

REFORMATION TODAY



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Stuart Olyott central in the photo was the main speaker at the fourth church leaders conference organised by Shalom Church (Reformed Baptist) in Singapore. On average, 53 church leaders, seminary staff and students as well as church non-office bearers attended the conference daily. They were from Singapore, Malaysia, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Australia. Churches represented were Presbyterians, Brethren, Anglican, Reformed Baptists and independent conservative Bible-believing churches.



Kurt Strassner is featured here with Haileyesus (see News, Ethiopia). Haileyesus trained at the English-speaking theological college in Addis Ababa. He was the translator at the conference in Ethiopia, reported in the News. Kurt Strassner has been the pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Cincinnati, OH IO since 2002. He trained at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tennessee. He is married to Tobey and has two children.

Carey Conference for ministers — January 8-10, 2008 – Swanwick – Derbyshire
Visiting preachers: Prof Russell Moore, vice-president of Southern Seminary and Dr Michael Haykin, principal of Toronto Baptist Seminary.

Front cover picture – *The development and composition of the European Union is described in footnote one on page four.*

Editorial

1900 - 1950 and the two Great World Wars

When is a war justified? — what about the Hussite wars?

The Testimony of John Huss (RT 216) and the Legacies of John Huss (RT 217) encouraged our readers in the Czech Republic. The Bohemians resented the murder of Huss at the Council of Constance. They chose to resist the power of the Roman Catholic Church combined with the Emperor. Repeatedly the Bohemians defeated armies greater and better equipped than themselves. But is it right for Christians to go to war? First Frederick Hodgson reviews a paper given by Ken Brownell at the Westminster Conference in December last. With several principles derived from that review he surveys the motivation of the Bohemians in their determination to resist invading armies.

The Recovery of the Reformed Vision

John J Murray has written a fine book, *The Recovery of the Reformed Vision*. The book comes to about eighty pages and consists of nine chapters which run as follows: 1. Losing the Vision, 2. Recovering the Vision: the Forerunners, 3. D Martyn Lloyd-Jones: the Recovery of the Vision, a. The preparation of the man, 4. D Martyn Lloyd-Jones: the Recovery of the Vision, b. The multiplying of the agencies, 5. Geoffrey Williams: the Storehouse, 6. James I Packer: 'Among God's Giants', 7. Iain Murray: the 'New Dress', 8. Professor John Murray: 'the Old School Piety', 9. Maintaining the Vision.

Basic to the whole is the first chapter which describes the near demise of evangelicalism in the period prior to the theological renewal of the 1960s. John J Murray has agreed to our printing 'Losing the Vision' which is the first chapter of his book.

1900 - 1950 and the two Great World Wars

John J Murray uses the dates 1900 - 1950 as a time when the vision was lost. Of course liberal theology had infiltrated the seminaries and churches long before that. However it is helpful to focus on the first fifty years of the 20th century and observe the low state of theology and the subsequent weak state of the churches.

Within 1900 - 1950 came the two greatest wars of all time, World War One, 1914 -1918 and World War Two, 1939 -1945. Since that time, apart from

Yugoslavia, peace has prevailed in Western Europe for 62 years. 27 nations, most of which were at war before, are now united in the economic and political federation of the European Union.¹

Wars during the modern period have averaged four to five years in length. Long wars such as the Thirty Years' War (1618 - 1648) were usually interspersed with truces. Wars showed a slight tendency to decrease in length during the modern period, but have increased in magnitude – more nations involved, more battles fought, larger areas affected and more casualties. Also to be noted is greater mechanisation and more sophisticated technology which incurs heavier economic costs. The latter point is illustrated by the difference in ships from the wooden sailing ships of Nelson's day to the massive steel aircraft carriers of today, ships which carry unimaginable fire power not only in concentric circles of protection but in the strike aircraft they carry.

When we compare the first great World War with the Second we see an increase in the number of nations involved.

In World War One the countries mobilised against Germany and her allies Austro-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria, were Russia, the British Empire, Italy, France, the USA, Japan, Romania, Serbia, Belgium, Greece, Portugal and Montenegro. Great numbers were killed in this war. Every war produces tragedy. Every person killed represents a family tragedy. Almost every parish in England has a monument to remember those fallen in the battles of the two World Wars.

The following are the statistics for the First World War casualties: Russia 1,700,000, France 1,357,800, British Empire 908,371, USA 126,000, Japan 800,000, Romania 750,000, Serbia 707,343, Belgium 267,000, Greece 230,000, Portugal 100,000, and Montenegro 50,000. On the other side: Germany: 1,773,300, Austro-Hungary 1,200,000, Turkey 325,000 and Bulgaria 87,500. This makes a total for the war of those killed on both sides, 8,538,315. To that must be added a total of 21,219,452 wounded.²

Controversy has long raged as to what were the deciding factors to defeat Germany. The accumulation of men and weaponry and above all morale and perseverance eventually determined the outcome. Britain's dominance at sea was crucial in blockading of supplies to Germany. The entrance of American soldiers into the arena when allied forces were near exhaustion was a telling factor.

The Second World War was on a greater global scale. Besides the inferno that Western Europe became, Japan was at war with China from 1937 to 1945, and the USA at war with Japan across wide stretches of the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. Fifty-seven nations, Allied and Axis were belligerents in World War Two.

Had Hitler and his cohorts known the cost to Germany of their mad enterprise would they have undertaken it? By far the worst physical damage came to Germany. Major cities were reduced to rubble. 2,850,000 military personnel were killed, that is one in twenty-five of her 1940 population. Near in proportion to this is Japan with 1,506,000 military killed; one in every forty-six of her population. Staggering is the loss reported by the Soviet Union of 7,500,000 killed, one in every twenty-two of her population in 1940. China at war with Japan from 1937 recorded battle losses of 2,200,000.

The UK suffered a loss of 397,762, one out of every 150 of the population. The rest of the Empire lost 146,836. Some of these are Canada 31,395, South Africa 36,092, Australia 12,262, India 21,085 and New Zealand 8,681.

The inexhaustible supplies of military hardware and well-trained soldiers from the USA were essential to defeat Germany and Japan. The cost of victory in battle dead for the USA was 292,100, one in every 450 of the population.

The total number killed in battle in the whole conflict numbers well over 15 million, over twice the number in the First World War. Essential in our remembrance is the loss of six million Jews who were murdered in the holocaust. Remembered too are great numbers who died in the bombing of cities or who died in Nazi labour camps. The Jewish holocaust under the Nazis and the slaughter of the civilian population of Nanking in 1937 by the Japanese are major events which highlight the wickedness that prevailed.

TV documentaries regularly and accurately remind the British public of the progress and costs of the two World Wars, especially the Second World War. Unforgettable sagas are described: the Battle of Britain fought in the skies in 1940, the astonishing evacuation of 233,039 British troops and 112,546 Allied troops from Dunkirk, the crucial battle of El Alamein in North Africa, the D-day landings in Normandy and the campaign to recapture Europe, the closely contested battle of Stalingrad and the ultimate defeat of the Germans in the freezing conditions, the desperate battles in the Pacific as the Americans gradually overcame the Japanese island by island, the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the gruesome discovery of the extent of the holocaust. Throughout can be traced the thread of divine providence making victory possible for the Allies. A vital factor was the provision of leaders like Winston Churchill and brilliant front-line generals like Bernard Montgomery and Russian general Georgi Zhukov. At critical points Hitler made decisions which proved disastrous to his cause.

Failure to intervene to stop aggression was the principal cause of the Second World War. In other words failure to go to war early when it was needed caused much greater suffering in the end. John Cornwall in his biography of Pope

Pius XII contends that failure on the part of the numerically strong Roman Catholic Church in Germany to resist the thuggery of Adolf Hitler between 1933 and 1939 is noteworthy.³ All Christians of whatever denomination need to observe that lesson.

Don Stephens in his book *War and Grace*⁴ is a reminder that God does not put his saving grace on hold during war but is at work at all times and on both sides of a conflict.

The philosophy behind Nazism

‘There is conclusive evidence that evolution was a major factor in the philosophy of those who steered Nazism to its destructive destiny. – All the Nazi leaders were committed evolutionists with Heinrich Himmler, head of the secret police, the ruthless Gestapo, claiming that “the law of nature must take its course in the survival of the fittest”.’⁵

When thinking of biological evolution which is so constantly asserted by the media as fact, I wonder why it is always assumed that homo sapiens has risen from the chimpanzee? Why should it not be going the other way? Chimps are physically stronger than we are. Should we not be evolving toward chimps? There is no fossil evidence between the different ape species or between the ape species and ourselves. To be sure we have never witnessed any of the ape species manufacture weapons of destruction. What a terrible commentary on human depravity and wickedness is that of the Nazis and Japanese to behave as they did in the Second World War! As evolutionary humanism prevails as a philosophy are we not in danger again? Even with the safeguards created by the EU we cannot afford to be complacent.

¹ The EU began in 1958 with Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In 1973 Denmark, Irish Republic and the UK were added, 1981 Greece, 1986 Portugal and Spain, 1995 Austria, Finland and Sweden, 2004 Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, 2007 Romania and Bulgaria – 27 nations in all. The EU is an officially secular institution, hence neither God nor Christianity was mentioned in its proposed constitution, in spite of pressure from the churches. Most of the Member States are secular states, although a small minority are not (the United Kingdom, Denmark, Greece and Finland) and others have references to Christianity in their own constitutions while officially remaining secular (e.g. the Irish Republic). Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel has promised the Pope that she will use her influence during Germany’s EU presidency to try to include a reference to Christianity and God in a revived constitution. However, this has provoked opposition, not least in the German press.

² These statistics are extracted from the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

³ John Cornwall, *Hitler’s Pope. The Secret History of Pius XII*, Viking, 1999.

⁴ Evangelical Press, 288 pages. This book of biographies is highly commended.

⁵ John Blanchard, *Does God Believe in Atheists?* EP, 2000, p. 118.

Church Missionary Conferences

A Personal Testimony and Appeal by Tom Wells.

