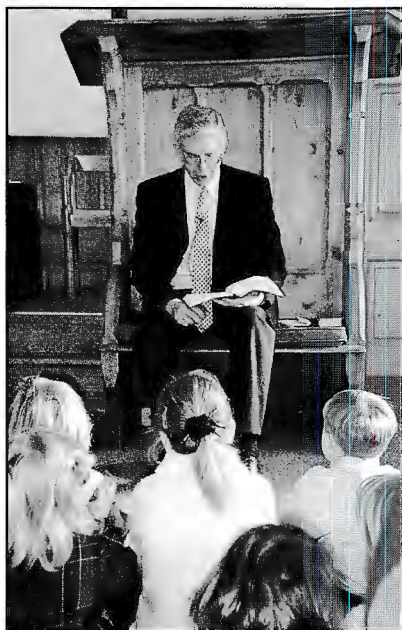


# REFORMATION TODAY



MARCH/APRIL 2000

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On 9th January Tom Nettles preached at Cuckfield Baptist Chapel, West Sussex. He is shown here addressing the children. His excellent book, *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts – the Study of Catechism in Baptist Life* (256 pages) is published by Calvary Press, P O Box 805, Amityville, NY 11701, USA. UK readers order from EP. This book provides the text of the most important Baptist catechisms which have been used to awaken and nurture faith among Baptist people in days gone by and are still as relevant and transforming as ever.

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### *Biblical Reformation Conference, Northern Ireland*

Three cassettes from the Biblical Reformation Conference in Belfast are available by writing to Pastor Harry Dowds, Stonepark Baptist Manse, Eskeragh, Brooke Brough, BT94 4GW. £2 sterling including postage per cassette. 'An affirmation of the relevance of Reformed Baptist Theology' and 'An assessment of the current state of RB Witness' both by Tom Nettles, and 'An overview of RB History' by Jim Renihan.

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Front cover: Steven Curry pastor of Ballymoney Baptist Church and Prof Tom Nettles. The photo was taken at Stormont, N Ireland with the Parliament building in the background. Following the CAREY 2000 Conference, Tom Nettles and Dr Jim Renihan were the principal speakers at a one day conference in Belfast. They addressed the subject of 'Reformed Baptist History'.

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## Editorial

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Featured opposite is Geoff Thomas beavering away on his laptop pc at the 'CAREY 2000' with the net result that a 14 page report is available on the *Banner of Truth* website. For the first time the Carey Conference is on the www! An abbreviated report forms part of this issue. At the recently concluded Westminster Conference in London the Puritan understanding of 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 was presented by the editor under the title 'The Puritans and the Promises'. This was the first time since the inception of the Puritan/Westminster Conference in 1950 that the subject of 2 Thessalonians 2 was opened up (Is the papacy antichrist?). It is available on the *Reformation Today* website and on the *Banner of Truth* website under Geoff Thomas.

The expositions given at Carey 2000 are available on cassette (a sheet describing these accompanies this issue). All are commended and readers will glean information from the conference report (p 11). It is not easy to publish and market a symposium but an effort will be made to gather some of the papers for that purpose.

Prof Jim Renihan's *The Holy Spirit and 2000* is ready for the press. He begins by describing the significance of Pentecost. Below is part of his Introduction:

'The crowning blessing in the application of redemption in Christ is



the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. From the explicit promises of Jesus in the Gospels, through the record of the coming of the Spirit in the book of Acts, to the many epistolary citations, the importance of the relationship between believers and the Holy Spirit is stressed. Yet there is much confusion with regard to the exact nature of this relationship. Varied positions concerning the time of personal reception, the nature of the transaction, and even the essence of the relationship itself may be identified.

This study is an attempt to wrestle with these and similar questions, and to offer solutions to some of them. It cannot purport to be exhaustive in its handling of the various aspects of the Spirit's work in the life of the

individual believer, but it will seek to be suggestive.

The most notable discussion about the gift of the Spirit revolves around the question of the time at which the Spirit is received by the believer. There are several important differences among Christian theologians with regard to the time frame of the reception of the Holy Spirit. Three major views need to be mentioned.

1. *The Sacramental View.* The Roman Catholic Church, and some Anglicans (Anglo-Catholics) and Lutherans argue that one receives the Spirit in conjunction with some type of religious ritual. This ritual may take the form of baptism, the Lord's Supper, confirmation, or the laying on of hands. By participating in one or more of these rituals, the participant is granted the Holy Spirit as a direct result of partaking in the ritual. This view implies that the Church, or the clerical order, passes on the Spirit through its ritual. The Holy Spirit is deposited in the Church, and the Church dispenses the Spirit to those who satisfy its prerequisites.

2. *The Pentecostal View.* There are many groups, whether Pentecostal or Neo-Pentecostal, who argue that a Christian receives the gift of the Spirit in conjunction with some form of (crisis) experience subsequent to conversion. This is frequently, although not always, evidenced by speaking in tongues. Perhaps the largest American denomination which holds this view in its classical form is the Assemblies of God.



*Prof Jim Renihan*

3. *The Evangelical View.* This view, which will be defended in this paper, holds that every true believer receives the gift of the Holy Spirit as a part of the complex of events that take place in the initial reception of salvation. This has sometimes been understood as synonymous with effectual calling, or regeneration, or even with the application of redemption in general; nevertheless, it has emphasized that every true believer receives the Holy Spirit as a part of the experience of conversion. This paper seeks to sharpen this view by asserting that at the time of conversion, upon the act of repentance and faith, God graciously grants to the new believer the supreme privilege of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Every believer is thus a recipient of the gift of the Holy Spirit.'

(Prof Renihan's paper interacts with well-known theologians. His references to them are not included in the above quote).



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# Simplicity in Preaching

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Tom Wells

The two chief things in preaching are having something of importance to say and having the accompanying power of the Holy Spirit in saying it. The two ideas are closely related in this way: the Word of God provides the content of Christian preaching, and it is God's Word that the Spirit has promised to honour. Neither of these things, content and power, comes automatically. We must study to know the truth and we must cry to God for power. To neglect these things is to court failure. Nothing else compares with them. Yet they do not exhaust the category of preaching, as though all else were without value.

Every public speaker and teacher must strive for *simplicity*. In America this is known as 'putting the cookies on the lowest shelf', that is, making the delectable things found in the Word of God available to those who do not have vast education or great intellectual gifts. Such people may not be able to give a dictionary definition of *simplicity* but they know it when they hear it. They speak in terms of liking to hear a certain pastor because they always know what he's talking about. What a grand compliment to any preacher! What a marvellous gift to cultivate!

As with everything worthwhile, cultivating simplicity means avoiding snares and traps that fall in the path of the preacher. One of the first of these is the temptation to think that simplicity is beneath the man of extensive education. Somehow the congregation must know

that the man before them is a man of learning. But this misses the point of education. It is the truth that must be displayed, not the man. Charles Spurgeon once wrote: 'Brethren, the whole process of interpretation is to be carried on in your study; you are not to show your congregation the process, but to give them the result; like a good cook who would never think of bringing up dishes, and pans, and rolling pin, and spice box into the dining hall, but without ostentation sends up the feast.'<sup>1</sup>

You may or may not admire C S Lewis, but you will have to admit his written ability as a communicator. Often the secret of his success was the simple way he wrote of difficult matters. In fact, I have a sample from his *Mere Christianity* that is written at a third-grade level on the readability testing scale that I use. Think of it – grammar, vocabulary and sentence length that can be understood by ordinary children of 8 or 9 years! I have never been able to write below the fifth-grade level.

The second temptation we must avoid is to think that being simple means dealing only with very simple matters. No, the calling of the preacher and everyone else who teaches Scripture is to take very difficult matters and speak of them in simple terms. Many of the words one meets in the Bible need a good deal of explaining in a simple way, if our people are going to grasp them. Here I can use myself as an

example. I preached for almost 20 years before I could remember the meaning of 'propitiation'. Every time I came across the word I had to look it up! And I was a preacher, a man who dealt in these things day after day, week after week. What of my dear people? Did they take words like propitiation in their stride? Perhaps, but I doubt it. We must rather imitate the example of one of P G Wodehouse's characters, an English curate, who in getting ready to preach struggled to find a one-syllable word that means 'supralapsarianism!' (Incidentally, if you come across that monosyllable I would like to have it from you.)

