

# REFORMATION TODAY



**M.A.F.**  
**40th Anniversary**

(see front inside cover)

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# MAF 40th Anniversary

*This year is the 40th anniversary of the Mission Aviation Fellowship which has provided a unique service for frontline missionaries throughout the world. Serving the very forefront of pioneer missionary endeavour, the story of MAF provides one of the most thrilling chapters in the history of the Church. A hundred and forty aircraft are now employed in the work. Without the back-up support of MAF it would not have been possible to reach some remote areas.*

*One example is that of a pioneer work by the Dutch missionary, Gerrit Kuijt, who with his wife and young family endured attacks by a hostile tribe as well as severe storms and earthquakes while carving out an airstrip in Irian Jaya. In 1974 while the Kuijt's were back in the Netherlands, local tribesmen attacked the settlement and massacred 13 national evangelists who were running the small mission station. The buildings were destroyed, the Kuijt's home looted and burned and the bodies of the murdered Christians mutilated and cannibalised.*

*It required unusual faith and courage for Gerrit Kuijt to return to the station at Nipsan and continue in the work of preaching the gospel to the Mek people. This year history was made at Nipsan because the church there held their first baptismal service since the massacre. Sixty-four men and women professed their faith in Christ. The first man to be baptised was the leader of the massacre in 1974.*

*The new Christians are now reaching out to other unevangelised areas north of Nipsan and a MAF helicopter is being used to assist in the work.*

*The picture on the front cover shows a MAF plane landing in Papua New Guinea.*

*For information about Mission Aviation Fellowship write to:*

*MAF, Ingles Manor, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2TN.*

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# Editorial



*The mission team from L.R.B.C. at Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham. On the left Russell Bridges and next to him Prof. Hugh Flemming of St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, on the far right is Kingsley Coomber and Peter Parkinson. Kingsley was the preacher to the youth gang in the area.*

Jim van Zyl reminds us of the central place given to preaching by the Puritans. A vast amount of effort can be expended in preparation but if there is no power in the delivery then all is in vain. A very simple illustration can be used of a motor car engine. Only one missing part can render the whole redundant. So in preaching it only takes one serious flaw and all the effort will be counterproductive.

‘One of the great perils that face preachers of the Reformed Faith is the problem of hyper-intellectualism, that is, the constant danger of lapsing into a purely cerebral form of proclamation, which falls exclusively upon the intellect,’ says Geoff Thomas on the subject ‘Powerful Preaching’ in the book *Preaching* (E.P., see editorial *R.T.* 95 ‘How can we be better preachers?’).

Jim Packer’s article ‘Puritan Preaching’ (*R.T.* 68), outlined four axioms which were basic for the Puritans:

1. The primacy of the intellect
2. The supreme importance of preaching (which is the axiom developed by Jim van Zyl)
3. Belief in the life-giving power of biblical truths
4. The sovereignty of the Holy Spirit

He went on to show that the Puritan sermon was expository in its method, doctrinal in its content, orderly in its arrangement, popular in its style, experimental in its nature, and realistically practical in its application.

Preaching, however, can have all these features but if there is not relevance it will be vain. What makes relevance? Many churches suffer from the absence of anyone from the unbelieving world. There might as well be a sign outside ‘SAINTS ONLY!’. The presence of those who do not believe and who are not Christians should make preaching

vitaly relevant, providing of course the preacher is himself alert and knows those to whom he is speaking. When unbelievers and believers alike are addressed in a vital urgent and living way with reference to current events, and when the truths of the gospel are applied to life as we experience it today, then there is relevance.

In the mission at Chelmsley Wood described in this issue I was impressed by the effectiveness of using homes for preaching. I preached at a meeting for men. As soon as I finished there was a fierce debate for about an hour. There was freedom to be very frank about the problems of faith. The outcome has been a happy one since the man who contended against the truth has begun to attend the church regularly.

There is no doubt that a prayerful spiritual congregation that brings with it the spiritually halt, maimed and blind, will lift the truly called preacher to great heights of effectiveness. George Whitefield was constantly borne up in a marvellous way by the challenge of the expectant crowds who came to hear him, but even he occasionally came across a sleepy congregation which reminded him that the hearers are just as important as the preacher.

In my article on the primacy of preaching in *R.T.* 64 I sought to show that Satan is just as vigorous in attacking the listeners as he is in attacking the preacher. The preacher has to be an incessant student and intercessor. Satan will be relentless in trying to sidetrack him. To be effective the preacher has to be a leader in evangelism, and with that work he has to visit and pastor the flock, and at the same time be a time juggler with the use of his time to ensure that he can study well, meditate always, and so meet the high demands of preaching.

Yes, Satan only opposes the preacher. He attacks the pew. He will encourage

criticism and malcontentedness. He will delight in roast preacher for Sunday dinner. He will promote division, disharmony and disaffection. The pastor whose task it is to lead a church of average size who does not receive the loyal support and protection of godly elders and deacons has very little hope of success.

Satan's greatest triumph in the U.K. has been to make the pulpit irrelevant and to kill the practice of powerful relevant preaching.

That is why we are always interested in articles which are directed to the recovery of effective evangelism combined with powerful preaching. For the next issue is an excellent work by Garry Phillips in which he shows convincingly that in the worship services preaching is an act of worship at the highest level.

#### *Personal friendship essential in evangelism*

Subsequent to the editorial in *R.T.* 104 questions have been asked about the increase at Garston Bridge Chapel in Liverpool. (Over 40 conversions in one year!) The explanation is found in a combination of factors; but mostly, the prayer meeting, consistent hard work, lively expository preaching, and especially love and unity in the church. However all those conditions could pertain and yet there be no increase or very little. After every effort has been made we have to reckon with the sovereignty of God. The pastor at Garston believes that present blessing must on the human side be traced back a number of years to that time when a handful of faithful believers laboured on and persevered in what seemed a hopeless situation.

Building up personal friendships has been a further practical and vital factor in the growth of the church. At Garston

# The Tercentenary of the 1689 Confession

Depending on where we begin with reformational theology we could say that the Westminster Confession of Faith took 131 years to prepare. 1517 is usually taken as the year the Reformation began. The Puritan age spans the period 1558 to 1662, the latter being the year of the Great Ejection, and the former the accession to the throne of Elizabeth I. The Westminster Confession represents the quintessence of Reformed and Puritan theology. Especially does it reflect three generations of theological and pastoral expertise.

The Confession together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and other documents, known as the Westminster Formularies, ultimately were produced during the years 1643-48 being hammered into shape through five years of intense conference, debate, and the refinement of clauses, sentences and words. In all from 60 to 80 ministers were at work. They met for 1163 sessions. B. B. Warfield wrote fairly extensively on the work of the Assembly. A. A. Hodge provides a short description of the Assembly as part of his introduction to his exposition of the Confession (Banner of Truth) and Richard de Witt has enriched us with a major thesis on the Assembly and its work called *Jus Divinum*.

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just a few weeks ago 75 men spent an evening together, 25 of that number being unbelievers. The meeting began with recreation in the park followed by a buffet meal, and then two testimonies from mature men including a local G.P., finishing with an exposition of the gospel. What began at 6.00 p.m. ended at 11.00 p.m. It takes love, patience and time to establish friendships in which there is trust and willingness to respond to gatherings of the kind just described. Personal friendship is essential for effective evangelism.

We are reminded, too, of the relevance of Psalm 126:2, 'Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy'.

This principle is certainly illustrated in the way in which the small church at Chelmsley Wood, led by Pastor Alec Taylor, has come through a difficult time of consolidation but now is growing well. To assist in outreach a mission was organised recently in which

a team of 15 workers from Leeds Reformed Baptist Church took part. They were involved in eight days of intense evangelism including meetings of all kinds, house to house, street evangelism, coffee mornings and so on. Work in school assemblies was a major area of outreach. A subway gang of about 20 youths notorious for their violence listened for an hour and half to the gospel being preached and subsequently responded by inviting the preacher to their club the following night when about 50 listened further to the gospel.

This was the second mission of its kind and definite growth has resulted, but the most encouraging result is the way in which the whole church is launched or catapulted into contact with the whole community, whereas in so many instances local churches become completely cocooned or 'monasticised' in such a way that they hardly see anyone except themselves.

## Concert of Prayer

The origin of the 18th Century Concert of Prayer was described in *R. T. 105*. On Fridays, especially Friday evenings, we recall promises in the scriptures and pray in particular for situations which humanly speaking seem impossible. One great area of need is for countries which are at present closed to the gospel to open, and for peoples still unreached to be reached. About 25 in the Maze prison, Northern Ireland, join the Concert of Prayer. Correspondence is invited.

In the introduction to *A Faith to Confess* (The 1689 Baptist Confession in modern language) S. M. Houghton explains how the Calvinistic Baptists in England took the Westminster Confession as a whole and made it their own. They shortened the chapter on civil government, considerably enlarged the chapter on the Church, and completely changed the chapter on baptism. In addition they added chapter 20 which concerns the great commission. The time of severe persecution having ended with the accession to the throne of King William in 1688 the Baptists were then emboldened to publish their confession in 1689. It was known as the London Baptist Confession. In 1744 the Calvinistic Baptists of America adopted it with very slender amendments and called it the Philadelphia Confession of Faith.

