through him is also to him, in other words everything created and preserved by him is made for his praise and glory.⁶

What is asserted of God in general is specifically asserted of his Son. Not only the visible but also the invisible creation is explicitly stated to be created by him and for him. He is the heir of all things.⁷

5. In six days

The assertion of a six day creation arose out of a literal reading of Genesis 1:1-2:3. By 'literal' we simply mean taking the words of the text 'in their natural and customary meaning, and using the rules of grammar'.⁸ The literal interpretation of the creation narrative, therefore, allows for figurative expressions and poetic phrases, but as part of the normal pattern of historic prose. The literal interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:3 is opposed to the allegorical, parabolic or mythical usages, all of which are non-literal.

It is widely recognised, even by those who reject the literal interpretation of the creation narrative in Genesis, that it is the literal interpretation which 'enjoys the support of the majority throughout church history'.⁹ However, the rise of a Darwinian and post-Darwinian world-view has meant that the literal view of the Genesis creation account has been increasingly discarded.

Non-Literal Views of the Genesis Creation Narrative

Just as Darwinism is always developing, so also there has been a gradual development in the way that anti-literal interpreters of Genesis have expressed themselves. Three theories, which to a greater or lesser extent have influence among evangelicals, need to be considered.

The Reconstructionist Theory

As diverse persons as Thomas Chalmers and C I Schofield have tried to cope with Darwinian development and biblical creationism by positing a gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, into which is poured the great ages of evolutionary development. Genesis 1:3f is then interpreted as an account of the divine reconstruction of that chaotic world.

Whatever relief from the tension between Darwinism and literalism some may feel by this solution, the fact is that this theory 'draws no support from the text, but rather brings its own framework, digging its own imaginary gap between the two verses in order to set it up'.¹⁰

Violence has to be done to the text of Genesis 1:2 in order to fit in the theory. Without any textual warrant the statement that the earth **was** without form and void has to be changed to read **became** without form and void so as to allow for an evolutionary process over many ages to occur. The three circumstantial clauses in the Hebrew of the verse which simply describe a condition without action have to be forced to do service as verbal clauses which involve action. Tampering with the natural reading of the text in order to satisfy a theory does little to commend the theory.

In addition to this, it needs to be remembered that activity on a Darwinist model between 1:1 and 1:2 would require the constant outworking of the survival of the fittest with its cycle of death and decay. Scripture, however, insists that death and decay are invaders of this world only **after** Adam's fall into sin.¹¹

It also has to be recognised that the rest of the Scriptures do not at all interpret the Genesis narrative as a reconstruction or recreation of a world but as its original creation. The Sabbath principle is not based on the remaking of the world but its creation in six days.¹²

It is not at all surprising that fewer and fewer books appear which advocate the 'gap theory'. Its inadequacies are recognised and it is increasingly viewed as an embarrassing attempt to avoid conflict rather than to explain realities.

The Concordist Theory

Within ten years of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species*, Hugh Miller asserted that the days of creation in Genesis 1 were ages of time which would allow a synthesis of geological ages and creation 'days'. In recent years as able men as D Kidner and R K Harrison have tentatively advocated this approach.

The key to success in finding concord between geological age and biblical day is the demonstration that the word 'day' does not have to mean a 24 hour period. Concordists note that even in the book of Genesis, and in the creation narrative itself, the word 'day' can have a variety of meanings. It can be used of the period of light rather than the period of darkness. The whole period of creation can be described as the day in which God created. The phrase 'there was evening, there was morning', it is suggested, does not describe a literal day. The end of the seventh day is not mentioned, and so, it is argued it must still be continuing. The argument from the Letter to the Hebrews that men will have opportunity to enter God's rest is introduced as further proof that the seventh day continues. If the seventh day is not a literal day, why should the others be so?¹³

It is easy to reel under what might at first seem an impressive barrage of evidence. However, the fact that sometimes the word 'day' does not mean a literal 24 hour day does not cancel out the fact that it is its usual meaning. Obviously where the context forbids the usual meaning, an alternative has to be sought, but is a non-

literal day demanded by the context in Genesis 1? This theory demands that a day should not be a 24 hour day, but does the text of Genesis I require it?

If the statement 'there was evening, there was morning' does not imply a literal day, what does it imply? It certainly does not imply a geological age as the concordist theory requires. Can we really draw from the absence of a statement regarding the conclusion of the seventh day and the theology of the book of Hebrews that we are still in an unended seventh day? Can this argument from silence be given more weight than the biblical assertion of the necessity of the Sabbath because God's work of creation was completed in six days?¹⁴

Perhaps the fundamental problem with the concordist theory is that the geological order and the biblical order just do not fit. Which evolutionary theory do you know that places the creation of the sun, or at least the reception of its light-bearing function in the fourth geological period? The sun became a light-bearer on day four and not before. The fourth day of creation and its activity in relation to the sun has correctly been described as the reef on which the concordist theory is wrecked.¹⁵

The Theological Theory

Since the early sixties, attempts to reconcile Darwinism and Genesis have largely been abandoned, especially in books directed at the student market. A new approach has been found and so it could be confidently asserted in 1980 that 'The old science-versus-faith controversies are increasingly a thing of the past. In fact these chapters are now reckoned to be among the foremost theological statements the Bible contains. Once men were released from trying to defend them as scientific documents they were ready to listen to what the text was actually saying.'¹⁶

The key element in the theological theory is the total denial that the Bible is interested in science at this point at all. Genesis 1 is 'not a treatise on geology, biology or any other science. We are not told **when** creation took place. Nor are we given details as to **how** God brought the earth into being.' Indeed, 'Genesis, with its poetry and panoramic sweep, is not concerned with "How did it happen?" but with the theological truth of God, the almighty ruler of the universe. Let the biologist continue to work on the "how" of creation. Let the Christian expound the opening chapters of Genesis to teach the "why".'¹⁷

Under this view Genesis is in no sense scientific. It is merely theological. The days of creation are neither literal nor geological ages but an artificial, literary device paralleled in other ancient near-Eastern literature. 'Close examination of this chapter will reveal a schematic presentation into which the creative acts are compressed into a pattern of six days.'¹⁸ This schematic presentation is not in literal but in poetic language.

What then is the theological purpose of this chapter? One recent suggestion states, 'The author's idea is to supply us with a chronology of origins... He wishes to bring out certain themes and provide a theology of the Sabbath.'¹⁹

As convenient as this approach to Genesis seems in the 'nuclear age' it is seriously flawed. Many of its assertions are just plainly untrue and others are open to challenge.

By what authority does anyone assert that the Bible is not interested in the 'how' of creation and only the 'why'? Have not the vast majority of interpreters throughout the centuries seen Genesis as concerned with the 'how' as well as the 'why'? Why must they necessarily be wrong? If the only concern of Genesis is the 'why', then Genesis 1:1 would have done.

The suggestion that the days of creation are an artificial literary device and that, therefore, Genesis 1 is not sober history, finds no support from the rest of Genesis. There is no suggestion in Genesis itself that chapter 1 or chapters 1-3 or 1-11 (wherever the anti-literalists want to make their division) are any less historical or literal than the chapters which follow concerning the patriarchs.

Genesis has its own, original structure with no differentiation made between the parts as to their historicity or non-historicity. That structure is:

1. The Creation account 1:1 - 2:3
2. The history of the Heavens and the Earth 2:4 - 4:26
3. The history of Adam 5:1 - 6:8
4. The history of Noah 6:9 - 9:29
5. The history of the sons of Noah 10:1 - 11:9
6. The history of Shem 11:10-26
7. The history of Terah 11:27 - 25:11
8. The history of Ishmael 25:12-18
9. The history of Isaac 25:19 - 35:29
10. The history of Esau 36:1 - 37:1
11. The history of Jacob 37:2 - 50:26

Nor does the rest of Scripture do anything other than assume the literal historicity of Genesis. Its teachings on creation, the Sabbath, the fall, marriage etc. all begin with the assumption that Genesis teaches sober fact and is not a near-Eastern parable.²⁰

The claim that the creation account and other early chapters of Genesis are poetry is palpably false. The main feature of Hebrew poetry is not metre or equal stanzas but parallelism. Most parallelisms are two lined although some are three, four or five lined (known as distichs, tristichs, tetrastichs and pentastichs respectively).

