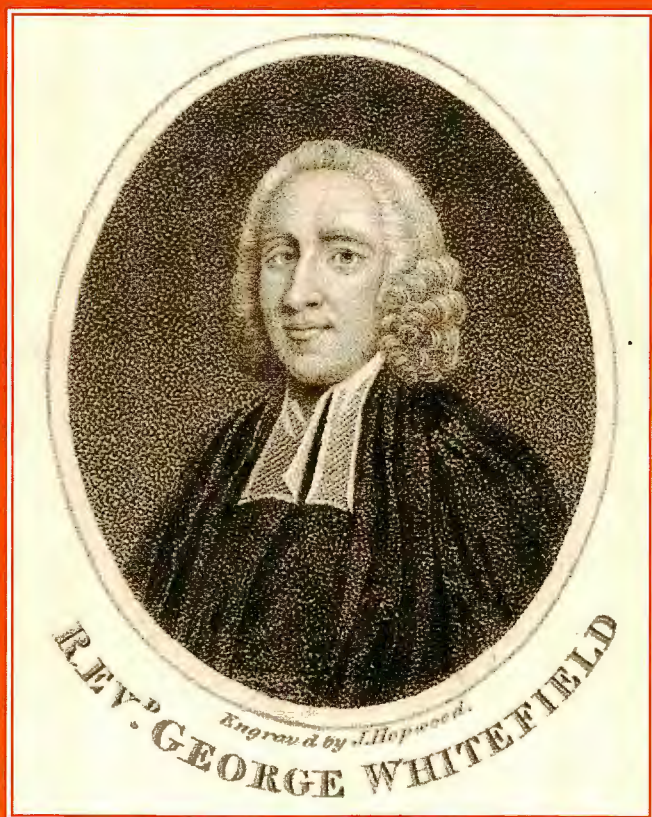




# REFORMATION TODAY



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2014

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Websites [www.reformation-today.org](http://www.reformation-today.org)  
<http://africanpastorsconference.com>

Email address of Kees van Kralingen [kees.vankralingen@online.nl](mailto:kees.vankralingen@online.nl)

## CAREY CONFERENCE 2015

6th – 8th January 2015

See details at [careyconference.org](http://careyconference.org)  
or get details by e-mail: [loiscollier@hotmail.com](mailto:loiscollier@hotmail.com)



A member of the 'Being There' team from *Caring for Life* in Leeds on a home visit. See page 34.

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Front cover picture. *George Whitefield* was born in Gloucester, England, 1714. He preached the gospel on both sides of the Atlantic after his conversion at the beginning of a time of great revival.

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## Editorial

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### 1714 – 2014 Remembering the Deeds of the LORD

(Psalm 77)

ASAPH WRITES THE FOLLOWING WORDS IN days of deep trouble: ‘I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds’(Psalm 77:11-12). This remembrance is a powerful source of comfort and encouragement in the difficulties he experiences. How much can we profitably apply this to our time and situation! Although we should never deny real blessings, the state of this world and the position of the church give rise to deep concerns. I hardly need to mention the terrible persecution of the Church in many countries and the sad divisions and spiritual weakness of the church in other regions. Also personally we may experience hard times in our lives and ministries.

In these circumstances we should take the example and advice of Asaph to heart. We should first of all turn to Scripture itself to find the mighty and wonderful deeds of our great God, which he has done and revealed in his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has demonstrated his pre-eminence in creation and

redemption (Col 1:15-20). We have the additional privilege of knowing about God’s work in the history of the church. And this brings us to the main theme of this issue: the commemoration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of George Whitefield, one of the key men God used in the great revival of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The year 1714 was not only Whitefield’s year of birth but also that of a range of other men mightily used by the Lord in the revivals such as Howell Harris. In the middle of a spiritually dark period for church and society God began a new work. About two decades after 1714 a period of revival broke out through the preaching of these men.

We are therefore profoundly grateful to Dr. Michael Haykin for drawing our attention to these great deeds of the LORD by contributing a biographical article on George Whitefield and introducing us to some of his letters. Meditating on this wonderful period of church history should point us to the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church. It is Christ who ultimately feeds his church as Luke Jenner reminds us in his sermon on

Ephesians 5:29. This is not only a source of real comfort in our times in the Church and in our ministries, but also stimulates us to serve our Lord. Realising the sovereign work of the Lord never leads to passivity for the Lord's people. Instead, he brings his purposes about through the proper working of each part of the body, the church (Eph 4:16) as Luke explains in this article.

It is precisely this biblical position of acknowledging both God's sovereignty and human responsibility that was such a key part of Whitefield's ministry. These truths, reflected in the doctrines of grace in the Reformed faith, have always been a strong incentive to prayer as we can see from the

prayers of the apostle Paul in his letters.<sup>1</sup> They also help us to put all our trust in the Lord on the one hand, and to be encouraged to serve him in the preaching of the gospel on the other. In his recent set of 3 books Paul Washer urges us to remain faithful to this gospel and to recover it whenever needed (see book review).

I hope and pray that the Lord will bless this issue of Reformation Today for all of us to consider these vitally important matters afresh to the benefit of our lives and ministries, to the health of the church for the glory of our great Saviour!

*Kees van Kralingen*

### **Erroll Hulse**

The founding editor of Reformation Today, Erroll Hulse, returned to the UK in January 2014 following a severe stroke which took place while he was ministering at an APC in South Africa. He now lives in Grove Park Residential Care Home, 100 Grove Lane, Leeds, LS6 2BG.

While an active preaching and writing ministry is no longer possible, Erroll has shifted focus to active and continued intercession for the Kingdom world-wide.

Over many years, Erroll has consistently promoted the 'Doctrines of Grace'. He has always emphasised that the sovereignty of God is not just a 'doctrine' to be intellectually grasped - it is a life-line in times of suffering. These recent months have been an opportunity for Erroll to testify that 'the Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.'

<sup>1</sup> See: D.A. Carson, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation. Priorities from Paul and His Prayers* (Leicester: IVP, 1992).

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## Jesus Christ Builds Healthy Churches

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*By Luke Jenner*

*'After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church – for we are members of his body.'* (Eph 5:29-30)

**O**FTEN ONE OF THE GREAT AND WORTHY EFFECTS OF A GATHERING LIKE THE GRACE BAPTIST ASSEMBLY – OR any other Christian conference – is that it creates in us a resolve to commit more faithfully, patiently and sacrificially to the work of building healthy churches for God's glory. Yet Scripture gently but firmly forces us to *abandon* that resolve if we go home looking to it as *the* critical factor in the work of fostering the spiritual health that we long for in our congregations. If you consider that everything rests upon how much you are able to retain and apply from the teaching you received, or upon the zeal with which you go about seeking to put it into practice, or upon the warmth and patience you display in presenting new ways forward for your church – then you are going wrong. By all means do all those things with God's help, but allow Scripture gently to take your focus off your own post-conference resolutions as the ultimate driving-force in your church's well-being. That honour and responsibility lie elsewhere.

The critical factor, the only ultimately non-negotiable factor in the building of healthy churches, is the personal and ongoing commitment of Jesus Christ to that process; and that is what Scripture promises in Ephesians 5:29-30. It is the same lesson we would do well to learn from Ephesians 4:16 – 'from *him* the whole body ... grows and builds itself up in love'; or 4:11-12 – 'So *Christ himself* gave the apostles and the others to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up'; or 4:7 – 'But to each one of us grace has been given *as Christ apportioned it*'; or Matthew 16:18 – Jesus doesn't say to Peter, 'On this rock *you will* build my church,' but '*I will* build my church.' For all *Peter's* labours, he still was not ultimate.

In focusing on just these two verses in Ephesians 5, I am not carelessly ignoring the rest of the passage or doing an injustice to wives and husbands; I am actually seeking to glean the heart of what the whole

passage is all about. In verse 32 Paul himself tells us what the whole passage is about, of course: ‘I am talking about Christ and the church.’ I trust you will conclude in the end that what follows is indeed the plain thrust and real encouragement of these few words. The Holy Spirit wants you to go home from a conference zealous for Christ, yes; but also *resting* in Christ, *worshipping* Christ, because Christ’s glorious work is not over. Let me repeat: *the biggest single factor in the health of your church is Jesus Christ’s personal and ongoing commitment to the health of your church.* Why? Because *your church* is nothing less than *his body*. That is the message of these verses.

### 1. The Essential Foundation

When we reach verse 29 in the passage, Paul has been talking about the unity of wives and husbands, and their respective duties, but he easily spills over here into where all that points. He lays down two essential truths that form the foundation for his main point. So we need to get those two truths clear ourselves. One is a truth about people in general; the other is a truth about the people that make up churches:

1. No one ever hated their own body. 2. We are members of his body.

No. 1 is a general truth about everybody – about you, about me. ‘*No one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body.*’ In other words it comes naturally for us to regard our bodies as worth protecting and looking after. You don’t need to be image-obsessed or engage in a 2-hour ‘grooming ritual’ every morning for this to be true of you. You just need to be found wearing an extra jumper on a chilly day, or responding to the sensation of hunger by making yourself a meal. Everyone cares for their body. Even the person who suffers from anorexia or self-harms (which are essentially the *abnormal* exceptions that prove the rule) still puts their hands up instinctively to protect their face when they trip over the kerb.

