
REFORMATION TODAY



NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2010

238

Websites www.reformation-today.org

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

<http://africanpastorsconference.com>



Kennedy Sunkutu (left) talking to a conferee. Kennedy was the main preacher at the recently concluded African Pastors' Conference, held at Molete Moshate Tribal Office near Polokwane, South Africa.

The forthcoming African Pastors' Conferences are as follows

16-18 Nov **George** in the Cape.

1-3 Dec (4th APC) **Orapa**, Botswana.

4-5 Jan (5th APC). **Port Elizabeth**.

7-9 Jan Durban, First Youth Conference, Kwazulu Natal.

10-12 Jan (6th APC) Koinonia, **Hillcrest**, Kwazulu Natal.

14 Jan (4th APC) **Mseleni**, Kwazulu.

17-18 Jan 1st APC **SOWETO** near Johannesburg.

20 Jan **Port Shepstone**, Kwazulu Natal.

21-22 Jan (3rd APC) **Newcastle**, Kwazulu Natal.

24 Jan (4th APC) **Welkom**, Free State.

26-28 Jan (5th APC) **Ora et Labora**, Pretoria.

A successful APC took place 23-25 September, 30km west of Polokwane. All the APC workers rejoice in the gift of an ideal vehicle (see RT 237 page 40). This is a major provision for the work. Books are now being chosen and dispatched for the APCs listed above. We are well short of the funds we need to cover the costs of the APCs in January. Support is welcome. Cheques to be made out to African Pastors' Conferences and posted to the editor or to Mrs Rachel Rothwell, 4 Hall Close, Bramhope, LS16 9JQ.

Front cover picture – *The Carp River, Michigan* - see Psalm 148

Editorial



Sale of indulgences – see page six

Reformed Baptists and Presbyterians are allies united in the doctrines of grace and both holding fast to the necessity of Confessionalism, that is, we cannot afford to rely on simplistic outlines of faith. We believe in the Reformed and Puritan Westminster Confession of Faith or the Second London Baptist Confession known as the 1689. There are many reliable Presbyterian denominations. In general they organise themselves more effectively and achieve far more than Reformed Baptists. It is for this reason and not over the question of believer's baptism that some Baptist pastors leave Baptist ranks to ally with Presbyterians. For instance recently the well-known pastor Andrea Ferrari of Italy joined Presbyterian ranks. The early Particular Baptists in England formed regional associations. The organisation of ARBCA in the USA demonstrates that it is possible for Reformed Baptists today to unite and work together to become more effective in church planting and in missionary enterprise.

As an example of a well-organised Presbyterian denomination I turn to *The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*. This grouping began in Philadelphia in 1782. It is theologically and socially conservative. Well-

known ministers in the ARPC ranks are Sinclair Ferguson, John Richard de Witt, Jay Adams and John Currid.

In 2004 the ARPC in the USA registered 41,019 members in 256 churches. There is a denominational office in Greenville, South Carolina. Membership is concentrated in the Southeastern United States, especially North and South Carolina. There are also numerous congregations in Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia. The ARPC has churches in Canada and in most states of the USA. Separate synods operate in Mexico and Pakistan. In Pakistan there are 100,000 members.

Along with other Presbyterian churches the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church uses the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms as subordinate standards. ARPC takes a conservative view of the Bible, officially stating that ‘the Bible alone, being God-breathed, is the Word of God written, infallible in all that it teaches, and inerrant in the original manuscripts’. The Holy Spirit reveals through the text that ‘God the Father gave His Son to save us from our sins’.

ARPC emphases are: The worship of the Triune God. The Holy Scriptures as the basis for our faith and activity. Unity with other believers in Christ. Total stewardship of life - time, talents, and money - including tithing through the local church. Excellence in education and equipping leaders for tomorrow. Loving and caring for one another and for other people, spreading the gospel to all parts of the world. Evaluating and changing church structures and priorities in order to meet the challenges of the future while preserving the best of the past.

In former times exclusive psalmody was the rule but now hymns and psalms are used in public worship.

A spiritual awakening across Europe will create a vast spiritual need. Now is the time for RBs to exercise foresight and organize themselves into a European Association. The European Union now has 27 member states adding up to a population of 500 million. If other European nations are included such as Belarus and Ukraine the number would be near 600 million, twice that of the USA which recently reached 300 million.

There would be great spiritual profit if RB pastors from all over Europe met annually. The Carey Conference in January is an ideal time and the Hayes Conference Centre, Derbyshire offers a centrally placed attractive venue for such a gathering. In future years the centre of a great unity of RBs might take place in Germany (the scene of astonishing reformation in the 16th century) or perhaps the Netherlands. Annual co-operative reviews of church planting and missionary enterprise would be on the agenda.

How Justification by Faith was Lost

Historical Theology is a vital subject. It traces out the manner in which Christian doctrine has been contested and formulated. By the study of controversies in the past errors can be avoided in the present.

Here I will trace out the history of the doctrine of justification. As we saw in RT 237 both justification and positional sanctification take place when a believer is united to Christ by faith. At the same time progressive sanctification is initiated.

Sanctification is inseparably joined to justification. Destroy justification and you demolish the biblical doctrine of sanctification. If you reject the perfect righteousness imputed freely as a gift and rely instead on your law-keeping, you cannot please God. ‘All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Clearly no-one is justified before God by the law, because ‘the righteous will live by faith’ (Gal 3:10,11).

Again, as we have seen, this does not mean that good works are not essential. James affirms that Abraham’s faith was reckoned to him as righteousness and then reminds us that Abraham’s faith was a living vital trust that inspired good works, not a mere intellectual assent to truth. As Luther affirmed, ‘To believe God means to trust him always and everywhere.’¹

The first attack made on justification by faith alone was to add Jewish rites such as circumcision to justification. In other words false teachers suggested that you can believe in Christ for salvation but it is essential to add works of the law in order to be saved. That heresy is firmly repudiated by the apostle Paul in Galatians.

Another way to destroy justification is by denying the reality of imputed righteousness. This took place gradually in the Roman Catholic Church culminating in the Council of Trent in which salvation by works righteousness was proclaimed as the way of salvation and justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ was anathematised (cursed).

In this historical overview I will proceed as far as the 16th – century Reformation. The unique contribution of the English Puritans deserves a

separate article as does the subject of the modern era and perfectionist teachings which was included in a brief way in the article on positional sanctification in the last issue RT 237.

Salvation moved its centre to an ordinance controlled by the Church

Towards the end of the fourth century the doctrine of baptism gradually changed from 'symbol' to 'performance'. By symbol is meant that converts were baptized to illustrate their union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. After emerging from the water it was often the practice to clothe converts with white clothing as a symbol of Christ's righteousness imputed to them. 'When they emerged from the font, the baptized were "robed in white, dressed in heavenly vesture", with the promise that if they did not soil the baptismal garment they would possess the kingdom of heaven.'² They were robed in white. The baptized heard the singing of a hymn.'

By 'performance' is meant that the Church claimed that baptism actually in itself as a rite confers multiple blessings upon the candidate. This idea led to the baptism of sick babies in order to save them in case they died. The rite itself rather than Christ became the guarantee of salvation. Gradually the Church took complete control of the ordinance and established the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and applied it to all infants without exception. Those infants not baptized were regarded as eternally lost while those baptized were born again receiving the remission of original sin. However Jesus teaches that the new birth is under the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit (John 3:8) and he employs the preaching of the Word of God to give new birth (1 Peter 1:23; James 1:18). The Holy Spirit is likened to the wind. He blows where he wills. He is not under the control of a priest claiming that regeneration takes place when he sprinkles water on a person and repeats the name of the Trinity.

Baptismal regeneration was designed to give the infants a start along the road of sanctification. The aim was to make progress by the practice of confessing sins and receiving remission for them at the confessional box, and also by regular attendance at Mass. Because sanctification in this life can never be perfect a place needed to be invented where the process could be completed. The doctrine of purgatory was established by Gregory I in 593 and was later proclaimed as official dogma by the Council of Florence in 1439.

If we stand back and view these developments we observe that the Roman Catholic Church claimed sole custodianship control of salvation. Until

JUSTIFICATION

Is righteousness imputed.

Is by the declaration of God the Father.

Is God's external work outside us and for us, like clothing.

Is the work of a Judge which is legal.

Is God's reckoning sinners to be righteous.

Concerns guilt.

Is legal or forensic which takes account of Christ's righteousness on our behalf.

Is complete and perfect and knows of no degrees.

Is the foundation of our acceptance before God.

Is a once-for-all act never to be repeated.

Our good works have nothing whatsoever to do with it.

SANCTIFICATION

Is righteousness imparted.

Is by the internal working of the Holy Spirit.

Is God's internal work inside us.

Is the work of a surgeon who gets inside to accomplish his work.

Is God's working in us to make us holy in heart and behaviour.

Concerns pollution.

Is the spiritual work enabling believers *both to will and to do God's good pleasure*.

Is never complete or perfect in this life.

Is a purifying work God does within us because he has accepted us.

Is a work which prepares us for heaven.

Good works are the evidence of saving faith.

Vatican II, 1964, the doctrine of *Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus* was held which means that there is no salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church!³ That claim was logical since Rome claimed exclusive use of the keys of the kingdom of heaven which can only be reached through the fires of purgatory. Rome teaches that if anyone dies with mortal sin then that soul goes to hell without hope of salvation. Before death mortal sin must be confessed to a priest to obtain remission before death. Time spent in purgatory can be shortened by purchasing indulgences.

