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Websites www.reformation-today.org
The editor's personal website is <http://www.errollhulse.com>
<http://africanpastorsconference.com>



Heritage Baptist Church, Owensboro, Kentucky, is referred to in the editorial and her ministries described in the article Encouragement from Owensboro.



Group photo taken at the African Pastors' Conference in Barberton, South Africa, see News, page 8.

Front cover picture – Students from Back to the Bible College, near Barberton, South Africa, participated in the recent African Pastors' Conference. The Makhonjwa mountains can be seen in the background. For report see News, page 8.

Editorial

During the discussion time at the Banner of Truth Leicester Conference for ministers in May Geoff Thomas posed this question: Why, he asked, did the Reformed movement which was flying high in the 1970s lose its momentum?

One answer given was the distraction of the charismatic movement. Attracted by 'higher' and far more exciting forms of worship and by the claim of signs, wonders and miracles (which seldom if ever eventuate) droves of young people moved away from the Reformed churches. Westminster Chapel, London, now a New Frontiers Church, is one example of what took place.

Failure to face the challenge of contemporaneity (the worship wars) led to the loss of many young people and families. Today the situation in the UK is worse than ever with many small Reformed ageing churches in decline and heading toward closure. The main reason is the failure to distinguish between essential truths, important truths and phantom truths. Phantom truths refer to matters which cannot be supported by Scripture and may refer such things as dress codes, musical instruments, flower arrangements, architecture, or the order of a worship service. Galatians chapter one tells us that we must not add anything to justification by faith alone but some churches place their Bible version or their hymn book on the same level as justification by faith. Ray Evans wrote an excellent article on Biblical Principles for Contemporary Worship (RT 183). His main headings are Regulation, Freedom, Tolerance and Pragmatism. A further extremely relevant and helpful article came from Pastor Mark Troughton of York titled 'Christian Misanthropy' (RT 208) in which he discussed the tension in organising services when our aim is to be God-centred but also to keep things simple in our desire to reach lost people. A misanthropist is someone who basically does not like people and therefore does not care about the needs or tastes of others.

In the discussion at Leicester Presbyterian minister Ted Donnelly of Ulster suggested that the factor of disunity contributed to the loss of momentum

in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In the USA Reformed Baptists divided over authoritarianism. That division weakened the Reformed cause. Lack of initiatives in evangelism, church planting and missionary enterprise also contributed to the failure to maintain momentum. Collin Hansen's recent book *Young, Restless, Reformed* documents the more recent resurgence of the Reformed faith in the USA (see review in RT 226). His book demonstrates that under God Reformed truth can revive powerfully and rapidly. A handful of dynamic leaders can be used to bring about a great change in a short time. This reality surely must be fuel for our prayers.

It is difficult to assess the health of the churches because so many factors are involved.

The slowdown in the late 1970s and 1980s has to be balanced with new works that sprang up at that time. One example is Mt Zion Church in Pensacola, a small Reformed church which has made a worldwide impact through printing and distributing Reformed literature. We could point to Reformed churches all over the UK which have grown since the early 1980s. The same is true of the USA. The article 'Encouragement from Owensboro' demonstrates that from that time of alleged slowdown some churches began to grow in numbers and in the case of Owensboro from about 20 to 350. Some of these churches have exercised a church planting ministry which is certainly the case at Owensboro.

The article on Owensboro concludes with a reference to the 1,300 member Reformed Baptist church in the Dominican Republic. Since the 1980s the Reformed Baptist cause has grown significantly in some countries such as Zambia, South Africa and Kenya.

Two means of grace need to be in our sights. The first is that wherever Reformed pastors are gathering regularly, say monthly, they should engage in a concert of prayer for revival and also be open to combining resources for evangelistic opportunities. The second means of grace is networking. We need to keep in close communication with churches abroad where there is successful reformation or where there is revival. We should then pray that the wind of the Spirit filling their sails will blow for us as well.

My Experience of Revival

By Jay Baker

The revival described here is something I witnessed as pastor in Dickenson, Texas. Dickenson is located about half way between Houston and Galveston. It was the largest unincorporated town in Texas, having a large Italian population. After the authorities had cleaned up the red light district and criminal elements of Galveston, Texas, some of them moved north to Dickenson. An old barber told me he had cut the hair of Machine-gun Kelly and Al Capone. After noticing the predominance of luxury cars parked in front of a mansion on the bayou I was told that it was a meeting of gangsters. I soon began to realise the reason for the spiritual oppression that I was experiencing for the first time in my ministry. Newcomers to town had shared the same feelings of oppression that I was experiencing. This was confirmation to me that we were involved in a great spiritual battle. Many times I would be awakened in the middle of the night with an eerie feeling.

I was called to be the pastor of First Baptist Church, Dickenson in 1969. This was a large church with about fourteen deacons and no elders and composed of a widely diverse membership. There were Ph.D. scientists, managers, engineers, a doctor to the astronauts and people in many other walks of life. During the interim period the church had appointed an administrator until a pastor could be called. He happened to be one of the administrators of the great Lunar Space Project. While serving in this capacity he drew up a 'Book of Procedures, Rules and Regulations'. This was contained in a blue loose-leaf notebook and placed in the church office to be followed by everyone as a rule book for 'running a church'.

Upon my arrival the administrator informed me that beginning on Monday he had lined up all the committees in the church to meet with me. This schedule was planned to begin immediately after my first Sunday in the pulpit. There were to be eight consecutive meetings. I was informed of this prior to the administrator going into the hospital for minor surgery. He had expressed to me that he believed there was something wrong in the church but he didn't know what it was.

At these meetings each member came forward and introduced himself or herself. The meetings began without prayer. I was never questioned about anything or asked to participate. I sat there feeling like an outsider listening to nothing of any importance. These meetings were protracted and one lasted to

almost midnight. At this time I learned something very interesting about those engineers. They could tell you five different ways to walk through a door, each having an opinion as to the best way to do it! Finally at the last meeting after about fifteen minutes I requested to speak. I reminded them that I had met with committees night after night and had listened to everything they had to say but not once had anyone mentioned what God wanted. There had been no seeking his face or asking for his guidance or wisdom. It was about what everyone thought and each one's opinions and all of them were different. I was beginning to wonder if anything could be accomplished in this place.

When I visited the hospital to visit the administrator I told him I had found the problem in the church. He was very surprised and immediately asked, "What is it?" I replied, "you have left God out. You have been running the church by the Blue Book of Rules instead of by God's Book the Bible. The church cannot be run like the Lunar Laboratory. It is a spiritual organism and must be sustained and nurtured by spiritual means. The Lord is its head and the Holy Spirit indwells her." Probably the greatest problem in many churches is unconverted leaders, no saving gospel and consequently no spiritual power.

What to do?

What was I to do? Should an appeal be made to the intellectual group? Should the church be reorganized? I had devoted my life to the study of Scripture and that was the resource in this hour of need. I prayed to God for a message and pleaded for the unction to preach it. I was never ashamed to be called a preacher. That is what God had called me to do. So I began to preach five times a week. It was a lonely experience. Each time I stepped into the pulpit it seemed like someone shut the door behind me and I felt shut up in a cage on my own. Perhaps this is how Jeremiah felt when he faced hostile resistance. Nevertheless God's Word was in his heart like a burning fire shut up in his bones (Jer 20:9). I sensed hostile resistance to my preaching. This was something I had never experienced in a church before. It lasted for eighteen months. I continued to immerse myself in study of the Scriptures. The congregation was subject to Bible exposition and particularly to practical application week after week. I sought to combine sound doctrinal content with gospel proclamation so that the way of salvation was clear and urgent with no blurring of the issues of eternal hell and eternal life and the absolute necessity of repentance from sin and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The end to this period of tension came suddenly and unexpectedly after a Wednesday evening service. While standing at the door greeting people I heard someone crying. I stepped outside to find our Sunday School Superintendent who was a deacon and the chairman of the pulpit committee weeping. I asked him what was wrong and he said he had never been exposed

to the preaching and teaching of God's Word as he had over the last eighteen months. We went to my study to talk and read the Scriptures. That night he knelt and cried out to God for mercy and forgiveness. For the next month and beyond people were calling on the Lord and being saved. My phone would ring at all hours of the night. Most of the conversions were those of the leaders of the church. One lady tried to convince a friend of hers that she was merely having an emotional problem and that she was already saved but this woman assured her this was the awakening work of salvation in her soul.

From that time onwards when I entered the pulpit the feeling of being in a cage was removed. I no longer felt surrounded by opposition. The battle with hostile resistance ceased. I experienced liberty in every service. This was a spiritual awakening in the church. Some term it a visitation of the Holy Spirit. No gimmicks were used. The Holy Spirit breathed on that assembly. What a joy to preach the wonderful message of grace and witness the eagerness of people to feed on the Word of God and grow in grace and knowledge. The Wednesday evening services were well attended as were the Sunday morning services. People began to buy and study expository books and gather Reformed libraries. A children's doctrinal class was started. Parents experienced an added incentive to study because the children asked them the meaning of words such as justification and sanctification and the immutability of God.

What revival is not

In his book *Revival and Revivalism*² Iain H Murray traces out and analyses the transition from the old revivals to a different ethos of revivalism in which methods are used to manipulate hearers to make decisions. Murray writes: 'All awakenings begin with the return of a profound conviction of sin. From attitudes of indifference, or of cold religious formality, many are suddenly brought by the hearing of truth to a concern so strong that it may even be accompanied by temporary physical collapse.'³ This conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit and cannot be created by human organisation.

Years ago there was a statement in an article in *Reformation Today* that declared that we in America announce revivals ahead of time. At first I thought, yes, but how else would the people know we were having one? I always announced when we were going to have a revival. However as I began to think about this statement I saw the fallacy of it. Moreover I had never really witnessed a revival nor had I ever met anyone who had. I heard a report in which it was claimed that there were 600 conversions in a week-long 'revival'. But that was a statistic reporting decisions. In that particular instance a year later the attendance was below what it was a year before the so-called revival.

1. Revival is not organising evangelistic meetings. In an effort to reach modern day man the church has compromised its message. Sadly so often the message today is man-centred. The Bible is God-centred. The Bible unfolds the revelation of God and his attributes, particularly holiness. He deals with the subject of sin. God glorifies himself in creating order out of the chaos caused by sin.
2. Revival is not the excitement stirred up by Neo-Pentecostalism. Many are deceived in thinking that if there are large crowds and claims of healing and driving out demons that is revival. On closer scrutiny we find no preaching about sin and repentance and where there is no repentance from sin there is no revival.
3. Revival is not entertainment on a large scale. In some areas there are enormous efforts to organise seeker-friendly services with music on a grand scale. This can be very impressive but the same criterion applies as above. Where there is no repentance from sin there is no revival.
4. Revival is not the prosperity gospel. Just 200 miles from where I live in San Antonio, in Houston, Texas, is Lakewood Church. This church boasts an average week-end attendance of 43,500 which is double that of the next largest church in the USA.⁴ The leader Osteen offers health, wealth, prosperity, success and good self-image. The unpleasant things like sin, guilt, the coming judgement and eternal hell are avoided

The character of revival

Our experience at Dickenson was the discovery of the character of God. Many know little of the attributes of God. A W Pink expressed it like this, 'The God of the average pulpit no more resembles the God of the Bible than the dim flicker of a candle resembles the heat and light of the noon day sun.'

