

REFORMATION TODAY



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The editor's personal website is <http://www.errollhulse.com>

<http://africanpastorsconference.com>



From left to right Isaac Macashinyi, Gary Morrison, Sechaba Legoete and Raymond Zulu.



These are the workers who helped make the conference at Ora et Labora a success. From left to right Nick and Sheila Court, Jill Lester, Gladys Sithole, Louise Oosthuizen, Wilna Jansen van Rensburg, Christine Sithole.

Front cover picture – *Families Richard Raven and Clinton Stone from South Africa. For a description of The Carey Conference see page 33.*

Editorial



African Pastors' Conferences

Shown above is the vehicle hired to carry four passengers, their luggage and 3,000 books. Opposite are photos from the conferences. See report by Raymond Zulu on page 19.

Salvation for Chiniquy and French Canadians

In the last issue Frederick Hodgson described the early life of the Roman Catholic priest, Father Chiniquy. In this issue he describes Chiniquy's conversion. Chiniquy was similar to Martin Luther. He made an enormous impact. The relevance of these articles is important because they raise the question, Has the Roman Catholic Church changed? A very small group who promote ECT (Evangelicals and Catholics Together) view Rome with rose-

coloured spectacles. This group diminishes the central place of justification by faith alone. The overall RC doctrinal position has not changed. The hostile statements of the Council of Trent have not been withdrawn.

The Gospel in China

Michael Snyder in Florida, USA, writes: 'I have just received the Jan-Feb issue of *Reformation Today*. I was greatly blessed reading about Marie Monsen in 'The Gospel in China'. Bob Davey did an admirable job. I had read about this unsung heroine of the faith who died back in her home and was completely forgotten over the years.'

It is planned that the series on the History of the Gospel in China will continue in the next issue with a

biography of the outstanding leader, Wang Ming-Dao, set in the background of the invasion of China by the Japanese.

The Disaster in Haiti

Reports on the Internet claim that 200 years ago Voodoo priests dedicated Haiti to Satan. 'At the time of the pact Haiti was France's richest colony, and was known as the Pearl of the Antilles for its singular beauty. But it soon became one of the world's poorest and most benighted nations.'

Was the devastating earthquake in Haiti a judgment attributable to voodooism? The reality of God's judgments (Rom 1:18) should always be kept in mind. We who deserve judgment must humble ourselves and pray for mercy. When Abraham prayed for the preservation of Sodom he began by asking if the Lord would spare Sodom if there were fifty righteous persons in it. Evidently there were not. Then Abraham interceded down to ten righteous persons.

Abraham said, 'Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?' He said, 'For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.' Then he said, 'May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?' He answered, 'For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.' The population of Haiti is about eight million.

Operation World maintains that in Haiti Protestant churches have grown to the extent that it is estimated that 22 percent of the population is evangelical, a proportion way above the UK. In Haiti there are many churches, many believers and over 450 missionaries. The article 'The Purposes of Disaster' warns us against a simplistic response to calamities.

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REFORMATION TODAY

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The Value and Use of the Psalms

David G Preston

Part Three

To introduce the Psalms into public worship, start with just perhaps three or four out of 46, 93, 103, 121, 139, 145, sung to familiar tunes. Metre and familiarity alone do not make a tune suitable. The party game of singing flippant words, nursery rhymes or the like, to a heavy, solemn tune or vice versa for comic effect is, alas, all too often replicated by Evangelicals in a mismatch of Psalm text or hymn and tune – perhaps not to comic effect, but sufficient to kill off the words. Take time to learn any new tune properly, repeating it a couple of times midweek before its re-appearance. See your accompanist understands and knows the *words*.

Keep a record and build a repertoire of 25 or so to sing twice a year each. The following 52 may provide a helpful quarry: 1, 8, 15, 16, 19, 24, 30, 32, 33, 34, 42, 46, 47, 48, 51, 62, 63, 66, 67, 72, 73, 80, 84, 85, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100, 103, 110, 111, 115, 117, 121, 122, 126, 127, 128, 130, 133, 135, 139, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150. The most personal and popular of all you sing already.

Try one a week, alternately morning and evening. Don't copy the keen young pastor who introduced two or three Psalms per service. You can guess the result.

Some, including some fine evangelical leaders, sing nothing else. With great respect we must disagree with them. Christians love to sing the praise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In 112 AD Pliny the younger reported to the Emperor Trajan that Christians were 'accustomed to meet before daybreak, and to recite

a hymn antiphonally to Christ, as to a god'.¹ Long before, in the New Testament itself, we find evidence of Christian hymns. The great passage about Christ's humiliation and exaltation for our redemption (Phil 2:5-11), is clearly a hymn and has been versified in English a number of times. So is 1 Timothy 3:16,² the basis of Vernon Higham's most successful hymn, 'Great is the gospel of our glorious God.'

When Paul writes to Corinth he observes, 'Each one has a hymn' (1 Cor 14:26). Charles Hodge comments, 'This can hardly mean one of the Psalms.' True, the Greek is *psalmon*, the word used in the Septuagint for the Book of Psalms; but as Hodge explains, it means 'a song of praise to God'.³ Dictionaries tell us the root of the word is to pluck a stringed instrument, coming in time to mean to sing to it. James recommends the cheerful believer, 'Let him sing praise,' *psalletō* (Jas 5:13). He might mean psalms, but he could certainly mean hymns. Paul and Silas were singing hymns (the verb is *hymnōn*) in prison (Acts 16:25), no doubt for their own benefit (Eph 5:19), but also for others within earshot. Did the jailer hear some before he went to sleep? (Acts 16:29-30)

Limiting ourselves to the Psalms really means restricting our sung worship to pre-Christian revelation – in principle, at least, to that of the synagogue. It would be missing so much divine light: 'For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ' (John 1:17). The cumulative revelation of the Scriptures comes to its glorious fulness in his advent, life, death, resurrection, ascent to glory, intercession and second advent. Shall we believers not sing with delight to and of our beloved Saviour? And to and of our all-glorious, self-revealed triune God?

Rightly we sing Trinitarian hymns like Watts's 'We give immortal praise', Bonar's 'Glory be to God the Father' and of course Thomas Ken's doxology 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow'. Rightly

too we praise our Saviour with ‘Join all the glorious names’, ‘We sing the praise of him who died’, ‘Love’s redeeming work is done’, ‘How sweet the name of Jesus sounds’. It is no discourtesy to the Psalmists (nor to the Holy Spirit who inspired them) to sing of what they could only dimly foresee. So in heaven our praise will far surpass that of our present ‘poor lisping, stammering tongue’.

We must see our selection of hymns balances the Trinitarian and the Christocentric. Anglicans tend to emphasise the former, Independents the latter. We must certainly take care to neglect neither or our worship will not be truly Christian.

The Psalms nevertheless have distinct value in Christian worship. Their divine inspiration, and use in the New Testament as well as in Christian theology, make that crystal clear. No wonder Spurgeon placed his selection of Psalm versions as the first 150 numbers in *Our Own Hymn-Book*. Others have followed his wise example, the most recent being *PRAISE!*.

They set an example and standard for our hymns. They blend perfectly the sense of awe at the greatness and majesty of God with a sense of delight in him and boldness in addressing him. We too easily err in one direction or the other: overwhelmed by holiness and majesty, or over-intimate in cosying up to the God of grace. ‘We have made God too familiar to us – we have made him ... our “buddy” and our “pal”’.⁴

The Psalmists also question him, sometimes bewildered, sometimes agonised. But they never forget that he is God. Psalm 73 is an example. In their anxious questioning they are, far more often than not, concerned for his glory.

They are honest before him in confessing their condition and need as sinners and in seeking forgiveness with a truly contrite heart. There are no glib excuses, no downplaying the gravity of sin, no

cheap grace. The language is always measured, appropriate, adult, thought through, well written, even the shortest like 117 and 131.

The Psalms also demonstrate a proper balance between the subjective and the objective, between being about me, my needs and my feelings, and being about God, his grace and his glory. The subjective emphasis of Christian hymns and songs today is nothing new. It goes back through Wordsworth and the Romantic Movement to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) as a counterweight to the rise of European rationalism. The increasing use of ‘heart’ for the seat of the emotions rather than the centre of one’s being, together with two centuries’ emphasis on the importance of the individual, affects us all.

They do not ignore the individual, far from it. Just under half contain ‘I’, ‘me’, or ‘my’ in the opening verse. Yet what a vast picture of God they present! Psalm 23 is an extreme case: 17 references to ‘me’ in its six short verses, but it starts with Israel’s covenant God, the LORD, and concludes in ‘the house of the LORD for ever’. In between it speaks of his lifelong provision, his ‘goodness and mercy’, that last word meaning his steadfast covenant love (*hesed*).

Those who oppose the use of hymns in Christian worship point out that human compositions may contain error. Too right! Over the last sixty years we Evangelicals have dropped our guard and allowed dubious or unsound hymns into our books and worship. And that includes those who consider themselves Reformed. For all his brilliance and fire, Charles Wesley needs careful watching; *Christian Hymns* rescued ‘Spirit of faith, come down’ by changing one word. Yet it is amazing how much error Evangelicals tolerate in their hymns that they would never sanction in the pulpit. Watts, Newton and Montgomery are the most reliable of the classic hymn-writers. But don’t just take my word for it (Acts 17:11).

