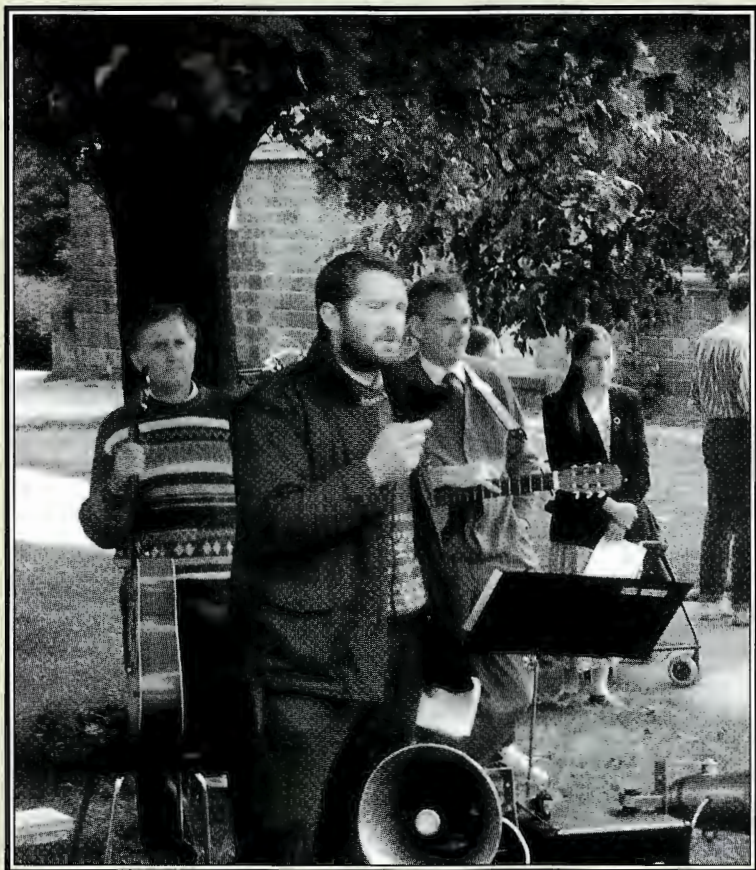


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# REFORMATION TODAY



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1995

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*Some CFL staff, young people and members of the building team featured in front of the new workshop at Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, Leeds LS16 7NH (see p. 15). Second from the left is farm manager, Jonathan Parkinson*

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### *Contributors in this issue*

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Front cover: *Geoff King* preaching in the open air. Geoff holds the portfolio for evangelism in the Leeds Reformed Baptist church. To his left in the photo is Russell Bridges who was inducted to the pastorate of Cornerstone Baptist Church, Bolton, on 26 August 1995.

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# Editorial

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## *Reformation Today – 25th anniversary*

In the last issue of *Reformation Today* we considered the origin of this magazine and the coining of the term 'Reformed Baptist'. Our legacy is threefold: Reformed, Puritan and Baptist as is expressed in the 1689 Confession of Faith.

Last time we considered various issues which have challenged the Reformed Baptists: Charismatic claims, Authoritarianism, the need for effective evangelism and missionary labours in the form of church planting abroad. We continue with these themes in this issue.

### **The Charismatic issue**

The present aberration within the Charismatic movement (Charismatics are divided over it) is TB, the Toronto Blessing. In this issue Nick Needham exposes the heretical origins of TB. He also shows that all the bodily manifestations are practised in pagan religions. TB is syncretistic. It is part evangelical (language and music) but mostly pagan extravagance. The leaders show enormous arrogance in fathering their antics on the Holy Spirit and then anathematising those who oppose the antics and accusing them of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit requires that we test all things by Scripture.

These leaders insist that we place our intellects and discerning powers on

the doorstep and then submit ourselves to their hypnoses and manipulations. When we refuse to do that, and point out that the Holy Spirit does not require that we behave like animals, we are anathematised! We will not respond to threats with threats but simply say with English under-statement that it would be helpful if the TB people quit using their manipulations, quit making their extravagant claims and quit insisting that TB is revival or prelude to revival.

### **Authoritarianism**

Following counsel received from others at home and abroad, comments are made in this issue.

### **Hyper-Calvinism**

Andrew Fuller was a key figure in the evangelistic and missionary movement of the eighteenth century which delivered the Baptists from hyper-Calvinism. Michael Haykin describes the early life of Andrew Fuller, his call to the ministry and his introduction to the hyper-Calvinist controversy. This work has been extracted from Prof Haykin's superb book *One Heart and One Soul – John Sutcliff of Olney, his friends and his times*.<sup>1</sup>

### **Our own agenda for the future**

During the last five to ten years there has been a gradual move away from

pessimistic views of the future and particularly the pessimism of American fundamentalism. To a much greater degree the optimism of the Puritans and pioneer missionaries is appreciated. The promises of victory for Christ's kingdom inspire vision and effort.

Reference has been made to Prof Michael Haykin's book on John Sutcliff and his friends, Andrew Fuller, William Carey, Samuel Pearce, John Ryland, William Ward and Joshua Marshman. These men were involved in the call to a concert of prayer which was popularised by the great American theologian of revival, Jonathan Edwards.

The primacy of prayer and the call to a concert of prayer lies at the base of our agenda for the future. Nothing worthwhile for Christ has ever been achieved that has not been born out of believing and intercessory prayer.

As we come to the end of the second millennium we look back over this century and note for our encouragement that the gospel has spread more widely and into more nations, more rapidly and far more comprehensively, than in all previous epochs. William Carey reviewed the worldwide situation in his day and, compared to his report, the situation is massively advanced today. The churches are often beset with lack of teaching, shallowness, legalism, natural thinking and sometimes fanaticism, but all that simply calls

for reformation. The scope for reformation is immense. What becomes increasingly clear is the literal possibility of the earth being filled with a knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

In their spiritual pilgrimage, the children of Israel referred to past revivals in pleading for new ones. May the Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers. We look to past revivals. How did they begin? How did they proceed? The concert of prayer like that of the 18th century is the way forward for us today. Most pressing for us is the need for young men to be called for life to serve as pioneer missionaries to unreached people groups. We can point to encouraging examples of this occurring at the present time but an army of such missionaries is needed. It is through men who have served for a lifetime in nations like the Philippines that the Reformed faith has become established in those countries. But in other places only a foothold has been gained. Trevor Routley labouring in Argentina is an example. In other countries like Zambia, Reformed Baptists have increased. The heartening feature in the case of Zambia is the almost entirely indigenous nature of the work.

### Reference

1. *One Heart and One Soul*, EP, 430 pages, pbk £9.95. Was Fuller mint coin on sovereign grace teaching? Prof Tom Nettles is one who has covered that ground and shown that Fuller was consistent in all his teaching on sovereign grace (See *By His Grace and for His Glory*, Baker Book House 1986 and, if you keep your RT set, issue 82, November 1984 – copies now depleted).



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## Does Your Church Buzz with Evangelism?

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Does your local church buzz with evangelistic zeal? Evangelistic fervour will be expressed in the prayer meetings. A love for and desire for souls will be evident as specific individuals are the subject of intercession. Allied to concern for people in the locality is interest in missionary work abroad. An attractive notice board kept up to date is one evidence of missionary concern. Regular arresting presentations of well-selected facts during worship services or at the prayer meetings will assist in sustaining missionary vision. That invaluable and brilliant resource, *Operation World*,<sup>1</sup> provides materials for such presentations. A focus on a nation should not be unbalanced with statistics but rather point to the most pressing needs. A vision for the world helps keep the fire burning in our hearts for the work of evangelism at home.

Here in Leeds we have, alongside the work of the church and mostly staffed by church members, the work *Caring for Life* (CFL – see News). CFL is a tremendous asset in our evangelism. Demonstrated in this work is the love of Jesus. Men and women in the community know that we really care about people and especially those who have suffered. Practical support is an integral part of outreach. The nature of this is perfectly expressed in Isaiah 58:10:

*And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness and your night will become like the noonday.*

We need to stave off discouraging thoughts when we seek to engage in a week by week effort of organised, systematic witness: street evangelism, house to house visiting and open air work.

### **Discouragements**

In general terms the reputation of Christianity in Britain has suffered many setbacks. There is the temptation to think that we represent a shabby cause. With so many scandals soiling the name 'Christian', why evangelise?

A major discouraging factor is the appalling state of the established Church which continues to compromise on important issues. Another is the regular reporting of sex scandals or child abuse. The intellectual

papers like *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Independent* devote pages to these scandals while the popular daily tabloids descend on these stinking carcasses like ravenous vultures. What is our response to this? We point out that it is inevitable that some are spurious believers. Take the instance of Judas Iscariot. We are called not to look at men, especially bad men, but look rather to the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of those who believe and repent.