The internet is awash with advice on how to keep your body healthy. Everything from Special K to dental floss reinforces the point. Everyone from Buddha to Miss Piggy (from *The Muppets*) abides by this rule, even though those two individuals’ outlook is very different, and their broader principles far from Christian. Buddha said, ‘Your body is precious. It is our vehicle for awakening. Treat it with care.’ Miss Piggy said, ‘Never eat more than you can lift.’ What ever you think of their philosophies of life,

they still prove the point, this first essential truth, about people in general: *'No one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body.'*

Here's the second truth, about the people who are the church. *'We are members of his [Christ's] body.'* This is one of the ways in which the New Testament speaks of the doctrine we call union with Christ. Unfortunately in modern English we rarely use the word 'member' (Gk. *melos*) when we're talking about body parts (except in the word *dismemberment*). But 'body parts', as a translation, sounds a bit odd (which is probably why the English versions don't use it); so we're left with a possible situation of misunderstanding. We might veer into thinking that Paul, when he calls the church 'members of a body', is describing our status as if we were members of a club (which is how we invariably use that word today). But *bits of a human body* is what the word means. It is, rather gruesomely, the word used to describe those twelve bits of the Levite's concubine posted off to all Israel in Judges 19:29 (LXX). The same concept is employed by Paul here, but in such a dramatically different manner: it is a living body, not a dead one; and the body belongs to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and it is we, the church, who are the parts of it.

That is perhaps easy to say, but it is staggering to really *grasp*: the connection between Christ and his people is *so close* that the sight I have before me as I preach to my congregation can be metaphorically but truthfully portrayed as a sight of Christ himself, in his constituent parts. These people are the parts of the body that is Christ. If you are in Christ, then when a person meets you, they are meeting nothing less than a part of Jesus. You are not he, and yet somehow you have become part of him. William Gurnall says, 'The church is nothing but Christ displayed.' Paul says, 'This is a profound mystery' (32).

## 2. The Glorious Implication

Put these two things together, as Paul does, and you come to this conclusion: negatively, Christ has never hated, and will never hate the church – your church. Instead, he will feed and care for it, because that is what all people do for their bodies, and your church is made up of parts of his body. It is entirely natural for him. It is perfectly normal. It is part of what it means for Christ to be Christ. *'No one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church, for we are members of his body'* (29).

Thus Jesus is not only king and ruler, the authority over the church. He is also father and mother, the source of nurture and care for the church. He has chosen to take on this responsibility. Christ has committed himself to making you healthy, because your health is his health. He has chosen, in the gospel, to not be able to separate himself from you, or his well-being from yours!

Let's get clear from these words what exactly Christ does for the church. His work is described in terms of what everyone does for their body, namely, 'feeding' and 'caring' for it (or 'nourishing' and 'cherishing', depending on your translation). My reference to father and mother a moment ago was intentional, because both these words in verse 29 are from the world of the nursery, the world of bringing up children. 'Feed' or 'nourish' is not really as narrow in meaning as 'putting stuff in your mouth'; it's the same word addressed to fathers in Ephesians 6:4 (the only other time it occurs in the New Testament); 'nurture' would therefore perhaps be better. 'Care' or 'cherish' also has only one other use in the New Testament, 1 Thessalonians 2:7, where Paul speaks of himself in terms of 'a mother caring for her children'. Its use in the LXX includes a mother *hen* or *ostrich* sitting on her eggs to keep them warm (Deut 22:6; Job 39:14). The root meaning is indeed that of providing heat, just as my wife throughout the winter months carefully wraps up our baby daughter at night to make sure she is warm enough. But the picture here, remember, is not simply of a mother caring for a child. It is of a person caring for *themselves* – for their *own* body, not someone else's. Just as you scrunch yourself up in bed in December and January to keep warm, so does Christ. It's *his own body* he's concerned about. And that means you. It means your church. To take tender care of himself is to take tender care of you. This work of making and keeping our churches healthy is *his act*.

This means that if your heart has been at all warmed during this assembly, by the preaching or through fellowship over dinner or a prayer or whatever, then something deeper and more profound has been going on than mere mutual edification. It has been *Christ* warming you, as a man warms his own feet. If you have been spiritually fed by any of the sessions, indeed, if you have been fed or warmed by *anything ever* in the Christian life, you can absolutely guarantee that Christ was not somehow simply looking on from a distance, proud of that Christian brother or sister who encouraged you. You can absolutely guarantee that it was *he* doing it. The risen Christ was personally and fully involved. You are part of the body of Christ, and



the natural, everyday thing for Christ to do is to keep his body nurtured and cared for. Jesus Christ loves you as he loves himself. He loves your church as he loves himself. He loves the parts that are unrepresentable and awkward because they are still *his body* (and thus so must you, by the way). He loves *you* as a precious limb or digit of his body when *you* are unrepresentable and awkward – or in pain – or feeling numb; because none of that has stopped you being a part of *his own body*. *He* will keep his people healthy. It is his responsibility. It is his norm.

Three months ago a prominent local drug dealer walked into a morning service at Grace Baptist Church, Halifax, where I am the pastor. Let's change his name to 'Phil'. I should say that he *used* to be a drug dealer. By God's amazing grace and entirely separately from us as a church, he had been dramatically converted 18 months previously. Phil had spent those 18 months trying to find a gospel church in our town, and at last to his great joy he discovered us as essentially the first serious Bible-believing, gospel-preaching church he'd come across. Phil is a totally new person, full to bursting with enthusiasm for the gospel and with the new convert's delightful concern to make sure he's on the right lines about everything in the Christian life. So things are still quite black and white for him – there's not a lot of grey. (Just the other day I'd been doing a midweek Bible Study and happened to mention our paedobaptist brothers. As I gave him a lift home afterwards, he said, 'I've never heard of 'paedobaptists' before. Are they bad or good?') But the amazing thing is just how much good doctrine and practical Christian living Phil has absorbed over the 18 months since he was born again, simply by reading his Bible, all the time unable to find a church. His level of understanding and discernment really is quite remarkable considering the circumstances. The question I'm asking you is, 'How did that happen?' The answer Ephesians 5:29-30 is giving you is, '*Christ fed him.*'

### **3. The Ultimate Motivation**

I hope that in some ways what we've seen already has caused you to rejoice in the present work of Christ and to want to be all the more what you really are – a part of his body. But there's just the slight possibility that you may be thinking, Does this *really* motivate me to be zealous? Does it really drive me to be concerned about other Christians, if Christ is the one with the ultimate responsibility for them? Is there any point in my seeking to build a healthy church where I live if the work is out of my hands and in Christ's? Well, actually, what Paul says here provides the *ultimate*

motivation for going back to your church and, whilst resting in Christ, also putting your back into serving the people of God.

Why? Because of the truth that's implicit here, and basically explicit in 4:16, quoted earlier to make the case for Christ's ultimate responsibility for the work of building healthy churches – 'From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and *builds itself up* in love, *as each part does its work.*' The amazing balance of this doctrine is remarkable. We are not to usurp Christ's place of honour as the one ultimately responsible for the health of his body. Yet how will he make and keep that body healthy?

Well – how do *you* care for *your* body? How, for example, do you bandage up a gash on your leg? With your hands. Now is it *you* doing it, or *your hands*? Or how do you protect your head and torso from danger when being charged at by an angry bull? You put your *legs* into action. Or when you get some suspicious looking milk out of the fridge, how do you make sure your stomach stays healthy? You employ your *nose* to give it a sniff first. *You're* doing it, for *your* stomach, with *your* nose. It's you keeping yourself healthy with the various bits of... yourself. Do you get what I'm saying? The task of keeping your body healthy is only possible *as each part of you does its work.* You look after your body... with your body.

And that's what Christ does. He wants to keep every part of his body healthy. His tool for doing so is... his body. Each part. That's why it's nonsense to say, 'Well, if it's all up to him, I might as well just let him get on with it.' No. 'His getting on with it' equals taking you up and using you within the life of the church. You are not ultimately responsible; but you will always be involved. Anyone who never gets involved in body life is a strange part of the body... a finger that's never lifted to help the eye or the toe, a nose that never sniffs for danger, a tongue that never tastes for what's good, a shoulder that never carries any load. What kind of a body would that be? It *couldn't* be the body of the Christ who constantly and personally nurtures and cherishes every member of it. How do you think the hands and arms and feet and lips of Jesus would behave, if you met him? Well – that's you.

Brothers and sisters, by being the body of Christ in action with other parts of the body that are needy or tiring or hurt – or strong or active or anything else – we prove ourselves to be nothing less than the arms and legs and hands of Jesus himself. What a motivation! Praise God that it is Christ

who is the critical factor in making our churches (his body) healthy; and yet wonder at the way he chooses to carry that process out: through our churches – his body. Wonder at the fact that while at one time he said to the apostle Peter, ‘I (not you) will build my church,’ at another time he said to the same man, ‘Feed my sheep’ (John 21:17). He said that because Peter was going to be his body on earth. And that’s what you are. So if you are a preacher and pastor, feed your people! If you are an older Christian, nurture the younger ones! If you are a younger Christian, cherish the older ones! It is Christ’s work. That means it is your work! Rest in him as the critical factor in your church’s health, and labour in him as nothing less than his body. *‘From him the whole body ... grows ... as each part does its work.’*

A couple of weeks ago Phil was describing how he felt in those 18 months when he wasn’t in a gospel church. As I’ve said, it’s clear that Christ was feeding him all that time, keeping him through his Word. But now he has something to compare that time to. He has *body life* to compare it to, participation in the people of God. And he said, ‘Actually, compared to where I am now, in those 18 months I feel like I was starving.’ I replied, ‘And now?’ He smiled: ‘Now I’m full up.’

Why? Because the one who has ultimate responsibility for the health of his body, nourishes and cares for his body... through his body. The difference it makes being in fellowship with other Christians, compared to *not* being in fellowship with them, is the difference between starving and flourishing. So when it comes to building healthy churches, two things are true simultaneously: in Christ you are the one being built; and in Christ you are the builder, with the rest of his body – because ‘the church is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.’ (1:22). This is a profound mystery – but I am talking about *Christ and the church*.