At Dickenson the Holy Spirit descended so we experienced the felt presence of God in coming to terms with the great truths of Scripture. Hearers sensed aloneness before the living God. Each one realised that he or she has been called by name. Eternity was overwhelmingly present. God's Word was powerful like a two-edged sword. There was a felt sense of the majesty and the absolute sovereignty and holiness of God. Together with this was the realisation of sinful helplessness combined with repentance. The words of Augustus Toplady's hymn Rock of Ages expresses this well:

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

Seeking revival

Most revivals have their inception in prayer. ‘And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son’ (Zech 12:10). The wisdom of this is clear. Prayer in this way brings God’s people to focus on the greatness of their need and to concentrate on the source of the blessing which is the Lord, the giver of all life. In the outcome the glory is then ascribed to him and not to man. But this way of prevailing prayer is not always the way of revival. Often God’s people are so weak that they are destitute of the energy to concentrate on prevailing prayer.

In his book *Pentecost Today* Iain Murray cites a number of instances of revival in which prior to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit prayer had dried up.⁵ James Robe, minister of Kilsyth, Scotland, at the time of revival in 1742 testified that ‘societies for prayer came gradually to nothing’ and were given up. The Rev Henry Davis, President of Hamilton College, New York, and a participant in the Second Great Awakening which began in 1798, noted: ‘I have heard no believers saying that they knew from their freedom or enlargement in prayer that there was about to be a revival.’ And a minister who was in the midst of the great Ulster awakening of 1859 wrote: ‘I knew that there were always a few (very few, I feared) praying persons in the several congregations of the neighborhood and that there were always attempts to keep up prayer meetings in my own; but, up to the very week of the bursting forth of the revival, there appeared no general desire nor felt need for such a thing.’

These examples remind us of the immensity of God’s grace. He rescues his people when their strength is gone and revives them when they are weak and feeble in prayer. These examples should renew our faith in the reality of revival.

¹ Revival is defined in different ways. Raymond C Ortlund Jr. in his book *Revival Sent From God*, IVP, 2000, describes revival as, 1. God comes down to us, 2. God reinvigorates us, 3. God heals us, 4. God pours his Spirit upon us, 5. God raises us up, 6. God restores us. What we experienced at Dickenson fulfilled these criteria. Iain Murray in his book *Pentecost Today* (Banner of Truth, 1998) begins with a chapter, How Do We Understand ‘Revival’? Likewise Erroll Hulse commences his book *Give Him No Rest*, Evangelical Press, 2006, with a study of the nature of revival.

² Iain Murray, *Revival and Revivalism - The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750 - 1858*, Banner of Truth, 1994.

³ *ibid* page 163.

⁴ <http://churchrelevance.com/top/100-largest-churches-in-america-of-2008>

⁵ Iain Murray, *Pentecost Today*, Banner of Truth, 1998 page 67.

News



Pastors Kabwe Kabwe and Conrad Mbewe

South Africa

135 conferees from the area around Barberton and from Swaziland registered for this two-day conference for pastors. Thirty came from Back to the Bible Training College. A number of these are pastors. The theme of the conference was 'Marks of a Healthy Church'. Pastor Kabwe handled the need to ensure regenerate membership, faithfulness to church discipline, a biblically qualified and working leadership, and a commitment to the work of missions. I handled the need to ensure biblically regulated worship, commitment to biblical preaching, and the need to ensure biblical dispute resolution. I also presented a biographical sketch on the life of William Carey, 'the father of modern missions'.

The chief organizer of this conference is Karl Peterson, an American missionary living and ministering as pastor of a Baptist church in Barberton. He is a very committed conference organizer and is also involved in organizing the annual FIEL Conference in Nampula, Mozambique, together with Dr Charles Woodrow. Erroll Hulse, who is part of the organizing team of all the African Pastors' Conferences, came from the UK to lend his support to this conference. His indefatigable labours in ensuring that publishers give a most generous discount on books that are sold at these conferences ensure that pastors and church leaders go back home with these books to help them in their ministry. Without this discount most of the pastors who attend these conferences would only



The book room

look wistfully at these priceless ministry tools on the book tables because most of them are too poor to purchase them at their real market value.

These African Pastors' Conferences are growing both in attendance and in number. Six of them were held all over South Africa last January, where Pastors Choolwe Mwetwa and Raymond Zulu were the main preachers. One took place in Botswana and one in Zimbabwe last year, where Pastors Ronald Kalifungwa and Isaac Makashinyi were among the main preachers. The Swazi pastors are urging that one be organised in their country. Enquiries have also been received from Tanzania. These conferences are a rare opportunity to strengthen biblical Christianity among African pastors who are vulnerable to false doctrines simply because they have not been equipped with the tools of knowledge from the great arsenal of Church history and the advantages of robust expository doctrinal preaching. I am grateful to God for the opportunity to

participate in these conferences (APCs) and commend them to you for your prayers. *Conrad Mbewe*

Mozambique

The Tenth FIEL conference for pastors and church leaders took place during the second week of June. 312 registered. The theme was 'The Christian Family'. The preaching by both Wayne Mack and a Brazilian Presbyterian named Jaime Marcelino was outstanding. The impact was greater than any conference to date, though very difficult to organise. In the 2001 conference the turkeys procured for the meals escaped and were last seen fleeing along one of the streets of Nampula. Since then they may well have multiplied in the hill country round Nampula. Goats were bought to take their place. This time we were caught off guard on a number of items, but thankfully the pastors never knew about it and were blissfully unaware of the drama behind the scenes. Noteworthy is the very high quality of pastors that attended.

A Tribute to Willis Metcalfe



Willis Metcalfe

Willis Metcalfe a director of both *Evangelical Press* and *Evangelical Times*, went to be with the Lord on 8 June.

Converted to Christ as a twelve-year-old boy in the Methodist chapel at Snape near Bedale, he later undertook evangelistic training at Cliff College, Derbyshire, in 1947-48. He prepared for missionary work in China, but this was thwarted firstly by ill health and secondly by the Communist takeover of 1949.

Willis returned to the family occupation of farming in Yorkshire over the next 60 years. He had a deep interest in the work of Christ's kingdom in many countries. He served as a Methodist local preacher, until seceding from Methodism in 1964 over the denomination's unbiblical ecumenism. He became a founder member of Zion Evangelical Church in Ripon in 1965.

Willis was one of the first directors of *Evangelical Press* (www.epbooks.org), along with Robin Bird its founder; and an early director of *Evangelical Times* (www.evangelicalpress.org), which had been founded in 1967 by Dr Peter Masters. His support and vision for these publishing works, especially in association with the late Bill Clark, helped to spearhead the propagation of the Reformed faith across many parts of the world, and latterly into China itself.

Willis' zeal for the Lord of hosts continued to the end. He was a prime mover behind the starting of Truth in Science, an educational organisation pressing for scientific integrity in the teaching of origins (www.truthinscience.org.uk) in UK schools and colleges.

For many years much of what has been taught in school science lessons about the origin of the living world has been dogmatic and imbalanced. The theory of Darwinian evolution has been presented as scientifically uncontroversial and as the only credible explanation of origins. Nevertheless, you only have to read recent editions of academic and popular science journals to realise that there is a battle raging over this very issue. Most popular school textbooks present Darwinism as the only scientific theory of origins and give little coverage to alternative theories, usually misrepresenting them.

Willis' last short illness from cancer was characterised by the same rejoicing in the grace of God that had adorned his life. All who knew Willis knew that his Christian profession was undergirded by an immensely inspiring, rock-like trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. We remember in prayer his wife Anne and his immediate and wider family in their sad loss. *Roger Fay*

The Huguenots – a summary

Frederick Hodgson

The western world seems to be dominated by secularism. The continued story of the development of the French Reformed Church is relevant to us as France has been a predominantly secular country since about 1800. Previous issues of *Reformation Today* have described how France was at one time the scene of one of the most remarkable revivals in history. Some scholars have suggested that up to 40% of the population were converted believers in the middle of the sixteenth century. Geneva in French-speaking Switzerland has had a profound influence not only in France but in the world.

RT221 described the exciting revival and attempts at reformation in Meaux during the 1520s. It took place during the reign of Francis I, a man who was anxious to foster culture in France. The Sorbonne, a fortress for the philosophy of the day, was violently opposed to the Reformation at Meaux, reminding us that Christianity and civilisation are not to be equated. The story of the Reformation in France is full of Spirit-sent revival, love of Scripture, faith, courage and intense suffering. This was the background from which Calvin's *Institutes* came to be written. RT222 tells the story of the origin of this work that had such a profound influence but also describes the 'Night of the Placards' and the awful sequel to that.

Calvin was used to establish a strong, biblically grounded church in Geneva. He followed that with the training of courageous missionary pastors to plant

churches in France. Many of these were martyred for their faithful labours. RT223 tells the story of the struggle to secure the work in Geneva, making the evangelisation of France possible. RT224 recounts the amazing revival that occurred in France between 1555 and 1562. The explosive growth of the churches came about in spite of the white-hot fury of the French throne, which seemed helpless to stop the God-sent revival.

Sadly the French believers (Huguenots) felt obliged to take up arms to defend themselves against the violent opposition they experienced. From that time onwards the flowing tide of conversions ceased. Instead of principally fighting with spiritual weapons against the forces of darkness, the Church was drawn into confidence in politicians. This confidence was misplaced and the treacherous Catherine de Medici drew the leading Protestants into a trap on the Night of St. Bartholomew. This slaughter of the Huguenots is described in RT225. Amazingly this did not destroy the Church. RT226 tells the story of the preservation of the Church up to the Treaty of Nantes in 1598. This was signed by Henry IV, who was brought up in a Protestant home but for pragmatic reasons abjured his faith and embraced Roman Catholicism.

After the death of Henry IV the prospects were bleak that Evangelicals should enjoy continued peace in France.

The story continues overleaf.

What ever happened to the Huguenots?