Missions, that is, making disciples of Jesus Christ everywhere, lie near the heart of the New Testament concern. I want to make an appeal that every church organises an annual missionary conference. I will share with you how this concern captured my heart and how I implemented this vision in our church.

In 1954 I went to work with Youth for Christ in Germany for 2 to 3 months. I was appalled at what I found. Though I saw only a small part of the country, it appeared that no village or small town I visited had an evangelical church of any kind. Coming from America this surprised and puzzled me. At home there were churches on every corner, many of them evangelical. There I found none. As a result I made a radical decision: I would stay in Germany. I had found my life's work, to bring the light of the gospel into the darkest area I had ever seen. It was not long after, however, that I found that others had a different plan for my life.

My first inkling of this came when my draft board ordered me home. I could be drafted into the U S Army, and they wanted to make sure that I was at hand. The Lord evidently had other plans as well. I spoke to two mission boards who showed no interest in my joining them. The doors seemed to be firmly shut. Perhaps I should have tried further avenues of service overseas, but I did not. I turned to preaching in the United States. But the burden of missions kept a firm grip on my soul.

In my first whole-time pastorate we decided to have an annual missions conference. It would be the highlight of our year. That was more than forty years ago, but I think that conference continues into the present. In two further pastorates I did the same thing. Along the way I worked with another pastor, Hugh Liversedge, who taught me more about missions. He and his wife became sacrificial to the point of being ill-nourished in order to give as much money as possible to advance the gospel across cultures. Of course I do not recommend the extremes to which they went, but their spirit was contagious and I caught a further measure of their vision. As a sidelight I may mention that their son, Steve, is the president of a mission board today!

Preparation for the Conferences

As early as possible, after the previous year's conference, we consider the missionaries we will invite for the next year. First we settle on a main speaker to drive home to our people the importance of world missions. Since about 1990 we had David Straub each year before his untimely death. During that time David headed up Reformed Baptist Mission Services here in the USA. After that we turned to Bob Selph of the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches in America. Both Straub and Selph have been tireless promoters of cross-cultural missions for many years. David Straub had formerly been a missionary himself. It is a distinct advantage to have the main speaker's wife with him as well, even if she is exhausted by so much travel!

The year after David's death it was our privilege to have Erroll and Lyn Hulse. Needless to say, they were a blessing to us here. We usually have two additional families with their children when that is possible. We opt to have a missionary family that is doing deputation work and another that is well-settled in a mission field. Such couples may be home on furlough or we may bring them from overseas for our conference.

Of course we pray in preparation for each conference. I will mention one other preparation when I discuss funds below.

What Our Conferences are Like

What do we do at an annual missions conference? Put as simply as possible, we continue to expose our people to missionaries whom they can meet and get to know. Many Christians do not know any cross-cultural missionaries personally. How can that be? Some mission societies provide all the funds the missionary needs and send him/her off. Local church people, in that case, do not get to know them. That seems to me unfortunate. We want our people to get as much exposure to God's missionaries as possible as preparation for praying for them during the coming year.

Our missions conferences run from Friday evening through to Sunday evening. In advance we offer our families the opportunity to keep some of our missionary guests in their homes for the weekend. This makes a lasting impression for good on the people who host them. In some cases it creates lasting friendships between the two families.

Meal times are also important. Our families come together for two Saturday meals during the conference, breakfast and supper. At both the missionaries sit among the people. For the rest of the meals of the conference the missionaries

usually have breakfast with their hosts. The other meals are handled by a sign-up sheet. Before the conference we use it to invite families or individuals to provide a meal at home or in a restaurant for our missionary guests.

Each of the three evenings we have two men minister to us. One preaches the Word. The other does a presentation of his work and field. On Sunday morning one missionary speaks to a united Sunday School gathering. Another speaks in the morning service. All of these services are interspersed with solid hymns that promote the work of missions to the ends of the earth.

On Saturday morning after breakfast we divide the men and women. Our ladies join the ladies from the field and the men do likewise with the men. These times together are not occasions for preaching, but are more informal. Both groups ask the missionaries to take 10 minutes or so to tell something of their own lives. The choice of topic is entirely theirs but often they tell how they were converted to Christ or how they felt the call to missionary work. Sometimes we hear them tell of some startling or amusing incident connected with missionary service. Finally, we invite as many of our own people as want to participate to tell the missionaries something similar out of their own lives. Here again the goal is to become better acquainted with missions and with people.

During the conference we distribute a brochure in which we give brief biographies of the missionaries and an outline of the weekend schedule. We also give the conference a title. In 2006 we used 'Pray the Lord of the Harvest!' This year we used 'Faithful Men Teaching Faithful Men'. This well described the three men who participated this year.

Here's a summary of the schedule I described above (some of the times are approximate) Hymn singing is scattered throughout our time together:

Friday Evening, [date]

7:00 PM	Missions Presentation	[Speaker]
7:35 PM	Break	
7:45 PM	Missions Message	[Speaker]
8:30 PM	Dismissal & Informal Talk with Missionaries	

Saturday, [date]

8:30 AM	Breakfast with Our Guests
9:00 AM	Men with the Male Missionaries & Women with Women
10:30 AM	Dismissal to Homes and Later for Luncheon Engagements
5:30 PM	Conference Dinner [we remind our people to RSVP]

6:30 PM	Missions Presentation	[Speaker]
7:00 PM	Break	
7:10 PM	Missions Message	[Speaker]
8:00 PM	Dismissal & Informal Talk with Missionaries	
Sunday, [date]		
10:00 AM	Joint Sunday School Missions Presentation	[Speaker]
11:00 AM	Missions Message	[Speaker]
6:00 PM	Missions Presentation	[Speaker]
6:35 PM	Break	
6:45 PM	Missions Message	[Speaker]
7:45 PM	Dismissal & Informal Talk with Missionaries	

The Questions of Financing the Conference and Supporting the Missionaries

Any missions conference incurs a lot of expense. We expect this in advance and plan for those costs to be taken out of our general budget. Of course every church with such a conference is free to finance it in any way that seems best to them. Generally speaking, we say very little about money and we do not take special offerings for expected expenses.

In our regular church meetings and in our conference we provide a box at the door for our people's giving. This avoids seeming to ask visitors, and especially the unconverted, for financial help. Nevertheless each year we give 30-40% of our regular income to missions. Last year this rose to about 65% for missions due to an unexpected large gift in 2005.

However we do appeal for missionary funds in another way as well. We use what is called the 'Faith-Promise' method. A month or so before the conference we send each individual or family a form to fill out. The form is voluntary. It asks them to prayerfully consider how much they would like to give to the church missions program weekly or monthly for the coming year, starting the month after the conference. The treasurer of our church receives these and totals them to see how much we may receive in addition to what comes out of the general fund for the coming year.

This program contains three important provisos. First, no one but the treasurer possesses this information. Second, no one who fills out a form will be asked for any of this money. It represents a target prayerfully chosen. IT IS NOT A PLEDGE. Third, no one will know whether the individual or family set a target or whether they reached it or not.

A Vision for Missions

Every church must cultivate a missions vision in its membership. This should be done for both individuals and the group. In our small church we do it in several ways. Every Sunday morning one of our men, Brad Garrison, gives about a four-minute summary of the missions situation in a single country. The summary is based on the excellent book, OPERATION WORLD by Patrick Johnstone. (OW is revised and updated every seven years).

Next Brad leads us in prayer for the needs of that country that were suggested by his summary. Finally it goes to the Internet where several hundred churches and individuals read it. (If you would like to receive it, e-mail Rob and Jenny Gerard at Dogma@Fuse.net. You may also request Grace World View at the same time.) To sample Brad's work see an example in RT 217, News, Guatemala. In addition we pray regularly for about 20 missionary families at our weekly prayer meeting. We also pray for other missionaries' emergency requests.

Another way to keep missions before your people is by sending missionary news from the missionaries you pray for and support to your membership via e-mail. One mailing list can be made up for your church that will take in most of your members. One person in the church can use that list by choosing to forward your incoming e-mails. Your e-mail provider will send the e-mails to everyone on the list at once.

Finally we may keep missions in the hearts of our people by the use of books. Here are some recommendations:

Bibliography

David Bosch, (1929-1992) *Transforming Mission – Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*. Orbis NY 10545, 584 pages, 18th paperback edition, 2003. This volume is deemed the most comprehensive and thorough study of Christian Mission to be written during the 20th century. Translated into other languages including Indonesian it is likely to be the number one set book on mission for years to come.

Similar to Bosch in overview of mission in the entire history of the Church is Stephen Neill. *A History of Christian Missions*. 528pp paperback. Penguin. Second revised edition, 1986.

Priority in mission is to unreached people groups and an example of what is involved in such an enterprise including finance, language learning and

translation, church planting is described by Cliff Hellar veteran missionary to tribes in Papua New Guinea. *The New Testament Missionary*, FirstLove Publications, Po Box 20989 Catro Valley, CA 94546.

Also highly recommended is *To Every Tribe With Jesus: Understanding and Reaching Tribal Peoples for Christ*, by David Sitton, President To Every Tribe Ministries, Grace and Truth Books, 2005, Sand Springs, OK.

OPERATION WORLD has been mentioned which is a necessity. There are similar volumes which describe unreached people groups. OPERATION CHINA is one and OPERATION INDONESIA is another. Patrick Johnstone of OW has also written *The Church is Bigger than You Think – The Unfinished Work of World Evangelisation*, Christian Focus/WEC. 314 pp., ppback., 1998.

Recommended is John Piper. *Let the Nations be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*. Baker. 240 pages, seventh printing 1996. Piper begins, 'Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church, worship is. Worship therefore is the fuel and goal of missions. In missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory.' God's glory is foundational to mission. Telling chapters follow on the necessity of prayer and endurance in suffering. There is an uncompromising chapter on the reality of eternal hell and a ringing theological clarity in this book.

Specialised study is required for missionaries working among those of other religions. An introduction to what is involved can be found in *Jesus Christ The Only Way*, essays edited by Patrick Sookhdeo, Paternoster, 156 page paperback, Paternoster, 1978.

