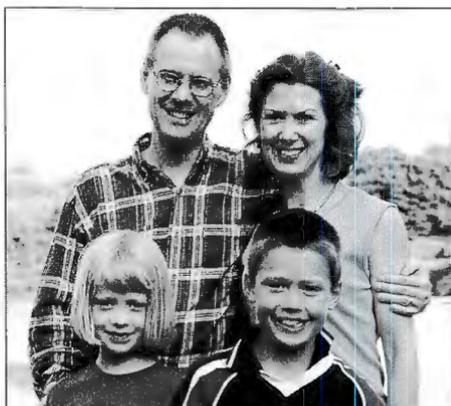

REFORMATION TODAY



NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2001

184



*Bill and Sharon James,
Lydia and Peter - see
11th September -
A Mother's Perspective*

Front cover: *The site of the new hospital, Nampula, Mozambique, see pages 19-20. Dr Charles Woodrow is looking for those who are called to missionary service who will help in the various spheres of service. Some years ago John Atembe, in a remote, difficult to reach part of Cameroon, called for doctor and a teacher to settle there with the object of extending the work of the gospel. He pointed out that if a bridgehead were established there, the further five-day walk into the jungle to contact the unreached pygmies would become more of a reality. So far this call has been unanswered. It is at present a bridge too far. In Nampula there is better access and some infrastructure including a nearby airport. Nevertheless to build and equip a whole hospital is ambitious. 'O Sovereign LORD! You have made the heavens and the earth by your great power. Nothing is too hard for you!' (Jer 32:17)*

Charles Woodrow's e mail: c&jwoodrow@teledata.mz

Apology. Carey Recording Studios has suffered a breakdown in services and apologise to all those who have not received cassettes or replacement cassettes. If you have written with an order or a cheque and have not received service please write to Timothy Parkinson, Crag House Farm, Smithy Lane, LEEDS, LS16 7NH
or e mail Tim@caringforlife.co.uk

For details concerning cassettes describing the Puritans see page 28

11th September – Editorial

11th September continues to dominate the world media of newspapers, radio and TV. Much of this issue is devoted to the tragic events of that day which like Pearl Harbour is inscribed forever in the history of the world.

The aforementioned media are very powerful as are the agents that control them. Politicians understandably are desperate to assure us that Islam is a religion of peace. We wish that that was correct but in almost every country where Islam takes over freedom of religion dies. Not every Islamic regime is as cruel or extreme as the Taleban government of Afghanistan but 11th September has served to raise the question of the persecution of Christians by Muslims around the world.

Many peace-loving Muslims are ashamed of the events of 11th September and ashamed of the Taleban just as we are ashamed of the Crusades. Bill James goes to the root of the matter when, in his article *Not by Violence*, he writes:

‘Such notions of violent religious zeal continue wherever spiritual and political or physical power are confused. This is the path of Constantine, and the alliance of Church and State. This is the way of the Crusades, or the burning of heretics. All are terrible stains on Christian history, and are alien to true Christianity. Even today, our zeal may tempt us to long for physical or political power. We secretly crave a Christian majority, and a Christian party, a government to impose Christian values upon our society. We are certainly commanded to be salt and light in our society, and to exert positive influence for good and godly moral principles wherever we can. But there can never be any such thing as “a Christian country”. This is a contradiction in terms. It is a return to the old theocracy of Israel, the Old Testament. It inevitably involves the use of coercion to enforce Christian truth. And this is never the Christian way. Rather, the Church is described as a holy nation which in the present age must always comprise “aliens and strangers” in the nations of the world.’

The article *Daniel Neal and his History of the Puritans* points further to the confusion which reigns when the Constantinian principle of Church equals State operates. In his three volume history of the Puritans, Neal describes the persecution meted out to the Puritans over a long period as they sought to purify the Church of England. Persecution came to a head in 1662 when about 2,000 Puritan ministers

were ejected from their churches. The post-1662 persecution was even more ferocious than before and effectively brought about the demise of Puritanism. For the period called the era of Dissent, nonconformists suffered fierce persecution and as described in the article, Daniel Neal added the history of the Baptists and Quakers to his *History of the Puritans*.

Persecution Today

The world media are very selective, capitalising on whatever catches public attention. The media have by-passed the fact that 10,000 Christians have been massacred in Indonesia, half a million made refugees and 455 churches destroyed. Of the 41 countries in the world where Christians are persecuted, 36 of them are either in Muslim-majority countries or those where a Muslim minority is pressing for Islamisation. Christian converts are likely to lose their jobs, be disowned or even murdered by their families. Saudi Arabia, Iran and Afghanistan enforce the death penalty for conversion.

The Barnabas Fund has documented just some known atrocities perpetrated against Christians in the year 2000 in Egypt, Nigeria, Sudan, Indonesia, Philippines (by Islamic rebel groups), Ivory Coast and Central Asia. Christian minorities are put at increased risk during times of turmoil. *The Barnabas Fund* is worthy of our support as that organization seeks to assist those who have suffered persecution. *website:* www.barnabasfund.org

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of *The Barnabas Fund* calls for prayer especially with regard to the following issues:

- That Muslims in America and Britain may not be attacked in revenge for the World Trade Centre attack.
- That Christians in the Muslim world may not be attacked in revenge for the anticipated military attacks.
- That the media may not be silent about suffering Christians. In Indonesia, Muslims from many countries are conducting a *jihad* to eliminate Christians and Christianity from various islands by military force. Ten thousand Christians have been killed, many thousands more have been forcibly converted to Islam. The main group responsible, Laskar Jihad, have set up a desk at Jakarta airport to welcome Islamic militants to join their ranks, including hundreds who have recently fled from Afghanistan.
- For wisdom for the leaders of our nations to know how to eradicate the evil of terrorism effectively and justly, without causing further suffering to innocent civilians.
- For protection for myself, my wife Rosemary and all the other staff of *The Barnabas Fund* at this time. We feel ourselves to be a lone voice, speaking on behalf of the suffering Church, when all the world now seems unwilling to hear our message.

11th September – the Day that Changed the World

Erroll Hulse

Four days after the terror of 11th September, the British royal family and political leaders gathered in a service at St Paul's, London. Thousands gathered inside and outside the great cathedral to express sympathy and solidarity with the people of America. Together with multitudes across this and many other lands, they observed silence, offered prayer and were united in grief.

The war against terrorism has gained momentum, but the horror of 11th September still broods over the nations. The images will live with us forever.

How do Bible-believing Christians respond to such a catastrophe?

Sympathy

We feel and express our grief and sympathy. For thousands of children who have lost father or mother; for thousands of wives who have lost their husbands and husbands who have lost their wives; for parents who have lost sons and daughters; and for the families of hundreds of firemen, policemen and rescuers who died.

'Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep,' says the apostle Paul. We must be willing to accept the full weight of

that injunction: 'bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ' (Rom 12:15; Gal 6:2).

Prayer

We also pray, seeking that the world will be alerted to the kind of religion that so easily breeds such hatred. For many years, Christians in their thousands have been murdered in 'jihads', so called 'holy wars'. The world's media have given scant attention to massacres that have taken place recently in the name of Islam in countries like Indonesia and Sudan, to name but two. Thanks to the courage and faith of leaders like Baroness Cox and the organisation Christian Solidarity, Britain has been kept informed of horrendous suffering inflicted by Islamic fundamentalists who perpetrate their barbarities unhindered. Now, similar extremists have carried out a massacre on the world stage, engaging the attention of the world's media. We must pray fervently that this will be the beginning of the end of the blindness that has afflicted the West for so long. A Muslim MP appealed in Parliament that Muslims should not all be tarred with the same brush. We agree. But the huge scale of persecution by Muslims of Christians around the world should no longer be concealed.

Understanding

Writing in the *Daily Telegraph* (2nd October) Herb Greer of Manchester cited the great Islamic scholar, Bernard Lewis, who pointed out that Islam divides the world into the *dar-al-harb* (where we infidels live) and the *dar-al-Islam* (where the faithful live). According to a core Islamic doctrine, these two are in a state of war, never interrupted by peace but only by temporary states of truce. This conflict will continue until the whole world is brought into the *dar-al-Islam*. Infidels may be tolerated in the house of Islam, but only as second-class citizens, as we see in the Islamic world today. We must understand that this doctrine is alive and well in the 21st century. Christians support and sympathise with the politicians who must keep disparate communities at peace with one another. But the way to lasting co-existence is to face up to realities, not conceal them.