The death of Henry IV in 1610 left the Huguenots defensively entrenched in the south and west of France. It also left them apprehensive about their future. They remembered the cruel scheming of Catherine de Medici when she was left as regent during the reign of the young King Charles IX. Their apprehension resulted from their painful recollection of the horrors of the St Bartholomew's massacres. It was intensified by the realisation that a regent from the house of Medici again led France. This was because the new king, Louis XIII, was only eight and a half years old when he commenced his reign upon the assassination of his father. In reality it was his mother Maria de Medici who ruled. Wylie wrote that she lacked the talent of Catherine but 'she possessed all her treachery, bigotry, and baseness. She was a profound believer in witchcraft, and guided the vessel of the State by her astrological calculations.' She also sought advice from the Spanish ambassador, the Pope's nuncio and from Concini, a man from her native city of Florence. Concini married the queen's lady-in-waiting, often known as Leonora Galigaï, and was elevated to become Duke of Ancre along with many other honours.

Initially the foreign policy of Louis XIII, or rather of Maria de Medici, who held the real power, was to reverse that of Henry IV. This king had forged alliances with the northern Protestant countries of Europe with the aim of humbling the Spanish and Austrian monarchs. Maria, to the alarm of the Huguenots, cultivated stronger friendships with these countries. These relationships were cemented by carefully chosen marriages. Louis XIII was married to Anne of Austria, daughter

of the Spanish king, Philip III. The other marriage was that of Princess Elizabeth, the king's sister, to the Spanish prince who became Philip IV. Both marriages took place in 1615.

From the beginning of his reign Catholic priests encouraged the government in gradually taking away the provisions made by the Edict of Nantes. The rights of opening schools and Protestant ministers entering hospitals to comfort the sick were removed, without repealing the Edict as a whole. Any form of check on the king's power was taken away after the States-General or parliament met for the last time in 1614. (It was not to meet again before 1789, the year of the French Revolution.)

Meanwhile Louis had become impatient with the control of Maria and her advisor Concini. In 1617, under the influence of Charles de Luynes, he had Concini assassinated, his wife Galigaï executed as an accused witch and Maria consigned to Blois Castle, as Louis flexed his muscles. Concini had a private army of 7000 men and was regarded as a threat to the king.

Navarre takes the beginning of the storm

During this year the Huguenots had a great reason to be dismayed. Lower Navarre and Béarn had been part of the territory of Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, the mother of Henry IV. When Henry became king of France these territories had become part of France. Jeanne d'Albret had encouraged the Reformation in her lands and at least 67% of their inhabitants had become Protestant. Louis XIII insisted that all the

people of this area follow his Catholic religion. He insisted that all ecclesiastical property previously belonging to the Roman Catholic clergy be restored to the former owners despite its having been in Protestant control for over 50 years and used for schools and colleges for the people. Arnoux, a Jesuit priest, encouraged his demands. An army was sent to subjugate the people, with Louis XIII at its head. This army was unscrupulous in the techniques used to bring the people to submit to the wishes of Louis. The doors of the churches were broken open and Protestant books burned, the people were compelled to kneel as the 'host' was paraded in front of them. The citizens of Béarn were driven to attend the Roman Catholic mass by cudgel and sabre.

Armed response to oppression

Perhaps surprisingly the Protestants were slow to respond to further gradual deterioration in their affairs. In 1621, however, a political assembly met in La Rochelle and the Protestant part of France was divided into eight departments, with a governor over each. He was given the power to raise taxes, employ soldiers and make war if necessary. There was a reluctance to go to war because of the miseries that France had already experienced from the civil wars up to the reign of Henry IV. However, arms had to be taken up in self-defence as a royal army was already on its way, having crossed the Loire.

This army captured the Castle of Saumur, where the godly governor Duplessis-Mornay lived. Louis and his army achieved this by craft rather than force of arms. After the governor allowed them peaceful entry he was offered a huge sum of money and honours but he rejected them with the words, 'I cannot in conscience or in honour sell the liberty and security of others.'

St Jean d'Angely was the next Protestant stronghold to receive the attention of the Royalists. The defenders were hard pressed by Royalist guns that rained shot onto them like hail. However, they were strengthened in their resolve to keep the enemy at bay by the bravery of a Scottish minister, John Welsh, who exhorted them to defend the city to the last. He led by example of great courage in repelling the attackers. In the end the besiegers gave favourable terms to the citizens and peace was given.

The Royalists were encouraged in their aggressive assault on Montauban by a mystic monk from Bohemia with a reputation for miracle working who prophesied that the city would fall on the firing of the four hundredth gun on the city. The prophecy came to nothing and after a siege of about ten weeks; the tearful king withdrew his army from the Psalm-singing citizens. Sadly a casualty of this siege was the godly minister Daniel Chamier, writer of significant books that encouraged reformation in France. (The Chamiers were leading Huguenots and their contribution to public life in many countries during succeeding centuries is well described in the website www.chamier-family.org).

The king finally turned his army on Montpellier, which capitulated. As a result of only mixed success the king signed a peace treaty in 1621, which confirmed the Treaty of Nantes, but left the Protestants weaker than before. Only two towns were left in the hands of the Protestants. These were Montauban and La Rochelle, the latter remaining their chief stronghold. Essentially the Huguenots were left as a nation within a nation.

The rise of Cardinal Richelieu

Louis XIII was not a strong king in and of himself, but initially Charles de Luynes

bolstered his power and then much more significantly after 1524 the former advisor to Maria, the Bishop of Luçon, a man of great energy, aptitude and astuteness came to the fore. He is better known by the name Cardinal Richelieu, 'famed' by Alexandre Dumas père in his novel *The Three Musketeers*. This powerful politician dominated the reign of Louis XIII and the policies of his son Louis XIV through his disciple Cardinal Mazarin.

There were three clear strands of policy that Richelieu had. Firstly he aimed to make the throne strong, but dominated by himself. Secondly he wished to subdue the nobility and thirdly and perhaps surprisingly his foreign policy was that of Henry IV. This involved the humiliation of the Spanish and Austrians.

The fall of La Rochelle

The remaining political power of the Huguenots was the first to receive his attention. Their being a state within a state was completely at odds with his policy of establishing a country under the complete dominion of an autocratic throne. La Rochelle was the stronghold of the Huguenots and it was on La Rochelle that Richelieu's attention was focussed.

The French fleet was dispatched to La Rochelle in 1625 and was completely victorious over the Huguenot force, but Richelieu's attention was distracted by a plot to end his life, based in Paris. He proceeded to crush this opposition and then turned again to La Rochelle with an enormous well-armed navy and army in 1627. The English Puritans wanted to aid the brave citizens of La Rochelle, whom they regarded as brethren in Christ, but were frustrated by the intrigues of Charles I and his French wife Henrietta. The large army of the English Puritans never reached La Rochelle and Jean Guiton, the

courageous, earnest Protestant mayor of this city and its citizens were left hemmed in by strong land forces and a naval blockade. They were determined on resisting this siege to the last man.

The following year the Duke of Soubise, the military commander of La Rochelle managed to get the support of an English squadron of ships and marines. This was commanded by the Duke of Buckingham, but this relieving force was unable to achieve very much as there was a series of blunders and accidents that disappointed the hopes of the citizens of La Rochelle. Sadly this failed naval expedition merely suggested to Richelieu that the construction of a land barrage across the channel of water leading to La Rochelle would entirely cut off the supply route to the city.

The inevitable result of blocking the path of the supply ships in this way was that famine and death prevailed in La Rochelle. On occasions elderly women or children tried to escape and look for compassion in the soldiers surrounding the city. They were either strangled or forced back into the city by these merciless men. Wylie reported that the people were forced to eat garbage in the city and that many houses were full of the dead that no one had the strength to bury. Two thirds of the population died and only 150 fighting men were still alive when La Rochelle surrendered in October 1628 after fifteen months of terrible suffering.

During this time the Protestants of the south and west of France simply looked on and no help was given despite the efforts of the Duke of Rohan to enlist their support. His words fell on deaf ears and cold hearts. The Roman Catholic religion was again established in La Rochelle and Cardinal Richelieu himself conducted the first mass in the city.

Richelieu and the absolute monarchy

The Huguenots had been crushed as a military and political force, but were allowed to keep their lives. The Catholic nobles who had supported Richelieu against the Protestants then became victims of the Cardinal as he made war against them. The final result was that the power of Richelieu and Louis XIII became absolute in France. Only the Roman Catholic Church was allowed to share the power with the throne. The alliance of church and state dominated the people of France until the Revolution of 1789. Richelieu however was not content with the total subjection of France to his will. He now concentrated his war efforts on the Austrian Emperor, greatly weakening him during the Thirty Years' War which was fought between 1618-1648. This war, involving most of the states of Europe, led to the population of parts of Germany being reduced by 50%.

The peaceful pursuits of the Huguenots

Meanwhile the energy and inventiveness of the Huguenots were directed into peaceful pursuits. Richelieu allowed their industry, agriculture and trade to prosper and this had the effect of increasing the power and prestige of France. The paper, silk, wool and iron industries prospered. The Huguenots were trusted in trade and were renowned for their honesty. They travelled widely and learned wider skills and knowledge with the result that their goods and manufacturing methods improved. They also worked for more days in the year than their Catholic countrymen who observed more feast days. Wylie pointed out that the Huguenots worked about 310 days in the year whereas their Catholic contemporaries would typically only work 260 days.

Protestants became foremost as physicians, lawyers, writers and orators.

The writings of Pierre Dumoulin were likened by some to Calvin. The Huguenots valued preaching and the sermon was the central part of their services. Protestant preachers became popular and their eloquence drew many to Protestant services. Catholics became alarmed at the drawing power of this preaching and responded by encouraging their own preachers who were renowned for their oratorical powers. Foremost among these were Bossuet, Massillon, Clécher and Bourdaloue. The difference between the Protestant preachers and the Catholic preachers was that the former concentrated on the truths rather than on the words that were uttered.

Protestants were allowed to meet in their synods, but special permission had to be sought and was given with difficulty. As time went on the synods were allowed to meet less and less frequently. The royal commissioner visited the synods and he usually spoke with proud, imperious tones, bringing an 'unwelcome message'.

Mixed theology of Protestant seminaries

The Huguenots had four seminaries during this period. The seminary at Montauban was Calvinistic and had eminent teachers including Daniel Chamier, previously referred to as being a victim of the siege at this town in 1621. Sadly the seminary at Saumur slowly devolved from being Calvinistic to Arminian in its teachings. Sedan, associated with the Scottish Reformer Andrew Melville, was purer in its doctrine and Pierre Dumoulin (1563-1658) was one of its professors. He had previously exerted much influence for good throughout France as a pastor in Paris, but the Jesuits had hounded him from there. However, this pious Christian leader worked with great energy and completed seventy-three books. He died in old age and as his death approached, he

spoke of it as 'that lovely messenger that would bring him to see his God, after whom he had so long aspired'. Sadly another teacher there, Daniel Tilenius (Tilène), became the first person in the French church to teach ideas evolved from Arminius. His views gradually pervaded the French Reformed Church. Nîmes was a less well-known seminary, but included the distinguished scholar Samuel Petit who had a great command of Hebrew which he put to good use, on one occasion being able to rebuke an astonished Jewish rabbi in his own tongue as he attacked Christianity.