It was a brilliant idea to add chapter 20. The Confession needed an application of that kind. It is vital that we should relate the glorious truth of the gospel to all nations and now more than ever is global Christianity relevant! However the wording of chapter 20 evidences the marks of haste. It is obscure to say the least!

A chapter on Christian unity as prayed for by our Lord in John 17 would enhance the Confession. Positively such a chapter would urge the responsibility of unity and negatively expose the fallacy that unity can be established without due regard to the centralities of the gospel. Paul's basis for unity is Ephesians 6:4-6. The 1689 Confession is for ministers. While it is useful for teaching it should not be used as a test for new converts. The Confession is meat not milk, and the Church has nurseries in it as well as doctors of divinity.

With the Carey Ministers' Conference due in January considerable thought has been given to the place of the 1689 Confession. What about improvement, amendment and addition? With modern challenges in mind several paragraphs could be sharpened while some chapters could be rewritten especially the aforementioned chapter 20. The article on adoption in this issue highlights progress made in recent years with regard to that truth, and the need to enlarge its emphasis. That could be contemplated with the 1689 Confession in mind and collating that truth with effectual calling. The chapter on sanctification could be improved now that clearer views prevail on positional sanctification.

To our advantage we can rewrite the Confession in contemporary language as Mr. S. M. Houghton, senior editor of the *Banner of Truth*, did with his unique skills (*A Faith to Confess*, Carey Publications, 66 pages, £1.20). With considerable profit we can use the Confession for debates and conferences and also writing articles especially with practical application in mind. But at the end of the day we can never replace the 1689. How can that be done without at the same time creating a void for the first three centuries of our overall distinctive Confessional position?

# Recovering the Doctrine of Adoption

*'Sonship is the apex of redemptive grace and privilege,' . . . 'It staggers imagination because of its amazing condescension and love.'* Prof. John Murray.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning our Sonship, *'There is no higher self-image that the Christian can have, and no doctrine which will more readily help him enjoy the life of faith.'* Sinclair Ferguson.<sup>2</sup>

*'Adoption is the highest privilege that the gospel offers,' . . . 'the entire Christian life has to be understood in the terms of adoption,' . . . 'if you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father.'* J. I. Packer.<sup>3</sup>

The cogent claims above highlight what adoption should mean to us. With regard to our spiritual experience sonship or adoption is *the* ultimate experience.<sup>4</sup> There is no plateau beyond that. It is as sons and daughters that we enjoy the complacent love of our Father and it is as his children that we anticipate the experience of the riches of his grace and love in the coming ages (Eph 2:6).

Union with Christ, Justification by the Father and Adoption into his family, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit: this is *the* experience of Christianity expressed appropriately in the baptismal formula. As I have sought to show in my book *Crisis Experiences* there is a place for all kinds of spiritual experience but we do not need to go off seeking a special experience which we might imagine to be the magic answer to our problems and which might perhaps raise us to a higher realm. There is no reason to feel second class in the sense that we might have missed a super experience. We do not have to hanker after a golden pot at the end of the rainbow. We have the gold. It is our sonship. That is the secret of the Christian life! The most urgent need of Christians in our generation is to recognise what we already have in Christ and to realise our glorious privileges as God's children.

♥ My purpose now will be to expose the thrilling nature of our sonship and contribute toward the recovery of this grand truth to its rightful place. As will be

shown presently adoption has been neglected in the history of the Church. In retrieving this truth we must be careful to preserve proportion. Effectual calling, union with Christ, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification all relate to each other. It is vital to keep to the balance of Scripture (see note 2).

### 1 *What do we understand by adoption?*

The Greek word translated adoption consists of a compound or combination of two words, *huios* (son), and *thesia* (placing), *huiothesia* the placing of a son. You will see that we have already used the terms 'adoption' and 'sonship' synonymously or interchangeably. The only difference is that adoption strictly speaking refers to the actual transition from being an alien to being a son, while sonship points more to the relationship itself.

With regard to human analogies Hendriksen in his commentary on Galatians 4:5 suggests that the NT doctrine of adoption so surpasses anything that takes place on earth that it is futile to look for illustrations from them. There is some truth in what he says but we still need to reckon with the way in which people think today, and also understand the historical background in which this truth came to be asserted during the times of the NT.

In contemporary society the immediate idea of adoption is that of the childless couple who legally adopt babies or very young children to be their own children. There is nothing in that idea which is contrary to the biblical concept except it is limited in comparison to what is involved in our adoption into God's family. Absent is the dynamic concept of grace conveyed in the picture provided by Ezekiel of the infant thrown out into the open field (Ez 16). Original sin presents an enormous problem with regard to spiritual adoption. In natural adoption the parents take it for granted that the child will have the same sinful nature as themselves.

In NT times the concept of Roman adoption was well known. If a nobleman did not have a son by natural birth he would seek to choose a son who could be trained to be his lawful heir. Hence the word adoption was common both in the inscriptions both from the Greek and Roman worlds. Julius Caesar adopted Octavius as his son and heir. Octavius became the Emperor Augustus who reigned over the Roman Empire for 41 years, and who is referred to by Luke (Lk 2:1). Augustus shared in the ruthless attitudes and practices common at that time but historians claim that he improved a great deal and in terms of common grace became the author of much good, organising the affairs of the Empire with great efficiency and even initiating legislation to improve moral standards. As an illustration of what is involved in adoption the Roman practice is helpful because it illustrates the aspect of training and advancing in knowledge and in responsibility.

Christian adoption gives the child a new legal status, confers upon him the privileges of the family, guarantees his share of the inheritance, but overarching

these is a spiritual filial union with the Father, by the Holy Spirit and through union with the Son. All this is effected and made real by the impartation of a new nature by regeneration (Jn 1:12,13). This leads us to take an overall view of what the Bible teaches us about adoption.

## 2 *What the Bible says about adoption*

The Bible has nothing to say about all men being sons of God. From the Bible it is impossible to maintain the concept that God is the 'universal Father of all mankind'. The relationship of men to God is one of sinfulness springing from the alienation and rebellion of ungodliness. That is the consistent teaching whether we read about it in Psalm 14 or Romans 3. There is the potential for men and women to become sons and daughters, but that state can only be brought about by a mighty work of sovereign grace, a reconciliation which comes from Christ himself and is only possible only by the atoning work of Christ. All men everywhere are called to repentance. Until they repent and believe men relate to God as Creator and Judge and cannot claim sonship.

### *Firstly we look at the Old Testament*

The idea of sonship is expressed with regard to the nation of Israel as a whole. 'When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son' (Hos 11:1). Moses was commanded to say to Pharaoh, 'Israel is my firstborn son, Let my son go, so he may worship me' (Ex 4:22).

Israel was required to be faithful to Jahweh since they were chosen to be a treasured possession (Deut 14:1,2). When there was apostasy from the covenant the relationship of sonship was broken. 'How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land – I thought you would call me "Father" and not turn away from following me. But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel' (Jer 3:19,20). As a guardian and provider so Jahweh was a father to Israel. Especially was that seen in the wilderness and in the settlement of Canaan (Deut 32:9-14; Jer 2:3). By faithfulness to the covenant that nation should have experienced the reality of sonship. Concerning the people of Israel Romans 9:4 says 'theirs is the adoption as sons'.

The NT reality of adoption is predicted by Isaiah in his prophecies describing the messianic age:

*To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose what pleases me,  
and hold fast to my covenant –  
to them I will give within my temple and its walls  
a memorial and a name better than sons and daughters (Is 56:4,5).*

A memorial and a name indicates the fame of uniqueness and individuality, not in the sense of human glory but rather in a glory which the redeemed bring to Jahweh on account of his free grace exhibited in their salvation. These eunuchs

were probably regarded as inferior by men but they were loved by God and he promises that he will demonstrate that they are truly part of his family. They will have a name better than sons and daughters which is the language of hyperbole to stress the truth of God's complacent love and esteem for them as his children.

Of David the Lord said, 'He will call out to me, "You are my Father." I will also appoint him my firstborn, the most exalted of the kings of the earth. I will maintain my love to him forever' (Ps 89:26-28).

What was intrinsic and concealed in the old covenant and realised and appreciated in varying degrees by man, becomes the treasured possession of all without exception embraced in the new covenant, 'for they will all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the LORD' (Jer 31:34). The essence of the new covenant is an intimate relationship of adoption, 'You will be my people and I will be your God' (Ez 36:28), a relationship which is guaranteed because a new heart and a new spirit is given to them. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. I will rejoice in doing them good' (Jer 32:40,41).

#### *Secondly we look at the New Testament*

In Galatians Paul compares the old order with the new. He suggests that the old order was a time of childhood learning and preparation, to be compared in some ways to slavery (Gal 4:3), but now that Christ has come, we who believe are all sons of God (Gal 3:26). We must not miss the glory of our relationship as sons dramatically unveiled in the coming of the Son of God. He has come to redeem those under the law 'that we might receive the full right of sons' (Gal 4:5). To ensure the full reality of that in our experience 'God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts' (Gal 4:6). By this means we experience the reality of the Father's love being poured out into our hearts (Rom 5:5). We come to appreciate the power of Psalm 103 which could well be called the adoption psalm:

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his love for those who fear him;  
As far as the east is from the west,  
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.  
As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.*

Love as the source of origin of our adoption is declared by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (1:5). 'In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ.' Likewise at the base of the golden chain of Romans 8:28-30 is the love of the Father. The 'foreknew', is the knowing of the everlasting love with which we are loved, a gracious, electing and irresistible love (Jer 31:3).

