

# REFORM- ATION TODAY '79



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*The above photo includes some of the principal personalities mentioned in the articles on the Leicester Conference. It is published by courtesy of the Banner of Truth and was taken on April 13th, 1973 in Edinburgh at the time when the Banner moved their headquarters from Chiltern Street in London to The Grey House, 3 Murrayfield Road, EDINBURGH.*

*Starting from the left in the front row we have Mr. Geoffrey Williams, founder of the Evangelical Library in London and his wife, Donald MacLeod and his wife, Gordon Hawkins, Mrs. Iain Murray and her husband, Ernest Reisinger, Prof. John Murray, Mr. Grier, Mrs. Hulse, Roger Irwin, Achille Blaize, Al Martin, Mrs. MacLeod and her husband. Then from the right, directly above Mrs. Hulse her husband, Mrs. Elizabeth Tallach, Mr. John W. H. Brooks, Sydney Norton of Oxford, Mr. S. M. Houghton (senior editor for Banner books), Geoff Thomas, Roger Hodgkinson, Mrs. Reeve and her husband Len. Then the top row from left to right, Paul Helm and his wife, Humphrey Mildred (who, trustees apart, is the longest serving member of the Banner), Mrs. John J. Murray, Mr. Ian Barter, Mr. John J. Murray (who is now a free church minister in Scotland), Mervyn Barter and Mr. Bruce Hunt and his wife.*

# Editorial

## *Roy Joslin and his writings*

'Urban Harvest' is the title that has been chosen for the material being assembled for a book by Pastor Roy Joslin of Walworth, London. The most recent chapter with the title, 'Testing and Evangelism' has been set in type and runs to twenty-three pages. There could hardly be a more relevant or urgent subject. It was our design to publish a sample of this chapter in this issue but shortage of funds prevents us extending the size of the magazine and it must wait. By next time we expect a further chapter from Pastor Joslin and will doubtless be much exercised in mind as to which extract to put in the magazine as a sample of the rest.

## *The Carey Conference, Cardiff, January 1-4, 1980*

Donald MacLeod and Achille Blaize have agreed to preach at the forthcoming conference. A number of practical subjects are to be handled such as Trade Unionism and its attendant problems by Stuart Olyott, Liberation Theology by David Kingdon, Marriage and Divorce by Geoff Thomas and the principles of Bible translation (especially as they affect the NIV) by Bob Sheehan. Pastor Arnold Dallimore of Canada will also contribute (see 'local news' page 32).

## *Pagination and printing errors in the last issue, Reformation Today 49*

It is estimated that due to a fault in the folding and collating machine from two to three per cent of the last issue was incorrectly paginated. It can be spotted immediately because the first page should begin with the editorial but on the defective copies a double column page faces the reader for page one. Please destroy your faulty copies and write to us for replacements. Our apologies for inconvenience caused.

Somehow gobbledegook resulted in the first sentence of the last paragraph of page 23 (RT 49). Instead of that sentence read, 'The over-ruling hand of God was evidenced in a remarkable way in the business firm of one of the members'.

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## *Cover picture*

*Toronto Baptist Seminary is located downtown in Canada's largest and most progressive city. Wedded to Jarvis Street Baptist Church many opportunities confront the seminary student.*

*Here some of the students are gathered after one of the editor's special lectures. Among the group shown are Tim Tozer and Tom Rush from Michigan, Vernon Allen from Jamaica, Marie Richardson from the Bahamas, Marc Schoni from Switzerland and Epiphane Joseph from St. Lucia. The last three were sent by seminary graduates.*

*(continued on page 32)*

*This is the first of three articles by Pastor Herbert Carson of Bangor, N. Ireland. The second is on deaconesses and the third on 'Widows and their ministry'.*

## The Role of the Deacons

ON THE SUBJECT OF ELDERS MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN, MUCH DISCUSSION has taken place, and in many churches definite steps have been taken to establish an eldership. But the steps are much less definite, and the arguments much less assured when the issue is the office of the deacon. Julian Charley sums up this condition of mind in his article in the International Dictionary of the Christian Church: there is, he says, referring to deacons 'widespread uncertainty concerning their role'.

That is certainly true. In some cases they are virtually treated as elders as far as their actual functioning is concerned. In others they may be little more than a blend of finance and building committees. But what their task is in the church, and what their relationship is to the elders, remain undefined.

### *The ministry of deacons*

There are three Greek words in the New Testament referring to this particular ministry, diakonos, diakonia and diakonein, which we may translate with a bald literalism deacon, diaconate and deaconing. Naturally enough, such crude literalism does not appear in English translations which vary their rendering of the words. So we may have 'servant' or 'minister', 'service' or 'ministry', and 'serving' or 'ministering'. The snag for the reader who does not know the underlying Greek words, is that he may not appreciate that it is still the word diakonos or one of its cognates which is being used. When he reads in Romans 13:4 for example, that, the ruler is 'God's minister', he may not realise that it is literally 'God's deacon'.

But there is a further surprise in store, and it is one which in fact causes the difficulty! It is that while one or other of the group of words is used about one hundred times in the New Testament, in only three instances is the application to a specific church office quite clear, and these references are found in two passages, Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In the overwhelming number of cases the terms refer, not to a specific office, but to various kinds of service or to particular people serving in varied capacities either inside or outside the church.

This does not mean that we are left floundering as we attempt to understand Paul's greeting to the church at Philippi 'with the overseers and deacons', or his outline in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 of the qualifications of a deacon. In fact the more general aspects of ministry help us to a right



interpretation of the terms used, and so help us to understand their role in describing the ministry within the church. So we begin our study of the deacon's role by examining the general usage of the terms in the New Testament.

### *The use of the terms*

The basic meaning of the word diakonos is that of the table waiter. So it is applied to the servants at Cana of Galilee who were employed to wait on the guests. The verb is used by Martha in her protest to Jesus that Mary had left her 'to serve (diakonein) alone' (Luke 10:40). Jesus employs the verb when he contrasts the one who sits at table and the one who serves' (Luke 22:26-28).

This basic idea of waiting at table is deeply embedded in the words and is sometimes seen even in more general usage. Thus, in Jesus' parable of the marriage feast (Matt. 22:1-13) the servants of the king who eject the man who had no wedding garment, were clearly table waiters—the R.S.V. and N.I.V. translate the word 'attendants'.

Emerging from this basic meaning there is a more general application to various kinds of service. So Jesus uses the words both of the faithful disciple and of himself: 'whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (diakonos) . . . for even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve'—both times diakonein is used (Mark 10:43-45). The twelve had a diaconate entrusted to them, and Judas having forfeited his place in this ministry is replaced by Matthias (Acts 1:17, 25). Paul magnifies his own diaconate (Rom. 11:13) and refers to Apollos and himself as deacons through whom the Corinthians believed (1 Cor. 3:5). The believer is called on to be the deacon of all (Mark 9:35). The women (Matt. 27:55) ministered (diakonein) to Jesus; and Simon's mother-in-law ministered to the company after her recovery (Mark 1:31). The terms are applied to a widespread ministry covering not only the apostles, as we have already seen, but evangelists—Timothy in 1 Thessalonians 3:2 is God's deacon; missionaries such as Epaphras (Col. 1:7), and Tychicus (Col. 4:7), both of whom are deacons, and the former of whom shares this 'diaconate' with Paul.

To sum up this very brief survey of some of the occurrences of the terms in the New Testament, there is the continuing thought of waiting at table merging with the more general conception of serving in various capacities in the fellowship. It is with this background of general usage that we can turn to the more specialised use of the words.

### *The church office*

Apart from Philippians 1 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, there are two occurrences where the terms have acquired a more specific connotation. In Romans

12:7 diakonia is listed among the charismata. Thus, while there is a diakonia in which every Christian is expected to be involved, there is a special ministry for the exercise of which some believers are specially endowed by the Holy Spirit. This same thought appears in 1 Peter 4:10 though with a slightly different emphasis, in that it is a varied ministry which is in view. It is however linked in its particular exercise to the charisma of the Spirit.

This linking of diakonia with charisma, of specific ministry with a particular spiritual endowment, brings us to the two passages dealing with church office. But before we deal with them we must refer to Acts 6 for it is often presented as virtually the institution of the diaconate. While the word deacon is not used, the men elected have the task of serving (diakonein) tables. Here it might seem is the basic meaning of the word linked to the new office being inaugurated.

There are however difficulties in this interpretation which, I believe, militate against it. The title of deacon is not given to the seven, and as we have seen, the verb can be used much more generally without implying a church office. Then again, the contrast is not between deacons who serve tables, and elders who minister the word, but between these seven and the quite unique group of 'the Twelve' who had a normative ministry in the church which they must not leave. Furthermore Stephen is not simply a server of tables, but is one of the powerful preachers of the Jerusalem church. Philip also is clearly a preacher, and in Acts 21:8 is designated as an evangelist. Furthermore, we may recall that the Apostle Paul engaged in a ministry of almsgiving to the poor in Judaea but such a diakonia did not mean that he was a deacon in the technical sense.

However in Philippians 1:1 and 1 Timothy 3:8, 13 it is quite clear, without any ambiguity, that we are dealing with the ecclesiastical office of the diaconate. In Paul's greeting to the church at Philippi, the overseers and the deacons are bracketed together in such a way, that it would seem to be a legitimate deduction that the deacons are there to assist the overseers in the discharge of their task of pastoral oversight. This kind of auxiliary pastoral ministry is perhaps reflected in a similar usage elsewhere, where Timothy and Erastus are Paul's deacons in sharing his evangelistic activity (Acts 19:22) a role also fulfilled by Epaphras who is Paul's fellow worker and Christ's deacon (Col. 1:7).

### *Qualifications*

The instructions about the deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 refer to their qualifications rather than to their function. It is abundantly clear that in this matter they did not occupy some secondary position, for the demands are pitched as high as those for elders, and indeed in some case they share the same requirements. Thus they are to be serious men (v. 8) for you cannot respect a trifle, and deacons are worthy of respect.