*Luke Jenner is the pastor of Grace Baptist Church, Halifax.*

*This sermon was the final address to the Grace Baptist Assembly in Swanwick in May 2014.*

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## George Whitefield

— a man of focus from the eighteenth century

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by *Michael A G Haykin*

**D**URING THE COURSE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY ONE OF THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY THINGS THAT HAPPENED among evangelical Baptists in Central Canada was tucked away in the small village of Cottam, down in southwestern Ontario, near Windsor. The Baptist pastor in this village, Arnold Dallimore, wrote what was for the twentieth century the definitive life of one of the most iconic Christians of the eighteenth century, the renowned evangelist George Whitefield (1714–1770). Year in, year out, Dallimore taught himself to be a historian and toiled away at his project of writing Whitefield’s life till eventually it appeared in two volumes in the 1970s and 1980s. It turned out to be not only an exhaustive study of Whitefield, but life-changing for many who read it (including this author!). Dallimore’s subject was a man who was above all focused: focused on winning the lost, focused on the glory of Christ. And in this year, the tercentenary of Whitefield’s birth, Dallimore would certainly want us to remember Whitefield’s focus and go and follow in his footsteps.

*The spiritual and moral mess of the eighteenth century*

Summing up the characteristics of English-speaking societies on both sides of the Atlantic in the opening decades of the eighteenth century, Oxford historian John Walsh has listed the following:

- 1) A noticeable decay of ministerial authority
- 2) The growth of rationalism and a massive intellectual assault on supernatural Christianity
- 3) The spread of material wealth and ‘luxury’
- 4) The frivolity of the young and an indifference on their part to spiritual matters and
- 5) A sense of spiritual powerlessness among godly believers.

Attestation of this description is found in both public documents and private testimonies. Here is the witness of one early eighteenth-century author, the London Baptist theologian Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), writing in 1701 about the city of London:

Was ever sodomy so common in a Christian nation, or so notoriously and frequently committed, as by too palpable evidences it appears to be, in and about this city, notwithstanding the clear light of the gospel which shines therein, and the great pains taken to reform

the abominable profaneness that abounds? Is it not a wonder the patience of God hath not consumed us in his wrath, before this time? Was ever swearing, blasphemy, whoring, drunkenness, gluttony, self-love, and covetousness, at such a height, as at this time here?

Despite the presence of a number of gospel-centred ministries like that of Keach and various societies which had been created to bring about moral reform – homosexuality, profanity, sexual immorality, drunkenness and gluttony were widespread. And the next three decades saw little improvement. The early eighteenth century in Britain was, as Selina Hastings put it well in the 1990s, ‘an age when atheism was fashionable, sexual morals lax, and drinking and gambling at a pitch of profligacy that has never since been equalled’.

The state church, the Church of England, was basically helpless when it came to dealing with this dire situation. By and large the bishops in the Church of England of this era were, in the words of English historian J H Plumb, ‘first and foremost politicians’, not men of the Spirit. ‘There is a worldliness,’ Plumb continues, ‘about eighteenth-century [bishops] which no amount of apologetics can conceal.’ They undertook their clerical duties ‘only as political duties allowed’. The worldliness of these bishops showed in other ways as well. Jonathan Trelawny (1650-1721), Bishop of Winchester, used to ‘excuse himself for his much swearing by saying he swore as a baronet, and not as a bishop’! Such bishops had neither the time nor the interest to promote church renewal. Of course, the decadence of church leadership was by no means absolute; but the net effect of worldly bishops was to squash effective reform.

Moreover, the attention of far too many of the clergy under these bishops was taken up with such avocations as philosophy, biology, agriculture, chemistry, literature, law, politics, fox-hunting, drinking—anything but pastoral ministry and spiritual nurture. There were, of course, a goodly number of Church of England ministers who did not have the resources to indulge themselves in such pursuits, since they barely eked out a living. But few of them—wealthy or poor—preached anything but dry, unaffecting moralistic sermons.

Even among many of the churches of the Dissenters, the children of the Puritans (those who are our theological forebears), things were little better. One knowledgeable observer of these churches bemoaned the fact that ‘the distinguished doctrines of the gospel—Christ crucified, the only ground of hope for fallen man—salvation through his atoning blood—the sanctification by his eternal Spirit, are old-fashioned things now seldom heard in our churches’. The Christian life was basically defined in terms of a moral life

of good works. Spiritual ardour was regarded with horror as ‘enthusiasm’ or fanaticism. The ideal of the era is well summed up by an inscription on a tombstone from the period: ‘pious without enthusiasm’!

It was the eighteenth-century Evangelical Revival and its message of the new birth and justification by faith alone that brought positive changes and hope to this bleak scene. And at the centre of that revival was George Whitefield.

*George Whitefield: early years and conversion*

George Whitefield was the youngest son of Thomas Whitefield (1681–1716), the proprietor of the Bell Inn, at the time the finest hotel in Gloucester. George’s father died when he was but two and so he was raised by his mother Elizabeth (c.1681–1751). His school record was unremarkable, save for a noticeable talent for acting. For a while during his teen years, when his older brother Richard took over the running of the inn, he worked as one of the servants. But his mother longed for something better for her son. Her persistence and the kindness of friends enabled him in November 1732 to enter Pembroke College, Oxford University. It was here in the following summer that he first met John Wesley (1703–1791) and his younger brother Charles (1707–1788), who were regularly meeting with a group of men known to history as ‘the Holy Club’. This was a company of ten or so men who were ardently trying to live religious lives in an extremely dissolute age.

Whitefield, like-minded and longing for spiritual companionship ever since coming up to Oxford, joined them. He engaged in numerous religious exercises such as fasting, praying regularly, attending public worship, and seeking to abstain from what were deemed worldly pleasures. Despite the evident zeal he brought to these religious activities he had no sense of peace with God or assurance that God was satisfied with what he was doing.

Conversion came in the spring of 1735 after Charles Wesley had given him a copy of *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* (1677) by Henry Scougal (1650–1678), a Puritan and former Professor of Divinity at Aberdeen. This book was a frontal challenge to Whitefield’s ardent endeavour to create a righteous life that would merit God’s favour. Here is the way Whitefield recalled it many years later in a sermon that he preached in 1769:

I must bear testimony to my old friend Mr. Charles Wesley; he put a book into my hands, called, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*, whereby God shewed me, that I must be born again, or be damned. ...As a good writer [i.e. Scougal] says, a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the Sacrament, and yet, my brethren, not be a Christian. How did my heart rise, how did my heart shudder, like a poor man that is afraid to look into his account-books, lest he should find himself a bankrupt: yet shall I burn that book, shall I throw it down, shall I put it by, or shall I search into it? I did

[search it], and, holding the book in my hand, thus addressed the God of heaven and earth: Lord, if I am not a Christian, if I am not a real one, for Jesus Christ's sake, shew me what Christianity is, that I may not be damned at last. I read a little further, and the cheat was discovered; O, says the author, they that know anything of religion know it is a vital union with the Son of God, Christ formed in the heart; O what a ray of divine life did then break in upon my poor soul...

Awakened by this book to his need for the new birth, Whitefield passionately struggled to find salvation along the pathway of extreme asceticism but to no avail. Finally, when he had come to an end of his resources as a human being, God enabled him, in his words, 'to lay hold on His dear Son by a living faith, and, by giving me the Spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting redemption'. And, he went on, 'Oh! with what joy—joy unspeakable—even joy that was full of, and big with glory, was my soul filled...'

#### *Preaching in the open air*

Soon Whitefield was preaching. When churches began to be barred to him because of his focus on the new birth and the need for regeneration—morality alone, he stressed, could not save anyone—he was not deterred. On Saturday, February 17, 1739, he made the decision to take to the open air and preach to a group of colliers in Kingswood, a coal-mining district on the outskirts of Bristol. These men with their families lived in squalor and utter degradation, squandering their lives in drink and violence. With no church nearby, they were quite ignorant of Christianity and its leading tenets. It was a key turning-point in not only his life but also in the history of the Church. From this point on Whitefield would relish and delight in his calling as an open-air preacher. He would preach in fields and foundries, in ships, cemeteries, and pubs, on horseback and even on coffins, from stone walls and balconies, staircases and windmills. For instance, referring to his calling in a letter dated December 14, 1768, he wrote, 'I love the open bracing air.' And the following year he could state: 'It is good to go into the high-ways and hedges. Field-preaching, field-preaching for ever!'

Whitefield never confined his witnessing about Christ to preaching occasions. He took every opportunity to share his faith. 'God forbid,' he once remarked, 'I should travel with anybody a quarter of an hour without speaking of Christ to them.' On another occasion, during his sixth preaching tour of America, he happened to stay with a wealthy, though worldly, family in Southold on Long Island. The family discovered after the evangelist had left their home that he had written with a diamond ring on one of the windowpanes in the bedroom where he had slept, 'One thing is needful'!

At that first open-air service in February of 1739 there were 200. Within six weeks or so, Whitefield was preaching numerous times a week to crowds sometimes numbering in the thousands! Whitefield's description of his ministry at this time is a classic one. To visualise the scene at the Kingswood collieries, we need to picture the green countryside, the piles of coal, the squalid huts, and the deep semi-circle of unwashed faces as we read his words:

Having no righteousness of their own to renounce, they were glad to hear of a Jesus who was a friend of publicans, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The first discovery of their being affected was to see the white gutters made by their tears which plentifully fell down their black cheeks, as they came out of their coal pits. Hundreds and hundreds of them were soon brought under deep convictions, which, as the event proved, happily ended in a sound and thorough conversion. The change was visible to all, though numbers chose to impute it to anything, rather than the finger of God.

Here is another description from this same period of time, when others besides the miners of Bristol were flocking to hear Whitefield preach:

As...I had just begun to be an extempore preacher, it often occasioned many inward conflicts. Sometimes, when twenty thousand people were before me, I had not, in my own apprehension, a word to say either to God or them. But I never was totally deserted, and frequently...so assisted, that I knew by happy experience what our Lord meant by saying, 'Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water' [John 7:38]. The open firmament above me, the prospect of the adjacent fields, with the sight of thousands and thousands, some in coaches, some on horseback, and some in the trees, and at times all affected and drenched in tears together, to which sometimes was added the solemnity of the approaching evening, was almost too much for, and quite overcame me.