Sound theology

We hold fast to sound biblical theology. Satan, the first liar and murderer, is ultimately the architect of the disaster of 11th September. It is he who occupies depraved hearts and fills them with hatred. He deceives the nations, persuading some that by killing their enemies they will attain paradise (when in fact they go direct to hell). The Bible also teaches us, however, that while disasters are engineered and executed by Satan, they can only come about within the permissive sovereignty of God (as the story of Job testifies).

Scripture further warns us against false religion. Muslim spokesmen all over the world have claimed that the

terrorists were not real Muslims but 'secular Muslims'. But that is contradicted by the instructions given to the terrorists before they carried out their attacks (and published in the media on 29th September). 'Only... believers who know the life after death and the reward of death, would be ... seeking death... continue to pray throughout this night. Continue to recite the Koran... from this night you will begin to live the happy life, the infinite paradise... God, I trust in you. God I lay myself in your hands.' This is false religion, not secular idealism.

Humility

The tragedy humbles us. It is not as though America and Britain are 'righteous nations' and those who harbour terrorists 'evil nations'. There is much in western society that provokes the wrath of God against us. Our TV channels portray unspeakable wickedness. Our society is post-Christian, philosophically post-modern, materialist, pagan, secular and largely degenerate. We are plagued with immorality, divorce, broken families, crime and violence. Christians who practise their faith in Britain form a small minority. National repentance would be in order, 'lest a worse thing happen'. There is much confusion concerning what Christianity is all about. The so-called Christian Church itself has often been corrupt and misguided. The Crusades were a disgraceful abuse of power. We can never make progress by the sword. Christianity is voluntary. We do not execute those who profess faith in Christ but then go back and embrace another religion. We grieve over them, pray for them, and reason with them. But we do not kill or persecute them.

Gratitude

We must be thankful for the degree of unity that is being expressed among the nations to combat and root out terrorism. The situation could be far worse as Satan seeks to create mayhem and conflict.

Concern

We must pray that our political leaders will be humble and wise. To strike back with military power indiscriminately will only exacerbate the hatred that already exists. It is tragic when many are killed who have nothing to do with the crimes of 11th September.

Faith

We look to God for spiritual awakening. Only when men and women recognise the sin in their own hearts and their need to be reconciled to God, will they turn to Christ in repentance and faith. Only God the Holy Spirit can give new birth and transform the lives of men and women. We can be encouraged by the fact that in 1858 a revival began in New York which spread right across the nation, from north to south and coast to coast.

The spectre of financial recession at that time was a means used to awaken souls to spiritual reality. May the current situation be used of God to similar effect! In the quest for safety from terrorism nations will unite, and this unity is encouraging. However, while terrorism may be reduced through co-operation it will not easily be eradicated. Peace and safety on earth, even if it were achievable, is not the same as peace with God. We must therefore look to him in the

battle against the universal terrorism of sin.

Warning

We warn men to flee the coming judgement. When asked about an atrocity committed by the Romans, Jesus replied: 'Do you think that those Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered in this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent you too will all perish' (Luke 13:3). God will require an account from every one of us. We shall answer for every thought, word and deed. Only those who by grace are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, a righteousness that is not their own, will escape God's wrath against their sin. Heaven is the most popular Christian doctrine and everlasting hell the most unpopular. 'How can a God of love send sinners to hell?' people ask. Yet no one warned about the reality of hell more than the loving Jesus. We can do no better than read his warnings in places like Mark 9 and Matthew 25. Yes, hell is certain for the terrorists; but it is also certain for all who persist in rebellion against God.

Love

We love others as we love ourselves. In contrast to hatred, we remember that God is love. The three Persons of the Triune God love and harmonise perfectly together, and those united to Christ by faith are brought into that family of love. It is our great privilege and responsibility to live lives filled with love for others. In this way, as our Lord prayed, the world will come to know that he is the Messiah who saves us from the guilt and power of our sins and gives us eternal life.

11th September – a Mother’s Perspective

Sharon James

11th September - What the children will remember

I was a child when the news broke of the first ever hijacking. I had been on planes - and could vividly identify with the horror of passengers being held captive at knife-point. Thoughts of the terror of those on board that plane gripped me, and I remember sobbing in bed in horror. But I also remember my parents coming to comfort me, and bringing assurance of God’s love.

Those sharp memories of terror and reassurance flooded back as I sat on the sofa with our children aged nine and seven, watching in disbelief as hijacked planes crashed into the twin towers, and as we saw the subsequent horrifying collapse of those mighty towers. How would they remember this day of terror?

At prayers that evening, in turn, Peter and Lydia recited the whole of Psalm 46. ‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, and the mountains quake with their surging . . . nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall, he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.’ We had taught them this lovely Psalm for such a time as this. They got the point. Towers may fall -

but the City of God will never fall. Everything can be taken from us - but no-one can take us away from God. Bombs - Explosions - Death - Disaster - God is our refuge and strength whatever happens. And we explained that all those who had died that terrible day, who trusted in God as their refuge, were even at that moment praising Him in glory - free from pain.

We then read the electrifying account of the fall of Babylon in Revelation 18. ‘When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, Was there ever a city like this great city?’ We explained that what we had seen together on TV just hours before was just a trailer of what will happen at the end. All the cities of this world will fall, but God’s city stands for ever secure.

My hope and prayer is that when Peter and Lydia look back to 11th September, they will associate it with the certainty of Psalm 46 - that God is our refuge and strength, and that, unlike the cities of this world, the City of God stands for ever. The following Sunday morning our congregation read Psalm 46 together, and sang a rendering of the same Psalm to the magnificent tune *Materna*. The children’s eyes met mine - this Psalm was special to them. We did not grieve as those without hope. The Word of God was making sense of the sin and carnage and sorrow in the world outside.

Not by Violence

Bill James

The recent atrocities in America have reminded us of the horror of violence perpetrated in the name of 'God'. It has now been discovered that at least one of the suicide hijackers was carrying in his luggage an extensive exhortation on the blessings of Islamic martyrdom which encouraged him to look forward to the unending pleasures of Paradise. The murder of 'infidels' was to be regarded as an act of virtue and righteousness.

Such perverse thinking is repugnant to the Christian, and has no place in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no clearer example of the contrast between a religion of violence and the Christian gospel than the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Before his conversion, he was on the road to Damascus breathing out 'murderous threats' against Christians, and intent on capturing believers for imprisonment in Jerusalem. Saul was the chief instigator of persecution against the early Church, and superintended the stoning of godly Stephen all in the name of God. Yet after his conversion to Christ, Saul is transformed to a man of grace and love who pursues his ministry only by peaceful means and whose life is characterised by weakness and suffering. The power of Christian ministry is not in physical force, but the preaching of the Word, persuasion and exhortation. The means are those of love and grace and forgiveness and all conjoined with prayer. All of these are regarded by this world as weak and ineffectual. But these are the means of spiritual power for the building of a kingdom which is glorious and eternal.

The ugly face of violent zeal

Paul regarded physical violence as a legitimate expression of religious zeal (Phil 3:6). This was a noble Jewish tradition stretching all the way back to Phinehas. The account of Phinehas is found in Numbers 25. Israel in the wilderness was being seduced by the Moabite women, and were engaging in idolatry. The Lord was angry with the people, and Moses ordered that those who worshipped the Baal of Peor must be put to death. At that moment, right in front of Moses, an Israelite man brought a Midianite woman to his family and into his tent. Phinehas, filled with zeal, followed them into the tent and drove a spear through both of them as they lay on the ground. The Lord

commended this righteous act and honoured Phinehas and his descendants with covenants of peace and of priesthood 'because he was zealous for the honour of his God'.