Finally, the Psalms can help with the question of appropriate language for Christian worship. God's wonder and glory can be as properly expressed in modern versions of the Bible as in older ones. We do not need antique language to worship God. The sonorous language of the AV is indeed magnificent and memorable, designed for declamation in public, after the Elizabethans had brought our language to its finest flowering. Its lineal descendants, the RV, ASV, RSV and ESV, retain noble expression despite the steady decline of English. But the simpler *New Living Translation* (2000 AD), made by an army including men from Westminster, Reformed, Calvin and Covenant Seminaries, shows how plain modern English can properly present the majesty and glory of God.

I understand why some address God in dated language, the old familiar 'thou' creating a sense of distance and respect. But like Gothic arches, vestments and plainsong, that is aesthetic, not spiritual. Those who preach God from the Scriptures in all his power, infinitude, holiness, wisdom, love, supported by the Psalms and soundly biblical hymns, will find they can address God properly in today's language. Look at Professor Robert Reymond's prayers offered before and after each lecture published in his *What is God?* referred to above.

All who know the Psalms appreciate that they offer no encouragement to a mystifying trend in some circles towards the trivial and even the childish in worship. The child-like (Ps 131:2; Matt 18:3-4) has been confused with the infantile. 'Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature' (1 Cor 14:20). Yet today students and grown men are singing 'the nursery-rhymes of the church'.

The trend goes back 60 years or more. The last two or three decades have brought a wave of lively music in popular style with thin content, trivial even, at times erroneous, whose meagre material has

to be re-sung *ad nauseam* to make up for its brevity. The music should not be the real issue, though in some places it is shamelessly exploited to work up a mood or atmosphere. No wonder some Evangelicals tragically leave so-called evangelical worship for the solemnity of Anglo-Catholic or even Roman worship – which is no substitute for profound Reformed worship.

Are our theological colleges properly training students to conduct worship according to biblical standards? *And doing it by example* in daily chapel services? Reformed churches must avoid this steep decline and set high standards of public worship, without being dull or old-fashioned. There is, after all, much good material. Our leading 20th - century hymn-writers, Margaret Clarkson, Timothy Dudley-Smith, Christopher Idle and Martin Leckebusch, have written nearly 1,000 hymns, which pastors ought to know and use. And pastors *must be responsible* for the content of everything that is sung in their churches.

Modern Psalm versions can be found in *The Psalter Hymnal* (1987) of the Christian Reformed Church, USA and in *Sing Psalms* (2003) of the Free Church of Scotland. *Praise!* (2000) starts with a complete set of Psalms. Timothy Dudley-Smith's collected hymns, *A House of Praise* (OUP, 2003), contain 40 complete versions, Christopher Idle's *Light upon the River* has complete texts of 60 Psalms. Some of these last two collections and some of my own will be found in *The Book of Praises* (1986), now available from Evangelical Press. Some of Christopher Idle's, of Emma Turl's and of mine can be found on the website www.jubilate.co.uk of Jubilate Hymns Ltd.

¹ Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, OUP 1943, page 4.

² '... the hymn from which Paul now quotes six lines.' William Hendriksen, *I & II Timothy & Titus*, Banner of Truth 1960, page 137.

³ *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Banner of Truth 1958, page 300.

⁴ Robert Reymond, *What is God?*, Mentor/Christian Focus 2007, page 180.

Going Soft on Sin

John Benton

Perhaps understandably people have always looked for some loophole, some way of avoiding or at least toning down the seriousness of sin and its consequences. And current Western culture puts pressure on the Church to play down sin's seriousness and that pressure has grown almost overwhelming.

As we move into the second decade of the 21st century we must give fresh attention to the doctrine of sin, because of course the whole gospel is predicated upon the fact that people are sinners and need to be saved from sin and its wages. If we go soft on sin, the biblical gospel and the whole necessity for the gospel begin to sink into obscurity.

The Calamity of Going Soft on Sin

Sin, according to 1 John 3:4 is lawlessness, or transgression of the law. God's law is an expression of his own holy character. So sin is anti-God, anti-Christ. As we consider sin, we are immediately driven to the law of God, especially the Ten Commandments. And it is right to bear in mind that the 'You shall nots' of Exodus 20 are echoes of the 'You shall not eat' of Genesis 2. Interestingly Romans 5:14 parallels Adam's transgression with breaking the law of Moses.

According to William Dyrness the vocabulary of sin in the OT can be subsumed under three major categories. These are *first*, words which speak of sin as deviation from a right way (God's law), words like 'sin', 'iniquity', 'perversion'; *second*, words about culpability and condemnation before God, words like 'guilt', 'ungodliness', 'wickedness'; *third*, words which mark sin as rebellion against God, words like 'trespass'. In the NT we have words which are usually related to the verb *hamartanō* which is literally missing a target and metaphorically denotes wrong action. Sin is debt, deviation and lawlessness. It involves both the external actions and the internal life of fallen human beings. In particular it is an enslaving power with dominion over mankind.

To go soft on sin, to play down its importance is a calamity, because of course it is satanic. Though God had warned Adam about eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, it was the serpent who said to Eve, 'You will not surely die.' In other words the devil was saying, 'Sin is not that

serious; God doesn't really mean it.' Calvin writes of Adam and Eve's sin, 'In the first place, Satan led them by his lies to doubt whether God had spoken in earnest.' (*Sermons on Genesis 1-11*, Banner of Truth, page 233).

Of course, by warning against going soft on sin, I am not wishing us to become harsh, or legalistic, or joyless or to give the impression that there is no forgiveness with God. We must avoid that. But we must hold to the seriousness of sin before God and the fact that sin is the central problem for humanity. To go soft on sin is satanic.

Let me sketch a few ways in which Scripture emphasises the gravity of sin.

Sin and Adam

The intensity of the holiness of God's character is what makes sin so serious. That God requires perfect obedience is underlined in Eden. Paul reminds us that it took just one sin to bring down the whole human race; *the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men* (Rom 5:18). The 'one strike and out' nature of sin shows its seriousness before God.

The character of the command which was broken in Eden teaches us the same thing. It seems such a small thing. Calvin writes in his day of 'comedians (who) try to lessen Adam and Eve's sin, saying, "Because of a morsel of food, did God have to become angry that way with people and ruin us all?..."' (*ibid* page 234). We can similarly surely hear our secular contemporaries' outrage. 'All this judgement, and for what? The eating of a fruit. It's not even as if the sin were something serious like rape or murder for goodness sake!' It is the seeming triviality of the offence which makes us sit up. What seems to be the 'smallness' of the sin should not lead us to conclude that the story is mythical; rather it should lead us to see the absolute holiness of God, his requirement of perfect obedience and the seriousness of sin.

Sin and Old Testament characters

There are many OT incidents which underline sin's gravity. Abraham's failure of faith led to his liaison with Hagar, and the descendants of the child born become the implacable enemies of God's people (Gen 16:15; 37:25). We think of Achan's sin and its consequences, a great battle lost and men losing their lives (Josh 7:5). Uzzah's being struck down for simply touching the ark of God shows God's utter holiness and total antipathy to any contact with sin (2 Sam 6:6,7). We think of the ramifications which flowed from David's lustful look at Bathsheba – adultery, murder, a bad example to his children, more lust, which leads to the rape of Tamar and Absalom's bitterness and eventually to

civil war! Such examples as these underline the dread seriousness of sin. In human terms it is an uncontainable evil. And yet we have a tendency to go soft on it.

Sin and Christ

Scripture underlines the enormity of sin of course as it unfolds to us the ultimate consequences of sin and what was required for its cure. Amy Orr-Ewing in her book *But is it Real?* (IVP) spells it out: ‘The idea of eternal punishment as a result of temporal sinning is seen as disproportionate if the seriousness of sin is not appreciated’ (page 94). And of sin’s cure we read, *The Son of Man must suffer...he must be killed* (Mark 8:31). ‘There was no other good enough to pay the price of sin, / he only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.’ Sin is so profound a problem that in the person of his Son, God must get up from the throne of heaven and come personally to earth. Sin is of such enormity that the Son of God must die to save sinners from its hellish consequences. Only the eternal Son can save us from eternal punishment consequent upon sinning against the infinite holiness of the eternal God.

A failure to grasp the gravity of sin leads to the whole gospel unravelling. To go soft on sin is a calamity of Satan’s inspiring and of gigantic proportions.

The Causes of Going Soft on Sin

We can see this going soft on sin as we see the paucity of discipline in the churches in our day. We can see it as we notice some of the ways sin is being redefined within the Church and modern culture. Let me give a few examples.

1. Sin is redefined by some as simply alienation, a breakdown of relationship with God and each other. Although these are part of the biblical consequences of sin, the intrinsically moral element is played down. (After all, there can be a break in relationship through e.g. misunderstanding).
2. Others have bought deeply into the culture of victimhood. It is the powerful who are sinners, but those who suffer are above criticism – they are almost considered ‘sinless’. Sin is being redefined simply in terms of that which causes suffering – really a utilitarian approach to sin. Where does this leave the coming wrath of God?
3. Others see sin really in terms of human beings failing to reach their potential.
4. Steve Chalke’s book *The Lost Message of Jesus* goes the whole hog and wants to emphasise people’s original goodness and deny the truth of original sin.

