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# REFORMATION TODAY



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Norman Porter, pastor of Orangefield Baptist Church, Belfast, Northern Ireland (see front cover, *RT* 113), was taken to be with the Lord during March while at the annual Irish Baptist Pastors' Conference. As a pastors' pastor, our brother was dearly loved. He was a combination of Bunyan's Great Heart, Faithful and Valiant for Truth. He is pictured here with Daniel Webber of the EMF at the Carey Ministers' Conference in January this year, where he gave an inspiring opening address.

## **IFRB**

So far the response has been universally positive with responses from various parts of the world. Near at hand is the example of the Leeds Reformed Baptist Church. At a church members' meeting on April 17th there was unanimous agreement to join IFRB as a church. Two abstained from voting because they had not read the four page leaflet included in *RT* 120, but later expressed their wholehearted approval. Supplies of this leaflet are available on request.

## **RT and IFRB**

Our readers are assured that the affairs of the International Fellowship of Reformed Baptists (IFRB), launched with *RT* 120, will not intrude on the balance of doctrine, biography, history and news which we strive to maintain. We rely on our supporters to recommend others to subscribe.

## **Muslim population and other corrections, *RT* 120**

Gratitude is expressed to Rev John Marshall for writing to us to point out that both secular and religious journalists have been inflating statistics for the Muslim population of Britain. The figure is more like one million rather than the two million that was suggested on page 28. We apologise for a printer's error in the deletion of a line from page 15 immediately following the note (*continued from page 14*). The missing words are, 'and Richard Baxter, both late Puritans'. Also please note that the phrase '(see front cover)' should be deleted from the top of column 2, page 8.

*Front cover:* Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones with Dr Llewellyn Williams in Cardiff on the occasion of ML-J's first radio broadcast, January 1, 1935.

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# Editorial

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Following the theme of the last issue; Martyrs of the 20th Century, Revivals of the 20th Century, and Cults of the 20th Century, we continue this time with 'Saving Faith in the 20th Century', 'Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones – a prophet of the 20th Century' and 'Evangelising the Young of the late 20th Century'. The article on faith is a doctrinal study which defines saving faith and contrasts that with 20th Century substitutes. This theme is closely related in its application to the evangelisation of the young and to the article by Eric Lane.

## **The Legacies of Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones**

The Doctor's life (1899-1981) spanned most of this century and his powerful ministry more than half a century. The new biography represents a legacy from which we can derive a world of guidance and profit. We must strengthen the institutions left us by ML-J: The Evangelical Library in London with its many branches in the UK and abroad; the annual two day Westminster Conference which is unique in the world for its historical studies; The London Theological Seminary (Principal Hywel Jones), which since its inception in 1977 has trained about 150 for the ministry especially men from Eastern Europe and third world countries.

In the ways suggested in the article, ML-J was a prophet. He grappled with every major problem confronting the Church, not always successfully. We continue in the battle. If we are to succeed we will need not only to be hard working students as he was, but also need to be endowed with the Spirit of power.

## **Eric Lane on the subject of children**

On the subject of the standing of children, Paedobaptist theologians are divided. Some say that the children of believers should be regarded as regenerate until they prove otherwise. Others assert that the children of believers should be regarded as unregenerate and from the very beginning should be taught to recognise the true nature of sin and the necessity of repentance and faith. The issue is one of great practical importance. Eric Lane has put us all in his debt with his exposition which helps us view children not as those who we should presume to be regenerate but rather as those who, concerning the receiving of the gospel, have very considerable advantages.

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# Saving Faith in the 20th Century

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In the 20th century our understanding of saving faith as described in the New Testament has often been lowered to a mere assent of the mind or equated with a decision made in an evangelistic campaign.

Calling for decisions in public and the use of the enquiry room has become the predominant method of evangelism over the last 120 years. Indeed it is difficult to find any well known evangelist who is not committed to this method. Moreover in the Southern Baptist Convention, reputedly the largest evangelical denomination in the world, calling for decisions is regarded as the norm. This method encourages exaggerated reports. In one state of America, statistics reported more Baptists than there were people!<sup>1</sup> Such is the gross deception brought about by decisionism. To make a decision may involve belief but that belief may not be saving belief. Sadly the vast proportion of decisions fall short of saving faith because there is no repentance. The after effects are harmful since many become cynical about a gospel that does not work.

During the 18th century a movement called Sandemanianism developed. In essence the main tenet of this movement was that saving faith consisted of mere assent to the facts of the gospel. It was held that so long as a person believed in the historical facts about Jesus he was saved.<sup>2</sup> That is so utterly misguided that it hardly requires refutation. Yet in mainline denominations a similar notion prevails. We call it nominalism. Nominalism is the idea that all those who assent to the basic facts of Christianity are saved and do not need evangelisation.

Roman Catholicism is particularly beset with nominalism, the idea that all those in the Roman body are secured by the way of salvation represented by that Church. Eternal life is received by coming directly and personally to Jesus Christ himself. By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that salvation is through the 'universal sacrament of salvation'. It teaches that if someone becomes a member of that Church and participates in the sacraments, then that person is a Christian. The Roman Catholic Church claims to be the means whereby the grace of God and the merits of Jesus are channelled to the individual through the sacraments, and that people are saved by their relationship to that Church, rather than by their relationship to Christ himself.<sup>3</sup>

What is saving faith? To answer that we will look at the origin, the object and the elements of faith. Then in order to get a full view of the subject we will examine the actions of saving faith.

## **The origin of faith**

The first thing we must observe about saving faith is that its origin is in God himself. Faith is a gift. It is a work of the Holy Spirit. A divine light is immediately imparted to the soul by God. In response to the question put by

Jesus, 'Who do you say that I am?' Peter said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Our Lord pronounced Peter a happy man for the faith he had expressed was not revealed to him by man, 'but by my Father in heaven'.

The faith given to Peter came to him by divine illumination. This divine light includes a real appreciative sense of the superlative excellency and glory of the Person of Christ and the awesome nature of his work on our behalf.<sup>4</sup> The Holy Spirit works through our natural faculties to give us this precious faith which unites us to the Son of God. Peter addresses those who 'have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Pet 1:1 RSV). The text can be translated 'a faith equally precious as ours', that is a faith intrinsically the same as that of the apostles. The use of the term 'having received',<sup>5</sup> emphasises the fact that faith is a gift and not the result of human ingenuity. Saving faith is precious. It springs out of the new birth. There is an exceedingly great power, an incomparable might exerted in bringing a sinner to faith, a power as great as that exerted in raising Christ from the dead (Eph 1:19,20; 2:1-10).

### **The object of our faith**

The second observation concerning saving faith is that it centres in the Person of the Son of God. 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' It is unthinkable that Peter is the rock upon which the Church is built, yet justice must be done to the declaration about Peter. At Pentecost it was Peter who took the lead and the substance of his sermon was that Jesus is the Son of God. Faith in the deity of Jesus is the very first principle of the Christian Faith. That is the foundation. 'For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ' (1 Cor 3:11 NKJV).

'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God', said Peter. Jesus as the God-man is the object of saving faith. We are inextricably joined to Christ in his Trinitarian relationship. Hence believers are to be baptised into the name of the three persons (Matt 28:18-20). In Acts there are references to baptism in the name of Jesus (8:16; 19:5). That does not mean that the Trinitarian formula was not used. Jesus is the one by whom we come into union with the Trinity and there is nothing amiss with the abbreviation 'in the name of Jesus'. To believe savingly in Jesus is to be united to him and to be united to him is to be united to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Romans 6 spells out the implications of the believer's union with Christ. By union with him we have at one and the same time righteousness (by which we are justified), holiness (progressive sanctification) and redemption (glorification, eternal life), (1 Cor 1:30).

When we are joined to Christ by faith we become co-heirs of the new world with him (Rom 8:17; Eph 1:14; 1 Pet 1:4). The headings used by Thomas Brooks in his exposition on the objects of saving faith remind us that Christ is all in all. In him we receive all things. Brooks' headings are, 1. The Person of Christ, 2. The Righteousness of Christ, 3. The Promises of God, and 4. The Future Glory.<sup>6</sup>

A number of serious questions arise from the above considerations. For instance, what about the salvation of the Old Testament believers? Since they could not see Jesus, how could they believe on him? Hebrews 11 provides an answer for it is clear that the believers of Old Covenant times had true faith in God and trusted that he would provide salvation for them. That is illustrated in the sacrifice of animals made by Abel. The reality of their faith is seen in what they dared to do for God and in their willingness to forego life itself and endure torture rather than deny his name. This shows that tenacity is a characteristic of true faith. It shows also that true faith can exist even though knowledge may be limited. For that very reason we do not confine church membership to those only who can recite Berkhof's Systematic Theology. Of tenacity and knowledge, it could be argued that the first is just as important as the second. Knowledge is essential to faith. Knowledge of the truth is of the highest value yet it is important to note that a person may know a great deal about theology but have no real conviction about it. It may only be a science to him like physics or mathematics. Such a person can make a profession of faith and abandon that profession as soon as it becomes costly. On the other hand a person handicapped with very limited teaching may prove the reality of his faith in martyrdom. Many young believers have been put to death before there was opportunity to grow in knowledge. These thoughts lead us to consider essential elements that make up faith.