A good habit to develop is this: when you have to use words like propitiation, justification and sanctification, pause briefly to explain them. Sometimes it is said, 'We must stretch the minds of our people.' And so we must. But we do so with wisdom. When a long and difficult word is the main building block of an important sentence, we lose the entire thought for those who do not know that word.

A third temptation to avoid is to pass over words that have one meaning in theology and a number of meanings in the Bible. This is more common than one might think. It comes about in this way: when theologians want to describe a single doctrine they like to use a biblical word to describe it. But the word they choose may have more than one meaning in Scripture. An example is the word 'sanctification' and the words like 'saint', 'sanctify' and 'sanctified' that are related to it. In theology these words are most often used to speak of our progress in the Christian life. And that is a scriptural

use. But it is not the only use and, in this case, not even the most frequent use. More often than not, when used of persons and not things, these words speak of a position that God has bestowed on his people at the outset of their Christian lives.

Other words are also ambiguous. We often must explain them as well. Recently I took down the dictionary by my desk and looked up the word 'mean'. In the dictionary, which is not a particularly large one, I found 27 meanings for that one word. That will give you some sense of the task before the writer and preacher.

This last illustration, however, leads to a fourth enemy of simplicity. The truth is, you must not concentrate on *words* at all. Yes, you must explain obscure words, but I repeat, you must not concentrate on words for their own sakes. A little history here will help you to grasp what I mean. As recently as the last century many did not understand the nature of the Greek used in the New Testament. They thought of it as 'Holy-Spirit' Greek, that is, as a language that the Spirit prepared especially for the NT. The reason was this: NT Greek was clearly not classical Greek. Where did it come from, then? One popular answer was: it must have been invented just for the NT! We now know, however, that the language of the NT was – roughly speaking – the language of the day.<sup>2</sup> It is the kind of language that has turned up in personal letters and bills of sale from the first century. It is the 'koine' or 'common' language of the day. The effect of thinking of NT Greek as a special language invented by the Spirit was to treat too many of the individual words

as *technical terms* that had theological meanings of great depth and significance. To be sure, there are such words, but they are far fewer than was once thought. Fewer of them, then, need individual attention.

Another development of the last hundred years also has led to less emphasis on individual words. More and more, students of communication have come to recognise that meaning resides in sentences and paragraphs much more than in individual words. Does that make the words less important or – what's worse! – less inspired? Not at all! It just means that the way the words are put together in larger units is the chief clue to meaning. Earlier I mentioned looking up a common word with many meanings. If you put yourself in my place at that moment, you will know that I could have stared at the dictionary forever without knowing what the word meant in the context before me. The dictionary showed me the possibilities, but only the passage could give me the meaning. The moral? Explain only the words that really require it. Instead, get on with the larger unit(s)!

This leads to a couple of final points that contribute to clarity and simplicity. First, beware of diversions. They kill clarity of thought. Drive straight through your passage without looking to the right hand or to the left. Every time you say something that is not directly pertinent to your main point, you invite your hearers to leave you and explore the siding for themselves while you return to the main track. If you must cite 3 or 4 other passages where the same word or phrase is used

elsewhere in Scripture, make sure that those citations really clarify something connected with your passage. It is easy to fill up time with parallel passages. It is also easy to distract your listener from the passage at hand.

Lastly, be sure that the points of your outline are among the simplest parts of your sermon. My experience suggests two things that have affected my preaching in recent years. First, men and women do not like repetition. If you have said something once in a sermon, going back over it irritates some people. But, second, there is an exception to this rule, the repetition of the main points of your outline. Ideally, of course, one would not need an outline since, in theory, a single point well made is the best method of driving truth home. But very few passages make a single point. So we use major points, plural. If they are quite simple, and if you enumerate them again as you move from point to point, your hearers will appreciate the repetition.

One last word: as with all non-moral advice, do not treat this as the law of the Medes and the Persians. Every such rule is made to be broken. But keep in mind, that if you break these often, your hearers will be less appreciative. Unless, of course, you are a genius!

## References

1. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries*, reprint, Kregel, Grand Rapids, 1954, p 30.
2. Scholars will recognise that my remarks on 'koine' in the main text are overly simplified. For a broad discussion of the subject see Daniel B Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1996, pp 20-30.

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# Care in Preaching

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*Editor*

The essential ingredients of powerful effective preaching can be summarized as follows:

1. Expository
2. Progressional or systematic
3. Exegetical
4. Doctrinal (instructional)
5. Structural
6. Applicatory (pastoral)
7. Practical
8. Experimental
9. Trinitarian
10. Evangelistic
11. Powerful (spiritually compelling)
12. Popular (relevant and attractive).

These characteristics can be used like a check list. When a preacher is coming near to completing the preparation of his sermon, he may well ask the following questions: Is this sermon really expository? Is my text in harmony with the context? Is it exegetical? Have I fathomed the precise meaning of the text or am I making it say what I would like it to say? Is there doctrinal instruction? Will my hearers be built up in the great central truths of the faith? Have I assembled my material with the best possible structure? In other words, is it easy to follow, logically connected and easy to remember?

As I preach this sermon am I dealing with my people pastorally? Am I mindful of, and sympathetic with, their struggles and temptations? And is this exposition practical? What are they expected to do about it? Is my sermon experimental? Will hearts be warmed? Will Christians be delighted in their union with Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

And what about those in the congregation who do not believe? How will this affect them? Will it be powerful? How can I bring my hearers to repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? Will I be used to compel them to come in? (Luke 14:23). What is there about my sermon which makes it appealing and attractive? Our Lord used references to nature and Thomas Watson used delightful pithy metaphors and similes. How can I emulate my Master and some of his best servants to make my preaching the effective vehicle of salvation and edifying to believers?

It is difficult if not impossible to do justice to all these requirements all the time. It is a mistake to pack too much into one sermon. The average person is limited in the amount of material he can absorb



in one sitting. The best kind of preaching, rarely achieved, is the kind in which one principal point is driven home in such a way that the hearers never forget the impact.

The task is exceedingly difficult. Paul says, 'And who is equal to such a task?' (2 Cor 2:16). Although John Bunyan was the most underprivileged of the Puritans from the point of view of a formal university education, he came closest to exemplifying all the features outlined above. Bunyan can be an encouragement to many who feel inferior because they have lacked the advantages of seminary training.

The Puritans are especially helpful when it comes to structure in expository preaching. They developed a knack of drawing out the meaning of the text and applying its teaching to their hearers. An example will illustrate this.

For instance, take John Flavel on '*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*' (Matt 11:28, AV). Flavel divides up his text as follows:

1. The soul's distress, *weary and heavy laden*;
2. The invitation to come to Christ under that burden, *Come to me*;
3. The encouragement from Christ, *I will give you rest*.

On the subject of writing, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) declared, 'Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man.' While it may not be practicable to write out every sermon in full, it is important for the expositor to construct the framework and then write out any sections in which there may be weakness, obscurity, or lack of clarity. Calvin's commentaries are still sought after and highly valued today because he is noted for explaining the principal points with maximum lucidity. He exemplifies Bacon's 'exact man'. We cannot edify when we are obscure.

In our day special skill is needed to arouse interest and keep attention. Those of us who are called to preach will do better at it if we follow the Puritan method of arresting headings and structures which are true to the text but handled in an imaginative and versatile way. A vital part of expository preaching is the use of illustrations which fit the subject in hand. If we can draw our illustrative material from the Scriptures all the better.

*Extracted from: Who are the Puritans? . . . and what do they teach? pp 167-179, by Erroll Hulse, Evangelical Press, UK, 220 pp, £7.95, \$13.99.*

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## Jim van Zyl – a tribute

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*Editor, with thanks to Mary, Jim's wife, for her help in gathering and dating the following events.*

When I heard that Jim van Zyl had gone to be with the Lord, I noted that at the time he suddenly and quickly slipped from this world into the world of the spirits of just men made perfect, I was preaching on Elijah's translation into heaven, but that coincidence is significant only as far as Elijah reinforces the reality of immediate fellowship in the next world. This comforts us when we lose our friends, and Jim was one of my best friends. He possessed unusual gifts and especially an acute understanding of theology. Everyone who heard him preach acknowledges that he was able to apply the Scriptures with extraordinary gentleness and sensitivity.