International influence of Huguenot pastors

In addition to the lecturers in the seminaries there were other eminent men of renown, piety and learning who exercised a pastoral ministry in France and wrote valuable books. One of these was André Rivet (1595-1650). He started as a pastor in France before going to work in Leyden in Holland as a professor in 1620. His influence there was immense and he contributed a valuable commentary on the Psalms along with other works, such as an *Introduction to the Study of the Bible*. He and his son Frédéric were tutors to the princes of the House of Orange. The famous preacher Dredlincourt (1595-1669), pastor of Charenton, wrote practical works including *Consolations in Prospect of Death*, which was translated into several languages. Other eminent learned pastors included Aubertin, Basnage, Blondel, Bochart, Mestrezat and Daillé. The latter eventually ministered to French congregations in New England after he was forced to leave his native France. There is room for detailed study on these faithful, immensely gifted Frenchmen and their written works, but it is important to note that the influence of the Huguenots was not limited to Europe as they and

their descendants were dispersed to many different countries throughout the world.

The birth of Louis XIV

Louis XIII was a weak, inconsistent man and although he appeared to exercise great power, it was actually Richelieu who was the power behind the throne. Louis and his wife Anne of Austria remained childless for almost twenty-three years until their first son Louis-Dieudonné was born in 1638. Many regarded this as a miracle and Louis dedicated France to the Virgin Mary. Some thought that this was because he had besought her for the child. Whether this rumour were true or false, it provides some insight into prevailing religious superstitions of the time. The child became Louis XIV, an even greater autocrat than his father. He was renowned for his proud boast, later in his life when he said, 'The State, it is I.'

Civil war and the absolutism of Louis XIV

Louis XIV ascended the throne in 1643, just before his fifth birthday, upon the death of his father. Louis XIII and Richelieu died within a year of each other. Anne of Austria became regent, but the power behind the throne was transferred from Richelieu to Cardinal Mazarin. The latter continued the policies of Richelieu but squandered the national resources with the result that taxes were raised. Some nobles rebelled against the crown and the War of the Fronde followed. This civil war had the nobility fighting on both sides and sometimes nobles such as the Prince of Condé changed sides. The outcome was that the king came out on top and the opposing nobility was crushed. He became even more powerful than before. Altogether Louis XIV reigned for 72 years and was known by names such as Louis the Great and The Sun King. He received this latter title

because it was noticed that just as the planets go round the sun, people (especially ladies) revolved around him. His tutor Bishop Jacques-Béigne's teaching on the divine right of kings had the effect of raising his self-importance still further. (The English king, Charles I embraced the same teaching and he too regarded himself as accountable to none.) However, Louis was hard working and strong-willed and possessed a great capacity for mastering the affairs of state both within France and elsewhere in Europe.

His power grew because of Mazarin in the first instance. The latter, educated in the Jesuit college in Rome, was the effective leader of the nation until 1661. He and his predecessor Richelieu had humbled the Catholic Spanish-Austrian alliance. In the providence of God Catholic cardinals were used to weaken another Catholic country, all of which was used to enhance the cause of Protestantism! At the height of his power Mazarin died, leaving Louis XIV as absolute monarch with immense unopposed power in France and great power in Europe as a whole. During the Richelieu years, France had expanded its hold on Canada, and a Jesuit college had been built in Quebec as France pushed inland to Montreal. The mighty Louis did however run up an enormous debt by his engagement in war and by his licentious life-style. This debt and the resulting taxation were a contributory factor to the Revolution of 1789.

Crushing of Huguenots in France during reign of Louis XIV and the apostasy of some of them

One of his advisors, Michel le Tellier, influenced his decision to repeal the Edict of Nantes, which had been gradually evacuated of meaning from the time Louis XIII ascended the throne, but was left in place giving some protection to the

Huguenots. Louis was persuaded that the Huguenots weakened France and he began a series of measures to eradicate them. Commissioners were appointed to settle differences between Catholics and Protestants. Although supposedly consisting of a Protestant and a Catholic, they always ruled in favour of the latter. A banishment for life was applied to any who went into a Protestant church having previously had any connection to Catholicism or shown any inclination towards Catholicism. A priest and a magistrate were encouraged to visit any sick person and ask of them or demand of them that they abandon their faith and pray to the Virgin.

Children as young as seven were allowed to abandon their Protestantism and then their parents had to pay for them to live in a Roman Catholic home. Huguenot preachers were spied upon and if they spoke against Mariolatry or veneration of Catholic saints they would contravene the blasphemy laws. Huguenots were not allowed to sing Psalms if a Catholic procession were passing. They could not bury their dead during normal daytime hours. No more than ten mourners could follow a coffin. Their churches were demolished and parental rights denied. Many Huguenots fled from France. Others apostatised.

Examples of apostasy included Marshal Turenne. He renounced his Protestant faith in old age, but it was noteworthy to observe that he had earlier turned to ungodly behaviour. His downward path preceded that of other nobles and courtiers who firstly turned to immoral behaviour before renouncing their previously expressed evangelical faith. A factor in his spiritual downfall was a book by the Catholic Bossuet which tried to blur the difference between Catholicism and the Protestant faith.

Another notable example of apostasy from the faith was that of Joseph Saurin (1659-1737). He was the son of a Calvinist minister who entered the ministry himself, but was inclined to be argumentative and unstable. He would not accept the Calvinist doctrine of predestination even after he fled from France to Switzerland in 1685. After travelling to Holland, he was eventually allowed back into France and after conversations with the Roman Catholic Bishop Bossuet he converted to Catholicism. He had married a Swiss lady and eventually settled back in France. His intellectually inclined nature led him into an interest in mathematics and he befriended other leading mathematicians of the day, making important contributions to the development of the subject. It is noteworthy to see the downgrading of his theology eventually allowing him to accommodate Catholicism.

Further important Huguenot theologians and their influence

Joseph Saurin should not be confused with Jacques Saurin (1677-1730). Joseph was the son of a French Reformed Church pastor who fled from the country upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Joseph was converted whilst studying in Geneva and eventually became pastor to a French Reformed Church in The Hague for 25 years. He was an eloquent preacher and some of his sermons were collected and translated into English. He was one of the last great Reformed theologians before the double onslaught of the Enlightenment and Pietism. Other great theologians and writers include François Turretini and Benedict Pictet (1655-1724). The latter's writing on the differences between 'intellectual faith' and 'saving faith' are particularly challenging, but some other contributions on the children of believers are questionable. He has been described as

the last orthodox pastor in Geneva. David Martin (1639-1721), educated at Montauban, served as a pastor of Espérance and La Caune before being forced out of France in 1685. He eventually settled in Utrecht as pastor of the city. His writings are important and especially his commentary on the Geneva Bible, published in 1707.

In contrast to the theologians mentioned in the previous paragraph Frank Orna-Ornstein pointed out that the downgrading of theology, including Arminian doctrine from Holland and the denial of the imputation of the active righteousness of Christ's obedience to the believer which spread from Germany, began to infect the Huguenot preachers. As mentioned earlier, this downgrading started at the seminary at Sedan, and even Blondel, Daillé and Testard embraced Amyraldian views. Claude Pajon (1626-1685) limited the work of the Holy Spirit to illuminating the mind, rather than regeneration of the heart. Preachers ceased to glory in the old truths and sermons were directed towards the instruction of church members. In a generally helpful essay about the composition of a sermon Jean Claude (1619 - 1687), the last pastor of Charenton remained silent on the need to seek the conversion of sinners.

The infamous Madame de Maintenon

An alarming example of apostasy was that of the grand-daughter of the Protestant historian Agrippa d'Aubigné. Madame de Maintenon was brought up as a Calvinist, renounced this faith and eventually secretly married Louis XIV. In order to please him she encouraged him in his fierce, implacable persecution of the Huguenots. Wylie indicated that she was joined in this by Father la Chaise, the Jesuit confessor of Louis XIV, who had encouraged her marriage with Louis.

Le Tellier and the Minister of War, Louvois, were bitter opponents of the Huguenots and the latter was responsible for sending the violent, uncouth, cruel dragonnades (soldiers) to be billeted in Protestant homes with the aim of intimidating them into abjuring their faith. Many of the Protestants fled from their homes and hid in woods and caves. Others went mad or gave in and kissed a crucifix as they enrolled as converts to Catholicism. Many tried to escape the country, but those found attempting to flee from France were arrested and sent to work on the galleys. Madame de Maintenon wrote in 1685, 'Not a post arrives without bringing tidings that fill him (the king) with joy; the conversions take place every day by thousands.'

The revocation of the Edict of Nantes

All this took place before the Edict of Nantes was formally revoked in 1685. Following the removal of this legislation matters became worse. All Protestant worship was banned and churches demolished. All pastors were commanded to leave France within a fortnight, Protestant schools were closed and Protestants were then forbidden to leave the country on pain of death. Protestant dead could not be buried and were left on dung hills instead. Wylie wrote of the Protestant, 'The king was his enemy, the law was his enemy, his fellow countrymen were his enemies; and on all sides of him was a cordon of guards and gendarmes, to apprehend and subject him to terrible sufferings should he attempt to escape from the vast prison which had shut him in.' Despite this up to quarter of a million did escape to countries like England, Holland and Germany. France lost many of its most illustrious citizens. The physicist Huygens was one of many eminent men who moved away from France due to persecution from Louis.

Lessons for us from this period of oppression, downgrading and apostasy

Apart from being amazed at the scale of the disaster to France and its citizens, we should try to learn lessons from this period of history. Louis is not the only dangerous bigoted autocrat in history to oppose those who are faithful to the gospel. Today the proclamation of the gospel is fiercely opposed by the leaders of many countries in the world in the Middle East and in parts of Asia. Harsh, brutal treatment is the lot of believers in North Korea and was until recently the experience of many in parts of Eastern Europe. The New Testament indicates that the godly shall suffer persecution.

Should those of us living in relatively stable western democratic countries expect to be immune from state persecution? There was a steady deterioration in the conditions experienced by the Huguenots between 1620 and 1685. Were they all aware of the flow of history around them? Are we conscious of the changes taking place in the national life of the UK? What should their response have been? What should our response be?