The consummation of our adoption is the redemption of our bodies (8:23). At that time in one simultaneous act of omnipotence the whole creation will be

liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God (8:21). Then our adoption will be brought to full fruition and enjoyment. The resurrection will constitute the supreme manifestation of our sonship.

Three groanings are described in Romans 8 which apply to our present condition. We groan, the creation groans, and the Holy Spirit groans as he intercedes for us. The same person of the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are God's children (Rom 8:16). We know in our experience what these groanings are. We know well what it is to suffer with the Lamb and hence we know that we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ. Since we suffer with him we will also share in his glory. That glory will soon be revealed when he recreates this world which will be the place where we enjoy the full inheritance of our Father as his sons and daughters. Our inheritance will be physical and tangible, yet we are warned that the glory of it transcends our present understanding 'no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Cor 2:9).

In the meantime how are we to live as sons and daughters? The basis of holy living has as its appeal likeness to our Father in holiness, 'Be holy just as I am holy' (1 Pet 1:15). John's appeal is that we observe the greatness of that love which the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God. The ethical implication which follows is that we purify ourselves even as he is pure (1 Jn 3:1,2; Rom 8:13). The call to separation from the world in its uncleanness and its idolatry is made on the grounds of our adoption as sons and daughters (2 Cor 6:18).

The concept of adoption is prominent in the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew 5 to 7. All the way through Jesus instructs us as to how we are to live in relationship to our Father. As I will show presently Jesus himself is our model: the pattern for our filial relationship as sons. He is utterly unique as the one and only Son by eternal generation: we are all sons by new birth (Jn 1:12,13). In his humanity he is the firstborn among many brothers (Heb 2:10-18). As he lived to please the Father so should we. Jesus assures us that our Father orders and over-rules all events of providence for our good. He truly cares for us. All our thinking and reasoning therefore must be in accordance to our relationship to our Father. Jesus would have us think of our status as sons and of our relationship of sonship at every point of our lives. Sonship must influence and direct all the decisions that we make. Moreover we are not to be anxious about our needs because our heavenly Father knows all about those needs in their every detail (Matt 6:32). If he cares for sparrows who are the least among the feathered creatures then how much more does he care for his own redeemed sons and daughters?

### *3 The history of the doctrine of adoption*

The steady accumulation of false teachings in the Roman Catholic Church before the time of the Reformation was inimical in the extreme to the idea of the joy of the Christian in having fellowship with the Father and the Son (1 Jn

1:3,4). Penance, indulgences and purgatory serve to generate craven fear, uncertainty and bondage, and hence conflict violently with the truth of a full assurance of faith, and the Holy Spirit's witness with our spirits that we are the children of God (Rom 8:15,16).

Luther was wonderfully used to re-establish the foundational truth of justification by faith alone. That was a magnificent achievement but the tendency was to stop there and not advance towards the development of the truth of adoption. For instance Zacharias Ursinus (1534-1583), author of the brilliant commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, a rich body of divinity of 680 pages, has nothing on adoption.<sup>5</sup> Francois Turretin of Geneva (1623-1687) a well known professor of theology, made adoption an integral part of justification. That may explain why many who have followed in later times have neglected the doctrine of adoption.

Surprisingly the Puritans did little in exploring this truth apart from a few paragraphs here and there such as Roger Drake in a sermon on John 1:12,13.<sup>6</sup> William Ames lectured on the theme in Leyden 1620-22 and later his work *Marrow of Sacred Divinity* included 27 different points of exposition on adoption. John Owen provides a brief exposition of adoption especially as it relates to communion with our Lord Jesus Christ<sup>7</sup> and as we would expect Thomas Watson in his *Body of Divinity*<sup>8</sup> is thoroughly clear and eminently practical in his nine page exposition.

The Westminster divines (1643-48) devoted a chapter of ten lines to adoption (chapter 12 in our 1689 Baptist Confession), in comparison to 32 on effectual calling, 41 on justification, and 24 on sanctification. It is just as well that we do have that brief chapter because most of the systematic theologians subsequently have ignored the doctrine (Charles Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd and A. H. Strong, and for a complete skip over the subject see Louis Berkhof). Some have merely mentioned it in passing like R. L. Dabney who gives this great truth a scant 22 lines! Full marks to the Baptist systematic theologian J. P. Boice who devoted a chapter to the theme (pp. 404-409).<sup>9</sup>

Two writers of the last century wrote books on adoption, namely Robert Candlish of Scotland and R. A. Webb of America, the latter having been recently republished by Lloyd Sprinkle of the U.S.A.

Following in the footsteps of Prof. John Murray, James Montgomery Boice in his recently published systematic theology (which received an extended review in *R.T.* 97) provides a splendid exposition of adoption in the popular yet expository style so much needed today. He is especially helpful in the section 'family privileges' where he points out that the title 'My Father' was startlingly original to those who heard Jesus teach that we should pray in that intimate way.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4 *The nature of adoption*

I am persuaded that the way to appreciate the nature of adoption is to appreciate the filial relationship of Jesus to the Father. Throughout his life he spoke to his

Father. He loved his Father perfectly and willed only to do his will. 'Take this cup from me, Yet not what I will, but what you will' (Mk 14:36). That is the model and pattern for us in our adoption. After his resurrection Jesus put a stress on sonship, 'I am returning to my Father, and your Father' (Jn 20:17).

Love is the key. When the Scripture says 'God is love' we are reminded that 'other person centredness' is the nature of the Trinity. The Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. The Holy Spirit loves the Father and the Son, and proceeds from the Father and the Son to accomplish their will which by concurrence is his will.

There is exclamation in the imperative in 1 John 3:1 which is well expressed in the King James translation, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.' This is specifically the Father's love expressed in an active grace of favour that has secured our redemption. This great love which John insists that we should realise is a love which has established our sonship now so that John emphasises the matter saying '*and that is what we are!*' (1 Jn 3:1 NIV). This love that has been lavished upon us by the Father is seen in the free gift of our relationship as sons and daughters. It is love that begins with grace and ends in complacency, that is, he loves us for what we are in Christ (Jn 14:23; Zeph 3:17; Mal 3:17). The immensity of this love is such that eternity cannot exhaust its marvel.

The love of the Father is explained by John when he points to the length to which this love went for our salvation. He so loved that he gave his only begotten Son (Jn 3:16). Moreover he *so loved* that he not only gave his only begotten Son to come by incarnation but he went much further than that and gave his Son up to be the propitiation for our sins (1 Jn 4:10-21). That is like saying he gave his only Son to be a burnt offering like the ram that took the place of Isaac and was burned up completely in the sacrifice.

Thus the fatherly love of the Father for us is utterly profound as is the love of Christ for us. Christ's love for us is a brotherly love, a love which through the Cross achieves mystical and spiritual union with him. It is a love unquenchable, a love beyond human description (Eph 3:18,19). It is by the love of the Holy Spirit that the immensity of the love of the Father and the Son is brought home to us (Rom 15:30).

We need to go further in our consideration of the nature of adoption to observe our relationship to Christ as brother.

*Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers; He says,  
'I will declare your name to my brothers;  
in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises'  
And again,  
'I will put my trust in him.'  
And again he says,  
'Here am I, and the children God has given me' (Heb 2:11-13).*

By his experience of anguish at the deepest level Jesus is qualified to be our mediator and high priest interceding for us. He does this not only as Lord and Saviour but also as a brother in unity with our humanity. When he says, 'I will put my trust in him' true faith and dependence on the Father is exemplified. The love and trust of Jesus represents the very heart of that filial relationship of Christ to his Father and our Father. That is the pattern for our relationship of adoption.

Adoption is the ultimate experience because it brings us into the relationship of sonship, the enjoyment of that love which the Father lavishes upon us. Sonship is not only an experience which is passive on our part, it is active inasmuch as it calls for a reciprocal love from us. Sometimes this is required under very exacting and trying circumstances. When we are tried and when we suffer acutely we must follow the example of our Head, the firstborn among the brothers. Like him we must show loyal trust and affection for our Father even when we do not understand why we should suffer. When Jesus did not understand he cried out 'My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?' but in his agony he never ceased in his perfect love of his Father. He was still 'My God'.

#### *5 The privileges of our adoption*

The privileges of our sonship are superlative.

The intimate filial relationship to our Father gives us intimate fellowship with him, the right of access in prayer at all times. Our union with Christ guarantees our final redemption that is the glorification of our bodies just as he now has a glorified physical body. Our union with him guarantees our participation in the new creation because we are by adoption heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.

We have the privilege of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit whereby we enjoy a direct assurance of our standing before God and of our salvation. In addition we enjoy his guidance in the affairs and decisions of this life (Rom 8:14-16).

Access to our Father at all times is a choice privilege. People who knock at our door or who telephone when we are exceedingly pressed with work are not always welcome. They might have to wait or they might have to make an appointment. But when a beloved son or daughter comes to see us or telephones everything is immediately put aside because of love. So it is with our heavenly Father. When I come to him it is as if I am the only one and there are no distractions for him. At any time I can go to him. Indeed I am urged to go always without hesitation (Heb 4:14-16).