In 1517 Martin Luther sounded the alarm. A priest by the name of Johann Tetzel was the chief salesman hawking indulgences on the authority of the Pope to free people from purgatory.

‘Listen to the voices of your dear dead relatives and friends, beseeching you and saying, “Pity us, pity us. We are in dire torment from which you can redeem us for a pittance.” Do you not wish to? Open your ears. Hear the father saying to his son, the mother to her daughter, “We bore you, brought you up, left you our fortunes, and you are so cruel and hard that now you are not willing for so little to set us free. Will you let us lie here in flames? Will you delay our promised glory?” Remember that you are able to release them for,

*“As soon as the coin in the coffer rings,
The soul from purgatory springs.” ’*

It was this wickedness in particular that stirred Luther to write 95 statements exposing the corrupt practices of Rome. Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. The printing press had only recently been developed. The 95 theses were translated from Latin into German immediately by the media of the day and rapidly sold over a wide area. In a very short time Luther was spoken of everywhere as the monk who had defied the Pope. The Reformation had begun.

The reason why all the 16th - century Reformers and 17th - century English Puritans believed that the papacy was antichrist (*anti* meaning in the place of) was that that system took the place of Christ. The Pope claimed to be the vicar of Christ. With regard to purgatory Luther said, ‘If the Pope does have the power to release anyone from purgatory, why in the name of love does he not abolish purgatory by letting everyone out? If for the sake of miserable money he released uncounted souls, why should he not for the sake of most holy love empty the place?’⁴

Luther had experienced spiritual turmoil. He had been tormented having no assurance of salvation. He tried everything including fasting and confession of all known sin. In 1513 he began lecturing on the Psalms. He went on to expound Romans and then Galatians and Hebrews. This intense study of the Scriptures was the means of his conversion. He wrestled with the meaning of the word 'righteousness' in Psalm 31 and followed that up by studying the New Testament equivalent in Romans 1:17. When he saw that God's righteousness is a free gift received by faith he was instantly liberated. He declared, 'Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.'

How can we explain the fact that justification by faith, a truth so clearly taught in the New Testament, could become obscure and then lost entirely by the majority? James Buchanan (1804-1870) in his book on justification draws attention to the fact that Augustine (354-430) confused justification and sanctification instead of seeing them as entirely different entities.⁵ Augustine while exemplary in opposing Pelagius and clear in maintaining the sovereignty of God in salvation, was not clear about justification. He knew little Greek and worked in Latin. The verb *justificare* in Latin means to *make righteous*. The Greek verb *dikaioō* means to declare righteous. Imputed righteousness and imparted righteousness are antithetical.

If our justification is to be based on the notion of self-merit we are lost indeed for all our self-righteousness is as filthy rags before God (Isa 64:6). If Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to us we are justified indeed (Rom 8:33). '[God] reckons righteousness to them, not because he accounts them to have kept his law personally (which would be a false judgment), but because he accounts them to be united to one who kept it representatively (and that is a true judgment).'

James Buchanan maintains that there is a supply of testimonies, 'extending from Apostolic times down to Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), the last of the Fathers, abundantly sufficient to prove that the doctrine of justification by grace alone had some faithful witnesses in every succeeding age of the Church'.⁷ He asserts that 'Faber adduces quotations from sixteen of the Fathers who wrote before the middle of the fifth century, and refers to twelve more as having been adduced by Archbishop Usher, making together twenty-eight Fathers, and who in every century down to the twelfth furnishes one or more witnesses to the truth'.⁸ Buchanan provides sample quotations from the writings of Cyprian, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Jerome and Chrysostom. It would be more convincing if actual treatises on the subject of justification could be located in lieu of Buchanan's very brief quotations from the patristic writings. .

The 16th - century Reformation constituted a massive return to the biblical doctrine of imputed righteousness. The Roman Catholic Church responded to this by calling the Council of Trent.

Over the centuries Ecumenical Councils have proved essential in clarifying doctrine and maintaining unity. There were eight such councils from 325 to 880. Of those the Council of Chalcedon was the most decisive and most useful. Chalcedon provided wonderful clarity on the nature of the Person of Christ. Between 1123 and 1517 there were eighteen councils convened and just three from 1545 to 1962.

Of all councils ever convened none has been more damaging and disastrous than the Council of Trent. The Council of Trent (Latin: *Concilium Tridentinum*) was the 16th-century Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church. It is considered to be one of the Church's most important councils. It convened in Trent (then capital of the Prince-Bishopric of Trent, inside the Holy Roman Empire, now in modern Italy) between December 13, 1545, and December 4, 1563 in twenty-five sessions for three periods. Council Fathers met for the first through eighth sessions in Trent (1545–1547), and for the ninth through eleventh sessions in Bologna (1547) during the pontificate of Pope Paul III. Under Pope Julius III the Council met in Trent (1551–1552) for the twelfth through sixteenth sessions. Under Pope Pius IV the seventeenth through twenty-fifth sessions took place in Trent (1559–1563).

The Council issued condemnations on what it defined as Protestant heresies and defined Church teachings in the areas of Scripture and Tradition, Original Sin, Justification, Sacraments, the Eucharist in Holy Mass and the Veneration of Saints. It issued numerous reform decrees. By specifying Catholic doctrine on Salvation, the Sacraments, and the Biblical Canon, the Council was answering Protestant disputes.

Instead of making *sola scriptura* the basis of its study the thirty-seven appointed theologians devoted their energies to the task of agreement on what the Roman Church had maintained in the medieval period on the subject of justification. Anathemas were compiled rejecting the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. In architectural and engineering terms Trent constructed the medieval fabric of salvation by works in steel girders and then set the whole framework in concrete. To remove or change such a structure is well-nigh impossible. All subsequent attempts to bridge the gulf between salvation by works and salvation by God's imputed righteousness have proved futile. Imputed righteousness can never be the same as infused righteousness.

The denial of the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed by God the Father to the believer had a disastrous effect on the doctrine of assurance of salvation. Trent Canon 8 explicitly rejects any suggestion that the believer may know with certainty that he is among the predestined, or that he will persevere to the end, apart from special revelation. The matter was discussed over the period 15-26 October 1546. Of thirty-seven theologians who expressed their views twenty were in favour of the possibility of assurance, fifteen against, and two undecided. The seven Dominicans were against assurance but the Dominican bishop Ambrogio Catharino was outspoken in favour of the possibility of assurance. The Franciscans present were deeply divided. The language of the Bible from beginning to end is the language of assurance. Romans 8:16 is typical, 'The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.' The psalms and hymns we sing reflect assurance. 'Happy are those, beyond all measure blessed, who know their guilt is gone, their faults forgiven'⁹ and:

*Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head* (Christian Hymns 545)

A contemporary departure from the doctrine of justification.

Luther maintained that justification by faith alone was the chief article of faith, 'upon which depends all that we teach and do against the Pope, the devil, and all the world. We must be entirely certain of this, and not doubt it, otherwise all be lost, and the Pope, and the devil, and our opponents will prevail and obtain the victory.'¹⁰

The manner in which Scripture preserves the doctrine of justification by faith alone is to distinguish absolutely between the nature of justification which is an act of God the Father and progressive sanctification which is the work of the Holy Spirit within us.

Anglican bishop of Durham, N T Wright, changes the doctrine by his claim that justification consists of being a member of the covenant community. Romans 1:16,17 therefore should read, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ because therein is revealed the way in which you can become a member of the covenant community.' According to N T Wright imputed righteousness does not exist.¹¹

It will be as well here to summarise again the biblical doctrine. The gospel reveals the righteousness of God which consists of the complete work of

Christ in his perfect life and propitiatory death on the sinner's behalf (Rom 3:21-26). Paul's own experience expresses this reality. Three sections of his writings endorse this, namely Galatians 2:15-21, 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 and Philippians 3:4-14. In Romans chapter four Paul shows that God's method of justification by the imputed righteousness of his Son is the only way of salvation and has always been his exclusive way of saving sinners.

When Paul and Silas answered the cry, 'What must I do to be saved?' the answer was immediate: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved' (Acts 16:33). According to N T Wright the answer should have been 'Let's have study sessions to find out how you can become a member of the covenant community.' The manner in which N T Wright deletes righteousness imputed together with the disastrous consequences of such a deletion is explained well by Philip Eveson in his book *Justification by Faith Alone*.¹² Likewise John Piper describes what is at stake in his *The Future of Justification – A Response to N T Wright*.¹³

How does justification work out in practice? The apostle provides the answer in eloquent terms in Romans 5:1-11.

¹ Martin Luther, *Romans*, Zondervan, 1954, page 66.

² Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, Eerdmans, 2009 page 650. This massive 951 page historically objective study makes easy reading and is user-friendly. It covers the first five centuries. With the same title, *Baptism in the Early Church*, Hendrick Stander and Johannes Louw of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa describe baptismal practice in the first three centuries. Reformation Today Trust, 1994, 192 pages. In the introduction Jim Renihan draws attention to the fact that this book is not written to win an argument but rather that readers may consider the evidence for themselves.

³ Francis A Sullivan, *Salvation Outside the Church?* Geoffrey Chapman, 1992.

⁴ Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand*, A Lion paperback, 1983, page 81.

⁵ Alister McGrath provides a detailed exposition of Augustine's teaching in his treatise *Justitia Dei - A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, second edition, Cambridge University Press, 1998.