The smallness of the harvest is disheartening. When the work is hard Satan is quick to suggest that we are wasting our time. There is very little response so why toil in vain? Why expend time and energy if there is nothing to show for it? This temptation to discouragement requires to be answered immediately and what better truth to refer to than the parable of the sower and to our Lord's reference to generous sowing of the gospel seed (see John 4:34-38)?

The activity of the cults, especially Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, can be daunting but it should be turned into a spur to work for the truth. We must use the broad range of quality literature available to us and spread it everywhere. Included is material showing the difference between the cults and the gospel. We must reverse the evil effects of heresy. Furthermore we can reason in a positive way and argue that if we kept the community better informed it would be much more difficult for the cults to make headway.

A real setback is the slide away from old values and absolutes which were generally accepted not too long ago. We have now arrived at a pagan post-Christian culture. We find increasingly that most young people have no knowledge of the Bible and in any case regard it as a story book. This means that we have to go back to basics. We are sent to *teach* all nations.

Another scourge of our day is the over-employment of those in work. Most of our members are overworked and genuinely find it difficult to help in organised evangelism which stems from the local church. Add to this the fact that only a few are equipped for front-line evangelism. It is better to accept the reality of these facts than to become critical or discouraged.

### **Encouragements**

Day by day and week by week we need to be motivated. We must never be afraid to repeat the basic reasons that stimulate our zeal and stir us into action. I will describe eight encouragements.

1. The encouragement of the Great Commission. There is never a time or place when we are not under constraint to teach the nations. The marching orders given by Jesus to his followers are with us always. It is work of overwhelming magnitude but we only have to think of his words, 'Surely I am with you to the very end of the age' and we receive new strength. Literally the text means, 'Surely I will be with you all the days' – that is every day. 'There is no day in this work when I am not with you to be your strength.'

2. The encouragement of the meaning of evangelism. Essentially we are bearers of good news. To evangelise means to present the good news that there is a full and free salvation from the guilt and power of sin to be had in Jesus Christ the Son of God and that every person who repents and puts his trust in God's Son will be saved for time and eternity. The hard part is the lack of conviction of sin and the careless attitude that prevails. This must not remove the fact that it is good news that we proclaim.

3. The encouragement of the doctrines of sovereign grace. The harder the climate the more we are pressed to look to divine omnipotence for the quickening of sinners. Those regularly engaged in evangelism know that it is indeed a mighty event for there to be heart repentance. If it depended on sinners no one would ever be saved. But the Father has elected a people. He has given them to his Son. When Paul was rejected by the Jews at Corinth he was encouraged by the fact of sovereign grace. One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: 'Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no-one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city' (Acts 18:9). Observe that this truth of election was accompanied by a command to action. Keep on speaking; do not be silent! In other words the Lord is saying, 'I have many people in this city. You go out and get them!'

The means must be employed and then the harvest will be gathered in.

4. The encouragement of the Holy Spirit. Allied to the above truth about sovereign grace is the promise of our Lord: 'When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin' (John 16:8). The practical work of sharing and commending the gospel belongs to us: the supernatural work is done by the omnipotent Spirit.

5. The encouragement of the prayer meeting. The prayer meeting is the visible and audible expression of our total reliance on the Holy Spirit to give success to our efforts. But there needs to be effort! Prayer alone, without hard practical work, is rather like the hypocritical concern of the

rich in James (James 2:16-17). When effort seems to be unrewarded we can yet believe that the prayers which accompany the work will, in God's time, be answered.

6. The encouragement of love. As our Lord loves souls so we love them. His great love was shown in laying down his life for his enemies (Rom 5:8). Our love is shown in our taking his love to those who are his enemies. We are dealing with the reality of eternal heaven and eternal hell. The reality of the coming Great Judgment is a constant reminder of the importance of the work that is ours. As God loves the world of sinners and will have them to be saved so we love them and long for them to be redeemed.

7. The encouragement of fellowship. To work on our own is not conducive to perseverance. Our Lord sent out his workers two by two into the vineyard. Companionship is a vital part of this work. We need to be sharing the difficulties and challenges with others in the fellowship week by week.

8. The encouragement of revival. It is heartening and inspiring to read of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in other nations. Nothing vindicates the livingness of our Triune God more than the work of regeneration. In reading reports we need to distinguish between shallow decisionism and well-grounded work that truly brings numerical increase to the churches. We do not have revival in Britain but from time to time we receive most encouraging reports of souls being added to the churches. When this occurs we need to maximise our own efforts. If the Lord is answering prayer in circumstances just as barren as ours why should he not prosper our efforts?

9. The encouragement of ultimate victory. Psalm 110:1 is often cited in the New Testament: "The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." There is absolutely no doubt about the final victory. Step by step in this spiritual battle our forces will advance; step by step the objective of world-wide evangelisation will be achieved. Those systems which oppose the Lamb of God with cruel hatred are doomed to fall. They will rise no more. We must encourage ourselves in the certain triumph of Christ's gospel work on earth.

## Reference

1. *Operation World*, Patrick Johnstone, 662pp, OM Publishing, Box 300, Carlisle CA3 0QS, UK, £8.99



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## The Early Life of Andrew Fuller

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*Michael Haykin*

*Extracted from **One Heart and One Soul** – John Sutcliff of Olney, his friends and his times, Michael Haykin, EP, 12 Wooler St, Darlington, Co. Durham DL1 1RQ, UK. 430 pages, £9.95. Full references are included in the book.*

Andrew Fuller was born on 6 February 1754 in the village of Wicken, Cambridgeshire. His parents, Robert Fuller and Philippa Gunton, rented and worked a succession of small dairy farms. Baptists by conviction, both had been born into dissenting families.

When Andrew was only seven years of age, his parents moved to the village of Soham, which was about two and a half miles from Wicken. Settled in Soham, they joined themselves to the Calvinistic Baptist work in that locality. Its pastor was John Eve who was a High Calvinist, or, as Fuller put it, he was ‘tinged with false Calvinism’. His preaching ‘was not adapted to awaken [the] conscience’ and he ‘had little or nothing to say to the unconverted’. Thus, despite the fact that Fuller regularly attended the Baptist meeting-house, he gave little thought or heed to the sermons that he heard. When he was fourteen, though, he began to entertain thoughts about the meaning and purpose of life. He was much affected by passages that he read from Bunyan’s *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, *Pilgrim’s Progress* and some of the works of Ralph Erskine, a Scottish evangelical minister and poet. These affections were often accompanied by weeping and tears, but they ultimately proved to be transient, there being no radical change of heart.

One popular expression of eighteenth-century High Calvinist spirituality was the notion that if a scriptural text forcefully impressed itself upon one’s mind, it was to be regarded as a promise from God. One day in 1767 Fuller had such an experience. Romans 6:14, ‘Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace’, came with such suddenness and force that Fuller naively believed that God was telling him that he was in a state of salvation and no longer under the tyranny of sin. But that evening, he later recalled, ‘I returned to my former vices with as

eager a gusto as ever.’ For the next six months, he utterly neglected prayer and was as wedded to his sins as he had been before this experience. When, in the course of 1768, he once again seriously reflected upon his lifestyle, he was conscious that he was still held fast in thralldom to sin. What then of his experience with Romans 6:14? Fuller refused to doubt that it was given to him as an indication of his standing with God. He was, he therefore concluded, a converted person, but backslidden. He still lived, though, with never a victory over sin and its temptations, and with a total neglect of prayer. ‘The great deep of my heart’s depravity had not yet been broken up,’ he later commented about these experiences of his mid-teens.

### **Conviction and conversion**

In the autumn of 1769 he once again came under the conviction that his life was displeasing to God. He could no longer pretend that he was only backslidden. ‘The fire and brimstone of the bottomless pit seemed to burn within my bosom,’ he later declared. ‘I saw that God would be perfectly just in sending me to hell, and that to hell I must go, unless I were saved of mere grace.’ Fuller now recognised the way that he had sorely abused God’s mercy. He had presumed that he was a converted individual, but all the time he had had no love for God and no desire for his presence, no hunger to be like Christ and no love for his people. On the other hand, he could not bear, he said, ‘the thought of plunging myself into endless ruin’. It was at this point that Job’s resolution, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him’ (Job 13:15), came to mind and Fuller grew determined to cast himself upon the mercy of the Lord Jesus, ‘to be both pardoned and purified’.