This tradition of violent and murderous zeal flourished in the time of the Maccabees, and on into the New Testament age until Saul of Tarsus became one of its leading advocates. Violent zeal was not regarded as something shameful, but on the contrary an act of righteousness. It would sit easily in the mind of Saul of Tarsus alongside his devotion to prayer, Scripture reading, temple worship, ritual washings, and moral lifestyle. For if God is the Lord and must be worshipped according to his commands, then those who defile his altar or blaspheme against him must surely be put to death. The Old Testament Law included clear sanctions of death for those who broke the Sabbath or cursed God. Christians were clearly to be the objects of such terrible zeal as they were guilty of blasphemy by claiming that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. This was to Saul an appalling offence, as Jesus was known to have been crucified by the (Gentile) Romans, and so not only humiliated but also subject to the 'curse' of being hanged on a tree. This was abhorrent to Saul who thought in terms of a Messiah bringing physical victory and the glorious triumph of Judaism in the world. His views of physical violence against blasphemers went hand in hand with his expectations of a powerful physical kingdom, and a victorious Messiah.

Such notions of violent religious zeal continue wherever spiritual and political or physical power are confused. This is the path of Constantine, and the alliance of Church and State. This is the way of the Crusades, or the burning of heretics. All are terrible stains on Christian history, and are alien to true Christianity. Even today, our zeal may tempt us to long for physical or political power. We secretly crave a Christian majority, and a Christian party, a government to impose Christian values upon our society. We are certainly commanded to be salt and light in our society, and to exert positive influence for good and godly moral principles wherever we can. But there can never be any such thing as a 'Christian country'. This is a contradiction in terms. It is a return to the old theocracy of Israel, the Old Testament. It inevitably involves the use of coercion to enforce Christian truth. And this is never the Christian way. Rather, the Church is described as a holy nation which in the present age must always be 'aliens and strangers' in the nations of the world. As Saul was to discover, the Son of God does not rule in this world by means of worldly power.

The beauty of humble King Jesus

On the road to Damascus, Saul's heart and thinking were to be dramatically and permanently changed. By heavenly vision, Saul met with the risen and exalted Lord Jesus Christ. And in an instant Saul's world was turned upside down, because at once he saw and recognised the Messiah for whom he was waiting - the Lord of glory. There was no doubting the exaltation of Jesus to the glory of heaven. Yet at the same time he knew that this Jesus was revealed on earth in weakness and suffering. Indeed, as Saul was to reflect and understand, the exaltation of Jesus not only went hand in hand with his humiliation, but Jesus' humiliating sufferings and death were precisely his means of victory and glorification. As Paul was later to express it in his letter to the Philippian church, it was precisely because Jesus was in very nature God that he made himself of no account (Phil 2:6-7), and this was also therefore the reason for his exaltation (Phil 2:8-9).

Saul is now a changed man, and a model of true Christian conversion. He is no nominal convert, adopting a formal verbal profession of faith in Christ. Rather he demonstrates a complete 180 degree turnaround in his lifestyle. Just as formerly he completely devoted himself in zeal to Judaism, so now he devotes himself in wholehearted zeal to Christ. But what is just as striking as his change of allegiance is Paul's changed understanding of the meaning of righteous zeal in the pursuit of the kingdom of God.

There is no doubt in Paul's mind about the exalted glory of Jesus Christ. Indeed, when he starts preaching, he proclaims Jesus to be the 'Son of God' (Acts 9:20) - the only time this name is used in the whole of the Book of Acts. It is an ascription of divine power and authority, a name which was used of King David (2 Sam 7:14). This was the name associated in first-century Jewish thinking with the glorious Messiah - notice the question of the high priest to Jesus himself at his trial in Matthew ch 26: 63ff. And this was a name associated with the powerful and all-conquering victory of the Messiah over all the nations of the world. Psalm 2 describes the Son as the one before whom the kings of the earth must come and bow the knee. When Jesus used this name it was a claim of deity, and the Jewish leaders regarded him as blasphemous in taking it upon himself (John 5:18,19b, 23; 16:15). It is precisely this universal royal authority of Jesus the Son of God which is the foundation of God's kingdom being established not only within the confines of the Jewish nation, but through all the Gentile nations of the world. This is at the heart of Jesus' own words in the

Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). And Paul asserts this universal divine authority of Jesus in his proclamation to the Gentiles (Acts 17:30-31).

And yet, while Paul sees so clearly the glory and divine authority of the Son of God, yet he also now understands that his kingdom is 'not of this world'. It is a kingdom which was established in weakness, at the cross. And it is a kingdom which is to be extended not with the 'weapons of this world' (2 Cor 10:3-5), but by the 'foolishness of preaching' (1 Cor 1:18ff). Most of all, the extension of the kingdom of Christ by preaching is characterised by suffering. This was immediately evident to the apostle Paul. Even when he received his commission from Ananias to take the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles the Lord promised to show Paul how much he would have to suffer for 'the Name'.

Paul's experience of suffering was to begin at once. From being the proud persecutor, he was now to become the victim of persecution. His proud boasts of strength and power, and his despising of the weakness of Jesus were to be replaced by an identification with Jesus in the weakness of gospel ministry. Even in Damascus he had to escape by being let down from the city wall, and later boasts of this incident as a demonstration of weakness (2 Cor 11:30-33). In being let down from the wall, Paul was acting out a reversal of the Roman boast of being the first over the wall in a seige!

Now we see in essence the difference between Saul of Tarsus and the apostle Paul. It is the contrast between the methods of this world, and the methods of Christ. It is the stark contrast between the convictions of Islamic terrorists and Christian missionaries. Now we must ask how we apply this principle of 'weakness' in ministry to ourselves.

Pursuing a spiritual kingdom

The notions of physical and political power are always appealing to our human nature, and can easily be confused with righteous zeal. Throughout Church history there have been multitudes, some godly men, who sadly have tried to impose the kingdom of Christ by physical force. But that is never the Christian way.

Similarly in church government we must renounce the use of worldly power. This is a regular refrain of the apostle Paul. His rejection of 'the weapons of

this world' in 2 Corinthians 10 is in the context of church life, where he is despised for his gentleness and meekness. Others, it seems, preferred to exercise authority and discipline by physical violence and intimidation (2 Cor 11:20-21). But such authoritarian church leadership is not the way of Christ. Rather, Paul exhorts us to 'gently instruct' those who oppose us.

Pursuing the sufferings of Christ

We must positively pursue the ways of weakness which are the ways of Christ.

In renouncing the old structures of his Judaistic past, Paul now actively pursues another path, namely the knowledge of Christ (Phil 3:7-11). As the resurrection power of Christ is evident in Christian Paul and the work of the Spirit of Christ is made known in his life, so Paul longs that the identification be evident through the path of suffering v.10. It seems that Paul regarded displays of weakness and suffering as both central and indispensable to Christian witness. Because it is precisely here that our resemblance to the Saviour is most clearly seen.

To the natural mind this is both incomprehensible and unpalatable. None of us naturally likes to be seen as weak, or foolish, or to suffer. Yet Paul boasted of such experiences as the very hallmarks of his apostolic ministry (2 Cor 11:16 - 12:10). The true Church of Jesus Christ is always small and weak by worldly standards. Faithfulness to the Word of God will never receive the accolades of the crowds. Holiness and self-sacrifice will always be despised by the world. Yet was it not so for the Saviour himself? And we are not greater than our Master. Far from it, our suffering is precisely a mark of our likeness to him.

We have to crucify the idols of worldly success, and pride, and personal comforts, and popularity. These belong to those who pursue worldly ways. Our accolades are yet to come, when the Lord Himself welcomes us with his great 'Well done.'

Pursuing a spiritual ministry

Preaching the Word of God may not seem to make a mighty or popular impact upon our world. We may wonder what is being achieved. We may become discouraged at apparent lack of progress. Yet what this world despises as weak

and foolish is in fact the power of God. It is precisely wielding the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, and persevering in Christian virtues, that is the road to spiritual victory over the kingdom of darkness.

Witness of true spiritual power is the witness of love (John 13:35). The mighty kingdom of the Son of God is a kingdom extended in gracious gentleness (Matt.11:27-30). It may not seem in worldly terms that such 'weak' and 'ineffectual' methods will accomplish anything. But then perhaps the world would say that of the prayer of the martyr Stephen as he was being stoned to death. Rather than calling down curses and vengeance on his persecutors he prayed that this not be held to their account. And then in the next chapter but one of Acts we read of the chief persecutor Saul of Tarsus being converted through receiving a vision of Jesus strikingly similar to that enjoyed by Stephen himself. Are we to believe that these two events are entirely unconnected? Should we not rather conclude that it is precisely through grace and love and forgiveness that the kingdom of God is extended with mighty spiritual power? Such mighty spiritual power is far greater than any force or violence. It is the power of God which transforms men and women from the inside out - something which coercion can never do. Just as the Muslim hijackers were deluded in their suicide missions, so we are deluded if we think we can extinguish such evildoers by the pursuit of physical force and law enforcement. It is essential that they be tracked down and punished but the only real hope for the end of evil in our world is by the changing of human hearts. And that can come only by the preaching of the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. Even the bin Ladens of this world are not beyond the reach of such spiritual power.