Ignatius reflects this attitude in his Epistle to the Smyrnaeans written about 107 A.D.: 'Reverence the deacons as the commandment of God' (Chapter 8). Then again they are not to be double tongued, saying one thing to your face and another behind your back, taking one line with one member or one group in the church and a different line with others.

Like the elders they must be free of a love of money; must not be addicted to much wine; must not be contentious; must hold firmly to the orthodox faith. Like the elders too who must not be recent converts (v. 13) the deacons must first be tested. They must therefore be approved by the church before being elected to office (v. 10). While the requirement for the elders—'able to teach'—is not laid down for the deacons, it seems in the total context of 1 Timothy 3 that they are engaged in a ministry which is closely linked with that of the elders.

### *The caring ministry*

If we root the special diakonia of the deacons in the context of the general diakonia of the whole church, we may conclude that it is the task of the deacons to focus and direct the ministry of the believers. The whole church is to be a ministering fellowship, with a mutual sympathy which leads not only to spiritual concern, but to practical care. The deacons are to be in the van of this caring ministry, are to stimulate the members in it, and are to open up avenues for members to exercise this ministry of compassion.

The basic meaning of the term deacon is still there, and part of their ministry will be that of dealing with the practical affairs of the congregation, and seeing to the administration of its finances in a God honouring way. So whether it is serving on a building committee, or dealing with a benevolent fund, whether counting the collections or disbursing gifts to missionaries, they will be ready to be table waiters in the Lord's household.

Calvin in his comments on Romans 12:8 (see Institutes iv. 3:9) deduces that Paul is referring to two classes of deacons, those who administered the money for the poor, and those who actually took care of the poor. While it may seem to be reading too much into the passage to see two classes of deacons, it does seem legitimate to see two aspects of their practical ministry. Thus not every deacon is called to be on the finance committee, for some would be disastrous misfits there, but all are called to apply wisely the money given by the congregation. They must also see to other mundane, but nonetheless important aspects of caring. There are tasks in which money is not involved but care is needed; and the deacons should be in the forefront of seeing that the older member with a husband or wife in hospital has transport provided; that in a cold winter the old person's coal is brought in and his taps kept free of ice; that his garden is kept free of weeds. The scope is wide and loving care is needed. The deacons should be leaders in all this as they stir the church to action by their own example.

*(continued at foot of page 6)*

*Pastor John Campbell, Riverton Baptist Church, Western Australia, spoke on this subject at the recent Carey Conference. He is a visiting lecturer in Theology and History at the Western Australian Baptist College and is chairman of the West Australian Baptist Ministers Fraternal.*

## Church Alive !

### **The Need for Contemporaneity**

ONE SATURDAY AT A REFORMED BAPTIST conference, Pastor Bill Jones gave a rousing paper on 'The Reformed Church Always Reforming'. In church the next day he sang Isaac Watts' great hymns, read from the AV and conducted worship according to a strictly controlled, eminently predictable, clergy-dominated format.

His sermon on 'The Christian family' was excellent, but those with problems and queries knew that there would be no opportunity during the week to share their scars, ask their questions or express their doubts in a group situation.

Pastor Jones saw little connection between Saturday's address and Sunday's ministry. His church, like many traditional Reformed Baptist churches, has lost some members to the charismatic movement. Feeling grieved and threatened, the elders have clamped down on the church. They rightly condemn charismatic errors, yet deep down some frustrated members feel that their own church life lacks, well, something. But they are not quite sure what it is . . .

This description is uncomfortably close to the mark for numerous churches. Many see no way forward, because there seem to be only two options.

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### **THE ROLE OF DEACONS** *(continued from previous page)*

But they are not only involved in this area of practical administration and compassionate ministry, for they are sharing with the elders in the task of building up the church. In the early church this was understood to involve visitation and presumably, allied with this, spiritual counselling. Certainly the requirements of 1 Timothy 3 imply a diaconate which does more than open and close doors, or put away the hymn books after the service. It involves whatever ministry may be required in visiting the sick or in encouraging the believers to discharge their own ministry.

There is obviously a distinction between elders and deacons. The Elders are the overseers of the flock and as such have been set by the Lord to rule the congregation, and to teach the Word with authority. But this distinction must not be pressed too far. The deacons are closely knit to the elders. They will acknowledge the authority of the elders and will be ready to submit to it. But at the same time they will aim to enlarge the exercise of the elders' pastoral care by committing themselves to a widespread ministry in which practical administration, financial affairs, compassionate concern and general pastoral care will blend into a pattern of fruitful service.



One is to surrender to charismatic excesses in the search for a satisfying church lifestyle, but discerning critics realise that this leads to throwing out the baby with the bathwater! The only alternative appears to consist of bolstering up traditional approaches and structures, yet such a solution often reflects more a siege mentality than a genuine, biblical creativity.

I contend that there is a middle way, a road increasingly being trodden by some reformed men in Australian churches. In this fast-moving world there are two specific dangers to avoid if we are to follow the New Testament pattern of ministry.

One danger is the worship of *relevance*. Acts 17:19-21 captures this cult of relevance. The Athenians gave themselves 'to spend their time in nothing other than telling or hearing something new'. Modern evangelicals compete to be the first on to the latest bandwagon, but reformed men are rarely susceptible to this modern mood of instability.

The other extreme is more dangerous to us. It is the worship of *tradition*. Numbers 21:6-9 and 2 Kings 18:4 provide unusual insight into this problem. The once glorious symbol of deliverance (Moses' bronze serpent) had become an object of ongoing idol worship. Hezekiah (the Reformer!) stripped it of its mystique gathered across the centuries, called it what it was ('a thing of brass') and destroyed it. Likewise there may be some traditions that once fulfilled significant functions in church life which are now retained only through custom and may even hinder our development.

I am not adopting the stance of an idol-breaker, but we must examine things to which we may be burning incense. An order of service? One style of church music? A church

building? (e.g. 'It must never close down,' or 'Prayer groups can't meet in homes.') A Bible version? (Tyndale was martyred in his effort to provide a translation in contemporary idiom. We honour dead prophets, but do we heed living ones?). Service times? Favourite ideas or fringe emphases? A church constitution? Some eminent leader? (e.g. 'The Doctor says...') A Confession of Faith? (What about a new one speaking to issues of neoorthodoxy, charismatic ideas and modern ethical issues?) We must neither absolutise the past nor despise it, but learn from it as we face the tasks of the present.

Our goal, then, is both to maintain biblical essentials and to review cultural expressions. In order to adopt such an open approach, we may have to be threatened by new ideas, be criticised by fellow Calvinists, and struggle against acquired prejudices ('can any good thing come out of Nazareth?')! God willing, in his grace we may find ourselves and our churches led out into a large place.

What am I really saying? I am *not* proposing a departure from any biblical, reformed norm. I am simply warning Pastor Bill Jones that a negative response to the charismatic threat is not sufficient. He needs to ask *why* they can successfully steal his sheep! Is it just by satanic delusion, or is such a defection symptomatic of weaknesses in reformed church life?

We must take seriously the appeal of the charismatics if our church life is to grow rather than decline.

Firstly, there is the appeal of *community*. Much of the institutional church has become arthritic and impersonal. Orthodoxy (right thinking) is not always accompanied by orthopraxis (right living). This has led to frustration because biblical images of

the church (e.g. family, body) have remained largely unrealised. Reformed circles have sometimes intellectualised the Gospel to the neglect of fellowship. Charismatics come along and offer their version of warmth and love to a depersonalised society. Why cannot we do the same, even more, holding as we do to 'gathered church' ecclesiology?

My own church has several orderly home fellowship groups whose ministry has facilitated much Christian growth and evangelism. These groups offer fellowship, prayer and Bible study. Our evening services often include a 'Body-life' segment, and both of these ministry forms provide much claimed by the charismatics (e.g. guided spontaneity; loving concern in a continuing group context) but without the excesses of disorder or 'tonguespeaking'.

Secondly, we need to face the challenge of *flexibility*. Are we prepared to review the relationship between structure and need? Ralph Neighbour's book *The Seven Last Words of The Church* ('We never did it that way before') epitomises only one of many modern calls for flexibility. A new openness need not be synonymous with a thoughtless acceptance of gimmicks. Some traditional programmes no longer fulfil their original functions, and they could be profitably treated as the booster stage of a rocket that now must drop away if the satellite is to reach orbit!

Lastly, there is the charismatic appeal of *ministry*. They claim to have rediscovered the ministry of gifts with its twin implications of lay ministry and active congregational worship. Why is it that Pastor Bill Jones only preaches from 1 Corinthians chapters 12-14 when he needs to refute false teaching? If through careful exegesis of 1 Corinthians and Ephesians chapter 4 we develop a positive concept of

gifts, and earnestly apply it to our church life as God leads, then we will find startling changes in our ministry.

Pastors will be freed from false expectations about ministry in areas for which they aren't gifted or called. Laymen will find release as their gifts and calling are evoked, discovered and trained by discerning pastors. Not only will an unhealthy clericalism recede, but our worship services will be enriched by the significant participation of laymen. This presupposes that such varied ministries are exercised by godly laymen whose concern is for the orderly edification of the church.

Such a recovery of biblical concept will enhance our total church life and complement our preaching, without involving a loss of pastoral leadership or making concessions to extreme charismatic extravagance!

In short, the Charismatics claim *contemporaneity* in their application of the Bible to the modern world. They are writing new hymns, exercising relative freedom in their services, and offering excitement and 'life' when surrounding churches seem dead. For biblical reasons I reject most doctrinaire charismatic foundations (e.g. 'spirit baptism' as a second experience), but I grieve that so many reformed men seem content to dismiss charismatic claims from a position of 'dead' orthodoxy. We cannot ignore the exegetical task before us, with all its implications for life and ministry.