5. There is also the redefinition of sin in ecological terms. Though we should look after God's creation, for many creation itself has become God. The Ten Commandments are seen as of lesser importance than sustainability programmes and carbon footprints.

All these and more are illustrations of a moving of the goal posts with regard to sin.

In his book *The Doctrine of Sin* (Christian Focus), Iain Campbell helpfully shows how the man-centred, existential liberal theologies of Barth, Bultmann and Brunner led to a down-playing of the biblical teaching on sin. And, of course, any departure from Scripture as our rule of faith, and especially a departure from what Scripture teaches about both the beginning and the end, the creation and the judgement, will have the tendency of cutting man loose from his obligations to God and so undercutting the significance of sin.

This is helpful, but I don't think that liberal theology in this area is the greatest reason as to why there is a tendency for churches to soften up on sin – especially at the popular, pew level.

Why is the contemporary church prone to going soft on sin?

My own suspicion is that, though there may be various secondary contributory factors, the major cause lies in a covert revolution in Western culture (linked with post-modernism) which has gradually changed people's thinking. This shift in the way we approach life has come very subtly in the context of growing secularism and taken many Christian people almost unawares.

The Culture of Emotion

What is this change? We have moved from a moral culture to what I will call a culture of emotion. Now sin is of course an innately moral category. But gradually the whole foundations of morality have been shifted or the category itself set aside. Whereas previously the word 'good' was defined in terms of 'right' and 'wrong' (and ultimately related to divine law), these days the idea of what is 'good' is much more likely to be understood in terms of what 'feels good'. This actually changes everything. Things are good if they make you happy. This way of thinking has its roots in utilitarianism – which redefines morality in terms of the greatest good for the greatest number. But now we have moved a step further by redefining 'good' in felt terms. Let me give some examples which indicate this move.

You can see this change very simply for example in the way the word 'wicked' has changed its meaning at the popular level. During the 1990s it was released from its standard meaning of denoting something which is morally bad. Now in modern parlance 'wicked' means 'exciting'. So wicked now means 'good', something which is exciting and will give you a high. The Bible writers speak of 'the pleasures of sin' (Heb 11:25) and that 'pleasure' or 'feel-good' factor is perceived as good. So 'wicked' now means 'good'.

You can see this change also for example in the area of parenting. Recently I heard of a parenting course which insisted that we must never tell children that they are naughty, or some of their choices are 'naughty' in the old moral sense. There are no good or bad choices; there are only happy or sad choices, those attending the course were told. You see the shift?

At the more serious level Professor Frank Furedi has described and chronicled the rise of the new way of thinking in his book *Therapy Culture*. The culture of emotion is the outcome of secularism. Secularism (which denies God's existence or at least his relevance to everyday life) believes there no is overall meaning or absolute truth about the world. Hence there is no faith or ideology worth living for, so living for self and feeling good about oneself becomes the only possible purpose for life. Furedi presents statistical evidence underlining the reality of this culture shift. He tells us for example that a search of 300 UK newspapers in 1980 did not find a single reference to the term 'self-esteem'. It found 3 citations in 1986. By 1990 this figure rose to 103. A decade later in 2000, there were a staggering 3,328 references. Similar figures apply for words like 'trauma' and 'stress'. This is the language of emotion and of therapy for damaged emotions.

These days we take emotion so seriously that we are actually trying to bring in legislation concerning the kind of emotion we might provoke in others. To cause offence is to commit a crime. We think of legislation such as the proposed Religious Hatred Bill.

Again, this culture shift is seen in the way people have become much more touchy/feely than before. We are the children of the *Friends* TV series generation. The emphasis upon feeling good has put a premium on choosing and making personal relationships with others because those relationships are often the avenues along which the 'feel good' factor comes to us. To be with our *amigos* is where we feel accepted and loved. This makes us happy. These days when friends meet the mere handshake of recognition is not enough. There are far more hugs between male buddies. There are cheek to cheek kisses among the women. These gestures are meant to signify how intensely we love and are loved. There is nothing wrong with this at all so long as it is

genuine. But it simply highlights how personal relationships and the emotions we experience and express in and through those relationships have come to the fore.

In the new culture life is not about making right moral choices. It is about relationships and feelings. Furedi says we interpret normal experience through the medium of an emotional rather than a moral script. ‘How did that make you feel?’ asks the TV interviewer. We now take emotions very seriously and morals not so seriously, because they are seen as not absolute but just matters of opinion.

Christian love?

Now, Christians being people for whom love is of primary concern (1 Cor 13:1-3) it is very easy for us to buy into this culture of emotion. We like to make people feel better, and at one level, of course, that is extremely commendable. But often we have not thought this thing through. We have not understood where the culture of emotion which so influences us is actually coming from. Suppose a drug which a doctor prescribes makes the patient feel better but actually makes their underlying condition much worse. What then?

Focusing on the central issue the biblical gospel is predicated upon the truth that mankind’s deepest problem is a moral one – the problem of sin. The most fundamental truth about God is that he is holy. Before God’s throne it is not first of all his love but his holiness which the angels declare in their worship, (Isa 6:3, Rev 4:8). That holiness exposes and condemns sin and sinners (Isa 6:5).

We have broken God’s moral law. We are rebels against that which is right and biased towards that which is wrong as defined by God’s holy character. Scripture frames the human condition in terms of the consequences of Adam’s disobedience towards our Maker and our God. Now, because mankind’s central problem is one of moral failure, that means that salvation must take place first and foremost in moral terms. Law is broken. Justice must be done. Forgiveness and righteousness are required etc. This is all very uncomfortable, not to say alien in our current culture where morality is caricatured as being ‘cold’ and ‘judgemental’ in its very essence. With this kind of background we soft-pedal sin.

The Consequences of Going Soft on Sin

My thesis is that going soft on sin through the unthinking adoption of the culture of emotion is and will be the major cause of confusion about and

declension from the gospel and in the long run will further empty the churches. Let me float one suggestion about how the culture of emotion is changing the gospel and then say something about its emptying the churches.

New Perspective on Paul (NPP)

There are of course other strands feeding into all this. Some would tell us that the changes being contemplated for the gospel have come about because of academic advances in understanding the Bible. We are told, for example, that the Reformers, on whose work so much of evangelical thinking has been based, had not properly understood the Jewish background of the first century against which St Paul, for example, wrote his epistles and had therefore misinterpreted the apostle.

But I have my doubts. Step back from the intricate academic arguments for a moment and think about the overall shape of the NPP. This movement is difficult to characterise completely, but it is generally agreed that it includes the following ideas:

The gospel is that 'Jesus is Lord', not first of all that he is the Saviour of sinners.

The 'righteousness of God' is a technical term denoting God's covenant faithfulness.

Justification is about how people are included within the people of God rather than about being right (in a moral sense) with God.

The word 'righteous' is understood as a kind of codeword describing those who are included in the covenant.

Paul's disagreement with the Jews, expressed in his epistles, was not about how people get right with God; it was more to do with the Jewish resistance to including the Gentiles in God's covenant.

My concern is not so much about the new research into first century Judaism, but that looking at the main thrusts of NPP its direction looks suspiciously similar to that of the current culture of emotion which so subtly influences us. Look at that list. The gospel is not first of all about Christ's dealing with sin. The 'righteousness of God' which naturally invokes a moral understanding is restricted to relational/covenant terms. Again the ideas of justification and righteousness are reinterpreted in relational rather than moral terms.

Why did the English stop going to church?

How will going soft on sin further undermine our evangelistic efforts? Robert Strivens very kindly pointed me to a lecture given in 1995 for Dr. Williams'

Library by the historian Michael Watts who accounts for a high level of church attendance in England in the 19th century. This is how he expresses it:

Watts contended that the high level of church attendance in England in the 19th century was due to clear biblical teaching on the law of God, the reality of eternal hell and the sacrifice that Christ has made for the redemption of sinners at Calvary. Fear of the great judgement was a major factor in the response of men and women to the gospel.

The high level of church and chapel attendance was the product of the education provided by the Church of England and the evangelism sponsored by the Nonconformists. 'The Church of England laid the foundations for the evangelical revival and for the expansion of Dissent by instilling into men and women, and especially into boys and girls, the necessity of adhering to a strict moral code, breaches of which would be punished by eternal damnation.'

Watts' analysis of 670 Nonconformist conversion experiences showed that the major factor that predisposed men and women to respond to the evangelical message was fear: fear of death, fear of judgement...Such fear was a particularly potent force among communities of miners and fishermen in which the breadwinners were constantly exposed to danger and ... sudden death.

Then speaking of the later decline in church attendance from the 1880s onwards and having recognised the influence of Higher Criticism and Darwin's theory, Watts maintained that future punishment was no longer taught so there was no longer fear of judgement. By contrast the American churches continued to teach the biblical doctrines of sin, the great judgement and eternal punishment.

'Liberal Christianity did not fill the churches, it helped to empty them. By soft-pedalling the doctrine of future punishment, by quenching the fires of hell, English Christians and especially English Nonconformists jettisoned what had been, in the first half of the 19th century, their most effective argument in the winning of converts. The liberalisation of Christianity was intended to make the faith relevant to men and women of the modern world. It had instead the effect of making the churches irrelevant to the needs of 20th-century men and women.'

'How then can we explain the difference between the religious histories of England and the United States? The answer seems to be that the American churches, to a far greater extent than English churches, have held on to the

doctrines that produced the upsurge in popular religion in both countries in the first half of the 19th century: the doctrines of the sinfulness of man and of his ultimate destruction in the fires of hell unless rescued by the shed blood of Calvary.’