### **The elements of saving faith**

The constituent elements of faith must include knowledge, self-renunciation and trust.

We have seen that knowledge must precede faith. Faith comes from hearing the message (Rom 10:17). Faith is grounded on facts. But faith is more than the possession of knowledge and more than an assent of that knowledge, that is knowing that the facts are true. A person can say, 'Yes I believe all that the preacher says is true. I even believe that Jesus is divine but I do not care to do anything about it.' The fallen angels know for a fact that God is real and that he is just and omnipotent. James says, 'Even the demons believe that there is one God and shudder!' (Ja 2:19). Faith has to be living if it is to be a faith that saves.

Self-renunciation is also essential. Unless there is a sense of lostness and need, a soul will not exercise faith in Christ to meet that need. Renunciation of self is allied to repentance. Faith and repentance, while being distinct entities can never be separated in the salvation of a soul. Repentance means a change of mind, a change of mind about myself and about the truth of God. Which comes first, faith or repentance? There is no priority. The insistence that one is prior to another is futile. The faith of salvation is a penitent faith and the repentance which is to life is a believing repentance.<sup>7</sup>

We go further and note that saving faith must consist of trust. Have you noticed that in our English translations the word used for faith in the Old Testament is trust? Have you noticed the frequency with which trust is used in the Psalms

(see Psalm 56 as an example) and Isaiah? Without trust there cannot be true faith.

Saving faith consists in trust in Christ so as to appropriate him and come into union with him. There is a danger of exercising faith in the benefits of Christ's salvation but not in his very person. This is the catastrophe of those who in the great day of judgment will say, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' But he will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' (Matt 7:22,23).

We come now to view faith in its actions. To illustrate the point we can take a person who has never seen an elephant or a tiger to a museum and view a stuffed elephant and a stuffed tiger and from that get a pretty good idea about the nature of these creatures. But it is better by far to see an elephant or tiger in action. A tiger can see in the dark, it can stalk, and leap, and kill and carry away its prey. I have seen a film of a tiger challenging a large alligator, terrorising it with facial messages, and wresting a deer from it. The Bible is full of the actions of faith. For instance Hebrews 11 is like a film depicting the acts of faith of steadfast believers.

### **1 True faith is alive**

Saving faith is active. It produces works. It expresses itself in worship and prayer. Faith builds an ark (Heb 11:7). Faith obeys God's commands (Heb 11:8). Faith enabled Joseph to endure exile and imprisonment. Faith comes from the heart and confesses that 'Jesus is Lord!' (Rom 10:9). Faith believes in the resurrection of Jesus' body from the tomb. Faith overcomes the world. Faith reacts under pressure and testing. Faith wrestles with doubts and trusts Jahweh even when there are no answers. Even when everything has fallen apart and death itself threatens, faith says, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust him' (Job 13:15). Trial and tribulation is the soil in which faith grows and becomes more resilient and more versatile. Faith has an appetite. Faith eats up God's book. Faith lives by the truth.

Since faith is a living thing we can focus in more detail on what it does.

### **2 True faith is obedient**

When Paul introduces his letter to the Romans he does so on the basis of his call to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. As an apostle he was commissioned to work for the obedience of faith among all nations. The expression 'obedience of faith' is repeated in the doxology with which the letter concludes. What is meant by 'obedience of faith'? Literally it could be translated as 'a believing obedience'. Obedience is the inevitable outcome of faith. Faith and obedience are inseparable. You cannot have one without the other. For faith to be saving it must be obedient.

Don Garlington comments as follows: ‘The small phrase the obedience of faith contains a world of thought, for in it Paul depicts God’s eschatological design for a new humanity, a new Israel. As over against unbelieving/disobedient Israel, the nations have responded in faith to the gospel of Christ and have become, in contrast to what they once were (Rom 1:18ff; 6:17; Eph 2:1ff), the faithful and obedient people of God. For Paul then there could be no higher commendation of his Christian readers than that voiced by Romans 1:8 – ‘your faith is proclaimed in all the world’ – and Romans 16:19 – ‘Your obedience is known to all.’<sup>8</sup>

### **3 True faith produces good works**

Obedience to God’s will results in good works. The most powerful passage in this connection is James 2:14-26. James vehemently repudiates the idea that faith can exist without good works and cites the instances of Abraham and Rahab. Even Rahab did something which showed the genuine nature of her faith.

The unity of faith and good works is illustrated by references to the Great Judgment. Every person without exception will be judged according to the works he or she has done (Rev 20:13; 22:12). Believers will be rewarded according to their works (Matt 25:31-46). There is not a word about their faith. Why? It is taken for granted that faith and the good works of faith are united indissolubly. Since faith is a gift so also are all the works that arise out of faith. There can be no room for human pride or boasting (Eph 2:10).

### **4 True faith sanctifies**

‘This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith’ (1 Jn 5:4). The faith which overcomes the world is faith in Christ, as John goes on to assert, ‘Who is it who overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.’ Jesus has himself overcome the world (Jn 16:33). He has achieved the great victory of the cross (Heb 2:14-18). Our faith is in him and his conquest. There is no other way by which we can overcome the formidable powers of the world, the flesh and the devil. By faith Joseph resisted the advances of Potiphar’s wife. In his first letter John is concerned to refute the teaching of the Gnostics who denied the true humanity of Jesus. He insists that it is faith in Jesus who came by water (baptised in Jordan), and blood (nailed to a cross), that we are enabled to overcome. This same Jesus who has taken our human nature and lived a perfect life for us is now exalted to God’s right hand and exercises all power in heaven and on earth. It is by supplies of his divine power that we overcome in our trials and temptations.

When Peter defended the right of entry into church membership of Gentile believers he pointed to the fact that the Holy Spirit had been given to them as well; ‘He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith’ (Acts 15:9). Peter pointed to the fact that in one regenerative moment the Holy Spirit was given and the hearts of these Gentiles cleansed.<sup>9</sup> By faith



Cornelius and his fellow believers had come into union with Christ by which means his sanctifying power had invaded their hearts. Peter was also affirming that it was not by food and rituals that there was unity in the Church but rather through the reign of grace and by the inward purity of those who had had their hearts cleansed.

The role of faith in progressive sanctification is central. In every part of the battle faith looks to Christ for strength by the power of the Holy Spirit. In every quandary and trial, faith lays hold of relevant scriptures for guidance. In every temptation there is a word of truth to grasp. We see this in the example of Jesus in his temptation in the wilderness. He repulsed Satan with truth prefacing each citation of Scripture with the words, 'It is written!' When the battle rages the Christian wields the shield of faith with which he can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one (Eph 6:16).

### **5 True faith perseveres**

The book of Hebrews records four impossibilities: 1. That anyone enlightened who thereafter falls away can be renewed (6:4). 2. That God should lie (6:18). 3. That the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin (10:4). 4. That man should please God without faith (11:6). The theme of the Hebrews letter is persevering faith. The object of saving faith, as we have seen, is the Son of God. It is not surprising therefore that the glory and preeminence of Jesus is set out in Hebrews. He is portrayed as superior to the angels, to Moses and to Aaron. He is the mediator of a new and better covenant. It is essential to maintain faith in Christ to be saved. The reasoning of the letter comes to a climax in chapter 10: 'You need to persevere, – my righteous one will live by faith, – and if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him' (10:36-39). Then follows the example of the Old Testament believers who did persevere under pressure and trial. This does not mean that our salvation depends upon our own constancy for then we would all be doomed.<sup>10</sup> Rather our salvation depends on the faithfulness of God. 'God is faithful' (1 Cor 1:8,9), he will keep us to the end. God's faithfulness to his promise to complete the good work he has begun in us is brought about by his protection. He will not try us above our ability (1 Cor 10:13). He shields us,<sup>11</sup> but the means employed in the process of our preservation by the Father is our faith. Peter describes those 'who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time' (1 Pet 1:5).

### **Conclusions**

We have seen what saving faith is not. It is not a mere knowledge of the gospel or a mere assent to the truth about Christ. Rather, saving faith is a gift of God born out of regeneration to lay hold of Christ so as to be united to him. We have seen too that saving faith once born is a living thing that obeys the Scriptures and is productive of good works. It is an instrument of sanctification. It overcomes the world and constantly supplies energy for holy living. Moreover true faith perseveres to the end.

Saving faith is a marvellous gift. It is the primary grace which gives birth to all the other graces. Heaven is a world of love but it is only by faith that we will get there. Reader, can I ask you if you think I have made more of faith than it really is? Has my profile of faith been too high? Have you examined yourself? Are you sure that you are savingly joined to Christ? The Scriptures speak of great faith (Matt 8:10; 15:28) and weak faith (Rom 14:1). Yes, we must make allowance for those with weak faith and those of little faith (Matt 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8). Room must also be made for those who may lack assurance. By no means do all believers enjoy a full assurance of faith (Heb 10:22). A man may have true faith and yet have doubts about the genuine nature of his faith. All who struggle are exhorted to search the Scriptures and to use the means of grace there exhibited by which faith can be strengthened. The very fact that you struggle is an indication of life. Those who are careless and indifferent show that they may lack saving faith.