There are four main types of parallelism:

1. Synonymous parallelism where the same thoughts are repeated in almost the same words;
2. Antithetical parallelism where the thought is expressed by contrast;
3. Synthetic parallelism where the second line develops and completes the first;
4. Chiasmic parallelism where lines 1 and 4, and 2 and 3, are parallel.

This fundamental and central form of Hebrew poetry is not the form in which the creation narrative is written. The attempt to make this prose to be poetry is for dogmatic reasons alone.

Why Maintain the Literal View?

In spite of the fact that the literal view of Genesis 1 is increasingly unpopular in the modern world and is subject to sneering even in some evangelical circles, there is no good reason to desert it. It is the historical position of the Christian Church because it is the natural way to understand Genesis 1:1-2:3. It treats Genesis as sober history because it is written as sober history.

The key strength of the literal interpretation is that it is ruled by the text of Scripture rather than the always changing ideas of the scientific theorists. Nor is the literal interpretation subject to the ever-changing opinions of the theologians who vie with each other to find the real theological reason for the writing of Genesis 1.

Trying to deal conscientiously with the Genesis text as sober history will not lead to just one interpretation. Variation in interpretation on points will result but speculation will be kept in check.

The attitude of the literalist is well summarised by the late E J Young, 'Of course there is much in the first chapter of Genesis that we cannot understand. There is, however, one thing that, by the grace of the Creator, we may do. We may earnestly seek to think the thoughts of God after him as they are revealed in the mighty first chapter of the Bible. We can cease being rationalists and become believers. In the face of all the strident claims to the contrary we can believe, and we need never be ashamed to believe that "in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all that in them is" (Ex 20:11a).'²¹

References

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- 3 Gen 1:2; Deut 32:11
- 4 Acts 17:25; Rev 4:11
- 5 Ps 90:1-2; 102:25-27; 103:19
- 6 Rom 11:36
- 7 Col 1:16
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- 9 Blocher H (1984) *In the Beginning*, IVP p46
- 10 *ibid* p43
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- 13 Gen 1:5; 2:4; Heb 4
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- 15 Blocher *op cit* p45
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Ann Judson: America's First Woman Missionary

by Sharon James

The story of Ann Judson is one of the great dramas of church history, a story of faith, loyalty, courage and love. It is both heartbreaking and heartwarming, a challenge to lukewarm commitment and yet a story that glorifies God rather than falsely romanticises human achievement.



Ann Hasseltine Judson

Preparation for Missionary Life

Early Life and Education

Ann Hasseltine was born in 1789 in a comfortable Christian home in New England. She had a wonderfully happy childhood, and as a teenager was popular, attractive and always in demand for parties and other social events. As one friend said, 'Where Ann is no one could be gloomy or unhappy.'¹ She maintained a pattern of daily prayer and dutifully attended church with her family, but despite considerable academic promise her main concerns were friends, going out, and as she confided in her diary, she often thought herself 'one of the happiest creatures on earth'.² However when she was 15, a new headmaster joined the school she attended and he was committed to the spiritual well-being of his students. Under his influence indeed the town of Bradford began to experience something of a religious awakening. Ann herself came under intense conviction of sin and was converted and baptised in August 1806, soon to be followed by her three sisters. Even her parents formally joined the church for the first time. Though respectable professing Christians they had never before had time for what they called 'experimental piety'.

Ann worked harder at her studies than ever and at the age of 17 began teaching school herself with the prime aim of seeing the conversion of those in her charge. In her diary she writes how she began each day with prayer and that the 'little creatures seemed astonished at such a beginning'.³ Ann's conversion

seems to be typical of the experience of many in the days of powerful revival in that from the very earliest she had an acute sense of the majesty and holiness of God, a sense of her own sinfulness before such a God and a great desire for his glory. 'My chief happiness now consisted in contemplating the moral perfections of the glorious God. I longed to have all intelligent creatures love him...'⁴ Her memoirs, from this young age, record a private and yet overwhelming desire that God should be glorified in the conversion of the heathen. It is clear that she was herself being prepared for a missionary vocation even before the Lord brought Adoniram into her life.

Marriage to Adoniram Judson

A little older than Ann, born in 1788, Adoniram was the first son of a Congregational minister in Massachusetts. A brilliant youngster, he excelled in everything he did and his devoted parents had high hopes for him. However he rebelled against their faith. At 16 he was sent to Rhode Island Christian College. There he fell in with free thinkers and atheists. He was particularly influenced by the powerful personality of a student, Jacob Eames, who scoffed at everything that Adoniram had been brought up to value. When he graduated at the age of 19, he returned home to teach school, but soon left to seek a more exciting life away from parental restraints. God however dealt with him and brought him to himself. One night Adoniram arrived late at an inn, and the only room left was next to a critically ill man. The innkeeper warned him that there might be some disturbance, and indeed throughout the night Adoniram was aware of groans and comings and goings. In the morning he inquired what had happened and was informed that the man had indeed died. Asking who the man was, he was absolutely devastated to hear that it was his college friend and admired mentor, Jacob Eames. To Adoniram, this was nothing less than God speaking to him, warning him, and it was the beginning of the path back to faith. He entered theological college while still seeking, but soon was truly converted.

Like Ann, Adoniram was converted almost simultaneously to the cause of the gospel overseas. This was all the more remarkable as at this time there were no American missionaries abroad. Some had gone to the North American tribes on the frontier, but none had ventured over to Africa or Asia. Adoniram read avidly all he could lay his hands on concerning India, China, and what was then known as 'The Golden Kingdom' or Burma. He was amazed at the complacency and seeming lack of concern of so many Christians in America:

How do Christians discharge the trust committed to them? They let three fourths of the world sleep the sleep of death, ignorant of the simple truth that a Saviour died for them. Content if they can be useful in the little circle of their acquaintances they quietly sit and see whole nations perish for lack of knowledge.⁵

Adoniram's single-minded commitment to take the gospel to the unreached was matched by an identical commitment in a small group of his seminary friends and though young and without reputation in their denomination they lobbied tirelessly for the Congregationalists to establish an agency for overseas mission. On 28th June, 1810, 4 students appeared before the General Association of Congregational Ministers in Bradford, to present a statement that they felt compelled to offer themselves for a lifetime commitment to take the gospel overseas to the heathen. This was unprecedented in American church history, and the beginning of the American mission movement. On that day, they adjourned for lunch to the home of a local deacon, Mr Hassletine. His daughter Ann, by then aged 21, was present. Just a month later Adoniram formally wrote to Ann asking if they could commence a courtship; she replied that her father's permission would be needed. She confided to her diary that she would indeed be willing to spend the rest of her life taking the gospel to the lost. Adoniram promptly wrote what must have seemed the most extraordinary letter to Mr Hassletine:

I have now to ask, whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next Spring, to see her no more in this world; whether you can consent to her departure, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of missionary life; whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death. Can you consent to all this, for the sake of him who left his heavenly home and died for her and for you; for the sake of perishing immortal souls; for the sake of Zion, and the glory of God?⁶

With much hesitation, her parents left the choice to Ann and she decided to marry Adoniram and to leave all she knew for the unknown. To quote again from her journal:

Jesus is faithful; his promises are precious. Were it not for these considerations, I should, with my present prospects, sink down in despair, especially as no female has, to my knowledge, ever left the shores of America to spend her life among the heathen; nor do I yet know that I shall have a single female companion. But God is my witness, that I have not dared to decline the offer that has been made me, though so many are ready to call it a 'wild, romantic undertaking'.⁷

We must remember that sea communications were much the same as in New Testament times. This was before the days of the steam ship, long before the days of telephone communication or refrigeration. Travellers were dependent on the wind and the stars. Pirates were a constant menace. Letters took months, and might well never arrive. There was no established mission network to

Readers will wish to extend their sympathy to David Kingdon, on the homecall of his wife Gwyneth, and to Jonathan, Ruth & Richard, and Gareth who is 11. Those who have a copy of David's book *Children of Abraham* will see there his own tribute to Gwyneth. They were married for 33 years. Gwyneth was never one to seek the limelight but she was ever supportive, a loving mother and homemaker, and a Christian of outstanding dedication.

which these pioneers could go, or from which they could take advice. There was no American Embassy in Asia from whom they could claim protection. The British East India Company which had power in India was utterly hostile to missions, as it feared that Christianity would stir up the natives to insubordination. The Chinese authorities decreed death to converts to Christ. And the Emperor of Burma likewise threatened torture and death to any Burmese who forsook the religion of Buddha. There was no certainty that these pioneer missionaries would find a place in which they could safely minister. Nothing was guaranteed: neither safety, health, toleration, and least of all, success. They did not go on a return ticket. They went fully expecting never to see America again. There was certainly no possibility of any visit from relatives or friends; the voyage was far too long, perilous and expensive for that. Many thought the idea hare-brained, many opposed it viciously. But Adoniram, Ann and the other young people with them would no doubt have argued that Christ did not issue the Great Commission on the condition that health, comfort and safety could be guaranteed. Christ had said simply 'GO'.

The Departure

And so in 1812 Adoniram and Ann were married and 13 days later they sailed for India with one other couple. The risks of sea travel were such that the other missionary candidates were sent in another boat. So despite her fears, Ann did have a female companion, for Samuel Newell one of the group had married a young friend of Ann's called Harriet. Harriet was only 16 and frail. For her, like Ann, this had been a fearsome decision. The farewells from family and friends had been heartrending. Their pastor in Bradford had known Ann and Harriet since they were small; many times he had visited the Hassletine household where the youngsters had been enjoying themselves in the specially built dance room, without a thought as to what the future might hold. The farewell service for them saw him speaking to them as a father. 'My dear children, you are now engaged in the best of causes... you literally forsake father and mother, brothers and sisters, for the sake of Christ...' He exhorted them to make special efforts to reach the women to whom their husbands would be unable to minister. "Teach them that they are not an inferior race... but stand on a par with men. Teach them that they have immortal souls."⁸ And at the end, with tears, he commended them to the Great Head of the Church. Many wept

unashamedly during the final hymn, as many were to weep during the other farewell services. But now Ann, Adoniram, Harriet and Samuel had finally left. The farewells were over.

Ministry in Burma

Trials and Testings

We pass over two years of tortuous travel, delays, frustrations and fear. India twice ejected the missionaries, a sea journey was made to Mauritius, where likewise they were unable to establish a mission. Ann lost her companion and friend, as Harriet and her new born infant succumbed to sickness brought on by horrendous conditions at sea. Ann herself suffered a stillbirth at sea, after a difficult labour at which her husband was the only attendant. To make things worse, Adoniram and Ann came to a conviction that believers' baptism was the New Testament pattern and one that they would have to follow in their missionary work. A study of the Greek New Testament on the voyage to India led to this conclusion and after much heartsearching both were baptised by immersion in India. This meant inevitable separation from the Congregational Association which was sponsoring them; no certainty of future support as the American Baptists had not entered the field of foreign missions; and equally as bad, a necessary separation from those who had gone out with them as it would be confusing to have two different teachings on baptism in the same mission.

Formidable Obstacles to the Gospel in Burma

However God was closing every other door and pushing them inexorably to the place which all advised them to avoid absolutely. No one seriously believed that a Christian mission stood any chance of success in Burma. It was an Empire governed by an absolute monarch, who ruled by fear. Torture and mass executions kept the population in utter subjection, no deviation from Buddhism was allowed. One or two Catholic priests ministered to the tiny number of foreigners who ventured into this exotic kingdom, but a solitary Burmese subject who had dared to profess conversion to Catholicism some years before had been horrendously tortured almost to death before the mediation of a foreigner had led instead to exile. There were no Scriptures in the Burmese language, and no aids whatsoever to learning the language. No dictionaries, no grammars, no guide to the appallingly complex circular script which had no punctuation, no word, sentence or paragraph divisions but just flowed endlessly in a seemingly identical stream. Moreover the Burmese had absolutely no concept of an eternal God and no way in their language even to express such an idea. This however was the unpromising and frightening place where Adoniram and Ann ended up in 1814.

Persistent Labour and the First Fruits

No overt opposition was encountered at first, because of course the Judsons

could not begin any evangelisation until some of the language had been learned. Both were gifted linguists, but Burmese proved to be a totally different experience from anything they had encountered before and a good couple of years with 12 hours of study a day was needed before real work could begin. Fairly soon after that, Adoniram produced the first Burmese tract and began work on translating the New Testament, while Ann produced a catechism which summarised Christian teaching. It was a further three years of steady working at one-to-one contacts, Adoniram with men and Ann with women, before they saw their first conversion. During this time they adopted a culturally appropriate means of communicating with the local people; they constructed a 'zayat', a shelter by the side of the road, where passers-by could rest, discuss and listen to teachers. Such were common in Burma at the time and the Judsons visited a nearby 'zayat' to discover the acceptable seating arrangements and so on. The idea worked, and those who would never have visited the mission house began visiting the 'zayat'. So six years after their arrival in Burma there was a nucleus of a church: ten baptised Burmese believers, who had taken this step knowing that the consequence could be persecution or even death. What is more, despite the risks they proved to have a genuine desire to evangelise others, a sure sign that this was a real work of the Holy Spirit.

These were years of toil and hardship, loneliness and grief. The year after their arrival they rejoiced at the birth of a beautiful baby boy, named Roger. But before his first birthday the infant succumbed to one of the fearsome diseases so common in that climate, and the loss was the more appalling as Ann and Adoniram were totally alone as far as fellowship and company were concerned. As Ann wrote in a letter home:

He had so completely entwined himself around his parents' hearts that his existence seemed necessary to their own. But God has taught us by afflictions what we would not learn by mercies - that our hearts are his exclusive property, and whatever rival intrudes he will tear it away... But what shall I say about the improvement we are to make of this heavy affliction? We do not feel a disposition to murmur, or to enquire of our Sovereign why he has done this. We wish, rather, to sit down submissively under the rod and bear the smart, till the end for which the affliction was sent shall be accomplished. Our hearts were bound up in this child; we felt he was our earthly all, our only source of innocent recreation in this heathen land. But God saw it was necessary to remind us of our error, and to strip us of our only little all. O may it not be in vain that he has done it.⁹

They had no option but to throw themselves into the work and back onto the promises of God. These were also years of physical hardship, as the unrelenting climate took its toll. By 1820, 6 years after their arrival, Ann was so seriously ill that she had to seek medical help in Calcutta. Two years later she

was told that unless she returned either to Europe or America for treatment she would die. She had consented to her husband accompanying her to Calcutta, but the longer voyage to England with a possible further trip to America would probably take a couple of years. She refused to see him abandon the infant church and the crucial Bible translation for that long, and travelled alone. She sailed first for England, a much cheaper option, but Christians there raised funds for her passage to America, where she not only received skilled medical care, but was also reunited with her family and that of Adoniram. The whole trip did indeed take two years and of this separation Adoniram said that it was literally like chopping off his right arm and gouging out his right eye. It was of course made infinitely worse in that communications were so slow; at one stage Adoniram lamented that he had not received any letters from Ann for ten months. Perhaps it was as well that Ann did not know of the turmoil through which the mission passed during her absence. Adoniram managed to achieve the completion of the New Testament into Burmese, and a summary of key portions of the Old Testament. So solid progress was made. But he and the fellow missionary, Dr Price, who had joined them, were summoned to the Emperor's court and detained in the capital, Ava. The political situation grew more and more ominous as war was drawing near between England and Burma.