My *Vision for Missions* is a small-size 156 page paperback (Banner of Truth). In this book I consider basic principles in mission and describe the example set by David Brainerd, William Carey and Henry Martyn.

A very practical book on how to raise levels of interest in mission in the local church is *A Task Unfinished* by Michael Griffiths, 184 page paperback, OMF International, 1996.

Another Source for Missions Conference Help

I mentioned at the beginning of this article my time in Germany. The young woman doing the children's work in our meetings was then a student at the European Bible Institute in France. Later with her husband she came to the

United States and they started the finest service I have ever heard of for teaching pastors how to have missions conferences. Their work has reached virtually the entire world. They may be reached at the following offices: World Thrust South Africa (for all ministry invitations within the country of South Africa). P.O. Box 236, Parow 7499, Republic of South Africa, TELEPHONE: 21-939-3300. e-mail: wthrust@telkomsa.net

World Thrust Africa (for ministry invitations throughout the continent of Africa – outside South Africa) P.O. Box 451, Benoni 1500, Rep of South Africa. TELEPHONE/FAX: 11 422 5800. e-mail: higen@mweb.co. World Thrust International (for all ministry invitations throughout the world excluding the continent of Africa) 3545 Cruse Road, Suite 309-A, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30044-3162 USA. TELEPHONE: + 770-923-5215 FAX: +770-923-3933 e-mail: info@worldthrust.com.

I urge you to contact them at the appropriate office above, and see what they can do for you!

A Final Plea

The great commission is compelling for every church. ‘Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’ (Matt 28:19,20). J A Kirk in *The New Dictionary of Theology* (1988) seeks to place humanitarian aid, social justice and ecological issues on the same level as the evangelisation of the lost. We are opposed to that. We must use the Bible as our basis for missions. Paul and Barnabas were the first ones sent out by the church at Antioch. These two men set an example for us all as they concentrated on evangelising the unevangelised. This they accomplished by preaching the gospel and church planting.

How high is mission on your church agenda? What place does it occupy at your annual general meeting when you review your church activities? And what percentage of your church budget is devoted to mission? I urge that a well-organised church conference will raise the profile of mission. The promise ‘I am with you’ is a promise that goes with missionary activity and mission support. The author of missionary activity is the Triune God who always has been and is presently concerned about mission. It is his foremost work and therefore should be ours as well.

Losing the Vision – 1900-1950

John J Murray

If we are to have a proper understanding of the change that took place in the history of the Christian Church in the United Kingdom and in other parts of the world during the middle decades of the twentieth century, we need to take a brief look at the state of Christianity in the first half of that century.

The Rise of Liberalism in the 19th Century

By the end of the nineteenth century it was clear that a wind of change was blowing through the Protestant Churches of the United Kingdom. This was due to the spread of Higher Criticism in the theological colleges of the land. This teaching had its origins in the Universities of Germany in the 1860s. It was the accepted practice for students from the UK who aspired to advancement in academic circles to do specialist studies there. The change that came about in theological thought was justified in the name of progress and of biblical scholarship. Those scholars affected did not reject the Bible totally but they believed that the new light and new understanding given to them required that modifications should be made in the message of the Church in order to win the approval of the majority. By doing this they thought that the Church would command greater influence in the world.

This proved to be a disastrous change and a significant turning point in Church history. Some saw the danger signals and warned their contemporaries. Chief among them was the great Baptist preacher, C H Spurgeon (1834-92) who fought a rearguard action in what became known as ‘the Downgrade Controversy’. He resigned from the Baptist Union over the liberal teaching that had infiltrated the denomination. Towards the end of his life he was regarded as ‘the last of the Puritans’. In his address to the annual conference of the Pastors’ College in 1889 he declared: ‘What is being done today will affect the next centuries, unless the Lord should very speedily come... For my part, I am quite willing to be eaten of dogs for the next fifty years; but the more distant future will vindicate me.’¹ It is interesting to compare Spurgeon’s prophetic words with the prominent liberal theologian, Dr Marcus Dods of New College, Edinburgh. In a letter to a friend on 8 January 1902 he wrote: ‘I wish I could live as a spectator through the next generation to see what they

are going to make of things. There will be a grand turn up in matters theological. The churches won't know themselves fifty years hence. It is to be hoped some little rag of faith may be left when all's done. For my own part I am sometimes entirely under water and see no sky at all.²

Liberalism led to the dismantling of much of historic Christianity by the turn of the twentieth century. Whatever show of scholarship it may have presented, there is no doubt that liberalism was just disguised unbelief. It undermined belief in the supernatural, and presented the Church with a God who was no longer regarded as transcendent. The essence of the true biblical faith, re-discovered at the time of the Protestant Reformation, was enshrined in the historic Confessions of Faith and catechisms of the Reformation and Puritan eras. Although some could not claim to call themselves 'Reformed' in the historic sense of that word, they would nevertheless hold to the biblical faith in what is known as the 'Calvinistic' or 'free grace' doctrines. B B Warfield was right to say that 'the central fact of Calvinism is the vision of God' and 'its determining principle is zeal for the divine honour'. 'It begins, it centres and it ends with the vision of God in his glory and it sets itself, before all things, to render God his rights in every sphere of life-activity....It is the vision of God and His Majesty, in a word which lies at the foundation of the entirety of Calvinistic thinking.'³ It is truly the echo of that Scripture which declares: 'For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever' (Rom. 11.36).

If the Reformed Faith is Christianity seen in terms of giving all the glory to God then liberalism, in essence, is 'Christianity' harmonised with the religious aspirations of men and giving the glory to man. Liberalism made Christianity man-centred. It assumed the goodness of human nature and portrayed Christianity in terms of 'doing' rather than believing, of achieving rather than receiving. It looked chiefly to the human level and saw the business of religion chiefly as the support of people. It was truth modified to give offence to none.

The Influence of Liberalism in Universities and Colleges

The emergence of Christian Unions in the English Universities was a feature of the last quarter of the 19th century. Among the factors that gave rise to this were the missions of the American evangelist, D L Moody, in 1882 and the 'Cambridge Seven' in 1884. On 15th October 1889 a 'Missionary Convention for Young Men' took place in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London with C H Spurgeon in the chair. 'Over 1,500 students attended it with much enthusiasm.

At the close of the convention one hundred and fifty-two London students signed the declaration that "It is my earnest hope if God permit to engage in foreign missionary work." ⁷⁴ Out of this grew the Student Volunteer Missionary Union (SVMU), inaugurated in 1892. The following year the Inter-Varsity Christian Union was established and began to hold joint conferences with the SVMU. These groups were part of what soon came to be known as the Student Christian Movement (SCM).

During the early years of the 20th century the influential elements in the SCM grew more committed to an open basis of belief that permitted all theological viewpoints. By the outbreak of the First World War the great student movement known as SCM had become a very uncomfortable place for evangelicals to work in. The tragedy of war further heightened their sense of crisis. By the end of World War I the main emphases in the SCM were no longer the earlier Biblical ones. Professor A Rendle Short, commenting on the state of Christianity in English Universities, believed that before 1914 'the situation was disquieting, almost calamitous, except at Cambridge, and at a few London medical schools... The real message of the gospel of forgiveness of sins in virtue of our Lord's atoning death had almost died out in the provincial universities.'⁵

As the century wore on there were very few Conservative scholars to be found teaching in the Universities and Colleges and evangelical students were frequently subjected to ridicule by fellow students and often by their tutors. To quote Professor Short again: 'The idea has got abroad that men of learning, and especially the scientists, have made the Bible impossible of belief for anyone without a modern education.'⁶ Few came out of their theological education unscathed. Dr T Glover writing in *The Times* in 1932 rejoiced in the change that had taken place and wrote: 'Today if you want a real old obscurantist college, you have to find one.'⁷

Effect of Liberalism in the Churches

The churches as a whole were going adrift in the direction of their leaders. The prevailing view was that no matter how much of the Bible was rejected by scholars, the essence of Christianity remained unaffected. After all, it was said, 'Christianity is a life not a doctrine.' This was the spirit that came to prevail in the Church. In 1907 a Congregational minister, R J Campbell published a book entitled *The New Theology*. Influenced by the so-called 'new science' and especially by evolutionary theories, he expounded an almost pantheistic

concept of God, denied the uniqueness of the incarnation and repudiated the miraculous. Many leaders in the Church who held radical critical views of the Bible still spoke in the devotional language of the old gospel truths that they had learned in childhood. The people in the pews did not apprehend the dangers. Too many of them erred on the side of a false charity.

S M Houghton, writing of the Methodism in which he was reared in the 1920s, said: 'The church into which I was born was largely given over to modern thought in its colleges and in its pulpits. Lord Tennyson, in his day, might sing of ringing in the true and ringing out the false, but the ringers of Methodism were "ringing the changes" by abandoning the Biblical doctrines to a large extent and welcoming doctrines which their fathers knew not. Yet as a tyro I was convinced that Wesleyan Methodism was Christian to a high degree. In fact all that could be desired of a Christian church.'⁸

During these years conservative evangelicals in the denominations became more unpopular with the established leaders and were increasingly isolated. Like C H Spurgeon they found it difficult to take effective action within their denomination. Their main recourse was to support one another in fellowships and societies that stood four square on the authority of Scripture. But in withdrawing from the contemporary religious scene, the danger for evangelicals was to live in a non-intellectual world of their own. They became wary of theology, partly because so many young evangelical students seemed to lose their distinctive beliefs when they studied at University or College.

Following the visit of D L Moody to the UK in the 1870s the outlook of evangelicals in the UK was dominated by campaign-type evangelism and Arminianism. Nevertheless the evangelicalism that prevailed throughout the first half of the 20th century retained the essentials of the gospel. It believed that men's souls are lost, that conversion is an indispensable necessity, that separation from the world and holiness of life should characterize the Christian. But increasingly there was less emphasis upon doctrine and less attention paid to historic Christianity. An appreciation of the place of Church history became almost non-existent. The Reformers and the Puritans were practically forgotten. The vision of God in his glory was rapidly disappearing from view and thinking in the Church became more and more man-centred.