For those who see their faith as weak there is comfort and counsel in the saying of the Puritan, Thomas Watson, 'A weak faith may receive a strong Christ.' Also, 'A weak faith may be fruitful, the vine is a weak plant, but it is fruitful,' and again, 'Weak faith may be growing. Seeds spring up by degrees; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.'<sup>12</sup> We must always look to the Head of the Church to whom we are joined by faith and trust him not only as the only source of our salvation but as its glorious consummation.

Faith may be weak and struggling but it must contain the elements that have been outlined. It must possess evidences of life, more or less. As expressed at the beginning ours is a century of cheap faith, partly the outcome of shallow evangelistic methods. The witness of the Church has been weakened by decisionism that falls short of saving faith and by nominalism which rests content in mere assent to the facts of the gospel. Let us preach the gospel passionately. Let us freely offer Christ and urge lost sinners to repent and trust in him. Let us allow for feeble faith and weak faith, but let us avoid methods which are sub-biblical, which bypass repentance, and which deprive faith of its true meaning and dynamic.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> John Blanchard.
- <sup>2</sup> Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Puritans*, paper on Sandemanianism, Banner of Truth 1987
- <sup>3</sup> William Webster, *Salvation – The Bible and Roman Catholicism*, Banner of Truth, 1990, p.117
- <sup>4</sup> Jonathan Edwards, A Divine and Supernatural Light immediately imparted to the soul by the Spirit of God, shown to be both a scriptural and rational doctrine, *Works*, vol 2 pp.12-17
- <sup>5</sup> Iachousin aorist participle from Iachano
- <sup>6</sup> Thomas Brooks, *Heaven on Earth*, Banner of Truth paperback 1982, p.195
- <sup>7</sup> Prof John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Banner of Truth 1975, p.113
- <sup>8</sup> Don Garlington in *WTJ* 52(1990) 201-224
- <sup>9</sup> F F Bruce, *Commentary on Acts*, M M & S, 1965, p 306. *dous* and *katharisas* are simultaneous aorist participles pointing to the giving of the Spirit and the cleansing of their hearts in one regenerative moment
- <sup>10</sup> G C Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance*, Eerdmans 1979, see discussion pp.220ff
- <sup>11</sup> *phroureo* – to keep safe, to watch carefully
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, Banner of Truth, 1970, p.220

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# Evangelising the Young of the late 20th Century

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Dr Roger S Greenway

During this last decade of the 20th Century we observe a major missionary challenge which is the massive migration of more than a billion people to the cities. This migration is occurring right now in the 'Southern World' countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In determining the kind of mission strategies we need in the decade ahead, we must take into account the fact that half the earth's people now live in cities and they must not be neglected by Christian missions.

The second major challenge on the missionary agenda is related to the first. It has to do with the number of children and youth being born and growing up in Southern World countries. If there is any single fact that must press deeply into our missionary consciousness, it is this. Today's world and tomorrow's is an amazingly *youthful* world.

When we look around in society, in many of our churches as well, we see an increasing percentage of senior citizens. Therefore, we may mistakenly conclude that this same picture holds true for the rest of the world.

But here again we discover how important it is to study missions from a global perspective rather than with merely a narrow, local focus. While it

may be true that many of the folks we see around us are getting up in years, that is not an accurate picture of the world in general.

The facts are these. Every ten seconds a child is born somewhere in the world. Three and a half billion children will enter the world between 1980 and the year 2000. *Half the world will be under twenty-one years of age by the end of this decade, and that single fact must influence all our planning in world missions!*

## Caught by Surprise

Right now we are not ready to meet the challenge of reaching this youthful world with the Word of God. We do not have in sufficient number and quality the evangelism materials, the books and study programmes, and the outreach strategies needed to reach the 'small half of the world'.

We have no time to lose. We need to train more teachers and youth workers, prepare more Christian education materials, and plan broader strategies to the student world. Churches that are located in places of rapid population growth will need help and encouragement to reach the children in their neighbourhoods. Christian parents that are recent converts and did not grow up in Christian homes themselves will need

help in training their own children in the ways of the Lord. In some places, mission schools will pave the way to a better life and a living faith to future generations.

### **Strategic Reasons**

There are several reasons why reaching youth and children constitute a high priority item on the missionary agenda. The first reason is obvious. There are so many children being born into the world that in terms of sheer numbers, they demand top billing. Besides that, children and youth are especially receptive to the gospel whenever they hear it. The world over, most conversions occur during childhood and youth. In the light of this we have to conclude that through the birth of all these children, God is giving us an unparalleled opportunity to evangelise hundreds of millions and see the size of Christ's church vastly increased.

### **Children in the City**

This challenge to reach the growing numbers of youth and children relates to the first challenge we examined. The fact that cities in the Southern World draw great numbers of youth from the countryside and the fact that the survival rate of infants is generally higher in the city combine to make cities major centres of youth and children. This means that urban mission strategies must give special consideration to the younger segment of the population.

To highlight all this, let me refer to Mexico City, a place where my family and I lived and ministered for a number of years. At the present time, Mexico City has a population in

excess of twenty-two million. The city is growing at a rate of 80,000 to 90,000 per month, which adds up to about one million a year. In just a couple of years, Mexico City will have more people than all of Canada from coast to coast.

Now think of this: *Half that city's population is under fourteen years of age!* Percentage-wise, only a trifling few of those millions of boys and girls are receiving Biblical instruction. What kind of missionary strategies ought we develop for a place like that? Would a plan to multiply missionary Sunday Schools all over the city be an appropriate thing to do?

Should a vigorous literature programme be launched for Mexico City's children, with a greatly increased production of Christian children's books written and published in Spanish?

How can we help the established Mexican churches respond more effectively to this challenge? What could we do in cooperation with those churches that might produce, with God's blessing, an enormous harvest of vibrant young Christians by the end of the decade?

These are the kinds of questions we need to be asking. The decade ahead is going to be an exciting time in Christian missions. To meet the challenges, we must keep our eyes open to the facts, the changes, and the unique opportunities that God in his providence places before us. We stand not at the sunset, but the dawn, of global Christian missions.

*Dr Greenway is Professor of World Missiology at Calvin Seminary, USA. This article first appeared in OUTLOOK magazine, February 1990. It is slightly abridged.*

*In RT 120 we considered the primacy of love in a Christian's heart and in the assembly of saints. God himself is love. The Father's gift proves his love. His love is perfected in us when we love each other. How is all this to be squared with references in the Bible to hatred, or with the imprecatory psalms? We can say that hatred is the other side of love. As we love that which is good so commensurately we hate that which is evil and which contradicts love. Jelle Tuininga casts light on this question. His article first appeared in the March, 1990 edition of OUTLOOK magazine, 4855 Starr St. SE, Grand Rapids, USA. Rev Tuininga is the pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.*

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## Is 'Christian Hatred' a Contradiction?

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The imprecatory psalms continue to be misunderstood by many evangelical (conservative) Christians. They cannot square them with the teaching of Jesus (especially in the Sermon on the Mount), and so these utterances give them problems.

I was reminded of this again the other day, as I was working on a sermon from Nehemiah. In response to the mockery of the enemies, Nehemiah calls upon the Lord to 'turn their insults back on their own heads. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders'. Of this the author in *The New Bible Commentary* says, 'The imprecatory prayers of the Old Testament, inconsistent with Christian standards, were within the context of the covenant relationship with Yahweh . . .' Kidner is slightly milder in his *Tyndale* commentary: 'The Christian, while he has been shown a better answer to evil, can learn from Nehemiah to look to God,

not to himself, for vindication.' The same author, in his introduction to his commentary on the Psalms, says, 'To the question, "Can a Christian use these cries for vengeance as his own?" the short answer must surely be "No"; no more than he should echo the curses of Jeremiah or the protests of Job.' Some years ago, a Christian Reformed minister writing in *The Banner* on the closing words of David in Psalm 139, called these words 'an appalling outburst', and said David had temporarily become 'a religious fanatic'.

Now if such utterances were a rarity in the book of Psalms, then one could with a bit more plausibility credit it to an occasional slip of the tongue on the part of the psalmist, a slip which, though wrong, could perhaps be excused. But such is not the case. The psalms are literally saturated with this kind of thing. I mention just a few: Ps 5, 9, 10, 26, 28, 31, 37, 55, 69, 83, 137. Are these all 'slips'? Indeed not. They are part and parcel of intense,

covenantal living before the face of God.