War - Intense Suffering and the Final Separation

When Ann returned to Burma in 1824 she had to join Adoniram in the capital, rather than at their home in Rangoon. They built a small wooden temporary home, where the heat was unbearable, reaching 180 degrees in the shade. Even here Ann, in characteristic fashion, insisted on starting a girls' school. Her reunion with her husband, though joyful, was pitifully brief.

When the war began, all foreigners were under suspicion of being spies for England and Adoniram and Price were thrown into the notorious death prison, from which few ever emerged alive. They awaited execution in the most filthy and sordid of conditions, weighed down with fetters so that they could not walk. Daily they observed the torture and execution of their fellow prisoners, not knowing when their time would come. Nightly they were placed in the stocks and their legs and bodies raised so that only their head and shoulders remained on the ground. They were in fact to remain incarcerated for one and a half years, during which time they were never able to wash, often sick with no access to medical help and with little contact with the outside world.

The wife of Dr Price had died of disease in 1822, but Adoniram's agony was worsened by fears for what would befall Ann who, without regard to the risk to herself, petitioned tirelessly on their behalf. Daily she walked the two miles from the small home they had set up to the prison, to try to see them and supply food and drink. Sometimes she was allowed to see them, but often not allowed to talk, so she found ways of smuggling messages. She then visited every per-

son of influence she could gain access to, trying to explain that as Americans the missionaries had nothing to do with the English war effort. She was quite alone through this ordeal and to make things worse she was pregnant. Eight months after Adoniram had been arrested, in February 1825 she gave birth to little Maria and was able to visit the prison with the little bundle whom the father could only observe from afar. Their first baby had been stillborn, their second had died at 8 months, and the chances of survival of this tiny one seemed even more slender. Even while nursing the baby, Ann continued her efforts to visit her husband and to secure his release. Of this terrible time she wrote:

Sometimes for days and days together, I could not go into the prison, till after dark, when I had two miles to walk in returning to the house. O how many, many times have I returned from that dreary prison at nine o'clock at night, solitary and worn out with fatigue and anxiety... and endeavoured to invent some new scheme for the release of the prisoners... the acme of my distress consisted in the awful uncertainty of our final fate. My prevailing opinion was, that my husband would suffer violent death; and that I should, of course, become a slave... But the consolations of religion in these trying circumstances were neither 'few nor small'. It taught me to look beyond this world, to that rest... where Jesus reigns...¹⁰

Eventually she had to set up a little shelter near the prison as the daily four mile round trip proved too much to walk in the blazing heat. Of this time her memoirs record:

The situation of the prisoners was now distressing beyond description. It was at the commencement of the hot season. There were above a hundred prisoners shut up in one room, without a breath of air excepting from the cracks in the boards... The white prisoners, from incessant perspiration and loss of appetite, looked more like the dead than the living...¹¹

It would seem that things could not get worse. But with the British troops advancing to the capital Ava, the foreign prisoners were removed on a death march to a remote spot in the country some miles north of the capital where rumour had it they were to be buried alive as an offering to the gods in the path of the advancing troops. Their sufferings on the march were indescribable, their survival remarkable. Even more remarkable was the determination of Ann to follow them. With her three month old infant, plus two little girls she was looking after and a faithful Burmese helper, she immediately set out by boat and then by rough cart in pursuit of the prisoners. For the duration of their imprisonment in the country she persuaded their jailor to let her and the children share his two-room hut. From there she continued to try to minister such help as she could to her husband and Price. During this appalling period she became so ill that she had no milk for the baby, and the only way tiny Maria

survived was by Ann bribing the jailor to allow Adoniram out of prison to carry the baby round the local village begging nursing mothers to let Maria have a little of their milk.

But freedom came at last. When the Burmese realised how hopeless the struggle against England was, they decided they needed all the help they could get in negotiating the least humiliating peace settlement. Adoniram and Price were released to help with the peace negotiations, as they could speak both Burmese and English. Again Ann and Adoniram had a wonderfully happy but tragically brief reunion. They enjoyed two blissful weeks of freedom and comfort at the British base before Adoniram was summoned elsewhere for further negotiations. This was their final separation. Ann's health had been broken by the sufferings of the past two years, and she succumbed to cerebral meningitis. She was 37. Her final sufferings had to be endured without her husband, and Adoniram was shattered not only by her death, but by the knowledge he had not been able to support her at that time. Shortly after, Maria also died. Adoniram was left quite alone. He was so grief-stricken that he suffered complete emotional breakdown. Eventually he recovered to complete the entire Bible in Burmese, as well as aids for future missionaries to learn the language. He also achieved many more years of fruitful evangelistic and teaching work.

A Life Bearing Witness to the Goodness of God

Her Achievements and Applications for Today

1. Ann and Adoniram were the human instruments used by God to pioneer the gospel in the great Empire of Burma. The population at that time was double that of America, and previously there had been no access to the gospel. The first church was planted, the Scriptures translated for the first time, and the tools prepared for future missionaries to learn the language.
2. Ann became the model of a missionary wife who was in all senses an equal partner with her husband, working together as a team. For especially in Asian society, there was no way culturally that women could be reached except by women. For evangelistic work a husband and wife team was the ideal. Ann felt equally as much a call to the work as her husband, which enabled them to persevere together, supporting each other, as they had the same priorities and goals. Ann had a great compassion for the plight of the Burmese women, and a great vision for what could be achieved through Christian education, and especially the teaching of literacy. She wrote shortly after arrival in Burma:

'I desire no higher enjoyment in this life than to be instrumental in leading some poor, ignorant females to the knowledge of the Saviour. To have a female praying society, consisting of those who were once in heathen darkness, is what my heart earnestly pants after, and makes a constant

subject of prayer. Resolved to keep this in view, as one principal object of my life.'¹²

3. Perhaps Ann's greatest contribution to missions was through her writing:

'She was the leading female missionary author of the early nineteenth century - indeed she was the first woman missionary in modern times to attract a wide hearing on the subject of missionary life and the condition of the 'heathen' overseas. Her letters and journal provided insight and inspiration to a generation of Americans whose knowledge of and commitment to overseas missions were very limited.'¹³

4. Her life is a witness to the reality of eternal things. Only the certain prospect of an eternal heaven and an eternal hell moved Ann willingly to risk her life in order to take the message of salvation to the unreached. In the words of Hebrews 11:16, she was looking for a better country, a heavenly one. She endured disgrace for the sake of Christ, because she was looking ahead to her reward.

5. Her life is a testimony to the joy of knowing God. Her memoirs betray no sense of questioning or bitterness at the hard providences that beset her. There is a quiet confidence in the love and merciful purposes of God even at the time of the loss of her babies, during the suffering endured by her husband, and during her own illnesses.