Yet the High Calvinism which formed the air that he had breathed since his earliest years proved to be a real barrier to his coming to Christ. It maintained that in order to flee to Christ for salvation, the ‘warrant’ that a person needed to believe that he or she would be accepted by Christ was a subjective one: conviction of one’s sinfulness and deep mental anguish because of that conviction were popularly regarded by High Calvinists as such a warrant. From this point of view, these experiences were signs that God was in the process of converting the individual who was going through them. This perspective on conversion was a direct result of the argument made by both Gill and Brine, the principal authors of High Calvinism in the Baptist denomination, that the Scriptures invite only those sinners who are sensible of their sin to believe in Christ. The net effect of this teaching – though unintended by either Gill or Brine – was to place the essence of conversion and faith not in believing the gospel, ‘but in a persuasion of our being interested in its benefits’. Instead of attention being directed away from oneself towards Christ, the convicted sinner was turned

inwards upon himself or herself to search for evidence that he or she was being converted. Against this perspective Fuller would later argue that the gospel exhortation to believe in Christ was sufficient warrant to come to the Lord Jesus.

Although Fuller was in the throes of a genuine conversion and quite aware of his status as a sinner, he was convinced he had neither the qualifications nor the proper warrant to flee to Christ in order to escape the righteous judgment of God. Upon later reflection, he saw his situation as akin to that of Queen Esther. She went into the presence of her husband, the Persian King Ahasuerus, at the risk of her life, since it was contrary to Persian law to enter the monarch's presence uninvited. Similarly, Fuller decided: 'I will trust my soul, my sinful, lost soul in his [Christ's] hands – if I perish, I perish!' So it was in November 1769 that Fuller found peace with God and rest for his troubled soul in the cross of Christ. His personal experience prior to and during his conversion taught him three things in particular: the error of those who maintained that a warrant to believe was necessary for salvation; the New Testament concept of faith, whereby faith was understood to be a coming to Christ and putting one's trust in him – it was not a turning inwards upon oneself to see if there was any desire to know Christ and embrace his salvation; and a concept of conversion which was rooted in a radical change of the affections of the heart and manifest in a lifestyle that sought to honour God.

The first time that Fuller witnessed believer's baptism was in March of the following year. He was deeply moved by the event. 'The solemn immersion of a person', he later wrote, 'on a profession of faith in Christ, carried such conviction with it, that I wept like a child on the occasion.' Fully persuaded 'that this was the primitive way of baptizing', he was himself baptised about a month later and became a member of the Baptist work at Soham. Some new Christians experience halcyon days at the beginning of their walk with Christ, and Fuller appears to have been one of these. He later recalled the summer of 1770 as 'a time of great religious pleasure'.

### **A call to the ministry**

From November 1771 to January 1774 the preaching of the Word in the Soham church was mostly undertaken by Joseph Diver. Although old enough to be his father, Diver was a very good friend to Fuller. After the departure of pastor John Eve he was chosen by the congregation to be a deacon of the church. Fuller also occasionally preached. Although Fuller was quite discouraged by his early preaching attempts, the church as a whole came to the conviction by early 1774 that a call to the pastorate

should be extended to him. After a trial period of slightly more than twelve months, Fuller was ordained on 3 May 1775.

During this first year of ministry, Fuller's time was largely taken up with reading and study. Though a practising High Calvinist – at this point in his life he refused to urge the unconverted to come to Christ – he was increasingly dissatisfied with High Calvinist reasoning. He began to sense that his 'preaching was anti-scriptural and defective in many respects'. But as yet he saw no viable alternative. He also read extensively in the area of Christology, particularly focusing on two highly mooted questions of the day: did Christ's human soul exist prior to the incarnation, and is the title 'Son of God' ever given to the pre-incarnate second person of the Godhead? Answering 'No' and 'Yes' respectively to these questions, Fuller later declared that wrestling with these Christological issues at an early stage in his theological career equipped him to be a defender of orthodox Christology later in his life. It should be noted that Christological debates centred around the pre-existence of Christ's human soul and the eternal Sonship raged in High Calvinist circles well into the nineteenth century.

### **The free offer of salvation**

Meanwhile Fuller was immersing himself in John Gill's *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, various tracts and sermons by John Brine, as well as the works of John Bunyan. He read most of Gill's *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, found much that was helpful in it, but was deeply troubled by the evident differences between Gill and Bunyan. Both were ardent Calvinists, but whereas Bunyan recommended 'the free offer of salvation to sinners', Gill did not. Fuller wrongly concluded that though Bunyan was 'a great and good man', he was not as clear as Gill regarding the gospel. Yet, as Fuller perused the writings of other sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors, in particular those of the Puritan theologian John Owen, he noted that they too 'dealt... in free invitations to sinners to come to Christ and be saved'. In other words, Fuller had discerned that with regard to the preaching of the gospel there was a definite difference not only between Bunyan and Gill, but more broadly between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Calvinism and that of the early eighteenth century.

...There had begun in Andrew Fuller an understanding of profound truth. In due course he was to become the author of *The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation*, a book which would, in the words of William Wilberforce, characterise the author as 'the soundest and most creatively useful theologian in the history of the English Calvinistic Baptists'.

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## The Means of Grace – How you can grow as a Christian

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*Earl Blackburn*

The Christian life is a wonderful experience. It is begun by a supernatural work of God's unmerited grace in one's heart and life. The Spirit of God applies the work of Christ on the cross to many who are spiritually dead. He regenerates them and brings them to repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is called salvation. Salvation is a glorious work of God's grace and Spirit.

People often ask what happens after one is born again and begins the Christian life. Once God saves a person does he then leave them to make it into his holy presence in heaven on their own and by the works of their flesh? Paul the apostle says, 'No! Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit are you now being made perfect by the flesh?' (Gal 3:3).

The Christian life is begun in grace, by God's sovereign Spirit, and is continued in the same manner. That does not mean there is no activity on the part of the believer. On the contrary, the Word of God plainly declares that those who are saved were 'created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them' (Eph 2:10), and 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and do of his good pleasure' (Phil 2:12-13. *Note:* This verse, which is grossly misused by the cults, does not teach salvation by works. Rather, it is one of the many verses that show salvation to be totally by grace.) Furthermore, Christians are told to 'grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 3:18).

What has the good and gracious God of heaven given to his believing people to help them work out their own salvation, do the good works which he has ordained and grow in grace? God has given specific things to accomplish these desired results. They are what theologians call the means of grace. We will now deal with these means of grace and growth.

When the means of grace are active in you, you will see astounding results in your life: spiritual growth, maturity, holiness, joy and Christlikeness. As these qualities are activated in your life there will be increased communion and fellowship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. You will be warmed and encouraged in walking with Christ. Spiritual strength and power to overcome temptation, sin and Satan will be given to you. Help beyond description will be yours in every aspect of the Christian life.



## **What do we mean by ‘the means of grace’?**

*The Oxford American Dictionary* defines the word ‘means’ as ‘that by which a result is brought about’. Thus, the means of grace are channels by which God conveys his blessings to people. The *Westminster Larger Catechism* defines the means of grace as ‘the outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicates to his Church the benefits of his mediation [i.e. death]’.

To illustrate this think of a garden hose. A hose is not special in itself, but it is the channel through which life-giving and refreshing water flows. So it is with the means of grace. In and of themselves they are not special, but are the avenues and channels through which God’s life-giving and refreshing blessings flow. Through the means of grace, God imparts strength, peace, comfort, instruction, direction, reproof, rebuke, joy and many other things that are needful for the Christian life.

While the term ‘means of grace’ is not found in the Bible, it is nevertheless a proper designation of that which is taught in the Bible. There are two types of means of grace: private and public. The rest of this study will deal with the different aspects of each type.

## **What are the private means of grace?**

### *1. The first private means of grace is reading the Word of God.*

God has given us a book in which he speaks to us. God no longer speaks in an audible voice, as in times past, but speaks to us through his Son (Heb 1:1-4). And his Son, Christ Jesus, speaks to us in the Holy Scriptures, the Bible. It is in the sacred pages of his Word that he speaks with a voice that can wake the dead and give life.

The Holy Bible was written by holy men of God as they were inspired and moved along by the Holy Spirit. It is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction and knowledge. God is its author, salvation its end, and truth without any mixture of error its content. The Bible principally teaches what people are to believe about God, and what duty God requires of them. It reveals the principles by which God will judge us and it is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions should be tried. Therefore, as J C Ryle says,

Make it a part of every day’s business to read and meditate on some portion of God’s Word. Yesterday’s bread will not feed the labourer today, and today’s bread will not feed the labourer tomorrow. Gather your manna fresh every morning. Choose your own seasons and hours. Do not scramble over and hurry your reading. Give your Bible the best, and not the worst of your time. Read all of the Bible and read it in an orderly way. I fear there are many parts of the Word which some people never read at all. To this habit may be traced that lack of broad, well-

proportioned views of truth, which is so common in this day. I believe it is by far the best plan to begin in the Old and New Testaments at the same time – to read each straight through to the end and then begin again. Read the Bible in a spirit of obedience and self-application. Sit down to the study of it with a daily determination that you will live by its rules, rest on its statements, and act on its commands. That Bible is read best which is practised most.