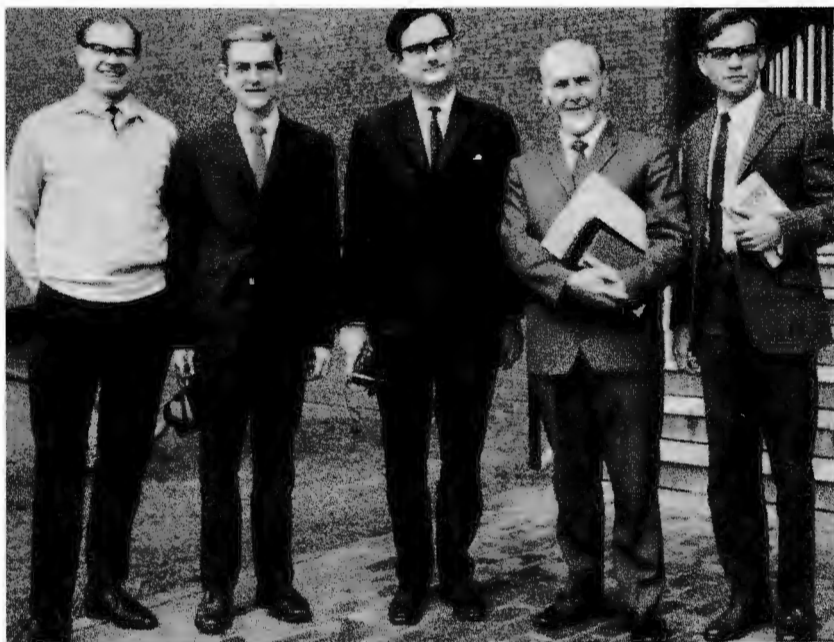
Jim van Zyl was born in Pretoria, South Africa, in August 1937. He trained at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Johannesburg. In 1963 he married Mary and the year following became minister of a Presbyterian church in Belfast, Northern Ireland. During this time, Jim struggled with the issue of baptism, and in 1966 he became pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. There then followed three years full-time study at university for a BA after which he taught in Greys High School in the Eastern Cape.

It was during his time in Port Elizabeth that Jim was burdened by the need for a reformed conference in South Africa. After much discussion and planning, the first conference was held in 1971. I



personally attended the first seven conferences and several others in subsequent years. The conference is now well established as the annual Evangelical and Reformed Conference at Skogheim, near Port Shepstone, Natal. Over the years, Jim made some of the most valuable contributions to the content of the conference.

From 1972 to 1975 Jim pastored the Hillcrest Baptist Church in Natal. His ministry of preaching and care was exceptional but he suffered from the stress that goes with caring for people, a stress which was exacerbated by the fact that he could not easily distance himself from the struggles and conflicts of others. A change was necessitated and this came about when he took on a work that brought him fame throughout South Africa. This was a radio programme 'Calling all Farmers' that was broadcast on the national network. The programme was very popular in South Africa where farming represents a huge and diverse industry. I will never forget his distinctive style on the radio, which always conveyed sincere pastoral



*The speakers at the first Evangelical and Reformed Conference held in Port Elizabeth, SA in 1971. From left to right, Erroll Hulse, Jim van Zyl, David Kingdon, Sandy Gilfillan and Jannie du Preez*

care for the farmers in the multiple crises and perplexities they faced. In 1981 Jim used his experience in radio work to become the organiser of English programmes for Trans-World Radio, a position he held until 1984.

Always a student of the English Puritans, Jim earned an MA while holding office as associate pastor at Lynnwood Baptist Church, Pretoria (1984-1987). His thesis was *William Gurnall and the Puritan concept of spiritual conflict, with special emphasis on the place of faith*.

In 1987 Jim joined the staff of The Bible Institute, Kalk Bay, near Cape Town. Besides lecturing, he prepared courses for correspondence students. Requests for this material come from

many in Africa, and even as far as Egypt and South America. The same pastoral care that permeated his radio broadcasts is observed in these correspondence courses.

Two boys and two girls were born to Jim and Mary, and all are united in the gospel. At the funeral, tributes were brought from the children, from friends in Port Elizabeth, Hillcrest (Natal), Pretoria, and Cape Town. Aspects of these tributes summarise a unique spiritual ministry: Jim van Zyl exemplified expository preaching. He taught the sovereignty of God in love. He led men and women to Christ. He was full of insight, wisdom and compassion. Above all else, in his preaching and teaching, Jim van Zyl was essentially caring and pastoral.



*Jim van Zyl (right) with Sinclair Ferguson*

The following quote is from *Evangelism* by Jim van Zyl, a highly commended 100 page exposition published by The Bible Institute of South Africa, Main Road, Kalk Bay, 7975 S A. Also commended from the same source: *An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, 160 pages, a work which explains what theology is all about with some brilliant insights.

*Section 3.1.3. Evangelism is a Sacred Stewardship.*

It is sacred because it involves the priceless souls of men and women. What, our Lord asked, if a man gained the whole world and yet lost his soul? (Matt 16:26). It is to our great shame that we regard individual human beings so complacently. It has been so throughout human history but in today's media world you can be a zero one moment and a 'superstar' the next.

We need to remember that ULTIMATELY the soul of a dying leper in the streets of Calcutta is as priceless as those 'superstars'. EVERY man, woman and child is made in God's image; all have a priceless dimension and quality about them. So do not disregard the little old 'nobody' in your office, do not ignore your postman or turn in disgust from drop-outs or prostitutes. Do not sneer at that modernistic painter, do not withhold the gospel from the teller at your bank or your difficult neighbour, and do not love your rebellious teenager less. They can become precious jewels in the crown of the King! Remember this: *Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover a multitude of sins* (James 5:20).

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# The Carey Ministers' Conference 2000

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*Swanwick Conference Centre, Derbyshire, UK, January 11-14*

*From report by Geoff Thomas*

Twenty-two nations were represented at the conference.

## TUESDAY 11

The first paper was given by Geoff Thomas – January 6th, 2000. This is the 150th anniversary of the conversion of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in 1850 in Artillery Street Primitive Methodist Church, Colchester, and the significance of this event was described by Geoff Thomas. The theme of the paper was an examination of true conversion based on that of Spurgeon. At the conclusion David Kingdon, who was chairman of this session, described his personal indebtedness to Spurgeon. Converted at the age of 15, when living in a Spurgeon's Home, David studied at Spurgeon's College. He later succeeded Spurgeon's grandson as the principal of the Irish Baptist College.

Graham Hind reviewed the forthcoming book of John Blanchard – *Does God Believe in Atheists?* (EP) warmly commending it as John Blanchard's finest book, £19.95 casebound, 736 pp.

John Campbell of Australia preached an expository sermon on 'Moses and



*Paul Mizzi of Malta*

the God of the New Millennium'. John has been an encouragement to a number of congregations in England over the past weeks.

John described the sexually and morally messed-up world of post-modernism. The clearest representation of post-modernism is seen in hard feminism. God is no longer talked of as He or Lord or King; even the Lord's Prayer is changed. "We women are going to bring an end to God," says Mary Daley.

## WEDNESDAY 12

Each day began with well-attended prayer meetings. At one, Mike Webb





Andrea Ferrari of Sicily

of Sierra Leone spoke of the terrible civil war in that country; ‘the cruellest war’ it has been called. He spoke of two women coming nervously to their church in Freetown, both having had their hands chopped off and both pregnant through rape. “How do you welcome and show your love for such abused women? We prayed for them in our shock and grief.”

At 9.30 a.m., in the place of Conrad Mbewe, unable to attend because his father had just passed away, David Kingdon gave a review commending Stephen Clark’s book on divorce, *Putting Asunder – Divorce and remarriage in biblical and pastoral perspective*. Bryntirion Press, Bridgend, Wales, pp 312, pbk, £9.99.