⁶ J I Packer Justification in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A Elwell, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984, page 596.

⁷ James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*, Banner of Truth, 1961, page 22,

⁸ *Ibid* page 93.

⁹ As rendered in number 32 PRAISE!

¹⁰ The Schmalkald Articles of 1537. Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol 1, page 255, Eerdmans.

¹¹ Philip Eveson, *Justification by Faith Alone*. Day One, 226 page paperback, 1998.

¹² *Ibid*, page 163.

¹³ John Piper, Crossway Books, 2007.

A Heart for Missions

Recapturing God's vision for the local church as it embraces and engages in wholehearted, life-transforming missions for the glory of God.

Bob Penhearow

We need a clear vision of our mission-hearted God

Biblical theology is about God's glorious mission plan to a fallen humanity (Gen 3:15). God himself marches through redemptive history from creation to consummation saving a people unto himself. The apostle Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus, points out that each member of the sacred Trinity is wholeheartedly engaged in missions. Paul reveals that our mission-hearted Father planned and purposed missions by choosing and predestinating his elect for adoption even before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:3–6). Paul moves on to show that Jesus, the glorious mission-hearted second Person of the Trinity, willingly sacrificed himself on the altar of the cruel cross for those whom the Father had elected. Jesus redeemed his people by his own precious blood to secure their eternal forgiveness (Eph 1:7). Paul progresses to point out that the Holy Spirit—the gracious mission-hound of heaven—is also involved. The Holy Spirit tracks down the elect through time and space and applies the marvellous, redeeming work of the Son to those whom the Father has elected. The Holy Spirit regenerates us (John 3:5–6) and seals us for that great and glorious day of redemption (Eph 1:13–14). Our triune God is a mission-hearted God.

It is noteworthy that at the close of the Gospels, we hear the command of our resurrected, mission-hearted King ringing in our ears to go forth to the ends of the earth to make disciples. To encourage us, as we obediently go forth in global missions, there is a wonderful promise running hard on our heels: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.... And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Matt 28:19–20).

We need a clear vision of the purpose of our missionary endeavours

Having established that God is a mission-hearted God, we need to ask the question, 'What is the purpose of missions?' If we took a poll, we would have

numerous insightful responses. However, there is one primary, overriding purpose that is so often overlooked or forgotten in churches and mission organisations today. God's glory is the ultimate purpose of all our missionary endeavours. That must be the driving force of missions and must remain at the centre of all our missionary undertakings. In fact, the entire created realm exists for God and for God's glory alone (Ps 19:1; 1 Cor 10:31).

God's glory is clearly evidenced in the life and missionary service of the apostle Paul. The apostle demonstrates his passion for God's glory by being compelled and propelled across the Roman world enthusiastically engaged in missions. Paul was no 'ivory tower' theologian or 'couch potato' Christian. It was for God's glory that Paul tirelessly engaged in front-line, hands-on, life and death ministry. For God's glory Paul was found in the trenches, labouring shoulder to shoulder with church leaders. For God's glory Paul was heavily invested in the thrills and spills of ministry and willingly bore the scars—emotional and physical—to prove it. It is for God's glory that the gospel is established and sinners are saved. It is for God's glory that we too share the gospel with our family, our friends and our neighbours. It is for God's glory that Christ-exalting churches are established. It is for God's glory that men and women willingly leave homes, family and country to reach across the globe to be channels of gospel blessing. It is for God's glory that saints past and present have been jailed, tortured and even burnt alive rather than compromise the gospel or deny the lordship of Christ. Here, then, is the launching pad for all missions, the great and glorious motivation of missions and the heartbeat of missions: it is no less than the glory of God. It is all for God. It is all for God's glory, his glory alone! As the Reformers cried, '*Soli Deo Gloria!*' ('To God alone be glory!').

Conversely, churches, mission organisations, publishing houses, seminaries and any other para-church organisation that exists primarily to establish its own agenda, to further its own reputation, is on dangerous and slippery ground. In fact, if they exist for anything less than God's glory alone, their demise is sealed. They will become a man-centred machine, pragmatic and self-serving. Success for them is measured by the health of their balance sheet or the size of their enterprise. Sadly there are many such organisations that have lost sight of God's glory. Friends, we desperately need to reclaim God's glory as the beginning and end of missions. As Jude 25 clearly articulates: 'To the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.'

We need a clear vision of the rôle of the local church in missions

Historically, some mission organisations have unwittingly marginalised the vital role of the local church and, thereby, unintentionally undermined entire church networks. We need to return again to the apostle Paul to glean missiological principles for the role of the local church.

Consider the events in Paul's life that launched him into international missions. Paul was called and commissioned by God himself, not a seminary or mission agency (Acts 9:15). Without this inner conviction, when the chips are down, no one can stand under the gruelling pressures of front-line ministry.

Observe that the call of God was accompanied by gifts from God to fulfil that call. Before Paul was publically commissioned at Antioch, he was given opportunity to prove himself by demonstrating his teaching and preaching gifts for an entire year (Acts 11:26). It is crucial that the body of Christ be given time to discern the gifts that Christ, the Head of the Church, has bestowed upon his servants. In addition, time was given for Paul to prove his character and conduct before the entire church. It was to proven men such as Paul and Barnabas that the church at Antioch entrusted financial resources to help those in Judea (Acts 11:29–30). Character is absolutely essential for effective ministry. Without spiritual character hypocrisy will permeate all we do and say. People need to see truth fleshed out in the character of those planning to serve in this area. It is noteworthy that Paul takes time to expound on character traits when guiding Timothy and the elders at Ephesus as to qualifications for spiritual leadership (1 Tim 3:1–7).

Observe too that the local church, having tested Paul's gifts and character, heard the voice of the Holy Spirit. Only then did the local church set Paul apart and send him out to do the work God had called him to:

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit... (Acts 13:2–4).

With the church's approval Paul was sent to blaze a trail across the Roman world for the glory of God. Paul was certainly no lone ranger! The entire church of Antioch was behind his endeavours. Do you recall what Paul did

when he completed a mission trip? He glorified his mission-hearted God as he reported to his sending church at Antioch what God had done (Acts 14:26–28). In summation, the Holy Spirit delights to work in and through the local church for the calling, equipping, sending and reporting process of missions.

Mission agencies, seminaries and other para-church organisations are not to be self-serving, independent entities, but rather are to see themselves as servants to God's institution—the local church. The local church must never be bypassed, marginalised or supplanted. The mission agency is but a tool, a channel to help the local church facilitate missions and ministry. Great wisdom is needed in this symbiotic venture.

We need a clear vision concerning missiological strategy

We need to recapture the apostolic vision of church planting. Paul's methodology was not mission stations administered and controlled by foreign missionaries but rather the establishing of indigenous, autonomous, local churches. What was Paul's 'strategic plan'? It was the establishing of self-governing, self-propagating and self-financing local churches.

1. Self-governing churches

Wherever Paul planted a church he was zealous to train capable, God-fearing, Christ-exalting, indigenous leaders. We see this clearly in Acts 14:23: 'And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.'

Self-governing churches are central to Paul's missiological strategy. In his letter to Titus he instructs Titus to appoint elders, indigenous leaders, in every city in Crete (Titus 1:5). Each church, then, is to be self-governing. Churches are not to come under the authority of a foreign mission agency or mission station. There is no place for 'the Westerner' to rule over indigenous peoples, but rather indigenous leaders should be diligently sought out and trained. Once indigenous leaders are in place, the missionary should step down and step out.

2. Self-propagating churches

Paul crossed the Roman world in three sweeping missionary journeys. He first went to the Jews in the synagogue and then to the Gentiles in the public

square. By God's grace Paul established indigenous churches that in turn planted other indigenous churches. *Churches planting churches is God's method.*

3. Self-financing churches

Whenever possible churches should be self-financing. Certainly there will be times in the foundational stages of a new church that may require outside human and financial resources. This may be the mother church helping a daughter work or a cooperative venture of many churches rallying to assist a new church. There may be other times when a local church falls upon hard times and may need temporary financial assistance. However, the long-term goal is self-financing churches.

The local church is responsible to provide for its own pastor and care for his needs (1 Tim 5:17–18). A local church may provide assistance to other churches should an emergency occur (2 Cor 8:1–6). The local church may provide financial assistance to missionaries whom they know and trust (Phil 4:18). However, missions that financially support indigenous leaders may inadvertently end up controlling them. There needs to be great care taken so that good intentions are not abused and that Western support does not rob indigenous people of the privilege and responsibility of supporting their own pastors.

Some challenging questions

Is the glory of God at the heart of all we do individually, in our local church and in the missions that we support? Are we earnestly praying for, training and sending out church planters? Are the missions that we support serving indigenous peoples or unintentionally ruling over them? Are seminaries working in concert with the local church? Friends, let us walk carefully, ensuring that God has all the glory as we labour through the local church to the ends of the earth! May our mission-hearted God enable us all to be a mission-hearted people!

This article first appeared in the summer 2010 issue of Barnabas, a magazine of the Sovereign Grace Fellowship of Canada. Used here with permission. Bob Penhearow is president of Carey Outreach Ministries (www.careyoutreach.org).

Deaconesses?