Wylie suggested that the Huguenots were concerned about their liberties being taken away during this period. They were concerned about being able to maintain their life-style and they could hardly be blamed for this. However, this was not the principal aim of the preachers who went out from Geneva into France in the mid-sixteenth century. Their burden was that God should be glorified as the Word of God was proclaimed and sinners come to faith in Christ. There was a downgrading in theology and morality during the seventeenth century in France among the Huguenots as evidenced by the spread of Arminian ideas into France and as evidenced by the life-style of some of the

Protestant nobility. Calvin bravely stood against the immorality of men of influence in Geneva even to the point of risking his life when he refused them the cup. This brave stance seems to have been missing in at least some of the Huguenot churches during the seventeenth century. Geneva in Calvin's day was known for the sending out of missionary pastors. La Rochelle was a stronghold that proved very difficult to be taken militarily, yet Wylie does not speak of La Rochelle's repeating the ventures of Geneva.

When La Rochelle eventually came under its cruel siege, Wylie points out that Huguenots elsewhere in the south of France seemed unwilling to intervene to help their brethren. The English Puritans were concerned and offered help even though they were frustrated in their attempts and made a mess of things. At least they attempted to intervene. The Huguenots were prosperous tradesmen and farmers and they had earlier shown themselves to be remarkable soldiers when required. At the time of Richelieu they did not seem concerned about the suffering of their fellow countrymen. Wylie pointed out their indifference. What would he write about those of us in the UK or USA as we see the suffering of believers in other countries? At least we could write to our governments and try and highlight the suffering of believers in other countries. How would we respond to the action of our own authorities if believers come under judgement from them as a result of the domination of secularism in the media and education and legislation produced as a result of the agenda of secularists or others?

Richelieu could not allow the appearance of a nation within a nation. Effectively this is how the Huguenots developed from the mid-sixteenth century. Wylie indicated that they were not able to carefully make the distinction between

church and state unlike the Scottish Reformers for instance. Perhaps much of their suffering was related to this failure. Having crushed them militarily and politically, he allowed them to live peacefully and develop their technology, trade, industry and agriculture. France needed these. (Even Stalin during the second world war allowed Russian Christians some measure of freedom from persecution as they were so industrious and reliable.¹) The Huguenots were in many ways like Joseph and Daniel who lived in the world under powerful leaders and were valued by them for their wisdom and reliability. Even these qualities did not save them from the proud, bigoted Louis XIV who acted unreasonably as he was encouraged by those around him to exterminate those whom they hated. Wylie's commentary on the flow of events in France regularly remarks that judgement was to fall on France and its rulers in 1789.

In the meantime there was the serious judgement on the nation in that the preaching of the Word of God was taken away, many wise and skilled men were taken from France as a result of the persecutions. The condition of the Reformed Church in France was perilous and Louis XIV simply declared it was no more. He simply said the nation was composed of Catholics and New Catholics. Despite Louis' boast, God had not finished with France and he had neither forgotten his saving purposes nor his people there.

For bibliography and sources please e-mail Frederick Hodgson frederick.hodgson@gmail.com

¹ DM Lloyd-Jones, *Life in the Spirit in Marriage Home & Work*, Banner of Truth, 1973, page 356.

The Silence of the Lamb

The fourth stanza of the fourth Servant Song reads:

7. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

8. By oppression and judgement he was taken away.

And who can speak of his descendants?

For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. 9. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth (Isa 53:7-9).

Here I will open up verse seven and comment only very briefly on verses eight and nine.

This description of the bearing of the Lamb of God in extreme suffering is as close as we will ever get to seeing what he was like. It is hard to understand how our Jewish friends miss seeing Jesus as the perfect fit in these Servant Songs. The Servant's meekness is especially compelling. Here is no aggressive victorious emperor like Napoleon with the aim of making his nation proud. God did not send his Servant on a political mission but on the greatest spiritual mission to deal once and for all with sin and its consequences. The Servant's achievement in conquering sin and death is stupendous. Isaiah sums the matter up like this: 'He will swallow up death for ever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken' (Isa 25:8). The writer to the Hebrews has his summary which is, 'By one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy' (Heb 10:14).

As he faced the prospect of dying at the end of the worst kind of execution ever devised Jesus could easily have stayed away from Jerusalem at that fateful Passover week. On the contrary he shocked his disciples by his determination to be in Jerusalem at the time of the Passover. When he was

arrested he said with reference to the ordeal which was about to begin, 'But the Scriptures must be fulfilled' (Mark 14:49). The absolute predestination in this was a strength but the human responsibility involved was agony.

At his threefold trial before the Sanhedrin, before Herod and before Pilate Jesus was mostly silent. If there had been a word-counting machine it is likely that for every thousand words spoken by his accusers he spoke only one. In his bearing our own sins in his body on the cross he was silent. He only spoke when it was for the benefit of others or to express the nature of his anguish. There was not one word of complaint and not a single utterance by way of retaliation to those who were brutalising him.

In his three volume classic work *Christ on Trial* Klaas Schilder¹ suggests that we should observe the active and passive work of Christ in order to appreciate when Jesus spoke in his trials and when he did not. Silence reigned in his passive obedience. Truth was expressed for the benefit of others in his active obedience.

In his active obedience Christ rendered universal conformity to the whole will of the Father. He was holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners (Heb 7:26), and throughout his life he was perfect in fulfilling every law of God, moral, ceremonial and civil. By his perfect life he fulfilled all righteousness like a seamless robe. This perfect righteousness is imputed to all those who are in union with him.

Christ's passive obedience consists of his submission to his Father's will. He was perfect in his passive obedience in submitting to the terrifying ordeal of the cross. When Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will," this revealed the enormous pressure that his oncoming trial was having upon him. He knew fully what was in imminent store for him. So heavy was this weight that it was close to killing him. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death" (Mark 14:34). Luke tells us that 'an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground' (Luke 22:43-44).

Prof John Murray comments: 'There now invaded his consciousness such increased understanding and experience of the involvements of his commitments, that amazement filled his soul. Our Lord was now looking

into the abyss that he was to swallow up in himself. The recoil of his whole soul was inevitable. If he had not recoiled from the incomparable ordeal, it would be unnatural in the deepest sense. We must reckon with the enormity of his agony and the reality of his human nature. Here was the unrelieved, unmitigated judgement of God against sin. It filled him with horror and dread.²

The nature and extent of his impending sufferings overwhelmed him. But he came to terms with that as we see in his second prayer in Gethsemane, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done” (Mark 26:42).

Gethsemane enables us to understand the statement in Hebrews 5:8, ‘He learned obedience from what he suffered.’ Month by month, day by day, step by step the cross drew nearer. The horror of it intensified and never more so than in the garden of Gethsemane.

It has been estimated that Jesus walked seven miles between his arrest and his crucifixion,³ an experience which was humiliating in the extreme from beginning to end and deeply hurtful as we see from the question he asks at the beginning: “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me” (Mark 26:55).

In his trial before the Sanhedrin Jesus was silent. In the face of false accusations which conflicted with each other he kept silence. He did not open his mouth. He responded to one question only: “Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?” “I am,” said Jesus. “And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:61-62).

Before Herod Jesus was completely silent. Again the accusations were confused and contradictory. There was nothing to be gained in reply. The accusers condemned themselves. They will give account on the great day of judgement. The third and final trial was before Pilate. Here again Jesus was silent with regard to the charges made against him. We see Jesus’ active obedience ignite as he looks into the eyes of Pontius Pilate, a poor, lost, needy soul. He told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world and that his

mission was to testify to the truth. As the trial went on Pilate became more and more alarmed but in the end he caved in to public pressure.

As Jesus was being crucified he prayed for his tormentors that God would forgive them. He pleaded mitigating circumstances. The Roman soldiers did not understand the momentous nature of what they were doing. When nailed to the cross he spoke to John and to his mother with his mother's future in mind.

In his sufferings, flogging and the physical torture of crucifixion Jesus was silent. When cursed and sworn at and mocked he never retaliated. He never complained. On the cross he spoke only words of assurance, for example to the criminal who came to faith, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). The centurion and the soldiers had never witnessed anything so amazing as this scene. Throughout the ordeal of the closing hours of his life he was like a lamb led to the slaughter. As a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 'When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"' (Mark 15:39).

The silence of the Lamb throughout the immensity of his sufferings rebukes us in our grumblings and our complaints. The Puritan James Durham comments: 'Jesus in his patient and silent carriage under all the injuries that he suffered very unjustly from men showed himself of a low and humble spirit. Oh the many conceits, the many high resentments of wrongs, the great grudging, fretting and foaming at them that there are in Christians tell us plainly that there is little of the meek and patient Spirit of Christ in and among us and that many of us do not know what spirit we are of.'⁴

How do we respond to persecution? We have to follow the example of the Lamb. 'To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly' (1 Peter 2:21-23).

We turn now to verse eight: 'By oppression and judgement he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken.'

The meaning here is that he was denied the normal course of justice. He was the victim of injustice. That is an understatement. It would be difficult to find anything to compare to the hatred and malice of the Sanhedrin or the vacillation of Pontius Pilate, who, after declaring that he could find no fault in him, still went ahead and condemned him to the cross. After all this the Servant's reward is great. Who can speak of his descendants? suggests that his disciples will be very numerous and diverse. Now in the 21st century we see that more than ever before harvests of believing souls are being gathered from all tribes, languages and nations.

'He was cut off from the land of the living' refers to the suddenness and violence of his death. How quickly everything became adverse from the rejoicings when Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey to the cries, a few days later 'Crucify him! Crucify him!s 'For the transgression of my people he was stricken.' Here Isaiah summarises and reminds us again of substitutionary atonement. Allan Harman suggests that NASB and the NIV margin have the best interpretation with the words, 'Yet who of his generation considered that he was cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the blow was due?' He was cut off 'because he was vicariously bearing the guilt of his people, to whom the penalty rightly belonged'.⁵

Verse nine: 'He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.' The prophet stresses the innocence (he had done no violence) and purity (nor was any deceit in his mouth) of the victim. At the end he was crucified with criminals and therefore should have been buried in the common grave of criminals. The Lord planned otherwise. From the moment of his decease his Servant was honoured. He was buried in the new tomb of a rich man, a new tomb from which the resurrected Christ emerged to continue his work to establish a new world which will be consummated in his second coming. To our Triune Yahweh be all glory, thankfulness and praise.

¹ Klaas Schilder, *Christ on Trial*, three volumes, Klock and Klock, 1978, chapter five, Christ standing mute before the Sanhedrin.

² John Murray, *Collected Writings*, vol two, page 155.

³ Thomas Goodwin, *Works*, vol 5, page 230.