Scarcity of Evangelical Literature

The decline in appreciation of the Reformed heritage was reflected in the Christian literary world. When we look back to the previous century and

consider the influence that the writings of the Puritans had on C H Spurgeon and the manner in which he promoted them, it was clear that a sad change had set in. It was the discovery of a library that had been preserved for almost 200 years that introduced young Spurgeon to the riches of Puritan literature. In the manse adjoining the old Meeting House at Stambourne he found the minister's study, the window of which had been blocked up through the window duty. 'In my time it was a dark den – but *it contained books* and this made it a gold mine to me....here I first struck up acquaintance with the martyrs and especially with 'Old Bonner' who burned them; next with Bunyan and his 'Pilgrim'; and further with the great Masters of Scriptural theology, with whom no moderns are worthy to be named in the same day.'⁹ The sermons and writings of Spurgeon showed just what an effect these writings had on him and what an influence he had in the republication and promotion of the works of the Puritans during his day.

In the early decades of the 20th century the state of Christianity could be gauged by the decline of interest in the Christian classics and by the type of literature that was becoming increasingly popular. At the time of the First World War Puritan books were often thrown out for salvage. It has been said that £12 a ton was the going price for unwanted books. Between the two World Wars demand for the older Christian books scarcely existed. John Stott could write: 'When I was an undergraduate at Cambridge University in the early 1940s (a vulnerable and immature evangelical believer, beleaguered by liberal theologians) there was no evangelical literature available to help me. In those days one had to ransack second-hand booksellers for volumes like A H Finn's *The Unity of the Pentateuch*, James Orr's *The Problem of the Old Testament*, R W Dale on *The Atonement* or works of the Princeton divines. But there was virtually no contemporary evangelical theology and IVP had not yet come into existence.'¹⁰

It was about this time that the writings of C S Lewis on the Christian faith began to fill a gap. In 1933 he had written *The Pilgrim's Regress* which is partly autobiographical and an allegory about one route to the Christian faith. A publisher who liked it asked Lewis to write a book on suffering which resulted in *The Problem of Pain*. It was admired by the BBC Director of Religious Broadcasting, who invited Lewis to give some radio talks. Lewis agreed that ordinary British people needed to hear what Christianity really is in language that they could understand. His aim was evangelistic and he gave a series of three talks and each was published in turn as *Broadcast Talks* (1942), *Christian Behaviour* (1943) and *Beyond Personality* (1944). These

three were later put together and revised by Lewis to form one of his most famous books, *Mere Christianity* (1952).

Resistance to Liberalism

The Protestant liberalism that prevailed for some forty years was given a setback by the social upheaval of the First World War and the rise of neo-orthodoxy. The theological shift was led by Karl Barth, who chastised the liberals for making God after their own experiential image – God had become a liberal nine feet tall! Barth went back to the Bible and discovered that the Scripture is all about God in his own absolute ‘Godness’. The new insights he had discovered were given to the world, particularly in his *Commentary on Romans*, published in 1918. Sadly, Barth, although shifting the focus back to God, failed to re-affirm the truth of the absolute authority of the Bible as the Word of God. The resulting Barthianism, or neo-orthodoxy, was a false dawn that led many further astray.

In the United States there was an early reaction to liberalism. A series of tracts for the times began to appear in 1909. Their publication was financed by two wealthy brothers called Lyman and Milton Stewart. There were sixty-five booklets in the series and millions of copies were sold. They were entitled *The Fundamentals* and covered such themes as inspiration and authority, the deity of Christ, his virgin birth and bodily resurrection, the Holy Spirit, sin, judgment, atonement, justification and regeneration. They were written in order for ministers of the gospel, missionaries, Sunday School superintendents, etc. to have at their disposal articles which would be useful in affirming and reaffirming the fundamental truths of Christianity. The authors were drawn from North America and Britain and included such well-known evangelicals as B B Warfield, R A Torrey, A T Pierson, J C Ryle, Handley Moule and Campbell Morgan. However the Fundamentalist Movement was not entirely a continuation of historic evangelical Christianity. Many of the leaders adopted the Premillennial Dispensationalist view of Scripture and this was often regarded by them as a fundamental article of the faith.

What proved to be the more orthodox re-affirmation of the historic Christian faith came through the testimony to the truth of J Gresham Machen. Trained at Princeton Theological Seminary under B B Warfield he did further studies in universities in Germany, and at Marburg was shaken in his faith for a time under the influence of the liberal theologian, Wilhelm Herrmann. Machen’s testing in the German crucible proved to be the tempering of the steel in his

character so that he would emerge as a champion of orthodoxy. By 1925 he published his benchmark book entitled *Christianity and Liberalism*, in which he argued that Christianity and liberalism are two distinct religions. This led to a confrontation within Princeton Seminary and in the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA). In 1929 when PCUSA reorganised Princeton to ensure a more inclusive theological spectrum Machen and others withdrew to found Westminster Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. The battle within the denomination continued and the crisis came in 1936 when Machen played a central role in the founding of a new denomination which became known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

It was in the year 1929, which proved a watershed in the USA, that an initiative was taken in the UK to counteract liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. One of the few colleges not affected by liberalism was the Free Church of Scotland College in Edinburgh. From there two of the Professors, Dr John R Mackay and Dr Donald MacLean, launched the *Evangelical Quarterly* in January of that year. The journal was an attempt to articulate the historic Christian faith and they sought to rally Reformed men from around the world. The main contributors were to come from Holland and North America.

In the first issue the challenge of expounding the basic principles of the Reformed Faith was given to Casper Wistar Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary, grandson of the great Charles Hodge. His assessment of the situation is significant:

‘Doubtless this Reformed Faith is suffering a decline in the theological world today. What has been termed “Reformed spring-time in Germany” we cannot regard as the legitimate daughter of the classical Reformed Faith. In Scotland the names of William Cunningham and Thomas Crawford no longer exert the influence we wish they did. In America the influence of Charles Hodge, Robin Breckinridge, James Thornwell, Robert Dabney, William G T Shedd and Benjamin Warfield, seems largely to have vanished.’

¹ *An All-round Ministry* (1900, reprint Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1960) p. 360

² *Later Letters of Marcus Dods* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1911) p. 67

³ *Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today* (Edinburgh, Hope Trust, 1909) pp. 14-15

⁴ Douglas Johnson *Contending for the Faith* (Leicester, IVP, 1979) p. 61

⁵ ‘Testimony for the Truth in the British Universities’ in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, Oct 1933 pp. 338-41

⁶ A Rendle Short, *Modern Discovery and the Bible* (London, IVF, 1952) p. 230

⁷ E J Poole-Connor *Evangelicalism in England* (London, FIEC 1951) p. 251

⁸ S M Houghton *My Life & Books* (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1988) p. 143

⁹ *C H Spurgeon: the Early Years* (London, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1962) pp. 10-11, CHC

¹⁰ *Evangelical Quarterly* Volume 1, No 1, January 1929 (London, James Clarke, 1929) p. 3

A Just War?

Frederick Hodgson

When is a war a just war?

The Puritans and the Just War Tradition

Dr Ken Brownell presented a paper entitled, 'When is a war a just war?' at the Westminster Conference in December 2006.

His paper is of immense importance as he suggests, 'The question of when is a war a just war is one that Christians had been asking and trying to answer for centuries before the 17th century and have continued to ask and tried to answer ever since.' Evangelicals in recent decades have correctly spent much time and energy defending the core doctrines of the Faith. However they have neglected this subject. Since 1945 the majority in the United Kingdom have not had to face war. Conscription has long since ceased. In the USA the subject is extremely relevant. The American Armed Forces number three million, one percent of the population. These are spread across the world, many being engaged in the war against terrorism. .

Several reasons call for attention to be given to this subject. For instance young people in our churches consider a career in the armed forces. Do they understand the principles? Members of the armed forces often come under pressure to consider whether it is

ethical to fight in certain arenas. In democratic countries like the United States and United Kingdom the public are asked to vote for or against candidates for government office depending on their attitude to a given war. Christians and non-Christians alike need to address the question of when a war is just or not. The importance of understanding the issues has been highlighted in recent years as a result of a Jihadist dimension being injected into our minds following 9/11.

Ken Brownell's paper was presented in the context of events written since the close of the Cold War in Europe. At the time many people breathed a sigh of relief as though we would never be troubled by war again. Instead there have been several wars in places like the Middle East, the Balkans and Afghanistan. We have had the tragic, dramatic events of the Twin Towers and bombings in Madrid and London. The media constantly report the appalling conditions in Iraq and the ongoing war in Afghanistan. There has been anxiety over possible nuclear arsenals being built up in North Korea and Iran. Genocide is rife in parts of Africa such as Sudan and the Republic of Congo. Is it right to ignore this? For instance British military intervention was successful in Sierra Leone.

History tells us that war is a feature of our fallen world. The brief optimism

experienced since the close of the Cold War has been as groundless as the optimism that prevailed at the end of the First World War which some claimed as the war to end wars. The reality of war is not going to go away. We need therefore to give it the attention it deserves.

Brownell introduces his paper by reminding us of the destructive way that modern Islamic Fundamentalists have promoted jihad. He then points out that reformed Christians have also been involved in holy wars in the past. He was not referring only to the crusades fought by the armies encouraged by the popes in the middle ages but to wars subsequent to that.

His paper focuses on the events of the Civil Wars in Britain in the seventeenth century. It was at this time that British theologians had to agonise most over whether war is warranted by Scripture. Brownell uses the eminent Puritan, William Gouge, 'as a kind of lens to help us see how the Puritans understood and appropriated the just war tradition'. It is perhaps dangerous for us to assume that there was unanimity about what constitutes a just war amongst the Puritans. Indeed Brownell highlights subtle but important differences that existed between the formulation of the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) and the Baptist Second London or 1689 Confession of Faith. The former states that it is the duty of magistrates (the civil authority) to maintain piety that, 'they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and

necessary occasion'. The 1689 is silent on these matters. The Westminster Confession was formulated in the time of Civil War.