If God is pleased to send a revival in his sovereign favour, I do not think it will come through achievement-oriented charismatics. But could he also pass us by because we have ears but hear not? Orthodoxy is essential, but it is not enough. We need the authentication that only the Holy Spirit can give,

# The Merits and Limits of Contemporaneity

By Erroll Hulse

TO ILLUSTRATE THE SENSITIVE NATURE of the subject, I think of a minister who this year instructed his people with regard to the principles of Bible translation and laid out before them the advantages of the N.I.V. Then one Sunday morning he read from that contemporary translation. One of his deacons stamped out of the church in protest and did not return that day!

The issue is not an easy one. Let me give you another illustration. The Sussex coast is one of the most popular areas of Britain for retirement. Large congregations consisting mainly of elderly, retired people are common all along the coast. Here is a body of people accustomed to the evangelical traditions of a lifetime. They are in no mood to be regimented into something different now. Worship should form the most important part of life for us all, but especially is this the case in advanced and mature believers as they make their final preparations for eternity. Changes need to be introduced gently and every consideration given to the feelings of the veteran saints.

The Bible does not have one word to say about contemporaneity because it is itself always contemporary. Every Christian who is burdened for souls will be relevant, so relevant that nobody will even notice what version of the Bible he is using. But the Bible has many passages like Ephesians 4 which counsel patience and forbearance because it is not only the issue of contemporaneity we face but increasingly difficult cultural and racial problems.

## *The necessity of contemporaneity*

John Campbell has struck a needful note. Eighteen months ago we lost nine members of our church who objected, among other things, to the contemporaneity of a new hymn book (*Christian Hymns*) and more strongly to the use of *Psalm Praise* which we use with discrimination. Also, offence was caused through commending translations other than the Authorized King James Version of 1611. We have not lost any to the Charismatic Movement but could do so for reasons of faith more complex than the straightforward issue of modernity. A Reformed ministry never in itself provides a guarantee that members will be immovable. If in the New Testament we read of those who went off in a variety of directions, who are we to think that we will be immune to such things, especially in an era of revolution and uncertainty like our own?

I regard contemporaneity as necessary because to me it is synonymous with relevance. For instance, we badly need contemporary church architecture (which will still have the pulpit in the central position). To me the issue is of plain common sense. Only an eccentric would opt for old barns as churches, dull services, boring preaching, repetitive clichés and inflexible forms. Not to give a warm welcome to visitors, not to be hospitable, not to be efficient—all that spells failure. Antiquated forms, morbidity, affected or stilted speech, aloofness, cultish separatism from all but the strictest of the orthodox—anyone with a modicum of common sense must surely see the futility of such things.

### *Contemporaneity at its highest and best*

When a church has been in the doldrums for decades, perhaps pastorless and totally inept in evangelism, it is tremendous when a lively pastor is called who is used to make everything hum. It is like life from the dead. The worship is joyful and the singing bright. Warmth and friendship overflow to all around. We would esteem that that should be a normal situation. After all, the worship aspect apart, you can get a similar degree of warmth and friendship in a variety of worldly places. That is a sobering fact which reminds us that we must not expect too much of contemporaneity.

### *The limits of contemporaneity*

John Campbell mentions the danger of the worship of relevance or contemporaneity. He lives in a culture midway between the stern traditionalism of old English Protestantism which we have in Britain, and the ultra-contemporaneity of entertainment evangelism in America where churches sometimes compete with each other by planning elaborate programmes consisting of solos, duets, groups, testimonies—the whole being geared to attract and hold people and give them a happy, pleasant, easy, comfortable time. Once we enter upon such competitions, where do we draw the line? We could even go so far as to have a ten pound note secreted under a different seat at every service to attract outsiders to come with that possible reward for their presence in mind.

Whether we like it or not, definite restraints are placed upon us with regard to the corporate worship of God, great stress being laid by Scripture on this subject and its nature. Unquestionably the whole congregation is to be involved in looking *to God*, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in love, adoration and joy. His praises

are to be sung joyfully and in harmony together. We are not sung to. We sing *to God*. We all pray to God, not to each other. Whether led by one or more it is still a corporate act of worship. We all concentrate as the Scriptures are read publicly, an act in which Christ himself engaged (Luke 4:17). We are all united in hearing the Word of God preached when the Lord himself speaks to his assembled people. According to Scripture, preaching has the prominent place in our corporate worship. This was so with Moses, Joshua, Nehemiah, with Christ and his apostles.

We are free to vary the shape of these prescribed forms of worship but not free to add items of entertainment to them. What was the Reformation all about? Among other things it was a mighty movement of revulsion against all the clap-trap and paraphernalia that had obliterated the true worship of God—tapers, candles, torches, processions, vestments, mitres, orbs, chasubles, pictures, images, stained glass, statues, the confessional, the unintelligibility of Latin, sacred water, crossings and bowings. Central to it all was the build-up and performance of the resacrifice of an already sacrificed Christ in the mass, the ringing of a bell, the raising of the host, the uplifted countenances of the altar boys, the gorgeous garments of the sacrificing priest, the shining silver plate—a statue of Mary on one side and Joseph on the other—and so we could go on. And who required all this? And who required of Jeroboam a golden calf to assist in the worship of God?

Shall we now begin to add our items? Contemporaneity has its limits. Musical accompaniment should not take the limelight or have the prominence. Guitars form a poor substitute for an organ. In any case they are already out of date. Synthesised music is the in thing. If we are to embark on

entertainment the sky is the limit. If we follow such a course we will have to compete with the world. Their musicians and comperes are practising constantly. They are professional. Some evangelical churches have managed to produce orchestras. The expense and time involved have been heavy. Eventually worshippers have complained that more service and homage has been given to the performance and the performers than to God. Christians can enjoy professional orchestras in action at any time. Why is it necessary to introduce them into the worship of God? *Ethelothreskia* in Colossians 2:23 means 'self-imposed worship'. Calvin calls it self-invented worship. We are forbidden to invent forms and parade them in front of the congregation.

What about evangelistic rallies? Surely this is *the* place for a fantastic show of talent and an impressive performance? Is this not a golden opportunity to show the world that we are the 'in' people, the 'with-it' ones! We have discovered that a lot of hard thought and preparation is needed to ensure that such meetings are well presented. We are only beginning to grapple with this problem. At the most recent Mid-Sussex Rally, Paul Bassett of Melbourne Hall, Leicester, was the visiting speaker. I had to decide what colour platform light should be used in the contemporary building fully equipped with such details. Green would make him look sea-sick, pink might make him look effeminate, a combination might prove a disaster, so I opted for brown!

We simply have to face up squarely to the fact that the Scriptures do restrict us and do place limitations upon us. There is very good reason for this. Too easily we place our confidence in human contrivances and influences other than spiritual ones. What is the power we seek, is it not the power of

regeneration which God promises to give through preaching (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18)? How should that preaching be presented? Certainly not against a background of morbidity. Nor do we need some flashy compere dancing on to the stage, clutching his microphone, the technicolour lights flashing upon his raven black hair as he electrifies us with his beaming personality. Nor do we encourage what I once unexpectedly witnessed before a sermon at a special meeting, which was four females singing and dancing before the congregation displaying their legs and hips in such a way that it took some time to regain the attention of the males in the front rows.

How do we line up Paul's 'fear and trembling' and not coming with a show of power or with eloquent words (1 Corinthians 2:1-4). Our presentation must be holy, reverent and humble. This is not incompatible with the warmest affection for people, interest, vitality and joyful animation. We must avoid artificiality and imitation of the world. We have something to commend which has a unique quality and power. We will only destroy that uniqueness if we try to jazz it up with worldly additions. This does not mean to say that we must wrap up our unique possession in the traditional garb of a committee of several austere looking clergymen gazing unjoyfully over their spectacle rims from the public platform, or presenting the truth between the usual non-conformist sandwich of sit-stand, sit-stand. Nor do we rule out a place for flexibility, a testimony or an occasional item providing this possesses the quality of genuine spirituality and is designed to enforce the message of the speaker rather than detract from it. A good question always is—would our Lord do it, or, since he was so unique anyway, would Paul do it?

When all is said and done, contemporaneity at its highest and best is not to be equated with spirituality. We should do all we can not to cause people to stumble with dead and heavy forms but also let us not bedazzle and confuse them with our prancing about in our eagerness to impress them. Above all, let us trust in the Holy Spirit to endure us with discernment and convert the people through the preaching. Let us not forget that Spurgeon led his huge congregation single-handed with one form of service and no organ for thirty years. When he died they rapidly changed all that. They bolstered the services with every contemporaneous device then in vogue in evangelicalism. But the decline was inexorable. Contemporaneity to be sure was not the only factor involved but it failed to arrest the decline. Similarly for thirty years at Westminster Chapel there was not so much as a glimmer of change. I now see the elderly and venerable Mr. Marsh, the deacon secretary in his black suit mounting the steps ponderously as though it was a mountain, and week after week reading the notices in exactly the same way.

Contemporaneity may have done a lot for the Chapel but the point is that its absence did not prevent a world-wide impact.

#### *Who demands contemporaneity?*

It is better to suggest the need for contemporaneity than demand it. In an article which will possibly be published in the July issue of the *Evangelical Times* I plead freedom for using the modern 'you' form in addressing Deity and take great care not to cast aspersions upon or disparage those who prefer the old form. My reasoning is carefully deduced from Scripture and does not arise from pressure or criticism about being old-fashioned.

Nor am I giving way to imperious demands for change.

Let us be wise and observe the source of the calls for contemporaneity. If the call comes from the mature and spiritual members of the church we do well to heed it. But if the pressure comes from those who do not support us anyway we do well to analyse their thinking.