#### *Revival and Whitefield's ministry*

Revival had come to England! And to that revival, and its confluent streams in Wales, Scotland, and North America no man contributed more than Whitefield. Over the 34 years between his conversion and death in 1770 in Newburyport, Massachusetts, Dallimore calculated that he preached around 18,000 sermons. Moreover, many of his sermons were delivered to massive congregations that numbered 10,000 or so, some to audiences possibly as large as 15,000.

In addition to his preaching throughout the length and breadth of England, he regularly itinerated throughout Wales, visited Ireland twice, and journeyed



fourteen times to Scotland. He crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, stopping once in Bermuda for eleven weeks, and preached in virtually every major town on the Atlantic seaboard. What is so remarkable about all of this is that Whitefield lived at a time when travel to a town but twenty miles away was a significant undertaking.

In journeying to Scotland and to America he was going to what many perceived as the fringes of transatlantic British society and culture. And yet some of God's richest blessings on his ministry were in these very regions. For example, Harry Stout, commenting on Whitefield's impact on America, writes:

So pervasive was Whitefield's impact in America that he can justly be styled America's first cultural hero. Before Whitefield, there was no unifying intercolonial person or event. Indeed, before Whitefield, it is doubtful any name other than royalty was known equally from Boston to Charleston. But by 1750 virtually every American loved and admired Whitefield and saw him as their champion.

Whitefield's ministry—insisting, as it did, on the vital necessity of conversion and the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart—was not without its critics, many of whom castigated him for what they regarded as fanaticism. And it needs to be admitted that in his early ministry Whitefield did make some unguarded statements and adopted certain attitudes that helped fuel this opposition. On his second preaching tour of America, for instance, Whitefield appears to have maintained that assurance belonged to the essence of saving faith and that a mature Christian could discern the marks of conversion in another individual. To his credit, Whitefield later admitted his injudiciousness and that he had been far 'too rash and hasty' in his speech and published writings. 'Wild-fire has been mixed with it,' he wrote in 1748, 'and I find that I frequently wrote and spoke in my own spirit, when I thought I was writing and speaking by the assistance of the Spirit of God.'

#### *A word of application*

In the early years of the revival Whitefield's itinerant, open-air preaching was often paraded as evidence of his 'enthusiasm' or fanaticism. Part of Whitefield's response to this criticism was to go back to the example of the Apostle Paul as found in the Book of Acts. 'Was he not filled,' he asked his opponents, 'with a holy restless impatience and insatiable thirst of travelling, and undertaking dangerous voyages for the conversion of infidels...?' Here Whitefield lays before us the spiritual passion that spurred his own incessant travelling over land and sea—and needs to grip our churches as well—the focused longing to see the lost embrace Christ as Lord and Saviour and find their deepest spiritual thirst and hunger satisfied in Christ.

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## Four Letters of George Whitefield

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*introduced and annotated by Michael A G Haykin*

*George Whitefield was an inveterate networker, who linked believers throughout the British Isles and across the Atlantic. He did this through travel and through letter-writing. The following selection well reveals his gifts as a letter-writer who used that medium to instruct, nurture piety and even rebuke.*

### **To the students at the Academy of Philip Doddridge in Northampton**

My dear brethren in Christ,

*Philadelphia, November 10, 1739*

I heartily pray God, that you may be burning and shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.<sup>1</sup> Though you are not of the Church of England, yet if you are persuaded in your own minds of the truth of the way wherein you now walk, I leave it. However, whether Conformists, or Nonconformists, our main concern should be, to be assured that we are called and taught of God; for none but such are fit to minister in holy things. Indeed, my dear brethren, it rejoiced me much to see such dawnings of grace in your souls; only I thought most of you were bowed down too much with a servile fear of man: but as the love of the Creator increases, the fear of the creature will daily decrease in your hearts. Nicodemus, who came at first by night to our Lord, afterwards dared to own him before the whole council in open day. I pray God make you all thus minded. For unless your hearts are free from worldly hopes and worldly fears, you never will speak boldly, as you ought to speak. The good old Puritans, I believe, never preached better than when in danger of being taken to prison as soon as they had finished their sermon. And however the Church may be at peace now, yet I am persuaded, unless you go forth with the same temper, you will never preach with the same demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.<sup>2</sup> Study therefore, my brethren, I beseech you by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, study your hearts as well as books – ask yourselves again and again, whether you would preach for Christ, if you were sure to lay down your lives for so doing? If you

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<sup>1</sup> Philipians 2:15.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:4.

fear the displeasure of a man for doing your duty now, assure yourselves you are not yet thus minded. But enough of this, I love to hope well of you all. I trust, as you are enlightened with some degree of knowledge in the mysteries of Godliness, you will henceforth determine not to know anything but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.<sup>3</sup>

### To John Wesley

Honoured Sir,

*Savannah, March 26, 1740*

I could now send a particular answer to your last; but, my honoured friend and brother, for once hearken to a child, who is willing to wash your feet. I beseech you by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, if you would have my love confirmed towards you, write no more to me about misrepresentations wherein we differ.<sup>4</sup> To the best of my knowledge at present, no sin has dominion over me,<sup>5</sup> yet I feel the strugglings of indwelling sin day by day; I can therefore by no means come into your interpretation of the passage mentioned in the letter, and as explained in your preface to Mr. Halyburton<sup>6</sup>—the doctrine of election, and the final perseverance of those that are truly in Christ, I am ten thousand times more convinced of, if possible, than when I saw you last. You think otherwise: why then should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing? Will it not in the end destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take from us that cordial union and sweetness of soul, which I pray God may always subsist between us? How glad would the enemies of the Lord be to see us divided? How many would rejoice, should I join and make a party against you? And in one word, how would the cause of our common Master every way suffer by our raising disputes about particular points of doctrine? Honoured Sir, let us offer salvation freely to all by the blood of Jesus; and whatever light God has communicated to us, let us freely communicate to others. I have lately read the life of Luther, and think it in no wise to his honour, that the last part of his life was so much taken up in disputing with Zwingli and others; who in all probability equally loved the Lord Jesus,

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:2.

<sup>4</sup> This letter pre-dates the later exchange of views on the subject of predestination and particularly George Whitefield's famous letter in response to John Wesley's sermon entitled 'Free Grace'. This later letter is dated Dec. 24, 1740 (published in A Dallimore, *George Whitefield, Volume 2* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1980), p.549. The letter reproduced here does show the spirit in which Whitefield approached the matter.

<sup>5</sup> See Romans 6:14.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Halyburton (1674–1712), a Scottish divine.

notwithstanding they might differ from him in other points.<sup>7</sup> Let this, dear Sir, be a caution to us, I hope it will to me; for by the blessing of God, provoke me to it as much as you please, I do not think ever to enter the lists of controversy with you on the points wherein we differ. Only I pray to God, that the more you judge me, the more I may love you, and learn to desire no one's approbation, but that of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ. ...Oh, dear honoured Sir, I wish you as much success as your own heart can wish. Were you here, I would weep over you with tears of love, and tell you what great things God hath done for my soul, since we parted last. Indeed and indeed, I often and heartily pray for your success in the gospel. May your inward strength and outward sphere increase day by day! May God use you as a choice and singular instrument of promoting his glory on earth, and may I see you crowned with an eternal and exceeding weight of glory in the world to come! This is the hearty desire of, honoured Sir,  
Yours most affectionately in Christ Jesus, GW.

**To Mr. G— C—  
On board the Savannah bound for Georgia<sup>8</sup>**

My Brother George,

*December 11, 1740*

Your late letters, especially that which you sent me by way of Charlestown, made me smile. I was glad to find that you had not so far thrown off all outward things, as to resolve not to write to any one; and I thought I knew the frame of your heart, as though I was within you. My dear, dear George C—, I love you tenderly in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and therefore would not have you be deceived. Alas, why do you pervert this text of scripture, “Be still, and know that I am the Lord,” as if it was designed to keep a Christian from striving, or meant a stillness of body, or waiting upon God only in silence?<sup>9</sup> The expression is taken out of the 46<sup>th</sup> Psalm, where God's fury against the heathen is described in the most lively colours; and then lest his people should complain of the severity of his dispensations, God commands them to be *still*, “not to murmur or repine, knowing that he

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<sup>7</sup> This is a reference to the quarrel between Martin Luther (1483–1546) and Huldreich Zwingli (1484–1531) over the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.

<sup>8</sup> The background to this letter is the stillness controversy of the early 1740s. In 1739 a Moravian missionary by the name of Philipp Heinrich Molther (1714–1780) began to teach in London that those who professed faith in Christ should abstain from the means of grace—such things as worship, the reading of the Bible, the Lord's Supper—until all doubts were removed from their minds and hearts. His teaching exercised a great influence among some of the earliest converts of the revival. Among them was the recipient of this letter.

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 46:10.

was the Lord, and might do what seemed him good.” Thus Tate and Brady in the translations explain it,<sup>10</sup> and this is the true and genuine meaning of that sentence. It hath no reference to stillness in prayer, or stillness of body.

Dear brother, I speak to you plainly, because I love you. I think I know what it is to wait upon the Lord in silence, and to feel the Spirit of God making intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered.<sup>11</sup> Often I have been at such times filled as it were with the fullness of God, and I do now daily carry on a communion with the most high God and the ever-blessed Jesus. But all this I fear is contrary to the false stillness you and some others seem to have fallen into. I was just in the same case some years ago at Oxford, when I declined writing, reading, and such like exercises, because I would be *still*. The Lord convinced me; I pray he may also convince you of this delusion. Dear George, consider how contrary your maxim is to our Saviour’s. You say, “*Be still.*” He says, “*Strive,*” as in an agony, “*Strive that you may enter in at the strait gate.*”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, my dear man, I pity you, knowing you have but a weak judgment, though a well-meaning heart.