And then in this dangerous world there is the priceless knowledge of care and protection, as the 1689 Confession eloquently declares of the children of God, they 'are pitied, provided for, and chastened by God as by a Father. He never casts them off but, as they remain sealed to the day of redemption, they inherit the promises as heirs of everlasting salvation'.

The above description includes an essential privilege, a painful one, namely, chastening. Hebrews 12:4-12 is devoted to this crucial aspect of sonship. Our Father's express purpose is to conform us to the likeness of his Son (Rom 8:29). That involves pruning by the Father, cutting off wild growth (Jn 15:2). Because he loves us he will fulfil his purpose for us and perfect us (Ps 138:8). Therefore correction and hardship is inevitable. It is all part of our training and we must learn not to grumble or faint when we are disciplined for our good.

#### *6 The 'bottom line' of adoption*

However it is important to understand that not all suffering in this world comes as chastening. We all share fully in the consequences of the fall. With the rest of creation we are subject to decay and death. That can involve intense mental and physical suffering which has no connection whatever with chastening or spiritual correction.

Sometimes God's children are involved in famine, disease or calamity in such a way that no good reason whatever can be discerned in it. To them it is only unmitigated disaster. Here we come to what we might call the bottom line of adoption and that is that there is no calamity unforeseen by our Father. Job could not make sense of his calamities. Martyrs through the centuries have not at the time been able to see any sense in the disasters that have overcome them and often the churches of which they have been a part.

The Holy Spirit, and our Saviour as High Priest share in all our afflictions whether they are for religious or natural reasons. Our union with Christ is utterly comprehensive, spiritual and physical. Irrespective of the disasters that come, and many different kinds are described in Romans 8 and Hebrews 11, we know that even though we can see no reason and discover no sense in our sufferings, nevertheless our adoption guarantees that nothing at all can change the truth that God is our Father. His promise is certain that everything without exception will work for our good (Rom 8:28).

#### *7 The responsibilities of adoption*

The prime responsibility of adoption stressed with the utmost rigour by our Lord and his apostles is love for the believing family. This responsibility in no way diminishes our responsibility to love all men as ourselves. It was when we were yet sinners that Jesus loved us. One of the reasons for this emphasis on loving the brethren seems obvious. If we do not love the brethren then how is it conceivable that the world will believe? If we can't get love right in the church then to the world our religion is just another curse and deception. Moreover there is nothing more devastating to Christians than the discovery of hatred in the church. Very few today are prepared to insist on love in the church and apply love as an essential test of faith. If a person in the church hates like Cain, then he is no Christian. Even though his creed may be orthodox itself he is no Christian.

John gives three tests for the believer, the doctrinal, the moral and the social. He had the gnostics in mind. In spite of their superior claims they failed all three tests. John shows that we ought to believe rightly concerning the two natures of Christ, the divine and the human, perfectly united in the One Person. We ought to be jealous too for morality and holiness of life. But the greatest stress is laid by the apostle on the social test, that is love for the family. The accumulative stress on this in his letter is simply tremendous (1 Jn 2:9-11; 3:11-18; 4:7-21). It is as though he knew how many would shut their ears to it.

The unity that belongs to the spiritual family is of the same extraordinary kind and genre as that which inheres in the Trinity (Jn 17:20-23). 'The persons of the trinity are not only *beside, with* and *towards* one another; they dwell *in* each other. The great theologians of the early church had a special word for this, *perichoresis*, which is very difficult to translate into English. A kind of union and interpenetration which is incredibly close and intimate is being suggested.'<sup>11</sup>

The modern Ecumenical movement has got it wrong because it has lost the disciplines of Chalcedon, that is of insistence on orthodox biblical belief. But have we of the evangelical and reformed faith got it right when we are so very far removed from the love and unity required by the truth of adoption? Are we gentle with beginners who are stumbling? Are we patient with each other or are we ready to establish an inquisition the moment one error is suspected? How much do we practise the meekness and love of our Saviour, our elder brother, in our great family of which he is the Head?

The privileges of our adoption are superlative. Indeed they are immense, but commensurate with our privileges are the responsibilities to promote love and unity in the family of God.

*Rather than provide a long list of references I will confine these notes to books that are in print or at least are of fairly recent availability.*

<sup>1</sup> John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Banner of Truth. Chapter on adoption, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson in *Pulpit and People*, Essays in honour of William Still, Rutherford House, Essay titled 'Reformed Doctrine of Sonship'. Prof. Ferguson provides an excellent survey of the doctrine in the history of the Church. In discussing the subject he suggests that adoption can be considered as an organising principle for our understanding salvation. It fits in well with a covenantal perspective and does flow out of redemptive history. Furthermore it expresses perfectly the 'already? not yet' tension which characterises the experience of believers. We are children of God but struggle with sin and with ourselves until the completion of our redemption. Only then will our adoption come to its full consummation in the glorification of our bodies (Rom 8).

<sup>3</sup> J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, Hodder, p. 181ff.

<sup>4</sup> Erroll Hulse, *The Believer's Experience*, see

chapter 12, *The Experience of Love in Adoption*. Both the Zondervans and Carey editions are at present out of print.

<sup>5</sup> Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, Pres. and Ref.

<sup>6</sup> Roger Drake, *Puritan Sermons 1659-1689, Cripplegate*, republished by Richard Owen Roberts, U.S.A., 1981, vol. 5 p. 328. This exposition goes further and deeper than most modern works and other writers on the theme.

<sup>7</sup> John Owen, *Works*, Banner of Truth, vol. 2 pp. 207-222.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, Banner of Truth, 1970, p. 231.

<sup>9</sup> J. P. Boice, *An Abstract of Systematic Theology*, American Baptist Publication Society.

<sup>10</sup> James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, I.V.P., 1986, see chapter 9, 'A New Family'.

<sup>11</sup> Donald MacLeod, *Shared Life*, S.U., 1987, p. 58.

# The Carey Family Conference



*Family Tom Lutz, Tom and Sue, and from the left Andy, Bobby and Beth*

Taking as his theme the Fruit of the Spirit Pastor Tom Lutz (Edgewood Reformed Baptist Church, Anderson, Indiana) was much appreciated at this year's Carey Conference held at Becket Hall, Leeds. Using the analogy of baseball he pitched the ball at just the right level. Sue Lutz presented materials for the children on the life and work of Hudson Taylor which was of outstanding quality. Those whose age precluded them from the sessions were keen to learn more of the theme themselves.

Family Lutz as pictured above contributed well to the overall success of the occasion. Concurrent at Becket Hall was another conference of devotees to basketball, mostly tall characters who seemed all to have the same gangley gait like a race apart as though they were perpetually pressing

forward bouncing a basketball. Their friendliness led to a match, one of their junior teams versus the best we could muster. Without the experience and skill of Tom and Andy Lutz plus the athletic versatility of Billy Bygroves it would not have been so much a match as a fiasco. But the Carey team acquitted themselves well and gave much pleasure to the spectators. Timothy Symonds of Cuckfield organised the sports and Anna Symonds played the grand piano with at least one discovery and that was that Psalm 148 in *The Book of Praises* is superb with the tune Camberwell.

In addition to his ministry at the conference Pastor Lutz preached at Cuckfield, Leeds Reformed Baptist Church, and at Leyton in London (Pastor Achille Blaize).



*A section taken from the group photo*



*On your marks!*



*Alec Taylor and Prof. Patrick Palmer  
RT agent in South Africa who  
attended the Family Conference*

# The Centrality of Preaching among the Puritans

by Jim van Zyl

In his famous work on the Christian's Spiritual Warfare, William Gurnall, the Anglican Puritan pastor of the church at Lavenham in Suffolk (1645-1679), likens the Christian to a soldier in spiritual combat. Significantly he also likens the Christian minister to a soldier engaged in preaching as a form of spiritual combat, saying: 'Now, in order to the discharge of this your public trust, I shall point at two duties incumbent on you . . . one to be performed in your study, the other in your pulpit. First duty: in your study acquaint yourselves with God. Second duty: in the pulpit use no other *Sword* but this (the Word of God) and handle it faithfully. The Word of God is too sacred a thing, and *preaching* too solemn a work, to be toyed and played with as is the usage of some, who make a sermon nothing but a matter of wit. Satan budes not for a thousand such squibs and witcracks. Draw thou therefore this *Sword* (of the Word) out of thine own fine scabbard, and strike with its naked edge. This you will find the only way to pierce (your) people's consciences.'

There are areas in our technological and micro-chip age in which the Puritans cannot be of help to us. But they were men who thought in terms of *priorities* and their emphasis upon the ceaseless priority of preaching is urgently in need of revival today.

We will look first at some general truths about their preaching, and then at some particular characteristics. It is a sheer historic fact that, as a body, they were amongst the finest preachers the Church of Christ has ever known. This is not to suggest that we emulate them in toto, but we can learn much from their high view of preaching and from their example which I will now outline.

*Preaching for the Puritans was the highest function of their Pastoral Office*

*The necessity of preaching.* It is not being uncharitable to suggest that the church is today spending a great deal of time on aspects of church life that are not related to expository preaching. In some cases this is unavoidable; in many cases questionable. The Puritans would never have allowed, in any form, the minimising of the pulpit. To touch the Pulpit was to touch the Word of God; to touch the Word of God was to touch not only God's honour but also the heart of true congregational worship. Preaching in one sense was the highest form of worship, for it meant listening to and responding to what God was saying!