We have been looking at contemporaneity in its general sense and not at any one brand of contemporaneity such as that discussed in *RT49*. Concerning that kind Bryan Wilson, a professor in sociology at All Souls College, Oxford, writing in *New Society* (27th October 1977) comments on the permissive society as follows:

The permissive society that has evolved since the early 1950's has revealed the growing demand for spontaneity, immediacy, hedonism and the freedom to 'do our own thing', particularly among the young. These currents have affected religion itself, of course, as is evident in the expansion of the Charismatic Renewal movement. But it can be said that these trends represent a shift away from older ideas of man as God's creature, here to do his bidding, here to 'wait on God'.

That is a perceptive comment from a secular source.

With much stress on contemporaneity today let us not forget to make room too for stillness, for quietness, for silence in our noisy, clamorous world. Let us moderns praise him in simple modern English. Let us sing likewise. Let us worship in the beauty of holiness. Above all may his glory fill the sanctuary. His glory will make us content with the role of seraphs who, hiding their own faces, cry 'holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty, the whole earth is full of his glory'.



*A record number of 270 attended the 18th Leicester Conference for ministers in April this year. A generously subsidised fee of only £16 for three days, pleasant surroundings, ideal fellowship, Banner book bargains, excellent speakers and interesting subjects are factors which help insure a successful gathering. But deeper reasons explain the significance of Leicester.*

## **Eighteen Leicester Conferences in Review**

IN A REVIEW OF THIS NATURE IT WILL help at the beginning to look at the historical background. Let us imagine Charles Spurgeon calling for a conference in which the main ingredients were Reformed Nonconformity, Puritanism and preaching along strictly Biblical expository lines. What kind of response would there have been? It would require an intimate knowledge of those times to provide a convincing answer. We know that by the time of the Downgrade controversy 1887-92 Liberalism had decimated evangelical ranks to a horrifying extent. Perhaps sixty or seventy might have rallied together in 1890.

If we proceed to a mid-way point between Spurgeon's day and our own, what would the response have been? The answer is surely one of negligible proportions. Whether we regard A. W. Pink as a reliable spiritual barometer or not, we do well to at least consider his verdict when he described the 1930's as the time of the lowest spiritual conditions he ever experienced. Those who desired solid doctrinal and expository material at that time had diminished in numbers to such a handful that he found it only just possible to continue publishing his magazine *Studies in the Scriptures*.

In 1939 Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones began a ministry at Westminster Chapel which was to become foundational as a means of encouraging others to return to the old paths, but particularly to the practice of making preaching central. This ministry was to continue for thirty years. Westminster Chapel was regarded as a centre and inspiration for twentieth century Puritanism. The Puritan conference was initiated there in 1950. The history of the Puritan conference was described in *Reformation Today* no. 6 in which a reference is made to an incident during the 1952 conference. It appeared that Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was the only one present who was prepared to defend the doctrine of particular redemption as held by the majority of Puritans as against the position of Richard Baxter.

The Banner of Truth began to publish a number of Puritan titles in 1958 the most successful of which was Thomas Watson's *Body of Divinity*. The demand for the books indicated a rising interest. The tide was turning. The Banner called a Conference for ministers in 1962. About forty gathered.

In my diary I have two pages of comment for 29th May, 1963 when we

were visited at the Banner of Truth offices in Chiltern Street by a minister with considerable experience and knowledge of the religious scene. He agreed with us at that time that the Reformed awakening then under way could possibly be a preparation for revival. It was possible at that time to point to about seventy ministers in England who were sympathetic with the doctrines of grace, not bound by tradition, and prepared to identify with specific efforts to revive the truth. We observed on that day, that as far as we knew, some places such as Yorkshire, Birmingham and Manchester were destitute of such a witness. Now sixteen years later I would judge that there would be three times the number of 270 who attended the Leicester Ministers' Conference. That is an estimate for the UK as a whole. Certainly down here in Sussex I felt very much alone in the doctrines of grace in 1963, but now the situation has been transformed to such an extent that the increase in this area of say a fifteen mile radius has improved five to six-fold as far as ministers are concerned. Most of the churches they represent are small in size or struggling in one way or another due mostly to traditions which die hard.

But it is not numbers that we are interested in. What concerns us is the reality that the numbers reflect by way of ministers and churches across the country that can be recommended. More and more frequently we are approached for information as to where reliable Biblical and doctrinal teaching ministry can be enjoyed in places throughout the British Isles and beyond. It is not a simple adherence, to a doctrinal system that is sought but a full-orbed faithful God-honouring ministry, and reverent, God-centred non-'gimmicky' worship, with depth of spirituality that will meet the needs of all members of families,

### *Does Leicester stand for a movement?*

The Leicester Conference is avowedly Reformed. Its strength lies in unwavering attachment by a solid core of men to our Reformation heritage and to the Confessions of faith. While there is robust preaching and an occasional contemporary paper on a contemporary issue the bulk of material is strongly doctrinal with the emphasis on biography and history. Many papers have been devoted to the exploits of our forefathers. This flavour is typical of the Banner of Truth, an approach sometimes criticised for being classical, dry, heavy or stodgy. It has nevertheless provided a bedrock or foundation of truth tried and tested, upon which ministers can rely. It is up to them to see that old truth is made relevant, lively, arresting and edifying.

But the main reason for the success of the Banner books and the Banner conference is the belief that, when due allowance is made for the need to be modern and up-to-date, the truths for our generation are the same as those which have stood the test of centuries.

The cement that binds such a diversity of men together is the cement of free grace experience. Nothing can replace that. It creates an unwavering affection for truth that exalts God. It is accompanied by an acute sense of dependence upon the Holy Spirit as well as a holy dread and fear of apostasy which is the way all flesh will go except for sovereign mercy. A free grace experience results in a unity of the Holy Spirit which has a unique quality. We are not impressed by, or drawn to, mere academic Calvinism. In fact such a spirit is repulsive. No new life will come from that quarter. It is the branding of truth on the heart that makes the difference and maintains our unity. Reformation has always been brought about by those who love

definitive Gospel truth to the extent that they are prepared to sacrifice for it and if necessary endure criticism and misunderstanding on account of it. Such men are not deterred by opposition or live in fear of reputations. They see the need to go all-out for Scriptural objectives. They are not at all afraid to cross denominational boundaries and to identify with those of a similar conviction. They clearly understand what they believe and work fervently for the spread of that faith. To the men at Leicester the Reformed faith is the Biblical gospel. Certainly all evangelicals are recognised, appreciated and embraced. The necessity of a broad evangelical unity is esteemed and honoured. But this broader unity does not require or command silence about distinctive doctrine.

The men of Leicester espouse the old-fashioned doctrines and Puritanism undiluted. In this way they constitute a distinct spiritual movement. For a movement of this kind no apology need be made. The world has only ever been affected by movements of one kind or another.

### *Criticisms*

Because 'the truth' sets before us such exalted aims in preaching, study, devotion, practice and church life, those who emulate it have been subject to censure since it is quite obvious that few attain to the advanced standards. Some have for a while been attracted to the Reformed movement because of its exalted doctrines and aims. After a while they have become disillusioned. The longed for and prayed for revival which could well accompany the restoration of high standards of preaching, evangelism and discipline in the churches has not come. A few have held aloof perhaps believing that they have the only real brand of Reformed belief. Others

have either grown weary or been injured in some controversy or perhaps suffered a personal disappointment.

Deep down they love the same truths and when their stamina returns it is hoped that they will again give open allegiance to the truth by openly identifying with men of like mind.

The weaknesses and imbalances that exist in the Reformed movement are very obvious. Some of the preaching is too heavy, too long, too stilted and lacking in practical application and relevance. There needs to be greater warmth and more flexibility. Some could afford to be more free and simple and direct in their preaching style and certainly be more evangelistic in their whole emphasis. But when all these observations have been made it is heartening to observe that most matters commented upon can be corrected. I think of a case of an able young pastor who at one time thought that there was merit in intoning doctrine for an hour at a time. He seemed incurable. But through the patient correction of a wise spirit he has been transformed into an interesting preacher. This is reflected in an increasing congregation. The right basis was there but direction was needed.

Most of the weaknesses and failures which are only too evident in some quarters can be redressed by a patient ministry of encouragement and nurture. Also we should avoid swinging from one extreme to another. Some of us have come from a background of entertainment evangelism which is better than the no evangelism of hyper-Calvinism. It is difficult to avoid gimmicks and entertainments on the one hand and avoid dullness, sameness and heaviness on the other.

### *The first conferences*

The first two conferences in 1962 and 1964 were almost wholly Presbyterian

in flavour with only one contribution by a Baptist. In 1965 the Conference opened up but the fact was then confirmed once and for all that we simply have to agree to differ over baptism and church government. But that was not all. There was a real problem as to the place of Calvinism in evangelical unity. With the advent at the Conference of Al Martin in 1967 the unifying factor of Calvinism was confirmed over-riding the Baptist issue. I well remember with joy the privilege at that time to give hospitality to Al and his wife and have him preach to our young people. About ninety young people turned up on a Saturday night to hear him. The next day he preached at Cuckfield on Matthew 7:13-14 and 1 Thessalonians 1:5. (We are looking forward to his return, when that is possible, for since then we have seen the development of the Mid-Sussex rallies and the establishment of the Whitefield fellowship of ministers). Subsequent to 1967 Al Martin has been the main speaker on no less than eight occasions and from 1970-73 contributed as main speaker four times in a row. This is an extraordinary achievement when we consider the nature of the audience and the requirement of fresh relevant material at that level on every occasion. If Professor Murray gave doctrinal depth and precision then Al Martin has shown us how to preach the truth at a level for the average congregation with a wonderful fullness of application in practice and experience.

#### *Other major contributions*

Ernest Reisinger has contributed at several conferences. He has always brought a very healthy and essential emphasis on evangelism.