Earl Blackburn spoke on ‘Principles that Govern Prayer’ from 2 Chronicles 20:1-20.

1. The precipitating circumstances behind this prayer.

2. When Jehoshaphat prayed there was a reply – God’s Spirit moved a man who spoke to the king and all the people: ‘Do not fear... the battle is not yours but God’s.’

3. The principles that govern prayer.

Later David Kingdon read to us a paper of Michael Haykin who was unwell and unable to attend. The title of his paper was *Hazarding all for God at a clap*, an expression expressing the core of Bunyan’s radical Nonconformity. But it can also serve as an apt description of the *raison d’être* of the English Calvinistic Baptist Movement from its emergence from the matrix of Puritanism in the mid-seventeenth century down to the early nineteenth century. Dr Haykin’s paper will be a valuable asset when it appears in paperback form with some of the other papers. He traces out radical Nonconformity to the time of Andrew Fuller.

The spirituality of believers’ baptism was properly emphasised, for example, by Fuller who was pastor at Kettering from 1782. He looked the very picture of a village blacksmith, but diligently studied until he was one of the most valuable men of his time. David Kingdon told us that Carey sent his journal for his first 18 months in India to Fuller, and Fuller was able to correct Carey’s Hebrew. For Fuller, baptism was an oath of allegiance to Christ which expressed that one relied

on the Saviour's atonement and obeyed his word. Baptism was like a soldier putting on his military dress.

The question session raised the issue of the origins of the English Baptists, whether it was from the Puritans (as Michael Haykin and most of the conference speakers believed) or the Anabaptists (with their kinship theory). David Kingdon, Tom Nettles and Jim Renihan all made fascinating authoritative contributions on this issue, referring to dates, personalities, literature and incidents in the Puritan period that left the non-academic members of the congregation respectful and edified. All believed that it was the Puritans rather than the Anabaptists who gave birth to the Baptists. The literature of the time supports this.

### **Prayer and sharing session**

As usual John Rubens led this session, this year acknowledging the difficulty of selecting men to speak because of the number of visitors from all over the world. Extracts from testimonies follow.

*Paul Mizzi of Malta.* Malta is a tiny island rock with five Baptist churches. Ours is a 1689 Confession church and the only Reformed church on the island. A radio programme of 45 minutes once a week is now being broadcast, every Friday evening. The station is owned by an RC monk, and the gospel is being preached clearly.



*Pal Borzazi of Hungary and Romania*

80% of the people we talk to have a hang-up with Romanism. We want to plant a church on a sister island.

*Andrea Ferrari of Sicily.* This large island is in the south of Italy where 5 to 6 million people live. Our town has 70 thousand people. We have 35 members in our church. A literature work is in progress with about twelve Reformed titles in print. In Sicily there are 300 Assemblies of God churches, some of which are very big. There are 200 Independent Pentecostal churches.

*Pal Borzazi of Romania.* I work with the Hungarians there, but also speak Romanian. The fall of communism took place in 1989 and now much dubious influence comes from the West. There is tension between Romanians and Hungarians. There are 230 Baptist churches but just 45 pastors. One recently split in two over the Toronto Blessing. I hope to be married this summer to a Hungarian



*Joel Gonzalez of Cuba*

whom I met in the training school in Welwyn.

*Tibor Foldvari of Hungary* is a Presbyterian and they make up 26% of the church-goers. The Baptists are smaller followed by RCs. There was a revival after the war. There is a 'Bible Union' which advances the faith and has a good Bible School. 'I am an assistant pastor in Budapest. It is a very large Presbyterian congregation. There are ten million people in the whole country and two million in Budapest.'

*Joel Gonzalez of Cuba.* It is the largest island in the Caribbean with more than 11 million people. There are 54 denominations on the island, the main one being Roman Catholic (we were once a colony of Spain). Churches in general are growing. The seminaries are full. Two brethren in the conference from Spain are sending literature to us. There are no foreign missionaries in the country.

Preachers can visit for a month. All the evangelism is done by Cubans.

*David Kosiol of Poland.* The situation is like Malta – 98% RC. 40 % attend church. The church has experienced no revival but we pray that this may be a blessing bestowed upon us.

*Maciek Stolarski* spoke about literature work in Poland.

*Volodymyr Kostyshyn of the Ukraine* spoke of the spiritual life there. The population is the same as that of France. He comes from the western part, and there are 12 churches in that region. He represents a Bible Institute and it provides Bible teaching and materials for the churches. Every week they visit the churches with study programmes. They are publishing new books.

*Vadim Stauchean of Moldova, near the Ukraine.* There are 3-4 million and 2 languages, Russian and Romanian. There is a vacuum after communism. We need teachers. I am in an 80 member church with many young people and children.

*Robert Strivens* for Evangelical Press described the French literature work (Europress) and the literature work in Belarus. A large percentage of the French books are sold in West Africa.

In Russia the work of publishing began five years ago. The environment was completely

Arminian. Recently in the Best Books competition at the Russian Christian Book Fair the 1st prize winner was *Calvin's Institutes*. It was a great event in Russian history. *The Sovereignty of God* by A W Pink has had a profound impact in Russia.

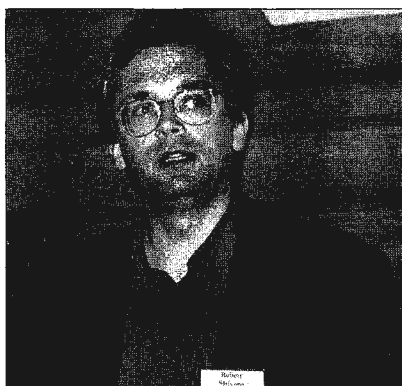
*David Rivero described his work and church in Malaga, Spain.* This is the only Reformed Baptist church in the city of 1 million. The church is 25 years old and has 30 members.

*Victor Roshior of Russia* told of his impending visit to Siberia. 'Where I work they have no cinema or theatre and sometimes the whole village will all come to hear preaching. It is very unstable in Russia. How long will doors remain open?'

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On Wednesday evening Baruch Maoz of Israel preached on the work of the eldership, all very relevant and helpful. The cassette is highly commended.

'We tend to consider ourselves threatened by anyone who dares question our teaching because he wants to think through the issues himself, and we are often intimidated by individuals of equal or greater gift. Because of this, we evidence an unwillingness to cultivate other people's gifts or make room for them in the leadership. So we exert authority, impose our views and put



*Pastor Robert Strivens of Banbury,  
Oxfordshire*

down any real or imagined danger to our position in the church.'

## THURSDAY 13

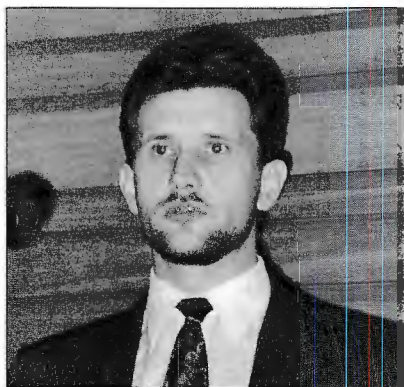
*'John the Baptist: the Silence that broke the Silence.'* David Kingdon.

Jesus was endorsing a baptism which was not of babies but only those confessing their sins. If John the Baptist required only those capable of confession to be baptised, and also the disciples of Jesus, it is more difficult for us to believe that the apostolic church baptised infants.

David Kingdon's work is meticulously reasoned and we look forward to reading it in print. His revision of *Children of Abraham* is long overdue and will include his work on John the Baptist.

*The Gospel Grip of John Gano.* Dr Tom Nettles.

Gano was licensed to preach in 1753



Valeri Grigoric of Belarus

and ordained in 1754. He visited the General Baptists and preached to them. They were changed to Particular Baptists and they began to flourish. The Negroes were blessed by his ministry because he took such care of their souls. Whitefield once came to hear him preach. In New York he became the pastor of a church which was constituted in 1752 and continued as a minister for many years. In the 1770s and 1780s there were great blessings and it grew to about 200 members. He was chaplain in the Revolutionary War and often in danger, but maintained his moral purity.