William Bradshaw, writing about the Puritans in the 17th century, put it this way: 'they hold that the highest and supreme office and authority of the pastor

is to preach the gospel solemnly and publicly to the congregation by interpreting the written Word of God, and applying the same by exhortations and reproof unto them.' To which we may add the words of the Westminster Directory drawn up by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 'the preaching of the Word being the power of God unto Salvation and one of the greatest and most excellent works belonging unto the ministry of the Gospel, should be so performed that the workman need not be ashamed, but may save himself and those that hear him.'

The elevation of even the *pastoral* office, let alone the 'ministry of counselling', would have been unthinkable for them; that is to say, the *pastoral* over the *preaching* office. Indeed the heart of the pastoral office and function lay precisely in preaching, for preaching was ultimately pastoring people through the Word of God. Preaching was pastoring the sheep at the highest possible level. 'Pastoral theology' as a theological science is not really modern, it was established by the famous William Perkins (1558-1602) one of the earliest of the Puritans and more particularly in his 'The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience'. Yet even he has his priorities right when he says: 'They therefore are thoroughly deceived who think a minister to discharge sufficiently his duty though he preach not, if he keep good hospitality and make peace among his neighbours and perform other works of charity and good life; for if a minister have not this virtue (of preaching) he hath none.'

Richard Sibbes (1577-1635) called it '... the gift of all gifts', and Thomas Hall insists that 'ministers must be preaching, not only they *may*, but they *must* preach. There is a necessity backed with a woe (1 Cor 9:16), so that they must either preach or perish. This must be *done*, or they are *undone*.'

*The reasons for this emphasis upon preaching.* The Puritans were biblically-orientated men. It cannot be stressed enough that their placing of preaching at the very heart of their ministry was done so out of a conviction that there were thoroughly Biblical grounds for doing so.

'Look at Christ,' says Arthur Hildersham, 'for he has set us the supreme example: 'Preaching was the chief work of all that Christ, the chief pastor, was sent to do in his ministry.' Furthermore, it was a crucial link in the salvation of the elect. John Downname says that preaching is 'God's own ordinance which he hath instituted and ordained for the gathering of the saints and building the body of his church, as appeareth from Ephesians 4:11,12. Neither does he use ordinarily, any other means . . . for the true conversion of his children.'

Preaching is also central in building up the saints. Explains Richard Rogers, 'we must consider that God appointed this preaching of his Word to perfect the faith of his elect, they are cleansed from error and grow more sound in the knowledge of the truth. Again the Word quickeneth them in their drowsiness, cheereth them in their heaviness, calleth them back from their wanderings,

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raiseth them up if they have fallen, counselleth them in their doubtful cases; and is a means whereby they are fast settled in a godly course.'

*The central importance the Puritans placed on preaching is also seen in their practice and activity*

So highly did they value preaching that they often appointed men to what was euphemistically called 'Lectureships', in which their only function was to preach. They were usually men who had been ordained. They might now however had a license yet (for political reasons), or had not yet been appointed to a living, or could not get a living because of their Puritan views, or in some cases felt they could not accept the restrictions placed upon them if they were to accept a living. Such men included the silver-tongued Henry Smith (1560-1591). Even Richard Baxter (1615-1691) was a 'lecturer' at Bridgnorth. These 'Lectureships' were supported financially by a Town Council, or a Guild, or a group of merchants, or a wealthy businessman, or even members of the nobility.

So highly did they value preaching that it affected the internal architecture (increasingly) of church buildings. When some of the Puritans began to erect their own buildings they placed the pulpit in the front of the church building at the very centre, with an open Bible upon it.

Their regard for preaching also affected their output. Some laboured prodigiously, preaching 6-8 sermons a week, and even rising to 10-12 for some ministers in the larger towns or cities.

Their esteem for preaching affected their view of the Sacraments. Although valuing the Sacraments highly, they consistently made the Sacraments subordinate to the Word. The Sacraments *sealed* the Word preached; they did not *convey* God's Word of Grace. Their position was the very opposite of Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645), who uncompromisingly placed the Altar over and above the pulpit; to him the Sacraments were superior to the preached Word. Here is his argument: 'Reverence,' says Seavers, describing Laud's position, 'is properly accorded to the altar, in his view, because it is "the greatest place of God's residence upon earth. I say the greatest, yes greater than the pulpit, for there it is *Hoc est Corpus meum*, "This is my body"; but in the pulpit, it is at the most but *Hoc est Verbum meum*, "This is my word". And a greater reverence no doubt is due to the Body than to the Word of our Lord.'

Again, they placed the preaching of the Word above the Liturgy. Their argument was that if you have long liturgical services the people will not learn to pray for themselves. But why should they learn to pray for themselves? Because

of the 'universal priesthood of all believers'. If, however, they heard more of the Word expounded, they would learn how to pray and this would enable them truly to act as 'priests of the New Covenant'.

Again, a close look at the Puritan preacher preparing in his study to preach betrays his priority. Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) devoted almost all his time to study. 'How he spent his time, in addition to preaching carefully prepared sermons, became evident upon the posthumous publication of his manuscripts. Furthermore it was in fact this cure of souls that motivated his study.' If a man were to preach and teach *acceptably*, then he had to *earn* the right to do so. Faith did not abolish, but improve reason and reason in turn if properly sanctified, improved the eye of faith as it discerned the depths of the Word and how to apply it relevantly to the flock. 'So,' as G. R. Cragg expresses it, 'the conscientious minister gave himself to study with a kind of maniacal zeal and considered it a sacrifice when matrimony reduced his daily span of work from fourteen hours to eight or nine.' It is important to understand that Cragg is referring to the *zeal* and hard work of their sermon preparation when he uses the word 'maniacal' and not to their attitudes! It must also be conceded that we do not have the same kind of time in our 20th century as the Puritans had in theirs, to prepare sermons, but this is still no excuse for poor preparation and it is their sense of priority that I am anxious for us to grasp.

Finally, so deeply did the Puritans feel about their 'liberty' to preach that they were prepared to suffer profoundly for it. During the Marian persecution under Mary I (1516-1558, 'Bloody Mary'), some 800 ministers fled to the Continent for safety and men like Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer risked their lives because they wished to preserve the free preaching of the Word. During the winter of 1662 between 1500 and 2000 ministers, some of them the finest in the Realm, suffered ejection under Charles II, rather than violate their consciences and accede to the Act of Uniformity. Archbishop Edmund Grindal, who ought to be treated with more sensitivity by evangelicals of today, was ruthlessly sequestered from his archiepiscopal functions in the early 1580s by Elizabeth I, whom he dared to take to task because of her suppression of 'prophesyings' or preaching. He held the classic Protestant-Reformed position that in the NT the minister of the Gospel was 'prophesying' or '*forthtelling*' the Word of God when he was preaching. He did not define the word in the modern charismatic sense. Grindal died alone, saddened, half-deaf and half-blind. But we can be sure that the King of kings treated him with greater kindness than his own sovereign did.

#### *The preparation of the sermon*

Since, as I have shown, the Puritans believed in the primacy of preaching, they were careful to prepare their own souls as well as give careful attention to the content and structure of their materials. Next time I will describe ten characteristics of Puritan preaching which could serve to enrich our preaching today.

*(to be continued)*

# News



*Margaret and Tom Nettles, Tim Symonds and Robert and Joe Nettles (see News).*

## Kenya

Geoff Thomas has just returned from his two week visit to Keith Underhill which time was greatly used for the encouragement and advancement of the work. Geoff says that the outstanding feature is the healthy diversity of character in the assembly in Nairobi (Pastor Keith Underhill) which is growing steadily.

The Reformed Baptist Mission Services of America have fulfilled an outstanding service in collecting a large portion of the funding required for a new building which is urgently needed. A contractor has agreed to undertake the work and by now a contract should have been signed.

## The U.S.A.

Readers will be sorry to learn from the article by Bill Ascol, that Tom Nettles has had to resign his position as professor of Church history at the Mid America Baptist Theological Seminary. The issue is strictly doctrinal. As we would expect from Christians of that calibre, no personal quarrel has cast shadows on this issue.

Pastors Bill and Tom Ascol have visited Dr. Grey Allison who is the president of M.A.B.T.S. and confirmed that the issue is one of doctrinal understanding. This highlights the difficulty that exists in persuading Southern Baptists that the reformed faith of the founding fathers is not only viable but practical. The booklet, *An Introduction to the Southern Baptists* (Carey Publications, 32 pp., £1.20) by Tom Nettles describes the beliefs of the founding fathers of the movement. Needless to say Tom Nettles holds the position of the founding fathers. His book *By His Grace and For His Glory* (442 pp., Baker Book House) describes the historical, theological and practical role of the doctrines of grace in Baptist life.

## Canada

David Bugden is due to take up the pastorate of the Reformed Baptist church at St. John which until now has been led by Professor Hugh Flemming who recently visited the U.K. (see report on evangelism at Chelmsley Wood, Birmingham). Bill and Sharon James of Geneva Road Reformed Baptist Church, Darlington, have been

formally set apart for a three-year course at Toronto Baptist Seminary. Don Garlington is now a tutor at the seminary and Geoff Adams continues to provide sterling leadership role as the principal of the seminary. Readers in Canada should note that our agents Max and Linda Latchford are moving to Vancouver.