What I fear is that whereas, by and large, the evangelical churches withstood the undermining of the seriousness of sin and judgement during the 20th century which came from liberal theology, they are now in the 21st century very vulnerable to this second phase of softening up on sin and its consequences produced so subtly by the culture of emotion.

The Cure of Going Soft on Sin

In the light of the massive drift of Western culture away from a moral to an emotional base, I do not have any quick cure. I doubt that this trend can be reversed except by the massive intervention of Almighty God. And indeed with Scripture indicating that the last days will be increasingly characterised by lawlessness and the revealing of ‘the man of lawlessness’ I am not at all sure that such an intervention is necessarily on the Lord’s agenda.

We must not go soft on sin. What does this mean for us? All I can do is to sketch some fairly obvious things.

For our lives

We must take seriously the challenge to be holy, especially if we are church leaders called to set an example to others. How can we expect others to take sin seriously if we do not? Robert Murray McCheyne’s adage hits us once again: ‘My people’s greatest need is for my own holiness.’

For our theology

In order not to go soft on sin the Scripture doctrines of Creation and Fall are crucial. If we allow ourselves to go fuzzy on these truths we will go soft on sin. In particular we must beware of those who would introduce the idea of suffering and death before the Fall as acceptable. No, these are the present consequences of Adam’s sin, which present us with evidence every day of the seriousness of sin. The groaning of creation evidences the gravity of sin.

I am thinking especially of the book by Dennis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: do we have to choose?* which is thorough-going Darwinianism and defends pre-Fall human death. But also I am sad to see that a new book by William Dembski, *The End of Christianity*, seems to attribute suffering to the

Fall but speculates that the Fall may have acted retrospectively so that though Adam's sin was the cause, nevertheless there was suffering beforehand. Such ideas do not fit with Scripture. For example, if either of these ideas were true, why would Revelation use so much imagery from the Garden of Eden to describe the new heavens and earth where there is no suffering?

For our preaching

It seems to me that we must return to the preaching of God's law. And we must do so not simply by way of producing conviction of sin and warning of judgement (though we must do that), but also by way of commending the law as the rule of Christian living and so commending the beauty of holiness. Paul tells us that we have been saved 'in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit' (Rom 8:4), and goes on to tell Christians that 'love is the fulfilment of the law' (Rom 13:10).

Further, because Scripture shows us that sin is the central problem of mankind, then we must exalt the Lord Jesus as our Saviour from sin and joyously preach those great doctrines of the cross such as penal substitution, the forgiveness of sins and the counting of Christ's righteousness to be ours by faith.

For our churches

Yes, let our churches be great places of love and tenderness and healing for the broken, but also they must be holy. A lawless society needs to see the beauty of holiness lived out among them. The culture of emotion adopted unthinkingly by Christians becomes the way that the salt loses its savour and the light is put under a bowl.

For our praying

We must pray for our society. We must pray for godly politicians. We need to nurture Christian writers and film makers who will recapture the imagination of the people to show them both in principle and in popular stories how much better it is for everyone when society is moral and sin is not glamorised, but exposed in all its viciousness and destructive power. O for popular song writers who will commend virtue and the nobility of godliness in their lyrics.

And of course let us continue to pray for God's intervention in reviving power to turn the tide of sin and to turn the hearts of the children back to the ways of the godly fathers of past years.

Six African Pastors' Conferences



Gayle Staegemann in the bookroom at Ora et Labora.

Report by Raymond Zulu

In a short space I am limited to a few fleeting impressions of six truly wonderful conferences. The theme for them all was Preaching Christ from the Old Testament. The preachers were Ronald Kalifungwa - Christ in Genesis, Gary Morrison - Christ in Psalms, Isaac Macashinyi - Christ in Exodus, Raymond Zulu - Christ in Kings and Sechaba Legoete - Christ in Leviticus. They were joined by Bob Dickie who spoke in Port Elizabeth from Isaiah on ministry marked by humility and brokenness.

Port Elizabeth

The ministry of all the speakers was well received and appreciated. Bob Dickie and Ronald Kalifungwa was the highlights. The spirit of the conference was very good. The local organizers clearly had invested much time and effort. Special thanks and appreciation should be expressed to Dr Paul Stoltz,

Siphiwo Kiti and the Bible Institute of the Eastern Cape staff for all their hard work.

Koinonia, near Hillcrest Kwazulu

The ministry of all speakers was well received and a good enthusiastic spirit was evident amongst the people. Ronald Kalifungwa was especially helpful during the question and answer session. Our book-warehouse manager Gayle Staegemann in Midrand demonstrates unwavering commitment in helping and serving all the APCs. Sya serves with the same kind of commitment at Koinonia. Like Gayle she knows not only the books but the book trade. These sisters deserve praise and encouragement.

Mseleni far north in Kwazulu

Dr Victor Fredlund, a very busy missionary surgeon did a sterling work organizing this conference in Mseleni. Our prayer for him to have a helper has not yet been answered. The ministry of the Word was well received and Isaac Macashinyi excelled. There was a group that came from 100 miles away who could not make it to Koinonia. The urgent need for expository books in Zulu is stark when we see how few books Zulu pastors have to help them.

Newcastle in Kwazulu

The Newcastle Baptist Church once again offered refreshments and manpower, thus reducing costs to a minimum. The new pastor, Japie von Kampera at Newcastle, like his predecessor, together with his elders and deacons is very supportive. The ladies of



Conference in progress at Koinonia.

the church were tireless in making sure the conferees were well fed. Paul Jacob led the meetings. The Lord blessed the ministry of the Word from Isaac Macashinyi and Sechaba Legoete which was warmly received.

Welkom in the Free State

Ron and Joan Adams were responsible for organizing this conference. One pastor declared that he was determined to spread the news of the value of the APCs among the pastors' fraternal in the townships around Welkom. Such zeal and support is the lifeblood of these conferences. Joan Adams is the dynamic, compassionate manager of Morning Star for Aids orphans. We were inspired by the extent and quality of care for so many damaged little ones when we visited this wonderful work.

Pretoria - Ora et Labora

Here Isaac Macashinyi, Gary Morrison and Sechaba Legoete were greatly used by God. Nick and Sheila Court and other helpers ensured that the conference ran smoothly (see photo on the front inside cover). The meals for so many delegates were served amazingly promptly.

Gayle Staegemann reported at the conclusion of the six conferences that 174 sets of five free books had been given to pastors and the total number of books which were either given or sold came to 1,773. Most books were procured at Ora et Labora with Newcastle second and Port Elizabeth third.

Pastors Elias Masango and Musa Simelane, pastors from the townships Soweto and Tembisa respectively, emphasized the importance of extending these conferences to include the pastors of the massive township populations round Pretoria and Johannesburg.

The conferences were a blessing and great encouragement to everyone present as far as we can tell. January 2010 was attended by God's grace and goodness in a very pronounced way with no tensions or major difficulties. Delegates at all the venues evidenced growth and maturity. All those saints who have taken the APCs to heart, and given their support either in prayer or in other ways, have much to thank God for. His Word was clearly and powerfully expounded and applied.

News

Why is it that the Church of Christ is subject to intense persecution in so many countries? Here is an answer from Revelation 12:13-17:

When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the desert, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring – those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Severe persecution is going on in about sixty countries. Here we describe five.

North Korea (population 26 million)

One of the most powerful revivals since Pentecost took place in North Korea in 1907 beginning in the capital Pyongyang. During the Korean war most Christians fled south and many who remained were martyred. Today the believers in North Korea are underground. Religious activity is punished with fines, imprisonment and even execution. The prison camps are notorious for brutal treatment, starvation and torture. It is believed that one in five Christians is in prison and that 400 are executed annually. Yet in spite of this

repression it is believed that the underground church is growing in North Korea. A recent estimate put it at between 200,000 and 400,000.

Indonesia (240 million)

According to some estimates 30,000 Christians were killed and about half a million driven out of Central Sulawesi and the Maluku Islands in the late 1990s. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. The amazing reality is that in spite of severe persecution and the burning down of many churches and many martyrs the Church has grown to the extent that the most accurate estimate is that seventeen percent of the population is Christian. Over the years *Reformation Today* has described the work of the Bible College called SETIA. This college of 1,100 students was attacked by extremists and the students were driven out. Pastor Stephen Nowak of Brighton spent three weeks there recently. He has been invited back again this year and will be seeking to distribute many books and copies of the 1689 Confession.

SETIA faces not only the indifference of the authorities to secure justice for them but is seen as a threat by the authorities even though all it wants to do is to supply teachers, medical workers and church workers for the nation. The students suffer the ongoing threat of eviction and violence. New land has been provided by a generous Indonesian. SETIA now continues to work towards moving 1,100 students, staff and equipment onto that site. Drainage, toilets, electricity and suitable accommodation for sleeping and

classes have to be arranged on a very small budget. In the midst of all this tribulation and poverty young men and women are being raised up to bring the gospel to the 110 million unreached people of Indonesia.