Nor are such utterances and thoughts limited to the Old Testament. You can find them in the New Testament as well, and it always amazes me that this is often overlooked. Consider only the following: Gal 1:8,9; Phil 3:18; Rev 6:10; 16:5-7; 18:6,7,20; 19:1,2. Here you have the same sentiments as expressed in the Psalms, and God's people are specifically charged to rejoice over the destruction of Babylon (Rev 18:20). Question and Answer 52 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* echoes the teaching of Scripture. ('Q.What comfort is it to thee, that "Christ shall come again to judge the quick and the dead"? A.That in all my sorrows and persecutions, with uplifted head, I look for the very same person who before offered himself, for my sake, to the tribunal of God, and hath removed all curse from me, to come as judge from heaven; and who shall cast all his and my enemies into everlasting condemnation, but shall translate me, with all his chosen ones, to himself, into heavenly joys and glory.')

The authors in the 'Introduction to the Psalms' in *The New Bible Commentary* make some valuable comments in this regard. They quote J R W Stott as saying, 'I do not find it hard to imagine situations in which holy men of God do and should both cry to God for vengeance and assert their own righteousness.' As motives behind these imprecations the authors cite 'the moral passion of a holy man' and men who 'were moved by a zeal for the clearing of God's

good name'. Even Kidner admits that David's 'passion for justice was genuine, not a cover for vindictiveness'. The authors of *The New Bible Commentary* conclude by saying that possibly 'our sense of offence at the imprecations arises not so much from Christian sensitivity as from our general inexperience of persecution and our failure to make common cause with Christians under the lash'.

American evangelicals would do well to read what Dutch Reformed authors have written about this. I think of men such as Grosheide, Noordzij, Popma and Van Der Waal. I conclude with statements from the last two:

'In the Bible we are instructed not to have *personal* hate: avenge not yourselves, beloved. It does not concern our right and it is not against our personal enemies, but it concerns the right of the LORD, the God of the covenant, and it is against his enemies! . . . Exegetically one can perpetrate no greater folly than when one explains a princely song like Psalm 35 as an expression of oriental hot-headedness... If there is no Christian hate living in the Christian heart anymore, then our fallible judgment must declare that in that heart there is no Christian faith anymore either.' (Popma in *Levensbeschouwing*.)

'The church which does not covenantally dare to "hate" that which her King hates is on a disastrous course.' (Van Der Waal in *Sola Scriptura*.)

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## **Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones — a prophet of the 20th Century**

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**D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Vol 1, The First Forty Years 1899-1939.** Iain Murray, Banner of Truth, 381 pages, £ 9.95, 1982.

**D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Vol 2, The Fight of Faith 1939-1981.** Iain Murray, Banner of Truth, 777 pages plus 50 pages in appendices, £15.95, 1990.

**The Puritans. Addresses delivered by D. M. Lloyd-Jones at the Puritan & Westminster Conferences, 1957-78.** Banner of Truth, 420 pages, £10.95, 1987.

**Knowing the Times. Addresses delivered on Various Occasions 1942-1977.** D.M. Lloyd-Jones, Banner of Truth, 383 pages, £11.95, 1989.

These four books together will enable any serious student of Church history and of evangelicalism in particular to understand the 20th century.

As assistant minister at Westminster Chapel during the years 1956-1959 and through a close friendship with the Doctor and his family, which gave him access to the materials he needed, Iain Murray has produced the authorised version of ML-J's life. In two volumes adding up to 1,158 pages he has succeeded in providing posterity with a thoroughly worthy account of the life, ministry and teaching of the foremost evangelical leader in Great Britain this century. He holds the Lloyd-Jones family together in a pleasing way from first to last. Many personal issues enhance interest. He tells how the young ML-J gave up tobacco and how he changed from reading 'The Guardian' to 'The Times'. He describes the Doctor's historic meeting with T T Shields (1:271ff) and weaves in principal friends such as Philip Hughes and associates such as Campbell Morgan. Occasionally there is delightful humour (read for yourself what happened when two young ladies pitched up at an early Puritan Conference! 2:227).

For those not familiar with the Doctor's life we will begin with a cameo.

### **An outline of the Doctor's life**

One of three sons of Henry Lloyd-Jones, Martyn was born in 1899 in Cardiff. He spent his boyhood years from the age of five in Llangeitho, a small village in West Wales made famous by that great Welsh preacher of the 18th century, Daniel Rowland. Martyn's father ran a general retail store. In 1910 the store and the home to which it was attached were completely destroyed by fire. Thereafter Henry Lloyd-Jones was threatened with bankruptcy. The resultant problems led to the family settling in Regency Street, only half a

mile from Westminster Chapel in London. Here young Martyn at the age of fourteen was often to provide valuable service as early morning milk roundsman to assist in his father's business. The story unfolded subsequently concerns the earning of a scholarship in London; training in medicine; the position at age 23 of chief clinical assistant to Sir Thomas Horder, the King's physician; the call at the age of 27 to be the minister of a struggling Calvinistic Methodist mission church in Aberavon, South Wales; revival in the church in the years 1930-31; the call in 1938 to assist Dr Campbell Morgan at Westminster Chapel. The church was apparently weak since there was not sufficient giving to support two ministers adequately. At 75, Campbell Morgan was obliged to continue in harness since he did not have a pension.

It was ML-J's thirty year pastorate at Westminster (1938-1968) which formed the basis for a wider ministry culminating especially in many books, several of which have appeared in the last decade particularly. All the way through his ministry the Doctor was a kind of Jeremiah striving for the old paths, for biblical standards against 'the terrible spiritual aberration of these days' (2:343). Matters of exceptional interest include the initiation of the Westminster Fellowship (fraternal) of ministers in 1940; the tumult of the war years; the building up of the Westminster Chapel congregation after the war; ML-J's role in the establishment of the Evangelical Library in London in 1945; his extraordinary experiences of the Holy Spirit during 1949; the development of the two day Puritan Conference which began in 1950; his views of the Billy Graham campaign in 1954 (2:338); the crisis among evangelicals during 1966; the ecclesiastical breach with Jim Packer in 1969 leading to the reforming of the Puritan Conference under the title Westminster Conference in 1970, the inauguration of the London Theological Seminary in 1977. ML-J followed the Puritans in believing that spiritual preparation must be made throughout life for death. In his last illness he provided an inspiring example of faith and patience.

Using the term in the sense of a spokesman and preacher who sought to base everything on Scripture the Doctor was a prophet to 20th century Britain in the following ways:

1. He exemplified the role of the preacher
2. He sought to ground the Church in her history
3. He maintained evangelicalism and rejected Ecumenism
4. He nurtured belief in revival as the hope of the Church

### **1. He exemplified the role of the preacher**

From the time of his call to the ministry in 1927 (it is easy to follow the Doctor's age since he was born on 20th December 1899) he devoted himself supremely to preaching.



Throughout his ministry from his early 30s to 80, the Doctor consistently preached to congregations roughly ten times the size of those of any leading preacher in the UK today. Besides his own congregations at Westminster of 1,200 to 1,400 on Sundays there were the large crowds at the mid-week rallies or special occasions. For instance as early as 1932 he preached to 6,000 in Toronto and in 1935 to 7,000 at Llangeitho. The Lord not only gave him the gift of preaching but gave him the congregations to hear that preaching.

His first pastorate at Sandfields in Wales lasted eleven years and was followed by thirty years at Westminster Chapel, London. Throughout that period he combined a ministry of expository preaching along consecutive lines three times a week at home, with an itinerant ministry of preaching at rallies, meetings and conferences all over the country, apart from the annual summer break when preaching abroad also took place. His practice was to preach primarily for the benefit of believers on Sunday mornings and evangelistically on Sunday evenings. The latter sermons provided well tested material for evangelistic preaching on his travels during the week. The work involved was very considerable. While at Westminster Chapel he usually preached away on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and would plan to get back to spend most of Thursday and Friday preparing for the Friday evening exposition and for the Lord's Day.

The primacy of preaching is illustrated by the form of service followed. 'Sunday mornings in the 1950s' (2:251ff) is one of the finest chapters in volume 2. It captures magnificently the form and atmosphere of those times for those who will never have the privilege of being there. There were no accessories. There was a substantial reading of Scripture, a 10 to 15 minute prayer and then a sermon of about 40 minutes. On Lord's Day evenings it was the same except that the main thrust of the sermon was evangelistic and would last anything from 45 to 60 minutes. There were always four hymns in the usual Non-conformist manner. I can never recall an addition of any kind whatsoever. During Campbell Morgan's day there used to be a choir but that disappeared.

During 1969 ML-J was invited to speak at Westminster Seminary in America. He chose as his theme *Preaching and Preachers*. Sixteen lectures were published in a book with that title by Hodder & Stoughton. In the first chapter 'The Primacy of Preaching' he analyses the reasons why preaching has fallen from the prime place it should occupy in the Church of God.

For ML-J preaching needed to be doctrinal. Campbell Morgan was noted for the way in which he could divide his subject and text in a structured imaginative and often alliterated way, but Morgan was not noted as a doctrinal preacher. The Doctor challenged his hearers to think and analyse for themselves. He was unique in that way. He was always asking questions

of and probing the minds of his hearers, which is very different from polished structures eloquently presented. Structure is very important as is spiritual unction, but more than these are required. The preacher must gain the hearts of his hearers. I used to sit in the gallery and often noted that the Doctor would have notes the size of an envelope but his writing was so appalling that he could hardly tell which was the top and which the bottom. It did not matter, for once he warmed to his theme he did not need them anyway.