### **South Africa**

Martin Holdt has just completed his third edition of the eight page broadsheet which has the title *Reformation South Africa*. This paper is vigorous in its presentation and extremely effective. Martin reports that the recently concluded annual Reformed conference at Skogheim was fully attended and of particular encouragement was the record number of black pastors who attended this largely being possible because of the support of R.B.M.S. in the U.S.A. Dr. Morton Smith of the U.S.A. was the main speaker and he took as his theme, 'Preaching Christ from the Old Testament'.

Martin Holdt reports that there is encouragement with some Dutch Reformed students who appear to have some excitement about the power of the doctrines of grace. For many years the Dutch Reformed Church has been characterised by a nominal attitude to the Reformed faith taking it for granted as an academic matter rather than that which has dynamism as is illustrated by great Christian leaders in the past.

### **Israel**

Baruch Maoz of Rehovit near Tel Aviv who has led the G.T. church from its inception, writes to say that there are nine applications for membership which at present stands at 50.

The Grace and Truth Christian Assembly (G.T.) was founded in 1976 in

Rehovit. Baruch has persevered through many setbacks and difficulties that have struck both from within and from without. Sometimes the church has been the object of repeated campaigns of intimidation, physical and social harassment and damage to the property. G.T. maintains an open fellowship with many churches in Israel while at the same time seeking to promote the distinctives of the Reformed faith. Baruch is involved in a vigorous publishing work in Israel, a ministry which is funded by Christian Witness to Israel (C.W.I.). A number of excellent titles have been published in Hebrew including Jim Packer's *Knowing God*.

G.T. and C.W.I. are not formally linked. While C.W.I. has provided a supporting role in relating to G.T., the church was not founded by C.W.I. and is not in any way controlled or funded by C.W.I. However both bodies maintain a close working relationship and are supportive of each other's ministries. C.W.I. was founded 150 years ago at the instigation of Robert Murray McCheyne and Andrew Bonar. C.W.I. supports workers dedicated to Jewish evangelism in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, France, Israel and the British Isles. C.W.I. publish a 20 page magazine of outstanding quality. The March-May 1988 issue carried details of the Shabbat covenant as well as a 4 page review of Paul Johnson's recently published book, *A History of the Jews*, 643 pp., Weidenfeld and Nicholson, £16.95.

Baruch Maoz' address is PO Box 75, Rishon LeTzion, Israel 715000. He is due to speak at a number of meetings in the south of England from October 2nd-9th. Details are printed in the Sept.-Nov. C.W.I. magazine, address C.W.I., 'Seven Trees,' 44 Lubbock Road, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5JX.

Following the Carey Family Conference the editor asked Pastor Alec Taylor to sum up the substance of his materials by answering the following questions:

## Inner Healing

*What is the Nature of Inner Healing?*

Inner Healing is a form of prayer-counselling which seeks the healing of past hurts. We are told that these hurts are responsible for present emotional, spiritual and psychological problems. Counsellors thoroughly probe into the past of those counselled and then encourage visualization, a technique which so concentrates the mind, that the Lord Jesus is imagined until he becomes real and tangible. Past hurts are vividly relived with Jesus imagined into the situation, giving comfort and encouragement (Roman Catholic charismatics generally visualize Mary into the hurt). 'Words of Knowledge' are often given to throw further light on the hurt; these 'words' are usually false and in themselves very hurtful. Those counselled often find another voice speaking through them, for instance of a child as they are regressed to childhood. Bible verses used to justify such practices, such as Luke 4:18,19; John 14:27; Romans 12:2. On examination we find these haven't the remotest connection. Inner Healing is fraught with danger:

1. Though warning against the occult, it unwittingly dabbles with demonic forces. Agnes Sanford, who pioneered the practice, adapted her ideas from C. J. Jung, the Swiss psychoanalyst. Jung received many of his notions from a spirit guide called 'Philemon'.

2. Responsibility for present sin is often blamed upon others who have hurt us in the past.

3. Inner Healing teachers are very weak in their theology of Biblical repentance, justification and sanctification.

4. Those counselled are left in a very vulnerable position, having an

unhealthy dependance upon their counsellor.

5. Inner Healing is leaving a trail of wrecked lives. Many who have been treated have lost what little faith they had, and are bitter and confused.

*Can you give an example of Inner Healing?*

Yes, I could give several examples. I was very moved at the Carey Family Conference by the testimony given by a sister, following my paper on Inner Healing. She told us, 'As a young Christian, I was one day visited by my church worker. She knew about my background which was a pretty bad one; I had been through quite a lot. She suggested to me that we should have a time of prayer. . . . She started to pray and she started to visualize. As she visualized, she saw my mother as a witch around a witch's cauldron (my mother has never been involved in witchcraft). At that time she was pregnant, carrying me. She said that my mother was cursed, that I was cursed, and that my children were cursed. She went on to say that I needed this Inner Healing to deal with the hurts of my life (and there were plenty). What happened next was horrific! I can't really begin to describe what happened, except that I knew the grace and the blood of the Lord protecting me. During it, and after it, I was convinced that what we actually entered in was a seance. Something entered into the room and took control; it took control of half of me — it was as if I was split in two. The left half where she was praying and laying on hands did the most awful things. I started to shake; I couldn't control my limbs; my eyelids twitched and I spoke in a man's voice. The right

side was the Lord's completely. I wasn't afraid at that time; I wasn't terrified as I was afterwards. This went on for about four hours. All the time she kept telling me I had spirits of oppression, spirits of fear, spirits of this, spirits of that, and that there was so much inner healing needed. At the end of that four hours I was left a total wreck; I was absolutely terrified. I believed that I was cursed, I believed my children were cursed. I was a young Christian, I trusted her. She left me and that evening I didn't tell my husband anything about it. I was in too much of a state to talk about it.

The next morning, I got up and walked into the sitting room. There was an iciness in that room that I can never explain, it was like a cold, cold damp. I screamed and ran into the bedroom. I poured all this out with my husband and we went and prayed, and whatever it was that was there, went.

I just want to say to any of you that hear or know of such a practice in your area, warn people against it. The kind of ministry I went through, if you can call it ministry, and I don't, affected all the young people in our church. We live in an inner city and there were many hurt people. Inner healing is a practice which I believe is spreading. I want to use my testimony to warn others. The hurt that is done is just terrible.

*What books are advocating and spreading this teaching?*

Most evangelical bookshops sell books on Inner Healing. Those generally

displayed are:

David A. Seamands  
*Healing of Memories* (Scripture Press)  
*Healing of Damaged Emotions*  
(Scripture Press)

Rita Bennett  
*Emotionally Free* (Kingsway)  
*How to Pray for Inner Healing for Yourself and Others* (Kingsway)

Betty Tapscott  
*Inner Healing through Healing of Memories* (privately published).

Jim Glennon  
*Your Healing is Within You* (Hodder)  
— one chapter on Inner Healing.

Other authors on books on Inner Healing are: Agnes Sanford; John and Paula Sanford; Morton Kelsey; Ruth Carter Stapleton. Roman Catholic authors are Dennis and Matthew Linn; Francis MacNutt.

*What books have been produced to remedy this teaching?*

Sadly, books that directly counter this teaching are few and far between. They are:

Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon  
*The Seduction of Christianity* (Harvest House) — especially chapters 9 to 12.

Dave Hunt  
*Beyond Seduction* (Harvest House) — especially chapters 10 and 11.

Peter Masters  
*The Healing Epidemic* (The Wakeman Trust) contains an excellent chapter analysing and answering this teaching in a biblical fashion.

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#### 'THE MYTH OF INNER HEALING'

by Alec Taylor — Tape 1

1. What is Inner Healing?
2. The practice of Inner Healing
3. Is it Biblical?
5. The peril of Inner Healing

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#### 'THE MYTH OF INNER HEALING'

by Alec Taylor — Tape 2

6. A Biblical Answer
7. Two testimonies of people who received so-called Inner Healing
8. Discussion led by Pastors Alec Taylor and Erroll Hulse

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# Books

I have chosen four books for brief review. The first a biography to warm the heart. The second on Christian unity because we ought not to think that unity is for the Ecumenical Movement and therefore has nothing to do with us. The third is a fine book for children and we are always in need of such. The fourth is a systematic theology of no small significance.

**A heart set free – The life of Charles Wesley.** Arnold Dallimore, 272 pp., E.P., £5.95.

John and Charles Wesley are famous as founders of Methodism. This year brings these men into public view again for it is the 200th anniversary of the death of Charles and the 250th anniversary of their conversion.

Of the great hymnwriters Charles Wesley was the most prolific. We are regularly reminded of his gift as a hymnwriter by the enjoyment we derive from his hymns. But Charles was much more than a poet. He was a preacher and evangelist of dauntless courage. He knew what it was to be attacked by mobs and what it was to persevere in the face of mortal danger.

Arnold Dallimore is a specialist in 18th Century history and is able to convey so well the spirit of those times. Especially does the atmosphere of revival come through the pages. In order to benefit the reader should not skip chapters but rather follow the life through; boyhood at school, study at Oxford, the missionary to Georgia, conversion, preaching in the open air, an amazing and thrilling work of aggressive evangelism, differences and divisions, a really successful marriage, the prodigious hymnwriter, and the joys and sorrows of old age. The book is illustrated generously and is well set out.