6. Her life is a testimony to faith in the sovereignty of God. Both she and her husband demonstrate in their private journals that they had no sense of God 'needing' them or their contribution to the cause. They both had a sense of their own unworthiness and an overwhelming awareness of the majesty and sovereignty of God. This is what enabled them to go where no others dared to go and to persevere when all would have counselled retreat. They were not working in expectation that it was their efforts, their talents or their ability which would defeat the humanly impossible obstacles in their way. Both had an unshakeable conviction that God was going to establish his own Church in Burma, God was going to call out his people, and God would protect his cause. In a real sense they believed that what happened to them was of quite secondary importance, for God would use them as long as he wanted but could equally raise up others in their place:

'They always enjoyed complete certainty as to the result of their labours, though occasionally doubting whether they would live to witness it. Their confidence rested solely and exclusively on the Word of God. They believed what he had promised. In doing what they believed to be his will, they accepted the promise as addressed to them personally. Their daily

work was a transaction between God and their own souls. It never occurred to them that God could be false to his promises.⁷¹⁴

7. In some ways indeed Ann seems superhuman. Her courage in leaving America, her dedication in insisting that her beloved husband remain with the young believers while she had to seek medical help abroad, above all her loyalty during the imprisonment of Adoniram and her disregard of risk to herself in her efforts on his behalf, inspire our admiration. The Lord undoubtedly gave Ann unusual gifts in terms of linguistic ability, determination and bravery, as well as spiritual gifts of zeal for souls, patience in working with enquirers and faith during times of desperate hardship. And yet she was only too human in that she suffered as intensely as any of us would suffer; she was not hard or insensitive or cold. It was her passionate devotion to her husband that enabled her to persevere on his behalf during his imprisonment, but the depth of her love for him meant that witnessing him in such degrading and sordid circumstances was daily torture for her. During her illness when she was unable to nurse her baby, she was far more in agony for the plight of her hungry infant than mindful of her own pain. She was a woman who loved intensely; loved her husband, loved her children, loved the people of Burma, but above all loved her God.

Footnotes

- 1 Anderson, Courtney, *To the Golden Shore*, Judson Press, Valley Forge USA 1989, p75.
- 2 Knowles, James D, *Memoir of Mrs Ann H Judson*, London 1830, p18.
- 3 *Memoir*, pp36-37.
- 4 *Memoir*, p24.
- 5 Anderson, pp63-64.
- 6 Anderson, p83.
- 7 *Memoir*, p49.
- 8 Anderson, p108.
- 9 *Memoir*, pp151-153.
- 10 *Memoir*, pp295-296.
- 11 *Memoir*, pp299-300.
- 12 *Memoir*, p61.
- 13 Tucker, Ruth A, *Guardians of the Great Commission*, Zondervan, 1988, p25.
- 14 Wayland, F, quoted by Nettles, T, *Adoniram Judson*, part 1, R T no 92, pp4-5.

For the current situation in Burma, now Myanmar, readers are directed to the 1993 edition of Operation World, pp. 398-400. Johnstone notes that the Church in Myanmar has continued to grow on the foundations laid by Adoniram Judson, and has become a strong missionary sending body despite official restrictions and isolation.

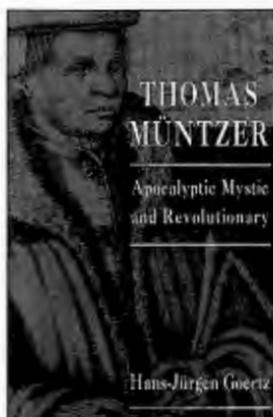
Thomas Müntzer – Apocalyptic Mystic and Revolutionary

A Review

*Hans-Jürgen Goertz, T & T Clark, 59
George Street, Edinburgh EH2 2LQ,
£19.95, hardback, 250 pages*

This is a masterly new biography of Thomas Müntzer by a leading German historian of the revolutionary Reformation movements.

When I read the claim of the publishers that without an understanding of Thomas Müntzer it is impossible to gain a full understanding of the Reformation, I thought that must be an exaggeration. After reading the book I accord with the claim but I would express it differently. A proper understanding of the Reformation is not possible without an appreciation of the prevailing social conditions together with a grasp of the mystical medieval ideas which motivated the revolutionaries during a time of great theological and ecclesiastical upheaval. It was in the person of Thomas Müntzer that reformation, revolution, medieval mysticism, eschatological vision, and the claim of direct revelation come together. Under stressful conditions this mixture ignited like gunpowder with calamitous consequences.



In order to keep the Reformation times in perspective I read this fascinating work by Prof Goertz alongside George H Williams' comprehensive and monumental 950 page work, *The Radical Reformation* (Westminster Press, USA, 1962), and at the same time reread William R Estep's classic *The Anabaptist Story* (Eerdmans, 1975). G H Williams distinguishes three phases of central European peasant revolt, 1. The medieval phase of sporadic outbursts, 1291-1517, 2. The Great Peasants' War, 1524-1525/6, universalised and religiously undergirded by an appeal to evangelical freedom, and associated with the calamitous massacre of 6,000 peasants outside and inside the city of Mühlhausen (population 7,500), and 3. In 1535, the uprising, debacle and slaughter of almost all the inhabitants of Münster (population about

15,000), under the misguided, fanatical and disastrous leadership of Bernard Rothmann and (King) John Beukels. Those not familiar with the history should note that the name of the leader Müntzer is not connected to the event at the city of Münster.

It is important to remember the Anabaptist movement was very extensive over several centuries and the difference must be noted between the inspirationists (many of whom were wild like Thomas Müntzer and John Beukels), the rationalists (some of whom were unitarian), the libertines and the evangelicals. It is common to find all groups erroneously lumped together as Anabaptists. Thereby the biblical issues contended for by the evangelical Anabaptists are often dismissed. In subsequent history some of the principal issues for which they stood and died have been embraced by almost all evangelical denominations, namely the gathered nature of the church in lieu of sacramentalism, liberty of conscience in religion and the separation of Church and State.

Estep's book *The Anabaptist Story* shows that Swiss evangelical Anabaptists were in a class on their own. Most of them were of the Zwinglian Swiss reformation stream. Their lives were cut short. Among the leaders were Grebel who died of the plague in 1526 aged 28. Mantz was executed by drowning in 1527 aged 29. Hubmaier was burned to death in 1528 aged 48, and Michael Sattler

was tortured over two days and burned to death in 1527 aged 37. His was the most glorious testimony of courage and Christian love and certainly the most influential of that period. Blaurock was burned at the stake in 1529 aged 38.

At one stage Müntzer was ahead of Luther in accomplishing reformation but gradually fanaticism took over. Fundamentally the lack of spiritual experience among the clergy including the reformers drove him to excess. In the end it was his claim to direct revelation that resulted in a bloodbath. The issues are alive among us today. Let us hold to the Word alone as our source of revelation, at the same time making full allowance for spiritual experience as delineated by that Word.

Goertz's tracing out of the life of Thomas Müntzer enables the reader to enter into the ethos of the times in a more intimate way than is possible with G H Williams despite his detail. Goertz's biography expands and enriches the reader's appreciation of the religious, political and social life of the nations affected by the German and Swiss Reformation of the 16th century. Much light is cast upon the head-on collision of Müntzer and Luther. Goertz's biography is brilliantly researched and well written. It makes enjoyable reading. For the reasons explained it is highly commended.

Reformation in Brazil

A report by Bill James, pastor of Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Leamington Spa. He and the editor were together in Brazil for about three weeks during October.

Background

Brazil is the fifth largest nation in the world, with vast potential. It is in economic chaos, however, with inflation at 35% per month and enormous national debts. There are great extremes of wealth and poverty. The already small middle class is being squeezed out of existence by present economic conditions.

Traditionally Catholic, most Brazilians now only adhere nominally to Rome. Spiritism is widespread and over half the population is involved in occult practices. There has been tremendous evangelical growth in this century with perhaps 18% of the population now professedly 'evangelical'. However, these figures should be treated with great caution. Much of evangelicalism is characterised by 'decisionism' and 'easy believism'. Such 'decisions' give false assurance of spiritual condition, and a grossly distorted picture of the size of the real church.

We found that Reformed doctrine is now beginning to make a significant impact in Brazil. The past few years have seen great growth in the sales of Reformed literature. These are exciting days, compared by some to the beginnings of the Banner of Truth in the UK in the 1950s. There are signs that the Lord's people in Brazil have a hunger for more substantial Bible teaching and are being attracted to the Reformed faith.