Iraq (30 million)

Since the Gulf War in 1990-91 Christians in Iraq have suffered in savage outbreaks of anti-Christian violence. These have intensified since the invasion of 2003. Islamic extremists are attempting to 'cleanse' the country of all its Christians, using threats, bombings, kidnappings and killings. They tell Christians, 'Convert to Islam or pay the jiyza tax (a sign of subjugation to Muslims), or leave, or we will kill you.' Much of the violence is centred on church buildings and church leaders. Neither the Iraqi government nor the coalition troops seem willing or able to protect the Christians who have fled to neighbouring countries. The Christian population of Iraq has declined from 1.5 million in 1990 to about 400,000 today.

In July 2009 at least six Baghdad churches and one in Mosul were damaged in explosions over a three day period. Iraqi Christians have suffered waves of coordinated bomb attacks at churches across the country.

Eritrea (5 million)

In early 2008 Yemane Kahasay Andom, an Eritrean Christian, was imprisoned for his faith in a military confinement centre. During his 18-month detention he endured brutal torture. After refusing to sign a form recanting his Christian beliefs he was placed in solitary confinement in an underground cell, despite suffering from malaria. He was denied medical treatment and two weeks later died. The

43-year old Andom is one of at least three Christians known to have died in detention in Eritrea during 2009. Some 2,000 Christians are believed to be imprisoned, many of them without official charge or any trial. Many are held in metal shipping containers, freezing cold at night and baking hot by day. Torture and beatings are common. Some are held in underground prisons.

Much of the above has been taken from the booklet *Praying for the Persecuted Church in Lent* published by Barnabas Fund. Persecution is described in 46 countries in this well illustrated and highly commended booklet. Barnabas Fund address: The Old Rectory, River Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5DB. Phone 01672 564938 e mail info@barnabasfund.org

China (1,300 million)

In RT 220 Bob Davey described the courage and perseverance of pioneer missionary Robert Morrison (1782-1834) to China. There were no known Christians in China when Morrison began his work. Since then stage by stage as we have seen in the twelve instalments on the History of the Church in China by Bob Davey, the Church in China has grown. This has always been in the face of obstacles and persecution, sometimes very severe. There are probably more committed 'heart Bible believers' in China than any in any other nation. When so much is driven underground it is impossible to give an accurate statistic. The most careful and conservative estimate by a British expert is 80 million. Jesus said, 'I will build my Church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it' (Matt 16:18).

Salvation for Chiniquy and French Canadians

Frederick Hodgson

Light Dawns in Illinois for Chiniquy and French Canadians

In Acts 7, as Stephen was stoned to death, there was a young man standing by called Saul. Charles Chiniquy recounted how Saul-like as a young priest he had encouraged a crowd of zealous Catholics to severely beat up some Protestant evangelists. In Acts 9:15 it was clear that Saul, or Paul as he was to be called, was to preach the gospel widely and suffer much for the name of Christ. Chiniquy was destined to travel and preach Christ as the only Saviour to crowds in Canada, the United States, Australia and Europe. Many were converted to Christ, particularly French Canadians, but like Paul he endured stoning by angry mobs intent on his murder but in addition he faced would-be assassins with knife or revolver. On a trip to Australia his ship came close to shipwreck in the Tasman Sea during a particularly fierce hurricane. The exciting account of his labours and sufferings for Christ are found in the volume *Forty Years in the Church of Christ*.

The last article in RT233 featured his conscientious work as a priest in Canada. The courageous, strong-minded Chiniquy was trapped in a Church that he had serious doubts about, but he was intent on following his training as a priest and keeping his vow of submission to the authorities above him even though this ran counter to his love of the Bible and his own intelligence. He confessed that he had become a machine that did the bidding of his superiors, but from time to time he could do no other than speak out and this then caused his superiors to accuse him of being a secret Protestant. In the face of these accusations he insisted on his submission to the Church of Rome.

Probably his greatest work as a Catholic priest was that of liberating many of his French Canadian countrymen from being enslaved to alcohol. Those so liberated made their vows by kissing a crucifix. He remained a zealous Catholic, in some cases winning weak Protestants to his faith. He was however, concerned for many of his fellow countrymen that immigrated to the United States. He felt that their faith would be 'diluted' as a consequence of their living in a country that was inhabited by so many Protestants. This led him to the conclusion that distinctly Catholic colonies needed to be set up in

the region stretching southward from Michigan. He saw a definite advantage in encouraging French-speaking Catholics from Canada, France and Belgium to set up settlements in the fertile prairies of Illinois. He was persuaded by a demographic argument of winning the United States for the Roman Church by encouraging French-speaking Catholics to enter Illinois and elsewhere in large numbers. Irish Catholics were to engage in similar ventures in cities like New York and San Francisco. Their intention was to eventually control the legal, policing and educational system of America. Chiniquy's idea was that of controlling the breadbasket of America. The overall control in both cases was to be gained simply by using the system of 'one person one vote', but ensuring that there were more Catholic votes than Protestant. It is a sobering fact that other groups believing in absolute control of nations may use similar strategies to gain control of nations enjoying democratic government. Happily for the people of the United States other forces came into play, preserving their freedom. One of these forces was to conquer Chiniquy.

Move to establish the settlement at St Anne

In 1850 he accepted the invitation of Bishop Vandeveld of Chicago to establish a colony at St Anne, Kankakee County. Chiniquy found Bishop Vandeveld to be both kind and courteous and was impressed with the bishop's plan to control the whole of the Mississippi valley with its rich agricultural potential. Chiniquy's acceptance of the imaginative plans of the bishop was not without reserve because of his perception of the evil lives of the priests. (Vandeveld told him privately that a grand vicar who wished to hide his immoral relationship with a nun poisoned his predecessor.) He was given the blessing of the Bishop of Montreal and went about the task of making a successful French-speaking Catholic centre at St Anne with characteristic energy and thoroughness, winning the love and esteem of his parishioners. He and fifty families arrived at the location at the end of November 1851. He recognised the danger that he and the 200 or so people (only 100 adults) were in from the cold, harsh winter weather. Having prayed to God for protection and help, he encouraged them to work together in chopping down trees and erecting forty small houses. He and one or two others were good at shooting and they managed to gather enough game to feed the community during the period of house building. After the houses were built he called a meeting on January 16th 1852 and put to his parishioners the need to build a two-storey building with the upper storey being used as a schoolhouse during the week and a church on Sundays. The ground floor was to be used as a parsonage. He secured agreement by his friends who acknowledged that he had worked very

hard to provide them with housing. Three months later Bishop Vandeveld opened the fine building, fitted with a steeple and bell. As the number of families of settlers had already doubled by that date, the building proved to be too small and was extended. Further settlements were quickly made at l'Erable and St Mary to the south-west and south-east of St Anne respectively. The settlements were soon filled. That very spring more than one thousand new families came from Canada to join them.

Chiniquy, the Bible, prayer and Mary

Chiniquy had seen the importance of reading the Bible. Unusually as a Roman Catholic priest he had endeavoured to distribute the Bible and encourage his people to read it. This was important as it provides a key to understanding why his flock of St Anne was so open to listening to Chiniquy after his conversion. However, his passion for distributing the Bible got him into trouble with his bishop in 1855.

At a retreat for priests in that year Bishop O'Regan accused him of being a Protestant because of his zeal in spreading the Bible to those willing to read it. (Aspects of this important encounter are found in the previous article of this series.) Chiniquy defended himself from the charge of being a Protestant by affirming his belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This was a surprising belief of Chiniquy in view of his love of the Bible. He continued to pray to Mary. His devotion to Mary can however be understood in that his mind was enslaved to the doctrines of the Church and the authority of the bishops. It is clear that he had to suppress his doubts about Mary out of obedience to the Church. In 1858 he came to trust in Christ alone for his salvation. He had clearly changed his confidence by then, and it is of great interest to try and understand what undermined his resolution to be a faithful servant of the Church.

At one time he was a firm believer in the effective role of Mary in securing good for those who venerated her. Early in his priesthood he was swayed by the argument that it is good to pray to Mary because all children, including Jesus, listen to what their mothers request. In a sermon preached in 1850 in Montreal Chiniquy said, 'Who will refuse any of the reasonable demands of a beloved mother? Who will break and sadden her heart when, with supplicating voice and tears, she presents to you a petition which it is in your power, nay, your interests, to grant?' His sentimental appeal was intended to 'put unbounded confidence in her intercession'. He went on to say that Jesus

always granted the petitions presented to him by his mother. He followed this argument by reminding his hearers that Jesus is also 'our God, infinitely just, infinitely holy'. As such 'he abhors our rebellions with an infinite, a godly hatred'. A rebel found in the court of a king looks round for a powerful friendly face and Mary is that friendly face. He quoted Pope Gregory XVI by saying that Mary is the only hope for sinners. Chiniquy confessed that he preached with the 'earnestness of an honest, though deluded mind and his sermon was praised by the bishop who was listening'.