Brownell points out that prior to Augustine Christians did not give much attention to the ethics of war. In the fourth century Christians became much more influential within the Roman Empire and there was a felt need to understand when it was right to go to war. Augustine hated war and knew that it was rarely fought in a just way, but he realised that it was sometimes necessary. Augustine realised that sometimes war may be driven by love. It is a loving thing to intervene, using a degree of violence, when a robber is attacking a man. It is therefore right for a state to use restrained violence to rescue innocent victims of a violent aggressor. Love demands that justice is pursued even to the point of using armed force. This is consistent with Romans 13.

Augustine sanctioned the idea that three criteria should be met for a just war. These are: a just cause, legitimate authority and right intention. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) built on these ideas. He said that any who are attacked should deserve it because of some fault. It is not permissible for a private individual to declare war as it is the responsibility of those in authority to look after the public good by using 'the sword' in dealing with external enemies as well as upholding law and order internally. The warring party

should have the intention of advancing good and avoiding evil.

The Puritans recognised the wisdom of Augustine and Aquinas. The magisterial reformers like Luther and Calvin also had an impact on Puritan thinking. Luther never questioned the right of a ruler to engage in war, but his prime concern was to give pastoral help to those involved in warfare. In particular he was concerned about attitudes to war. He indicated there should be restraint in going to war and that it would be a mistake to fight in order to take a castle if the result would be to put a whole country in jeopardy. It would be sinful to fight for vain glory and soldiers must always be aware that sinful passions may overcome them in the midst of fighting. 'He is a mighty poor Christian who for the sake of a single castle would put the whole land in jeopardy.' Also, in a just war, 'it is both Christian and an act of love to kill the enemy without hesitation, to plunder, to burn and to injure him by every method of warfare until he is conquered, except that one must be aware of sin, and not violate wives and virgins.' Luther acknowledged that despite its repulsive nature in creating misery and apparently contrary to Christian love, 'it protects the good and keeps and preserves wife and child, house and farm, property, honour and peace'. He could see how 'how precious and godly this work is'. 'The hand that wields the sword and kills with it is not man's hand, but God's; nor is it man but God who hangs, tortures, beheads, kills, and fights. All these are God's works and judgements.'

Brownell notes that Luther rejected the idea of holy war. The Muslim Ottoman Empire threatened Europe before and during Luther's time. The pope encouraged European armies to fight against them. Luther agreed, not because they were Muslims, but rather because they had aggressive intentions and threatened peace and order in Europe. Luther said that it 'was absolutely contrary to Christ's doctrine and name' to fight as an army of Christians against the Turks. In today's world Luther's comment is highly significant.

John Calvin held similar interpretations of Romans 13 as Augustine and Luther. He said if magistrates 'rightly punish those robbers whose harmful acts have affected only a few, will they allow a whole country to be afflicted and devastated by robberies with impunity? For it makes no difference whether it be a king or the lowest of the common folk who invades a foreign country in which it has not right, and harries it as an enemy. All must, equally, be considered robbers and punished accordingly.'

Calvin added a further building block to just war theory. He considered the problem of an unjust magistrate. He was writing at a time when French Protestants were being persecuted by the French government. Many of the leaders amongst the French Protestants were in positions of power themselves. Calvin allowed these men, who had legal authority, to fight for justice. He said that in exceptional circumstances

God 'raises up open avengers from among his servants, and arms them with his command to punish the wicked government and deliver his people, oppressed in unjust ways, from miserable calamity'. Brownell describes how this line of thinking was pursued by Beza and others and eventually became influential in the English-speaking world.

As mentioned earlier, the English Puritans were forced to address the question of just wars. In 1643 news reached England of atrocities committed against Protestants in Ireland. John Ley preached a sermon before the House of Commons and said, 'For though war itself be a grievous calamity, yet if the enemy be not courageously resisted, in his own way of violence, a worse thing than war will follow upon it, that is perpetual tyranny and slavery upon the consciences and persons of the vanquished.' Brownell also quotes Richard Bernard, living at this period, 'A just war...is to be preferred before an unjust peace.'

Like Calvin the English Puritans were obliged to consider what to do in the face of the unjust government. Ken Brownell speaks of the Puritan, Goodman, who in line with Calvin said that opposition should not come from private individuals, but only by magistrates and lesser officials; indeed it was their duty 'to see that their princes be subject to God's laws'. The thinking on rebellion against a tyrant was developed so that rebellion 'could only be called just whenever it fulfilled

the three tradition requirements of a just war: that it was truly defensive, fought at the command of a legitimate authority, and carried on in a restrained and more or less orderly fashion, without pillage, rape, or unnecessary murder.'

Brownell's paper shows that theology influences how men might be drawn into war. He points out that 'in the mind of the Puritans, there was no fundamental distinction between the secular and spiritual' so there was no reason to see why the sword of the state could not be used for spiritual purposes. The Puritans did not recognise the differences between the people of God in the Old Covenant and the New. He pointed out that their understanding of the apocalyptic writings in the Bible also influenced their thinking.

The paper's conclusions are important in that they remind us of the importance of learning from our spiritual forefathers, recognising their wisdom and noting their failures, and applying the lessons to our own day. The issues of a just war may seem to be merely academic to us, but many of the issues faced by the Puritans are all too alive to some, particularly in countries where evangelicals are both numerous and under threat. Prior to the First World War few believed that war would again envelop the country, but it came. We cannot afford to be unwise in these matters. 9/11 and its aftermath is an important reminder for us not to be complacent or intellectually lazy.

The Hussite Wars

Bohemian Battles of the Fifteenth Century and Today

Frederick Hodgson

For a century before the extraordinary world-transforming Protestant Reformation of the 16th century the small nation of Bohemia, instead of surrendering, defeated powerful armies in order to maintain their religious freedom. The Bohemian people were incensed by the murder of John Huss even though he had been promised protection at the Council of Constance. I described the testimony of John Huss in RT 216, and in the next issue outlined the legacies of Huss including the wars that followed.

The purpose of this article is to address the question of a 'just war' focusing on the Bohemian wars that were fought in the fifteenth century. The study by Ken Brownell is used as an instrument for analysing the justness or otherwise of the Hussites in these wars.

There had been a remarkable awakening to the authority of the Scriptures in Bohemia at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Central to this awakening was the preaching of John Huss at the Bethlehem Chapel in Prague. However, despite the promise of a safe conduct to the Council of Constance (1414-1417) by the Catholic Emperor Sigismund, Huss was martyred by order of the council in 1415. In November 1417, the newly elected Pope demanded a crusade against the Bohemians. Wylie stated that the bulk of the nation had embraced the faith of Huss within 4 years of his death. By 1419 the nation, dominated by two groups (Calixtines and Taborites) had embraced four principles that they were absolutely united on. These involved liberty to preach the Word of God and celebrate communion by all receiving the bread and the wine. The principles also included social justice with the cessation of clerical rule with excessive wealth. In other words clergy and people were to be brought under the same rule of law. The Bohemians had begun to experience liberty and justice. They wished to keep these gains.

Meanwhile a leading courtier, Ziska, had requested that the king allow him to engage the Emperor in war in order to avenge the death of Huss. He held the Emperor Sigismund responsible for the duplicity leading to the death of Huss. The king was the half-brother of the Emperor, his superior. The king gave

Ziska the permission he sought, but did he have the right to allow rebellion against the Emperor? Did the Bohemian people have the right to take arms and defend their newly established freedom and justice? In defending these rights, they would of course have to defend their property and the safety and security of their families against invading armies that were considerably better equipped and organised than they were. Were there sufficient reasons for the people to unite under Ziska? (The king who gave Ziska permission to fight against the Emperor died shortly afterwards.)

Augustine (and the many teachers who followed in his tradition) taught that war was only justified if there were a just cause, legitimate authority and right intention.

The Bohemians had united over the cause of justice and liberty. They had to fight a defensive war if they were to keep these. The justice of the cause was obvious. Augustine had used the Bible's teaching about the duty of the state to keep law and order, using the sword if necessary. Robbers and murderers within the state should be punished by the state. The Bohemian leaders saw that invading armies would rob and plunder, injure and kill. The remit to punish individual robbers and murderers should also apply to organised murder, robbery and abuse when those offenders came from outside the state.

When Ziska approached the king for permission to fight against the Emperor, he was also driven by the desire to avenge the death of Huss. In the first instance it seems that his motivation was one of retribution. He believed that the Emperor was responsible and that he should be punished. Was the desire to punish the Emperor a just cause to go to war? We are faced with two problems here. Did Ziska have evidence that this was the case or was he propelled by ungrounded suspicions? If it were only the latter then he had no grounds whatsoever for his actions. However, the Emperor did believe he had the power to give Huss safe passage to Constance and there is no reason to suppose that he could not have stopped the cruel action of the murderers as the so-called trial and execution of Huss were not done in a quiet corner. There was also the matter of proportion. Huss was a very fine man of learning and righteousness and his death was totally unjust. If the Bohemians went to war against the Emperor, many thousands of people would be killed and injured on both sides. Iranian soldiers recently captured British sailors. Had they been executed or imprisoned it is doubtful that the British government would have declared war on Iran. Luther was not a lover of war and insisted that it should not be engaged in lightly. He said, 'He is a mighty poor Christian who for the sake of a single castle would put the whole land in jeopardy...Let this be the rule: where wrong cannot be punished without greater wrong there let him waive his rights, however, just they may be.' Luther understood the horrors of



Children in an east London suburb made homeless by the random bombs of the Nazi night raiders, waiting outside the wreckage of what was their home. September 1940. See editorial with regard to the world wars. (National Archives, World War II, Battle of Britain, photo no. 87).

war, even just wars. As it happened, retribution for the death of Huss was not the only cause of the wars with the Emperor. The Bohemians were forced to fight a defensive war to protect their lives, property, rich culture, liberty and newfound systems of justice. They had a just cause to go to war and the intention was good.