You once thought that you were born again; then, you found it was only an elapse of the Holy Ghost. You used to say, you wished you could believe from experience in the doctrine of election; now, you find as yet no evidence within yourself that you are a real Christian. You take too much refuge, I fear, in the doctrine of universal redemption. It is the finest doctrine in the world to cause a soul to be falsely still, and to say *Peace, Peace*, when there is no peace.<sup>13</sup> You seem to insist upon sinless perfection, and to think a man hath no real salvation till he literally cannot commit sin. From whose experience do you write this? Not from your own, dear George; for I much question, if ever your heart was truly broken or had a saving closure with Christ. You seem to mention Peter Böhler<sup>14</sup> as an instance; but alas, though he has been washed in the blood of the Lamb, so as to be justified from all his sins, yet like me his feet want washing

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<sup>10</sup> Nahum Tate (1652–1715) and Nicholas Brady (1659–1726) were the authors of the *New Version of the Psalms* (1696). This work was constantly reprinted throughout the eighteenth century.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 8:26.

<sup>12</sup> Luke 13:24.

<sup>13</sup> This remark makes clear that Whitefield disagreed with this doctrine.

<sup>14</sup> Peter Böhler (1712–1775) was a German-speaking Moravian missionary who was instrumental in the conversion of both John and Charles Wesley.

still,<sup>15</sup> and will, till he bows down his head and gives up the ghost. I have conversed with him intimately. Take heed, brother, of having anything too much in admiration, or of thinking you must necessarily find Christ at such and such a place.

...If God loves you, he will let you see the vanity of your present imaginations, and bring you to see that salvation is not of him that willet, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.<sup>16</sup> Dear George, be not given to change; be not too fond of new things. “To the law and to the testimony,”<sup>17</sup> and see what Christ and his apostles have spoken. I speak this out of love, and not in reference to myself. If God blesses another ministry to your soul, I rejoice, yea and will rejoice. But if I see you fall into errors, do not be angry if I tell you the truth. If you are, I will notwithstanding love and pray for you. That errors are crept in among you, I think is too plain: but I suspend my judgment till the spring, when, God willing, I hope to be in London.

In the meanwhile pray for me, that I may with joy bear to be deserted by those, who once were blessed and awakened by my ministry, and to whom I am a spiritual father, though they may have many instructors. Dear George, may the Lord be with you. He only knows how dear you are to my heart. It is near midnight; but it was much upon my heart to write you this letter. That God may sanctify it to your edification and comfort, it is the hearty prayer of your affectionate friend, brother and servant in Christ,  
GW.

### To Mrs Ann Dutton<sup>18</sup>

My dear Sister,

*On board the Minerva, February 20, 1741*

My conscience almost reproaches me, that I have not wrote to you often, nor full enough; accept this as an acknowledgement of my fault. I am sorry for it. We are now about a thousand miles off England. I hope this will provoke you to send me a letter immediately after my arrival. I find Luther’s observation to be true: “Times of reformation are times

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<sup>15</sup> An allusion to John 13:6–10, where Jesus washed the feet of his disciples.

<sup>16</sup> Romans 9:16.

<sup>17</sup> Isaiah 8:20.

<sup>18</sup> Anne Dutton (1692–1765) was a prolific author of spiritual tracts and theological treatises. A Particular (i.e. Calvinistic) Baptist by conviction, she maintained an extensive correspondence with key figures associated with the Evangelical Revival, including Whitefield, Howell Harris, Philip Doddridge and John Wesley. As is evident from this letter, Whitefield highly regarded her and her writings.

of confusion.”<sup>19</sup> As yet the churches in America are quiet, but I expect a sifting time ere long. My family in Georgia was once sadly shaken, but now, blessed be God, it is settled, and, I hope, established in the doctrines of grace. Your name is precious among them. I wish you would send them a long letter. Your book on *walking with God* has been blessed to one Mr. Bryan, and others in South Carolina.<sup>20</sup> It hath also been serviceable to a dear friend now with me, as also to myself.

I cannot well tell you what great things are doing abroad. I have a scene of sufferings lying before me; I expect shortly to cry out with the spouse, “Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me, my mother’s children were angry with me.”<sup>21</sup> My Lord’s command, now, I believe, is, “Take the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes.”<sup>22</sup> Help me by your prayers. It is an ease thus to unbosom one’s self to a friend, and an instance of my confidence in you. O, my dear Sister, I am less than the least of all saints, I am the chief of sinners,<sup>23</sup> and yet Jesus loves me, and sheds his love abroad in my heart abundantly by the Holy Ghost.<sup>24</sup>

I have been much afflicted in composing some gospel sermons, which I intend for the press. I have sought the Lord by prayer and fasting, and he assures me, that he will be with me. Whom then should I fear? Hitherto we have had an extraordinary passage, praise the Lord. Herewith I send you a letter from one of the children which God has given me. He will rejoice to receive a line from you. If possible, I hope, tho’ you are in the decline of life, to see you face to face before I leave England. I should be glad to hear how you are as to worldly circumstances; if I can help you in any degree, freely command

Your affectionate friend, brother and servant, in Christ,

GW.

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<sup>19</sup> Whitefield would have in mind the stillness controversy and the controversy with the Wesleys over the doctrines of grace and Christian perfection, both of which are mentioned in previous letters in this selection.

<sup>20</sup> The “Mr. Bryan” is either Hugh Bryan or his brother Jonathan, both of whom had been converted under Whitefield’s preaching and who were prominent South Carolina plantation owners. The book to which Whitefield is referring is Anne Dutton’s *A Discourse upon Walking with God* (London, 1735).

<sup>21</sup> Song of Solomon 1:6.

<sup>22</sup> Song of Solomon 2:15.

<sup>23</sup> Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15.

<sup>24</sup> Romans 5:5.

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## Tent-Making and Church-Planting

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by *Phil Roberts*

IT IS WIDELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT BRITAIN IS NOW A MISSION FIELD AND INCREASINGLY WE HAVE PEOPLE describing themselves as church-planters. Sometimes these are working in a 'strawberry plant' relationship with a larger church; in other situations they have been able to gather a group of existing believers in an area. Large areas of the country stand in need of the evangelical witness being re-established and there is often a lack of vision on the part of existing churches and a dearth of agencies able to facilitate such pioneering. In considering this over the years, both as a church-planter in the Republic of Ireland and latterly as a pastor in a large conurbation in England, I have come to the conclusion that we need to do some radical rethinking. It is my contention that for a number of reasons setting apart tent-making missionaries might be part of the solution.

### **What do we mean when we use the term 'tent-making'?**

A working definition might be: *The engagement in secular work by a person whose primary reason for being in a particular area is to be a missionary.* The word secular is included to differentiate it from those Christian service industries such as printing, etc. Stress is placed upon missionaries (or evangelists) doing secular work, rather than Christians in secular employment who are active in evangelism in their spare time. This is at times a fine distinction, but it becomes apparent in the mindset of the person and in their 'primary reason' for being in the area. One could argue that ideally this definition should apply to all believers – a view with which I would not necessarily disagree.

### **Paul's example – a historic survey**

We have records of Paul engaging in tent-making, or some form of work with his hands, in three cities; Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus.

#### **Thessalonica**

Paul makes mention of the fact that he and his companions

*...were not disorderly among you; nor did we eat anyone's bread free of charge, but worked with labour and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, not because we do not have*



*authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us (2 Thess 3:7-9).*

This refers to Paul's first visit to the Thessalonians on his second missionary journey.

### **Corinth**

Continuing his second missionary journey, he came to Corinth where he joined the tent-making team of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:1-3). He spent his time working mid-week making tents and preaching on the Sabbath (Acts 18:4). It appears that, once Silas and Timothy arrived, he devoted himself to preaching and teaching (Acts 18:5). How long he spent tent-making we do not know, and we can only guess at why he was able to stop once they arrived.

Whatever happened, we know that Paul stayed a further year and a half in Corinth (Acts 18:11) and this may have included periods of physical work done in the city.

### **Ephesus**

Paul eventually left Corinth and sailed for Ephesus with the tent-making couple, Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:18a). After addressing the people in the synagogue, he departed, leaving Aquila and Priscilla behind in Ephesus. When he returned (Acts 19:1), he remained in the city for over two years (Acts 19:8-10). This period was marked by hard physical work as well as spiritual ministry.

*I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by labouring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:33-35).*

These words seem to indicate that at times Paul also supported his co-workers.

### **Paul's reasons for tent-making**

In trying to assess these, a number of observations can be made:

#### **1. Full-time Christian ministry is honourable.**

*And we urge you, brethren, to recognise those who labour among*

*you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves* (1 Thess 5:12-13).

Those engaged in ministry have a right to expect material support from those whom they serve, as Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 9:7-18 and in his letter to Timothy:

*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, 'The labourer is worthy of his wages'* (1 Tim 5:17-18).

**2. Paul made a conscious decision to lay aside his rights in this area at times.**

*If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.* (1 Cor 9:12; cf. v.18. See also 2 Thess 3:7-9 already referred to above).

**3. Paul's constant desire was that his life should be a model to imitate.**

It was his aim that those whom he sought to reach should have ample evidence of what kind of man he was. He stressed the need to follow his example (1 Thess 1:5-7; 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; Phil 3:17; 4:9; Acts 20:34-35). As an integral part of this example he indicates his practice of working for his support (see again 2 Thess 3:6-9; cf. 2 Cor 6:3-5).

**4. An important part of Paul's teaching concerned itself with how they should live, act and work now that they had become Christians and so his own example was vital.**

*Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; . . . that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing* (1 Thess 4:1,11-12; cf. 2 Thess 3:6, 10-12).

In writing to the Corinthians Paul commends Titus as one bearing a good testimony with outsiders (2 Cor 8:21-23). Compare this with Paul's words to Timothy (1 Tim 3:7).