It will be harmful if those who read the Doctor's volumes on Romans and Ephesians get the idea that he was only a verse by verse preacher. The Doctor was an extremely versatile sermon outline maker. In the early years at Westminster he preached short series. Appendix six, the bibliography of his published works, is fascinating (2:799ff). His two volume work on Matthew 5-7, *The Sermon on the Mount*, eleven sermons on Psalm 73, *Faith on Trial*, and six on Habakkuk, *From Fear to Faith*, were evidently his most used series being translated into many languages; for instance *The Sermon on the Mount* into Japanese, Spanish, Korean, Portuguese, Thai, Chinese, Dutch and Slovak.

It is said that a preacher needs to take hold of his hearers and grip their attention in the first two minutes. To start with a fine looking package and then unload superb contents is ideal. But the Doctor never resorted to methods as such. He was often a slow starter and there were times when he struggled as all preachers do from time to time. He tells us that it was his interest in the people he was addressing that guaranteed application. He followed the medical approach of thinking of the patient and of diagnosing his disease and what remedy could bring healing. He was very direct in addressing his hearers in their need. He pointed out that it is possible to expound Scripture in such a way that the man of the world does not know what on earth you are talking about (1:147). ML-J was constantly aware of the need to explain the terms of Scripture. He was always relevant and like Spurgeon before him would refer to major events and interpret them. His first book in 1939 was, *Why does God Allow War?* His preaching was not only relevant, it was significant. A comedian can be relevant in what he says but not significant. The Doctor was relevant and significant in the content of his message and in its reasoning and application. He was supremely evangelistic. He was always preaching for the salvation of souls even when the approach was mostly to ground believers in the truths of Scripture.

ML-J was a voracious reader and disciplined labourer. He read not only the Puritans but kept abreast in all theological matters and in addition read secular books especially biographies and medical journals. He always seemed to be in advance of others in reading and information at



*The family at Regency Street: Henry and Magdalen Lloyd-Jones, with Harold (front), Martyn (left) and Vincent*

the Westminster Fellowship attended by about 120. (Only fulltime pastors were permitted.)

## **2. He sought to ground the Church in her history**

In 1950 Jim Packer wrote an article on 'The Doctrinal Puritans and their Work'. He contrasted the thorough treatment of Christian experience with the shallow subjectivity in much modern teaching. He concluded by drawing attention to a Conference to be held at Westminster Chapel on the 19 and 20 December, 1950, under the general title, 'The Distinctive Theological Contribution of the English Puritans'. From its inception, the Conference consisted of six papers of about an hour each followed by an equal time of discussion. ML-J was chairman for all the sessions and in due course the tradition came into being that he would give the concluding paper, which pertained from 1959 to 1978. Between them, Jim Packer and ML-J were responsible for future Puritan Conferences which began very modestly with about twenty in attendance. The numbers grew and peaked at about 220. Current attendance at the Westminster Conference is about 180.

The two volumes described at the beginning, *The Puritans* and *Knowing the Times*, feature the principal subjects addressed by the Doctor over respective periods of 19 years at the Puritan/Westminster Conference, and over a period of 35 years on special occasions. As we follow the choice of subjects and their content and application in a direct way to our times, the prophetic voice comes through cogently. To these volumes there will be added eight BEC addresses which are being prepared by Hywel Jones, Principal of the London Theological Seminary for publication by Evangelical Press. An occasional address of unusual significance is not included in these books. For instance I will never forget when on the tercentenary of the Great Ejection of 1662 at the Evangelical Library the Doctor riveted our attention for two and half hours as he described that momentous event in English history when 2,000 ministers were put out of the Church of England.

About one third of the papers recorded in the two volumes *The Puritans* and *Knowing the Times* are devoted to the Reformation period, a third to the Puritan period, and a third to the 18th century. The quest always was to maximise the lessons of Church history and each of these epochs had lessons for us. In 1944 the Doctor gave an outstanding paper on John Calvin and in 1960 explained why we should remember the Reformation. The detailed outworking of Puritan doctrines he left to others, especially to Jim Packer whose Puritan expositions have just been published under the title *Among God's Giants* (Kingsway, see review in RT120). Dr Packer and ML-J were the only two who never read papers but were conversant enough with their subjects to be able to speak from rough outlines.

To what extent was ML-J responsible for the initiation and advance of the Reformed movement of our generation and what were the primary influences directing his own thinking on that? Looking at this question, we note that his wedding presents in 1927 included second hand sets of John Owen and Richard Baxter. In 1971 speaking on 'The Puritans: their Origins and Successors' at the annual Westminster Conference, he confessed that his interest first began when he read a biography of Richard Baxter in 1925 and affirmed that his whole ministry had been governed by his love for the Puritan authors. Then right at the top of the list was the influence of Jonathan Edwards. In 1929 on his knees in a corner of a second hand bookstore he discovered the two volume 1834 edition of Edwards' Works, (republished by Banner of Truth in 1974). The Doctor bought his set for five shillings (25 pence or 50 American cents!). He devoured these volumes which he said helped him more than anything else (1:254). In 1932 while in Canada he discovered a ten volume set of B B Warfield's works and here found an exegetical precision more evident than in the older writers. Warfield helped him more than any other modern writer (1:285ff).

The beginning (in the sense of getting off the ground) of the present Reformed movement can be traced to an Inter Varsity Conference in Wales in 1951 when the Doctor gave three addresses on the sovereignty of God (2:238). In the third address he expounded the doctrine of unconditional election. A powerful work of the Holy Spirit brought many under conviction of sin at that time. Derek Swann, a preacher at the 1991 Leicester Conference, testifies that, 'Many of us came to the doctrines of grace for the first time, myself included. I was so overcome with the wonder of it all that I had to fight back the tears. For many of us since, election has been an affair of the heart as well as the head' (2:246).

### **3. He maintained evangelicalism and rejected Ecumenism**

ML-J exercised an extensive influence within the evangelical movement in the universities and colleges from the time he became president of the IVF in 1939 until he spoke at his last major IVP conference in 1969 and his last IFES conference which took place in Austria in 1971. He was greatly influential in the development of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students. Before 1914 the situation with regard to the gospel in English universities was calamitous, except for Cambridge and a few London medical schools (1:293).

In his last major address for the IVF he reminded the 500 students present of the origin of the IVF and how it had become necessary to conclude that it was useless to stay inside the liberally compromised Student Christian Movement in order to try and win it. Separation was essential (2:606ff). The Doctor consistently taught that there can be no compromise with modernism. We are not to put ourselves under modernist teachers. It is sinful to do so. It was his custom to warn believers that they were not to fellowship or eat with those whose purpose it is to undermine the Faith, and hence destroy our faith. They are false prophets. He would quote 2 John 10, 'If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.' Had this warning been taken seriously we might not have lost our seminaries, denominations and countless souls who have been destroyed by the unbelief of modernism.

This was not a merely negative outlook. ML-J defined what it is to be an evangelical Christian in the clearest terms in his preaching. The most significant and extended of his expositions on this is the address 'What is an Evangelical?' (*Knowing the Times*).

He constantly sought to show that there were issues which need not divide evangelicals and he strove to maintain a broad evangelical unity based on

John 17 and Ephesians 4. The section 'A Basis of Christian Unity', some 45 pages, is worth its weight in gold (*Knowing the Times*).

In the Doctor's view the 1950's and early 1960's witnessed the greatest degree of change in the Christian world. Behind this change was the emergence of the World Council of Churches which convened at Amsterdam (1948) and at Evanston (1954). The Ecumenical Movement challenged the whole structure of English evangelicalism (2:297ff).

Iain Murray's biography provides an accurate description of the influence of the Billy Graham crusades in England, the role of the ambivalent Evangelical Alliance and the compromise of the London Bible College. At the opening of the new premises of the London Bible College in 1958 ML-J warned against the lack of concern over error, 'It will eat as does a cancer' (2 Tim 2:17). The LBC faculty turned down the proposal to publish his address (2:311).

Three chapters (2:495-568, 73 pages) are devoted to the greatest crisis in ML-J's ministry. This concerns the opening address he gave at the second National Assembly of Evangelicals organised by the Evangelical Alliance at the Westminster Central Hall in London on the 18th of October, 1966. This is printed in full in *Knowing the Times*. ML-J declared that a crisis was before us as great as that of the 16th century Reformation. Compromise in his view had come to predominate in the apostate denominations and loyalty to the gospel was the priority for evangelicals. In other words this was a call to come out and separate from apostasy. At the end of his address the chairman, the Rev John R Stott, contradicted the Doctor by saying that Scripture was against him and history against him asserting: 'The remnant was within the church not outside it.'