And so we are to persevere with the 'weak' methods of preaching and teaching, prayer, evangelism, personal witness, love, forgiveness and grace. For the present the work may seem small and the rewards disappointing. We stand in contrast to those who pursue worldly fame, fortune, and success and in contrast to those who would pursue their cause by violent zeal, or who muddle up spiritual and physical and political power.

Real power, and true spirituality does not lie in the paths of oppression, coercion and violence. No, real power lies in the way of the cross. And as we pursue the spiritual means of the gospel which God has set before us, so even through us the kingdom of God's Son is extended, and a work of immeasurable and eternal value is accomplished.

Daniel Neal and his *History of the Puritans*

Erroll Hulse

Daniel Neal is best known for his magnum opus *History of the Puritans* which in three volumes extends to 1670 pages. It requires a massive intellect to take in such a broad scope of English history. A successful historian needs not only to be accurate but needs to convey a balanced picture of events throughout. It is essential to be selective otherwise the work would be too lengthy for practical purposes. For instance in his shorter work on the history of the Baptists, (from the time of Wycliffe to 1689), John Bunyan and his twelve years in prison are bypassed. Rather Neal devotes nine pages to Benjamin Keach. Valuable detail is provided with regard to the physical persecution and humiliation meted out to Keach and the loving, patient testimony he bore through it all.

The life of Daniel Neal

Daniel Neal's life and ministry cover more or less the interesting period between the end of Puritanism in 1662 and the Great Awakening which began in 1735. He was born in the city of London in 1678. Orphaned as a child he was subsequently brought up by a maternal uncle who provided for him generously. This uncle made sure that his talented nephew received the best possible education. He attended Merchant Taylors' school where he began at the age of seven and continued there until he became head scholar. The care and affection of his uncle was often mentioned by Daniel with gratitude. He was offered a place at St John's College, Oxford, but declined this prestigious opportunity and preferred instead tutelage in a seminary of Protestant dissenters led by Thomas Rowe. David Bogue in his three volume *History of the Dissenters* says of Thomas Rowe, 'He proved an able tutor, and the seminary under his tuition was in a flourishing state. To his considerable learning, he united a most amiable disposition: his students loved him for he rendered the path of knowledge easy.'¹

After three years tutelage with Mr Rowe, Neal left for Holland where for two years he studied under learned theologians, first at Utrecht and then for a further year at Leyden. He returned to England where he was called to be assistant pastor to Dr John Singleton at an independent congregation in London. In 1706 on the death of Dr Singleton, Daniel Neal was elected to be pastor. He served this church faithfully for 36 years until just six months before he died at the age of 65, worn out from excessive labours.

When he began as pastor the church was small in numbers but some of the members were people of considerable wealth and influence. With great zeal Neal devoted himself to pastoral work and preparation for preaching three times a week. He possessed an easy style in his preaching and was free from affectation. His one fault was that he did not discipline himself to regular exercise or recreation. His friends and family attributed his shortened life to this factor. One observer expressed it like this, 'His love of study, and an unremitting attention to the duties of his office, rendered him averse to the frequent use of any exercise that took him off from his books.'²

If he did have a hobby it was the study of history and it was in this sphere that he discovered a natural genius. His first major undertaking as an author was ambitious and consisted of two volumes with the title *The History of New England*. Neal showed skill in highlighting relevant facts that sustain the reader's interest. He is especially skilful when it comes to cameos or short biographical memoirs. He embellished his work with maps and captures the imagination of his readers by describing innumerable difficulties and obstacles and how they were overcome. His work was applauded in New England. Harvard University conferred on him the highest award available at that time, namely the degree of Master of Arts.

Daniel Neal married Elizabeth, the only daughter of a minister. They had a son and two daughters. Their son Nathaniel became an eminent attorney. Elizabeth Neal survived her husband by five years.

Neal's academic interests were varied. In addition to publishing sermonic material he published a treatise on the method and success of inoculating against smallpox in New England. This quickened the interest of the British royal family and he was invited to the palace where he met Caroline, Princess of Wales and King George II.

Over his lifetime Neal gathered and collated his material on the history of the Puritans. He begins with the background to the Puritan times starting with the reign of King Henry VIII and concluding with the accession to the throne of William in 1688. The work of 1,670 pages is printed in three volumes. These were last republished in 1979 by Klock and Klock, Minnesota, USA, which firm (now defunct) used the 1837 London edition. *The History of the Puritans* concludes at page 328 volume three. From there Neal continues with a history of the Baptists and Quakers. The history of the Baptists in England extends to 87 pages and covers the period from John Wycliffe 1370, to 1689. The history of the Quakers in England consists of a 67 page work covering the time from Oliver Cromwell to the Declaration of Indulgence in 1674.

In doctrine Neal was Calvinistic. He participated in a series of lectures given in London to combat what was perceived to be an increase of Popery in 1734.

A foremost question answered

The question is often asked, If the Puritan movement reached an apex in power and influence as seen in the *Westminster Confession of Faith 1643 -1647*, why was its demise so profound? Neal's work shows that the main reason is the Great Ejection, the removal from the Established Church of England of about 2,000 Puritan pastors. This resulted in the curtailment of their ministries and influence. After 1662 what was known as the era of the Puritans became the epoch of the Dissenters and Nonconformists with some strong and sometimes unhelpful divisions between Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Baptists. One of the strengths of Neal's history of the Puritans is that the severity, cruelty and extent of this persecution are described so vividly that the reader can well understand how hard those times were. There is cogency in Neal's *History of the Puritans* to demonstrate that the violent persecution following 1662 was the principal cause of decline. Persecution can bring the best out of Christians, but under Satan it is also a means of halting the gospel as we see very clearly in many nations today. For instance in Saudi Arabia it is forbidden even to possess a Bible.

The Church of England has never recovered from the Great Ejection of 1662. The Puritan ministers expelled were a minority of about twenty percent of the clergy. Today the number of full-time clergy is hardly more than it was then but I doubt if one percent of the number today would hold to the convictions and theology of the Puritans or possess the kind of preaching gifts with which they were endowed.

It is however a mistake to exaggerate the decline and demise of the Puritans after 1662. There was a very serious decline but many of the ejected ministers of 1662 continued in one way or another to exercise a spiritual influence. This fact is illustrated by Thomas Vincent, one of several unlicensed ministers who stayed on in London during the plague of 1665 when licensed ministers fled the city. Neal lists 44 names of Puritan ministers who lived right up to the time of the Restoration 1688/9. Some of these are well known, such as Richard Baxter, John Flavel, Thomas Doolittle and William Bates (vol 3, pp 328). Certainly the number of great leaders of the calibre of John Owen (1616-1683) decreased. When we read the life of George Whitefield we might get the impression that London was destitute of good ministry in the years between 1680 to 1735. However reading the life of Neal we find that London was far from bereft of able and faithful preachers during that period.

Two historians, David Bogue and James Bennett wrote three volumes with the title *History of the Dissenters from the Revolution 1688/9 to 1838*.³ This provides a treasury of information on the Nonconformist denominations - Independent, Baptist, and Presbyterian in England in the years of decline and recovery. Beside much informative well-written history many biographies fill these pages including some of the better known ministers of that time such as Matthew Clarke, John Gill, Philip Doddridge, Isaac Watts, Thomas Bradbury and Edmund Calamy.