Bill James

The Biblical Case The key texts are Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3:11 and Romans 16:1. These are not absolutely clear and there are a variety of possible interpretations. For example:

1) Acts chapter 6. Is this the establishment of the diaconate with the precedent being set of all males? Or is this the beginnings of a diaconal ministry that grew and developed into what was understood as the diaconate by the time the Pastoral Epistles were written? John MacArthur doubts that the men of Acts 6 were deacons at all and believes they may have functioned more as elders. For example Philip turned out to be an evangelist, and Stephen a preacher. MacArthur does believe in deaconesses, 'Later Paul divided church leadership into three distinct offices: elders, deacons, and deaconesses (1 Tim 3).' – sermon on Acts 6:1-7.

2) Romans 16:1. Was Phoebe a deacon of the church, or just an outstanding servant? The Greek word for deacon is the same as the more general term for servant/minister. However the context suggests some official church role as she was the messenger bringing the letter to the Roman church.

I will focus on 1 Timothy 3:11. First, the arguments in favour of women deacons, second the arguments against, and third, arguments for an intermediate position:

Arguments in favour

1) The text just uses the word women. If Paul had been referring to the deacons' wives, we would expect the Greek to give some indication such as 'their women' (the conventional way of describing wives). But it isn't there. The text just says 'women'.

2) The expression 'in the same way' leads us to expect a new category of church officers. First you have the elders. Then 'in the same way' you

have the deacons. Then thirdly ‘in the same way’ you have the women. The most natural way of reading that is that Paul is specifying a third group of church officers, namely women deacons.

3) The qualifications required of ‘the women’ are almost exactly the same as those required of other church officers (elders and deacons). In particular, the women are to be ‘worthy of respect’. This implies some special church responsibility.

4) If v.11 is talking about the wives of male deacons, it is strange to say the least that Paul has no qualifications for the wives of elders.

Arguments against

1) In v.12 Paul makes clear reference to male deacons, and vv.8-9 refer more naturally to male deacons. Hence the whole section (vv.8-12) is best understood as referring to male deacons, with a brief parenthesis in v.11 referring to their wives. (Taking this position requires that we apply the qualifications of v.11 to deacons’ wives, and seems to imply that deacons’ wives have a recognised place in the work of the church.)

In answer to this I would say that vv.8-12 are all clearly referring to deacons. Verse 11 makes specific reference to the qualifications of women deacons, and v.12 makes specific reference to the qualifications of married male deacons.

2. There is no qualification for marital faithfulness required of the women in v.11. This would be implicit if they were deacons’ wives.

Arguments for an intermediate position

Some say that women have a role in assisting the work of male deacons, but should not be regarded as ‘deacons’ in the full sense.

1) The qualifications for the ‘women’ in v.11 are less extensive than those of the men.

If you look carefully at the text, there are five qualifications for deacons in vv.8-9. There are 4 qualifications for the women in v.11. This is hardly a significant difference. In fact, there is a very close parallel to be drawn

between the qualifications of vv.8-9 and v.11. The commentator Knight who takes the position of 'deacons' wives' acknowledges that the qualifications for the women are virtually synonymous with those of deacons.

2) In 1 Timothy 5:9-10 there is reference to the 'widows' who are supported by the church and may be employed in some way, perhaps assisting the deacons. This is not clearly linked to 1 Timothy 3:11. The emphasis in 1 Timothy 5 is not on the ministry of the widows, but benevolent support (1 Tim 5:16).

Some further observations

a) In surveying the commentators, it is noteworthy that all regard 1 Timothy 3:11 as difficult.

b) It is important to maintain the principle of 1 Timothy 2:12; that overall authority belongs to the male eldership. So we need to be clear about the subordinate position of the deacons; in churches where the deacons are the ruling council, a female diaconate is unbiblical.

c) Should women deacons have a different and distinctive rôle from their male counterparts? (ie are we really establishing a church office of 'deaconesses' which is subtly different from that of 'deacons'). It would be difficult to maintain this distinction, because the responsibilities of 'deacons' are not clearly defined in Scripture beyond the inference from Acts 6 that they are serving/assisting in some way. As with all deacons, responsibilities will vary according to aptitude and what the elders consider to be appropriate.

Cases from Early Church History

There are references to women deacons/ deaconesses in the early church:

1) The letter of Pliny (Governor of Bithynia) to Emperor Trajan 111-113AD speaks of his interrogation of two Christian women known as deaconesses (*ministrae* in Latin).

2) The *Didascalia* (200-250AD) speaks of the honour due to the officers of the church and includes the statement: 'The deacon stands in the place

of Christ and you should love him. The deaconess should be honoured by you as the Holy Spirit is honoured.'

Then on the institution of deacons and deaconesses: '...should be chosen and instituted as deacons: on the one hand, a man for the administration of the many necessary tasks; on the other hand, a woman for ministry among the women.' It goes on to say how women deacons would be involved in visiting homes, assisting in baptisms of women, and the instruction of women converts. 'The women especially should be diligent in their service to other women and the men deacons in their service to other men.' In the same period, Clement's student Origen refers to Romans 16:1 as evidence of women deacons. (*Women in the earliest churches*, Witherington, Cambridge, 1988).

3) Council of Nicea 325AD.

'....If inquiry reveals that they are unworthy, though, then they must be excluded from the clergy. The same thing must be done with respect to deaconesses..... We spoke about deaconesses enrolled in these ranks, since they have received no laying on of hands and are thus therefore to be counted among the laity.'

Epiphanius (374-377) speaks of deaconesses working amongst women. He is keen to distinguish them from the priesthood, and says that it is the work of male deacons to have charge of 'assisting those who do administer the sacraments'. Evidently there is some sacramentalism at this point.

4) 5th and 6th centuries

It is evident that clear clergy/ laity divide is being maintained by the Council of Nicea. By the time of the Council of Chalcedon in 451 there is a requirement that deaconesses should be at least 40 by the time they are ordained, and if they then marry they are to be regarded as spurning the grace of God and to be anathematised.

By the sixth century there were edicts stopping the ordination of women entirely (Witherington). This may have been because of a sacramental understanding of priesthood, and a confusion of the diaconate with 'priestly' ministries.

Source (unless otherwise stated): 'Deaconesses: An Historical Study' Martimort, Ignatius, 1986 translation from French

Some observations

There is clear evidence that there were women deacons/deaconesses operating, and they were involved at least in ministering to other women for the sake of decency, propriety, etc.. However, it is not clear whether women deacons operated in a wider sphere, and if not, why not? There are questions of sacramentalism evident, and ultimately a tendency to associate the work of the deacon closely with the 'priest'. There will also have been questions of what was appropriate in that time and culture.

Conclusions

It is impossible to be dogmatic. We can take a view on the biblical text, and seek to be faithful in applying it according to clear principles:

a) We must maintain and not undermine the biblical teaching of male authority in the church family, eg 1 Timothy 2:11-15.

In maintaining this principle, we do not want to overemphasise male leadership so that it becomes oppressive in a way which is alien to the NT. Paul regarded women as fellow workers in the gospel (eg Phil 4:3). So we should not exclude women from ministries and office which do not violate the text above. We recognise that diaconal roles are not clearly defined in the NT except that they are distinct from eldership, do not involve overall spiritual leadership/ authority, and the name of the office implies works of service.

b) We must acknowledge that 1 Timothy 3:11 means *something*, ie: There was involvement of women in the diaconal ministry. Such women had to be suitably qualified and recognised in some way by the church.

We must therefore either recognise women in some diaconal capacity, or recognise the wives of deacons in a formal way for that ministry.

Church officers need to be agreed among themselves before taking this subject before the church membership.

The Gospel in China 1949-1952

Bob Davey

The Communists take over China

On 1 October 1949 Mao Zedong proclaimed the birth of the People's Republic of China. By the end of 1949 the Communist army had established virtual control of China. There was a widespread welcome for the peace. It turned out to be the calm before the storm. The new civic Communist officials were taking careful stock. A reign of terror was being deliberately organised. Then they launched into a programme of widespread arrests and public trials. The victims were landowners, businessmen with interests abroad and supporters of the old 'imperialistic' government of Chiang Kai-shek. University faculty members, professionals, artists and writers were also the objects of hate. These trials were held in public. When the charges were read out, the people were asked to pass the sentence, whether of confiscation of property, or sending to a labour camp, or execution. Executions were carried out without any delay. House searches were made by day or night. Suspects were taken away for interrogation, some of them never to be seen alive again.

Meetings for indoctrination by Communist cadres were compulsory. Accusation meetings, including self-accusation, abounded. Self-accusation meant criticism of one's past thinking and actions. The group, led by a well-trained cadre, would demand that the accused change to the party line. Any resistance or reluctance was met by intimidation. It was blatant brain-washing.

By the end of 1951 up to 5 million people had been executed or perished in other ways (Mao admitted to 800,000). Many Christians were martyred. Christians had served in the government of Chiang Kai-shek during and after the war with Japan and there were many Christians occupying senior positions in commerce and education.

The immediate Communist domestic policy within China

The Communists set about giving China the strongest government that China had ever had. To achieve this they set about complete domination in three areas of life :

1. *In the area of politics:* to maintain absolute domination of all China by a one-party state backed up by ruthless power. Tibet, regarded as part of China, was invaded and taken by May 1951.

2. *In the area of society:* to introduce and maintain a programme of social engineering so as to thoroughly remould the Chinese people and their culture. This would be achieved by a programme of re-education. Communist ideology would be imposed, with its view of the universe, man, history, ethics and all the structures of society. Resistance would be summarily dealt with. Class enemies were to be regarded as irredeemable, and eliminated.