Earl Blackburn preached a stirring expository message on *The Valley of Dry Bones*, Ezekiel 37:1-14.

#### FRIDAY 14

Jim Renihan expounded on the gift of the Holy Spirit given at Pentecost. Those who order the cassette will

receive more than their money's worth. Included is an exposition of the metaphors used to describe the Holy Spirit. 1. A sealing 2. A deposit 3. Firstfruits 4. An outpouring 5. A baptizing 6. A drinking 7. Rivers of living water 8. Anointing.

Erroll Hulse. *The Promises for the New Millennium*. The history of the church divides into periods: The apostolic age ended in AD70. The early church period ended with the conversion of Constantine. The medieval church was characterised by the development and consolidation of the papacy with disastrous results, but the gospel was recaptured with the Reformation of 1517-1625. A new evangelical period got under way which developed in stages but now has become international on an ever-increasing scale. The promises to be pleaded are:

1. The removing of the obstacles to the gospel
2. A major conversion of the Jews
3. Multitudes to be delivered from the superstitions of Rome
4. Multitudes to be won in the '10/40 window' which is most resistant
5. The earth to be filled with a knowledge of the glory of God.

A comprehensive report by Geoff Thomas is available on the Banner of Truth website as is Geoff's paper on Spurgeon's conversion.



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## David K Straub – a tribute

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*David Straub, until recently the Co-ordinator of Reformed Baptist Mission Services (RBMS) in the USA, went to be with his Lord on November 17, 1999.*

*by Tom Wells*

I first met David at the Reformed Baptist Family Conference in Harvey Cedars, NJ, in the late 1970s. At that time David and Susan had returned from Scotland where they had served as missionaries, first in Haddington and later in Edinburgh where David also heartily threw himself into the work of the Banner of Truth Trust. He recognised my name through a book that I had offered to Banner in the mid-1970s. After that brief chat I knew that I had found a friend.



*David and Susan Straub*

David was born in Louisville, KY on August 18, 1945 but spent his pre-college years in West Pittston, PA. His parents were followers of the Lord Jesus, so David had all the advantages of a Christian home. But like so many teens, while convinced of the truth of the Word of God, he nevertheless refused to yield his life to Jesus Christ. In a testimony which he prepared to be read at his funeral, he wrote: 'A new dilemma plagued me in my senior year in high school. What should I do with my life?... As I saw it, the solution was to choose a career in something that would not require a commitment to Christ... Music was about all I did in high school. I began to tell people I was planning to go to college to major

in music.' Through the influence of his pastor he found himself at Bob Jones University where he became a music education major. There, mainly through the influence of a godly roommate, he was brought to Christ. He later wrote of 'ending years of *knowing* what was right but not *doing* what was right'.

Following graduation and marriage, the Straubs moved to Scotland where their three older boys were born. When they returned to the USA in 1977 David became pastor of Paradise (PA) Baptist Church where he served for 8 years. The Paradise church was affiliated with newly formed *Reformed*



*Some friends and colleagues at the funeral from left to right: back row: Steve Martin, Tom Lutz, Andrew Symonds, Walt Chantry, Tom Wells, front row: Gary Swigert, Fred Huebner, Bob Selph, Jamie Howell and Baruch Maoz*

*Baptist Mission Services* and when its first Co-ordinator chose to go to the Middle East as a missionary himself, David was chosen to succeed him in 1985. Thus began the relationship that David enjoyed for the rest of his years, a relationship that brought him and his family joys, tears, excitements and grave dangers.

As Co-ordinator of RBMS David had two main responsibilities. He had to stay in vital contact with the missionaries sent by the local Baptist churches that RBMS aided. He also had to represent these same missionaries as he contacted like-minded churches in North America. Working only with one other full-time person, the secretary in the RBMS office, David travelled tirelessly back and forth between churches and missionaries

overseas. At the same time, he developed an encyclopedic knowledge of evangelical missions generally. This enabled him to bear witness to his own love for all those engaged in gospel work, and to challenge the rest of us to expand our own horizons of loving interest in the cause of Christ.

Part of David's work was to visit the missionaries on their fields. This was also his delight. Brethren in Eastern and Western Europe, Africa, the Middle and Near East as well as in both North and South America remember his visits with great affection. David even found his way to Cuba in 1998, a country largely unvisited by Americans. Of course, brothers and sisters in Great Britain were among his first and greatest loves.

Venturing into Eastern Europe brought David more excitement and danger than many of us have ever known. In the mid-1990s David went to Kosovo with a large amount of money on his person, intended for literature ministry. While travelling, his bus was stopped. There were forty passengers and every one was searched and carefully interrogated by police. For some reason the man in the seat next to David resisted. There was a scuffle and the man was taken off the bus and searched. This confused the police because when they returned they missed David and continued with their work with all the remaining passengers. When David arrived at his destination, his host told him that had the police found the money, they would have killed him and divided it among themselves!

For seven years the highlight of my own congregation was the annual missions conference in which David invariably was one of the speakers. He told his stories, showed his slides and preached to us concerning the cause of God in the world. Each year we not only benefited by David's ministry personally, but the missionaries at the conferences were greatly helped by David's knowledge and zeal. These annual visits were cut short by the sudden discovery in May, 1998, that David was suffering from a malignant brain tumour.

Over the years Grace Baptist Church of Carlisle, PA had become home to David, Susan and their four boys. On



November 30, 1999 they gathered with 400-500 friends from around the world for a memorial service for David. The two hours proved to be a time for tears richly mixed with hope and joy. The service was conducted by Bob Selph, David's successor as Co-ordinator of RBMS. Walt Chantry preached and there were many other contributions.

Hudson Taylor once wrote that one way God prepares us for heaven is by peopling it with those we love. We who have the perspective of more than a few years behind us can attest to the truth of that word.

David Straub is survived by his parents, a sister, a brother, and his wife Susan, with sons Jonathan, Stephen, Timothy and Nathan Straub. They need our prayers, while not forgetting the burden of David's heart, the need of a sin-cursed world for the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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# Dr D Martyn Lloyd-Jones 1899-1981

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– *his method in preaching*

*Paul E G Cook*

I first heard Dr Lloyd-Jones preach in 1950 in Westminster Chapel, London. The Chapel was full of scaffolding. It had survived the war, but required considerable restoration work. We had to observe the preacher through a jungle of scaffolding poles. I had an overwhelming sense of the authority of God's Word as I listened to him on that Sunday morning.

Dr Lloyd-Jones had three distinct styles of preaching. They could be described as his Sunday morning style, his Sunday evening style and his Friday evening style. On the Lord's Day mornings he preached in an expository manner, with considerable application and exhortation to believers having to live the Christian life in a hostile world. His preaching was in a low key with not much physical energy being expended. His books on the Sermon on the Mount and the Epistle to the Ephesians were the product of this Sunday morning ministry.

His evening preaching was in great contrast to his morning style. He was preaching as an evangelist, and flinging the arrow at any unbelievers present of whom there were many. He wore a simple Geneva gown and in manner appeared like a latter-day John the Baptist, preaching with great seriousness and with tremendous eloquence. His method was to take a verse or passage from Scripture and demonstrate the relevance of the Christian message to the modern man. In doing this, he would often present the arguments of the unbeliever, building up his case, rather like an attorney for the defence; and then, having done this, he would expose the fallacy of the unbeliever's position, demolishing his whole case; and this would be followed up with a powerful presentation of gospel truth. The unbeliever was left with nothing except Christ, to whom he was urged to resort. The preaching usually rose to an astonishing climax as Lloyd-Jones, totally caught up in the greatness and wonder of the message he was preaching, exhorted the congregation with great energy of spirit to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Son of God and their only Saviour. His preaching was

accompanied by frequent physical gestures and actions; in fact, the whole man seemed to pulsate with the conviction and truth of his message.

In early 1953 I worked with a communist Jew in the estimating office of an engineering company. We arrived at an agreement whereby in return for my going with him to a big communist meeting at which I heard some remarkable oratory, he would come with me to hear Dr Lloyd-Jones. So one Sunday evening he went with me to Westminster Chapel, and was so affected that he took the opportunity of seeing Dr Lloyd-Jones after the service.