Daniel Neal's sympathy for Baptists

In his public ministry and writing Neal maintains a marked catholicity of spirit. He hated intolerance. It is evident throughout his written works that he deplored the persecution of the Puritans but he equally deplored the intolerance of the Presbyterians against the Baptists when power seemed to be going their way after 1643. We are reminded of John Milton's observation on the new forcers of conscience under the Long Parliament (1640-1660), 'New Presbyterian is but old Priest writ large.' Neal loved and upheld the principle of liberty of conscience. He believed passionately that all people should be free to study and choose their religious beliefs and practise the faith without persecution. Neal shows a very generous attitude toward the Baptists and Quakers and describes clearly and sympathetically the intense sufferings to which they were subjected.⁴ He does not hesitate to state clearly their beliefs. For instance in the case of a series of lectures in London to which he also contributed, Neal describes a tract that appeared in 1735 following the series of lectures against Popery which were held at Salters' Hall. A respectable lay gentleman, Killingworth of Norwich, was the author of the tract. He demonstrated clearly that the Church of England practice of sprinkling infants is basically the same as that practised in the Roman Catholic Church, and that if you put the axe to the root of the tree then it should be placed firmly at this root also! Neal suggests that Killingworth was an able writer and was unanswerable in this matter.

Daniel Neal's History of the Baptists

Neal asserts, as a fact which admits of no dispute, that John Wycliffe maintained and propagated those principles which when carried out into practice are wholly subversive to the practice of infant baptism.

One of the maxims of Wycliffe was 'that wise men leave that as impertinent, which is not plainly expressed in Scripture', in other words that nothing should be practised in the Church of God, as a branch of worship, which is neither

expressly commanded nor plainly exemplified in the New Testament. He points out that it is on this that the Baptists base their practice. 'They examine the sacred writings, and there find, that in their Lord's commission, baptism stands connected with the preaching of the everlasting gospel; that the apostles who well understood their Master's will administered it to none but those who professed repentance and believed the gospel' (vol 3, p 329ff).

With regard to John Wycliffe, Neal goes on to assert, 'All our historians agree in affirming that the doctrines of Wycliffe spread very extensively throughout the country inasmuch that, according to Knighton, a contemporary historian, "more than half the people of England embraced them and became his followers".' Soon after Wycliffe's death the followers of Wycliffe, known as Lollards, began to form their own societies and appoint their own priests to perform divine service their way. It was not long before this resulted in persecution. One of the first victims was William Sawtre, a Baptist, who was burned in 1400. The area of Norwich where Sawtre lived was full of persons of his conviction. The historian Fuller says that Sawtre's disciples were persecuted with great cruelty so that the prisons were filled with them. Neal makes it clear that it was beyond dispute that infant baptism was rejected throughout the fifteenth century (that is, by the Lollards). He cites the writer Walsingham who called Wycliffe a damnable heretic for following the opinions of one Berengarius who denied the right of infants to baptism. Neal points us in the direction of John Foxe who followed the plight of Baptists who fled for their lives and relates the instance of one, by name Swinderby, who was burned at the stake for his Baptist faith at Smithfield in 1401. Neal repudiates the idea that the Baptist cause was minimal in the time of King Henry VIII. If that was the case why was such a huge effort put out against Baptists? Why were so many legal and rigorous laws passed against them? And also why were so many, including fourteen from the Netherlands, martyred?

During the short reign of young King Edward (1547-1553) the times were much more tranquil. Apparently the only two burned for religious beliefs during that time were two Baptists, a young woman, Joan Boucher, known as Joan of Kent, and the other a Dutchman named George. The bishops named in searching after Baptists included the well-known Cranmer and Ridley. Joan was a woman who avidly read the Scriptures and was very active in spreading Tyndale's New Testament. It is ironic that both Ridley and Cranmer themselves were later burned at the stake for their stand for Protestant principles as against Rome. 'When this poor woman had been convicted, and condemned as an obstinate heretic, she was given over to the secular power, and Cranmer was employed to persuade the king to sign the warrant for her

execution. But the young monarch was so struck with the cruelty and unreasonableness of the sentence passed upon her, that when he was requested to sign the warrant for her execution, he could not, for some time, be prevailed on to do it. Cranmer argued from the law of Moses, according to which blasphemers were to be stoned.’

Bishop Burnet says, ‘They rather silenced than satisfied the young king; who still thought it a hard thing, as in truth it was, to proceed so severely in such cases.’ Accordingly, he set his hand to the warrant with tears in his eyes, telling Cranmer, that if he did wrong, as it was done in submission to his authority, *he* (the archbishop) should answer for it to God!

Neal’s history describes a great deal of persecution and consequent suffering due to differences among Christians. In the preface of his first volume he concludes with this exhortation that ‘we love one another; that we forgive offences; that we bear one another’s infirmities, and even bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us. If this spirit and temper were more prevalent, the love of Christians would throw a bright lustre upon the truth and excellency of their divine faith, and convince the atheists and infidels of the age, more than all their arguments can do without it.’

Endnotes

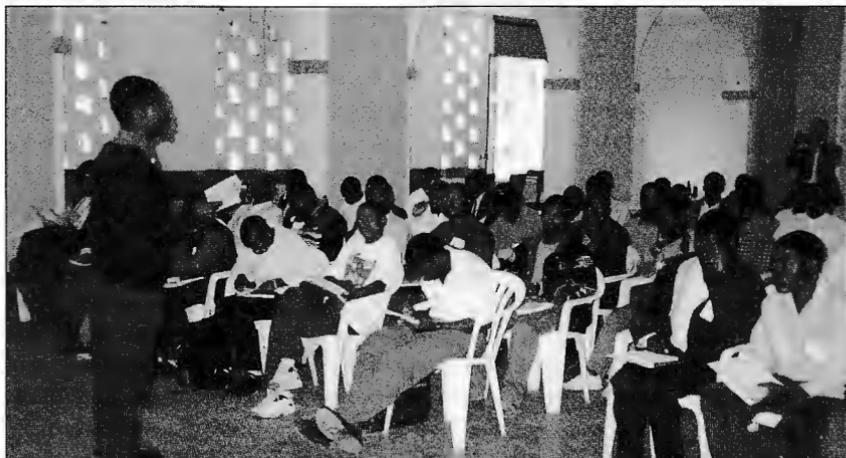
¹ David Bogue, *History of the Dissenters*, vol 1, page 231.

² A twelve page memoir of Daniel Neal is included in volume 1 of *History of the Puritans*.

³ David Bogue and James Bennett. *History of the Dissenters*. Three volumes. These have been republished in cloth by Tentmaker, 121 Hartshill Road, Stoke on Trent, ST4 7LU, UK. At £47.95 which includes postage this set is a bargain!

⁴ Early Baptist historian Thomas Crosby did not think that Daniel Neal was impartial toward the Baptists but feeble! Crosby’s *History of the Baptists* appeared in two volumes, the first of 475 pages in 1738 and the second of 494 pages the following year. These can be found in the Evangelical Library, London. In reading Crosby the feeling comes through with great power that the trust of the entire population lay in the fact that salvation was attributed to infant baptism. The most bitter persecution was meted out to anyone who dared to question that. Anyone who dared to assert that there was no biblical warrant for infant baptism was forced to recant or be burned at the stake! Infant baptism (sprinkling) to Crosby was a curse!

Momentum in Mozambique



One of the sessions at the conference

Mozambique

Second Reformed Conference at Nampula in Northern Mozambique

Last year after the first Leaders' Conference (Conferência Fiel) in the city of Nampula, northern Mozambique - right at the frontier of many unreached people groups - missionary doctor, surgeon and church planter Charles Woodrow declared that this event was the high point for him in over ten years of ministry! Martin Holdt of South Africa was the visiting speaker at that conference in July 2000.

The second conference took place from July 25th to 28th 2001. Again the principal organisers were Charles Woodrow (Nampula) and Karl Peterson (Maputo). Karl was the leader with regard to the planning of

sessions and Charles was commander-in-chief on site in making sure that all conferees were fully catered for and comfortable. The work involved is prolonged and exacting. Why should the missionaries and pastors feel such enthusiasm? As a pastor, imagine if the only time you could buy the expository books you need at a price you could afford is in one place, once a year for three days! Books are one incentive. But here too is an annual opportunity to hear preachers from other countries, be exposed to the challenge of reformation, pray with like-minded brothers, ask questions and share with others.

A highlight of our time in Nampula was a visit to the hospital site with the foundations already laid for the hospital building. Nearing completion is a home for the Woodrow family to incorporate offices for administration



The bookroom. A large number of books were sold

and guest accommodation. Charles has great vision for evangelism combined with practical care for the sick and suffering. Previously he administered and operated in a government hospital and the family lived in a very small apartment. Now, while a new hospital and home are being built, Charles, Julie and their five children have slept and worked in 'containers' with canvas-covered kitchen and living areas between. They still offer hospitality and serve meals to guests in a relaxed and joyful spirit. Seven well-trained shepherd dogs are needed to guard the extensive campus.