We cannot do justice to this subject here. Iain Murray devotes a chapter to assessing the pros and cons of the Doctor's call at that time and the increasing division that it uncovered among evangelicals over the issue of our relationship to the Ecumenical Movement and to those who choose to stay in mainline, apostate denominations. The issue is fairly simple if you hold to independency but what does independency have to offer those who regard that system as a chaos of fragments? The old denominations might be breaking up, but we can understand evangelicals within them still finding it more consistent and certainly safer to be in a battered ship in a storm than in a leaking rowing boat.

How can we regard the Doctor's voice as prophetic on this issue? We can, inasmuch as he blew the trumpet regarding compromise with Rome and with the liberalism of the Ecumenical Movement. He cannot bear the blame for the weak and disintegrated state of independency.

While he was at Westminster Chapel a situation existed in which there was a



*The family with Bethan's mother, Mrs Phillips*

tightly knit body of believers (ecclesiola in ecclesia — a church within the church) and a large floating congregation with many from abroad especially students benefiting enormously from the preaching. But most were not integrated as church members. ML-J's call for us to consider again the nature of the Church is a prophetic call. That inevitably will include a re-examination of church government, a subject which is unwelcome and unpopular because it constrains evangelicals to face up to the responsibility of Church unity. It is easy to retreat into independency and ignore the responsibility of inter-church unity. As late as 1962 ML-J said, 'Where the foundations are sure Presbyterianism is the best form of government.' But the tragic fact is that in many instances liberalism has invaded Presbyterian denominations and what was an advantage is now turned to be a disadvantage as evangelical churches are threatened rather than protected by their synods.

#### **4. He nurtured belief in revival as the hope of the Church**

To the Doctor revival was the most crucial question, the only answer for the declining churches and for disintegrating society. As the 18th century revival enlivened the churches and saved society from corruption, so we can be rescued by the grace and power of God. ML-J's intense interest in the 18th century awakening is reflected by the subjects he presented at the Puritan Conference; *Revival: An Historical and Theological Survey* (1959), *Howell Harris and Revival* (1973), and *Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival* (1976).

Then in remembrance of the 1859 revival in Britain and America he preached a series of 24 sermons on that subject. Most important of all ML-J had his own experience of the power of God in his ministry and more particularly during his first pastorate at Sandfields. In 1930, 70 souls were added to the church, and the following year a further 128 'from the world'. By any reckoning that is exceptional. One member who remembered the revival in 1904 exclaimed, 'Why, this is revival! The power of the Spirit is greater here than in 1904!' It was a time of intense conviction of sin followed by a corresponding intensity of joy and jubilation in the assurance of sins forgiven.

The main point is that the Doctor always prescribed the quest for revival as the duty of the Church rather than resorting to special campaigns. In an interview with Carl Henry in 1980 he declared, 'I am unhappy about organised campaigns and even more about the invitation system of calling people forward.' He went on to describe three hours that he spent with Billy Graham in 1963 when he attempted to persuade the evangelist to give up the sponsorship of Liberals and Roman Catholics. ML-J said to Carl Henry that congresses and campaigns had not served to arrest spiritual decline over the previous 25 to 30 years. As long as we think we can do it ourselves churches and ministers will not implore God to come in revival. 'The old approach was for ministers and deacons to call for a day of fasting and prayer and to plead with the Lord to visit them with power.' ML-J pointed to the watershed in the last century when Asahel Nettleton's emphasis and experience of revival had been subverted by Charles Finney's views and practices.

But the Doctor also attributed the lack of concern for a return of the power of the Holy Spirit to intellectual smugness and to the danger of quenching the Holy Spirit with the idea that we have all we need with nothing more required.

That leads to the most controversial part of the ministry of ML-J, his views on the baptism of the Spirit. It is at this point where I believe his exegesis let him down. In typical Pentecostal style he interpreted the four Acts passages as the norm for all believers (*Joy Unspeakable*, Kingsway). He took the four Acts narratives of the coming of the Spirit: Jerusalem, Samaria, Caesarea and Ephesus as the pattern for a 'one, two' experience and did not interpret these within the framework of the biblical theological context of the New Testament as a whole. He then transposed the idea of a post conversion power experience upon Romans 8:15,16 and Ephesians 1:13.

If we omit the book of Acts we have to face the reality that there is no such thing as a crisis experience promised, commended, commanded or even suggested in the NT. When we are united by faith to the Triune God in



regeneration, we do indeed have all we need in our union with the three Persons. On that basis there is no end to the dimensions of the real felt experiences we can have, but that does not depend on any one stipulated experience in the way that Pentecostals insist. Because of this confusion in ML-J's exegesis some charismatics have been prone to claim him as their own. As I was writing this a cassette arrived in the post of an address by John Piper, a well-known minister in Minneapolis. I was astonished to hear him claim that ML-J would be 100 percent for the Vineyard teachings of John Wimber, and to prove that he simply selected some of the Doctor's statements. It is possible to do that but the fact is that nobody was further removed from the modern charismatic movement or from the crass fanaticism of John Wimber than ML-J. I am glad that the appendix 'miraculous healing' is included in volume 2. I heard the Doctor fairly late in his life declare that he had never personally known an authenticated case of miraculous healing. The fact is that Piper is not reading as carefully as he should. He is misconstruing statements on this issue made by ML-J which in turn are not as clear as they should have been.

We must allow for cultural differences but then too we must heed the Doctor's warning against the charismatic movement's tendency to give way to popular demand for sensation, entertainment, dancing, drama and an artificially created euphoria, all at the expense of the mind (2:668).

Iain Murray's mild criticism about the Doctor's Pentecostal leaning: 'A degree of looseness about ML-J's teaching at certain points' (2:491) is a gross understatement, but then brother Murray's task was not so much to give a verdict on this issue as to present the facts and provide a balanced commentary. ML-J's displeasure with books on the Holy Spirit in which no place is given to revival is understandable. When I wrote *Crisis Experiences* it was because of the Doctor's influence that I was aware of the need to expound the subject of the baptism of the Spirit in detail and relate it to revival.

So then in what sense is ML-J a prophet to our generation concerning revival? In my view he is the prophet inasmuch as he is absolutely correct about our lack of belief in and culpable lack of burden for revival. He was moreover altogether accurate in his assessment that we are for the most part dreadfully under the norm when it comes to dimensions of our heart experience of the three Persons of the Trinity. His method in attempting to correct the balance was a disaster from an exegetical point of view. But then as A P Taylor, Britain's most famous historian of the same 20th century period, frequently pointed out, the greatest of men have clay feet. The weaknesses of the most illustrious leaders of the Bible are kept open to our view to remind us among other things that even when we benefit greatly

from our leaders it is the Lord God only whom we are to worship, serve and praise.

### **The glory of God and the future**

The Doctor prayed for revival always but never witnessed again the power of the Holy Spirit as in 1930 and 1931. In the early 1960's there was great expectation that revival was impending, but as ML-J reminded us, we had to learn that doctrinal renewal does not necessarily lead to revival (*The Puritans*, p. 14). In more recent years there have been those who have tried to take the Church in the Charismatic direction as though revival depends upon the restoration of the supernatural gifts. As we have seen, ML-J sought to ground the Church in her history. Past revivals show that the Body of Christ possesses all the means of grace she requires. What is needed is the glory of God to fill those means.

In his Puritan Conference address in 1976, 'Jonathan Edwards and the Crucial Importance of Revival', ML-J pointed to this factor as follows: 'Let us seek to know more and more of the glory of God.. That is what leads always to a true experience. We need to know the majesty of God, the sovereignty of God, and to feel a sense of awe, and of wonder. Do we know this? Is there in our churches a sense of wonder and amazement? This is the impression Jonathan Edwards always conveys and creates.'

What is revival? Is it not the pouring out of the Spirit upon us, filling our prayer meetings, worship services, preaching, fellowship and our very souls with the glory of God. Is it not at the same time an overflow of God's glory and love so that many are awakened to repentance and faith?

United prayer for revival and awakening is the only means prescribed for the Church (*The Puritans*, p. 21). Let us then use the appointed means of grace and look forward to the answers to ML-J's prayers and ours.

*He shall come down like showers  
Upon the fruitful earth,  
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,  
Spring in his path to birth:  
Before him on the mountains  
Shall peace, the herald, go;  
And righteousness, in fountains,  
From hill to valley flow.*

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## Of Such is the Kingdom of Heaven

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'Few Christian parents seem to have an assured understanding of their own children's status before God. This comment applies equally to churches in which infant baptism is practised and in those in which believers' baptism is the norm. It seems that within the Church as a whole there is no settled "theology of childhood".' It is indeed a fact that Christians are often uncertain as to how to treat their children: should they teach them to pray to God as 'their heavenly Father' and to sing hymns which express knowledge of Jesus and faith in him? Or should they treat them as ignorant sinners who can only be evangelised? The way we teach them to behave will depend on how we view them, on what we think is their relation to God and their status regarding his kingdom.