This is the means whereby God speaks to his people. As Christians read the Bible, God blesses and strengthens them with all they need for their daily walk.

## *2. The second private means of grace is prayer.*

What is prayer? Prayer is one way in which the Christian cultivates a living relationship with the living God. Prayer in personal devotions is indispensable. It involves talking to and communing with God. In this communion we offer up our heart-felt desires. It is how believers converse ‘face-to-face’ with God. The Old Testament gives numerous examples: Genesis 18:23ff; Exodus 5:22, 6:1,10,12,28-30; Deuteronomy 3:23-26; Psalm 27:8. The New Testament summarises the same in Acts 13:1-2.

Asking God for the good things he has promised each of his children is a vital part of prayer (Matt 7:7,11; Luke 11:5-13; Col 1:9-12; James 1:5-6). According to Philippians 4:6-7, prayer is a key to a Christian experiencing God’s peace. It is also the means by which you surrender your will to God (see the Lord Jesus’ example in Matthew 26:39,42,44).

There are several parts to prayer. Prayer may include one or more of the following: adoration and praise, thanksgiving, confession of sin, supplication, intercession, and dedication of ourselves to God.

According to Ephesians 6:18 and Jude 20, prayer is to be in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who helps Christians pray. He attests to the spirits of believers that they are the children of God and causes them to cry out ‘Abba, Father’ (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). He prompts Christians to pray by bringing to mind the words and promises of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:26). He also burdens our hearts for others (Rom 10:1 cf 9:1-2). Therefore when you do not feel like praying, ask God the Holy Spirit to help you to pray.

Christ has given his people a pattern to help them pray. It is often called ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ and is found in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-4. This pattern of prayer was not given to be recited as a ritual in private or in public. Reciting this prayer does not discharge your obligation to pray. Instead, Christ gave it to teach believers how to pray properly. There are six petitions in the prayer. The first three deal with God’s priorities and the last three address our needs. In this

pattern, Christ is teaching us that before we can pray for our needs, we must first pray for God's priorities.

### *3. The last private means of grace is meditation.*

After the Christian has come into the presence of God by reading the Scriptures and praying, he nurtures what he received by meditating. Thomas Watson, one of the Puritans, has said, 'Meditation is like the watering of the seed, it makes the fruits of grace to flourish.'

Meditation is to our soul what digestion is to our body. C H Spurgeon gave good instruction when he said:

Our bodies are not supported by merely taking food into the mouth, but the process which really supplies the muscle, and the nerve, and the sinew, and the bone, is the process of digestion. It is by digestion that the outward food becomes assimilated with the inner life. And so it is with our souls; they are not nourished merely by what we hear going hither and thither, and listening awhile to this and then to that, and then to the other. Hearing, reading, marking, and learning all require inwardly digesting; and the inward digesting of the truth lies in the meditating upon it.

The attitude of the psalmist David was, 'I will meditate on your precepts, and contemplate your ways. I will delight myself in your statutes; I will not forget your Word' (Psalm 119:15-16). He knew the value of meditation, as a private means of grace, some 700 years before Christ was born.

## **What are the public means of grace?**

### *1. Assembling together for worship is the first public means of grace.*

God never intended the true believer to live the Christian life alone. After Christ's ascension, the apostles went everywhere starting churches and ordaining elders in each (Acts 14:23). They did this so that the young Christians could be strengthened, encouraged, guided, instructed, and above all worship God together. God, not man, ordained that by publicly assembling for worship, each believer would receive divine help and blessing for the days ahead. Together the people of God would not only receive God's benediction, but mutually fortify one another. Christians are commanded not to forsake the assembling of themselves together in public worship (Heb 10:25).

Historically, Christian churches have always worshipped on Sunday. It was on Sunday, the first day of the week, that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and secured the fall of Satan's empire. Fifty days later, at Pentecost, again on the first day of the week, the Holy Spirit came as a mighty rushing wind filling and empowering the Church. Since then Christians have met on Sundays, the first,

best, and brightest of days, to worship the first, best, and brightest of beings, the LORD God of hosts and his Son Jesus Christ (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 16:2).

The elements of public worship are: public reading of Scripture, joined with preaching and teaching; the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs; offerings; and prayer. In the reading and exposition of the Scripture, God speaks to us; in the singing, offerings and praying, we speak to God. While each of these elements of worship is important, the preaching of the Word of God is the most important. Our forefathers realised this when they wrote:

The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word of God, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort ... (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Question 89)

## *2. The ordinances of the gospel are the second public means of grace.*

An ordinance is a custom and practice begun by the Lord Jesus Christ while on the earth. In the true churches of Jesus Christ there are only two ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism is the first ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ while on the earth. He commanded it to be performed by his apostles and churches until the end of the world (see Matt 28:18-20). A professed believer who has neglected this, Christ's first command, has no right to call himself a Christian. Baptism is to be performed by total immersion in water, and in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Baptism is reserved only for believers. It is not for unbelieving infants. There is not one instance of infant baptism in the New Testament. It has always been for those who repent and believe and are thus converted and saved (see Acts 2:41, 18:8). This ordinance was designed to be a testimony to the world that we are followers of Christ and to strengthen our resolve to follow him.

The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is the second ordinance instituted by the Lord Jesus while on the earth. It is a divinely appointed means of strengthening the faith of believers. The Lord's Supper is not a sacrifice offered to God, but only a commemoration of that one-time offering up of the Lord Jesus Christ himself, on the cross, for sins. As often as the Lord's Supper is observed, it is to be in remembrance of him (1 Cor 11:24-26). It should never be missed unless one is providentially and legitimately hindered!

The elements of the Lord's Supper, bread and wine, are symbols. Each element represents a different aspect of Christ's atonement. The bread is symbolic of the bruised and broken body of the Saviour, broken because of our sin. The wine symbolises the blood of Christ which was shed for the cleansing of our sin. There

is nothing magical about the bread and wine. They do not change and become the literal, physical body and blood of Christ, but remain what they are.

A careful study of the Scriptures reveals the requirements for partaking of the Lord's Supper. The person *must* be one who is a true convert to Christ, baptised, seeking to walk in a way pleasing to God, and a member of one of Christ's churches. Remember this ordinance was not given to individual Christians, but to local churches and their members.

*3. Fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ is the third public means of grace.*

God's people come from all types of background. Yet, there is one thing that unites them all: they are in Christ! Christ loved them with an everlasting love and drew them with lovingkindness. All barriers fall before the electing, redeeming, saving love of Christ (see Eph 2:14-16).

Fellowship means 'sharing together' or 'shared life', especially as it relates to other Christians. Again, when Christ saved you he did not intend you to live in isolation. You were meant to be a part of one of Christ's churches and to enjoy fellowship with other believers (see Acts 2:41-42). One of the most blessed things you realised after your conversion is the bond you have with true Christians.

Fellowship is not Christians socialising about sports, hobbies, weather, jobs, or politics although there is no harm in this. Instead it is the shared heart and life with one another in the things of the Lord Jesus and his Word. The uniqueness of Christian fellowship lies in being able to talk about and share together the joys, happiness, victories, problems, trials, sorrows, temptations and blessings of our walk with God. Proverbs 27:17 says, 'As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.' Fellowship with Christians, in a local church, is iron sharpening iron. Fellowship with brothers and sisters in Christ is a means of grace to keep us spiritually sharp and healthy.

*4. Corporate prayer (Acts 2:42) is the fourth public means of grace.*

The early churches not only continued in the apostles' doctrine, the Lord's Supper and in fellowship, but they were faithful in praying together as a group. Church gatherings for prayer were one way of bearing one another's burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ (Gal 6:2). In the book of Acts, there are many examples of the early Christians praying together. On the day of Pentecost, what were the believers doing? Praying! (1:12-14, cf 2:1). Through the means of corporate prayer, the church saw the Lord God deliver them from the hand of their enemies (4:23-33). Peter was set free from prison because the church prayed together (12:5). The history of the New Testament churches is a picture of the blessing and necessity of prayer meetings.