⁴ James Durham, *Christ Crucified*, 72 Sermons on Isaiah 53, 1682, page 156.

⁵ Allan Harman, *Isaiah*, Christian Focus, 2005, page 366.

Encouragement from Owensboro



Music group at Heritage Baptist School

Owensboro is situated on the crook of a bend in the Ohio River. It was first settled in the 1790s by frontiersman William 'Bill' Smeathers. The present population of the city is about 54,000. Owensboro is the third largest city in Kentucky and is situated about 32 miles south-east of Evansville in Indiana.

Heritage Baptist Church has a website which declares: 'Pre-eminently, we are lovers of Jesus Christ and his gospel. It is this good news, which has recovered our once broken lives and transformed us into lovers of God. Because of His grace and kindness toward us in Christ, we centre our lives around the message of the gospel. We love the cross and seek to live in its shadow. Because the gospel is the 'power of God unto salvation', and has freed us from our

slavery to sin, we live at peace with Him and possess a "joy unspeakable and full of glory". Now, our highest pursuit in life is to help others find this same delight in God.'

This warm, attractive introduction to the church and its aims is complemented by its clearly defined doctrinal statement. It is a Reformed Baptist church, embracing the *London Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689* as its 'primary confession of faith' but it acknowledges the value of the *Canons of Dortrecht*, the *Abstract of Principles*, and the *Baptist Faith and Message of 2000*. *Over and above these the church recognises 'the inerrant Scriptures to be the supreme authority in all matters of faith, morals and order'*. The church clearly is determined to define and defend what it believes! Heritage BC is not content to settle only for

evangelistic outreach into Owensboro during the first decade or so of the twenty-first century. It has an eye to the future, not only in Owensboro but also much wider afield. This passion for God's glory in the future has fuelled a number of ventures. The church has seen that the provision and training of godly, wise, experienced pastors taught to a high academic standard is of prime importance and has recognised its own responsibility for this. Some of its own pastors have been given the necessary gifts to train others.

Heritage Christian School

The church is concerned for the biblically grounded education of its children and the children of the city. Heritage Christian School began in September of 1984 with 12 kindergarten students. By the blessing of God the school has grown to 189 students in pre-school through to 8th grade. From the very beginning Pastor Ted Christman laid a solid foundation of academic excellence in a loving, disciplined, Christian environment. After 25 years those values still shape the ministry of HCS. With 65 percent of the students coming from outside the church family, the school reaches out widely into the community of Owensboro. It gives a wonderful opportunity to reach many families with the gospel and a distinctively Christian education. The unchanging principles of God's Word are at the core of all subjects taught. It is a great delight to staff and church that students are helped to see themselves and the world in which they live from a biblical perspective.

Midwest Centre for Theological Studies

MCTS is a seminary training men for the ministry. Its goal is to give men a cutting edge theological education in the context of a local church. The motto of MCTS is 'Informed scholarship with a pastoral heart'. Men with advanced theological degrees teach the classes. Sam Waldron is one of the pastors of Heritage BC and holds a PhD in Systematic Theology from Southern Seminary in Louisville. He is the

Academic Dean. Dr Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, (Executive Director of Founders Ministries) is the chairman of the board of directors. Pastor Ted Christman of Heritage BC serves as the president of the seminary. This board is composed of Reformed Baptist pastors from across our country and the Caribbean. Dr Richard Barcellos another pastor at Heritage BC is also one of its professors. Visiting and adjunct professors include Dr Fred Malone, Dr Tom Ascol, Dr Tom Nettles, Dr Don Whitney, and Dr Tedd Tripp. MCTS is now in its fourth year of operation fifteen resident and thirty-five distance learners are presently enrolled. Fuller details of MCTS are found on its website.

Church Planting in Evansville

For many years several families from Southern Indiana faithfully journeyed across the Ohio River to attend Heritage Baptist Church. They delighted in the ministry of the Word, the pastoral care and the vibrant friendships at Heritage. However the long drive stretched even the most generous definition of 'local' church membership. Many aspects of church life were logistically impracticable. Furthermore, and most importantly, the hearts of these families were burdened for their own community as the greater Newburgh/Evansville area consists of well over 360,000 souls who have no local *Reformed Baptist church* to attend.

In March 2008 it was agreed that Pastor Richard Barcellos would direct the planting effort with assistance from ministerial student Eddie Goodwin. The core group of 15 to 20 adults then met once a month from May until September of 2008.

The word about the existence of Cornerstone Fellowship spread through several of the attendees' social networks. By the end of October between 45 and 50 people consistently attended these meetings. Now there are Lord's Day morning worship services with an average attendance of 80.



Johnathan Christman with his Indian friends

Urban Evangelism

An inter-city endeavour known as 'the West Fifth Street Ministry' overseen by one of HBCs care groups has been grilling burgers and hotdogs monthly for the people of that community. The goal of this outreach is to cultivate long term loving relationships which will afford natural opportunities for sharing the Gospel. This encouraging project has been going on for more than a year. Our ultimate hope is to plant a church among this 'people group'.

Louisville Indian ministry

The Lord gave Jonathan Christman a heart for Indian ministry in 2003 in a very special way. He was attending an Indian Church in Minneapolis, while working on his M.Div. at The Bethlehem Institute. He spent two years of close fellowship with this church (Bread of Life Church) on Friday evenings. That church sent him to India for ministry during the summers of 2005-2006. He led a team of medical professionals (Drs and RNs) to North India where they conducted 'Free Medical Camps' in rural slums and villages as a means of sharing Christ. God really blessed those times. When he finished his two years at The Bethlehem Institute, he transferred his credits to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he completed

his M.Div. That brought him to Louisville, KY, where this ministry started. It had its inception in prayer and a desire to reach Indians in Louisville.

After many weeks of prayer the Lord did something marvellous. The hospital adjacent to his housing complex hired 150 nurses from India. 70% of them moved into his apartment complex. He began building relationships. A prayer meeting started and continues to this day, although it feels much more like a local church. They gather each Sunday evening for prayer, worship in song and preaching. God is doing a work of saving grace among them and for the first time they are seriously considering the potential of planting an Indian church in Louisville, where there are more than 10,000 Indians residing, and no doctrinally sound Indian church among them. By 2008 there were more than forty Indians meeting together, some having been converted and then baptised. The fellowship involves Christians from south of India and cultural barriers will have to be crossed for northerners to be reached. Heritage BC supports him in this effort financially and prayerfully. Each Sunday Jonathan drives from his home in Owensboro to Louisville (two hours there and two hours back). It is a big expenditure of time, but very rewarding



Keith Maddy among Haitian pastors

and fruitful. He sometimes spends Sunday night in Louisville and then visit homes and does more ‘pastoral work’ on Mondays when he meets with the youth (men) and teaches them the Word of God and gets to know them better. Readers interested in learning more about this work among Indians from Jonathan may contact him by e-mailing him at jwchristman@gmail.com

Ministry in other countries

Keith Maddy one of the pastors at HBC, has noted that the missionary call to the church involves not only reaching out to unreached peoples but also strengthening under-equipped needy works already established. These vital resources are theological training, reformed literature, and funds for pastoral support and construction projects.

Keith, who speaks fluent Spanish, humbly describes himself ‘as merely a “burro” who is blessed of God to carry the messages for prayer and financial support between a part of Latin America and the U.S.’ This work

facilitates a close connection between participating churches and individuals and Keith has reported how the Lord has used this partnership so ‘that reformation is being advanced, pastors are becoming better equipped, commitments to help are continued, national pastors are reaching out to their own people more effectively, souls are being saved, and the worship and service of the Saviour is growing’.

His involvement with resourcing needy works began on meeting the Dominican national, Oscar Arocha, pastor of Iglesia Bautista de Gracia in the city of Santiago. He invited Keith on three separate occasions to accompany him to Cuba where he was mentored on how gospel progress is achieved in the Caribbean. He already had friendships with pastors there who needed the resources described earlier.

Later Keith became connected with the large 1689 confessional Reformed Baptist church: Iglesia Bíblica del Señor Jesucristo (IBSJ). Its congregation numbers over 1,300

in attendance. It already had a longstanding work concentrated in the capital city of Havana. Both of these key churches also have church plants on their own island, ministerial training, and outreach ministries in Central and South America. Keith works in partnership with IBSJ in Havana and also in Cienfuegos on the southern coast of Cuba. IBSJ's pastors Sugel Michelén and Salvador Gómez Dickson provide the needed leadership, guidance and oversight of the pastoral training and construction projects in those two cities. They have been working in Cuba for a period of about fifteen years. There are now three Reformed Baptist churches in Havana. Two of them are house churches with viable congregations. The other is a larger RB church which was remodelled and transformed from a 'garage' and includes a pastor's residence. This new sanctuary welcomes approximately 100 worshippers with accommodations for many more.

Keith's role with IBSJ is to represent this work in the US and to channel funds for its support. There are enterprising future plans for both Havana and Cienfuegos co-authored by both the Cuban and Dominican pastors. Keith is also involved with a significant outreach for theological training starting in Santiago, DR and now underway in Bogota, Colombia. The Reformed Baptist Seminary (RBS) of Easley, SC has had tremendous success with their twelve part *Marrow of Theology*. This curriculum covers the full range of theological and pastoral training through a concentrated and intense methodology. Its dean, Dr. Bob Gonzales, of RBS, has a team of professors some with Ph.Ds (Richard Barcellos, Sam Waldron from Heritage BC) as well as experienced Spanish-speaking pastors (e.g. Oscar Arocha, Francisco Orozco) along with excellent translators for the English-speaking pastors. The programme in Bogota has first rate leadership in pastors Guillermo Gómez and Jorge Enrique Castañeda. This approach holds much promise for another major city in Colombia. Keith's association

with Paul Washer in Peru is another hopeful prospect.

IBSJ reaches virtually the entire Spanish-speaking world via the internet. Its powerful radio station *Radio Eternidad* covers all of the Dominican Republic and sermons, music, social comment all from a Reformed perspective are the daily output for this radio dominated society. Also worthy of mention is the work going on in Haiti, the closest neighbour to the DR. IBSJ is on the team with two other Dominican churches for pastoral training in that extremely poor part of their island. Pastors Miguel Ángel Castillo from Iglesia Fundamento Bíblico and Pastor Francisco Guzmán from Iglesia Bautista de Trinidad along with coordinator and translator (for Creole) Jean-Pierre Kawas from IBSJ make up the team for Haiti. Keith modestly claims only 'to provide the sturdy rope bridge (not steel or cement) to channel resources in that direction'.