The Reformation in Brazil runs on the wheels of literature. The tables at the FIEL Conference were loaded with excellent books

Southern Brazil

Our first 10 days were spent in the relatively prosperous South. The two weekends were in São José dos Campos, where we had opportunities to preach at local churches. We met several key personnel:

Sillas and Wanger Campos: Sillas is the young Brazilian pastor of Grace Baptist Church in São José. He is a gifted preacher. The church is outgrowing its present building and a new site has been purchased.

Jack and Thereza Walkey: Jack has been a missionary for 40 years, coming from Westminster Chapel, London. Originally working in the interior (Amazon), he is now assisting with pastoral work at Grace Baptist Church in São José.

Bill and Mary Barkley: Like Jack, Bill and Mary also came originally from Westminster Chapel, have been missionaries for 40 years and began work in the Amazon. Now based in the megacity of São Paulo, they are operating their publishing house (PES) with an



Bill and Mary Barkley with Jackie (left) and Joyce, daughters of Jack and Thereza Walkey. Sharon Barkley is a member of the Leeds Reformed Baptist Church

elderly assistant who is a talented and productive translator. Much of the work of Lloyd-Jones as well as other Reformed literature has been translated. They are presently overwhelmed with work; more Reformed books are being sold now in Brazil than ever before.

Richard and Pearl Denham: Conservative Baptist missionaries from the USA, Richard and Pearl threw themselves into pioneer work in the same region 42 years ago. However, Richard perceived shallowness in the converts he was making who did not withstand persecution. He came to the doctrines of grace through the Banner of Truth magazine, given to him in the late 50s by Bill Barkley.

At about that time Pearl's health deteriorated, necessitating a move to the South of the country. Richard established FIEL publishing house to promote Reformed literature and now has offices and a team of workers in São José. He is a dynamic pioneer. Included in his enterprise is the securing of a square kilometer of land on the edge of town where Jack Walkey has built a large warehouse for FIEL. Richard hopes for further offices, a Christian school and camp on this site. His vision is large!



John Armstrong and translator Eros Pasquini at the FIEL Conference

Richard promotes the doctrines of grace by distributing thousands of booklets to pastors around the country. He receives positive response from some, to whom he then sends a free book each month. He also pays for these pastors and their wives to come to the annual FIEL Conference. This work is bearing fruit. Contributions to this pastors' sponsorship programme are invited from churches in the developed world.

Richard's promotion of the doctrines of grace has earned him the antagonism of his original Conservative Baptist supporters in the USA. Recently a church which supplied half of his support cut him off instantly because he published *The Gospel According to Jesus*, a book which insists on the necessity of repentance and holiness in the Christian life.

At the week-long FIEL Conference in the mountains, 2-3 hours drive from São José, the speakers were Erroll Hulse, John Armstrong (USA), and myself. Whereas in previous years the normal attendance would be 150-200 pastors, leaders and their wives, this year there were 409 adults, reflecting the current upsurge of interest in FIEL and their emphasis. We enjoyed extraordinary unity at the Conference. While delegates came from a variety of back-



Richard Denham pioneer, publisher and conference organiser

grounds, all were receptive and open to biblical teaching.

Erroll gave historical papers on lessons from the Reformation; John Armstrong spoke on 'Signs and Wonders' and 'The Centrality of the Cross in Christian Ministry', and I preached on spirituality and holiness from Exodus 33-34.

Richard Denham, Jack Walkey and Bill Barkley are praying and looking for younger men who are truly called to continue and expand the publishing and conference work into the future.

Northern Brazil

The second leg of our visit was spent in Recife. I preached with Erroll at the 3-day Puritan Conference in Recife which was attended by over one hundred delegates. There were openings at two local seminaries and we also preached at the First Presbyterian Church. At the Conference Erroll expounded Romans 6-8, while I expounded on the subject of 'Law and Gospel'.

Recife gives a good initial impression as a tropical beach resort. However, we were told that the city recently ranked below Calcutta in a UN survey of the world's poorest cities. There are extensive slums and street children are much



Manoel and Josafa lead the singing at the Puritan Conference. Their method, very effective, is to show by example how congregational singing (with little or no accompaniment) is to be enjoyed to the glory of God. This is desperately needed in some of our churches where the Lord is dishonoured by drab half-hearted singing (editor)

in evidence. Child prostitution is rife.

Key personalities in the Reformed movement here are:

Manoel Canuto: Manoel is the son of a Presbyterian pastor. He is a paediatrician, and gifted in many ways. He is an elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Recife. In 1987 Pastor Augustus Nicodemus was called to the pastorate. He had trained in South Africa and learned the doctrines of grace there. Manoel was awakened in his understanding by Augustus' preaching and by reading Lloyd-Jones and Spurgeon. He became an enthusiast for Puritan theology, seeing that, as Jim Packer puts it, 'The Puritans are strongest where we are weakest.' He caught a vision for spreading these doctrines and in 1991 started the *Puritan Project* which holds regular seminars and an annual conference. The Project also publishes a bi-monthly journal, which already has a circulation of over 800, with more subscriptions coming in.

Josafa Vasconcelos: Josafa is a pastor



The well designed Grace Presbyterian Church, Recife, is an asset not only to the local congregation but forms an ideal conference centre. Olin Coleman and Bill James in the foreground



What kind of enthusiasm is this? Puritan T-shirts! We have never seen Puritan T-shirts in London! The photo was taken at the FIEL Conference

in Salvador, Bahia, and a widely travelled evangelist throughout Brazil. He was introduced to the doctrines of grace by Manoel. His ministry was transformed as he sought to bring his work into line with the Scriptures. He used his TV programme to give a series on *The Reformed Faith*. Then together with Manoel, he hosted a TV programme in Recife. The heart of the programme was an evangelistic Bible study attractively presented by way of dialogue between Manoel and Josafa. This became one of the most popular TV shows in town. Josafa is now known as a speaker on the Puritans and their theology.

Olin Coleman: An American missionary who worked in Brazil for many years, Olin was influenced in his understanding by the *Banner of Truth*. He was latterly Dean of the Presbyterian Seminary in Recife until his retirement in 1992. He still visits Brazil and assists the Puritan Project with research and resources from the USA.

Jorge Issao Noda: Jorge was trained in a seminary with a Charismatic emphasis, and called to pastor a Baptist church in Salvador. There he came under the

influence of Josafa who showed him the relevance of Puritan theology. They preached together at a camp and Josafa's messages on the Sovereignty of God were mightily blessed and made a great impact on Jorge. He is now full-time editor of the *Puritan Journal*, with its historical, theological and practical emphases. He also has some opportunities to teach systematic theology at local seminaries.

The Puritan Project has a specific practical need. It has been financed by a Christian businessman (Manoel's brother-in-law, Josias Bahia). His business is now failing. It was Josias who funded the evangelistic TV broadcasts in Recife but they had to stop a year ago due to lack of funds.

The Puritan Project is still in its infancy. Pioneering is difficult and can be discouraging. The leaders need our prayers, especially Manoel, who is the driving force behind the work. Wisdom is needed to know priorities in publishing and how to move forward most effectively.

Pray for the Project to have a great impact on pastors and churches.

E F Kevan, Samuel Petto and Covenant Theology

Don Strickland

Ernest Kevan in his highly influential work, *The Grace of Law*, delineated two schools of thought on the nature of the Mosaic Covenant. Kevan identified this difference, whether the covenant at Sinai was either one of works or grace, as the point of contention between the orthodox and the antinomian Puritans. If one interpreted the Mosaic Covenant as a Covenant of Works, a danger of antinomianism was present, although certainly not all who held to this view were in fact Antinomian (for example, John Preston and Richard Sibbes).¹ Far more of the orthodox Puritans held to the Mosaic Covenant as being an administration of the Covenant of Grace.