*It is a cause of rejoicing that Pastor Bill Payne of Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, here pictured with his wife, Hetty, has recovered well from extensive heart surgery.*



## ***For your diary***

### **THE GRACE / CAREY CONFERENCE**

is due to take place at Swanwick  
Conference Centre,  
8 - 10 May 1996

*Principal speakers;*  
Albert Mohler, President of  
Southern Seminary, Louisville,  
KY, USA,  
Geoff Thomas, Stephen Rees,  
Bob Sheehan and  
Daniel Webber

### **CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCE**

1st week of August, 1996,  
Cloverley Hall, Shropshire

*Enquiries:*  
David Jarrett,  
Penglais,  
6a Soar Close, Croesyceiliog,  
Cwmbran,  
Gwent NP44 2PD.  
Tel. 01633 866214

All that is true of private prayer is true of public prayer, except public prayer is corporate, instead of individual. If God is with his people and individually blesses them with his presence, how much more is this true when the church comes together for prayer? If he hears and answers the prayers of one, how much more will he hear and answer the prayers of many? One of the Puritans, David Clarkson, has said, 'The presence of God, enjoyed in private, is but a stream, but in public it becomes a river, a river that makes glad the city of God.'

A gracious, wise and loving Father in heaven gave these means to his children for their good (see Deut10:13). He did not give them to put you in bondage to man-made rules, but to bless, strengthen and encourage you. The private means of grace are given for your daily Christian life in a work-a-day world. The public means of grace are given for your benefit in a local church of Jesus Christ. Put each of them into practice right now and watch your Christian life develop, grow and blossom. Pursuing these God-ordained means will glorify God, increase Christ's kingdom and bring you righteousness, peace and joy.

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# The Origin of the Toronto Blessing

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*Nick Needham*

## **What is the Toronto Blessing?**

The Toronto Blessing (or TB, as it is now often called) is a worldwide spiritual movement within the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. It is named after the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church, Canada, where the movement first hit the headlines in January 1994. Its advocates claim that the blessing is a 'sovereign move of God', a new and glorious work of the Holy Spirit. Many of them call it a 'revival'. However others, conscious that scarcely any unbelievers are being converted through this movement, do not call it a revival, but a 'renewal' of the Church. The claim is also made by many advocates of the TB that those who resist this great move of God will, if they persevere in their resistance, be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and various dreadful things will happen to them. What exactly will happen is often left rather vague; the language used is that opposers will be 'swept aside', 'crushed', that sort of thing. On his video *The Coming Revival*, Rodney Howard-Browne warns that opposers will be struck dumb and blind.

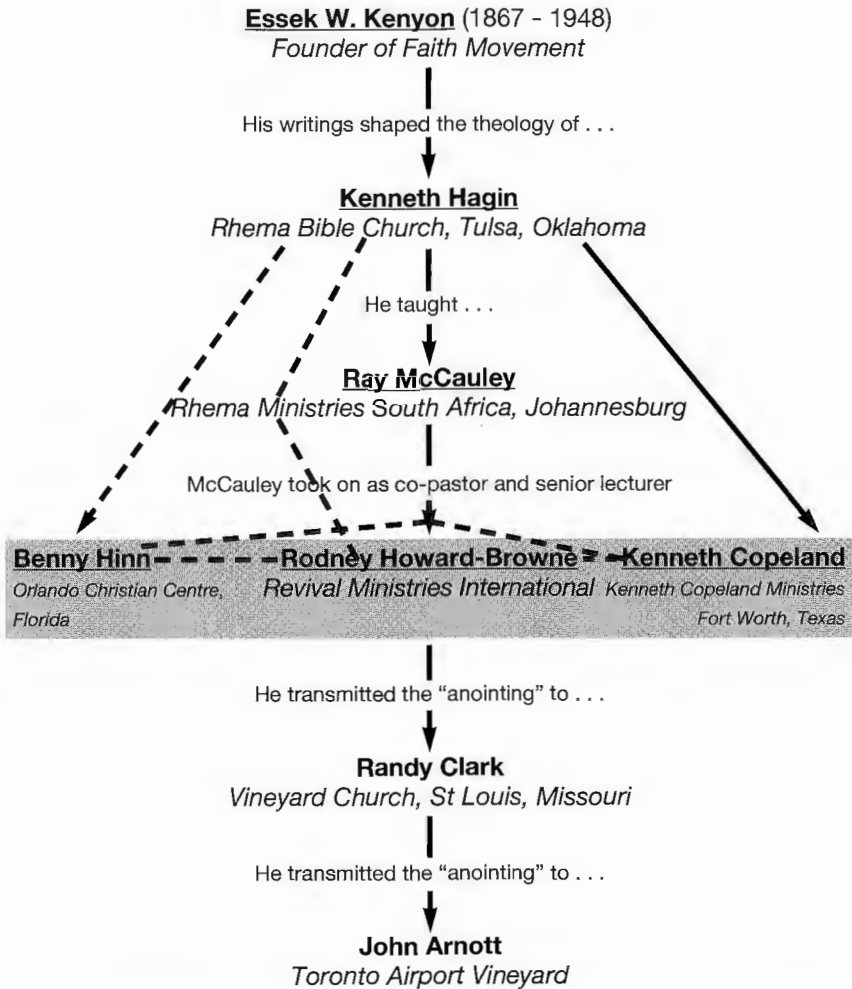
What then is this great blessing that God is allegedly pouring out on his Church at this time? According to its advocates, it is a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit which can be compared with the day of Pentecost. This outpouring happens when a leader, who has already received the blessing (anointing) himself, passes it on to others. Usually, people will be asked to walk to the front, where the leader and his team will lay hands on them, and transmit the blessing to them physically. A few of the leaders have stranger and more dramatic methods of passing on the blessing such as blowing on people, hurling the blessing at people by dramatic hand gestures, or even transmitting the blessing into a tea-towel and then throwing the tea-towel at someone.

TB advocates claim that the blessing or anointing has two main effects on believers; it brings them a fresh and overwhelming sense of God's love, which leads to a wonderful joy and secondly it lifts people up to new heights of the spiritual life, a much closer walk with God, praying more, reading the Bible more, evangelising more, etc. The question is how these sensations of joy and euphoria should be interpreted.

The immediate observable effects are:

- i. Almost without exception, people fall over onto their backs, sometimes gently, sometimes as if struck by a bolt of electricity. Those who fall sometimes black out. This phenomenon has of course been around for a long time in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles, and is referred to as being 'slain in the Spirit'.

# The Faith Movement and the Toronto Blessing



The names of Faith Teachers are underlined. Other Faith Teachers include Morris Cerullo, Paul (David) Yonggi Cho, Oral Roberts, Robert Tilton, Frederick Price, Charles Capps, Marilyn Hickey, Jerry Savelle.

The experiences and phenomena now known as the "Toronto Blessing" were a central feature of these men's ministries several years before the "Blessing" was transmitted from them to Toronto.

----- General influence; these men associated in one way or another.

—————> More direct influence: one man studying or working under another or receiving the "anointing" from another.

ii. Often those affected are seized by a spirit of uncontrollable laughter which can last literally for days. On *The Coming Revival* video, Rodney Howard-Browne reports a man who (to use his language) 'got drunk on the Holy Spirit and laughed uncontrollably for 3 days'. This particular phenomenon is referred to as 'holy laughter' and it has been so widespread in the TB that the movement has sometimes been called 'the laughing revival'.

iii. Often, but by no means always, when the blessing is imparted in a meeting, some will respond by making noises and bodily movements like various animals. In the early days of the TB, the most common of these animal manifestations was 'roaring like a lion'. However, this is in fact only one of many animal manifestations which have been observed. I myself have witnessed people gibbering like monkeys, barking like dogs, and howling like wolves. Here is a description by a person who is in favour of the TB:

That room sounded like it was a cross between a jungle and a farmyard. There were many, many lions roaring, there were bulls bellowing, there were donkeys, there was a cockerel near me, there were sort of bird songs... Everything you could possibly imagine. Every animal you could conceivably imagine you could hear.<sup>1</sup>

These three are the main physical manifestations of the blessing or anointing but others do occur such as so-called holy drunkenness (staggering about as though drunk), dancing in the Spirit (tap-dancing, ballet dancing), running on the spot, and bouncing up and down like a grasshopper.

### **What are the origins of the Toronto Blessing?**

The TB originated within something called the Faith Movement in the USA. The Faith Movement is better known in this country as the 'health, wealth and prosperity gospel', because of its teaching that Christ has delivered believers from the curse of poverty and sickness. These are seen as evil powers from which Christ has liberated us by his work of atonement, so that all true believers ought to be living in a state of perfect health and material prosperity. However, this is only one aspect of what the Faith Movement teaches. The chart illustrates the development of the movement which is advanced by book, audiotape, video and satellite ministries that literally span the world. TB influence within the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements is large and growing. I was recently in the bookshop of Kensington Temple, one of London's most prominent Pentecostal churches and found that it was selling hundreds of books and tapes by people like Kenneth Hagin, Benny Hinn, Rodney Howard-Browne, Morris Cerullo, Paul Yonggi Cho, Marilyn Hickey and others. The Faith Movement is also very widespread in Third World countries such as Nigeria where I spent 5 months last year. Morris Cerullo is very popular with Nigerians.