3. *In the area of religion:* to introduce a policy of strict State control until religion died a natural death and became history. As atheists and humanists, Communists believed all religion was but superstition and would vanish away through the process of re-education.

Confucianism was regarded as the major enemy because it was an indigenous philosophy and religion. It was deeply rooted in Chinese culture and life. To break its hold on the people there needed to be the break-up of the traditional family, the destruction of Confucian ethics and the reinterpretation of history along the lines of class struggle.

Buddhism and Taoism were regarded as almost indigenous faiths and could be dealt with by closing down most of the temples and monasteries, expropriating their land and sending the 'parasitic' priests to tasks of productive labour and re-education.

Christianity was viewed as a foreign religion used to impose foreign ways and foreign powers on a weak China. The first task was to expel all foreign missionaries. All mission assets such as properties, hospitals and institutions of education would be taken over. Expulsion would be achieved as quickly as possible and without offending world opinion too much. Remaining Christianity, of all forms, would be State-controlled until it had withered away.

Islam was a minority foreign religion by and large confined to the western provinces. It was to be strictly kept down because of the history of periodic armed revolts.

The immediate Communist policy toward the Protestant Church

In January 1950 a directory published by the National Christian Council indicated there were 834,000 Protestant communicant members in China. A

more realistic assessment put the number of believers at 1,000,000 at least. There were 19,000 churches, chapels or evangelistic stations, over 2000 ordained Chinese pastors and 10,500 evangelists and Christian workers.

At the beginning of 1948 there were 110 Protestant mission groups with over 6000 missionaries in China. The number of missionaries was down to 4062 by the end of 1949. By the end of 1951 all remaining missionaries had left or were in the process of leaving China for good. Thereafter, for a long time, the only direct missionary input into China was from Christian radio ministry. The Far Eastern Broadcasting Corporation began to beam programmes into China from 1949.

In May 1950 the new Premier, Zhou Enlai, invited four Liberal Protestant leaders to a conference in Beijing. At three late night sessions they worked out a manifesto *Direction of Endeavour for Chinese Christianity in the Construction of the New China*, more popularly known as *The Christian Manifesto*. It was first published on 10 August 1950. This required an admission from Christians that the Church had been a tool of imperialism. Now they were to give their first and foremost loyalty and obedience to the Communist Party and purge themselves of all imperialistic influences. In return they could hope for freedom of religious belief according to the Constitution. The manifesto embodied the three-fold principle of self-government, self-support and self-propagation for the Church. Implementation of this policy would be through the 'Three-Self Reform Movement' which was to be controlled by the Religious Affairs Bureau. The TSRM (later to become the Three-Self Patriotic Movement) was launched in April 1951 with its slogan of 'Love Country; Love Church'. Chinese Christians of all persuasions were to cut off connection completely with their brethren in the West and see to the removal of all missionaries out of China. Within two years it was claimed that 400,000 Protestant Christians had endorsed the manifesto, though 40,000 was nearer the true number. Clearly, there were going to be problems.

Communists had places of influence and authority within the Chinese Church and organisations such as the YMCA, YWCA, denominational bodies, and some theological colleges. The main drafter of the manifesto and chairman of the newly formed TSRM was Y T Wu (Wu Yaozong, 1893-1979), a long-time serving secretary of the YMCA. He was a secret Communist party member for many years. Wu was also trusted by the Communist leaders.

Accusation meetings in the churches

Accusation meetings in the Protestant churches were organised by the TSRM. The first accusation campaign was launched in Beijing, at the

inauguration conference of the TSRM in April 1951. Then on 2 May 1951 the *Tianfeng* published a summons to the whole Protestant Church in China to take part in accusation meetings. Accusations and self-criticisms of all past and present 'imperialist associations' were to be made. The slogan was 'propagandise well, accuse minutely'. Elaborate preparations were made and every detail rehearsed. Betrayals were deliberately planned. Only participation by churches and all their members in these accusation meetings would qualify them to join the new ecumenical Protestant Church body being set up, called the Three-Self Reform Church. The accusation meetings became extraordinarily intense because many churches in some way had links with the USA through the missions. The USA and China had troops on opposite sides in the Korean war, which had broken out in June 1950. The USA was now the number one imperialist enemy. Chinese Christian was made to accuse Chinese Christian. Congregations were made to accuse their pastors. In this way the spirit of love in the Christian fellowships was deliberately destroyed by the spreading of lies, suspicion and fear.

Accounts of the meetings were published by national and local newspapers. Thousands of Christian pastors and church workers were imprisoned and sent to labour camps. Many survivors were not released until 1979, after the death of Mao Zedong.

Many Christians withdrew from the organised Church altogether and met in the private homes of trusted friends for fellowship and worship. This was the origin of the house-church movement.

Last days in China for foreign missionaries

In 1950 it became clear that missionaries were vulnerable. They were told they were not welcome, being foreigners and agents of imperialism. The Chinese Christians began to tell the missionaries that it was dangerous for them to stay and that their presence constituted a danger for the Chinese Church. The China Inland Mission was the last mission to withdraw from China. At the beginning of 1951 the CIM had 637 missionaries in China, together with over 200 children.

Evacuation was not a straightforward task. The situation inland was complicated. Missionaries were held under virtual house arrest with no work possible while exit visas were obtained. These were only granted after advertisements had been placed in local newspapers for any with debts or any other grievances against the missionaries to come forward. Doctors could be charged with murder just because patients had died! A Chinese citizen must also be found to act as surety for debts, crimes and all future behaviour toward the People's Republic of China. Even then permission

could be withheld. However, in spite of all, evacuation was completed on 20 July 1953. It was the joyful testimony of the CIM that 'since the decision to withdraw was taken, not a life nor a limb was lost. To God be the glory.'

The 'Open Century' of freedom to evangelise throughout China by foreign missionaries was over. It was not quite one hundred years since Hudson Taylor had first set foot on mainland China on 1 March 1854. The withdrawal of the last CIM missionary also brought to a close the one hundred and forty-six years of direct Protestant missionary endeavour in mainland China from Robert Morrison's arrival in 1807.

Assessment of a hundred and forty-six years of Protestant foreign mission input to China

How much had been achieved for the gospel in China since Robert Morrison's arrival in China on 7 September 1807? The answer would become clear within the next quarter of a century. The spiritual foundation of the Chinese Protestant Church turned out to be sound and strong. And from that foundation the Protestant Church would not only survive, but would multiply numerically. It also maintained its essential evangelicalism. This has been the legacy of all the sacrificial missionary service in China, together with the supporting prayers and sacrificial giving of the worldwide Church for the cause of Christ. The gospel of free salvation to be found by saving faith in Jesus Christ is still the power of God unto salvation, wherever it is declared.

Christian students and the Communists

The Communists gave a high priority to gaining control of students' minds and actions. Though Christian fellowships were able to meet on campus to start with, it was not long before this became impossible. Political pressures on the students were tremendous. Every student was placed in a political group with endless indoctrination meetings and parades. The difficulty was that the Christian could not accept the Marxist atheistic view of life. These were really tough times for the Christian student. Most were strong enough to stand up to the pressure, but some were not. Christians could get into trouble just for saying grace at meals. There was always the threat of losing their scholarships hanging over them. Application forms of all description, including jobs, would have the question 'Do you have any religion?' Christians knew perfectly well that any answer in the affirmative would mean rejection of the application. Shouting blasphemous slogans such as 'Our eternal liberator, Mao Zedong, our Saviour' were expected. Students had to write out their life stories time and time again. They had to include criticisms of their past thinking and then the others in the group would

criticise in turn. If the Christian stood firm he would be subjected to 'douzheng' which is 'struggle'. This is when the group would accuse and struggle against him, to change his thinking and attitudes to that which was 'correct', that is to say, to the party line.

We can see the importance of the powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival among the students in the period leading up to the Communist People's Republic of China coming into being. A special strength from God was needed to be faithful to Christ.

Dilemmas and their resolution

Great determination and skill were exercised by the Three-Self Reform Movement to unite all the churches under the banner of patriotism and firm central control. The individual church leaders were given special attention and every effort was made to win them to the cause. Co-operation with authorities was rationalised and attempts were made to justify submission on biblical grounds. Some succumbed to blandishments, fair promises, threats and specious arguments in the hope of preserving the continued existence of their church. Some of those who held liberal theological views, or those with no firm views at all, could acquiesce quite happily. Others just made the best of the situation. Those who were won over were placed in positions of authority and influence. At the end of the day it came down to the individual conscience before God.

Leaders with evangelical convictions differed among themselves in their response. There is nothing new about that. Church history clearly has many similar examples where the preciousness of the biblical truth of the 'priesthood of all believers' comes into sharp focus. Each believer has the right to stand before God in the light of their understanding of Scripture and prayer. Some good men just could not go along with what they saw as fundamental compromise and disobedience to Scripture. For them the path would be a path of suffering. Other good men stayed with the Three-Self Movement to the end, convinced it was the will of God for them. Then there were those good men who were at first convinced it was the will of God for them to submit, but as time went on came to see it as an error and confessed it to be so. To such no mercy was shown by their Communist masters.