Special tribute must be made to the late Professor John Murray who provided a formative structure to the Leicester conference right up until his

physical strength failed in about 1971. A lifetime of dedicated experience in training others in theology was used with incalculable effect. Many of us will never forget the impact which he made both by the substance of what he said and by his life. Mr. W. J. Grier of Northern Ireland was the opening speaker at the first Conference in 1962 and has fulfilled that rôle throughout the years right up until the Conference just concluded, when he spoke in a convincing manner concerning the necessity of the place of private prayer in the life of a minister. He is the only remaining veteran from the old Princeton days who then went on into the new era of Westminster Seminary. Not to be omitted in our considerations is the unwavering and faithful support of men like K. J. MacLeay of Beaulieu, Invernesshire, a Free Church minister who has recently retired.

Donald MacLeod's gift of presenting theology in a way peculiarly refreshing to ministers has added to the dimensions of Leicester.

In his role as initiator, organiser and leader Iain Murray has maintained a sense of history and purpose. He has utilised the subjects of history and biography to the full. Wonderful is the advantage of a sense of destiny—the knowledge that we take up our positions on the battlefield where our predecessors fought courageously. The Scriptures provide a history of God's people from Abel to the times of the early Church led by the apostles. Such sections as Psalms 78 and 105 and Hebrews 12 show us how to employ the lessons of history. Illustrative material galore is available to inspire us and stir us up to resist the spirit of defeatism and pessimism which can so easily set in. I have heard Iain Murray criticised for overstressing the past. Every specialist is going to stress his subject. If we do

not apply the lessons to our day the fault is ours. It would be absolutely fatal to lose our grip on church history or lose our determination to preserve all that is best from the past. The history of revivals is particularly important. In this connection it is heartening to see Spragues' 'Lectures on Revivals' republished at £4 by the Banner. The descriptions contained in the appendices alone are worth the price of the book.

When on three or four occasions able men from other parts have been invited to contribute as main speakers there has been helpfulness but difficulty with 'ignition'. This is not to blame these welcome visitors. The point is that a vital work of reconstruction is going on and a 'once-off-in-a-lifetime not really involved in the situation' visitor, with the best will in the world, has

absolutely everything stacked against him.

'Ignition' can be illustrated from the natural realm. A professional footballer can have all the required expertise of being meticulous, accurate, reliable—yet his true worth is revealed in those inspired moments of need when he streaks away with the ball at his feet and produces the goals that count. In the spiritual realm it is given to preachers by the Spirit to discern the needs of those whom they address and to deliver the message in such a way as to renew the hearers; to galvanise their spirits into action; to forge new resolution in them. Paul called this boldness of speech (*parresia*)—speech inspired by the Spirit, free utterance, truth on fire! It is a dynamic power and as preachers may we never lose the sight or experience of it!

## Leicester 1979

THE NUMBER OF YOUNG MEN PRESENT for the first or second time at Leicester this year was impressive. It would be difficult to find anything to exceed the quality of the teaching and preaching ministry that was presented yet it is not the high intellectual intake that we must glory in. We are thankful for that but most encouraging is the maturity reflected by an increasing number of ministers who through the years have gained invaluable pastoral experience. They have borne the heat and burden of the day. Some have pioneered in very trying circumstances, have had to deal with the most exacting matters at the level of discipline, and now continue to adapt themselves in a work of building and reforming. Practical experience of this kind is priceless. If in times to come God does grant us a reversal of the present hardening situation and does grant us

a plentiful harvest then it is likely that those who have suffered in the sowing will be most faithful in giving God the glory as the fields are reaped.

### *Evangelists and evangelism*

Al Martin in three addresses based his material on 2 Timothy 4-5, 'Do the work of an evangelist,' and outlined the responsibilities of the minister. Brother Martin is fully aware that it may be artificial to use that particular text for the purpose in mind. Nevertheless he was bold enough to do so and declared that the minister must, 1. teach sound truth, 2. inculcate godliness, 3. establish and maintain scriptural church government, 4. nurture his own soul, and then, if you please, if that were not enough to occupy all his time, he is to, 5. do the work of an evangelist! That work involves

spreading the Gospel to all men near and far alike. All this activity is to have proportion and organisation to avert neglect of duty in any one department.

The message of the evangelist was explained. Then the required disposition of the evangelist was described, that is if the work is to be properly accomplished. Finally God's method of thrusting forth evangelists was spelled out. The overall emphasis on evangelism was superb. It needs always to be present in every Reformed conference. Matthew 9:35-38 was the text basic to the third address, all rich constructive material but also containing a timely warning and a much needed corrective:

'What is our Lord's direction to his own disciples to deal with this great disparity between the abundant harvest and the few labourers? Well he did not say call a church-growth seminar and feed into a computer all of the statistic patterns and response patterns to the Gospel, and then take a Public Relations man and go about the seminaries and Bible schools and get men to get in touch with the proper mission board and the job will get done in our generation. Brethren the hour is coming when some of us who take no delight in controversy are going to sin if we are silent on some of these movements; the modern missiology movements; the Church Growth Movement with its emphasis upon so much which is humanistic and in direct violation of principles in the Word of God.'

And concerning the propaganda which has been going out for years uncorrected:

'The most blatant form of unbiblical teaching is the kind of stuff that Bill Bright, the head of Campus Crusade propounds around the world saying that there are millions just waiting to receive Christ if only they can

hear him presented in an attractive manner—it is absolutely atrocious in terms of the teaching of the Word of God.'

#### *John Owen and other papers*

Sinclair Ferguson gave two edifying papers on the subject of piety in the teaching of John Owen. He interwove biographical detail with his doctrinal theme and the whole was like the best Angus steak presented with just the right quantity of greens. I found myself standing next to Sinclair Ferguson when Bob Horne, editor of the *Evangelical Times*, attempted the impossible by way of a photograph from the gallery of the assembly. He assured us all that at best it was only an attempt. When so many are present one has to seize every possibility for helpful though brief conversations. I asked Sinclair to what period he was referring in the life of Owen when he referred to lack of encouragement from his congregation. I am still not clear to which pastorate he was referring.

Gordon Fyles, an Anglican minister from London gave an interesting outline of the life of James Haldane, no relation of James and Robert of the last century. This James Haldane was a missionary in Morocco for forty years this century, an indefatigable labourer and competent preacher. After all that time of effort he was not able to point to a single convert. During the address his life was probed for any weakness which might explain this lack of result which has been typical of most of the Muslim world. God's sovereignty is inscrutable. We might perhaps find a gleam of light for our understanding in the report that in more recent years there has been some awakening among the Muslims of the Atlas mountains in Morocco. Apparently the main instrumentality in winning souls in Morocco in recent



times has been through the work of radio broadcasting.

While Mr. Grier emphasised the necessity of private prayer in the minister's life, Professor Adam Loughbridge through a paper of excellent balance on the life of Samuel Rutherford demonstrated that the pastoral base is the foundation for all other ministry. We are accustomed to receiving the biographical materials from Iain Murray who this time devoted himself to the subject of self-examination. This was a welcome theme with many helpful emphases such as the reminder that the best lessons are learned in the valley of humiliation. The presentation could have gone further and been more radical along the lines of an address given by him at a BEC Conference in which he helpfully pointed to the fact that a new kind of evangelicalism is emerging today which is weak in doctrine, in the observance of the Sabbath, in lacking resistance to worldliness, etc.

### *The corporate worship of God*

John de Witt who has been much prospered in the ministry and at the Seminary at Jackson, Mississippi, has contributed much to the Conference over the years. In his address on the public worship of God he made some telling points. Why is it that we are so man-centred in our considerations and preparations for public worship? Are we not always thinking first about what will please the visitors, the congregation and the young people? Everything is planned to please men! The supreme question is, What pleases the Lord of hosts? Never mind about all our human entertainments and efforts to make people happy—what is it that God's Word requires of us? Often services become disjointed, ill-prepared and poor in content, because inadequate attention has been paid to

the peculiar demands of God-centred spiritual congregational worship.

### *Smaller discussion groups more profitable*

The discussion periods were disappointing. The Carey Conference is also often vexed with this problem. Inhibition may be due to the large size of the company present. Men are reluctant to open up and say what they really think before so many. However it is amazing how this discrepancy is made up by a multiplicity of smaller informal discussion groups which go on all over the place during the dark hours of the night. Specialist groups gather in which the wisdom expressed would be the envy of Solomon and Job! Theological and practical matters, sometimes of inestimable value are shared at such meetings which form on their own without any special organisation. With an 18-hour day of intense mental and spiritual activity the body needs refreshment which even the excellent food at Leicester may not quite satisfy. I was astonished at the quality of what I understood to be exotic Hebrew salami produced in Room X19 at a late hour together with other delectables showing that men are not destitute of imagination when it comes to refreshments. The opportunity to meet old friends and share the latest problems and challenges will always be one of the chief attractions of conferences of this kind.

### *How does the Carey Conference relate to Leicester?*

We Baptists owe a great debt to our Presbyterian brethren and incidentally my count by way of contribution over the eighteen conferences is 49 sessions contributed by Baptists to 105 by those of other persuasion. The Carey Conference has sometimes extended invitations to Paedo-Baptist brethren to contribute but Carey is a shorter

period and up until now it has been necessary to devote the available time to concentration upon our own particular theological and local church affairs. Those who organise the Carey Conference are all appreciative of Leicester. The basis it represents which we are able to take for granted enables us to go from there to spend more time on detailed contemporary practical application. The organisers of the Carey Conference are of one mind that we need to be broader in appealing to a wider constituency rather than narrowing down. This may bring fierce criticism from a few whose objections must be countered by the challenge before us of whole sections of the evangelical world with whom we should be in contact, not out of contact. It is through contact that we ourselves were introduced into the universe of history and theology and those who so introduced have not compromised themselves or defiled themselves in the process. Furthermore while we see the encouragement of an increase in the United Kingdom we are not forgetful of the fact that there are whole nations still wholly ignorant as well as vast territories abroad where only two, three, or maybe four ministers exist who share the convictions that have been expressed in this inadequate and sketchy review of the Leicester Conference—a gathering which because of its character and doctrinal strength is unique in this century.