**5. The apostles were known, among other things, for their hard work.**

*For you remember, brethren, our labour and toil; for labouring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God (1 Thess 2:9).*

*And we labour, working with our own hands (1 Cor 4:12a; cf. 2 Cor 11:23, 27-28).*

**6. They were concerned not to burden those to whom they preached.**

Paul wanted there to be no ground for the accusation that he had ‘taken advantage’ of the believers.

*Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself. (2 Cor 11:7-9; cf. 12:13-18. See also Acts 20:34-35; 1 Thess 2:9; 2 Thess 3:7-8; 2 Cor 7:2).*

It can be seen that Paul’s reasons for tent-making did not arise solely, or possibly even primarily, from a need to support himself financially. At times he felt quite free to lay his needs before those who he believed should be supporting him. It seems that he chose this lifestyle in order to aid in the communication of his message. He desired to live out the Christian life in a way that was most easily understood and related to by his hearers. The Christian life, in Paul’s understanding, could be lived out in the everyday routine of life.

**Factors to bear in mind when considering Paul’s example**

We need to consider the factors that enabled Paul to engage in tent-making and also those features of tent-making itself which made it a suitable occupation for combining with missionary work.

**1. Paul was single.**

This gave him a flexibility which would not be possible for a married man with a family (1 Cor 7:32-35). He was able to work very long hours without sacrificing time with a wife and children. We do, however, also have an example of a couple who practised this trade

and engaged in missionary activity with Paul: Aquila and Priscilla. They appear to have moved their business to different centres: Corinth (Acts 18:3), Ephesus (Acts 18:18-26) and Rome (Rom 16:3).

**2. The Roman Empire brought certain advantages for a tent-making missionary.**

There was an infrastructure of roads that made travel fairly easy. Roman law was almost universal and Roman citizenship was a passport to any part of the empire. Greek and Latin were the languages of communication and commerce in most parts.

**3. As a tent-maker he was self-employed and could control the hours he worked.**

This was important if he were to be active as a missionary.

**4. Making tents did not require, of necessity, a long period in an area.**

Once the current orders were fulfilled, Paul could leave and set up elsewhere.

**5. Tent-making brought Paul into contact with people in the town.**

It was a public activity, commonly done in the market place, and presumably brought him exposure to the community.

What appears clear is that making tents was a good occupation for a missionary to engage in, for a number of reasons, and the Roman empire made it relatively easy for a missionary such as Paul to move from country to country and set up in business.

**Application of these principles to the modern world**

There is a danger of taking a specific situation and making a universal doctrine and so we should be careful not to lay down laws. Here, though, are some points to consider:

**1. Tent-making should be considered as a valid option.**

Too often missionary organisations have only turned to tent-making where a country is 'closed' to 'full-time' workers. It appears from looking at Paul's example that, in a given situation, tent-making might be the best method even if the country is open to missionaries and support is forthcoming. Are missionary organisations sufficiently flexible to respond to this possibility? Given the need of re-establishing

a witness in many areas of the rural areas of Britain, let alone establishing churches in other countries, should mission agencies and churches change to adapt to this style of work?

**2. Church-planters must be aware that they are communicating a lifestyle.**

If we set a realistic pattern for missionary service combined with secular employment, would this not encourage more dedication on the part of the local Christians and more involvement in evangelism? Would we also realise the potential of local believers moving to other areas as tent-making church-planters? Would we, by adopting this strategy, be setting a pattern for realistic organic growth of the indigenous church?

**3. Tent-making releases funds and reduces the strain on mission agencies or sending churches.**

Obviously, tent-making means that fewer funds are required to provide for the income of the missionary engaged in this way of working. An issue may be how a tent-making missionary continues to seek the extra support needed over and above that coming from his work. They may lack the time for fund-raising. In addition, people may not see the need for funding tent-makers.

**4. The nature of the 'tent-making' must be assessed.**

Here are some criteria to bear in mind:

- a. Does the church-planter have control over his working hours and his workload? Does he have flexibility in deciding which hours of the day to work?
- b. Does the work bring him into contact with a large number and wide range of people?
- c. Does it allow him to move relatively easily to another centre?
- d. Does it allow him to terminate his employment at fairly short notice if needed?
- e. Is it a job which is able to be shared with a co-worker?
- f. Is it considered to be a respectable trade locally? Is there a problem of disturbing the local community's 'closed shop' in a trade?

How near does a proposed type of work give a satisfactory answer to all these questions?

## **5. The feasibility of tent-making for foreign workers depends on various factors.**

Some of the factors are:

- knowledge of the language (fairly crucial in any case as a missionary!).
- knowledge of the legal situation and its differences from that in the home country.
- ability to obtain a work permit.

We saw how these factors were eased in Paul's situation as he worked within the Roman empire. We could draw parallels with the possibilities afforded by the European Union.

### **Considerations for and against tent-making today**

#### **FOR**

1. Tent-making is a viable alternative where the financial constraints upon small churches prevent them from fully supporting a gifted worker.
2. With increasing problems of visas for foreign workers such a strategy would go a long way to raising up a committed body of nationals with a vision for church-planting.
3. It would avoid the accusations made against 'full-time' religious teachers, that they are an unproductive segment of society. It needs to be stressed that 'full-time' service is honourable in the Lord's eyes and should be so in the church's eyes, but here I am thinking of the perception of the local community.
4. The church-planter is not as dependent on outside finance.
5. We show forth the Christian life as it relates to most people's every day experience; the work-place. In a pioneering community, where Christian principles are unknown, the church-planter is often the first Christian they get the opportunity to study closely.

#### **AGAINST**

1. Danger of getting one's priorities wrong. One can become absorbed in the business and forget the primary vision.
2. Our chosen profession may actually build barriers between us and those we want to reach.

3. Danger of a guilt trip resulting from trying to do too much. There is a clear need for each person to steward carefully his resources.
4. We may be open to criticism that we are taking jobs from local people. This depends on the nature of the work.

### **Some other financial considerations**

In the life-cycle of a church-plant it is important that the church as it forms shoulders some of the responsibility for supporting the church-planter. It will be natural under such circumstances for the missionary to increasingly rely upon that contribution which of course ends abruptly once he leaves and a local man is appointed. The dilemma that faces many missionaries is: do I stay on as the pastor long-term; look for another pastorate; or start again church-planting in another area? Church-planting involves distinct gifts, however, and we need a man who will plant a succession of churches. Tent-making can help to resolve this dilemma as that aspect of the work can increase or decrease as required, as we see in Paul's example.

### **Practical examples**

It may be surprising that I choose an example from a cult. In Ireland the Jehovah's Witnesses have practised this type of church-planting and tent-making combination. In Clonmel, as in many towns, they have a window-cleaning business covering both the town-centre business premises and the outlying housing estates. This work allows them to involve new missionaries immediately and the degree of flexibility makes it almost ideal. It is also a public activity giving them good exposure to the local population. The result is a largely self-supported missionary endeavour.

The advent of computers has increased the flexibility of working from a number of localities and one might consider a job such as website design. Here the freedom to re-locate is increased, though, on the downside, this type of work often precludes contact with the general public.

In Ireland, at one stage, we seriously considered the possibility of having a single lady worker attached to our team with hair-dressing skills. Equipped with the basic equipment and a small car she would be enabled to do home visits in the rural areas and the nature of the work would allow her to interact with customers.

## Final thoughts

We must realise that lifestyle is a challenge, not a burden! Most of the reasons I have come up with, given that the political and economic situation allows for tent-making, would point towards its being a very valid option with certain dangers to be avoided. It is not *the* answer to missions! I do believe it is an answer and a way forward for a much greater number of missionaries and church-planters. Each person needs to assess his abilities and his strength and their calling. Let us keep in mind the message that Jesus gave his disciples when he told them to leave their nets. He called them to leave secular work and become fishers of men.

*Phil Roberts is a trustee of RT and was a church-planting missionary for 18 years in Ireland. Whilst there he established Tentmaker Publications which is an application of the principles outlined above. He now pastors Hartshill Bible Church in Stoke-on-Trent.*

### New Books

We would like to bring the following new books to your our attention:

*Reformation Heritage Books:*

- Joel R. Beeke (ed.), *The Beauty & Glory of Christian Living*. This book consists of the addresses given at the 2013 Puritan Reformed Conference in Grand Rapids on the beauty and glory of Christian living. They are organised under three headings: 1) Christian Living in its Divine Roots, 2) Christian Living in its Human Branches, and 3) Christian Living in its Earthly Storms.
- J.V. Fesko, *Songs of a Suffering King. The Grand Hymn of Psalms 1-8*
- David P. Beaty, *An All-Surpassing Fellowship. Learning from Robert Murray M'Cheyne's Communion with God*
- George Swinnock, *The Blessed and Boundless God (a Puritan work on the attributes of God)*.
- Stanley D. Gale, *A Vine-Ripened Life. Spiritual Fruitfulness through Abiding in Christ*.

*EP Books:*

- Joan Ripley Smith, *George Muller* (in the popular Bitesize Biography series)
- Ann Benton, *Parenting Against the Tide*
- Maureen Wise, *With God all things are Possible* (the story of the author's work on Moldova)
- Dr. D. Eryl Davies, *Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones and Evangelicals in Wales: Bala Minister's Conferences 1955-2014*



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## Review Article

### Recovering the Gospel - a trilogy by Paul Washer

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by *John Palmer*

The Gospel's Power and Message.                      Paperback                      288 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-60178-195-6

The Gospel Call and True Conversion.                      Paperback                      200 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-60178-236-6

Gospel Assurance and Warnings.                      Paperback                      288 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-60178-294-6

Published by Reformation Heritage Books.

PAUL WASHER HAS DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS 'A FIVE-POINT SPURGEONIST'. HE HAS DEVELOPED A MINISTRY OF opposing the superficial and deficient semi-Pelagian understanding and preaching of the gospel so prevalent in the USA and in other countries whose evangelicalism is primarily influenced by it. This trilogy of books should certainly open the eyes of those in the UK and elsewhere who are comparatively sheltered from this.