At the conference everything was translated fluently by a Mozambican, Baptista Boa, a young man who is training in theology in Pietersburg, South Africa.

Limited travel facilities

Only two or three small planes are normally on the tarmac at Nampula airport apart from the daily visit of the larger jet from Maputo which

sometimes calls at Beira on the way. However there was a USA military aircraft present and we saw a number of USA servicemen who were on a mercy mission.

Mozambique is still one of the world's poorest countries. This shows in the severely limited infra-structure. We have to remember that this country suffered a devastating, prolonged civil war. There are no highways like those which traverse the length and breadth of South Africa. To reach the conference from Maputo, five men travelled by bus for five days; their only place of rest during that time was the seat on the bus and the roadside at night. Frustrations along the way included three tyre blow-outs. After a journey like that it takes a long time to recover but after a night's sleep these men were eager and alert for every session and discussion period.

Books worth their weight in gold

In the end, 80 pastors from seven of the 10 provinces gathered for more



Baptista Boa



Dr. Charles Woodrow and Karl Peterson

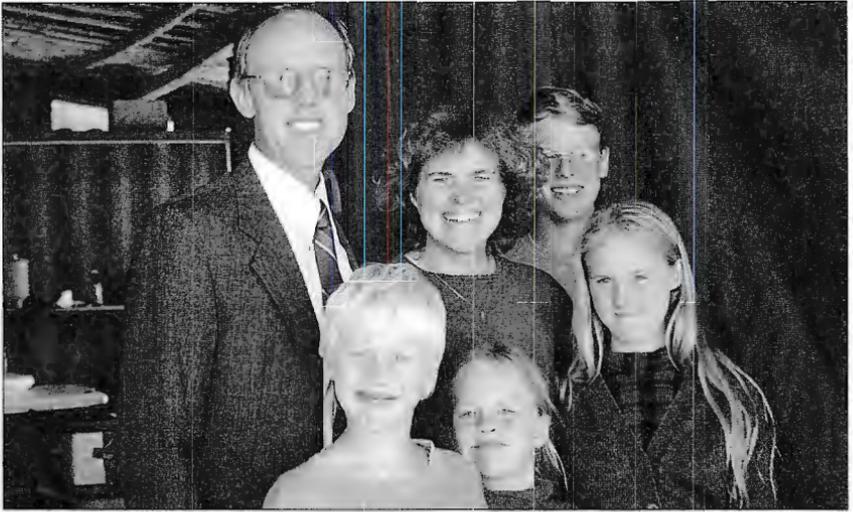
than two full days of ministry, centred on the theme, 'Pillars of Truth from Romans'. There were nine general preaching sessions, two slots for elective classes and two lively question-and-answer sessions. The eagerness to hear, and the enjoyment of the Word was evident throughout. When natural fatigue threatened, elder Vincent led singing in enthusiastic African style which will not tolerate sluggishness but which serves to get the blood flowing.

An entire small hotel housed the out-of-town pastors. Poverty is extreme and the high quality expository books in Portuguese imported from Brazil were generously subsidised. Books which would normally sell at ten dollars were sold for one dollar and even then these pastors thought long and hard about what they could afford. To them these books are worth their weight in gold! Missionary Richard Chiorino, helped by his twelve-year old son, sold hundreds of books from Editora Fiel (Richard Denham) and Publicações Evangélicas Seleccionadas (Bill Barclay). There is a smaller range of

Puritan Books published by Olin Coleman in Récife but only a few of these were available. However plans are under way to be sure there will be more next year. 'Chapel Library' (Pensacola) tracts and booklets in Portuguese were in supply but it can take as long as 10 months for ordinary mail to arrive from the USA. Air freight is expensive, but this was used by FIEL and PES from Brazil to ensure that sufficient books were available.

Evangelising and church planting

It was encouraging to hear of progress of pastors in their work, despite difficulties, since the time of meeting last year. One church planter was supervising 27 churches last year in a high-growth area. This year he has 33 churches with leaders being trained in their Bible School. Another man came to the conference from an area where Christ is almost completely unknown - a strongly Muslim area. Yet through his tireless work, he has been able to establish five small preaching points in the last three months. In that area house



Charles and Julie Woodrow and family in their temporary canvas covered habitation (see page 20)

visitation is futile. His practice is to use a drum and sing. Soon people gather and then he preaches, followed by questions and answers. It is a privilege to encourage men of such enterprise!

A highlight was hearing the testimony of a young pastor who described how his whole life and ministry was changed this last year when he read Martin Luther's 'The Bondage of the Will' which we had sent him. He testified, 'This book changed me profoundly.' There were contributors and helpers from South Africa, translator Baptista, Prof Tyler Hopkins of Pietersburg, and Mark Powell who is assistant minister to Martina Holdt in Constantia Park, Pretoria. Several came from the Nampula area, including Roland and Sue Sieler, of the Reformed Baptist Church, Burlington, Ontario, Canada, who work with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

FIEL is part of an international theological renewal

The FIEL Conference needs to be seen in the context of the Reformed theological renewal that has been in progress in English-speaking nations. It is thrilling to note that this one is Portuguese and is inspired out of Brazil. In England even in our Reformed churches much of our evangelism is limp, like a sick man suffering from malaria. In many parts of Mozambique there is fervency and expectation. This is understandable because there is the breath of the Holy Spirit and a harvest is being reaped. Many churches are being planted. The future is bleak if the flock is not fed. Supplies of gospel grain must be provided.

It is not straightforward. While Portuguese is spoken widely, it is not universal. The literacy rate is low in Mozambique.

OPERATION WORLD

Bill James



Indonesia (population 212 million).

OPERATION WORLD describes each major island or group of islands separately. In the same way the 27 provinces of India are treated separately. This is vital as these provinces differ greatly in character. Excellent maps enhance OPERATION WORLD.

OPERATION WORLD, Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, 798pp pb
Paternoster 2001, £12.99 introductory price, or £19.99 with CD-ROM
www.operationworld.org

Window on the World, Daphne Spraggett with Jill Johnstone
Paternoster 2001, 221pp hc, £14.99 introductory price

It is good to welcome the new edition of *Operation World* - the indispensable handbook for world prayer.

The layout of the book is similar to earlier editions - starting with a section on the whole world, then each continent in turn, then the

countries of the world in alphabetical order. Each section includes a brief overview of the geography, politics, economy and peoples living in the region, and their religious affiliations. The authors then suggest a series of 'Challenges for Prayer' for each country which give an overview of the spiritual situation. Theologically the authors write from a broad evangelistic perspective.

This book is a vital resource for church leaders, and all Christians concerned about God's work in the world. The authors suggest a number of ways of using the book, including:

- i. Using the book as a prayer diary. Each section is marked with dates to assist with this.
- ii. Keeping the book by the radio or TV to refer to when items come on about particular countries.
- iii. Sharing brief portions at church prayer meetings and in services, or including sections in the weekly bulletin.

The new edition of *Operation World* comes with valuable additional resources. The CD includes the whole text of the book, with much additional data, reports and tables, and full search

capabilities. All the maps and charts in *Operation World* are included in full colour. Both text and graphics can be 'copied and pasted' or exported to be reformatted and printed for ministry use. The CD is also intended for personal prayer use; when it is loaded it opens up a simple prayer summary for that day - you can click on links for more details as required.

The website

www.operationworld.org

is attractively produced and is an aid to prayer, even when you have left your book or CD at home! The site also provides corrections and updated information since the publication of the book and CD.

Operation World can be used to encourage family prayer for the nations. Families may also like to use *Window on the World*. This is beautifully produced with lots of photos and colours, giving accessible prayer information on over 100 countries and people groups.

We are once again indebted to Patrick Johnstone and his team for completing the great labour of updating this resource. May it be much used, and through prayer may God be pleased mightily to extend his kingdom in the world.