Kevan overlooked a third position. This view was held by John Owen,² but was more clearly championed by Samuel Petto.³ This third option breaks the tight continuity of the second view, and yet protects one's theology from the moral anarchy of antinomianism.

The Covenant of Works was originally made with Adam prior to sin entering the world.⁴ Being based on the concept of 'Do this, and live', life was promised for obedience and death for disobedience.⁵ Justification came by way of man's works.⁶ The Covenant of Grace was necessitated by Adam's disobedience. Necessitated, because God decided to choose some of Adam's race for life, but life for any under

- 1 Kevan, pp24 and 113-116. The disruption of the continuity between the covenants caused by such a position necessarily created difficulties determining an unbroken ethical relationship between the Old and New Testaments.
- 2 With Owen not having written a specific treatise on the covenants, the reader is left to piece together his thoughts at this point (primarily from his commentary on the book of Hebrews). He leaves little doubt as to his thoughts on Petto's work, however, with the high praise and agreement he expresses in his preface to the book (John Owen, Preface to *The Difference Between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained*, by Samuel Petto, London, 1674, p b1). See also Sinclair B Ferguson, *John Owen and the Christian Life*, Banner of Truth, Carlisle, PA, 1987, pp 24, 28-30; and John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, vol IV, reprinted Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1980, pp 70-71, 76-79.
- 3 Petto, after graduating from Cambridge, became rector of Sandcroft, Suffolk. He was ejected in 1662 for Nonconformity and afterwards became a pastor in Sudbury until his death in 1708(*Cyclopaedia Bibliographica*, James Darling, London, 1854, II.2347).
- 4 The purpose of this article is not to defend exegetically the existence of the Covenant of Works. The author recognises that men, such as E F Kevan and John Murray, have rejected that concept. However, the Puritans and the majority of Reformed thinkers in history did not. It should be noted that Petto's system relies upon the concept of an Adamic Covenant in order to explain the purpose of the Mosaic Covenant. Without the idea of a Covenant of works, Petto's system, as he presented it, would not cohere. Therefore for the purposes of this article, a Covenant of Works given to Adam is assumed to be true (see also *Second London Confession*, 1689, ch 20.1).
- 5 Samuel Petto, *The Difference Between the Old and New Covenant Stated and Explained*, London, 1674, ppA3(b) & 8. The writer of *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, Presbyterian Board of Publication, Philadelphia, n.d., p2 also uses the form 'Do this for life' p174.
- 6 This statement is not implying that grace did not feature in the Covenant of Works. Had God given sustaining grace, Adam certainly would not have sinned.

Adam's federal headship could now only be achieved through grace. The Puritans had various ways to describe this Covenant of Grace, one being 'Believe this, and live'.⁷ Any discussion of the status of the Mosaic Covenant from the Puritan standpoint must keep this distinction in mind.

These two basic covenants cannot be mixed. Grace and works are not compatible. Works are destructive of grace. Therefore it is argued that a covenant must either be works or grace. The covenant with Adam was clearly one of works. Grace as the basis for the Abrahamic, Davidic and New Covenants is also clearly evident. However, because the Mosaic Covenant has both ideas interwoven within its contents, one tends either to say that it is a Covenant of Works which looks toward grace with types and shadows, or an administration of the Covenant of Grace which emphasised the idea of obedience (Law). In both cases, the Mosaic Covenant was to be used to drive man to Christ as it set up the conditions under which he would appear.⁸

'The rigour of the Law [its place in the covenantal structure] can easily be accounted for when the Law is thought of as the Covenant of Works, but it is less easy to do so when it is not so regarded.'⁹ The reason, Kevan writes, is that the Mosaic Covenant 'looked much like a Covenant of Works',¹⁰ and Christ did keep it as such.¹¹ Those who argued for the Covenant of Works underscore the passages that speak of a 'Do this, and live' concept within the covenant made at Sinai with Leviticus 18:5 being a prominent verse.¹²

John Ball spoke for those who held Sinai to be an administration of the Covenant of Grace when he argued that whenever God entered into a covenant with fallen man it must be a Covenant of Grace, therefore the Mosaic Covenant is a Covenant of Grace.¹³ The proponents for this position, beside pointing out the Ceremonial Law and its promise of mercy to those who kept it, point to the preface of the Decalogue as containing the heart of the Covenant of Grace formula.¹⁴ The Passover, the sacrament of the Mosaic Covenant, was kept by faith (Heb 11:28). And the other Old Testament shadows and types all pointed to Christ, thus arguing for the presence of the Covenant of Grace.¹⁵

7 Ezekiel Hopkins *Works*, vol II, C Whittingham, 1809, p304. Again, the *Marrow* gives an alternative formula 'Do this *from* life', p174.

8 *Marrow*, pp64,71; Kevan, p114; and Petto, p A3(b).

9 Kevan, p127.

10 Simon Ford quoted in Kevan, p128.

11 Kevan, pp142-143.

12 *Marrow* p58; and Petto, pp122,128.

13 Quoted in Kevan, p115.

14 'I am the Lord your God', Ex 20:2 (NAS). Kevan, p 123.

15 Included in these shadows and types are directions for worship. True worship can only be given by those who are in a right relationship with God. God would not have given directions to worship if that worship would not be acceptable (Petto, pp153-154).

Additionally, man cannot both be under a Works and a Grace Covenant at the same time. Samuel Petto points out that Moses and Israel were already under the Covenant of Grace through *Abraham*. Promise, not law, had been established as the way of salvation. Therefore, the Mosaic Covenant was not a Covenant of Works *for man* else it would not have been consistent with God's working through Abraham (Gal 3:16-18). And yet, even the most stringent authors recognised the Mosaic Covenant's use by the biblical writers as a Covenant of Works. What is the solution?

According to Petto the interpretative key is found in the New Testament passages referring to the Old and New Covenants. If one reads the pertinent passages, Hebrews 8, Galatians 3-4, or 2 Corinthians 3 for instance,¹⁶ the contrast between the grace exhibited in the New Covenant comes not from the Covenant of Works made with Adam, but from the covenant made with Israel at Sinai. This covenant is the one which is placed in opposition to the New Covenant. Some of the authors, however, who argue strongly for the Mosaic Covenant being one of grace, are the same ones who also argue for the identification of the Old Covenant with the Covenant of Works with Adam; or else they see no contradiction when the Old Covenant passages from Hebrews are used in connection with the Covenant of Works. However, the Old Covenant, treated as a Covenant of Works, appears inconsistent with the view of the Mosaic Covenant as an administration of the Covenant of Grace.

Petto agreed with these same writers by arguing that because of the major differences between the Mosaic Covenant and the Covenant of Works, the former could not be a Covenant of Works to Israel for their salvation. And yet, neither was the Old Covenant, strictly speaking, an administration of the Covenant of Grace. For, as Petto points out, when Israel sinned by making the golden calf, Moses pleaded for mercy not according to the covenant just made, but on the basis of God's covenant with Abraham (Ex 32:10-14).

Instead, Petto contended for a third option. He maintained that the Old Covenant was a distinct covenant from the New. They were not merely different administrations of the Covenant of Grace, but that they were actually two separate covenants. God repeated the Covenant of Works at Sinai in substance (Gal 3:10,12) 'not that Israel should have eternal life, by their own doing; but that Jesus Christ should be born under the very law that we were obliged by, Galatians 4:4', in order to take on the curse and fulfil its righteousness.¹⁷ Israel was the guardian, or administrator, of this covenant until the Messiah should come, but the covenant itself, as to the expression of its eternal nature, was made with him, not with Israel.

16 Sinclair Ferguson states that because of Heb 8 and 2 Cor 3, John Owen rejected the Mosaic Covenant as being a Covenant of Grace (p29). Of course, neither did he accept it as a Covenant of Works (p28).