### *Dangers to be guarded against*

The Leicester Conference has been going long enough now to see the emergence of what may be called the seasoned campaigners compared to a larger number of those for whom the experience is still new and fresh. There is a danger that we presume that believers have assimilated the doctrines of grace merely because they show a general interest or because

they appreciate the quality of ministry such as that at Leicester. Intellectual assent or an admiration of capable preachers is totally inadequate. Unless these truths are esteemed as gold and rubies, unless they are engraved on the heart, those who profess them will never withstand the pressures to compromise. The Reformed faith involves a way of life, an approach in counselling souls, a form of preaching, a practice of evangelism, and an attitude towards corporate church worship which is distinctive and different because it is theocentric and not anthropocentric. We will be disappointed every time we presume men to be Reformed just because they have some Banner books or because they mix with some Calvinistic buddies.

Also reference should be made to the missing element in the British scene today, the absence by and large of a thoroughgoing training in theology for those who truly love the free grace of God. Conferences can help fill the gaps and provide inspirational guidelines. Helpful as this may be it is no substitute for comprehensive and thorough grounding in theology. Because men attend Reformed conferences let us never be foolish enough to presume that they are equipped both in heart and head to withstand the tremendous pressures that come to compromise the great God-centred principles we love.

Also for those coming for the first time there is the danger of being lost in the crowd. How can we guard against the impersonal and lack of time for individuals?

For the 'old-timers' there are several perils, I will name three.

Firstly, there is the terrible danger of staleness and lack of versatility, the danger of being worn out and tired out, the peril of saying the same old

# Helping the Struggling Causes

by Derek Bigg

## Part 2

*A synopsis of part one will help our readers pick up the threads.*

*According to the New Testament, local churches are inter-dependent. This means that stronger fellowships should reach out with a helping hand to struggling causes. But does this entail no more than sending the occasional Sunday preacher? Will such ministry produce solid long-term results?*

*A succession of visiting preachers encourages people to rely on human aid rather than on their spiritual resources in Christ. How can they be helped*

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things in the same old way. 'Study to show thyself approved' applies increasingly as we advance in age and experience. Timothy was no novice when the exhortations of the pastoral epistles were written. Manna must be fresh. If we rely on yesterday's supply it will breed worms and stink. Ever forward, ever seeking to conquer new ground, ever relying on the Holy Spirit, ever working at old truth that it may be pulsatingly alive and dynamic for today—that is surely the way forward!

Secondly there is the danger of complacency. Look at the increase! Isn't it great? Yes but it is only an organised conference. Look at the size of the world and look too at the unevangelised multitudes. Look at the might of the enemy and the powers of darkness. Look at the advance of Islam, the progress of the cults, the entrenched indifference of nominal Christians. We should be producing leaders for every field and missionaries for all nations. There is no room for smugness or complacency but alarm and concern about the smallness of our impact.

Thirdly, there is the danger of discouragement, the opposite of course to complacency. Conferences are designed both to instruct and to encourage. Yet in a strange way a

conference like Leicester can backfire. Men can be stirred up and yet when they return to all the besetting problems of the pastorate soon feel that it is all theory after all. Reformation may work, especially for gifted ones, but it will never work here where most the people have set ideas and traditional attitudes. Discouragement produces many casualties. This is particularly the case when ministers fall into the trap of thinking that if only they work hard and preach the doctrines all will be well. But orthodoxy alone is no guarantee of success. Many have put their trust in orthodoxy alone and been bitterly disappointed. A host of human and divine complexities enter when it comes to success and who dare measure this when the awesome day of assessment is fast approaching when faithfulness will be rated higher than success upon which we rightly lay stress. Success is important but it must be sought through scriptural means and faithfulness.

By way of conclusion let it be asserted that we need to be watchful and prayerful in our desires that the advance registered at Leicester will culminate in what has always been regarded as the ultimate, namely, a return of seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

*to recover a true biblical faith and perspective? Spasmodic Sunday visits should give way to systematic teaching combined with meaningful mid-week fellowship.*

*If these aims are to be achieved, some formidable problems must be surmounted. The first problem is one of attitude. What we conceive as help may be construed by others as interference. To avoid giving the impression of spiritual bulldozers, can we not discuss the whole question openly with struggling groups we have tried to assist in the past? It is then a case of seeking God's will together.*

*Other problems must now be considered . . .*

## 2. COMMUTING BELIEVERS

A second problem is that of commuting believers. Before the advent of widespread car ownership and easy travel, local churches were by and large truly local. Christians used to worship in the place where they lived. Which is surely what God intended. Nowadays, for some Christians, mobility means privilege without responsibility—the privilege of joining a fashionable or lively church some miles from home without the responsibility of becoming immersed in an ostensibly less congenial situation on their own doorstep, where faith and love will be really put to the test.

This is of course an extremely complex question. It cannot be tackled from a practical standpoint alone. Important spiritual and theological issues are at stake. Consequently, it would doubtless be an oversimplification to suggest that every Christian should become a member of his nearest evangelical church. In today's confused and distressing situation, such a course of action might so easily entail compromise or spiritual starvation.

Nevertheless, when all the 'ifs' and 'buts' have been taken into account, there are still Christians who are shirking their duty to worship and witness in the locality where God in His providence has placed them. How far are we entitled to expect the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in small, struggling congregations which have been virtually abandoned by commuting believers?

It is hard to know what can be done about this particular problem. Is there any solution short of revival? Those who opt out of local involvement are unlikely to respond to mere reasoning—even Scriptural reasoning—for this is not so much a matter of the head as of the heart. Nothing less than divine persuasion is needed.

On the human level, the indirect approach might be the most fruitful. The successful implementation of proposals made earlier in this article would no doubt provide a greater incentive for commuting believers to think again regarding their responsibilities. They would see genuine

efforts being made to provide struggling groups with pastoral care and regular teaching in a spirit of love and prayerful concern. If this does not win them, humanly speaking nothing else will.

### 3. MISPLACED LOYALTY

Thirdly, there is the disheartening problem of misplaced loyalty. This commonly takes two forms, often found in tandem: unswerving allegiance to a denomination and attachment to a particular building. The denomination may be on the rocks and the building in a ramshackle state, yet these loyalties override in practice the supreme loyalty to Jesus Christ.

What bearing does this have on our theme? Simply this: such misplaced loyalty is usually accompanied by a fiercely independent attitude and a refusal to seek any outside help apart from that which will ensure that the struggling group still holds the reins in a continued separate existence. With numbers steadily dwindling and the average age increasing, that existence becomes a living death. Sadly, the chill of death is only too apparent to the visitor.

The question has been asked, precisely in this context, When is a church not a church? If, for instance, a group consists almost entirely of women and no pastoral or teaching gifts are in evidence, can we call it a church in the full New Testament sense?

This problem is most acute in the case of struggling causes located only a stone's throw from a thriving evangelical church. Their very presence just down the road can be a positive embarrassment. A sound biblical ministry and warm fellowship are close at hand and readily available to them, but the price to be paid is apparently too high. Loss of independence—and therefore loss of control—is for many a bitter pill to swallow. But then, unreasoning independence of this kind is fed by human pride. Cold acknowledgement of a biblical inter-dependence requires humility and mutual acceptance in Christ.

It is probably true that most struggling causes relate to individuals (of their own choosing) rather than to larger churches as such. Indeed, the larger churches are sometimes regarded as a threat to their existence.

Faced with this dilemma, strong churches are often reluctant to take action in relation to nearby struggling causes for fear of giving offence or creating the impression that they are manoeuvring for a takeover bid. Such fears are natural enough. But are they justified?

Has the time not come for an approach to be made to these small groups in our own back yard? (Those further afield are considered in relation to the first problem discussed.) Can they not be invited to share the spiritual benefits of a stronger fellowship? Minor differences are inevitable but they are trivial compared with the riches of the gospel.

Any approach made will not be in our own name but in the name of the Lord of the Church. We shall thereby express not so much our concern

as God's concern for the local unity of his people. Our aim is not empire-building but practical recognition of the one body: 'That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another' (1 Cor. 12:25).

Once again, the exact method of approach can only be determined by local factors—the personalities involved, the nature and extent of previous contacts, the composition and ethos of the struggling group, and other characteristics. But whatever approach is adopted, it must surely be saturated in prayer and reflect the spirit of Christ who was meek and lowly in heart.

#### 4. VESTED INTERESTS

An altogether different problem is that of vested interests. However strong our case may be for introducing more fruitful ways of helping the struggling causes, there will probably be those who oppose such a move. They may profess to see no need for change. The real obstacle, however, is that they have a vested interest in perpetuating the present system.

In this category are individuals (individualists?) who engage in itinerant preaching because they get a kick out of it themselves. It seems well-nigh impossible to control their movements, and they will tend to counteract our best efforts. They do not generally regard themselves as subject to the discipline of the local church in this matter. Indeed, in some cases they do not even belong to a local church in any meaningful sense. Rightly or wrongly, they feel that they are entitled to act as free agents, going where they are invited. Readers will judge whether there is anything to commend in this approach.

Similarly, readers will make up their own minds as to whether it is an altogether healthy practice from the point of view of the struggling causes for them to offer their pulpits to Bible College students for preaching experience. Regrettably, another vested interest is involved here. Where else would the students gain such experience?

Preaching is, of course, ordained of God and one would not wish to under-estimate it. Far from it! But we are concerned in this article with long-term results. Our great interest lies in presenting 'every man mature in Christ' (Col. 1:28, RSV). Itinerant preaching, without discipline or pastoral oversight, will never of itself achieve that aim. Experience has shown that it is more likely to have precisely the opposite effect as Christians allow themselves to be spoon-fed week after week.