Baptists probably have most difficulty here because they reject the idea of their children being included in the covenant of grace by virtue of birth. Yet they hesitate to put them in the same category as the children of unbelievers and treat them as such. The question is one which needs thorough examination and discussion. Basic to it are the words of Jesus in Matthew 19:14, Mark 10:14 and Luke 18:16, 'of such is the kingdom of heaven' or in the NIV: 'the kingdom of God belongs to such as these'.

The great commentators are divided over the precise reference of *toiouton* ('of such').

1. There are those who seem to apply it to the children of believers *as children*, for example Matthew Henry: 'The children of believing parents belong to the kingdom of heaven and are members of the visible church. Of such, not only in disposition and affection . . . but in age, is the kingdom.' Matthew Poole would seem to take the same line in view of his connecting the words with infant baptism.

2. Others apply it not to children as children but to those who are like children. Plummer points out that the word is *toiouton* not *touton* — 'those like them' not 'those': 'Not those particular children nor all children but those who are childlike in character are possessors of the kingdom.' Geldenhuys takes the same line and quotes Jerome in support: 'It is not these children but those who are childlike in character, especially in humility and trustfulness, who are best fitted for the kingdom.' Lenski is even more definite: 'Not "of these", the ones now being brought, but "of such" . . . the great class of beings to which babes as

such belong. . . . They are model examples of the whole class. If we want to know the character of the class we must study children. It is their receptivity to which Jesus refers.'

3. Calvin saw a double reference, both to children as such and the child-like: 'Under this term he includes both little children and those who resemble them', but he does not specify whether the children referred to were only those of believers. Recent writers on the subject hold this view even more strongly and commit themselves to referring the words to children generally. J S Pridmore makes a thorough examination of *toiouton*<sup>2</sup> which, according to Arndt and Gingrich can refer either to a 'definite individual' or a 'bearer of certain definite qualities'. He quotes some uses of this word where it is applied not to the bearers of certain qualities but to particular individuals: For example, Acts 22:22 where it is for the death of Paul himself not people like him that they are crying out.

Examples of the use of *toiouton* are seen in Romans 16:18 where the divisive persons are referred to as 'such persons'. Similarly in 1 Corinthians 5:5 when Paul has described the incestuous man he says that such a person (*toiouton*) should be delivered to Satan. (See also 2 Cor 10:11, Gal 6:1, Tit 3:11, 1 Cor 7:28.) This leads Pridmore to the conclusion that Mark 10:14 means that 'the kingdom belongs to children and those like them'.

Ron Buckland, influenced by such as Pridmore, says that Jesus is not only using children as a visual aid to challenge adults but making a statement about all children: 'The kingdom of God belongs to them. Jesus seems to be doing two things at once. He challenges adults that they will never find a way into the kingdom of God unless they become childlike. . . . At the same time and on the basis of the adult challenge towards childlikeness Jesus teaches that children already belong to the kingdom of God.' He then proceeds to discuss this in relation to the various answers commonly given to the question of the status of children in regard to the kingdom. To him it means that children begin with God but will drift away unless they are 'nurtured' (in the case of the children of Christians) or 'evangelised' (in the case of the children of non-Christians). This shows how central to the whole matter of child nurture and child evangelism is this statement.

It cannot be denied that the words as they stand are ambiguous and that 'strict grammatical considerations cannot settle for us the width of reference intended' (Pridmore). Other canons of interpretation have to be brought into the equation, the chief of which is context. Pridmore uses this canon in the case of the other instances of *toiouton* he quotes, but fails to let the context determine the matter in Mark 10:13-16. Having said in verse 14 that 'the kingdom of God belongs to such as these', Jesus immediately explains what he means by this in verse 15: 'Anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God as a

little child will never enter it.’ ‘As a little child’ cannot mean the same as ‘when a little child’ which would say too much for any contributor to the discussion, for it would exclude all except children. It would mean that unless you come into the kingdom during childhood it will be too late! It must therefore mean ‘in the way a little child receives it’. Vincent Taylor renders the words in this way and Pridmore agrees with him. Evidently there is something about the way children receive things which is an example to all who would receive the kingdom. Children who do receive the kingdom have no problem doing it in the right way because there is something in childhood which fits them for it. This is to be emulated by others.

Pridmore admirably expresses what this spirit is: ‘the capacity of a child to receive something as a gift is what Jesus had in mind . . . the kingdom cannot be earned.’ He quotes Cranfield: ‘To receive the kingdom as a little child is to allow oneself to be given it.’ This is Jesus’ own exposition of his words ‘of such is the kingdom’ or ‘the kingdom belongs to such as these’. By them he means that those who belong to the kingdom are those who receive it in the way children receive things, that is, in a state of helplessness and as a free gift. Children do not belong to it because they are children, but anyone who emulates their receptivity can belong to it.

This interpretation is confirmed by several other considerations.

1. Jesus’ action in verse 16 which, as Pridmore points out, is a fulfilment of Isaiah 40:11: ‘He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart.’ ‘The lambs’ are not children as such but the weak and helpless, the kind of people for whom the Messiah came. This is similar to what Jesus said in John 21:15-16 to Peter: ‘Feed my lambs . . . take care of my sheep.’ The lambs are the new entrants into the flock, still in their weak and helpless state and the sheep are the more established and secure disciples. Those who come to him in helplessness he takes into his arms, be they children or adults.

2. In the previous chapter, Mark 9:33-41, we have other references to Jesus and children. The setting is that he and his disciples are in Peter’s house in Capernaum where Jesus asks them to tell him about their argument over greatness in the kingdom, which they had been engaged in along the road. Jesus settles the argument by stating that ‘the greatest’ is ‘the very last and the servant of all’. He then takes hold of one of the children of the house, probably one of Peter’s, and uses him to exemplify the point. To become ‘last and servant’ is to become like a little child. The Greek *paidion* means both ‘servant’ and ‘child’. The status of children in that age was like servants — one of utter insignificance, very different from the regard with which they are held today. It is this same status we must accept for ourselves in order to join the kingdom. Possibly the ‘strange exorcist’ of the next few verses is an example of a child in the faith who is not to be refused because of his weakness in understanding (not realising who

Jesus is) or in will (not resolute enough to come and join his band). Then in verse 41 the disciples are told that they will be served by others in the kingdom. This goes with verse 37 – those who welcome ‘little children’ such as the disciples, welcome him. The disciples were not children but were like children.

3. Another similar children passage is Matthew 18:1-10. Again the child is used as a lesson to the adult who would like to be in the kingdom. He must become like a little child, he must adopt a very insignificant, weak, helpless, receptive mindset. This for an adult involves a ‘change’ (verse 3) and a self-humbling (verse 4). Jesus is not saying, ‘children are naturally humble’, that is, that they themselves feel they are humble. This is far from the case! In their own eyes they are the centre of the universe! He is saying they are in a humble and lowly position, whether they realise it or not. We must all come to this to get into the kingdom, which is exactly what Mark 10:14 is saying.

4. The Lucan parallel to Mark 10 is 18:15-17. Luke uses a term which means ‘tiny babies’ – as it were, just born. This further emphasises the point, for who is more helpless and weak than a tiny baby? All such a one can do is to receive, everything has to be given it, the milk is put into its mouth and it only has to suck. What a vivid picture of how we ‘receive the kingdom’! What a confirmation that Mark 10:14 describes the way we must all enter the kingdom!

5. From the theological standpoint this is the only interpretation that is in accord with the imputation of sin. Buckland, because he takes the view that the kingdom belongs to children as children, has to remove them from being included in the ‘original guilt’ and sin of the human race. He is prepared to accept that ‘you and I, along with other responsible people, have aligned ourselves with Adam’s rebellion. We have all sinned. Some actively rebel. Some passively drift away from God’. The key word is clearly ‘responsible’. He is not happy to involve children in the rebellion of Adam until they become responsible beings: ‘How are children involved in the rebellion of Adam? For some it is quite clear: from conception the child is sinful because he’s human. For others, it is clear that there is a bias towards sinfulness. But what if the child is not really aware of this? Is the child accountable to God? It seems reasonable to say that when a child can have a conscious experience of sin he can have a conscious experience of guilt. Before that he lacks understanding.’

Others have succeeded in extricating children from the Adamic curse by adopting the view that, although included in the fall they are also included in the atonement. The classic statement is, ‘Whether we think of children dying or living, the fact is the same. What is the spiritual position of these infants in relation to our Lord? Surely the truth is that all children are included in the great atoning sacrifice and belong to Jesus Christ until they deliberately refuse him.’<sup>3</sup> This view is passionately embraced by John Inchley: ‘My own ministry with

children was certainly transformed from the time when I was able wholeheartedly to . . . believe that all children have the status of belonging to the Lord until such time as they may reject him, and that up to this moment of personal accountability their original sin is covered by the sovereignty of God and atonement of Christ.<sup>4</sup>

There is, however, nothing in the New Testament to suggest that children are exempt from the curse of sin and death before the age of responsibility or covered by the atonement until they reject it. Paul's teaching in Romans 5:12-21 is not only clear but all-embracing. Through Adam sin 'entered the world' bringing death in its train inasmuch as 'all sinned'. The idea that a state of ignorance such as childhood excludes any from this is discounted by his statement that 'death reigned' prior to the law of Moses 'even over those who did not sin by breaking a commandment as did Adam'. To Paul death proves sin and inasmuch as children die they are also in a state of sin, even before they consciously and deliberately disobey. There is nothing in his teaching that excludes even the youngest children from this. David even included the unborn (Ps 51:5).