However, that night he read Matthew 12: 46-50 and the parallel passages in the Gospels of Mark and Luke and discovered that when Mary and her other sons wanted to speak to Jesus, he did not do her bidding. Chiniquy found his conscience accusing him of deluding his hearers. His distress was increased when he read the account of Jesus at Cana in the second chapter of John's Gospel. Here Jesus' rebuke of Mary shook him. As a consequence of his understanding these passages Chiniquy spoke to the bishop who had congratulated him the previous day. Chiniquy confessed that he had a sleepless night and explained, 'The whole night it has been told me that this was a blasphemous lie, and from the Holy Scriptures themselves I have been nearly convinced that you and I, nay, that our holy Church, are preaching a blasphemous falsehood every time we proclaim the doctrine of the worship of Mary as the gospel truth.' When the bishop expressed his fear that Chiniquy was becoming a Protestant in his views, Chiniquy asked for help so that he would not be lost from the Church. He put a number of questions to the thunderstruck bishop and summarised the reply of the bishop with the words, 'You told me that Jesus loved sinners, when on earth, infinitely more than Mary; that he was infinitely more their true friend than she was; that he infinitely took more interest in their salvation than Mary; that it was infinitely better for sinners to go to Jesus than Mary, to be saved; will you please tell me if you think that Jesus has lost, in heaven, since he is sitting at the right hand of his Father, any of his divine and infinite superiority of love and mercy over Mary for sinners; and can you show me that what Jesus has lost has been gained by Mary?' The bishop replied that Jesus had not lost any of his love and power to save now that he is in heaven. The bishop was lost for words and urged Chiniquy to see what the Church Fathers had said about Mary. Chiniquy lost no time in acquiring a book by Migne on the Holy Fathers so that his Catholic faith might be restored. He found to his desolation, shame and surprise that the Holy Fathers of the first six centuries had never advocated the worship of Mary¹.

His response was that he ought to leave the Church of Rome but he knew of no alternative. He was aware of Protestant churches but in his view 'they were divided and sub-divided into scores of contemptible sects, anathematising and denouncing each other before the world'. He had not yet seen that he needed to be united to Christ rather than to an ecclesiastical body. However, it is worth noting that obvious and pronounced divisions in the evangelical world are a stumbling block to Catholics looking for something more credible than their Church. (They are taught that this ancient Church is the only one in which salvation is said to be found.)

He had been rocked to read Augustine's comments on the worship of Mary. Augustine had commented on John 2:4 that we are to be admonished 'that in respect of His being God, there was no mother for Him'. This contradicted the prayers Chiniquy had learned from being an infant, when he said, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for me.' His studies demolished the teaching of his Church and told him it was a blasphemy to call Mary the Mother of God.

The Catholic Church and the Immaculate Conception of Mary

In December 1854 Chiniquy was ordered by Bishop O'Regan to read to his congregation the decree from Pope Pius IX that Mary was immaculate. He was embarrassed by the demand to announce this new dogma and when one of his farmer parishioners asked him where it was taught in Scripture he had to say that he had not found any evidence to support the dogma in Scripture. The parishioner wanting to be convinced then asked Chiniquy which of the Fathers taught this dogma. Chiniquy admitted that he had studied the Fathers assiduously but had not found any of them to hold that view. The questioner then pressed Chiniquy further and enquired if it were true that the Church of Rome had always believed it. Chiniquy replied that over the previous 900 years more than 100 popes had declared that the Church had never believed it. He added that he wished the man had never put these questions to him.

In his autobiography Chiniquy recounted that on the 8th December 1854 Pope Pius was sitting in all his splendour on his throne in the Vatican and a cardinal approached him, kneeled before him and asked, 'Holy Father, tell us if we can believe and teach that the Mother of God, the Holy Virgin Mary, was immaculate in her conception.' The pope replied, 'I do not know.' After some sacred music the cardinal repeated the question. The response was the same, but the pope said they should ask light from the Holy Spirit. More music was sung and the question repeated, whereupon the pope answered the question in

the affirmative and added that there is no salvation for any who do not believe this dogma. Interestingly the Franciscan monks and Dominican monks had disagreed about this doctrine for over a century beforehand. Even at the time the learned Archbishop of Paris had sent his protest against announcing this dogma to the pope before the pope made his pronouncement. The magnificent theatrical performance of Pius IX was no doubt impressive to some but his pronouncements did much to encourage scepticism about the claims of Rome to be the pillar of the truth.

Chiniquy, priests and bishops of Chicago

Chiniquy had been happy to enter the work in Illinois because of the high esteem he had for Bishop Vandeveld. He was distressed by a visit of this respected man only a year later. The bishop had decided to abandon his diocese and explained to Chiniquy, ‘I cannot bear any longer the corruption of my priests. There are only five honest priests in this diocese, so I asked the pope as a favour to transfer me to another place.’

He was replaced by Bishop O’Regan, and Chiniquy was to endure several years of contest with this man, whom he described as being a ‘notorious defender of drunkenness and immorality among the priests of his diocese, and who was guilty of simony, theft and brigandage himself’. During these years Chiniquy had to endure court appearances as a result of trumped-up charges. He was to meet and befriend his lawyer Abraham Lincoln, warning him of his own assassination that occurred some years later. Chiniquy, always brave and resolute, was in the end instrumental in the removal of O’Regan, which he achieved by writing to Pope Pius IX himself, enclosing documentary evidence of O’Regan’s guilt.

O’Regan was replaced by Bishop Smith of Dubuque, Iowa. This man expressed his gratitude to Chiniquy for cleansing an open wound in the Catholic Church in Illinois, but he was aware that Chiniquy had been accused of being a Protestant and wished to investigate this. He sent Mr. Dunn, Grand Vicar of Chicago, to interview Chiniquy, who was determined to write a document that would enable him to lead his church in St Anne as a Catholic, but based upon the Word of God, rather than on what he now considered the ‘lying traditions of man’.

His letter of submission was worded, ‘My Lord Bishop Smith, We French Canadians of Illinois want to live and die in the Holy Catholic Apostolic and

Roman Church, out of which there is no salvation, and to prove this to your lordship, we promise to obey the authority of the Church according to the Word and Commandments of God as we find them expressed in the Gospel of Christ.'

Dunn and Bishop Smith were delighted with this act of submission, but as suspected by Chiniquy, the delight turned into something else when the Jesuits of Chicago studied it and accused Chiniquy of being a Protestant. Chiniquy was called to see the bishop, who demanded that the words 'Word of God' and 'Gospel of Christ' be removed from the document. If they were not removed Smith said he would treat Chiniquy as a rebel and could no longer allow him to act as a Catholic priest. Chiniquy 'raised his hands to heaven and cried: "May God Almighty be forever blessed" and left the room'. Chiniquy was still without peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Conversion to Christ (1858)

In his book *Fifty Years in the Church of Rome* Chiniquy described in graphic detail how he entered a state of utter desolation, outside the Church of Rome, fearful that no Protestant Church would accept him because of his bitter verbal attacks on Protestants. He was on the point of ending his own life and had a dreadful awareness of his own sin. Momentary relief was found by considering that Christ saved him by dying on Calvary. He reminded himself, 'If Jesus has perfectly saved me by shedding his blood on the cross, I am not saved as I have thought and preached till now, by my penances, my prayers to Mary and the saints, my confessions and indulgences, not even by the flames of purgatory.' Until this point he had trusted in these matters. It was now that he abandoned his faith in Mary. His relief was temporary. His joy evaporated as he considered the enormity of his sins. He described his sin as being mountainous and wrote that he was horrified 'when I saw it moving towards me as if, with a mighty hand, to crush me. I tried to escape, but in vain. I felt as if crushed under its weight; for it was as heavy as granite. I could scarcely breathe! My only hope was to cry to God for help. With a loud voice heard by many in the hotel, I cried: "O my God! Have mercy upon me! My sins are destroying me! I am lost, save me!"' He found no peace for some minutes of unspeakable agony. The Lord then reminded him of the free gift of the gospel and in prayerful response Chiniquy said, 'Dear Jesus, the gift of God, I accept Thee! Thou hast offered the pardon of my sins as a gift. I accept the gift! Thou hast brought me eternal life as a gift. I accept it! Thou hast redeemed me and saved me, beloved Saviour; I know it, I feel it! But this is not enough. I do not

want to be saved alone. Save my people also... I feel rich and happy in that gift; grant me to show its beauty and preciousness to my people, that they may accept it, and rejoice in its possession.'

Chiniquy now felt a new man; the unutterable distress of his soul had been changed into an unspeakable joy. He felt his fears to be replaced with a boldness and believed that he was a match for popes, bishops and priests and he was determined to go back to his people and tell them what the Lord had done for his soul.

Response from French Canadians in Kankakee

Meanwhile news of his refusal to submit unconditionally to the Church of Rome had reached Kankakee City. The people of that city had gathered in large crowds to hear a telegram being read out from the Catholic bishop. Chiniquy was so well thought of that the crowd unanimously said: 'If Mr. Chiniquy has refused to give an unconditional act of submission, he has done right; we will stand by him to the end.' He hurriedly returned to his congregation at St. Anne and shared his news and testimony to the packed congregation. 'My dear countrymen, I have not come to tell you to follow me! I did not die to save your immortal souls; I have not shed my blood to buy you a place in heaven; but Christ has done it. Then follow Christ, and him alone!' He spoke to the multitude for more than two hours and he was amazed by the silence, broken only by tears when he told them that he could no longer serve them as a Catholic pastor. He urged them, 'Let all those of you who want to follow the Word of God rather than the traditions of men; let all those of you who want me to remain here and preach to you nothing but the Word of God, as we find it in the gospel of Christ, tell it to me by rising up. I am your man! Rise up!' The response was awesome. 'Without a single exception that multitude arose! More than a thousand of my countrymen had for ever broken their fetters.'