#### 5. SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION

This brings us finally to a whole range of problems within the struggling communities themselves. The same problems are to be found in varying degrees in thriving churches too; but inevitably they are aggravated in situations where spiritual life is slowly ebbing away.



In many ways they are inter-related problems which impinge on one another and tend to have a cumulative effect. Or perhaps in reality they are different aspects of a single vast problem. In any event, it is never easy to pinpoint the root of the trouble. We can only observe the various symptoms and ask the Lord himself for discernment to make the correct diagnosis in specific situations.

One symptom—no doubt caused by inadequate teaching—is the inability or unwillingness to apply biblical principles to local church life. Another is the apparent lack of any desire to seek the reasons for decline. Then there is an almost obsessive resistance to change, coupled with a rigid adherence to traditions and outward forms. Add to these ingredients a distressing apathy, the sheer force of ingrained habit, and an excessive preoccupation with the difficulties of the situation, and you have a recipe for a most unappetising meal. If it looks unappetising to us, how much more to the unbeliever! It all adds up to chronic spiritual depression.

Has the picture been overdrawn? Possibly; and of course no two situations are alike. Nevertheless, the description is too close to the truth for comfort or complacency.

#### *Withdrawal or involvement?*

These, then, are some of the problems. They are truly formidable. Can they be overcome? 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'

Much prayer and patience will be needed. Even then, the end result may be disappointment and frustration. We may still find that people prefer their old ways, however unrewarding and unproductive they are. We may still find that there is a greater interest in maintaining dilapidated buildings than in developing spiritual life. We may still find that to many folk a different speaker every week is the most attractive aspect of their evangelical existence.

Withdrawal or involvement? At certain points this article may seem to be advocating both. The apparent contradiction is intentional. There are strong arguments for withdrawing from the itinerant preaching circuit. At the same time, there are solid reasons for involvement with struggling causes at a deeper level.

The effort of involvement must surely be made. Perseverance will have its reward. But what if we meet with a totally negative response? Suppose the door is firmly and finally closed, in the sovereign purposes of God (cf. Rev. 3:7, 2 Cor. 2:14-16)? We need not despair. Our responsibility has been faithfully discharged and the Lord does not require more than that. Meanwhile, there are in every area communities with no gospel witness at all. What are we doing about those?

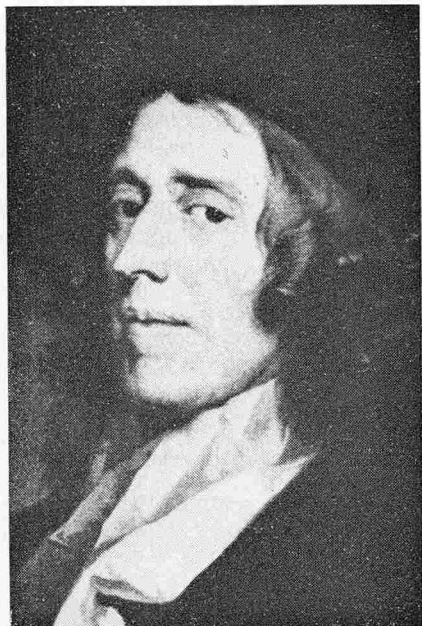
# John Owen 1616-1683

## Pastor and Theologian Supreme

*By way of synopsis we saw last time that a study of John Owen, 'The Prince of Puritans', reveals that he experienced suffering for the truth.*

*He was ready for university at the age of twelve, and during his ten years stay in Oxford he gave his attention to the growth of Arminian doctrine in Holland and in the Church of England. He perceived that the central point at issue was the doctrine of predestination, guaranteeing the free, unmerited grace of God and eliminating all human merit in salvation. He strove to teach the church the doctrines of the providence and predestination of God.*

*In 1643 Parliament offered Owen a pastorate at Fordham, near Colchester in Essex, which he accepted. Here he married, and of his eleven children only one daughter survived further than early youth. He visited and catechised from house to house, and crowds came from neighbouring parishes to hear him preach. From Fordham he became Pastor at nearby Coggeshall, where he was able to build on the solid foundations of the doctrines of free grace. While here he continued to write and preach to Parliament, but war broke out and Coggeshall became the headquarters of the Parliamentary forces.*



*After preaching in thanksgiving for deliverance to Parliament, he was commanded to do so again the day following the execution of Charles I, who had been found guilty of treachery, tyranny and murder. Owen preached that this was God's judgement on the nation's disobedience. Owen was now a popular preacher often sought after by Parliament, where Oliver Cromwell was deeply impressed by his message and arranged for Owen to accompany him to Ireland.*

*There he preached, rebuilt Trinity College Dublin and wrote a book. After nine months he returned to England pleading before Parliament for preachers to be sent to Ireland and for the publishing of the Gospel in the dark corners of the world. Later he accompanied Cromwell to Scotland where they shared a close bond of fellowship. Owen then returned to his pastorate in Essex. We take up the story from there.*

### PART 2 by Ven Evans

#### *Dean and Vice-Chancellor*

In 1652 John Owen was recommended as Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University and was duly appointed for a six year tenure. Toon tells us that the task was a difficult one at the best of times but the situation at Oxford made it the more difficult. 'Sectarian bitterness between Inde-

pendents, Presbyterians, and less orthodox groups, as well as the shocking behaviour of some scholars was to blame for this. . . . In his own strength Owen could not remedy such a situation; all he could do was to work diligently and cast himself on the mercy of the Lord, trusting in the divine promises.'

There were many responsibilities for the new Vice-Chancellor. Besides his membership on the Board of Visitors, he had to ensure that sermons, lectures, disputations, and academic exercises were duly carried out, that offenders were punished, that heretical sermons and books were suppressed, that the goods and possessions of the University were preserved, that the Oxford market was kept clean and well supplied, that the Vice-Chancellor's Court was run in a proper manner, and that the Halls and Inns were properly supervised.

Space does not permit a detailed account of Owen's days as Vice-Chancellor but we do note that he led the counter-attack against those who attacked learning. Typical of these attacks was a book by a self-styled preacher, Samuel How, entitled *The Sufficiency of the Spirit's teaching without humanist learning* published in 1640. A typical sentence from this book is quoted by Toon: 'If a man have the Spirit of God, though he be a Pedlar, Tinker, Chimney-Sweeper, or Cobbler, he may, by the help of God's Spirit, give a more public interpretation than they (i.e. men trained in the Universities).'

Owen also stood firm when the left-wing of the Puritan movement launched an attack on the University during the Barebone's Assembly. As Vice-Chancellor he entered many debates concerning the scholastic curriculum and its reliance on Greek and Latin. In addition, the left-wingers protested that the University restricted the professions to a social class who could afford to attend their Colleges and then if necessary go on to the Inns of Court.

The Vice-Chancellor also fought the wearing of 'Romish' academic dress in the University; he even took his case to London, to have 'habits' made optional, but failed in his attempt. He stood firmly for strong discipline; and on one occasion he ordered that two Quaker girls be whipped and driven out of Oxford for interrupting a church service.

There came a time when the majority of the Parliament proposed to bestow upon Cromwell the crown and title of king; when the Protector appeared to like the proposal, Owen saw the danger. With Colonel Desborough, Fleetwood, and the majority of the army, he stood up in opposition, and even put his signature to a petition which in fact defeated the plan. This act severed his close working relationship with Cromwell, and no longer was he invited to preach at great occasions of public state. Indeed when Cromwell was inaugurated into his office as Protector, at Westminster Hall, 'those who were accustomed to watch how the winds of political favour blew, observed that Lockyer and Dr. Manton were

the divines who officiated at the August ceremonial; and that Owen was not even there as an invited guest'.<sup>10</sup>

Soon after this Cromwell resigned as Chancellor of the University and his son Richard was appointed as his successor. Thomson then tells us that six weeks later John Owen was 'displaced from the Vice-Chancellorship'.<sup>11</sup>

In assessing Owen's time as Vice-Chancellor, Toon makes these observations:

1. He saw his task as an extremely important aspect of the work of the kingdom of God in England.
2. He was successful in his propagation of the Calvinistic view of God, the universe and salvation.
3. He made theology, preaching, catechising and prayer central. 'He wanted the graduates of Oxford not only to be proficient in the Arts and Sciences but also to aspire after godliness.'<sup>12</sup>

Many of the students, who later became Protestant Nonconformists, thanked God for the spiritual life of Oxford during Owen's time as Dean and Vice-Chancellor. It was indeed an inspiring time in history marked by spirit-filled men who refused to compromise their doctrinal stand, and who, despite their human failings, showed how the Lordship of Christ can be worked out in all of life.

### *Pastor and Theologian*

Apart from his time at Fordham and Coggeshall, it is difficult to trace Owen's pastorates with any degree of certainty; in all probability he pastored Wallingford House church for about ten years, during the 1660's. The church consisted mainly of army officers and their families. He worked all through the days of the Act of Uniformity and the Five Mile Act. In 1673 after the Declaration of Indulgence, Owen pastored the united churches of Joseph Caryl (who had just died) and his own, in the Meeting House on Leadenhall Street, London. (The sermon that he preached on the occasion of the first service can be found in his *Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 256-271.) We know that between 1673 and 1683 one hundred and eleven persons were received into membership in the new church.

But of special interest to us are the sermons that Owen preached and the books that he wrote. Owen regarded his principal task as a preacher to carefully explain the nature of the biblical view of the Christian life and witness, and to exhort his hearers to seek after God, and to obey him, and to cultivate his grace in their hearts.