Building Foundations in Albania

Stephen Rees

In September 2001, I had the privilege of preaching at a conference organised by the Evangelical Mission for Albanian church leaders. The conference was held in Saranda, just across the straits from Corfu. I found myself preaching to twenty-five or so earnest Albanians - mostly young church-leaders and their wives. Many of them had extraordinary testimonies of what Christ has done for them. Some were awakened to seek God during the years when all religion was prohibited. One told me how he opened a bottle that had been washed up on the beach and found a gospel tract. He began to call on God. When at last the Communist regime fell in 1991 and missionaries began to arrive, he sought them out and was pointed to Christ.

This conference was strategic. These are first-generation believers - none of them of more than 10 years' standing. They're conscious that they are pioneers. The foundations that they lay now will shape the future of Christianity in Albania for generations to come. It was largely Trevor Baker's vision that this conference should be held to introduce them to expository preaching and Reformed doctrine. Shaun Thompson, pastor from Gjirokaster, chaired it. He has charm,



*Stephen Rees and Mageni the translator.
With her husband, Mageni directs the
Christian orphanage at Berat*

zeal and eloquence. I spoke five times through an able interpreter, a woman in her twenties who is director of an orphanage in Berat. The first address was a survey of Acts 1, then four addresses on Acts 2. I had to deal with big themes: the transition from old covenant to new; the role of the apostles; the significance of Pentecost and the gift of tongues; the primacy of preaching and the message the apostles preached; the formation and pattern of the first gospel church in Jerusalem.

So much of it was new to them. I prefaced the first address with a plea for consecutive Bible exposition. That itself was a mind-blowing idea for many of them. Most have never heard a book of the Bible expounded. And then, the thought that there are no apostles today! The Bible is complete

and sufficient. Albanian Christianity has been much influenced by the charismatic movement. They all know men who claim to be apostles and speak often of their own authority. In every discussion session we returned to that issue. 'But what about the authority of the Spirit?' 'What about new revelations?' And slowly it began to dawn on them. If God has spoken once for all in Scripture, we need no new apostles, no new revelations. The work of the Spirit now is to move us to believe and understand and obey his once-for-all revelation in Scripture.

That is the watershed issue for Christians in Albania as it is in so many places. God willing, some will look back on this conference as the point at which they first realised that they can build on an immovable foundation.

My fellow-speaker, Ian Harrison, spoke three times on true worship: The fear of God in worship: The love of God in worship: The place of our emotions in worship. These were moving, powerful addresses which touched my heart. The themes were familiar to me but Ian dealt with them in fresh ways, turning to passages that I hadn't anticipated. Again, folk were gripped. So much was new to them. It would have been worth travelling to Albania just to get to know Ian and hear those sermons.

In one of our discussion sessions, the question was asked, 'Have you ever witnessed a miracle?' In reply

we showed them the place of miracles in redemptive history: their role in authenticating the great works of revelation - above all, as signs of Christ and his apostles. Yet we do believe in contemporary miracles. I said to one of the brethren after the session, 'If anyone back in the UK in coming years asks me that question, I shall say I saw a miracle in Albania in September 2001.' It is nothing less than miraculous that this conference was held. Ten years ago, it would have seemed impossible. A seemingly impregnable Communist regime ruled in Albania. Its leaders boasted that they had blotted out religion from the life of the Albanian people. We wondered if there was one believer left alive. We know now that two or three survived the fifty years of atheistic tyranny. But in ten short years the Lord has increased the number a thousand-fold. And he is raising up preachers and teachers to lead his church.

They need resources. It is easy for me to plead for expository preaching. But most of them have never seen a commentary. They need models. They are conscious that they have no models for Christian family life - they have never witnessed Christian marriage or parenthood. They need to hear Bible preaching - hence the usefulness of this conference.

A further conference is planned for next year.

A King's Bible and the *Textus Receptus*

Michael Drake

In a 150 page work with the title A King's Bible, Michael Drake of Wycliffe Christian Schools, New Zealand, honours the King James Bible, (the Authorised Version), but exposes the complex and pervasive mythology that has enveloped it. Some have even insisted that it is the only valid English translation. He describes the historical background and those who did the work. What text was used? This brief extract explains that issue.

The wonderful array of Bible manuscripts now available are grouped together by things they have in common, mainly to do with linguistic issues. One such group is known as the *Textus Receptus*, which means received text. This group is based on manuscripts that come from the Eastern or Byzantine Empire which continued to use Greek after it separated from the rest of the Roman Empire. Frequently, reference is made to the *Textus Receptus* as if it is a single New Testament Greek text, one that is said to be reliable to the exclusion of all other manuscripts.

Such a text does not exist. Although there is obviously a group of texts called *Textus Receptus*, that they should have special powers associated with 'being received' is nonsense. For a start, this group does not produce a single Greek New Testament about which there is total certainty, even among those who treasure it. It is not simply a choice between *Textus Receptus* and other sources of manuscripts – choices have to be made even when translating from all the manuscripts within the *Textus Receptus* group. Most advocates of *Textus Receptus* now recognise that it originates in a broader group of manuscripts in which there are about six to ten variants per Bible chapter about which these choices have to be made.¹ In fact, the handful of manuscripts used to construct the *Textus Receptus* were not even all the manuscripts then available – its compiler, Erasmus, was in such a hurry he had to make do with what was at hand at the time, instead of making a comprehensive collection.

Help from the Puritans *Erroll Hulse*

Available from

Colin Lanfear, 4 Pinecrest Way, BREAM, LYDNEY, Gloucestershire, GL15 6HG
Telephone 01594 564292 e mail cjanlanfear@lineone.net

£7.00 for two cassettes including postage

1. **From the Marian martyrs to 1603**
2. **From 1603 to the Westminster Assembly and the Ejection of 1662**

Recorded at an inter-church rally in Leeds, these are popular lectures commending the legacies of the Puritans. The first edition of *Who are the Puritans?* by Erroll Hulse published by EP is sold out. A second edition is scheduled for December.

The idea of such a superior text or group of manuscripts upon which they could rely was completely foreign to the King's writers. They used other language versions of the New Testament based on manuscripts that were not *Textus Receptus*, openly bewailing the limited number of manuscripts available to them, and saying they would have consulted more texts had they been able to. Not only does a single, completely reliable *Textus Receptus* not exist, the concept was not invented until after the King's writers had completed their work. Although they made use of the texts now called *Textus Receptus*, they did not do so exclusively or consciously. They simply had no idea there would ever be a *Textus Receptus*!

Too often the polemics of those who want to use the *Textus Receptus* go from the extreme to the foolish. Objection is made to alternative texts as coming from Roman Catholic sources – but so did the *Textus Receptus*! Westcott and Hort are significant textual critics who favoured an alternative textual tradition. Their work has influenced modern translations. Their critics doubt the faith and integrity of these men and therefore reject their scholarship. Critics ask, 'How can we rely on the textual criticism of men who do not meet the high standards of our evangelical faith?' If that is the case, how then can we trust the work of the Roman Catholic who compiled the text that forms the *Textus Receptus* from sources that include Roman Catholic ones?

¹ It is important to note that while there are minor variations in the texts from which our Bibles are translated that there is nothing of any importance with regard to Christian doctrine that is jeopardised by the variants. Agreement characterises the ancient texts.

Items from the Press

Seeing the Lord, *Papers read at the 2000 Westminster Conference*, London, UK, 124 pp, £4.95 (+50p postage abroad). Available from J Harris, 8 Back Knowl Road, Mirfield W Yorks WF14 9SA, UK

1. *The Puritan Doctrine of Sin and the Wrath of God* - Ian Hamilton
2. *The Case for Forensic Justification in John Owen* - Philip Eveson
3. *Walter Cradock on 'The Saving Sight of God'* - Paul Cook
4. *Puritan Views on the Causes of Apostasy* - John McIntosh
5. *A Puritan Guide to Prayer* - Hywel Roberts
6. *Count Zinzendorf and his Contribution to the Evangelical Movement* - David Kingdon

There is no better exposition of justification by faith, the central doctrine of our faith, than that by John Owen. Philip Eveson's paper on its own is worth the price of this paperback. David Kingdon's paper is valuable historically and biographically and is enjoyable to read. The other papers are all valuable for solid exposition. Thomas Cobbett is my favourite book on prayer so I find I am biased toward Hywel Roberts' excellent presentation of Cobbett's work. Paul Cook's paper highlights an example of vivid and effective Puritan preaching on what it is to see the Lord (Isa 6:1).