During that period, late 1953-1955, I worked in a hospital in lieu of National Service with a gang of labourers. One of these men had recently been released from prison. He was a Welshman and I persuaded him to come with me one Sunday evening to hear a fellow Welshman – Dr Lloyd-Jones. I noticed that during the preaching he was becoming increasingly agitated. Suddenly, he leapt to his feet and entering the aisle he took several steps towards the pulpit, shaking his fist at the Doctor and shouting out, ‘You don’t know what you are talking about!’ The Doctor just carried on preaching and my companion left the church. But he was stopped by a deacon outside, who succeeded in getting him to see Dr Lloyd-Jones after the service. He had been brought under considerable conviction of conscience.

Many people of all types were converted in the Chapel under the preaching of Dr Lloyd-Jones. Why was there such a contrast between his evening and morning styles of preaching? The answer, I think, lies in an experience he had early in his ministry. He was on holiday in North Wales, and attended a church one Sunday morning, where he heard a preacher of exceptional preaching power and ability. He decided that he must hear him again in the evening; but to his amazement the preacher was quite ordinary, and had none of his earlier energy and passion. On leaving the church he asked the preacher for an explanation. ‘Oh,’ said the preacher, ‘no man can prepare and preach more than one sermon each week.’ Dr Lloyd-Jones clearly decided to follow this man’s advice to some extent. He reserved his full energies for the Sunday evening service.

His Friday evening Bible Lectures expressed yet a third style of



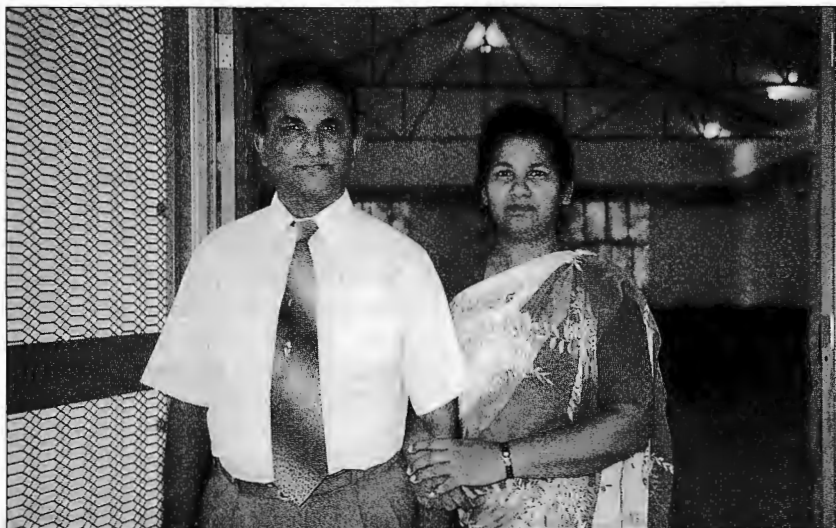
preaching. The series of published books on Bible Doctrines and on Romans illustrates it. I attended all his Bible Doctrine lectures from 1952-1955, but only an occasional lecture in his Romans series. But in these addresses there was little preaching or proclamation as such; instead, a careful and wise interpreting of God's Word, when he would consider differences of viewpoint before arriving at the position he regarded as biblically right. His style was didactic, and his approach reflected his medical training in the 1920s under the famous Lord Horder, the king's physician. Following an era of rampant liberalism, he reminded his hearers of the supreme authority of God's Word and demonstrated the sufficiency of Scripture over against the failing philosophies of men.

Dr Lloyd-Jones was a pulpit giant, though small of stature. He was God's gift to the church in Britain during very barren years. Born in Wales, and Welsh speaking, his family moved to London just before the First World War. His father had a dairy business in Westminster, and young David used to help him deliver the milk. Having excelled at school and in his medical studies at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, he became chief clinical assistant to Lord Horder. But he became increasingly aware that many of the physical problems of his patients were the result of godless living. God's call to him to enter the ministry took him to Aberavon in South Wales at the beginning of 1927. There the Spirit of God mightily used his preaching and many working-class people were converted.

In 1938 he resigned from the church in South Wales and shortly afterwards joined Dr Campbell Morgan in a joint-ministry at Westminster Chapel. After Dr Morgan's death in 1945 Dr Lloyd-Jones assumed the full responsibility in a ministry which was brought to an end by a serious illness in 1968. Following his recovery he exercised a fruitful itinerant ministry until his death in 1981.

Dr Lloyd-Jones occasionally preached in the USA and on the Continent, but his greatest contribution was his London ministry and the world-wide influence which it had. Despite the fact that numerous books by him are in circulation, I think it is true to say that he never wrote a book. All his books consist of sermons and addresses. He was pre-eminently a preacher, and one of the greatest preachers of this twentieth century.

## News



*Vijay and Narsamma Chandra*

### **Fiji**

*David Steere*

The rainy season had begun; the cane harvest was nearly in; the new building for Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Ba was complete! The official opening and dedication took place on Sunday 28th November 1999, 3.30 p.m. with 97 present, the largest congregation ever.

The town of Ba has a population of 16,000 surrounded by many small villages housing cane farmers all of Indian descent who, with much difficulty, eke out a living barely above subsistence level. For how much longer remains to be seen, as the landlords (indigenous Fijians) are not

renewing the leases for these small farms. They say they want their land back and are going to grow sugar cane, whereas they have little or no knowledge of such farming. It is very complex and the situation is getting very tense between the two ethnic groups.

Seven years ago a Fijian/Indian missionary, Rev Vijay Chandra, with his wife Narsamma and two sons Andrew and Philip, went to live and work for the Lord in this town. A small group soon gathered and services were held in the Chandras' rented home. A church was formed based on the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*. The house was used for worship until last summer (1999). Now a new chapel



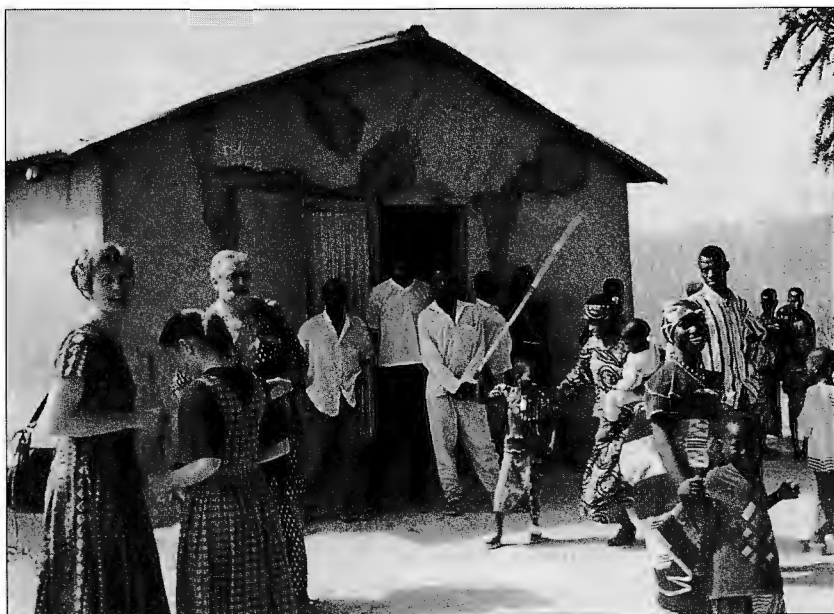
*The new building*

building has been erected. Things impossible with man are possible with God. Membership of Sovereign Grace Baptist Church today is about 50. On 28th November, the day of the opening, 8 were baptised and are joining the church. Guest preacher for the occasion was Pastor David Steere of Fressingfield, England, who preached on Hebrews 12:1 calling for endurance to run 'the race that is set before us'. On the Thursday before the official opening an evangelistic meeting was organised. 95 attended including some Muslims and Hindus. Pastor Steere preached on the question asked by Pontius Pilate, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' (Matt.27:22).