The preacher's sermons covered topics such as the excellency of Christ, personal holiness, the nature of the church, cases of conscience, reaction to persecution, and the proper approach to the Lord's Supper. So we can see, that although he was an immensely learned man, Owen also preached practical sermons of contemporary interest. He preached in

1680 for instance, on how to live by faith with the threat of popery nearby.<sup>18</sup>

On the occasion of a day of prayer and fasting, Owen preached another fascinating sermon attacking hard the sensuality, oppression and cheating which inundated England at that time. He claimed that the London plague of 1665, the Dutch war of 1665, the fire of 1666, and the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1680-1681, were warnings from God of impending judgment! 'Have these warnings of God been complied withal? Hath the voice of God in them been heard? Hath the nation been afraid? Have they rent their clothes and returned to the Lord? They have not. We yet continue, God help us, in a state of sin even against warnings.'<sup>14</sup> John Owen wrote several books on the doctrine of the Church which rank amongst the classic statements of Congregational church polity. The principles of separation of the true church from worldliness and from the State, the mutual edification of the members in the love of Christ by the Word of God, the voluntary nature of membership, and the pursuit of individual conformity to the mind of Christ, are all found in Owen's writings. His doctrine of the church was based on the New Testament alone.<sup>15</sup>

In his writings he believed there were some true Christians in the Church of England, but he also believed that any conformity to the liturgy was out of the question.<sup>16</sup> Toon tells us that in the last twenty years of his life he wrote 'a series of works which rank amongst the greatest theological books of seventeenth-century European Protestantism'. These are books of doctrinal and practical divinity and commentaries on the Bible, 'although in making this division it must be remembered that those books which are basically doctrinal have practical application, that the practical divinity is based on Biblical exegesis, and that the commentaries contain both doctrine and practice'.<sup>17</sup>

Owen saw the Holy Scriptures, God's written Word, as the sole authority for Christian faith, hope and conduct. But without the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the hearer or reader, the Bible was as a dead letter. The God who inspired the authors must likewise inspire the readers. Owen also maintained that the sum, substance, and centre of the Old and the New Testaments is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Eternal Word.

A tremendous contribution to systematic theology is undoubtedly his five volumes on the Doctrine of the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup> The Puritan divine was very clearly a pioneer in constructing a systematic theology of the Holy Spirit and it is sad to see how modern Christendom generally neglects it. He taught clearly that both regeneration and sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit from first to last.

Owen wrote practical treatises on the nature of indwelling sin. It is

doubtful whether any writing on that theme (see Vol. 6 of his works) can match his clarity, power and depth.

There is one more work we must mention and Toon makes the best comment on this: 'Owen's greatest work of Biblical exposition was, without any doubt, his study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, published in four folio-volumes between 1668 and 1684. When he finished it, a friend reports that he said 'Now my work is done: it is time for me to die!'

In 1676 he was bereaved of his partner who was an excellent wife; attractive and affectionate. After eighteen months he remarried a widow who brought him no small income. In fact it was observed that he was able to keep a carriage during his remaining years, a needful provision for his health was failing.

Three able men assisted him during the last few years especially in frequent absences from the pulpit and in his literature work. One of these was the able and excellent David Clarkson whose works were later to be published in three volumes. The church in London pastored by Owen's during his last years was probably the most numerous and influential Independent fellowship of that period. Joseph Caryl had been a former pastor.

Just before his death Owen wrote to a friend saying 'I am going to him whom my soul has loved, or, rather, who has loved me with an everlasting love—which is the whole ground of my consolation.' The day he died a fellow minister, William Payne, called to see him and give him the news that the first sheets of his book on *The Glory of Christ* had been printed. Owen lifted up his hands and looking upward exclaimed, 'I am glad to hear it; but, O brother Payne! The long wished-for day is come at last, in which I shall see that glory in another manner than I have ever done, or was capable of doing, in this world.'

We could learn much from the example of this great pastor, theologian and defender of the truth. Owen's greatest strength seemed to lie in his ability to instruct and establish believers. He admired John Bunyan's gift to preach in a powerful manner. When asked by King Charles why he listened to Bunyan, he replied, 'Could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching, please Your Majesty, I would gladly relinquish all my learning.'

We find Owen's chief defect is more in his style of writing than in his person. He exhausted his particular theme entirely and he sometimes wrote too laboriously. He never seemed to learn the secret of just touching a theme. He tended to make his subject into a major issue! It is this very heaviness that has indubitably forbidden a wider acceptance of his works. In some features Owen is not equal to the other Puritans: Baxter excels in zeal and energy; Flavel in tenderness; Howe in majesty, Sibbes in comfort and Manton in application. Yet, where can we find,

in his day or ours, such an accumulated treasure of sanctified learning? Spurgeon read Puritan writings avidly. He wrote: 'We assert this day that, when we take down a volume of Puritan theology, we find in a solitary page more thinking and more learning, more Scripture, more real teaching, than in whole folios of the effusions of modern thought. Modern men would be rich if they possessed even the crumbs that fall from the table of the Puritans.'<sup>19</sup>

'John Owen belonged to a class of men who have risen from age to age in the church, to represent great principles, and to revive in the church the life of God. The supreme authority of the Scriptures in all matters of religion—the headship of Christ—the rights of conscience—religion as a thing, not of form but of the spirit as the result of personal belief in certain revealed truths—the church as a society distinct from the world—these principles often contended for in flames and blood, were the essence of that Puritanism which found one of its noblest examples in Owen. His was the spirit which breathed in the Lollards of Wycliffe's time in the Hussites of Bohemia . . . in the Huguenots of France; and in the stern Scottish Covenanters—and which God has sometimes sent down like a benign angel whenever the church at any time has begun to stagnate into a cold orthodoxy, to trouble the waters of the sanctuary, so that the lame might be healed. It is a spirit which the inert orthodoxy and the superficial evangelism of the church even today greatly needs. And the diligent and prayerful study of the writings of the Puritans might do much to restore it. Let the same truths be believed with the same faith, and they will produce the same men, and accomplish the same intellectual and moral miracles.'<sup>20</sup>

May God be pleased to bless our churches with a new emphasis on the doctrines of grace and the holiness of God. And, may we see in all our churches a reformation in doctrine and a revival in spiritual life.

David Horner, Australia.

Ven Evans, Canada (section from Chancellor to end).

Introduction and overall presentation by editor.

## References

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Thomson, *The Works of John Owen*, Vol. 1, p. lxvii. <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxvii.

<sup>12</sup> *God's Statesman*, p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> The sermon was entitled *The Use of Faith, if Popery Should Return Upon Us*, and is found in *The Works*, Vol. 9., pp. 505-510 (surely one of his shortest ever!).

<sup>14</sup> Sermon entitled *Seasonable Words for English Protestants*, found in *The Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 3-16. Quote from p. 11.

<sup>15</sup> See the four treatises in *The Works*, Vol. 15, pp. 59ff., 189ff., 447ff.; Vol. 16, pp. 3ff.

<sup>16</sup> See *Twelve Arguments against any conformity of members of separate churches to the national church*, in *The Works*, Vol. 16, pp. 248-253.

<sup>17</sup> *God's Statesman*, p. 165.

<sup>18</sup> All five volumes are contained in *The Works*, Vols. 3 and 4.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Iain Murray in *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Thomson, *The Works*, Vol. 1, pp. cxi, cxii.

*The seminary has a missionary aim in training foreign students. They are encouraged to return and establish or support an indigenous ministry. Already some 15 are serving in France, Switzerland and Spain.*

*Among the Canadians in the picture there are representatives from Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Peter Hakkenberg, of Dutch origin, soon expects to serve in Belgium.*

*The student on the extreme right, Eddie Hodges of Ethiopia, survived a vicious razor attack in the centre of the church directly after a morning service at which the editor was preaching. This was a reminder that able men need to have oversight where there are crowds of people. Jarvis Street is particularly well organized but vigilance was redoubled after this horrifying event.*

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## Local News

The Whitefield Fellowship—a fraternal for evangelical ministers in mid-Sussex plan to meet on Monday, 22nd October.

Austin Walker is to present a paper on the Biblical view of homosexuality, especially with the object of providing practical instruction because of current propaganda in schools.

Achille Blaize is to preach on the subject of the minister and his devotional life.

The mid-Sussex Bible Convention offers a robust Biblical and doctrinal ministry with a strong emphasis on evangelism. The venue is Clair Hall, an attractive modern structure centrally situated about a hundred yards from Haywards Heath Railway Station and right opposite the bus station.

Friday, 29th June at 8 p.m. Baruch Maoz of Israel

Friday, 27th July at 8 p.m. Peter Lewis of Nottingham

Friday, 7th September 8 p.m. Achille Blaize of London

Churches in Sussex look forward to the ministry of pastor Arnold Dallimore in December and January. He will probably contribute at the Whitefield Fellowship. Details for his trip are yet to be finalised.

Geoff Thomas is to be the preacher at the Reformed Baptist Church in Robinson Road, Crawley, to mark the occasion of the entrance of Austin Walker into full-time ministry, 3 p.m., Saturday, 15th September.

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(Continued from page 1)

*When people are lined up for a photo it results in a kind of regimentation. When a picture is taken more informally it can have more interest but some faces are hidden as is the case with this one which was taken in February at the meeting of The Fellowship for Reformation and Pastoral Studies. Apologies are made because not all the names can be recalled but for the records here are some from left to right:*

*L. Kenneth Wakefield, Dr. Geoff Adams (with specs.), Ron Matthews (in black coat) and next to him Rev. Tiessen, Bill Payne can be spotted in the crowd and then moving along the back we can clearly see Roger Fellowes, Hector McRury, Bob Wilkins, David Knappett, Doug Shantz (standing clear with his feet buried in snow and wearing heavy gloves), Ernie Wood, Victor Cornish, Bill Lancaster of Montana (heavy black coat), Stewart Richmond, Les Clemens, Jim Clemens, Bruce Handy and Alan Topham.*





NUMBER 50

JULY-AUGUST 1979

**Reformation Today** is a bi-monthly magazine published by Cuckfield Baptist Church, Sussex.

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Single copies one-sixth the above in each case which includes postage.

Gifts are welcomed and those who wish to support the Magazine should make out their cheques to "Reformation Today".