International Students

City churches have an important role in ministry to international students. HBC is committed in this way. 'We minister to international students in our community by helping them to assimilate to the United States. We do this by developing a relationship with various students from college campuses in our city. Families from our church have 'adopted' several students and serve to help them in tangible ways as they complete their studies in the United States. Ultimately, our desire is to show them the love of Christ and point them to the gospel, where all of their deepest needs can be met. Consequently, we hope that when they return to their home, they will return with a new-found relationship to Jesus Christ.'

The following websites are commended.
<http://www.hbcowensboro.org>
<http://www.mctsowensboro.org/faculty.html>
<http://www.heritagechristianonline.com/>

The Gospel in China – 1920-1930

by Bob Davey

The Republic of China (1925-1938)

When Sun Yat-sen died in 1925 he was succeeded by General Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975). Chiang Kai-shek turned against the rapidly increasing influence and power of the Communists. The irreparable breach occurred in April 1927. Chiang set up his government at Nanking (Nanjing). By the end of 1928 all of China was nominally under Chiang Kai-shek's control and his government received prompt international recognition as the sole legitimate government of China. A decade of substantial national consolidation and modernisation by Chiang Kai-shek followed. But these efforts were undone by insubordinate warlords and the implacable opposition and rising power of the Communist party. Chiang had to be constantly on the field of battle. The calamitous invasion of China by Japan from 1931 onwards tipped the scales against him. From then on he was facing a losing battle. All his good intentions were being undermined and defeated. He had married into a strongly Christian family and Chiang himself was converted in 1930. The Generalissimo and his wife launched the New Life Movement, an attempt to renew the nation morally. The campaign had limited success, though their personal examples of doing good gained much admiration at home and abroad.

The effects of civil strife in the twenties on the Church in China

Life under the warlords was an increasingly hazardous matter. Kidnapping for ransom, murder and pillage occurred all too often and after 1920 missionaries and Chinese Christians were increasingly sharing the sufferings of their neighbours. In 1925 there was also the rapid rise of a Soviet-style Communist campaign in the inland provinces. They were adept at undermining institutions everywhere by subtle infiltration tactics. They also had a specific agenda of smashing religion in all its forms. The churches and missionaries were singled out for physical attack and lives were lost.

We have already mentioned the founding of the exclusive Pentecostal 'True Jesus Church' at Peking in 1917. This work was centred mainly in Shantung (Shandong) province. They regarded 'foot-washing' as a sacrament and essential for salvation (John13:6-10). Then in 1921 the 'Jesus Family' was founded in the rural areas of Shantung province by Ching Tien-ying (Jing

Dianying). Their emphasis was on simplicity of life and sharing, imitating the example of the Apostolic Church in Jerusalem as recorded in Acts 2 and 4. Their rural communities were akin to the modern Israeli Kibbutz. Also at this time, and in the same area, appeared the 'Spiritual Grace Society' and the 'Holy Spirit Society'. All these were Pentecostal movements. They caused considerable confusion as well as stimulating spiritual renewal. The period from 1921 is seen as a period of revival for the churches in Shantung province.

On 30 May 1925 the police of the British and American Shanghai International Settlement opened fire on student demonstrators. This sparked off nationwide anti-foreign demonstrations and boycotts. 'China for the Chinese', the students cried in their demonstrations and riots. These troubles revived the 1922 anti-Christian movement. Students, especially those in government schools, colleges and universities, were the chief agitators. Christian schooling came under severe criticism. Students in Christian schools felt their loyalties divided and increasingly climbed onto the 'China for the Chinese' bandwagon. Chinese Christians formed Christian Unions to discuss the national and international issues of the day from their point of view. They were distancing themselves from the foreigner in order to escape the jibes of their fellow countrymen that they were traitors.

A Touch of Revival

When the troubles in Shanghai erupted on 30 May 1925, Mr Paget Wilkes, (1871-1934) founder of the Japan Evangelistic Band, had already been invited to lead a mission at Kuling, the biggest summer resort and conference centre in all China. This became impracticable now. But rather than cancel the invitation, Dr and Mrs Wood (Southern Presbyterian Mission and members of the World Wide Revival Prayer Movement) were convinced, after two weeks in prayer, that a valuable ministry could be carried out among the missionary refugees from the interior now coming into Shanghai. The team would be joined by Rev and Mrs Russell Howden of England on the invitation of the Stewart Evangelistic Committee. They all became convinced that the mission should also be extended to include evangelistic meetings for the Chinese. A large hall at the Union Church was secured for the meetings. This was a step of faith, because the Union Church was British, against whom particularly the Chinese wrath and intense hatred were directed at that very time. Leland Wang (Wang Zai), the young Chinese evangelist, was invited to share the preaching ministry. An all-day meeting commenced on 18 July devoted to prayer, fasting and praise. The Chinese came. The whole church was then opened for the following meetings and was filled with seven hundred daily for six and a half weeks, 19 July- 4 September. Preaching morning and evening and a prayer

meeting in the afternoon was the agenda. Many were converted and the prayer meetings were remarkable for the spirit of repentance and confession. A number of missionaries were revived. The Union Church recorded their gratitude for the success of the event and noted how all bitterness and even national feeling had been swallowed up in the tide of spiritual blessing. A veteran missionary declared that until that time no such thing had ever been witnessed in Shanghai as a foreign church crowded with Chinese.

By 1927 it had become a major crisis time for the gospel in China, more threatening than the Boxer rising of 1900. Nine out of ten foreign missionaries had left the interior on orders from their Consuls. Four thousand missionaries, nearly half of the total missionary force, left China in 1927. Two thousand of these never returned. When Chiang Kai-shek gained national control and international recognition in 1928, the crisis and tensions eased and evacuee missionaries began to return inland. One good thing to come out of this testing time was the acceleration of the hand-over of control of the missionary churches to the Chinese Christians. This was the policy of the 'Three Self'; that is self-government, self-support, self-propagation. In practice this was not easy to achieve, especially financially in poor districts. Independent Chinese churches began to spring up from this period. The motivation for these came from biblical grounds but also as a reaction to Communist taunts and accusations that they were 'the running dogs of the Imperialists'.

Ecumenism

A National Christian Conference had been convened at Shanghai in 1922 and had formed as its crowning act the National Christian Council. The agenda was to represent the various Protestant groups in China and co-ordinate their actions. The statement of faith was minimalist. The majority of the Council membership of one hundred were Chinese, with a Chinese Chairman, David Yu (Yu Rizhang, 1882-1936), General Secretary of the national committee of the YMCA. The Southern Baptists did not join the Council and the China Inland Mission and Christian Missionary Alliance withdrew within four years. By 1927 the breach between Evangelicals and Liberals was complete and both pursued their separate paths and agenda. Both parties continued to prosper in China, the Liberals with numbers and with educational, social and political influence, the Evangelicals in numbers and spiritual fruitfulness. The economic crisis following the Wall Street crash of 1929 had a major adverse effect on missionary recruiting for most societies.

The crisis for the missions during the persecutions of 1925-1927 only served to accentuate the fundamental differences between the Liberal and Evangelical

parties both in perception and policies. The majority of the missionaries who left never to return were disillusioned Liberals. In contrast, it is a fact that by 1931 the number of CIM and affiliates who were working inland had never been higher! CIM evacuees had begun returning inland by 1929 and were buttressed by no less than two hundred new recruits.

Chinese Christian leaders and ministries emerge

The 1920s saw the emergence of some outstanding Chinese Christian preachers and evangelists whose ministries made a significant contribution to the total life of the Christian Church in China. They could preach about revival, both the blessings and the dangers, from first-hand experience. These men, if they were alive today, would bring us to our knees in humility and repentance because of our subnormal spiritual standards of conduct. Six such men gain our attention.

Andrew Gih and John Sung

Andrew Gih (Ji Zhiwen, 1901-1985) was one of fifty young Chinese men and women who consecrated their lives for full-time evangelistic ministry at the remarkable meetings in Shanghai of 19 July to 4 September 1925. He was moved in particular by the preaching of Paget Wilkes. Andrew Gih had been converted at the age of 23 while he was studying English at Bethel Secondary School. Now he was baptised by Leland Wang and chose to take upon himself the name of Andrew. Immediately afterwards he formed the Bethel Evangelism Team to spread the gospel in Shanghai and nearby cities. He was ordained in 1926 at Bethel Church. He became joint founder of the Bethel Evangelistic Band with John Sung in 1931 and they commenced a very fruitful nationwide evangelistic ministry.

Dr John Sung (Song Shangjie, 1901-1944) was brought up in a Christian home. His father was an American Wesleyan Methodist pastor in Hinghwa (now Putian), Fukien (Fujian) province. In 1920 he was sent to America to the Wesleyan University of Ohio and Ohio State University where he was a brilliant student and earned a doctorate in chemistry within five years. Turning his back on lucrative career opportunities he went to Union Theological Seminary in 1926 for theological studies, convinced of a call to Christian service. On 10 February 1927 in prayer 'the love of God was poured out into his heart by the Holy Spirit given him' (Rom 5:5). 'This is my spiritual birthday.' He says, 'The Holy Spirit poured onto me, just like water on top of my head. The Holy Spirit continuously poured onto me wave after wave.' The theologically liberal seminary authorities confined him to an insane asylum

for six months! One is almost tempted to say they deserved that treatment rather than he. During the enforced confinement John Sung read through the whole Bible forty times! Was not this whole experience the best training he could possibly have had for his future ministry? The Chinese Consulate obtained his release and he returned to China. On his return he began his preaching ministry immediately. His main topics were 'The Blood of Jesus' and 'The Cross of Christ'; his recurring themes were the need of repentance, saving faith and bearing a cross for Jesus. Also he saw a place for faith healing. In 1931 he joined with Andrew Gih in founding the Bethel Evangelistic Band and commenced with him a nationwide evangelistic ministry.

Leland Wang and Watchman Nee

Leland Wang (Wang Zai, 1898-1975), mentioned above as an evangelist invited to minister at the Shanghai meetings of 1925, was converted to Christ in 1920 at Nanking (Nanjing) when he was a young naval officer. In 1921 he went ashore at his home city of Foochow (Fuzhou) and was attracted by Christians singing at one of the meetings of the evangelist Miss Dora Yu. She was a medical student turned evangelist and had been holding a series of evangelistic meetings for the Chinese at the Congregational church since 1919. Watchman Nee (1903-1972) Ni Tuosheng. (Tuosheng means 'sound of a bell', hence 'Watchman') and his mother were among the converts there in 1920.