They undoubtedly had the good intention that their country would be one that valued freedom and justice. Along with freedom and justice the Bohemians valued learning. The university in Prague was one of the leading universities in Europe. They intended that their country would flourish as a centre of learning and influence for good. Right intention is a matter that is both easily stated and easily hidden. The intention to establish justice and freedom was easily stated, but hidden sinful intentions are always a possibly stronger cause to go to war. Racial prejudice is something that can be the strongest driving force behind aggression. The Bohemians did not like the Germans and there had been an earlier incident in the history of the university of Prague when Germans were expelled. Some modern African wars are tribal in nature. Right intention needs to be addressed before going to war. Ken Brownell quoted the Puritan Gouge, 'There must not be any notion of unreasonable passion or anger, or ambition and vainglory, or desire for earthly possession whatsoever.' It is helpful for would-be combatants to search their hearts for prime reasons for desire for war, but it is not easy to see into the hearts of others to assess

intentions of the heart. Ziska has to answer the one who sees the hidden depths of every heart.

Ziska had been given authority by the Bohemian government of the day. However, the question of whether or not it was right for the king to sanction rebellion against a higher authority remained.

Later Calvin struggled with the question of whether or not it was wrong to rebel against a higher authority. Protestants in France were being persecuted in France by those in power. Some of their own leaders had political power too. He taught that private individuals should submit to tyrants, but men given legal authority to exercise justice for and on behalf of their citizens had the right and duty to protect them against 'the fierce licentiousness of the king...because they dishonestly betray the freedom of the people, of which they know that they have been appointed protectors by God's ordinance.' Later English Puritans had the dreadful decision to not only fight against the forces of King Charles I, but ultimately whether or not it was right to execute the king. The Bohemians were never faced with the question of executing their Emperor. Of course this problem was faced recently in Iraq and it is not inconceivable that Christian soldiers or members of the government of some countries might have to make such judgements in coming years. Christian journalists and teachers have great responsibility for their comments on such happenings in different countries.

The Bohemian armies were able to go into battle with a good conscience. They actually marched into battle singing hymns. They believed that God was on their side and it is remarkable how such a small country could stand up against the might of the several armies sent against them.

If they were justified in going to war, the next question that should be posed was: did they pursue their fighting in a godly way? Did they seek personal glory? Did they cause as little suffering to innocent people as possible? Motives are difficult to judge at the best of times. There is evidence that as a principle they used as little violence as they could. After the death of Ziska, Procopius his successor offered mercy to any opposing soldiers taken prisoner in battle. His offer was turned down. However, even if the Bohemian leaders acted according to principle, warfare is a violent process and it is quite possible that individual soldiers were carried away by sinful passions with the result that undue violence was used. In modern Iraq we have come to read of incidents when small groups of soldiers have disgraced their cause by evil behaviour. There is no reason to suppose that men of perverse minds were not caught up in the Bohemian wars.

Robert Leighton wrote, 'War is the fruit of sin, the wages of sin, and the cause of sin; yea even one part of sin itself... In war, renown, honour, wealth, chastity, life, wives and children; yea and religion itself, lies at the stake: nothing so sacred, no sex so tender, no age so impotent which the barbarous soldier will not contaminate, deflower and kill.'

Despite this dreadful reality, in analysing the willingness of the Bohemians to go to war it is worth contemplating the words of John Ley, the seventeenth-century Puritan. He wrote, 'For though war itself be a grievous calamity, yet if the enemy be not courageously resisted, in his own way of violence, a worse thing than war will follow upon it, that is perpetual tyranny and slavery upon the consciences and persons of the vanquished.'

During the Bohemian struggles Procopius took the war to the territory of his enemies. He engaged on an offensive campaign in Germany. The Bohemian farmers, peasantry and householders had suffered from the ravages of war on their own soil. He led his army and ransacked German castles, destroyed towns and exacted tribute from the wealthy. This was a different activity from simply defending Bohemian territory. Was this right? Is it right to take pre-emptive action of any sort? In his paper on the justice of war Ken Brownell deals more briefly with the question of whether or not an offensive war is ever justified.

He quotes Gouge who lists possible just causes of offensive wars, with biblical reasons, in the 'maintenance of the truth and purity of religion', 'recovery of that which is unjustly taken away', 'execution of such as have done public wrong', 'drawing away enemies from some dangerous plot they have in hand', 'weakening the power of open and professed enemies' and 'to help and assist friends and allies in like cases'. The first of these categories will be examined later in this article, but many modern wars including the Falklands, the Gulf War, Afghanistan, Iraq and the involvement of NATO in the Balkans would fit under the categories listed by Gouge. Procopius' actions in Germany would fit into the category of 'weakening the power of open and professed enemies'. Later Procopius repeated this kind of campaign in other parts of the empire and the result was that in 1432 the Emperor requested a peace settlement. Eventually after a failed peace conference at Basle a peace treaty was signed in Prague.

Procopius was possibly correct in pursuing the war into the lands of the enemy. He did not have the means of mustering international opinion to aid his cause. Bohemia was alone in Europe at the time. Europe was dominated by the Empire which in turn was dominated by the authority of the pope. Unlike today he was unable to use the media to support his cause. Printing, radio and

internet were not available to Procopius. He did not have the means to win over the hearts and minds of the populations of the other European countries. They simply viewed the Bohemians as heretics. They were in fact ignorant as to what the Bohemians actually believed and why.

After the peace treaty of Prague the Taborites and Calixtines became divided. Their aims had been different. The Taborites wanted to pursue reformation according to the Word of God. The Calixtines had gained their objective of giving freedom to laity as well as clergy to drink the wine at communion. Procopius, the leader of the Taborites, went to war against the Calixtines and was defeated at the battle of Lipany. Procopius was killed and the Taborites were so badly defeated that they could never again wage war.

Were the Taborites justified in engaging in this war against their fellow-countrymen? Was their cause just? Did they have legal authority to engage in this war? Did they have the right intention? Essentially they were engaged in a 'holy war' – their cause was religious in nature. Like the English Puritans the Taborites had difficulty in drawing clear lines between the Old and New Covenants. Williams writes of them that 'like the Maccabeans long before them and like the Munsterites after them, they became fighting saints... They had a complete religious and social programme that was eschatologically grounded, taking their name from the hilltop encampment called Tabor (Judg. 4:6), where the forces of Issachar and Zebulon had once assembled preparatory to fighting the Canaanite commander Sisera.'

Procopius was the leader of the Taborites and had been the leader of the joint forces of the Calixtines and Taborites. He was Ziska's appointed successor and was one of the men who represented the Bohemians at the previous two peace conferences. He was a man of exceptional military and political acumen and agreed with the Roman Catholic leader Aeneas Sylvius that the peace treaty left the small remaining Catholic Party in Bohemia in a position of power. He probably had the authority to wage war. He was not acting as a private individual.

If Procopius were asked whether or not his cause was just, he would have argued that he was acting for the cause of truth, which had been undermined by the Prague peace settlement. He was a national leader acting on behalf of true piety. Ken Brownell quotes the following: 'It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereunto: in the managing whereof, as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice, and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so, for that end, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war, upon just and necessary occasion.'

Is it really biblical to wage war on behalf of piety? Didn't Jesus say, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews.' At the garden of Gethsemane his disciple had the means of waging war. They had two swords with them and they could have fought for the kingdom of God. But Jesus forbade this. Furthermore, Paul instructed Timothy, 'The Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.' Procopius and his friends recognised that the Calixtines had fallen into a trap, but they were hardly behaving in a gentle, patient spirit towards those who had been entrapped.

They were great soldiers and earlier they had fought successfully for national peace, justice and freedom. They were apparently able to teach and preach in the conditions that prevailed after the Peace Treaty of Prague. It was not appropriate to fight even if their cause were right. The intention to convert those who disagreed with them at the point of the sword was not appropriate. Paul told the Corinthians, 'For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.'

The Taborites were never again able to make war. Wylie wrote that they had to search for 'clearer religious convictions'. To his credit the new king of Bohemia, Sigismund, gave them land and the privilege of worshipping freely.

There was another strand to the attitude towards war in Bohemia. One of the followers of Huss was Peter Chelcicky. He believed in the complete separation of church and state and identified the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity in the fourth century as the source of so many of the troubles of the church. Peter Chelcicky was right in arguing for separation of church and state. Rarely are leaders of state equipped with the grace and gifts of elders described in the New Testament as needed to lead the church. History bears testimony to the damage done to the church by politicians when they attempt to guide or control the church. Equally if a church dominates the state, then persecution of those having a different viewpoint is never far away. Religious wars are so often a product of church and state compacts.

Many Christians are pacifists. There have been such down the centuries. At first sight Peter Chelcicky and the United Brethren that followed him seemed to have come to the correct solution. The Lord said that Christians should turn the other cheek. The Ten Commandments teach that we should not kill, although significantly the death penalty was also inbuilt into the Mosaic law for certain offences.

It is important to distinguish between a clear command to private individuals to be submissive, non-violent and non-abusive and the responsibility of the state to control sinners by the threat of the sword or other punishment. Ken Brownell showed that the vast majority of reformed Christians were not pacifists. He pointed out Augustine's argument that rulers should act out of love when they restrain violent men with the force given them by God. He pointed out that Luther taught that a just war may be fought by Christians with a good conscience. He said, 'In a war of this sort it is both Christian and an act of love to kill the enemy without hesitation, to plunder, to burn and to injure him by every method of warfare until he is conquered, except that one must be aware of sin, and not violate wives and virgins.' He also said that when warfare is conducted as an act of love, 'it protects the good and keeps and preserves wife and child, house and farm, property, honour and peace'.

Peter Chelcicky's love of peace was commendable, but he ignored the fact that many of the wars in the Old Testament were fought with divine approval and even divine command. His hatred of war was surely right and in keeping with a God who does not delight in the death of the wicked but ignores the fact that God uses war to demonstrate his justice sometimes in this world as a warning that his justice will be fully executed on the day of his wrath, portrayed as a victorious military campaign in the book of Revelation. Peter Chelcicky ignored the fact that when John the Baptist rebuked sinners, he did not tell repenting soldiers that they should give up their livelihood, but rather that they should not extort money or accuse people falsely and that they should be content with their pay.