Testing times for new converts

Within three months of his followers leaving the Church of Rome he was able to report that there 'were not less than six thousand French Canadians marching towards the Promised Land'. The Catholic Church could not ignore this work of God. News came to Chiniquy that Duggan, Bishop of Illinois, was determined to bring the 'apostate Catholics' to submission. Duggan wrote to his fellow bishops, 'The schism of the apostate, Chiniquy, is spreading with an

incredible and most irresistible velocity. I am told that he has not less than ten thousand followers from his countrymen.' The bishop spoke fluent French and determined to visit St Anne and 'unmask Chiniquy...and show the people the folly of believing that they can read and interpret the Scriptures by their own private judgement. After which I will easily show them that out of the Church of Rome there is no salvation.'

Duggan went to St. Anne, accompanied with a number of priests including the 'Grand Vicar Mailloux'. Thousands of French Canadians greeted them by flying the Stars and Stripes, and shouting, 'Hurrah for the flag of the free and the brave.' Some of the priests fled at this point having been convinced that this was a signal for them to be butchered. They had been told that the new converts were depraved and dangerous. The Grand Vicar was much braver and he commanded in French that the crowd must bow in the presence of the bishop so as to receive his benediction. The crowd refused to give the bishop this demanded veneration.

A platform had been erected before the crowd so that a public debate could be held between Chiniquy and the bishop. The bishop was allowed to address the crowd first. The substance of his appeal at the end of his long speech was that those left behind in Canada were full of tears over the apostasy of Father Chiniquy and his flock. He asked them who was going to lead them in the ways of God if they continued to remain outside the Catholic Church, the Church of their fathers, and grieving relatives and friends back in Canada. His emotional appeal was greeted in complete silence. Emboldened, he entreated the crowd again. After enduring a further period of silence, the anxious Chiniquy was relieved to hear the voice of an old farmer, who raising his Bible above his head spoke up, 'This Bible is all we want to guide us in the ways of God. We do not want anything but the pure Word of God to teach us what we must do to be saved.' Chiniquy recorded that more than 5000 voices said, 'Amen' and requested that the bishop go away and not return. The defeated bishop, bathed in tears, sank back into a chair that had been placed upon the platform. Chiniquy then attempted to speak to the crowd, but the angry bishop jumped up and started shaking him and forbidding him to speak. This was too much for the crowd and they surged towards the platform, only to be stilled by the calm authoritative intervention of an intelligent young man called Bechard. The hushed crowd were told by Bechard that, far from being angry, they should be grateful for the cowardice and tyranny of the bishop who feared the reply of Chiniquy. He reminded them of the blessing they had received in having been delivered from the slavery of such a domineering system of bishops and priests.

The crowd clearly wanted Chiniquy himself to speak to them, which he did, pointing out that the long speech of the bishop had included nothing about the free gift of salvation that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to all that accepted him as their true and only Saviour. He insisted that the crowd should divide and let the bishop and his companions pass through safely to their carriages. This they did and the humiliated, broken bishop departed.

Chiniquy and the crowd were not left without trials. They endured famine as a result of extreme weather conditions. Kind Protestants in Philadelphia eventually relieved their poverty as a result of Chiniquy's costly, persevering efforts to plead on their behalf. As mentioned in the introduction Chiniquy himself became a zealous but persecuted preacher of the historic, crucified, living Saviour, rather than the Christ of the wafer. In his life he expressed dismay at the corrupting influence of Dr Newman (later Cardinal Newman), Dr Pusey and others of the Oxford Tractarian movement in the Church of England during the nineteenth century. Chiniquy quoted the words of Newman, 'I suppose it was Dr Pusey's influence and example which set me, and made me set others on the larger and more careful works in defence of the principles of the movement which followed (towards Rome) in the course of years.' Newman started work as an Evangelical in the Church of England and having developed a fascination with the Church Fathers gradually became more Catholic in his views.

A more detailed study of the life of Chiniquy is long overdue, particularly as some church leaders, who call themselves evangelical, are urging us to adopt ancient practices such as lighting candles, burning incense, introducing 'contemplative prayer' and related mystical experiences. Chiniquy's love of the Bible led him out of Rome to experience the light and peace that God gives through faith in Christ alone. Incorporating ancient, non-biblical activities into 'worship' will lead us back into darkness according to Paul's letter to the Colossians.

¹ Chiniquy had been told by his Catholic superiors that Catholic teaching is based upon the unanimous consent of the Fathers. His study of the Church Fathers indicated that they often disagreed between themselves on theological matters. He concluded their divided opinions were not a reliable source of authority and he kept coming back to the direct teaching of the Bible. Those advocating that the Reformation was a mistake and that ancient spirituality should be embraced would do well to listen to Chiniquy's comments.

The Carey Conference



The new auditorium. John Rubens is leading the prayer and sharing time.

The 2010 annual Carey Conference, the 40th since its inception in 1970, was threatened with being wiped out by heavy snowfalls and record-breaking Siberian freezing temperatures. Nevertheless, 160 people considered the warmth of the fellowship of greater value than the possible discomfort of the cold and snow. For the first time a brand new high-tech auditorium was used (see photo) which served us well for book tables, excellent acoustics and all the latest visual aids.

Our intention was to have our families stay on a farm near Swanwick, but the sudden heavy

snow made the farm homestead inaccessible. With our wives and children we were cast upon the mercies of the Hayes Conference Centre and the Carey organisers. For the first time in the Carey Conference history children joined the conferees for meals (see front cover photo). We are very grateful to John Rubens for his willingness to allow us to break the mould and to allow some younger participants in the conference!

Kees van Kralingen, a gifted leader from the Netherlands, opened the conference with a study of the primacy of the Word in the Church with special reference to the church at

Ephesus. He powerfully depicted the heaven-sent revival that came down upon Ephesus with far-reaching effects into Asia Minor (Turkey on today's map). That kind of revival is desperately needed today.

Dr Greg Beale, professor of Biblical Studies at Wheaton, USA, gave three very helpful addresses. The first was on the inerrancy of Scripture as we find it expressed in the book of Revelation. The second raised the hermeneutical bar to new heights as we looked at the theme of the garden of Eden as the first Temple and how that is carried forward throughout in Scripture to the new heavens and earth. The third was an extremely relevant and pointed exposition on the subject of idolatry. This was launched from Isaiah 6:9-13. These difficult verses are often passed over.

John Benton, pastor of Chertsey Street Baptist Church in Guildford for 30 years, gave a paper titled 'Going soft on Sin' (which appears in this issue of RT). Ann Benton led the two ladies' sessions on the theme 'Supporting parents of teenagers', and 'Supporting marriages in the church'. The ladies were inspired by Ann's insights, and her clarity in communicating these truths to our wives was a great blessing.

The evening sessions were taken by Conrad Mbewe of Zambia. He dealt with the subject of 'Christian Joy', and particularly how to discover and maintain true Christian Joy in ministry and service. It is this balance of pastoral and exegetical papers at

the Carey Conference which makes it highly beneficial for those in Christian ministry. Conrad brought his many years of pastoral experience to us as well as his heart for God. His love for serving the people of God is contagious. We especially enjoyed God's Word preached with African articulation.

Conrad ended the conference with a biographical study of the life of Adoniram Judson. Especially moving was the devotion of Anne Judson and the extraordinary endurance of Adoniram in the face of the death of Anne and the children born to them in Burma.

This was our second year at the Carey Conference and again it proved the highlight of the year for us. The singing of great Christian hymns, the times of prayer and sharing and the open forum for questions and answers all added to the time of great spiritual feasting. We left the conference full of encouragement and spiritual fuel for the year ahead.

Richard Raven and Clinton Stone.

Recordings of individual sessions are available on CD or 10 sessions on MP3. A complete catalogue of previous conferences is available. Write to:

Carey Conference
1 The Saddlery
Newton Aycliffe
County Durham
DL5 7LX

john.rubens@epbooks.org

The Purposes of Disaster

Tom Wells

Once more the world has been shocked by headlines of a natural disaster, this time in Haiti. In America a few years ago we watched while New Orleans was flooded. In south-east Asia the tsunami struck. In each case many millions of dollars were lost. More importantly, tens of thousand of lives have been affected bringing misery to many already miserable and increasing the numbers of those who feel great tragedy for the first time. Can anyone explain such things? Perhaps we ought to put our hands over our mouths and keep them away from our computer keyboards. What can we say?

A Frequent First Response

I have been struck again by the number of reporters who ask pastors and other Christians the question, 'Why did this happen?' And I have been chilled by the answer often given, 'It has happened as punishment for the wickedness of the people involved.' No sooner had New Orleans been flooded than this answer was given repeatedly by people who profess respect for their Bibles. 'New Orleans is a city known for its wickedness. It's notorious for prostitution, addiction to gambling and drunkenness. That's why this

happened.' In the case of Haiti we heard, 'This is God's judgment on the wickedness of widely adopted witchcraft.'

What can we say to this frequent response to disaster? Is it true or is it false? Which is it? It seems to me that it is both true and false. Let me explain what I mean.

What is True in This Response?

One great handicap we in the West work with in understanding our times is this: by and large, churches and Christians have abandoned the doctrine of the depravity of man. By man's depravity I mean our fallen nature that leads us to do what we want to do, whether it pleases God or not. The person who does not believe in Jesus Christ simply leaves God out of the picture much of the time. God has said, 'Be holy for I am holy.' In the face of that command for purity in actions, intentions and motives men generally ignore God, except when in deep trouble. Otherwise they mention God only in the nearly omnipresent phrase, 'O my God!'