17 Petto, p A3(b).

‘The Mount Sinai Covenant (with reference to the matter of it) may be said to express the legal condition of the Covenant of Grace, as to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ.’¹⁸ In order to fulfil the Covenant of Works and win the promised blessings, the Mediator had to be born under the stipulations of that covenant. And since the Covenant of Works had been broken in Eden, it had to be restored or reinstated. Thus the Old Covenant ‘was a Covenant of Works to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ,’ but it represented ‘an imperfect administration of the Covenant of Grace to Israel’. It promised eternal life to the elect upon the obedience of Jesus Christ, and ‘temporal mercies’ to Israel upon their ‘due obedience’ to its commands.¹⁹

Petto lists five reasons why the Old Covenant was a Covenant of Works to Jesus Christ. First, the Old Covenant excels all other covenants in describing what is required for legal righteousness. Only the Messiah could give the perfect obedience required of man (Lev 18:5; Gal 3:10,12; Deut 6:25; Rom 10:3-5). Second, the Old Covenant pronounces a curse which none can undergo but Christ.

Third, no one but the Messiah could have purchased redemption for the elect in the Old Covenant (Gal 4:4-5). As is mentioned above, with Adam having broken the Covenant of Works, its promissory part was at an end. Only its curse remained. Therefore, the legal conditions needed to be given in a different covenant so that the Messiah could be born under the law. No one without sin could enter into the original Covenant of Works ‘either to perform the righteousness of it, or to answer the penalty; it had nothing to do with an innocent person after it was broken [for it] was never renewed with man again as before’. Therefore, allowing an innocent man into it ‘must be by some kind of repetition or renewing of it’ to be fulfilled by a sinless person, thus it could not have been given to Israel in that sense. Israel voluntarily agreed (Ex 19:8 and 20:19) to place themselves and their seed under the Old Covenant for its perfect obedience by the Messiah to come. Christ, being born a Jew, was born under the law. Merely to have been born of Adam (outside of Judaism) would not have been enough. The Old Covenant, then, ‘was a necessary medium or means for the execution’ of the New Covenant.²⁰

Fourth, Christ underwent the very curse of the Old Covenant, so the elect would be delivered from it. Fifth, the ceremonies in the Old Covenant typically signify the Messiah’s sufferings in order to enact the New Covenant. The typical ceremonial commands, just like the moral commands, were ‘wrapped up’ in Christ’s perfect obedience for the elect’s righteousness ‘as the principle aim and intendment’ of the Old Covenant.²¹

18 Petto, p A4(a). See also p102.

19 Petto, p124.

20 Petto, pp133-135.

21 Petto, pp137-138.

The sacrifices for sin provided a way for Israel to obtain temporal blessings without perfect obedience to moral law, thus there was grace in the Old Covenant to Israel. These sacrifices did not, however, provide forgiveness 'to the Conscience'.²² The Old Covenant only committed God to Israel externally (Hosea 1:9). The New Covenant internalised the Covenant of Grace (Jer 31). The ceremonial law appeared to confer spiritual blessing, but it was only a type and shadow of heaven intimating what would be purchased by the Messiah. Spiritual blessings were dispensed by the 'Covenant to Abraham, and though Israel's obedience to Moral Law was on another account a fruit of holiness and sanctification, yet as the same obedience had relation to the Mount Sinai Covenant, so it ushered in only temporals to them'.²³

Being the legal aspect for the Covenant of Grace the Old Covenant carried conditions that required obedience which only the Messiah could fulfil. Every covenant supposes conditions to its fulfilment. Once those conditions have been met, however, that covenant becomes an absolute covenant - that which was promised is given. What of the conditionality of the Covenant of Grace?

The Westminster Confession gives faith as the requirement for the Covenant of Grace.²⁴ Thomas Blake, possibly showing Neonomian tendencies, argued strongly for repentance (obedience) as an additional condition of the Covenant of Grace. He feared (and claimed) that even to seem to make the Covenant of Grace unconditional would disengage man from the process and invite Antinomianism. However, Petto rightly argued that the Law held forth obedience as righteousness unto justification which makes obedience different in the Old Covenant than in the New Covenant. In other words, the Law was for different ends depending on the covenant in force at the time. The Law in the Mosaic Covenant offered justification to whoever perfectly obeyed it, but the Law under the New Covenant was for man's sanctification.

Blake believes the parties to the Covenant of Grace to be God and man. Petto reasons that both the Covenant of Works and Grace are not made with man immediately, but in and through a federal head. He understands the Covenant of Grace as being made with Christ and ties this position to his distinctive view of the nature of the covenants. Because the Old Covenant was the legal condition of the Covenant of Grace, the fulfilment of its conditions as a conditional covenant triggered the inception of the New Covenant as an absolute covenant. Petto is not suggesting that the New Covenant was an unconditional covenant. Rather, he was saying with other Puritans that Christ, by fulfilling the condition of the Old Covenant (the Law), had therefore made it into a new absolute covenant - the New Covenant, and

²² Petto, p151.

²³ Petto, p A4(b). If the Old Covenant continued, Christians could claim its temporal blessings upon condition of obedience, instead those under the New Covenant are promised persecution and suffering (pp183-184). See Matt 6:31-33, 10:20; Acts 14:22, 20:23; Luke 9:23; and 2 Tim 3:12.

²⁴ W C of F, VII.3, p42.

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Carey Conference for ministers at Swanwick January 5-7

Sinclair Ferguson has agreed to speak on *The New Testament use of the Law*. DV The editor will take the session, *Maintaining discipline in the churches*, leaving time for discussion. He and Lyn are in South Africa until January first. Those wishing to attend the conference are urged to communicate as soon as possible with the conference secretary, John Rubens, 22 Leith Road, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 8BQ.

thus, obtained its promised blessings which have been passed on to the elect. Therefore nothing a person can do can be a condition of the Covenant of Grace. Even faith with its concomitant obedience is all of grace.

Contrary to Blake, however, this position is not Antinomianism. Petto argues that works testify to our faith in God, and as such 'are required, not as conditions, but as effects and declarations of our justification'.²⁵ With a man's regeneration, the Moral Law is written upon his heart. 'The Law written in the heart is the foundation of all obedience unto the Law, and the perfect writing of the Law in the heart is the highest reward of all the Promises, and all the obedience of the Gospel.'²⁶ Christ's obedience to the law was for the elect's justification and life. The regenerate man's obligation to the moral aspect of the law is for sanctification 'that [he] may glorify God by those fruits of [his] being spiritually alive'.²⁷ Samuel Petto's book could have been written by a Baptist, except for the teaching of Baptism itself. This conclusion is exactly what was reached by Richard Greaves in his work on John Bunyan.²⁸ Greaves, a noted Bunyan scholar, describes and documents Bunyan's position on the covenants, and in the process, Bunyan becomes a virtual mirror of Petto. Thus, Bunyan saw a resting place for the Baptist in this position. With the paedobaptistic continuity broken and the antinomian error avoided, this view appears to be a consistent Baptist view of God's covenants with man.

Don Strickland is pursuing doctoral studies through Westminster Seminary and is a member of People's Bible Church, Greenville, SC where Stuart Latimer is pastor.

25 Petto, p A4(h).

26 William Strong, *A Discourse of the Two Covenants*, London, J M, 1678, p105.

27 Petto, p273. See also Strong, p139.

28 'In his development of the concept of the covenants, Bunyan took the via media between the moderate Calvinists on the one hand and the Antinomians on the other. His position was, on the whole, at one with strict Calvinists such as John Owen and Samuel Petto, with the principal exception of his rejection of the concept of the baptismal covenant' (Richard L. Greaves, *John Bunyan* (William B. Eerdmans, 1969), p117).

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