In the afternoon, after the official opening and tape cutting, the church and congregation entered their new building for the praise and worship of almighty God. Many churches were represented in the congregation

including Assemblies of God, Pentecostals, Baptists, Methodists and Anglicans. The principal of the Fiji Bible College and other ministers were present. The members and their pastor shared in a very moving public act of dedication of themselves and the building for the glory of God. Pastor Steere preached on 'What is the Church? The Church which the Lord loved and gave himself for?' basing his ministry on Ephesians 5:25. There followed the provision of a hot (very!) meal for everyone. This had been cooked on wood-burning fires. It was a day never to be forgotten.

Pastor Chandra is greatly blessed in his wife as co-worker and supporter. Proverbs 31: 10-31 is apt. The future is challenging as new initiatives in evangelism are undertaken in the local neighbourhood. It is hoped to start a multi-racial evening service on Sunday evenings in English. Present worship is almost entirely in the Hindi language. Also it is hoped to begin training for pastors and lay workers on Thursday evenings. This is in addition to Rev Chandra's lectures at Fiji Bible College and being co-ordinator of the local ministers' fellowship, both of which give wonderful opportunities for passing on the doctrines of grace! Tuesday and Wednesday evenings are set aside for village Bible studies and prayer meetings. The needs are vast – so also are the opportunities. The discouragements, however, are great also.



*Some of the congregation at a village church on the outskirts of Parakou.  
Megan Patterson, far left and David Ellis, third from left*

Pastor Chandra would very much like help by way of an experienced pastor to assist him for a period. This would release him to concentrate on church planting further along the coast. Humanly speaking the future for the Fijian Indians is bleak. Under the country's constitution they are not allowed to own land. What are the cane farmers going to do? Where are they going to live? The British brought them there to do what they have done for generations – grow and harvest sugar cane. Now they are no longer wanted. Fiji, a land of over 300 islands, is already a third world country. Tourism is all that is left to prop up the economy if sugar cane production ceases. Almost all tourism

is in the hands of the indigenous Fijians. Where does this leave the future of a Fijian/Indian, Hindi-speaking church?

### **Niger, Benin and Burkino Faso**

*David Ellis*

These are French-speaking countries and as I had lived and pastored churches in France for a number of years, my mind returned to French mode for this tour of about a month in which I was accompanied by my wife Barbara who was active in teaching women. We reached remote places by a Piper Saratoga single-engine, six-seater aeroplane which was kindly put

at our disposal. Two pilots, Ken Morton and Dan Germaine, took turns to pilot us.

About 120 missionaries from all over Niger gathered for a conference at Galmi (about 300 miles east of Niamey), a hot place with fine dust which gets into your lungs. My task was to teach on a systematic expository basis the theme of the kingship of Christ from Mark chapters 1-5. There is an evident shortage of expository preaching and an inadequate grasp of the sovereignty of God and the doctrines of grace which subjects are paramount when tremendous patience and perseverance is needed in barren situations and exhaustion is near. Missionaries themselves need the stimulus of hearing preaching; by cassette if no other is available. They also need journals which are biblical, practical and contemporary. I met one missionary, Nigel by name, who appreciates *Reformation Today*. One missionary couple I met travel long distances to nomadic tribes. Others are engaged in medical work and yet others in agriculture.

In Benin we spent two weeks in Parakou. We were met at the airport by dedicated missionaries Jim and Megan Patterson with Craig and Ruth. We have known Megan since her school days in Aberystwyth. About 40 attended the missionary conference including German, Swiss, British and American missionaries. We were



*David Ellis with pastor David Atchadé of the Central Church, Parakou*

reminded in personal conversations that all the human stresses, strains and depressions are present on the mission field as they are at home. Missionaries belong to the same race of Adam as the rest of us and letters of encouragement are always appreciated. In the second week I was asked to give a series of evening talks on 'The life of prayer and sanctification in the life of the believer' in a central church. Some 150 gathered each evening. I preached in French and at the conclusion of each message the pastor of the church questioned the congregation on what they had been hearing. I was encouraged to hear how much had been taken in. After the final evening we spent a helpful time in prayer.

The final conference in Ougadougou, Burkino Faso was held in the Wycliffe Translators' HQ buildings and was similar in size to the one held in Benin. Most of the workers are involved in evangelism and church planting and fully committed to their task irrespec-



tive of personal cost. It would be rare to find such commitment in the home countries. We were thrilled to meet missionaries whom we had known as young people in France many years ago. One, Derek Johnson, is now co-ordinator of Summer Institute of Linguistics' translation work and that day had seen their very first book delivered, the New Testament published in the Sissala language.

These parts of West Africa have left a deep impression on us. The people are friendly and kind; several gave us gifts, none asked for help. The infrastructure of the cities is better preserved than in Kenya. Nevertheless there is profound spiritual darkness everywhere. Most encouraging was the dedication of the missionaries labouring in difficult conditions.

## **South Africa**

*Martin Holdt*

The 9th Grace Ministers' Conference took place early in January. Due to popular demand, three conferences were held successively in order to accommodate the 356 people who registered. The first two were held at Magaliesberg, a beautiful little town an hour's drive from Johannesburg, and Pretoria. The third conference was held near Cape Town. The speakers repeated their expositions at each conference.

The conferences have been attracting more and more men in the ministry. Encouraging reports continue to come

in of those who have been renewed in their vision for the glory of God and in their commitment to declare the counsels of God with vigour.

Sadly Don Carson, booked to be the main speaker this year, was unable to come due to his wife's serious illness. Within days of the commencement of the first conference a replacement was found in the person of Stephen Rees from the UK. Mervyn Eloff was the other speaker.

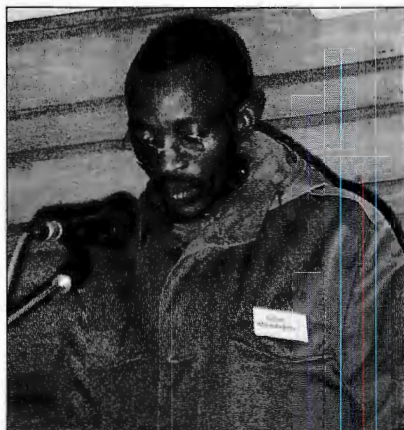
Many who were initially disappointed that Don Carson could not come were delighted with the masterly expositions on the 'Servant' passages in Isaiah by Stephen Rees. The two prayer meetings at 7 a.m. at the Cape conference were a taste of revival.

We give thanks for the vision which prompted the first conference 9 years ago, attended by a mere handful of men. Who could have dreamed that the day would come when so many would gather in 3 different venues across the country? We look forward to the 10th conference due to be held in 2001 and understand the sentiments of one brother who commented this year: 'This was my first Grace Ministers' Conference, and it certainly won't be my last!'

## **Namibia**

*From a report given at the UK Carey Ministers' Conference 2000 by Laban Mwashekele*

Aad van Onselen introduced Laban. He has a local church and has the



*Laban Mwashekele of Namibia*

vision to evangelise the whole country. Laban said, 'When first converted I was a typical Arminian evangelist. At theological school I read Timothy George's book on *Southern Baptist Theologians* and that book taught me the Reformed faith. Tom Nettles was one of the authors. In 1995 Erroll Hulse visited and encouraged me in my first church. Reading D M Lloyd-Jones' *Sermon on the Mount* introduced me to expository preaching. Later I was invited to preach on the radio at 8 a.m. every Sunday morning. This led to an invitation to preach at Walvis Bay on *What is the answer to AIDS?* My answer is, "The gospel!" Meetings were organised in the Town Hall. 7,000 attended every night for a week. At the end of the second week 97 people were committed to preparation for baptism and assigned to one of the elders of the church for further instruction. The same phenomena took place in Luderitz.

## Serbia

*News of Simo Ralevic from David Bugden*

Readers will know that our brother Simo had to leave his home town Pec in Kosovo and flee to Northern Serbia where he was initially in great need. There he received some help from friends in the UK and other places and he soon saw the providence of God in taking him there. Opportunities abound for preaching and literature distribution. He is preaching more than he has ever done – in his own meeting place and elsewhere. There is a good response to the gospel and much literature is being distributed. A new store, 60 by 18 feet, is almost completed. Since Simo arrived in Serbia twenty books have been printed and five tracts in both Serbian and Croatian. He writes: 'I also have great joy in receiving letters from those professing to have been saved either through my literature or my sermons. Much of my time is given to answering these letters.'