These books were originally a series of sermons. In the series preface, printed in each book, he asserts that, 'Churches reduce the gospel message to a few creedal statements, teach that conversion is a mere human decision, and pronounce assurance of salvation over anyone who prays the sinner's prayer.' The books are written for preachers, as those who are stewards entrusted with the gospel. The style is lively and commands the attention.

In the first book, *The Gospel's Power and Message*, the author says, 'The gospel is not merely the introductory class to Christianity.' 'Not giving the gospel pre-eminence is to misunderstand it altogether.' The offence of the gospel is stressed. These are sermons mainly on 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 1:16, and Romans 3:23-7.

The background is the assumed common practice of teaching 'how-to' sermons based on worldly philosophy and therapeutic methods, to churches full of those who have been proclaimed Christians on inadequate grounds. If they find this 'preaching' helpful enough in overcoming the difficulties of this life, they will stay. If not, they will leave. 'It is possible that [someone]

could sit his entire life in the pew without ever hearing sermons dedicated to a proper and specific explanation of what was accomplished through Calvary and the empty tomb.’

There are many other striking sentences. To give one example: ‘We ought to be seeker-friendly, but we ought to realise this: there is only one seeker, and he is God.’

The exposition of the gospel is strong on the holiness of God, the depravity of man, and the wrath of God against sinners; and on Christ bearing this for his people (this is stressed). It is sad that there is need for such in a book written for evangelical preachers. However, if it is true that, ‘It is not uncommon to hear a preacher declare that the Father turned away from his Son because he could no longer bear to witness the suffering inflicted on him by the hands of wicked men,’ and ‘It is often said that the cup represented the cruel Roman cross and the torture that awaited him’, then such teaching is certainly necessary.

The second book, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*, begins by asserting that the gospel call is to ‘Repent and Believe the Gospel’. It is strong on repentance and on faith, and how these are continual marks of those in God’s kingdom, not just the means of entering it by a single mental act. He shows how believing in Christ ‘in the heart’ differs from praying the sinner’s prayer. Receiving Christ means receiving him who is both Saviour and Lord.

If the true seed is in the soul, it will bring forth fruit throughout life. ‘Jesus is not a ticket to heaven that a person purchases with a prayer, then hides in a pocket until he finally withdraws it at the moment of death to obtain entrance into heaven.’ True conversion leads to new people. The Christian is such because of God’s covenant which promises what he will do *in* as well as *for* us. ‘Our sanctification resulting from regeneration is evidence of our justification resulting from faith’— for that faith is a result of regeneration.

This is flatly denied by many. Churches, says the author, are filled with ungodly people because of a defective gospel of salvation from hell, not sin, with a view of the new birth as an act of man not God; and the pursuit of making the church like the world, and so failure to exercise biblical discipline.

The nature of a true church is a people who walk together obediently, in the unity of the Spirit and the fear of the Lord. However, many ‘churches’ are not like this at all. They ‘preach,’ not the Word, but methods of self-realisation as man replaces God as the focus of the church. Repentance and reformation are essential.

In the third book, *Gospel Assurance and Warnings*, the author sets out both to give true assurance to God's people and to warn the presumptuous unbeliever. He challenges throughout the false assurance of the 'carnal Christian', which flows from the teaching that one can receive Christ as Saviour but not as Lord.

He briefly expounds the main themes of 1 John, with its tests of the true believer: one who exhibits such evidences of grace as fellowship with God, ongoing confession of sin, obedience to God's commandments, Christlikeness, righteousness, love to believers, purification of self, overcoming the world and ongoing faith in Christ. Again, he contends that the same regenerating work of the Holy Spirit leads both to initial repentance and faith, and to a new life lived in the power of the Spirit.

This again is a challenge to the many churches where 'the glory of conversion has been diminished to nothing more than a human decision to follow Christ'. 'The doctrine of regeneration could be called the lost doctrine of contemporary evangelicalism.'

The author goes on to expound Matthew 7:13-27, where Jesus challenges his disciples as to which way they are on, and what foundation they are building upon. Professing Christians who have been assured that they are real believers are found among both the saved and the lost. 'Millions of people sit in church pews who are unconverted yet assured of their salvation because at one time they gave right answers to wrong questions.' They believe that they are sinners, and want to go to heaven, not hell. Yet they neither hate their sins nor love the God of heaven.

Inevitably in three books, some parts are better than others – the chapters vary from the good to the excellent. Because of the sermonic nature of the work, there is some repetition. There are the occasional faults caused by someone relying too much on a spell-checker: 'antidotes' for 'anecdotes' more than once.

Helpfully, as the author alludes throughout each sermon to many other scriptures, these are documented in the footnotes.

If Paul Washer is right, many in the USA and presumably elsewhere are playing at churches, and doing it very badly. Blind guides are leading the blind astray.

It would be good to put these books into the hands of young men entering the ministry. They are a useful check to even the most Reformed of pastors as to discerning any weakness in their preaching or practice. Highly recommended.

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## ‘Sharing the Love of Jesus’ – the Ministry of Caring For Life

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by *Jonathan Parkinson*

CARING FOR LIFE IS A CHRISTIAN CHARITY, ESTABLISHED TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS AGO, WITH THE MOTTO ‘SHARING the love of Jesus’, and with the specific purpose of: *‘Promoting the evangelical Christian faith in bringing the love and compassion of Christ Jesus to mankind through the relief in need of persons who are poor, have a disability or are otherwise in need’.*

So Caring For Life (CFL) is in every sense a missionary organisation, bringing the love and gospel of Christ to people who are in desperate need, very often people who have never been to church.

Yet the whole project began because homeless young men turned for help to a church where they had attended Sunday School as children living in a children’s home in Leeds. The charity was established by Peter Parkinson, then the pastor of Leeds Reformed Baptist Church, driven by biblical passages such as Matthew 25, and by Esther Smith, a member of the church who had initially introduced the children to church from a small children’s home, of which she was the ‘officer in charge’.

The work now encompasses two supported homes, the Being There housing support project, which cares for around 120 vulnerable people living in the community, and sixteen therapeutic daytime activity projects at Crag House Farm, the home of CFL. The ministry is unashamedly Christian and receives no government support for its work. The vast majority of the charity’s income comes from individual Christian people and churches, people who give maybe just a small amount each month, but who, crucially, pray. They pray for people like Jim:

*Jim was left in a children’s home at the age of three. His mum said she would come back for him, and he waited every day, staring out of the big window in the lounge. But she never did come back for him. She still hasn’t, and now Jim is in his late forties, full of anger and deeply affected by mental ill health. From the children’s home he was sent to numerous foster homes. None worked out. From there it was one quick move to prison, out again, suicide attempts, crime and back into prison; this is a ‘revolving door’ which entraps thousands of vulnerable adults.*

*But one probation officer referred Jim to Caring For Life, and we have supported him ever since, for more than twenty-five years. Caring For Life does what it says on the tin; it cares for life or for as long as the person wishes. And that makes all the difference!*

*Jim still hurts and he still lashes out; very often he still feels suicidal, but he has a real family at Caring For Life, a family from which he sometimes turns away, but who are always there. He has a home of his own, a CFL support worker and a place to be every day at Crag House Farm. He also has a Saviour! Praise God, Jim has come to know and love the Lord Jesus.*

CFL's housing support team is known as 'Being There' because they seek to simply 'be there' for people who are in need, even when there seems little else they can do.

If you happen to visit Caring For Life after dark and drive up the access road to Crag House Farm, you will see that the whole hilltop, Crag Hill, is lit up by the bright security lights which illuminate our car park area. These lights provide an unintentional testimony to the reality that our ministry is 'a light set on a hill', as we strive to bring the truth, the power and the light of the gospel to people who have lived in the most oppressive darkness all their lives.

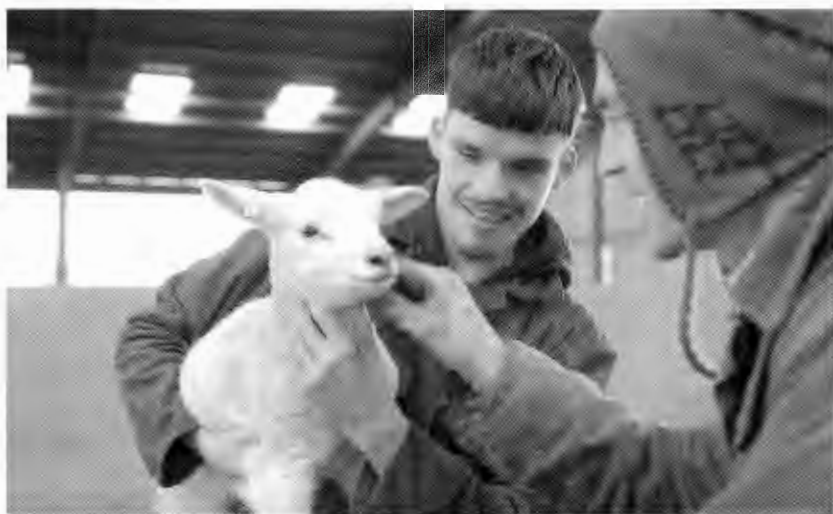
Many people who visit Crag House Farm, the home of Caring For Life, comment on how peaceful they begin to feel as they drive or walk up to the farm, into the rural setting. The farm does not always feel or sound peaceful for those working on site (!), but there is an undeniable beauty, peace and sense of the Lord's presence here. From this peaceful setting, lit up on a hill, the 'Being There' team go down into Leeds, into some of the poorest areas, the loneliest high-rise flats and the most despairing and terrifying of circumstances.