**One in Truth – Fighting the Cancer of Division in the Evangelical Church.** Robert Amess, 157 pp., Kingsway, £4.95.

The author claims that evangelicalism is not marked by mutual trust affection as it should be but rather by distrust and animosity. He asserts that there is a party mentality, a contentious spirit, and a love of controversy. Robert Amess who has contributed at the Carey Conference for ministers does not compromise biblical principle as he strives for more unity. He boldly addresses those issues which should never divide us. We are not obliged to agree about everything but we are obliged to maintain unity with all believers to the greatest degree possible without injuring the gospel. The issue addressed of most concern is the contention, probably correct, that disunity and lack of love is the foremost reason why there is the peril of *Ichabod* (the Hebrew word for 'the glory has departed') being written across many churches (p. 12). I agree entirely with the author in his burden and concern and stand with him in his call for love and unity among the pastors and churches. The only criticism I have is a technical one, namely that Kingsway have been unduly slack in their proofreading and the whole would have been better for one more round of refinement and polish.

**Signposts from Proverbs.** Rhiannon Weber, illustrated in colour by Lawrence Evans, 99 pp. spiral, Banner of Truth, £3.95.

Do you maintain daily lively family worship? Recently I spent a day with a family where the young children had learned the Westminster Shorter Catechism. There was an evident intelligent knowledge and enjoyment of the truth by the young children who could discuss the differences between justification, sanctification and

### **Carey Family Conference 1989**

*Monday 31st July to Saturday 5th August 1989*

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Main speakers will be Thom Smith (U.S.A.) and Geoff Thomas.

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For details write to Conference Secretary:

Lesley Simmons, Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, COOKRIDGE, Leeds LS16 7NH.

### **Carey Conference for Ministers**

*Tuesday 3rd January to Thursday 5th January 1989*

College of Ripon and York St. John, RIPON, Yorkshire

Theme – The 1689 Confession

Speakers – John Armstrong (U.S.A.), Robert Oliver, Geoff Thomas, David Kingdon, and others.

### **Tercentenary of the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith**

*Friday and Saturday 8th and 9th September 1989*

WEMBLEY ARENA, LONDON (maximum seating, 12,000)

Speakers Tom Nettles and Joel Gregory of the U.S.A., Drs. Robert Oliver, Raymond Brown and Barrie White of the U.K.

Visitors from many countries are expected. The two day celebration was initiated by the *Particular Baptist Fund* (chairman Jack Hoad) and fifteen different Baptist organisations committed to the 1689 have been involved, including the editor on behalf of the Carey Conference. Interest is such that far from being too large, the venue may yet prove too small. Further details to follow.

adoption. It requires prayer and imagination to provide variety and interest in family worship. Here is a book which will add to the repertoire of biblical exercises to be happily enjoyed. The proverbs are printed usefully into 32 different categories and the book is a pleasure to handle.

**Systematic Theology.** Charles Hodge, 564 pp., Baker. Charles Hodge (1797-1878) trained over 2,000 students at Princeton Theological Seminary. His *Systematic Theology* was his magnum opus, three volumes, which have now been abridged into

this single handsome volume. The work has been skillfully and judiciously executed and will be an extremely valuable addition to the libraries of those who love sound theology. John H. Gerstner declares of this one volume abridgement, 'this is probably the century's most important event in Reformed systematic theology.' That is probably too generous. I would say that Berkhof, and the recent republication of Dabney, as well as the contemporary James Montgomery Boice (see review in *R.T.* 95) begin as equals at the starting blocks, and that for influence the latter will probably have the most effect because of its contemporaneity and relevance for today.

# A Great Denominaton Degraded

*A Response to 'Upgrade in a Great Denomination' (see R.T. 101)  
by Bill Ascol, pastor of First Baptist Church, Clinton, Louisiana.*

In *R.T. 101* our dear friend and esteemed colleague Dr. Tom Nettles gave a wonderful account concerning recent occurrences in the 'battle for the Bible' which continues to rage within the Southern Baptist denomination in America. With his amazingly keen eye for historical theology, he drew very striking connections between the present crisis in the S.B.C. and the downgrade which faced the Baptist Union of England in Spurgeon's day. Reformed Baptists in general and Southern Baptists in particular can learn much from Dr. Nettles' analysis of the recent 'mood-change' in the denomination. In short, there is much in his report with which this writer can agree. While Dr. Nettles acknowledges 'the battle in Southern Baptist life is not yet won and many problems remain unresolved', this writer would like to question his conclusion 'the direction is UPGRADE and much good is being done'.

If a man's wife was dying of cancer and the doctor in charge of her treatment reported that the massive doses of radiation therapy used successfully to arrest the cancer had terminally damaged the patient's vital organs, the woman's condition could hardly be considered to have been UPGRADED. The patient is still terminally afflicted. In the hands of a zealous but somewhat misguided physician the alleged cure has become a deadly poison. It is this writer's conviction that such an analogy is best suited to describe the real situation in the S.B.C.

The 'conservative resurgence' so-called is spearheaded by Southern Baptist pastors who are for the most part 'decisional regenerationists' theologically and 'hyperpragmatists' methodologically. Add to this the fact that most of the high-profile spokesmen for the movement are decidedly Arminian, and one cannot help wondering if such a 'physician' is capable of effectively giving treatment to the 'tumorous patient' in the first place.

Dr. Nettles mentioned Dr. Larry Lewis, a conservative/inerrantist elected to the presidency of a Southern Baptist agency (i.e., the Home Mission Board) as a result of the recent conservative resurgence. One would want to rejoice at the prospects of a 'Bible believer' heading up an agency which is responsible for leading Southern Baptists in taking the gospel to every corner of America. Any inclination to rejoice diminishes quickly, however, when Dr. Lewis demonstrates his understanding of what Jesus meant when he said, 'Go and make disciples.' On April 21st this writer attended a Southern Baptist seminary chapel service (accompanied by the editor of *R.T.*) at which Dr. Lewis spoke. He shared a recent experience of having 'led a Muslim to faith in Christ' while on an aeroplane ride. After having spent some time sharing with the man concerning his need of Jesus Christ as his Saviour, Dr. Lewis said (extending his hand toward the hand of his potential convert):

'Imagine that my hand is the hand of Jesus Christ. It's not his hand, but just imagine that it is. Would you, by simply clasping my hand with your hand, take Jesus Christ to be your Saviour?'

The man followed Dr. Lewis's instructions, and the president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board summarily pronounced him a Christian. In that one extended hand, decisional regenerationism and hyper-pragmatism kissed each other.

The writer cannot help wondering how long it will be until 'Hand-to-Hand Evangelism' makes its debut as the latest programme designed to 'win America for Christ!'

Dr. Nettles referred to the Report of the 'Peace Committee' at the 1987 meeting of the S.B.C. While Dr. Nettles pointed out that the report sounded some definite notes of encouragement, the out-working of the report within various denominational agencies remains questionable. Dr. Roy Honeycutt, acting in response to the Peace Committee report, led his trustees and administration both to elect a conservative to the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (in Louisville, Kentucky) and give tenure to a notoriously liberal female professor of theology! So we see that in at least one instance (with others to follow, no doubt), peace in the S.B.C. means extending a hand to the right as well as the left of the theological spectrum.

Dr. Nettles gave a glowing report of the two 'Grace preachers' who participated in the 1987 convention meeting. Both of these men are powerful preachers of God's Word, and their ministries have been greatly blessed by God. It would have been wonderful to have had them back to speak this year (or even someone else who believes like they do!). However, the theme for the 1988

pre-convention Pastors' Conference was flamboyantly presented as 'Growing the Greatest Churches Since Pentecost'. The sermon topics read like so many testimonials from the Fuller Institute for Church Growth. It was 'mega-church' mania at its finest.

A 'mega-church', for those not familiar with the nomenclature, is a religious institution whose membership includes multiplied thousands, and whose actual congregation approximates about 35% to 40% of that number. If this assessment seems harsh to the reader, then consider the following realities.

1. Official 1987 statistics from Southern Baptist Convention offices in Nashville, Tennessee, reveal the following:

Total resident membership:

10,399,810 (70.6%)

\*Total non-resident membership:

4,327,960 (29.4%)

Total combined membership

14,727,770

\*(Some estimates place this number closer to 7,000,000 or 50%.)

At least 30% of the denomination is 'non-resident', that is, they have moved away from the area where their church membership is and have not even bothered to establish a formal church relationship in their new location! Of the remaining 70% whose whereabouts are known, only about 40% of those actually attend congregational meetings (this includes the infrequent as well as the regular attender). Simple arithmetic reveals that on any given Lord's Day the S.B.C. cannot seriously count on more than 4,159,924 warm bodies gathered in its churches for worship! This writer is further of the conviction that in the average Southern Baptist church, through years of defective theology and evangelistic methodology, no more than one half of the members in

attendance have any real saving hope in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. If one is honest enough to view the S.B.C. from the standpoint of the number of its disciples for Jesus Christ (rather than the number of its decisions recorded), then 2,000,000 may be the number that most accurately reflects the strength of the denomination.