He pleads for prayer support and says; 'We still feel the effects in our minds and bodies of all the suffering we endured during the war in Kosovo – these wounds will take a long time to heal.' God has given Simo a great door of opportunity in Serbia. Let us pray for him.

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# Help in Preaching

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## *Resources for preachers – Reviews by Bill James*

***Setting Hearts on Fire***, John Chapman, Matthias Media, UK, 1999, 230pp, pb.

This excellent little book is designed to help all who seek to communicate the Word of God – whether they be preachers, youth leaders, or Sunday School teachers. The primary concern is with evangelistic preaching.

Chapman begins with a robust and stirring defence of the Bible as the Word of God, and shows the necessity and the power of preaching:

‘...if you are teaching the word of God properly, then you speak on God’s behalf. There is no doubt that the hearers hear the “voice of God”. That is the wonder of preaching and teaching. A human is speaking but the listeners encounter the living God speaking’ p 23.

The key is teaching the Word of God properly. There is a most helpful emphasis on keeping texts in their context to understand their true meaning. And that context includes the whole context of biblical history in which everything prepares for and points towards the Lord Jesus Christ. So Chapman is able to assert, ‘All preaching is evangelistic preaching when it is set in its biblical context, because it points to Jesus’ p.49. He is keen not to divorce evangelism from biblical preaching. But specifically evangelistic preaching will tend to present that whole Bible message ‘in a nutshell’, and will be based on texts which go to the heart of the matter. He gives examples of texts, and how to present them evangelistically. In the appendices he gives examples of his own talks, and suggests further outlines. There is also a self-assessment sheet to fill in when you listen to a tape of yourself speaking.

The second part of the book deals with how to prepare the message. This includes how to understand the text, and how to unpack it and present it in an attractive way with illustrations. There is much helpful practical material. An ‘altar call’ is opposed, but good suggestions are given as to how enquirers can make some sort of response to ask for help or advice after the meeting.

Matthias Media also distribute a video called 'Giving the Talk' in which John Chapman speaks to this subject. That is most helpful, and I have already given it to young men in my church who are starting to preach. My main reservation about the video is that it is somewhat mechanical – good on technique, but not strong on spirituality, the need of prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. The book is more balanced in that regard. Together they make an excellent resource for our young preachers, and this preacher found that even with years of experience there are still very valuable lessons to learn from John Chapman.

*The Letter to the Ephesians*, Peter T O'Brien, Eerdmans/ Apollos (IVP), UK, 1999, xxxiii + 536pp, hardback.

This is an outstanding modern commentary on Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Peter O'Brien is thorough and careful in his scholarship, clearly orthodox in his doctrine, and readable and accessible for the preacher.

The main rival to this commentary is perhaps Lincoln's work in the WBC (Word Biblical Commentary – Word Books, Dallas, Texas) series, but that is marred by Lincoln's unreasonable insistence on non-Pauline authorship. In contrast, O'Brien provides an extensive defence of Pauline authorship. The text layout and readability of this volume (in the same series as Morris on *Romans* and Carson on *John*) are also superior to WBC.

I dipped into this commentary at various points, and was nowhere disappointed. In particular it is refreshing to find that O'Brien is unafraid to explain Ephesians 5 in a balanced and faithful manner in its teaching on the roles of husband and wife. When I next preach on Ephesians, this commentary will be my first choice for exegetical help.

*Philippians*, Gordon D Fee, Inter-Varsity Press, UK, 1999, 204pp, hardback.

This is the latest addition to the IVP New Testament Commentary Series which aims to provide faithful exegesis of the text, coupled with contemporary application. To senior pastors who are equipped with good libraries, these commentaries may seem a little lightweight. But for the younger preacher, or

for those who lack a working knowledge of Greek, this is a most valuable series to provide a good guide for exegesis and exposition.

Fee provides a helpful and generally reliable guide to Philippians. Sometimes caution must be exercised, however, for example where he assumes that Lydia was a leader of the church.

*Crossway Classic Commentaries*, UK, ed. McGrath & Packer -

*Jude* / Manton, 1999, 223pp, pb.

*1 & 2 Timothy & Titus* / Calvin, 1998, 208pp, pb.

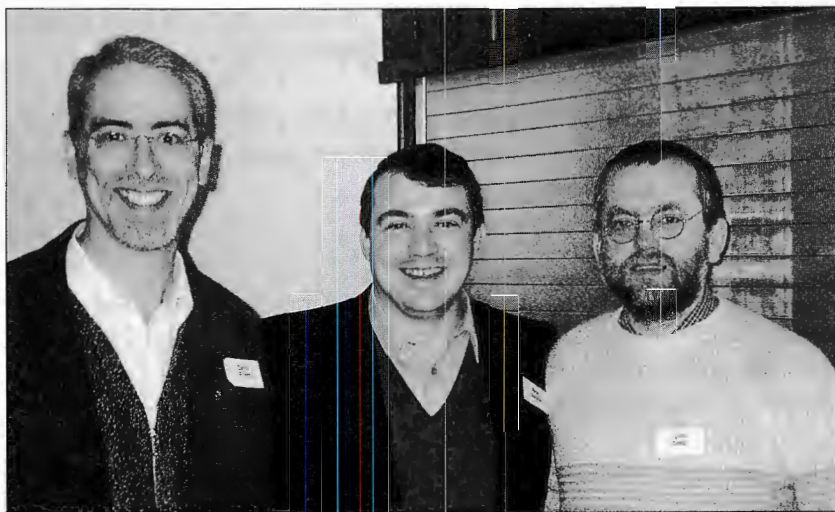
*Hebrews* / Owen, 1998, 269pp, pb.

This series of commentaries is to be very warmly welcomed. While we live in an age of abundance as far as biblical scholarship is concerned, yet there are great riches also to be enjoyed from an earlier age.

McGrath and Packer are attempting to bring the treasures of Reformed and Puritan commentaries to the modern preacher. If we are sometimes put off by the great length of older works, or their inaccessible style, these paperbacks answer our need.

Inevitably this series is open to the criticism, 'How can Owen on Hebrews be reduced to a paperback of 269 pages?' For some there will be no substitute for the original volumes. But in my own view, the editors are to be commended for their efforts. The power of Owen's argument on apostasy in Hebrews 6 remains, while condensed to a mere 7-8 pages. Nor is Manton's pastoral counsel blunted. As he comments on v.5 of Jude, 'Though you already know all this', he digresses with an exhortation to be thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures. He urges the reading of the Bible in family worship and in private, and to read thoughtfully – seeking the Lord in prayer and asking help from church leaders in understanding. Again in v.3 on 'I felt I had to write and urge you', Manton reminds pastors of their duties towards their people, and in particular seeing what is necessary for the congregation at any time.

This series is warmly commended. It may be used in sermon preparation, or devotionally.



*From left: David Rivero, Pepe Morena and Luis Canho of Spain at the 'CAREY 2000' – see report*

***The Quest for Full Assurance: The Legacy of Calvin and his Successors,***  
Joel R Beeke, Banner of Truth, UK, 1999, 395pp, pb.

The question of assurance can be one of the most challenging issues for preaching and pastoral care. We know that the Reformers and Puritans excelled in their understanding and application in this area, but where to begin? We are therefore indebted to Joel Beeke who has masterfully summarised the understanding of this doctrine from the time of Calvin through English and Dutch Puritanism.

This work started life as Beeke's PhD thesis, and I was privileged to secure a copy some years ago, albeit in rather crude typescript. It was a great treasure and help then, and even more so now when it is laid out attractively in more modern format. It is an enormous asset in helping us to understand this doctrine and apply it to our people.

Banner of Truth is to be congratulated for making this excellent volume available in attractive format and at a very reasonable price.

For those who are intimidated by 400 pages of fine scholarship, you will be encouraged to hear that every time I think through the doctrine of assurance I am convinced that the 1689 Confession provides the best summary statement to be found anywhere!



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