Note from the chart that almost all the spiritual phenomena and experiences which are now called the TB were in fact already taking place under the ministries of men like Benny Hinn, Rodney Howard-Browne and Kenneth Copeland years before the Toronto Airport Vineyard Church took these things on board. I've especially singled out these three men, because it was Rodney

Howard-Browne who transmitted the blessing or the anointing to the Toronto Airport Vineyard, and Howard-Browne has been closely linked with the ministries of Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland.

Faith Movement doctrines are summed up in *Christianity in Crisis* by Hank Hanegraaff.

i. 'Faith' is seen as an independent spiritual force, a basic law of the universe. God visualised the universe and then spoke it into existence with 'faith-filled words' – saying, 'Let it be' and believing that it would be. Man also can use the same power and create his own reality. This involves visualising what you want, and then speaking it into existence with faith in *our* creative words – sometimes called 'Name it and claim it'.

ii. Adam in paradise was God's equal, 'God manifested in the flesh', the god of planet earth. By giving in to Satan, Adam lost his godhood to the devil who thus became 'the god of this world' while Adam acquired Satan's nature. Through Christ, man regains his lost godhood and becomes as much an incarnation of God as Jesus Christ was.

iii. Most Faith Movement teachers deny that Christ's death on the cross saves sinners. What really happened on the cross was that Jesus actually became sinful, being transformed from a divine to a demonic being – the same thing that had happened to Adam in Eden. The demonised spirit of Jesus literally went into hell itself, where he was tortured by demons for three days and three nights. Then Jesus was spiritually reborn in hell, recovering his lost divinity and defeating Satan. The same rebirth is granted to the believer, who is thus liberated from his Satanic nature and becomes a god.

iv. Poverty is part of the curse of the law from which Christ has delivered believers. Many Faith teachers require money from their followers promising that God will repay them tenfold. Such giving is called 'sowing a seed of faith'.

v. Sickness and suffering are demonic powers from which Christ has delivered believers. We must claim our healing by faith and speak our health into existence by positive confession.

You will gather from this that the Faith Movement is extremely heretical. The question needs to be asked: If these Faith Movement leaders teach destructive error, how can it be the Holy Spirit that is at work in their meetings and ministries? Remember that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Truth:

*When the Helper comes, Whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me (John 15:26).*

### **TB roots in Eastern religions**

Physical phenomena, such as hysterical laughter and animal manifestations, are also found in other religions. The great Hindu guru, Swami Baba Muktananda



(died 1982), transmitted these experiences to his followers by touching them on the forehead:

Manifestations included uncontrollable laughing, roaring, barking, hissing, crying, shaking, etc. Some devotees became mute or unconscious. Many felt themselves being infused with feelings of great joy and peace and love.<sup>2</sup>

Muktananda was simply channelling into his disciples experiences he himself had undergone. 'Roaring like a lion' was one of his favourites:

My identification with a lion had become stronger still. I roared so much that the cows nearby broke their ropes and ran helter-skelter, dogs barked madly, and people rushed to my hut. Sometimes I would zigzag along the ground like a snake, sometimes hop like a frog, sometimes roar like a tiger. My mind was held spellbound watching the extraordinary inner moods of the Goddess Chiti.<sup>3</sup>

The same kind of experiences are well documented in the activity of other influential 20th century Eastern gurus like Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and Yan Xin, and among various pagan and mystical cults such as 'Subud'.

### **True Christian experience**

True Christian experience is rooted in Scripture. Jonathan Edwards makes this point with great force in his treatise, *The Religious Affections*:

Holy affections are not heat without light; but evermore arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual instruction that the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge. The child of God is graciously affected, because he sees and understands something more of divine things than he did before, more of God or Christ, and of the glorious things exhibited in the gospel. He has a clearer and better view than he had before, when he was not affected; either he receives some new understanding of divine things, or has his former knowledge renewed after his view was decayed... [Edwards then quotes 1 John 4:7, Philippians 1:9, Romans 10:2, Colossians 3:10, Psalm 43:3-4, and John 6:45 to prove his point.] Knowledge is the key that first opens the hard heart, enlarges the affections, and opens the way for men into the kingdom of heaven; Luke 11:52, 'Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.' Now there are many affections which do not arise from any light in the understanding; *which is a sure evidence that these affections are not spiritual, let them be ever so high.*<sup>4</sup>

### **References**

1. HTB in *Focus*, October 9th, 1994, p12.
2. Testimony of former Muktananda disciple Joy Smith, in *Focus* magazine 12, winter 1994/5.
3. Quoted by Tal Brooke, *Riders of the Cosmic Circuit*, Lion Publishers, 1986 p45.
4. *Works of Edwards*, Banner of Truth edition, vol 1, pp281-2; emphasis added.

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# News

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## Edgewood Baptist Church, Anderson, Indiana, USA 25th anniversary of the ministry of Pastor Tom Lutz



*The Lutz family, from left to right, Andy, Bobby, Beth (who has wonderfully recovered following a recent serious car accident), Sue and Tom*

Edgewood Baptist Church has grown steadily under the faithful ministry of Pastor Lutz and the influence of the church extends worldwide among the many missionaries and indigenous churches supported by them.

Visitors to Edgewood can testify to the spiritual warmth and genuine welcome of being invited to select gifts from the bookroom or missionary supply room, let alone of the feeling of being part of the body in recognising one's field of work lovingly represented in well displayed photos and letters along the 'family gallery' walls.

The church officers and people give themselves unstintingly whether it be to short term building projects or regularly organising and servicing conferences in the USA and abroad. They consider it to be a privilege and joy to be 'servants of the Lord's people'. Many months each year are given to the organisation of and planning for the annual Mid-America Reformed Baptist Family Conference.

This conference now caters for over 1000 delegates. The huge backstage workload is the sowing. We rejoice to hear of the reaping in the conversions of young people. 1995 was especially blessed in this respect.

Tom and Sue have on several occasions provided invaluable input into the Carey Family Conference in England and will be glad to see in this issue a happy transition as a new generation takes on the organisation.

Pastor Lutz's sermons have been the means of blessing to many Christians where he has visited and he maintains a high standard of pulpit ministry at Edgewood. For him and Sue his wife, it was an added joy that their son Andy preached during the anniversary celebrations.

We give thanks for this church and family who have so wonderfully encouraged and supported *Reformation Today* and all its ministry over 25 years.

*Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering (Heb 13:3).*

## **Sudan**

With a population of 29 million, Sudan has the largest land area (2,504,000 sq km) in Africa. It is interesting to compare this with the other two large areas of Algeria 2,382,000 and Zaire 2,345,000.

Over much of the last 40 years the church has been persecuted. Deliberate attempts to eliminate Christianity have increased. Persecution has included bombing Sunday services, destruction of church buildings and Christian villages, massacres, killing of pastors and in some areas mass crucifixions.

The pressures have been on the increase. Close to 900,000 people (mostly Christians) have had to abandon their towns and villages in the southern provinces as Government troops closed in on them. The Government of Sudan is using a 'politics of hunger' policy to force the people of the South to abandon their homes and trek to the north where they will be under Islamic domination.

Tens of thousands of black Africans are believed to be enslaved in Northern Sudan. *Christian Solidarity International* provides documentation of the situation and in the August 1995 press release tells of major atrocities.<sup>1</sup>

Since January 1995 there have been three major slave raids in just one area. Hundreds of women and children have been abducted – 282 from Nyamillel alone on March 25 this year.

From the village of Sokobat 63 women and children were taken into slavery in January – 49 have been bought back for 2.5 million Sudanese pounds while the remainder are still in captivity. This is only a fraction of the slave trade that is being carried on.

The Government of Sudan receives funding from the 'Islamic League' to open a route for Islam to go deep into Africa. Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains are the gateway. The policy is to capture Africa for Islam.

A Muslim leader in a radio interview declared, 'Our ultimate goal is to stamp out all activities which are aimed directly or indirectly at hampering the process of Islamisation in the country... Christian missionary endeavours have no legitimate reason to exist in our societies and nations. They must and will be completely stopped... A new era of Islamisation has begun and no one can stop it; it is Allah's merciful will to restore to us unadulterated Islam.'

Those who are persecuted declare of their persecutors, 'They are determined; they don't have ears to hear or to listen to the International community. They are fundamentalists and don't listen to anyone. They don't even mind being killed because according to the Koran, if they are fighting a holy war, they will go to heaven.'

1. *Christian Solidarity International*, P O Box 48, Witney, Oxon, OX8 7DB, UK.



*The new workshop under way*

### **Caring For Life**

For several years the leaders of CFL, Leeds have prayed for a workshop in which to train young people in practical crafts, carpentry, plumbing, metal work and general building skills.