The Communist press conducted a remorseless campaign of abuse and hatred against the Church and individual Christians. Also the official TSRM magazine *Tianfeng* was unsparing with its abusive vilifications. The main targets of the campaigns were naturally the most influential theologians and charismatic leaders. Three early casualties were : in 1951 Bishop Chen Wenyuan, prestigious Methodist leader ('China's No.1 Protestant'), then in

1952 T C Chao, (Zhao Zichen) Professor of Theology and Dean of the School of Religion at Yanjing University, Beijing and Ching Tienying (Jing Dianying) founder of the Pentecostal Jesus Family. The Jesus Family was dissolved the next year. The next major leader to suffer was Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903-1972). He refused to move to safety from Shanghai. He was arrested and imprisoned for twenty years in May 1952. He was to die a few weeks after his release in 1972.

The Little Flock

By 1949 the Little Flock had about 700 assemblies around the country, with a total attendance of about 70,000. These figures are approximate because Brethren assemblies did not count numbers on principle! Early in 1951 Watchman Nee and some of his colleagues visited the CIM in Shanghai. Time had been when they kept strictly apart from all western missionary societies. The gesture of friendship was greatly appreciated and bound up the breaches of the past.

The Little Flock had always been free from all foreign influences and independent of foreign financial support so it had been expected that they would be regarded with favour by the new regime. However the favour was not lasting because the Little Flock could not give up its spiritual independence and the Communist authorities would not allow that on principle.

Difficulties lay ahead but the Little Flock was going ahead with the plan of evangelising China by means of mass migration of Christian groups. They were to settle inland in unevangelised places and earn their living by practising their trades. So the Shanghai congregation of about 5000 would become a seedbed from which small but mature church groups would be planted. The emphasis would not be on communal living but on communal worship. But did they really know what was going on inland? Their answer was that of course they did, but it was the love of Christ compelling them to go, in spite of all.

Ministry to Chinese outside of China

Some influential evangelical leaders saw their future ministry as being to Chinese outside of China. Four such were Calvin Chao, Andrew Gih, Witness Lee and Leland Wang.

Calvin Chao (Zhao Junying) moved to Hong Kong. He visited Singapore in 1950 to hold revival meetings there and was asked to return in order to start the Singapore Theological Seminary with Paul Contento. He also started the

Chinese Youth Gospel Centre in Manila, Philippines. In 1956 the Chao family moved to the USA.

Andrew Gih (Ji Zhiwen) held evangelistic meetings from 1949 in the Kuai Le (Happiness) Theatre in Hong Kong on Sunday mornings with congregations each week of more than 1200. The scale of the need and opportunity for the gospel at that time in Hong Kong can be gauged from the fact that the population of Hong Kong, as a result of refugees from mainland China, multiplied many times from 500,000 before World War II to more than 3 million by 1955. A Gospel Hall was formally established. His influence upon Chinese churches in South-East Asia was to be profound.

Witness Lee (Li Changshou, 1905-1997) had emigrated in 1949 to Formosa (Taiwan) and there a flourishing Little Flock work was established. He then emigrated to the USA in 1962. His leadership was authoritarian. His branch of the Christian Brethren was called 'The Local Church' movement. It has expanded around the globe including into China. It now has over 2300 assemblies with 250,000 membership worldwide. In 1965 Living Stream Ministry was founded in Anaheim, California which published the works of both Witness Lee and Watchman Nee.

Leland Wang (Wang Zai) had founded the Chinese Missionary Union to reach overseas Chinese with the gospel in 1928. He was the first Chinese from within China to engage in this field of work. He was known as the 'Moody of China'. His ministry extended to the USA, Canada, Europe and the Middle East. He also received a D.D. degree from Wheaton College. Leland Wang died in 1975.

For the Church of Christ still in China it was the beginning of sorrows, but God was with them.

Sources

A J Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century*, Book 7, Hodder & Stoughton, 1989.

K S Latourette, *A History of Modern China*, Pelican, 1954.

Leslie Lyall, *Come Wind, Come Weather*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1961.

Angus Kinnear, *Against the Tide, The Story of Watchman Nee*, Kingsway, 1979.

Phyllis Thompson, *The Reluctant Exodus*, Hodder & Stoughton, and OMF, 1979.

Partners International website, [partnersintl.org/history/complete history](http://partnersintl.org/history/complete%20history). Links with *Calvin Chao*.

News

China

The Nobel peace award has been awarded to Liu Xiaobo a 54-year-old leading intellectual dissident in China. The basis of this award is Liu's non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights. Beijing reacted angrily to this award, called it an obscenity and warned that Norway's decision could damage ties between the two countries. Liu, who has been arrested and detained several times, was sentenced last year to eleven years in prison for his co-authoring of Charter 08 which is a call for democracy. Liu earned a PhD in 1988. He has visited Columbia University, the University of Oslo and the University of Hawaii.

Hosting the Olympic Games did not seem to lessen the persecution of dissidents in China. Perhaps this Nobel peace award to Liu will make the Chinese Government more aware of the watching world. Our responsibility as believers is to pray for thousands of Christians in prison for their faith in Christ. We should pray that they will have spiritual and physical strength to share the gospel. We should pray for significant and lasting advances in religious freedom in China.

Malaysia

I was asked to preach at an annual combined camp of eight Reformed Baptist churches, one being from Singapore.

I was enabled to preach with a felt sense of liberty and authority, and this was coupled with an obvious receptivity from



Beijing Olympic stadium

most hearers. Our theme was the nature and worship of God. My wife Rosemary's presence was a blessing to many of the women. I enjoyed stamina enough to fulfil all that was asked of me in a heavy programme. Incidental to my ministry we were able to explore the historical backgrounds of Melaka from the Sultans and Portuguese to the Dutch and English; the Straits of Melaka, and highlights of Kuala Lumpur such as the Petronas Towers.

These churches are fairly new, generally small and given the restrictive racial and religious laws they must endure are courageous and committed. These brethren faithfully adhere to essential Christian doctrines within the context of diluted or distorted teachings in some other professing Christian groups. National laws favour Malays over Chinese and Indian Malaysians, and Islam over all other religions, which include, besides Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism and Hinduism. Chinese ancestor worship has increased rather than declined, and we were stepping

around burning embers from sacrificial fires lit on footpaths outside family shops with the purpose of obtaining ancestral favours for the owners.

Massive amounts of government money go into the building of huge mosques while Christians struggle for years to get approval to buy land for the building of church premises. While more cosmopolitan cities such as KL and Melaka enjoy reasonable toleration, north-eastern areas are more influenced by zealous Muslims. By law a Malay must be a Muslim. A Malay (as distinct from a *Malaysian*) who converts from Islam faces legal pressures, loses status as a Malay, often has to change names, and may eventually find it more tolerable to leave the country. Chinese and Indian Malaysians are among the most hardworking people in the country.

These Reformed Baptist churches approach doctrine, discipleship and worship with the utmost seriousness. Most pastors are not formally trained but instead have gone through local pastoral internship courses with a senior pastor. This highlights the importance of experienced visiting speakers at camps, and an annual leadership conference sponsored by the Shalom church in Singapore, a big brother to them. This church also obtains and makes available good Christian books to the Malaysian churches – there was an imposing bookstall at the camp.

I talked over possibilities with these Malaysian pastors. Could we like-minded Aussies provide teaching resources between us, with visits to Malaysia, or even sponsor several on a ‘ministry intensive’ to Perth, since we are their near neighbours and even in the same time zone? These brothers and sisters need our prayer support and interest.

John Campbell.

Portugal

From Karl and Glynn Peterson who work into Mozambique from Barberton South Africa

Glynn and I just returned from an 8-day trip to Portugal, where I spoke at the FIEL Conference for church leaders. FIEL is the same Brazilian publisher we work with in Mozambique – distributing their books and organizing a church leaders’ conference. We lived in Portugal 15 years ago to study the language before moving to Mozambique. It was a delight to return.

Evangelicals form only a tiny segment of the Portuguese population. Their congregations are few in number and small in size. So it was a real privilege to minister to the 40 or so who participated. As it was a smaller conference (and one that I didn’t have to organise!), Glynn and I enjoyed much time in personal conversation and fellowship with almost everyone who attended. It was good to hear about the struggles and successes of the church in Portugal. Though the believers are few in number, they have a depth to them which I miss in the church in Mozambique. As Glynn and I receive such little spiritual input it was refreshing to sit and enjoy the fellowship, music and ministry of the other conference speakers.

Iraq

The Iraqi government has pledged to help exiled Christians return to their homeland after thousands were forced to flee amid intense persecution. The new Iraqi ambassador to the Vatican, Habbeeb Mohammed Hadi Ali Al-Sadr, in a statement following a meeting with the Pope last month, said the government had taken steps to preserve the country’s

Christian heritage and culture. It follows years of campaigning on behalf of the decimated Iraqi Christian community on an international stage by Barnabas Fund. Mr Al-Sadr said: 'For its part, the government has committed itself to all those who return, to give them a job, a plot to rebuild their homes and 1.5 million Iraqi dinars.' It seems the government has finally acknowledged the problems faced by Iraqi Christians, who have been targeted in waves of savage anti-Christian violence over the last 20 years. As a result, the Christian population of Iraq has declined from 1.5 million in 1990 to perhaps as low as 400,000 today. Much of this decline took place after the invasion of 2003, with many of the remaining Christians now internally displaced.

Give thanks for the Iraqi government's commitment to exiled Christians and pray that the pledges made will be honoured.

Pray that Christians who have fled will have the courage to return – thereby strengthening the Iraqi Church – and that they will be protected.