2. The June issue of a Baptist state paper carried an article entitled, 'Non-Resident Members Sap Energy of S.B.C.'. The article told of a study conducted by Dr. Ebbie Smith, a professor of ethics at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. Among other things, Dr. Smith's study revealed 'the S.B.C.'s growth, though marginal, may be more illusion than reality'. Dr. Smith said, 'We need to admit to ourselves that nearly 37 out of every 100 Southern Baptists are non-resident members . . . they do not live anywhere near where their church membership is.' A shocking statistic shown in Dr. Smith's study concerned a 'disturbing trend' in the number of children under the age of six years who are being baptised. 'Since 1966 we have baptised about 40,000 children in this very young age bracket; 2,900 were baptised in just one year — 1986.' So in practice at least, Southern Baptists are moving toward a position that this writer would describe as 'latent infant baptism'.

3. In the time that has transpired since the appearance of Dr. Nettles' article in this magazine, he has been asked to resign his position as professor of church history at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee. Lauded as the 'conservative alternative' to the S.B.C.'s six denominational seminaries, it is now abundantly clear that the conservatives have little use (and even less room!) for

a professor who stands in the theological stream of the founders of the S.B.C.! In the words of one of the leaders of the 'conservative resurgence', 'You just can't grow churches if you believe those things' (a reference to the doctrines of free grace).

These realities, and many others, bring this writer to the conclusion that the Southern Baptist Convention, while not necessarily travelling on a 'downgrade' concerning the authority of Scripture, has definitely been 'degraded' through the pervasive influence of faulty theology and questionable evangelistic methodology. The patient may not die of the cancer of liberalism and neo-orthodoxy, but she may well die from the massive doses of decisional regenerationism and hyper-pragmatism which come with the treatment prescribed by the present conservative leadership in the S.B.C.

All is not hopeless, however. Our sovereign God is still on his throne, ruling and over-ruling his universe. He is able to manifest the truth of his sovereign grace to those who so tenaciously defend the inerrancy and infallibility of his Word. He continues to raise up within Southern Baptist ranks pastors and teachers who love the truths of free grace. Christians around the world must pray for those who labour within the confines of the Southern Baptist denomination, both in works of reformation and church planting. God may well dispose of the Southern Baptist Convention by placing it on the trash heap of presumptuous and apostate denominations. He may bring many within its ranks back to the theological foundations of the founding fathers. It is this for which the writer prays, and for which this writer labours to the Glory of God!

# Upgrade Reaffirmed

*An open letter to Bill Ascol from Tom Nettles*

*This realistic and much-needed addition to my recent 'Upgrade' article I would simply say is further evidence for my basic contention. I do not claim that Southern Baptist life is now a haven where the preachers of free and sovereign grace may roam unhindered, applauded by all as maintainers of truth for the saints and promulgators of the only hope of life for sinners. There is much opposition and innumerable attempts to badger and intimidate. But ten years ago what Southern Baptist preacher would have been able or willing to offer such an analysis as is now spread before us by you? You are a 'maintainer and promulgator' who has been 'badgered and intimidated', but Ascol lives, and many others who carry his concerns. Even more now than 12 months ago.*

*The success of conservatives in taking the helm of S.B.C. agencies and institutions does not represent the introduction of a dangerous cure into a dying patient. The supplanting of the liberal mentality is good; many of them will leave. The conservative replacements, who until the last ten years have kept their noses pretty much out of denominational politics, are simply relocating. Their success has not introduced a new substance. Arminianism is better than Socinianism.*

*Moreover, Calvinists have never sought to become a political force within the Southern Baptist Convention, even though they have the greatest historical pedigree to support such an effort. The 'upgrade' that I see has been the effect of salt and light, not trustee power. I certainly do not despise the position of trustees or denominational heads and, if God gives us an historic Baptist Calvinist in one of those positions, I will rejoice*

*greatly. But the one-man-at-a-time and one-church-at-a-time reformations that come, not from a vote victory, but from the power of the truth are the fruits that cause me to rejoice in the harvest.*

*It is true that the anecdote shared about the decisionistic evangelism practiced on the Muslim could be repeated more times than any of us have the strength to bear. But Dr. Lewis did speak with the man 'concerning his need of Jesus Christ as his Saviour', and so he obviously believes in the lostness of men without Christ and the necessity of salvation. A passionate commitment to the facts and vocabulary of the Gospel is a great advantage; our Reformation must insist on a biblical understanding of the nature and definition of the Gospel.*

*Even though there is a continued hand extended to the left in many of our institutions, that one was also extended to the right indicates at least a glance in the right direction. The new addition at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary by the way, will be able conscientiously and without mental reservation to sign the articles of faith of the seminary, articles approved by Manly, Boyce, and Broadus, among others. And while one 'notoriously liberal female professor of theology' was receiving tenure, a missionary who denied some of the miracles of Jesus was relieved of his duties on the mission field and brought back. Yes, mixed signals, but at least they are beginning to be mixed with some of the right ingredients.*

*The facts clearly stated in Professor Ebbie Smith's analysis of Southern Baptist Churches cause us great concern. But it is merely a sociological way of saying what the concerned theologian has been saying*

# News from Malaysia

Dr Poh was released from detention on 17th September 1988, subject to stringent conditions. For instance, he may not be absent from home from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Dr. Poh has made good use of his time, having written three treatises one of which, an evangelistic tract *God's Way*, is now published. The second of the manuscripts is on the nature of a Reformed Baptist Church and the third on boy-girl relationships.

It was on the 27th October last year that about 80 were arrested and this number increased to over 100, most of whom are now released. These events stimulated a worldwide interest in the work of the gospel as well as drawing the attention of the secular press in many countries. Now about a year later three Christians are still detained. Of very special concern is the wellbeing of Joshua, a young Malay Christian whose ill-health and detention has occasioned considerable anxiety. The churches in Malaysia have been encouraged by the knowledge of the affectionate interest and remembrance of others in many countries.

Robert and Rachel Oliver visited churches in Malaysia and Singapore during August. They were impressed by the continuing spirituality and zeal of these assemblies. Christians are well grounded in doctrine but deeply exercised to know more. It was good to see their concern for the cause of Christ which seems greater even than it was a year ago. In both Singapore and Malaysia, Reformed Christians have a grasp of the significance of literature among the churches and to bring other believers to an appreciation of the doctrines of grace.

Robert and Rachel travelled to Thailand where they appreciated the opportunity to make acquaintance with various churches and came to know a very different set of difficulties that confronts believers there.

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*for years. We historic Baptists must continue to preach that 'We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh' (Phil 3:3); and, that only those who are born of the Spirit will manifest the fruit of the Spirit and are fit material for the spiritual building that the Lord Jesus is constructing; and that those who are born such are born not of the will of man, but of God.*

*The greatness of our opportunity may be measured by the greatness of our opposition. If no one were being affected, then no one would be concerned. Therefore, we should not think that*

*opposition (even the loss of a teaching position) signifies that our message has no effect and that God's blessing does not crown our efforts. On the contrary.*

*I believe, my brother, that you make my case when you say, 'He continues to raise up within Southern Baptist ranks pastors and teachers who love the truths of free grace'. It seems to me that we are of one mind in the matter. I lament everything that you lament, and you rejoice in all in which I rejoice. I simply want to see things from the standpoint of the ground that is being gained, rather than from the standpoint of how much there still remains to cover. The battle is the Lord's.*

Please note Editor's new address:

ERROLL HULSE  
75 WOODHILL ROAD  
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## Correspondence

The following letter from Dr. Angel Rendle Short of 13 Gilbert Street, Buderim, Queensland 4556, AUSTRALIA.

*Dear Sir,  
I write in connection with two books which are on sale from Christian Bookshops:*

*Intended for Pleasure by Ed and Gaye Wheat, published by Scripture Union  
Act of Marriage by Tim La Haye*

*These two volumes were on the book stall of a recent Christian Family Conference.*

*My viewpoint is that of a happily married mother of one son and six daughters all of whom are married and we have eight grandchildren. This family history leaves little room for any personal inhibition or hang-up! My medical experience has been in the fields of Gynaecology and General Practice, covering such matters as sexually transmitted diseases and marriage counselling.*

*I find myself strongly critical of these two books. One senior statesman in evangelical Christendom has described La Haye's The Act of Marriage as Christian pornography. This description would also well fit Intended for Pleasure.*

*The thrust of both these writings is to elevate the sexual orgasm to the ultimate*

*in human experience; and achieving of this as being the highest priority in Christian marriage. One can best describe this philosophy as Christian humanism. The consequences of such explicitly sexual writing are widespread and penetrating, viz.:*

- 1. A hidden spiritual bondage by the devil in the lives of spouses with a very real possibility of secret enjoyment of the extraordinarily detailed description of human sexuality.*
- 2. Sexual burnout, which can especially apply to the woman spouse.*
- 3. Infertility through overuse of the contraceptive pill.*
- 4. Overuse of the sexual function over the years with possible long term ill effects.*
- 5. The hidden effects on the children within the family unit where they unconsciously pick up the values and priorities of their parents.  
And so one could go on. . . .*

*In the unsanctified secular world, of course, it is this type of explicit writing which undoubtedly contributes to our present appalling upsurge in crimes of sexual violence and child abuse.*

*I would therefore ask Christian booksellers to give most serious reconsideration to the promotion and selling of these two books.*

*I write only out of concern for the 'Body of Christ'.*

*Yours sincerely,*

**Editor**  
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