In this article we have looked firstly at the clear justice of a defensive war, and secondly the less clear case for an offensive campaign, using the threefold test of just cause, legal authority and right intention. These wars had a religious dimension, but were conducted by a civil authority generally having the support of the whole population of Bohemia. Thirdly the rightness of a tragic failed offensive campaign conducted principally for a religious purpose was examined. Finally a pacifist position was briefly critiqued from a historical and biblical position. Clearly much more could be stated, but hopefully the article will stimulate further discussion on the issue of a just war to the end that we shall be better equipped to advise and act responsibly as citizens.



Alan Levy teaching in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone

Report by Alan Levy

With crowded churches, and lots of them, at first glance it would appear that 'the church' in Sierra Leone is in a healthy condition, but sadly a closer look reveals that conclusion is far from a true picture.

Economically Sierra Leone is a poverty stricken place. For the last ten years it has been voted by the United Nations as the 'poorest country in the world'. Socially it is also poor. The division between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' is evident everywhere. Health-wise, there are only 84 general practitioners in the whole country, with a population of over six

million. There are hundreds of amputees which is the result of the barbarity of the rebel movement in the eleven year civil war. They are begging in many places. But the greatest poverty is spiritual. The country has been badly infected with the sickness of 'Prosperity Teaching'. Churches everywhere advertise a 'Seven day explosion of His Almightyness', and claims that attendance at their church will 'increase your financial intelligence', that there will be a 'week of flame and fire', yet in reality apart from a lot of noise and emotion nothing substantive and lasting happens.

I attended a church Bible Class where the subject was 'Prosperity'. The Bible was hardly opened. This was

followed by the worship service in which the pastor told us he was going to speak on the Good Shepherd as found in Psalm 23, but all we were told, and I quote, 'The Good Shepherd will guide his people to vote for the right man in the forthcoming election, (July 27-28) and the right man will lead us into the green pastures of financial prosperity.'

Such teaching is widespread and of course in a place of abject poverty is hopefully accepted, but all too soon reality and disappointment set in. False promises always lead to this.

Sadly many of the pastors themselves have never been taught the truth. Most are self-appointed to their churches. They are strong on evangelistic zeal, (which is good) but weak on feeding their people with the Word. When someone wants to join a church the first question that they are usually asked is 'Have you been baptised?' (Either sort!), not, 'Have you been converted.' If the answer to the former question is 'yes' then they are accepted into membership and instructed to pay their 'tithe'. Money is in the forefront of their thoughts.

What are needed are pastors who will faithfully teach their people the Word of God and warn them of the falsehood that abounds all around them. To try to aid these men in this task *PTI*, (Pastor Training International) working alongside UFMSL, held four conferences for pastors in that needy country during March and April of this year. The conferences centred around the

Pastoral Epistles and emphasised that the Word of God is the only message that the church has to proclaim and that of course Christ, not monetary gain, is the centre of that message. Also emphasised was the necessity of integrity and purity in the lives of the pastors of the churches; how sad to be asked the question, 'If a pastor has an affair and it is a kept secret, how can that affect the church?'

A total of over 200 pastors came to the conferences which were held in four different towns throughout the country; those that attended were given a pack of books to help them in their ministries, particularly with regard to faithful preaching of the Word; they were encouraged not only to receive the books but to read and study them when they got to their homes in order to gain the most benefit from them. Many of them confessed they never read!

Most of them labour in very difficult situations, facing problems that we in the UK never have to consider. In order that they will not feel isolated and forgotten they were encouraged to write to *PTI* with their questions and individual mentors here would reply offering biblical answers to their queries and in addition send other helpful books to them.

The great need of the church in Sierra Leone is that God would turn these pastors into faithful preachers of the Word who will teach the people and lead them biblically, stem the tide of falsehood and build the people up in their most holy faith. Only a little has been done. There is much, much

more to accomplish. Follow-up conferences will be planned. Pray that God may bless that which has been done and also that which will be done, all for the greater glory of the Saviour in the needy land of Sierra Leone.

Indonesia – Aceh, Sumatra,

In the region of Aceh last year an angry mob set fire to a church that had stood strong for 28 years. The pastor and his wife had to flee through the jungle for safety. Netty is emotional as she recounts that fateful night when she and her husband were inside their church as angry Muslims poured litres of gasoline on the building and set it on fire. Her face was covered during television interviews to protect them from retribution. ‘When I heard the Muslims say “Kill them, kill them,” I thought I was dreaming,’ Netty said. ‘At the back of the house I jumped and fell to the ground. I was crying and praying, “Where are you, God, where are you, God?”’

Netty’s husband, Luther Saragih, has been the pastor of the Indonesian Evangelical Mission Church since 2003. He says it was about midnight when two trucks and 50 motorcycles carrying more than 100 Muslims surrounded their church building.

‘The people were holding swords ready to kill us,’ Pastor Saragih said. ‘But we were astonished when they just looked at us as we passed in front of them. I believe God’s angels were there to protect us.’ Pastor Saragih

explained that the Muslims became enraged when they received invitations to a revival meeting at the church. Though he denied sending the invitations, police ordered him to cancel the revival gathering.

Despite the police order 60 Christians continued to meet for prayer. ‘The police said the people will be angry if we continue with the fellowship, but I did not see anything wrong if we worshiped God,’ Saragih said. ‘We prayed and read Psalm 23.’

Pastor Saragih and his wife survived the attack by running into the jungle while their church burned to the ground. Netty, who was then three months pregnant, fell several times as she fled. She was hospitalised to prevent a possible miscarriage. Because of death threats Pastor Saragih and his wife fled from danger only to find themselves preaching in a much bigger town. Several months later CBN News met up with Saragih and Netty – and their newborn baby girl. ‘At first I told myself I will stop sharing the gospel,’ Saragih told CBN News. ‘I must admit I questioned God for what happened to us. But he allowed me this amazing experience with him. We did not think we would survive, but God miraculously saved us and our baby, too.’

Because his faith was strengthened by the attack, Pastor Saragih was inspired to attend Bible school. He is now sharpening his evangelism skills. While the church building in Aceh was destroyed, the congregation continues to hold prayer meetings in

their homes while waiting for the completion of a new church building. 'At first, when our church was burned, we were afraid. But later on we realised we should not be afraid because we are followers of Jesus Christ,' said Augustus, an elder of the Indonesian Evangelical Mission Church. 'We believe that if we die, because of Jesus, we will live again. We pray for the Muslims, for them to follow Jesus. They did not know what they were doing. We believe God has a good plan for us here in Aceh.' These Christians insist persecution will not drive them from their village in Aceh. They intend to stay. They ask believers around the world to pray God will give them the strength to endure this ongoing test of faith. CBNNews.com

Ethiopia

Report by Pastor Kurt Strassner

Over the last two weeks of April a fellow pastor (Scott Duley) and I travelled to Ethiopia to assist missionary Anthony Mathenia in the training of 80 church-planting pastor trainees. In this country, whose landmass is approximately equal to that of Texas, there are over 60 million people in 80 plus different tribes. Official statistics show that roughly half the population is Ethiopian Orthodox and about a third Muslim. Actual on-the-ground estimates say that the number of Muslims is closer to 40% and growing.

In the midst of this largely unbelieving populace sits the

evangelical community. The believers we worked among are strong in many respects. There seems to be an absolute certainty about the exclusive claims of Jesus. The singing in our worship times was always done with great enthusiasm. There was a servant spirit evident everywhere. The men were eager to learn and usually on the edge of their seats to drink in the teaching of the Word. And (how encouraging!) the director of education for the Addis Kidan Baptist Church (the denomination with whom we worked) said to us on the second day: 'You are reformed theologians! I like reformed theology!'

Amid these encouraging signs there are definite areas for concern and prayer among the evangelicals in Ethiopia. The residue of several false ideologies still clings to a significant number of believers. The Orthodox background of many of the believers has left behind (in only a few of the men, it seemed) a false dichotomy between Old and New Testaments. It is almost as though God changed his personality between the two. The surrounding pagan culture has also left behind a whole host of tangled knots in the area of sexual ethics, particularly in the more rural communities. Western culture has bred an unhealthy emphasis on theological education in English, and this in a country where only 36% of the people are literate in their own language (Amharic)! In addition, there is a great need to strengthen many of the pastors in the areas of ecclesiology, robust hymnody, expositional preaching and the doctrine of sin.



Students in Addis Ababa

All these facts point to one great need – sound, careful, reformed theological training in the Amharic tongue. Enter Anthony Mathenia. Anthony has been travelling to Ethiopia for the last seven years. Two years ago he and his family made the capital city, Addis Ababa, their permanent home. His pursuit? Amharic-based theological training for local pastors and trainees. This past winter the Addis Kidan Baptist Church approached him with an offer. ‘We have 70-plus men who have committed, if we can provide them theological training, to plant churches, two-by-two all over unreached Ethiopia. Would you design and head up the training program?’

Would he ever? The result of that initial meeting has been *Pastors’*

Training International. *PTI* will consist of eight 2-week training modules over a two-year span. The trainees are housed and fed through a local church in Addis Ababa, and attend classes for six hours a day, five days a week. The curriculum is arranged systematically, beginning with the doctrine of God and moving forward the way any Systematic Theology text-book would. Interspersed are practical seminars and sermons as well. For this first two-year round of *PTI*, the training will be mostly done by English speakers and translated into Amharic by able men.

Scott and I travelled from the US in April to be the inaugural teachers at *PTI*. Scott taught the doctrine of God, while I taught the Sermon on the Mount (taken out of the systematic order because I also taught it as a

Christian Ethics class in the English-based Baptist Bible School). The hope is that Scott's class put the men on a sound, God-centred footing heading into the rest of the systematics courses. The Sermon on the Mount, we hope, served a dual purpose as a solid course in Christian ethics and as a practical example of the fruitfulness and process of expositional preaching. The men seemed to listen eagerly, intently, and with teachable hearts. Many of their questions were very perceptive. The Spirit was surely at work on behalf of Christ's church in Ethiopia.

Eventually Anthony would like *PTI* to use the Amharic language. This will require his own mastery of the language, as well as selecting and training a group of Ethiopian men who will become the instructors in a long-term Amharic *PTI*. Would you pray with us about all that the Lord is so graciously doing in Ethiopia? A few requests...