Suddenly that prayer was answered. The Yorkshire TV programme *ACTION TIME* provided an important stimulus and volunteers responded to the broadcast concerning the project. Work on the 24m x 9.6m double-storey building began on June 14th and was completed on September 4th!

Apart from concrete and building blocks, everything was donated, often at the last minute after earnest prayer was made for the need. CFL staff wish to record their gratitude for the Lord's unfailing goodness in answering prayer. 75 secular companies donated materials and/or skilled labour. In addition individual Christians contributed by way of skilled labour. CFL young people entered enthusiastically into the work and assisted professional builders. *ACTION TIME* gave live coverage on TV providing an

overview of the scheme from start to finish.

CFL welcomes a new workshop project leader in the person of Rob Newby who is moving with his family to Leeds.

### **Argentina**

Much prayer is needed for the cause of Reformation in the Argentine. The tide continues to run in the direction of charismatic excitement rather than the discipline of living according to the Scriptures. Evangelicals, especially Baptists, are all at sea with regard to miracles, signs and wonders, slaying in the Spirit and other excesses. The churches are weak and those who are burdened with the urgent need for reformation and revival do not find it easy to work with little fellowship in the truth and little support.

Trevor Routley of Tandil describes a visit to a church in the north where he ministered for ten days. This church has been weakened by dissensions, has lost its evangelistic fervour, and also some members of the congregation. The resident pastor desires reformation but is weary.

A Fellowship of Reformed Churches, FRA (Fraternidad Reformada Argentina) was founded last year in Buenos Aires. The FRA is small but many times better than the vacuum that existed before as far as reform is concerned. The FRA organises meetings and an annual conference. There is also a magazine to promote reformation but this can only be published once a year because of the small circle of interest and the high cost of producing only 500 copies. One of the aims of the FRA is to cooperate with others of Reformed conviction in the Spanish-speaking world.

The breath of the Holy Spirit is needed to give momentum to reform not only in Argentina but in the other Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America.

## Brazil



*Richard and Pearl Denham*

October sees the annual *Editora Fiel Conference* and this year a record 800 delegates were expected. We look forward to hearing news of this vital ministry of teaching indigenous pastors.

*The Baptism of the Spirit* (E Hulse), has been translated into Portuguese by *Editora Fiel*. The title was made available in time for the October conference. However in July there was still a shortfall of \$3,500 against the price of printing and contributions are invited.

Richard Denham wrote from Brazil (*Editora Fiel*, CP 81, São José, SP 12201-970) in July:

'Do remember Pearl in your prayers as she has not been at all well for several months. Head and neck pains plague her night and day. As yet we have not found clearly the cause or the cure. Thankfully, she is a good warrior and complains little, but the strain is felt by both of us.

The *Adopt a Brazilian Pastor* project continues to be a blessing to many and an encouragement to us.

The church is doing well with João Serafini serving as interim pastor. He is a young Brazilian who, following graduation from college in agriculture, joined us for a year to strengthen his faith. We helped him to go to the USA where he received a Master's degree in his field. He then came back a year ago to help with the work and has increasingly felt a call to preach.

Paulo de Oliveira is another young man we helped to study in the USA. He and his wife and two children have just returned after eight years during which time he completed a doctorate in education and she a Master's in public relations. They plan to join us here to help in the publication of educational materials and to start, DV, a school to prepare teachers for Christian schools. We are looking to the Lord for his provision.'



## Kenya

*Pastor Nigel Lacey of Stowmarket, UK is soon due to join Keith Underhill for ministry in Nairobi.*

Nigel Lacey, pastor of Bethesda Baptist Church, Stowmarket, Suffolk, UK and editor of *Grace* magazine is planning with his wife to settle in Nairobi in March 1996. Bethesda is fully behind this step and will be the 'sending' church. Prayer is requested: i. For a suitable pastor to be found to replace Nigel and, ii. For the granting of a work permit in Kenya. Nigel will be particularly concerned with the Pastors' Training Course which is a ministry he has also initiated in the Stowmarket area.

Trinity Church, Nairobi is pastored by Keith Underhill and Naphtally Ogallo. They are fully stretched with ministry at home and around the country, as well as literature ministry and the Pastors' Training Course which aims to equip indigenous church leaders. For the past decade prayer has been made for help and now there is much thanksgiving for this provision which will enable Naphtally to concentrate fully on work in the growing home church.

Keith, meanwhile, has also been engaged in visits outside Nairobi and in neighbouring countries. Recently he sought to encourage a Christian couple, in a predominantly Muslim area in the South of Kenya, who hold services for migrant factory workers in small one-roomed homes. Another very needy country where great advances are being made by Islam is Tanzania. Following Keith's ministry in that country we pray that the sparks of interest which were shown in biblical teaching may be fanned into a flame by the Holy Spirit. In August Keith ministered at the Reformed Baptist School of Theology and Family Conference in Zambia as well as in several churches.

## Philippines

Cubao Reformed Baptist Church (Pastor Brian Ellis), 55 Miami St, Cubao, 1102 Quezon City, Philippines has initiated many ministries including a theological training programme and a considerable literature work.

### *Christian Compassion Ministries*

The church has now set aside a man, Arnel Carreon, to lead an outreach to Manila's 'street children', with two full time assistants, Madeleine Salmoran and Maribeth Cano. Several volunteers from the church give part time help.

As in so many of the world's burgeoning cities, children have been abandoned or have run away from horrendous situations and exist by begging and stealing, often ending up as hard core criminals. Others have families but spend long hours day and night selling commodities and begging. Such often drop out of school. Bringing a message of hope in Jesus Christ must also include ministry to the physical needs of such children and their families.

An educational assistance programme currently targeting 20 children is being sponsored for children who would not otherwise go to school. Prayer is requested for the team who visit and advise the families. At the time Brian Ellis wrote the report 15 children had been enrolled. The team especially seek opportunities to share with these families the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. A home has now been started with two abandoned children and two already hardened and problematic 'street children' from heart-breaking backgrounds. It is expected that other children will soon join this new 'family of hope'.

Brian describes the workers' longing that 'God will be pleased to bless this undertaking and use it for his glory and that sinners may be *snatched as brands from the burning*'.

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# Carey Family Conference 1995

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*A report by Duncan Briant*

As the many 'goodbyes' were said at the end of this year's Carey Family Conference the organising committee breathed a sigh of relief mixed with a measure of satisfaction that their efforts had paid off.

This was the first conference organised by the present committee who had taken over with some trepidation from those in Sussex, theirs being a hard act to follow.

We are, as always, indebted to our God for meeting our every need. This year the conference enjoyed the hospitality of Quinta Hall in Shropshire, a venue which is hard to better for its location, grounds and facilities.

We welcomed back Geoff Thomas from Aberystwyth who eloquently and movingly expounded his theme of *'The Cross of Christ'* and Andrew King from Haywards Heath was again present bringing more treasures and insights from Mark's Gospel on the practical outworking of our salvation in the light of *'The Cross'*.

Many appreciated David Kingdon's addresses on *'Preparing for Suffering'* and *'Profiting from Suffering'* which clearly came from the heart while Joachim Rieck from Namibia focused our attention on the importance and necessity of daily personal and corporate prayer particularly within the family.

Outside the main meetings there were official and unofficial outings to Chirk

Castle, Hawkstone Park and Llangollen together with the usual selection of sports, supplemented this year by an all-ages 'It's a Knockout'.

The children's and young people's groups focused on the theme of creation science though with the emphasis firmly on the accuracy and authority of Scripture. Brian and Merle Grantham-Hill from Taunton taught the children while Peter Senior, a research physicist from Loughborough, and Dr John Peet from Guildford (both members of the Biblical Creation Society) led seminars for the teenagers. Dr Peet was also able to present slides of the Mount St Helen's volcanic eruption showing how catastrophic events can in a few hours produce geological structures normally believed to be the product of thousands or millions of years.

Some of us enjoyed the conference so much that we extended it with a leisurely walk and lunch by The Mere at nearby Ellesmere. We are now looking forward to next year's conference which will be held in the first week of August at Cloverley Hall near Whitchurch in Shropshire. Publicity material and booking forms will be going out around the end of the year though advance information may be obtained by telephone from David Jarrett on 01633-866214.

Cassettes of all the 1995 sessions are available at £3.50 each incl postage from: *Carey Conference Cassettes, Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, Leeds LS16 7NH*, all profits going to the *Caring For Life* charity.