They take with them the love and light of the Lord Jesus, and they care for people like Izzie:

*Izzie was a troubled teenager and was rootless and often homeless, even as a child. Life became even more difficult as her teens passed, and she suffered unbearably.*

*When housed in an emergency hostel by the age of sixteen, a place where Izzie was literally terrified, Caring For Life became involved in Izzie's life and began the long journey of walking alongside this troubled and intensely angry young lady, through all that life was throwing at her, day by day.*

*After four years Izzie started to attend Bible studies run by CFL's housing support team, then to ask her support worker lots of questions about the Christian faith. Soon she asked to be taken to a church, and Izzie would sit in church, listening attentively, her face literally shining with eagerness to hear the gospel.*



*Farm animals have a wonderful therapeutic value to those who care for them.*

*Izzie is now a Christian, an enthusiastic, joyful young believer who was recently baptised and became a member of a local church, where she is deeply loved. Her problems continue, but Caring For Life and the church will continue to walk beside Izzie, day by day, yet with the assurance that Izzie is in Christ, and no one can tear her out of his hands.*

CFL's two homes provide safe and supported homes for the most vulnerable ladies and gentlemen, people who could not safely live alone. Here almost every resident has come to know Christ, for which we praise and thank God. All vulnerable adults, with varying needs such as learning disabilities, autism, severe psychological problems and physical disabilities, these precious people are growing in Christ and are true prayer warriors, with wonderful grace seen in their lives.

The various daytime therapeutic projects based at Crag House Farm provide a safe, constructive lifestyle for growing numbers of vulnerable adults each day, currently providing for more than eighty every week. Activities encompass agriculture, horticulture, woodwork, conservation, art and craft, music, drama, adult literacy, computer and media studies, butchery, a free-range poultry project, a mechanical project, an equestrian project, care of small mammals, conservation and a catering academy.

The variety of project choices helps people who have rarely felt of any value and have no sense of self-worth, to begin to flourish, as they feel needed for the first time in their lives. The friendly, welcoming atmosphere on the farm

gradually draws in those who are nervous. Each day begins with a time of sharing and then prayer, and through this simple witness, many gradually begin to ask questions about who God is. Nothing is forced or required of them, but through sharing the love of Jesus in the most down-to-earth and practical ways, we are seeing growing numbers attending Bible studies, coming along to church and professing Christ.

In recent years, individual Christian people have given significant capital support to enable the purchase of land to extend the farm's grazing for livestock, silage and hay production and also a beautiful conservation project known as 'Care in Creation'. The Adult Learning and Arts Centre, the Little Granary Coffee Shop, the Meat Room and the Egg Room, were all enabled to be built by deeply generous support from Christian individuals, as was the laying of the entrance road. Social enterprises were established, again supported by Christian individuals or companies, which funded the beautiful restoration of a historic barn into the Granary Restaurant and Farm Shop, and the CFL Nurseries.

Looking back, a tapestry of sacrificial Christian giving has enabled these ventures to be launched, and it is hoped that the social enterprises will contribute increasingly to CFL's work in the future.

Yet the daily Christian pastoral ministry, with its relentless, never failing, loving outreach, very much frontline evangelism, is sustained by Christian people who give with love, surrounding that gift with prayer.

CFL is overwhelmed by requests for help. The need for more homes is overwhelming and the Trust's CEO, Peter Parkinson, has a vision for a care village, in which people's needs for a safe home, independence, support, multiple and changing care needs, and above all compassionate Christian care, can all be met.

So many have been rescued from the most horrifying of circumstances. So many have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the glorious light of the gospel. To God be all the glory.

CFL is seeking Christian people to support this ministry, which is transforming lives, by God's grace.

For more information, to request a presentation at your church, or to become a supporter, please contact Pam Parkinson at: Caring For Life, Crag House Farm, Otley Old Road, Crag Hill, Cookridge, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 7NH. Telephone 0113 2303600, or email [pam.parkinson@caringforlife.co.uk](mailto:pam.parkinson@caringforlife.co.uk). Visit our website on [www.caringforlife.co.uk](http://www.caringforlife.co.uk)

*Jonathan Parkinson is the Chief Executive Officer at CFL.*

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## APC Church Sponsorship Programme

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*by Irving Steggle*

**A**LREADY THIS YEAR AROUND 1600 PASTORS AND BIBLE TEACHERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA HAVE BENEFITED FROM the books and lectures at African Pastors' Conferences – and there are still 8 more of the 42 to be run. Many of these pastors are minimally trained and a frighteningly high proportion are hearing for the first time the basic truths of the gospel and the nature of biblical preaching. It has been encouraging to see the excitement of men discovering truth with comments like 'Our men must hear more of this new teaching' even when the teaching has been on preaching Christ and him crucified!

As in all true gospel work we face multiple challenges and just occasionally even outright resistance from men we are trying to help, but the norm is a high level of acceptance and a desire for improvement in their ministries. Some of the challenges are logistical, with problems of getting books across borders, poor local organisation, vehicle breakdowns and inadequate facilities. Through it all we have to retain the vision of what we are trying to do, namely be used by the Spirit of Christ in transforming pastors' attitudes to the preaching of God's Word, so that local churches and whole communities are transformed. Africa is a needy continent and in many areas suffers from a drought of the Word of God as did Israel when Elijah was not on the scene. The once-a-year conference that most of the c2000 men attend needs to be supplemented by follow-up meetings and intensive prayer for individual pastors and also groups in a particular area.

To facilitate this we are proposing to set up a 'Sponsor a Conference' or 'Sponsor a Conference Run of 3 or 4 Conferences' system, whereby an individual church can take some level of ownership of particular conferences. This would involve commitment to pay for the conference, giving towards the cost of the conference, contact with individual pastors who attended the conference and gaining more understanding of the local situation. As APC we would produce for interested churches a list of conferences with approximate running costs, a history of past attendances and number of books bought: after a conference we would produce a delegate list if possible, highlighting men who could be contacted by a supporting church. Hopefully links will be made with pastors and their churches which could develop into a broader partnership in the gospel.



It is important to emphasise that the domestic costs of a conference (food and accommodation) are met by the local conference organiser through the delegate's registration fee. APC costs are the travel costs for the speakers and purchase and carriage of the books. The doctrinal basis of APC is the historical Reformed Confessions of Faith, and both teaching and books offered must conform to this confessional base – however all that is required of delegates is that they believe in the inerrancy of Scripture which must be the sole basis of their teaching, ministry and governance in the local church.

Please pray that our plans may be transmuted into God's glory through faithful preaching about Christ. We very much hope that we will get sufficient information out by the beginning of October for individual local churches (or indeed individual Christians) to choose a conference or more for which they could take responsibility and ownership. Already there is a power point presentation which can be sent to any interested churches. We would welcome visits to conferences by members of individual supporting churches wherever in the world their lampstand has been placed.

Irving Steggles – Director of APC in Republic of South Africa.

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## News

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### Cameroon

Our brother John Atembe writes the following:

In our day when many lives are perishing through crime and violence, there is a great push for self-defence through ownership and use of guns and other weapons. But I believe that the need of the hour is for self-deliverance through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is important and very urgent for us to reach the world, preaching 'the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes' (Rom 1:16).

We urgently need your prayers for the roofing of our house of prayer. We have completed the building of the walls but the roofing remains to be done and this needs 150 sheets of 4 metres zinc. This is a very big burden to us because we have used all our finances on the construction of the walls and since the walls are built with bricks and the rains are fast coming we are afraid of demolition. Please take our burden to Jesus at the throne of grace (Heb 4:16). If the Lord inclines your heart to give us assistance we shall rejoice and praise the Lord.

## Ukraine

Some extracts from a report recently sent by those working there tell us a little about the tragic situation in Ukraine:

As I sit here today at my kitchen table in England, I can hardly believe that the two recent weeks of work with refugees in Ukraine was actually real. It seems so far removed from our stable lives here. Yet the war that is going on is very real, and so are the tragic human consequences. I saw so many broken lives and so much pain in people's eyes over those two weeks; it's hard even to tell a fraction of their story.

We heard that many of the refugees are placed at the out-of-town summer camps around the edge of the city. So I joined one of the local pastors, who had been travelling from camp to camp searching for such refugee groups and bringing them food and clothes that they need. I am struggling to put into words what we have seen. As we walked in, there looked back at us dozens of hungry and tired faces, adults, children, young and old – all of them in this one big room, with beds standing in a row down both sides of the room against the walls. Their eyes looked lost and worried. Yes, we could bring food for their bodies, but where to begin to help their souls?

Then I went to another refugee camp. There are 300 people there, who have been living in wooden sheds for weeks now. One of the local evangelical churches is helping them there. People bring food and clothing and on the Sunday before I arrived they had just started to organise something for the children, games and Bible stories. I found out that there are a few new-born babies there. So we packed seven bags of essentials specifically for these families with the babies and gave them to the mothers. They took the bags, looking at me with such fear... and said nothing... Only later did I find out why. The reason was that in this particular camp most of the refugees are pro-Russian. Although they too had fled the fighting in nearby regions, they have believed all the Russian propaganda about Ukrainians, which is utterly false. Some of the non-Christian Ukrainian volunteers had refused to help these people, as they were 'the enemy' to them, due to the war. But the Christians keep helping them. 'We are trying to show Christ's love to people that actually think we are going to kill their children – this is the hardest part of it all,' one Christian volunteer said to me that day as I told him that I had gone to this camp.

Do pray for them, and thousands like them, that they will find Christ and be able to build a solid foundation for their lives now even in the midst of ruins.

*It is possible to send financial help to this relief work in Ukraine. Please contact the editor for details.*

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**Bound volumes are available:** Please enquire from Frederick Hodgson about availability and prices.

**Donations to APC:** These should be sent to Phil Roberts, 121 Hartshill Road, Hartshill, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7LU. Cheques should be made out to 'African Pastors' Conferences'. Could UK donors please let Phil Roberts know if they intend to use gift aid?

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| 31. <b>Review Article — Recovering the Gospel</b> | John Palmer        |
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| 38. <b>APC Church Sponsorship Programme</b>       | Irving Steggles    |
| 39. <b>News</b>                                   |                    |