When Justice Failed in Church and State. Dr Murdoch Murchison and Rev Iain Murray. Obtainable from Geneva Books, 58 Elms Road, London SW4 9EW, UK. 88pp paperback, £3.00 including postage.

How is it possible that a denomination famous for its church order and its faithfulness to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* should split into two parts? This is the account of a court case in which Prof Donald MacLeod was cleared and the witness of six women disregarded as fabricated. In the course of the trial some ministers were branded conspirators. They never appeared in court and have never had the right to clear their names. If the judge had dismissed the case on the grounds that it is impossible to prove what goes on between two adults in private we would have to accept that. Unless there is a tape recorder or a video how can we know? It is the word of the one against the other. What is hard to believe is that these women should all make up stories. What is even more difficult to credit is that ministers of the gospel would conspire to get these women to make up stories. What motivation would there be for that? At the time of the trial I wrote to say that the accused was held in high esteem in our circles in England. Why should we conspire against him? What motive would there be? Yet the conspiracy theory carried the day. Those who do not understand this will need to read the book.

This account describes in detail the subsequent suspension in 1999 of Maurice Roberts who is the editor of the *Banner of Truth* magazine. He acted with courage and this book vindicates him for his stand.

This account is obligatory reading for all those involved in this case in

Scotland. It is also important for all those who know and love the cause of the gospel in Scotland. It may be that legal experts who study this book will think of a way forward which will heal rather than divide. I believe that when this rumble has passed the two parts of a famous denomination based on the *Westminster Confession* will unite again.

A Christian's Pocket Guide to ISLAM, Patrick Sookhdeo, 88 pages, Christian Focus. £2.60

This booklet, which is friendly and informative throughout and not polemical, describes the origin, all the main basic beliefs of Islam and how these affect the attitudes, worldview, everyday life and culture of Muslims. Important subjects are explained such as the difference between Sunni and Shia, Sufism, and the Gospel of Barnabas. The booklet does not deal with the verses in the Koran which are taken by the minority of extremists and terrorists as a warrant to kill infidels.

The Storm Breaks - Job simply explained, Derek Thomas. A Welwyn Commentary. 352 pages, paperback, EP

11th September makes the book of Job more relevant than ever. Job constantly prayed for his family yet in one disaster he lost all ten of his offspring. The transcendence of God and his incomprehensible purposes are central to the book of Job. Derek Thomas is outstanding in his treatment of the book. He is lucid and easy to read. He handles all the main points with clarity. His illustrations from Church history and contemporary life enhance the work. His four page select bibliography is helpful

especially with regard to Calvin's sermons on Job. There is a reference to the massive scholarly volume in the Word Series by David Clines. The layout is described as appallingly off-putting. I would be more critical and say much of Clines' work is totally irrelevant except for about three or four specialists somewhere on earth, and he could provide that material separately for them. It is scholarship gone mad.

A Battle for Righteousness - The Message of the Book of Job. Prof Dr K J Popma, translated from Dutch by Jack Von Meggelen, 278 pages, paperback. Essence Publishing, Canada. ISBN 1-894169-34-4

This is a work of great quality. It is complementary to the above work by Derek Thomas. Popma lays out the contents in a way that stirs the interest of the reader and the quality of his writing is such that you want to read every part. His major headings run: Turmoil Has Begun. The Poisoned Friendship. A More Moderate Conclusion. Orthodox Intermezzo. Job's Talk with God. The Message of the Book of Job.

Unlike other expositors Prof Popma has some good things to say about Job's wife. He is apt in his observations. For instance he points to Job's godliness as a rich man who had to crawl through the eye of a needle. He powerfully exposes the dreadful mistake of Job's three friends who instead of bringing comfort aggravated Job's suffering and thereby missed a great opportunity of ministry to a man who was in desperate need. His exposition of Elihu's contribution in the saga is outstanding.

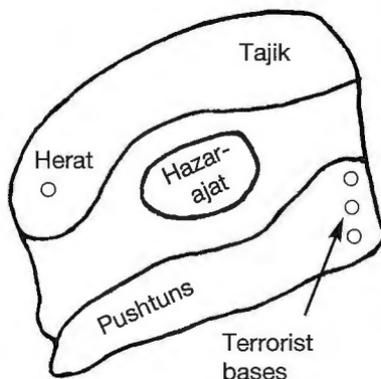
The Tragedy of Afghanistan

Editor

With the disaster of 11th September the focus of the world is upon Afghanistan. Secreted away somewhere is the world's greatest villain and most wanted man, Osama bin Laden. It is easy to allow one's imagination to run riot. Is Afghanistan teeming with terrorists and is it under the control of mad mullahs? We must try to gain a balanced and accurate picture.

For a mountainous hostile terrain Afghanistan, with an area of 652,000 sq km (France is 551,000 sq km) has a surprisingly large population of about 23 million. Were it not for those who had fled and are now refugees, we might add another seven million.

We must pray that in the war there will be a genuine respect for civilian life. There are about 90 people groups in Afghanistan. A clear picture can be gained by describing three principal areas. If we follow the three deck diagram we will see that the top third of the country is predominantly Tajik who speak Dari. Dari, or Persian, is the official language of Iran (64 million). The principal city of this northern area is Mazar-e-Sharif. There are about four million Tajik.



In the middle band is a circle named Hazarajat which means land of the thousand. Genghis Khan's warriors roamed in bands of a thousand horsemen known as Hazara. The Mongol people withdrew leaving them trapped in the high plateau of central Afghanistan. The Hazara people look different and have a Mongol appearance. They are the underdogs. They have no major city. Unlike the rest of Afghanistan they are Shia Muslims and not Sunni. There are about two million Hazara.

The bottom deck in the diagram represents the area occupied by Pushtuns who speak Pushtu. One of our missionary friends who reads *RT* speaks Pushtu and has a special interest in the several million



Pushtun speaking refugees who have fled from Afghanistan. There are about eight million Afghani Pushtun people. Kabul with 3.5 million is the main city.

Down in the south are the terrorist bases which are reputed to have about 10,000 men. Osama bin Laden's organisation is called al-Qaeda. This military group must not be confused with the Taleban which is a fairly new political/religious group which has gained ascendancy backed by the Pakistan army intelligence services. Al-Qaeda have their own agenda which is significantly different from that of the Taleban.

Contrary to the prevailing opinion in the West the strict fundamentalism forced on the people by the Taleban is alien to the majority of people who are not zealous Muslims and who enjoy sports, music, dancing and radio. There are small pockets of

fierce resistance to the Taleban particularly the Northern Alliance under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Marud, who was recently assassinated (almost certainly by al-Qaeda).

The forlorn state of Afghanistan

The Soviets fought an unsuccessful war of 10 years (1979-1989) in Afghanistan and then withdrew. The infrastructure has been largely destroyed. Farmsteads, schools and homes lie shattered. About a million have died and 1.6 million were maimed. Afghanistan is one of the least reached lands in the world. There are 48,000 mosques but not one single church building. There have been four years of drought. At least five million are threatened with a devastating famine. Foreign relief workers have mostly left but, as at 15th October, eight have been arrested and detained, threatened with the death penalty by the Taleban rulers on the charge of propagating Christianity.

It will be difficult to strike the terrorist bases since those who operate them are hardly likely to stick around. Further bombing of Afghanistan will be a rearranging of rocks and rubble. The nation already lies in ruins. It is a nation at war with itself and the Taleban regime defies all opposition. It is tragic that it is the powerless who suffer while the power brokers get away with crimes of an order that only Deity can comprehend and curb.

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CONTENTS

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------|
| 1 | 11th September - Editorial | |
| 3 | 11th September - the Day that Changed the World | Editor |
| 6 | 11th September - a Mother's Perspective | Sharon James |
| 7 | Not by Violence | Bill James |
| 13 | Daniel Neal and his <i>History of the Puritans</i> | Editor |
| 19 | Momentum in Mozambique | Editor |
| 23 | OPERATION WORLD | Bill James |
| 25 | Building Foundations in Albania | Stephen Rees |
| 27 | A King's Bible and the <i>Textus Receptus</i> | Michael Drake |
| 29 | Items from the Press | Editor |
| 31 | The Tragedy of Afghanistan | Editor |