It is true that the phrase 'original sin' is Augustinian rather than Pauline and may be an obscure one. A better is 'imputation' or 'reckoning' ('crediting' in NIV) of Romans 4:5, etc. We are justified or made righteous by the imputing or crediting to us of Christ's righteousness (Rom 4). Then in chapter 5 the necessity for and reasonableness of this is seen in the fact that prior to this Adam's disobedience had been reckoned, imputed or credited to us. The whole of Romans 5:12-21 is based on the idea of imputation. The question of age doesn't come in. It is all about nature. Our children cannot be excluded.

How does this relate to Mark 10:14 and to the way we regard and treat our children? Buckland thinks this teaching prompts Christians to put pressure on their children to bring them to repentance and faith. We would agree that this is bad. It is also unnecessary and inappropriate. Jesus' words encourage us to expect our children to respond without pressure. They are in the best position to do so while they are children. It is natural for them to receive gifts without earning or deserving them. They don't need pressurising to receive freely as adults do. They have no money to buy them or skills or strength to work for them. They will take whatever we offer; they don't have the hang-ups of adults. So we can present to them Jesus as Saviour of sinners with a good hope that they will receive him, because his kingdom is for those who receive it like children.

**Eric Lane.**

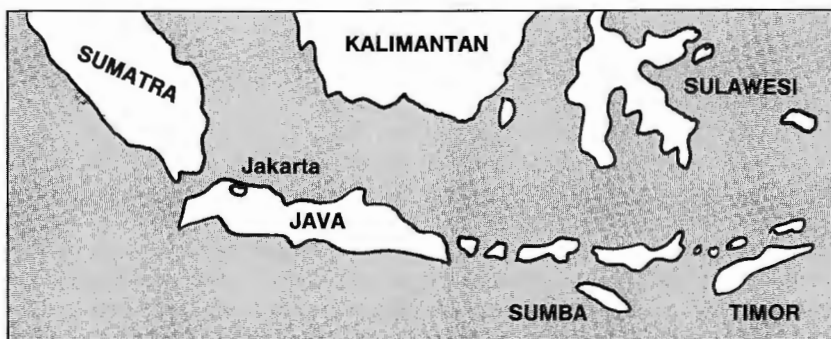
<sup>1</sup> *Children of the King*, Ron Buckland, p.19

<sup>2</sup> *The New Testament Theology of Childhood*, an unpublished thesis by J S Pridmore

<sup>3</sup> *Principles of Theology*, W H Griffith-Thomas

<sup>4</sup> *Realities of Childhood*, John Inchley

# News



## Indonesia

The above map indicates the scattered nature of the islands comprising Indonesia. The southern island of Sumba has experienced the blessing of God and during the last three years 40,000 animists have professed Christianity. Of the island's population of 380,000 about half are now Christian at least by affiliation. Protestants outnumber Catholics by about four to one, most being connected to the Sumba Christian Church which is Reformed. The church is urgently calling for help to disciple and train new believers. The missionary task is made more difficult because there are no colleges on the island and the young people must go abroad for tertiary and higher education, leaving a gap in that vital age group in the churches. New believers are enrolled in classes using the Heidelberg Catechism for a period of three to twelve months. At present one missionary is assisting temporarily in this program.

The door is still open for Christian workers from overseas to work in Indonesia as a whole, but increasing restrictions make the obtaining of visas more difficult than previously. For

those with a Master's degree or equivalent there are opportunities for lecturing in educational institutions including seminaries and Christian universities. Overseas workers can also find placement in various 'holistic ministries' relating to health, agriculture, linguistics, etc. Christians with expertise in various professions are having significant ministries within local churches. While direct church-planting ministry is largely forbidden to foreigners except in some tribal areas, witness is carried out in the context of local church training programs and outreach efforts with Indonesian believers. Opportunities abound to make meaningful contacts on a one-to-one basis.

While the government still allows overseas Christians to work in Indonesia, may the churches in those lands with a long Christian heritage seize the opportunity, encouraging their youth to consider Indonesia as a place of service. We should pray that freedom of religion will continue, including the freedom to change one's religion. Indonesia is coming up to national elections in 1992. Pressures within the country could bring about changes in those areas.



## Quebec, Canada

The Eglise évangélique des Laurentides (Baptiste Réformée), 1326 Notre-Dame, Charlesbourg PQ, G2N 1R7, Canada (Pastor Raymond Perron) have continued regular weekly meetings over a number of months. It has been an encouragement to them to be registered as a missionary church under Reformed Baptist Missionary Services (USA).

A major opportunity and challenge they face as a church is the offer from the Theological Faculty of the Laval University to commence a Reformed Baptist School of Theology affiliated with the university. The facilities of the university will be made available but the teachers and funding will need to be provided by the Reformed Baptists.

Pastor Tom Rush and the church at Oromocto are actively supporting the venture and Pastor Perron reports that they are planning to commence the school in September 1992 in the belief that the Lord is opening a unique door of opportunity in what has been, up till recently, a predominantly Roman Catholic province of Canada.

## New Brunswick, Canada

David Woodman is pastor of the Trinity Baptist Reformed Church, 185, Pettingill Road, Rothesay, N. B. E2E 2V6. We have received good news that for the first time this young church has been able to purchase a building (help is



*The new building*

needed to complete the payment). The property is ideal and is situated in an environment from which the church can evangelise a considerable community.

## Macedonia, Yugoslavia

There is an astonishing appetite for the Bible in many parts of Russia and Eastern Europe. A revival is in progress in Romania as well as among the Gypsies of Bulgaria, but many parts of Eastern Europe are totally barren spiritually.

Of Macedonia, the most southern province of Yugoslavia with its population of 2 million, Branko Traikovski writes:

'I have begun the Spring sale of books in Bitola and made one visit to Prilep where I was only able to sell three small booklets and gave away three more. I plan to cover the whole of Macedonia during the summer. The standard of living here has so fallen that it seems impossible to sell any book priced above £5. In some shops, however, the Bible costs about £25-£30. Many bookshops have had to close, or change the nature of their business over the last year. Even those who used to sell Christian books in the open from their cars have disappeared. People have no money and books are the last things they will consider at present. In



addition, the effects of Greek Orthodoxy, Islam and Communism on the minds of the people have rendered them closed to all reading and reasoning. How sad it is that people will give £1 for a sandwich, but not 5p for a printed gospel sermon!

### **Russia**

A Russian-speaking member of Leeds Reformed Baptist Church reports that her contacts in the Ukraine, Russia and Siberia are so short of literature that families have to share Bibles between them, one month at a time for a family. In evangelistic enterprise, for a day in a village, there are sometimes no more than two portions of John's Gospel that can be left behind. The need is colossal. Those who wish to have further information, please write to the editor.

This raises a moral problem. An instance could be cited in the fact that parcels of *Ultimate Questions* are being exported to Israel, in itself a great encouragement, but if the Russian edition is depleted it leaves a gaping need in Russia itself. Analogous is the fact that where the mass media cameras are, there a need is more likely to be met. We all rejoice to see something being done for the Kurdish refugees, but what about the starving millions in Africa and genocide in many countries of the world?

*The Times*, April 17, 1991 quotes a report from the Royal Institute of International Affairs: 'Often it is simply a matter of the news media's access to a country. When the Syrians slaughtered as many as 30,000 people in Hama in 1982, there was no significant coverage because the cameras were not let in. Strict censorship in Tibet, where as many as 1.2 million people have been

killed since China's 1949 invasion, and in East Timor, where another 200,000 have been murdered since Indonesia's 1975 invasion, has prevented either atrocity from significantly affecting the public's consciousness.'

### **The Kurds**

There are around perhaps 10 million Kurds in Eastern Turkey, and millions more in Iran, Iraq and the Soviet Union. They are thought to be the descendants of the ancient Medes, but their recent history has been a tragic series of massacres as their bids for autonomy have been put down by the various governments involved, and their language and culture have been suppressed. Because of this, evangelism among the Muslim Kurds is severely restricted and there are very few believers. However there is a good response to Bible correspondence courses in the Kurdish areas of Turkey.

The turmoil in Iraq has prompted Turkish Prime Minister Ozal actually to say the word 'Kurd' — until recently their existence as a separate group was denied and instead they were called 'mountain Turks'. He is proposing new legislation that will bring a limited freedom for the Kurdish language, allowing Kurdish tapes and videos, but not books. At the same time, he has surprised many by talking sympathetically with leaders of the Iraqi Kurds who were fighting Saddam Hussein.

We must now pray that ongoing Kurdish New Testament translation projects will be completed quickly and that when the dust settles, the Kurds will have the freedom to hear the gospel in their own language, and that workers will have the freedom to proclaim the Good News.

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