Pray specifically for converts to Christianity from Islam, that they too will be granted equal humanitarian rights in Iraq.

Zambia

News from Sovereign Grace Theological Seminary

We now have just over 40 students from Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. Contact sessions were held in March/April, and we are due for another round in September. I am thankful that there is increasing involvement in the Contact Sessions from a number of pastors and other ministers of the Word,



Bruce Button teaching

so that the students are able to benefit more richly from those whom God has gifted as teachers and ministers in the Body of Christ.

As you can imagine, our students come from a very wide range of situations and backgrounds. Some are making rapid progress with their studies while others are faced with all manner of challenges. Please pray for our students, that God will strengthen them, establish them in the truth, and give them a clear understanding of his call on their lives.

The situation in Zimbabwe continues to be a great challenge, on the one hand because of the general disintegration of the infrastructure, and on the other because our coordinator, Theo Soko, has suffered severe ill health this year. Please do bear him up before the throne of grace, asking our merciful Father to heal him and to encourage him and his family through this difficult time. During a visit to Zimbabwe in June, a brother from the Central Baptist Church helped us to organise a 3G Internet connection for Theo, but the actual service is still very slow most of the time. Pray for the country as a whole, and that the Lord

would enable us to overcome the challenges there and handle the administration in an efficient manner.

Israel

Some weeks ago one of the main daily newspapers of Israel carried a series of articles on various Jewish groups in Israel including the Orthodox, Conservative, and Reformed Jews. On August 18, the article was entitled Jesus (Yeshua) Super Star. The sub-title expanded: 'They circumcise their children, celebrate Bar-Mitzvah, get married by the religious (Jewish) authorities, but believe in Jesus as their Messiah. If you bump into them in the street or the army, you will most likely not recognise them.' This article seems to express tacit acceptance of Jewish Christians as one of the many groups within the Jewish people. Furthermore, a Jewish pastor was interviewed on a late-night show on national TV several months ago. The interview lasted 45 minutes and was very fair, to say the least. Although the interviewers were at times cynical, enough time was accorded to properly answer the questions posed. This exposure was very important for the body of believers in the land.

There has been more media exposure about the believers in Israel in recent years and that is significant. In the past we could only dream of being recognised as a legitimate part of the Jewish people, but now it seems it may have become a reality!

United Kingdom

The Times newspaper recently published a front page article reporting the view by a well-known atheist scientist, Stephen Hawking, that he didn't think a Creator

was needed. All one needed was gravity and the Big Bang would do the rest. Professor John Lennox at Green College Oxford withstood such sad logic. In an article in the *Daily Mail*, 3rd September 2010 he stated:

'According to Hawking, the laws of physics, *not* the will of God, provide the real explanation as to how life on earth came into being. The Big Bang, he argues, was the inevitable consequence of these laws; because there is a law such as gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing.....'

Prof John Lennox went on to say –

'As both a scientist and a Christian, I would say that Hawking's claim is misguided. He asks us to choose between God and the laws of physics, as if they were necessarily in mutual conflict.

'But contrary to what Hawking claims, physical laws can never provide a complete explanation of the universe. Laws themselves do not create anything, they are merely a description of what happens under certain conditions.

'What Hawking appears to have done is to confuse law with agency. His call on us to choose between God and physics is a bit like someone demanding that we choose between aeronautical engineer Sir Frank Whittle and the laws of physics to explain the jet engine.

'That is a confusion of category. The laws of physics can explain how the jet engine works, but someone had to build the thing, put in the fuel and start it up. The jet could not have been created by the laws of physics on their own - but the task of development and creation needed the genius of Whittle as its agent.'

The Reality of Hell

This is an extract from the fourth of five sermons on hell preached by pastor Jerry Marcellino of Audubon Bible Church, Laurel, Mississippi.

Will there be those who once professed Christ be in hell?

We consider that this place of eternal torment will also be the eternal abode of those who 'expected' to spend eternity in heaven. So, please know that I want to help you make sure that you will not become a 'shocked' inhabitant of hell! The Lord Jesus Christ taught us and warned us that there will always be people (i.e. never-dying souls) who expected, at death, to wake up in heaven; but instead, wake-up in hell (Matthew 7:21-23, 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness"'). However, the most alarming of our Lord's words, on this subject, can be found in Luke 13:22-30, 'He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them, "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, "Lord, open to us," then he will answer you, "I do not know where you come from." Then you will begin to say, "We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets." But he will say, "I tell you, I do not

know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!" In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last."

Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ taught unmistakably and unashamedly that there are and will always be 'shocked' inhabitants in hell (cf. 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 4:1-3; Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43; 25:41-46). O dear friends, this is not a light matter for mockery! Those who were once religious earthlings are now screaming in hell! This frightening fact begs a Scriptural question and description of this place. In other words, what is hell like? The Bible tells us that hell is a place of unspeakable, conscious, punishment of unrepentant sinners who are endlessly weeping and gnashing their teeth in hell-fire (Matthew 8:12; see also Isaiah 33:14; Matthew 12:32; 25:46; Luke 16:23, 28; Revelation 20:1,15; 21:8; 22:11)! So then, despite what the 14th century Italian medieval poet, Dante Alighieri, wanted us to believe about both Satan and his demons' role in hell; Revelation 20:10 tells us that both he and his demons will be the ones being tormented in hell! Furthermore, this tormenting and consuming fire in hell, is God himself (Psalm 139:8; Hebrews 12:29)! In conclusion, how could a sporadic or even a regular attendee of church end up in hell? Luke 13:22-30 reminds us that there are two reasons for this sad, but certain reality - a lack of spiritual urgency and a life of spiritual complacency.

A Tiberias Rabbi

The story of Ephraim ben Joseph Eliakim by W M Christie

Ephraim's father was a rabbi in the city, a leading man in the Arabic-speaking Jewish community. Ephraim was from a young age expected to follow in his father's footsteps and become a rabbi, and was well trained in Bible and Talmud. In due time he attained the dignity of *Haham*, or rabbi.

Esteemed and honoured by Jews and Arabs alike, he held a leading place in the community, and became one of the *dayanim*, a judge in the religious court, specially entrusted with the rights and interests of the individuals of the community. His wife was the daughter of the chief rabbi of Tiberias.

Along with other duties Rabbi Ephraim undertook the teaching of the Bible and the Talmud. His school was of the kind usual in Tiberias in those days, with the rabbi sitting on a chair and his pupils gathered around him on mats on the floor. Generally the Bible was studied only through the Talmud, but the Bible for its own sake attracted him, and he gave it more than ordinary attention.

Haham Ephraim was wary of Christians, especially missionaries, and would not venture near them. In his own words he said that he had 'never permitted his wife or children to go near the hospital department of the Church of Scotland Mission, however ill they might be', a compromise most of the other rabbis were ready to make whenever a Jewish doctor was not available.

But a change was to come. The head of the Church of Scotland in Tiberias at that time was the Rev. Dr. William Ewing. During a visit to the Jewish section of the town, I accompanied him. On our way we passed the school of Haham Ephraim and looked in through the open window. Dr. Ewing, fluent in Hebrew, greeted the rabbi. Kindly words from one he had been accustomed to look upon with fear and distrust touched the rabbi's heart, and a few days later he appeared at Dr. Ewing's home.

The two men were of almost the same age and very soon the formal visit developed into friendly talk. Many different subjects were discussed, with the Talmud and the Bible having a prominent place. The Haham called upon Dr. Ewing again and again, and every conversation led from both sides to the claims of Jesus as Messiah. The rabbi's knowledge of the Bible stood him in good stead, and the prophecies gradually became clearer to him.

The older Jewish interpretation of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah was known as referring to the King-Messiah. It was not long before Haham Ephraim recognised the picture of the Suffering Servant 'by whose stripes we are healed'. The sufferings of his own people throughout the ages touched him deeply. He looked back through the centuries and asked: 'Where are the promises to the Fathers? We are God's chosen people; the glorious things that were to be ours are the possession of strangers.'

Guided by Dr. Ewing, the Haham considered: 'The first temple was destroyed and the nation scattered on account of three great sins committed by Israel, but seventy years later the temple was rebuilt. Then came the second destruction, and for over eighteen hundred years Israel has been without the Holy House. What was the cause of this second destruction and of the greater scattering? Idolatry was not the reason. There was no lack of zeal for either the Law or the sacrifices. Men were zealous for God and did not cease the temple service till the hour of destruction came. Why has God forsaken us so long?'

The Haham wept and prayed and struggled with the problem, unwilling to give in. He even asked questions about these things of his brother rabbis, but they could give only the time-worn formal answers of traditional Judaism. He was still unsatisfied, and the only result of his queries was to arouse suspicions among his brother rabbis who set a closer watch upon his movements.

Still he struggled, convinced that some terrible sin had been the cause of the wrath of God against his people. Then there dawned on him the secret of it all – 'hatred without a cause' (Yoma 9b). A still, small voice expostulated within him, 'Cease to hate Me. Love Me and I will give you peace.' The struggle was over. Rabbi Ephraim found a peace that was unbroken till his dying day.

At the thought of the next scene I still shudder. Rabbi Ephraim told his family that he was going to Jaffa for a few days. He was suspected and set upon, but found refuge with Dr. Ewing. It was decided that Dr. Ewing, the rabbi and I start for Jaffa before dawn the next morning. We had just got clear of the old castle when we were surrounded by a raving crowd, immediately unhorsed, and Ephraim was almost torn to pieces. Dr. Ewing talked to the crowd and they finally dispersed.