1. Successful long-term progression to an all-Amharic based *PTI*.
2. The next *PTI* module happens the last week of May and first week of June (Jordan Thomas and Nathan Sawyer of Memphis, Tennessee, teaching).
3. Lasting fruit through the eventual planting of up to 40 Christ-centred churches in the unreached corners of Ethiopia!
4. Hosting logistics, travel, finances, and other nuts and bolts the Mathenias family will be dealing with as they organise round after round of *PTI*.

Canada, Quebec

I have just returned from 2 weeks in the USA and Quebec where I was tremendously stimulated, challenged and encouraged by what the Lord is doing among Reformed Baptists. The annual general assembly of ARBCA (Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America) was a refreshing opportunity for me to have good fellowship with like-minded pastors and to hear of the Lord's work through the Association of Churches with which I am glad to identify myself. In Quebec I was privileged to attend the first general assembly of the new Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of Quebec (French-speaking) and to preach to the brethren of that assembly on the holiness of God. What excellent men God is raising up under the ministry of our brother Raymond Perron! I was moved to see the affectionate attachment they have towards him, and towards one another, their solid theological convictions and their vision to bring the gospel to their land. I had the feeling, as did Raymond, that in one sense this assembly could mark a turning point because of the possibilities we there realised for future collaboration between French-speaking Reformed Baptists in Quebec and in Europe. In the areas of literature publication, radio, training of men and other areas there is much that we can do to help each other and strengthen our respective ministries. We intend to begin working on some of these things right away. *David Vaughn.*

Penal Substitution

A review article by Bill James

Controversy over the doctrine of penal substitution has been the subject of a number of recent books. Readers in the UK will be aware of Steve Chalke's denial of penal substitution in his book *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Steve Chalke & Alan Mann, Zondervan, 2003). Chalke is appalled at the portrayal of God's wrath and judgment in sermons such as Jonathan Edwards' *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*. He prefers a gentler and more positive presentation of the Christian faith, insisting that instead of focusing on original sin we need to emphasise that Jesus believed in the original goodness of human beings. We are then prepared for Chalke's dismissal of penal substitution: 'The fact is that the Cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse – a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed' (p.182). He claims that such a notion of the crucifixion is in contradiction to the idea of God's being love. Rather, we should understand the Cross in terms of God's identifying with us in our weakness and suffering, and absorbing and overcoming the powers of evil.

This controversy has been important in the context of British evangelicalism because Steve Chalke is a leading figure in Evangelical Alliance circles. He is extraordinarily gifted and has a wide ranging ministry, including the establishment of the Oasis Trust which has been an important agency for Christian social action for over 20 years. But for all of his gifts Steve Chalke is not known as a theologian. The theological foundations for his writing are found elsewhere – in the works of N T Wright. Indeed, Tom Wright's warm commendation of *The Lost Message of Jesus* appears on the front cover.

Liam Goligher has provided a brief and readable response to *The Lost Message* in his recent book *The Jesus Gospel: recovering the lost message* (Authentic Media, 2006). His introduction explains that Chalke's theology is nothing more or less than the reappearance of Modernist theology which has been so influential through the 20th century. We can have some sympathy with Chalke's motivation in writing as he does; he is trying to connect with needy, suffering, hurting people, and wants to emphasise the love, care and compassion in the ministry of Christ. But as Goligher demonstrates so clearly, in playing down the importance of sin and the need for personal salvation from its guilt and power, Chalke has sadly erased the heart of the Christian message.

Goligher retraces the Bible's lost message. He begins, refreshingly, with John 17 and the eternal counsels of the Father and the Son in planning the salvation

of the world. Then he takes us through the plot-line of the Bible, starting at the beginning of Genesis to show the central problem of sin and the need for sacrifice and salvation. He points us to the Garden of Eden, and shows the issues involved in the Fall. Then there is a chapter showing the corruption of humanity at the time of the flood, and the need for divine judgment; the ark is given as a picture of Christ the way of salvation. In the same way at the time of the Exodus the wrath of God was clearly evident against the Egyptians, and the Passover Lamb had to be sacrificed to save the firstborn Israelite sons from death. The Day of Atonement is a graphic picture of the need for the removal of sin. This is accomplished both by the washing with blood, and by the banishment of the scapegoat who bears the sins of the people (pre-figuring the desolation of Christ on the Cross).. Psalm 51 gives a portrayal of the reality of sin and guilt, and the need for repentance and forgiveness. Then Isaiah 53 is expounded, showing the divine Servant appearing as our substitute to pay the price for our sins.

Having taken us through some of the types of the Old Testament, Goligher then describes the Cross and shows how it is the fulfilment of all that has gone before. He reminds us of the darkness, the anguish, the cry of desolation all speaking of the terrors of hell. Then the curtain is torn in two, the victory is won and the entrance into God's presence is opened. The message of the Cross is expounded from the early chapters of Romans.

In all of this we are provided with a whole biblical theology in short compass. But we are not left simply with a 'correct understanding' of the message of Jesus. We are reminded why it is so tempting for Chalke, and others, to move away from this central focus on sin, judgment and salvation. Evangelism is hard work, precisely because of the depravity of the human heart. The message of sin and judgment is not popular. If we want to reach out to people, it is much easier to remain in the realm of social action alone. But true Christian witness, while committed to acts of love and mercy, must not, cannot, lose its central message. For our God is not only love but also light and wrath against sin. This book is highly commended.

A more substantial and rigorous work of theology has also now appeared in response to Steve Chalke, written by three men from Oak Hill College, London. It is *Pierced for our Transgressions* (Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, Andrew Sach, IVP, 2007, 372pp), which includes a foreword by John Piper. In the opening chapter there is reference to some of the Modernist works of the early part of the last century and beyond as well as a range of titles from the last 20 years, a number of them from professing evangelicals. But in the first half of the book the primary concern is to build a positive case for penal substitution. Key incidents in the Bible story-line which depict penal substitution are examined: the Passover, the Day of Atonement, Isaiah 53, then



American troops of the 28th Infantry Division march down the Champs Elysees <<http://www.archives.gov/research/ww2/photos/images/ww2-105.jpg>>, Paris, in the 'Victory' Parade Poinsett, August 29, 1944.

National Archives, world WAR II, France, photo no. 105. *See editorial with regard to the two world wars.*

texts from Mark, John, Romans, Galatians and 1 Peter. There is a broad overview of the Bible themes of creation, sin, death, judgment and redemption. And there is a brief historical survey of theologians and leaders throughout the ages of Christian history showing their adherence to this doctrine. There is also concern for pastoral application: without the doctrine of penal substitution, how can we know or understand the love of God? How can we be assured of God's truthfulness, unless we see that he is faithful to both his grace and his justice and fulfils both his warnings of judgment and promises of salvation? Indeed, how can we have any realistic grasp of sin and justice at all?

In the second half of the book the authors engage directly with those who hold a different view. 115 pages are devoted to responses to a series of questions and criticisms of penal substitution, such as 'Penal Substitution is not the only, or central model of the atonement'; 'It is the product of human culture, or relies on concepts that are outdated and misunderstood'; 'It contradicts the love of God,' etc.

Our desire in such controversies is not just to refute unbiblical and unhelpful ideas, but in responding to error to grow in our own understanding of the truth. This is certainly the case here. In answering each argument and challenge, we are stimulated to reconsider our response, and so our appreciation of the Cross is deepened and our understanding sharpened. It is worth highlighting the brief appendix: a personal note to preachers. The concern in these few pages is with

our sermon illustrations of penal substitution. If we use unhelpful or unfaithful illustrations we end up confusing rather than clarifying biblical truth, and very often our detractors pick up on such illustrations to draw caricatures of the position we are seeking to portray. For example, the illustration of the judge who passes sentence and then comes down into the dock to pay the fine is actually unjust. The story from *Bridge over the River Kwai* of the soldier who gives up his life on behalf of his compatriots to save them from death for a non-existent crime is a demonstration of self-sacrifice but also of vindictive, cruel and unjust prison guards rather than a wise, loving and just Father. The awful illustration of the signalman who throws the switch to save the people on the runaway train, while crushing his wayward son in the gears, is indeed a caricature of the Father's justice being exacted from a willing Son. We are encouraged, therefore, to use illustrations only when they accurately portray the particular point we are emphasising at the time.

NT Wright has already written a sharp riposte to this book. It is most easily found on the web by following the link from www.piercedforourtransgressions.com on 'News and Articles'. First of all Wright protests that he (and Steve Chalke) have been both misunderstood and misrepresented. Of course they both believe wholeheartedly in the doctrine of penal substitution! Indeed, Wright would have us believe that he is a leading advocate of this position. But then he defines penal substitution in a way which is unrecognisable to most of us. He endorses Steve Chalke's statement: 'Just as a lightning-conductor soaks up powerful and destructive bolts of electricity, so Jesus, as he hung on that Cross, soaked up all the forces of hate, rejection, pain and alienation all around him' (*The Lost Message of Jesus* page 179). In other words Wright believes in a doctrine of penal substitution that represents Jesus as bearing in his body the forces of sin and evil and thus overcoming them. This is to say that Jesus bore the brunt of sin; that is very different from saying that Jesus bore the wrath of God against sin. Wright begins to argue that there are a number of different versions of penal substitution. But actually Wright's position sounds much more like a Christus Victor model and he admits later on in the same article that this is the view that he prefers. As he says, 'That is why, though I have argued here and in many other places for something that can be called "penal substitution", I regard the "Christus Victor" theme as the overarching one within which substitution makes its proper point....' So perhaps Wright is not a great champion of penal substitution after all.

This debate will doubtless run and run. Further lines of argument can be found from the website referred to above. But its importance is far from academic. At stake here is the gospel itself, with the questions, Why did Jesus die? What was achieved on the Cross? What fundamental problem was solved by Christ's death? or even, more simply, How can I be saved? If this controversy drives us to greater clarity in our understanding, and more faithfulness and passion in our preaching, then it will have borne good fruit.

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