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## Valuable Books

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John Armstrong has edited a fine book with the title, *Justification by faith ALONE* and subtitle, *Affirming the doctrine by which the Church and the individual stands or falls*. This handsome 188 page paperback published by *Soli Deo Gloria*<sup>1</sup> is made up of expositions by John F MacArthur Jr, R C Sproul, Joel Beeke, John Gerstner and John Armstrong. The work has the merit of lucidity and sticking to the main issues: What is justification? How is it received? Why by faith *alone*? What is the faith that justifies? The book responds to the present challenge of the Roman Catholic Church. Many in America have been perplexed by a book called *Rome Sweet Home* written by Scott Hahn a former Presbyterian. Dr Gerstner who knows Scott Hahn well shows decisively that Hahn has never understood justification.

Dr Gerstner uses the most elementary outline as follows:

The Bible = FAITH > JUSTIFICATION + WORKS

Rome = FAITH + WORKS > JUSTIFICATION

Rome's caricature of the Protestant position of justification by faith  
= FAITH > JUSTIFICATION – WORKS

It is acceptance of the latter caricature that shows that Hahn has never understood the biblical doctrine of justification by faith.

This above simple way of expressing the matter reminds us of a further vital point and that is that Christ's righteousness alone is the basis of the believer's justification. Good works, as James insists (James 2:14-24), are essential as a proof of the genuine nature of saving faith which unites to Christ, but the good works of the believer are not added to Christ's righteousness as the foundation of our justification.

Also on the central theme of justification by faith is the small paperback *Not Guilty*, the title given to no. 10 in the series of twelve (so far) abridged Christian classics published by Grace Publications.<sup>2</sup> The history and exposition of justification is compacted into 96 pages. This series of Reformed and Puritan classics is ideal for those who have English as a second language. The series is designed for translation into other languages. The success of this series of abridged works is most

encouraging. The most popular is the abridged *The Sovereignty of God* by A W Pink now translated into other languages including Chinese, Hausa, Shona, Italian, Swedish, Tamil, Telegu, Neomelanesian, Sebuarno. Next in popularity is the abridged modernisation of Jeremiah Burroughs' *The Divine Art of Contentment* with the new title *Learning to be Happy*, translated into Albanian, Arabic, French, Hindi, Korean, Nepali, Persian, Portuguese, Spanish, Urdu and Xhosa.

If Scott Hahn has converted to Rome, William Webster has come in the opposite direction. His book *The Church of Rome at the Bar of History* is a handsome bound volume of 243 pages published by the Banner of Truth.<sup>3</sup> This work concentrates on the single most fundamental issue of the 'Rome versus Reformed Faith' question, namely, Scripture and Tradition. The author shows that essentially in all the foundational issues the Roman Catholic Church is built on Scripture plus Tradition. And so the words of our Lord are apposite, 'Thus you nullify the Word of God by your tradition' (Mark 7:13). Webster devotes chapters to the Papacy, Mary, the Sacramental System, the Eucharist, and Justification. It is important for the reader to be able to examine crucial original historic Papal documents. 13 of these are added to this book including Vatican 1 and Vatican 2 on Papal Infallibility. Another is the Bull *Unam Sanctam* by Boniface VIII which declares that there is no salvation outside the RC Church. Yet the Church which is supposed never to change has changed! Whereas before salvation was supposed only to be found in Rome, now inclusivism (salvation may take place in other faiths such as Islam and Hinduism) has taken over. For holding to the old view of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (no salvation outside the RC Church) Leonard Feeney, a conservative, was excommunicated. That provoked a book in his defence by Francis Sullivan. Webster's valuable book is retailing at £13.95 in the UK.

For further valuable books I recommend the Welwyn series of commentaries published by Evangelical Press. The main feature of this series is the provision of non-technical basic exposition combined with practical application which is sadly lacking in many modern commentaries. Gordon Keddie's contribution to this series is outstanding in quality and quantity: Numbers, Judges and Ruth, a volume on 1 Samuel and one on 2 Samuel, Jonah, Acts and James. The shortage of commentaries on the Old Testament adds value to some of these books including excellent recent additions by Derek Thomas namely Ezekiel, Isaiah and Job. The EP catalogue stresses that these books are simply

explained. Here is value for those who have no commentaries on these books of the Bible.

The development of Christian doctrine in the early centuries is a daunting subject primarily on account of the conflicts surrounding the development and eventual clarification in detail of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Person of Christ. The story is told in an eminently interesting and easy to read fashion by Philip Schaff's set of volumes, *History of the Christian Church* first published in 1910 and reprinted in 1988 by Eerdmans. But it takes 2779 pages to reach 590 AD. J N D Kelly's study *Early Christian Doctrines*<sup>4</sup> concentrates more on the development of theology with less about the human story and personalities and we reach 451 AD in about 450 pages. Thereafter several chapters follow which concentrate on specific developments such as original sin, Christ's saving work, Christ's mystical body, and the sacraments. This is a scholarly book of excellent value.

Small by comparison and very different in character is O Palmer Robertson's **The Final Word** with subtitle *A Biblical Response to the Case for Tongues and Prophecy Today*, published by the Banner of Truth as a paperback, 150 pages, price £3.95. Chapter one is devoted to the subject of Prophecy Today, and chapter two to Tongues Today. The author describes four elements of New Testament tongues as follows:

1. NT tongues were revelational
2. NT tongues were foreign languages
3. NT tongues were for public consumption
4. NT tongues were a sign indicating a radical change in the direction of redemptive history.

Chapter three is devoted to Revelation Today, divided into three parts: What it means that revelation has ceased, The history of the cessation of revelation and Objections to the concept of cessation. The book concludes with a refutation of Wayne Grudem's widely espoused views on the existence of prophecy in the contemporary Church.

## References

1. Soli Deo Gloria Publications, Box 451, Morgan, PA 15064, USA, \$12.95.
2. Grace Publications titles are distributed by E P, 12 Wooler Street, Darlington, Co. Durham DL1 1RQ.
3. Banner of Truth, 3 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh EH12 6EL.
4. Early Christian Doctrines, JND Kelly, A & C Black, London, 511 pp, £14.99.

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# Authoritarianism

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In reviewing the last 25 years (see editorial *RT 147*), it is noted with a great degree of sadness that during the 1980s the Reformed Baptist movement became seriously divided over the practice of authoritarianism. Associated with this is a tendency toward censoriousness and fundamentalistic separatism over marginal differences which continue to give the movement a bad reputation. Injuries have been sustained and trust has broken down. Part of the tragedy is that those who have exercised 'authority' in hard and extreme ways genuinely believe their actions to be scripturally warranted.

Can anything be done to redress the situation? It is essential to provide a godly and loving example. We must show that while we care about truth we are not sectarian in the way we hold our views. We are not 'authoritarian'. We believe in maintaining discipline (see article in *RT 143*) but we deplore and shun hardline shepherding. Often authoritarianism is caused by unreal idealism.

In 1971 the Carey Ministers' Conference sought to assess the biblical view of the local church. The papers were published by Carey Publications under the title *The Ideal Church* (now out of print). Questions were asked: 'Is there a pattern for church life?'; 'Is there an ideal church?' – and the qualifying text was stressed: 'Not as though I had already attained'. Christianity is voluntary not coerced. Certainly we need to strive for biblical idealism concerning the marks of a true church – pure worship, a godly membership, elders and deacons, evangelism and missions – but much damage is done where coercion is used rather than spiritual means. While we must make every effort to attain, there is no such thing in this world as an ideal church. The letters addressed by our Lord to the seven churches of Asia demonstrate this.

After some years of pastoring I learnt to be less tense about several issues:

i. Members beginning to question one or another local church doctrine or practice and discussing the issues with other members. Openness does not necessarily imply disloyalty or divisiveness. ii. Complaining – pastors should never place themselves above criticism, we may deserve it! iii. Members wishing to leave for another church – there may be a number of factors involved. It is important to maintain friendly and relaxed relationships. I remember losing a valuable member to the Charismatic movement. After a year he returned, disillusioned with what he had seen. If he had been traumatised when he left us, he would not have come back.

There have been instances (and one is currently going on) in which virtual excommunication is exercised on a whole section of a church over secondary issues. Excommunication is for scandalous sins. Even where there is serious disagreement over doctrine or practice a peaceable parting is the way forward.

The subject of worship has also been mishandled by those who are inflexible in their own congregations and seek to impose stipulations on others. In striving for pure worship the regulative principle (allowing only that which is described in the Bible) can be turned into a big stick which, when applied in a legalistic way, reminds one of Moses' rod which became a serpent when thrown down! It is for each local church leadership to make biblical application concerning what is acceptable for the assembly in worship rather than be dictated to by other churches (for example, whether men only, or men and women, may pray in the prayer meeting).

Authoritarian attitudes can drive away joyful freedom and flexibility which are vital ingredients of worship. Joy is not the prerogative of the Charismatic movement. It is the right and privilege of every Christian.



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