In turning on TV here in the USA, I am struck by the large number of 'gospel' programs that fail to mention depravity. Instead they pursue entertainment, self-help and miracles.

It is not that they do not use my vocabulary. That's irrelevant. People could go a lifetime and not use the word 'depravity', as long as they made the fact clear. But they avoid words like 'sin', 'wickedness', and 'godlessness'. A number of these programs seem to have a deliberate policy to say as little as possible about sin.

But man's sinfulness is one of the chief themes of Scripture, not far behind the facts about God, Christ and salvation. Did I say 'behind' those facts? It would be nearer the truth to say you can say almost nothing about any of these themes without bringing in the others as well. Leave behind the first two chapters of Genesis, and you will find sin from chapter three to the last chapter of Revelation.

The Bible is full of this subject because we are full of it. Those who believe in Christ escape the penalty of sin through his sacrificial death, but we do not ever escape the infection of sin's presence in this life. We are all sinners.

Those who accuse mankind of sinfulness as a source of disaster bring a relevant charge against cities and nations that face enormous tragedy. To that extent they tell the truth. The impulse to see disaster as judgment is sound but caution is needed as I will now show.

What is False in This Response?

Two factors are false in the response that disaster is punishment for sin. First, it misrepresents God. Second, it brings charges against large numbers of people by being too specific. Let's look at these one at a time.

How does this response misrepresent God? It does so by ignoring all but one of the reasons God allows or brings disaster. Does God punish sin? Certainly he does, both in this life and in eternity. But this kind of simplistic response forgets the fact that God is doing many things at every moment in all that he does or allows to happen. In a moment I'll list more of the things he does in disasters. In the meantime you may think on the fact that God sews with a thousand needles at once.

How does this response misrepresent men, women and children? It overlooks the fact that millions affected by disaster are utterly innocent of the crimes that are mentioned. Were all the people in New Orleans addicted to gambling? Were they all either prostitutes or drunkards? Some of those who suffered most were children totally uninvolved in any of these things. In many cases such children were members of poverty-stricken families. This is not to deny that all are sinners. It also does not deny that God sometimes deals with nations as nations, including men, women and

children. But to give a single answer to God's purpose in sending disaster is to paint with a brush much too broad. To suppose that God spares his people from the disaster is folly. Disaster strikes all humans. Their personal morality, or lack of it, plays no clearly seen part in its presence in the lives of the godly and ungodly. In regard to disaster God is indeed no respecter of persons.

The apostle Paul illustrates this fact. He and other apostles suffered from many handicaps, some of which were disasters in every *apparent* sense:

To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. We work with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world (1 Cor 4:11-13).

Again he compares himself with false prophets to show how much it has cost him to be faithful to Christ:

. . . I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, have been flogged more severely, and have been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was

stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea . . . (2 Cor 11:23-25).

At the same time no one should suppose that Paul is writing such things boastfully. Rather, he has heard the Lord Jesus say to him: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness' (2 Cor 12:9). One of the grave dangers in this broad-brush approach to disaster is to leave the impression that the one who uses it is, himself, far better than those he is describing. So in misrepresenting others, there is a great possibility of misrepresenting ourselves. Pronouncing judgment, except where it is absolutely necessary, is better left to God and government.

What Else is God Doing in Disaster?

Let's look at a list. We can give such a list in part because the Lord has told us through Paul that each thing God does to and with his people serves two great goals. It brings him glory and it creates in us some good thing or things. The world hardly grasps this, but God's people have witnessed to this fact down through the centuries.

1. *God disciplines his children through disaster.* We must not make the mistake of confusing punishment as seen in Scripture

with discipline. It's true that we often use the two words as synonyms in popular speech. If a loving father says to a son who has disobeyed him, 'I'm going to punish you for what you just did,' we understand what he means. He means he will try to teach his son through the discipline of a spanking – or depriving him of a favorite pleasure – to avoid that sin from then on. The motive for this is not revenge. It is the future happiness of the boy. There's a world of difference in these two things. Vengeance belongs to God and, to a lesser degree, to earthly rulers. Discipline belongs to parents, teachers and other leaders of people. And even non-Christians may profit from the discipline side of disaster. They may learn not to do some things that God abhors. This can contribute to the general morality of their cities and nations.

2. *God teaches his children and others the meaning of service through disaster.* When we recently watched the TV news direct from Haiti we saw something more than the enormous devastation. Of course that was evident everywhere. But we also saw the brave and costly efforts of many others serving the suffering nation. Large numbers of people native to Haiti, Christians and unbelievers,

learned and applied the lesson of service to others. Some of that service was forced on family members and close friends. But much of it was spontaneous and voluntary. In the nature of the case the response could not measure up to the size of the calamity. Despite that fact, the response was enormous. It took every form imaginable. At great personal expense thousands rushed to be in Haiti to do whatever they could. Many more supported those who went by providing water, food, medical supplies and other necessities.

3. Closely related to the last point, *God teaches his children the meaning of stewardship.* A steward is a person who manages things that belong to others. In ordinary life he does not manage them for his own profit beyond his salary. He manages them as he is told. People chosen as managers or stewards follow general directions from the owners. But in the mind of the owner(s), they are thought to be qualified for such responsibility without detailed instructions.

For example, before we purchased our church property we found it was owned by a well-known philanthropist. But we never saw him or dealt with him in any way. He had someone who managed

property for him. It did not belong to the manager, but he kept it or disposed of it for the benefit of the owner. And that is what God expects us to do with his gifts to us. He is still the owner of all we have, and he expects us to recognize the fact. We must use it all in ways that call attention to him. Men need to see his grace, his kindness, his charity in what we do with the things God gives us.

This fact is enormously important. We see it illustrated in the parable of the sheep and the goats coming to judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. The sheep are astounded to hear that they had actually fed and clothed the Lord Jesus by the way they used their time, talents and goods. Jesus assumed that they were his stewards or managers of all that they possessed. And he approved of the way they handled it. The goats were also astonished. They were judged as people who ignored their stewardship. They managed things for their own convenience.

By common grace or special grace, the Lord taught this lesson to tens of thousands who rushed to help in Haiti, New Orleans and the site of the tsunami in south-east Asia. In each of these places the lesson of stewardship is still being lived out in various ways.

4. In times of disaster *God teaches his people and others the necessity of humility*. What is humility? It takes many forms but in essence Jesus illustrated it when speaking of self-exaltation: 'The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted' (Matt 23:11-12). There is a 'pride that apes humility', as Coleridge and Southey wrote in their day. In America it is perhaps found in the apocryphal man who authored, *Humility and How I attained it: with Fifty full-length Pictures of the Author!*

We live in a world of sometimes bitter competition. When disaster strikes it comes as a great leveller, reminding us that we are not self-sufficient creatures. We are dependent on God first of all and on others as well. We foolishly dream of rising above the herd of common people. We think of them as 'the masses' who are hardly worthy of our notice. Suddenly that is changed. Long-range plans are laid aside in the effort simply to survive. But in such circumstances God works humility in us. Even if we do not minister to others in those circumstances, the disaster itself ministers reality to us. We see ourselves as a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. There is little to boast about in this.

Book Notice

The editor ran out of space and apologises to our readers for the lack of a substantial review.

A Practical Theology of Missions

Dispelling the mystery
Recovering the passion
Eric E Wright
Day One 2010
380 pages paperback £12.00

Eric Wright grew up in Toronto, Canada. He served as a missionary in Pakistan for sixteen years before returning to pastor a church in Toronto and teach the History and Theology of Missions at Toronto Baptist Seminary. He has the advantage of experience on the field and experience of what is involved in preparing and sending missionaries out from a home base.

His book is divided into eight parts:

The Biblical Basis of Missions
The Missionary task
The Missionary Message
The Missionary
Missionary Teamwork
The Missionary and Culture
Missionary Strategy
Missionary Work Proper

Of special interest in Part One is missionary preparation in the Inter-Testamental period which illustrates the sovereignty of God in preparing the way for the coming of Jesus. According to one estimate the Romans built 52,000 miles of roads. The Jews were widely dispersed and built synagogues which were found in many places. The Greek language predominated throughout the Roman Empire.

In Part Two the priority of church planting is emphasised. 'I have the greatest respect for Christian works of compassion: hospitals, schools, literacy programs, relief projects, agricultural efforts. These important ministries however do not constitute missions as such' (page 108). Church planting as the central task of missions is developed fully in Part Eight.

Churches are encouraged to adopt an unreached people group. Has your church taken this step? The magazine *Mission Frontiers* is commended, 'Every serious missionary, mission or church should subscribe to this magazine' (page 101).

Under Part Four the role of missionary societies is expounded in detail. What is involved in the call to be a missionary? What are the essential qualifications for the missionary and what preparation should be made? These questions are answered in detail.

Missions as a team effort and the place of the sending church are spelled out in Part Five.

In Part Six the missionary and culture and the issue of contextualisation is expounded.

Between sections of the volume there are eight four page descriptions of truly extraordinary missionary work taking place in different nations, is a vivid reminder that even though we seem to be failing in so many ways the Holy Spirit is not failing to see that the Gospel reaches the most remote areas.

This book is highly commended. A review is held over for the next issue.

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