Leland Wang joined fellowship with them and soon resigned his commission in the navy. It was in Leland's home in 1922 that the first informal meeting, at which all were encouraged to minister, was held. Watchman Nee was there, as was his mother. This insignificant gathering was indeed the original assembly of 'The Little Flock'. They were soon to be joined by Leland's brother Wilson Wang and another two. Watchman Nee and both his mother and brother were baptised in the river at Pagoda Anchorage. Faithful Luke and four others followed their example in the summer of 1923 and before the end of the eighteen more, mostly students, had been baptised into the fellowship. Nee worked for three years under Leland Wang until he was made to go his own way in Foochow in 1924. Leland Wang became the founder of the Chinese Foreign Missionary Union in 1928 which was committed to the task of mission to the Chinese diaspora in south-east Asia. His mission board consisted of only Chinese nationals. The mission was the first of its kind and worked in as many as thirteen countries within his lifetime.

Watchman Nee was the third of ten children born to a Christian family. He was the eldest boy, and was given the name Shu-zu. He had exceptional

intelligence and memory and was always top of his class at his school, Trinity College, Foochow (Fuzhou) in the province of Fukien (Fujian). He was converted at the age of 16. As a result he became convicted of the sin of his cheating at a past Scripture examination. He had to put the matter right even if it meant expulsion. On confession, the missionary headmaster wisely took the matter no further. This act of obedience and self-humbling was rewarded when many of his classmates were converted through his testimony and example of a changed life. His life work really began in 1928 when he set up in Shanghai an independent work on the Brethren lines. It was called the 'Little Flock' after the hymn book published by him. Nee contended that there could only be one 'Body of Christ' in any geographic area and a church planted on any other basis was not a true church.

Nee never ceased to regard missionary societies and denominational churches as sectarian and in need of repentance. 'Walk out of your denominations and return to the Bible.' Yet an 'open' communion table was maintained. It is not surprising that he and his work were seen as a threat by many established works. Students were warned off and much bitter opposition came his way. Entire congregations broke away from their affiliations and joined the new movement, especially in Chekiang (Zhejiang) province. Ironically the CIM was hit hard in this way. Nee was a voracious reader. He also had the ability to digest what he was reading and memorise it. He read as many as 3000 Christian books reaching back to the first century. It was his practice to apportion his income - a third for personal needs, a third for helping others, and a third for books to add to his library. He issued many publications including a magazine, 'Revival', a hymn book, and a newspaper. His base continued to be in Shanghai. By making his understanding of the doctrine of the Church to be a matter of prime importance and a basis for fellowship with others, he himself fell into the trap of becoming schismatic. 'The Little Flock' movement went on from strength to strength.

Wang Mingdao and David Yang

Wang Mingdao (1900-1991) was born in Peking (Beijing) in the year of the Boxers. His father took his own life during the siege just before Wang was born and his mother had to struggle to bring up both him and his elder sister. Wang was educated at a London Missionary Society (LMS) primary school. He was top both in his class and in examinations so he gained a scholarship for further education. He was converted at the age of 14. In 1920 he surrendered his life to the will of God and changed his name from Tie-zi (iron son) to Mingdao (witness to the truth). He lived up to both names magnificently. When he underwent believer's baptism he lost his job at the

Presbyterian school where he was a teacher. In 1923 Wang Mingdao emerged from eighteen months' private waiting upon God and Bible study (he read the whole Bible six times in a period of 62 days) to speak at an eight-day CIM conference at Zan Huang. It was greatly blessed and opened up many doors for ministry. A public clash at a Congregational leaders, conference with a speaker who disparaged the Scriptures met with his riposte, 'I am unwilling to accept the reasonings that are not found in the Scriptures.' This episode opened his eyes as to the extent heterodox views were emanating from foreign missionary and denominational sources. It sharpened his awareness of the need of clarity in his own views. He also saw the great need to rebuke the sins of the churches, taking nothing for granted as he found so many nominal Christians in them.

It was in 1924 that Wang started Bible studies in his home. This developed into a strong independent evangelical church in Peking. In 1925 Wang began his twenty years of travel throughout China. In both 1926 and 1927 he was away from his Peking home for over six months in order to respond to over forty invitations to speak at conferences and churches. He was not hampered by the political turmoil of these years. He early published booklets of a polemical nature, *A Cry amid the Evil World, Christians and Idols, A Most Important Matter, Who is Jesus?* and *The Cross of Christ*. Also from the spring of 1927 Wang Mingdao started a periodical called *Spiritual Food Quarterly* which eventually gained nation-wide circulation. Over the years this magazine reproduced his sermons and Bible expositions. This constitutes a valuable resource for Chinese Christians to tap into today. He waged a life-long crusade against the spread of liberal theology in China. He did not mince his words in denouncing prominent liberal Christian leaders yet he was also meticulous and detailed in exposing the lack of holiness and spirituality in professing Christians, calling on all to repent. He did not hold any Pentecostal views. Wang Mingdao became the most complete and influential of all the leaders.

David Yang (Yang Shaotang) was a Christian farmer's son from Yang village, Quwo, in the south of Shansi (Shanxi) province. He was born in the midst of the bloody 1900 Boxer uprising. In this area of Quwo Mr and Mrs Duncan Kay (CIM) and their little daughter and some Chinese Christians were killed and homes were looted and burned. The Yangs were spared and little Yang had a happy childhood. He went to the local Christian primary school where he took the name Shaotang (though later he adopted his Christian name of David). He loved the Bible. When he was twelve he moved away from home to the provincial Christian middle school at Hongdong where he received a solid grounding in the Christian life. The D E Hoste School gave an excellent, all-round education and Yang excelled. He felt called to the Christian ministry and

with the blessing and help of his parents and the churches he was sent in 1923 to the best evangelical theological college in North China. This was the Presbyterian Seminary at Tengxian in the coastal province of Shantung (Shandong). He did not find his feet spiritually until he went to a convention for the deepening of the spiritual life, held in the summer resort of Kuling in 1924. There he came under a deep conviction of sin and deeply in prayer 'early on the morning of the 7 July, he (Christ) found this lost sheep. The blood of the cross flowed into my heart and the burden of sin fell away. For the first time I enjoyed a true relationship with Jesus Christ and from that day until now the Lord has continued to do his marvellous work in my life.' After graduation in 1925 David Yang returned home to oversee thirteen churches in thirteen counties of which Quwo was the base. There he worked happily away in his constituency of farmers and local merchants. He was being prepared for great usefulness in the revival coming to Shansi in the thirties.

Assessment of these six ministries

There can be no doubt that these were all evangelical gospel ministries, with the leaders attempting to do justice to Scripture teaching. The leaders all experienced and preached evangelical conversion, repentance for sin and simple saving faith in Christ, to be evidenced by a holy life. They sought to grapple biblically with contemporary problems in the existing churches and in society. Their works complemented each other. They all wanted purity in personal and church life. It is also true to say that some Pentecostal experiences were embraced in moderation by some, yet with them 'speaking in tongues' was never the necessary evidence of being 'filled with the Spirit'. This indigenous church movement was also the product of the spirit of Chinese nationalism rife in society at the time. God was providentially preparing the ground for a strong evangelical indigenous church ready to meet the even greater challenge to its existence in China in the near future.

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Book Reviews

HEROES, Iain H Murray, Banner of Truth, 300 pages hardback, 2009.

The nine heroes are Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, John Newton, Thomas Charles, Hewitson and Kalley (fellow missionaries), Charles and Mary Colcock Jones and Spurgeon. A hero is a person who exhibits extraordinary greatness of soul. It is assumed that readers will know the lives of Edwards, Whitefield and Spurgeon who are presented with helpful but limited biographical detail much of the space being devoted to relevant lessons.

The powerful revival at Northampton in 1735 where Jonathan Edwards was the pastor and the extensive revival in the New England States in 1740-41 formed the background and resources from which Edwards wrote his books on revival and on Christian experience. Murray discusses these and develops the themes: 'Preaching the law and the holiness of God is the God-given means to bring men to an end of themselves' and 'Conviction of sin often makes real to men their danger of the wrath of God.' He corrects the notion that Edwards did not preach the love of God. One of the most fruitful ministries in history ended when Edwards was voted out of his church by 230 to 23. When he and his family moved to the frontier town of Stockbridge conflict did not end. Edwards died unexpectedly aged 54. He left immensely valuable literary resources. Murray reviews these in general and then concentrates

on the nature of true Christian experience, a framework with which to understand history, the necessity of combining the work of the Holy Spirit with Calvinistic doctrine and the mortification of pride in every area of God's work.

After a sketch of George Whitefield's early life Murray devotes 28 pages to the subject of catholicity using Whitefield as a role model. Under five headings we learn how to increase catholicity. The fourth is especially telling: 'Let us seek to keep the unity of heaven before us.' (Banner proof-readers note the 4 on page 81 should be 5).

The details of John Newton's life never fail to fascinate. On three voyages after his conversion Newton was captain of a ship transporting slaves. Later he was to become an ardent supporter of the abolition movement. A main lesson drawn from Newton's life is that growth in knowledge and Christian experience is gradual. John Newton and William Cowper composed hymns to run parallel with the preaching. 350 of these were published as *Olney Hymns*. This surely is a reminder of the care we need to take in our choice of Psalms, hymns and songs.

Thomas Charles (1755-1814) is less known. Romance enriches this volume in several places and does so in Charles' biography. His fiancée was not prepared to move any distance from her parents. You will have to read the book

to find out what happened. Charles' efforts to enter the Church of England failed time and time again. The clergy would have nothing to do with his gospel. He began therefore to preach for the Calvinistic Methodists of North Wales. There he witnessed an astonishing revival which most pastors only dream about. Thousands flocked to hear Charles preach. Then one night in 1791 in the town of Bala the Holy Spirit was poured out and swept across the town from one end to the other and then spread from one town to another with unabated power. 'The moral change was immense and permanent for several generations to come' (p.133).

Divine providence brought William Hepburn Hewitson (1812-1850) and Dr Robert Reid Kalley (1809-1888), both from Scotland, together in the island of Madeira. The preaching of the Word resulted in several hundred conversions. Lives were profoundly transformed. The opposition of the Roman Catholic priests was aroused. They stirred up persecution, which became so severe that the leaders and 550 converts were compelled to emigrate to Trinidad. Kalley later laid the foundations of a Protestant church in Brazil.

The story of Charles and Mary Colcock Jones is one of devotion to the calling to minister the gospel to the negro slaves of the southern states of America. This proved to be a mammoth task but one for which they were well equipped. The historical background particularly with regard to the appalling destruction of the American Civil War is wonderfully described. This for me is the best chapter in the book.

The last chapter is devoted to C H Spurgeon and what we can learn from his evangelism. This book is instructive and enjoyable - ideal to give away as a present. *Editor*

Two books on the rise of unbelief

Iain Murray: *The Undercover Revolution: How Fiction Changed Britain* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2009) 104pp. Pbk.

Charles Taylor: *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MI: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 874pp. Hardback.

For detailed reviews by Sharon James see www.reformation-today.org

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