A conference was then held in which the Haham's wife and one or two rabbis took part, but it was suddenly broken up, and the Haham let it be known that the journey to Jaffa was off. He took his wife's arm and walked home with her.

Then began a time of fierce persecution. Rabbi Ephraim was secretly and suddenly seized. Afterwards it became known that a false accusation of theft had been brought against him, and that he had been confined in a filthy cell. His resolution and spirit remained unbroken. He was flogged and starved, a punishment which injured his health for life. Still he was true to his convictions.

Condemned as a traitor, he was secretly removed from the town to a Jewish colony at the Waters of Meron (Lake Huleh) and his name blotted out of the remembrance of his friends and companions.

Months later one of the workers of the hospital at Tiberias, while riding in the Upper Jordan Valley, saw a forlorn figure bending to his task in the field under a hot sun. On closer approach he was surprised to find it was none other than Rabbi Ephraim. He was greatly changed. The hardships he had endured had left their marks upon his frame. The lines had deepened on his weather-beaten features, but there was a light of eager welcome in his eyes.

In answer to questions, he told briefly of his experiences. But these things had not moved him. Nothing daunted, he held on his way. A return to Tiberias was then impossible, and for support he willingly endured the weariness of unwonted toil until it should please God to make his duty plain. He stood among the furrows in the field, waving a genial farewell to his departing friend.

Not long afterwards Rabbi Ephraim turned up in Nazareth, and was baptized there. Upon his return to Tiberias his wife and children were taken from him. Though his wife loved him dearly, the relatives on both sides of the family united in threats and warnings, and kept the closest observation on her movements.

Had he been an ordinary Jew, they said in my hearing, 'we could have understood it. But that a rabbi, and one of his standing, should change, why, we never heard of such a thing.'

His children were young, and were kept beyond his influence. However, they were continually on his heart, and were constantly in his intercessions. In matters of faith, however, the rabbinical barrier was maintained and there was little association, except with the oldest son during a period of World War I.

The Haham made his way to Jerusalem. Suspicion and misrepresentation dogged his path, and he was misunderstood by nearly everybody. He worked

as a day labourer, carrying stones and mortar. His income was that of an ordinary worker, but he never complained. He was content with the simplest of living and clothing, and anything he could spare from his meagre resources he used to help the poor whom he met through his continual testimony to the gospel. Thus his service was not only in word, but also in deed.



Haham Ephraim

During this time he often came into contact with the rabbis in Jerusalem, many of whom had been his pupils in Tiberias. They were troubled and vexed to find him doing such lowly work, and pleaded with him: 'We beg you to have regard for your age and to abandon this hard and menial labour and return with us to be our father and chief as you were formerly.'

He accepted their offers of friendship with thankfulness, for they were evidences of their love for their old teacher, but he remained unswerving in his loyalty to his Messiah.

A happy change came when he was appointed as an evangelist in the service of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, nearer to the center of Jerusalem and to those he was anxious to reach. Freed from hard manual labour he could now devote his whole time and strength to witnessing among his fellow Jews. The Alliance rented a meeting-room for him on the Jaffa Road, and there many a warm disputation took place. This sometimes led to his being stoned, and on one occasion he received an ugly gash on the head. But still he never thought of ceasing to praise his Messiah, and the meeting-room was often filled to overflowing for the Saturday evening service.

Efforts were again made to secure his recantation, or at least his silence. Persecution had failed. Flattery and tempting inducements were resorted to. He was invited out by the rabbis, and he accepted the invitations, even to the Chief Rabbinate, for thereby he got what his heart yearned for most - the opportunity of proclaiming the gospel.

Haham Ephraim spent hours with the rabbis, reasoning with them from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah. The majority remained unconvinced, but some of them were awakened, recognised the proofs he presented, and met him privately from time to time for study and prayer.

I met him again in the summer of 1927, a joyful and happy reunion after thirty-four years. He was steadfast in the faith, humble and contented. His association with the Alliance was now continued in a voluntary way. It gave him great joy to spend a portion of his Sabbath day in the Reading Room, which bore the designation *Beth Dorshe Emeth*, the House of the Seekers after Truth. As men and boys came in he talked with them, and very often remained for the evening meeting, carrying through the service in Hebrew, which by this time was again a living language in the land. In all things he was an outstanding testimony to the saving power of the Messiah Jesus.

The Rev. Esber Domet, a close friend of Haham Ephraim, gives a beautiful account of their last talk together the evening before he was called home. He wrote: 'I felt the presence of the Lord near that bed. Haham Ephraim asked me to pray with him. After I had done so, he too prayed as follows: "O Lord Jesus, I praise thee that thou hast redeemed me. I bless thee that thou didst use me in thy service for the salvation of many souls. I beseech thee, Lord Jesus, to bless thy Church all over the world and to strengthen it. But I especially thank thee for the many believers here in Jerusalem. Give them faith and courage that they may never falter in their witness. Amen." '

With such words and thoughts of praise for the Lord he loved and whom he served so long, he passed from this world to hear the welcome, 'Well done, good and faithful servant... I will give you a crown of life.'

That was on the 30th of August, 1930. The next day the venerable rabbi, at the age of seventy-four, was laid in his last earthly resting place. Mr. Gabriel, of the Arabic Christian community, records the event: 'Another grave was dug alongside the Haham's for another brother in Christ, of the Arabic race. Jew and Arab were laid one beside the other, and Jews and Arabs, standing with bowed heads by the two open graves, were touched and softened the one toward the other.'

Sources:

This article with grateful acknowledgement to the CWI-Hagefen website Einspruch, Henry (ed). *When Jews Face Christ*, The Mediator, Baltimore, MD, 1932.

Christie W M, The Tiberias Rabbi, in *Would I? Would You?* pp. 50-57. Einspruch, Henry (ed), The Lewis and Harriet Lederer Foundation, Baltimore MD, 1970.

Book Review

The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church

Timothy Z Witmer

268 pages paperback

P&R Publishing, 2010

ISBN: 978 1 59638 131 5

There are many helpful books on preaching and pastoral counselling. There is a need for books that take a broader view of ministry and offer a framework for all the responsibilities of the elders of a church. *The Shepherd Leader* is a book that seeks to fill that gap. Timothy Z Witmer, Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, begins with the premise that leaders are shepherds and not directors. His book shows that the most appropriate way to think of role of the elder in a church is as a shepherd of God's people and then goes on to develop some the implications of a shepherding approach to the role of the elder.

The book has three main sections. The first looks at the biblical background to the concept of God as our Shepherd, and leaders of God's people as under-shepherds of the Great Shepherd. In this section Witmer provides a biblical-theological overview followed by an historical overview of the concept of shepherding.

The middle section outlines the four main roles of a shepherd: knowing, feeding, leading and protecting the flock. Each of these four roles have macro (large scale) and micro (small scale) elements. In knowing the flock he emphasises the importance of church membership and of the elders' role in maintaining the membership list as well as maintaining regular contact with church members. In feeding the flock he emphasises expository ministry from the pulpit as well as small scale and individual level teaching. In leading the sheep he discusses the importance of church-wide direction and leadership as well as leading oneself and family well. When discussing protecting the sheep he emphasises the need to guard against error through public teaching maintain the role of restorative church discipline.

The last section of the book begins to discuss how some of the principles and ideas can be applied in the church.

The Carey Conference 2011 – 4-6 January

Theme Spirit-filled ministry.

Preachers: Bruce Ware (USA), Ray Evans, Barry King, John Ling, Mike Tindall, Keith Walker. Womens' track Val Archer.

Venue – Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick.

For information contact John Rubens john.rubens@epbooks.org

Overall, this is a very helpful exposition. It is manageable without being too brief and will certainly be important in encouraging church leaders to think in a connected and creative way about shepherding the flock. Witmer works in a Presbyterian framework that does come through at points. He defends the Presbyterian position of a two-office view of the eldership (the teaching and ruling elder distinction). His historical survey of approaches to church leadership is understandably brief. However, because it is short he focuses on Reformation figures who adopted and developed his own Presbyterian position. It is interesting to see that the two (or even four) office view of the eldership seemed to originate with John Calvin in Geneva and Witmer does not find it proposed or practised before Calvin!

Perhaps the most valuable section is the central section which considers the four roles of the shepherd. The author has some very helpful practical ideas for how these roles might be fulfilled. It is refreshing to read his discussion on how to keep the spirit of Richard Baxter's pastoral concern whilst recognising that it would not be feasible to follow Baxter's actual practice of visiting 14-15 families per day with his assistant pastor two days a week! Witmer suggests a greater use of regular telephone contact with church members so that shepherding can happen in a way that is viable both for elders and members who have many other commitments.

This is a volume that is suitable for full-time pastors as well part-time elders. Some of Witmer's ideas and practical suggestions will need to be thought through for particular church situations and bearing in mind the cultural environment. However his work has high potential value in initiating a discussion on how to improve shepherding within the church. This work reminds those who are elders of their responsibility to shepherd God's flock well. It also keeps the focus on the help and care that the Lord God provides in fulfilling the responsibilities of shepherding and also on how the Lord our God is the Chief Shepherd of all his people.

Matthew Seymour

Editor ERROLL HULSE, 75 Woodhill Road, Leeds LS16 7BZ
Associate Editors DAVID KINGDON, UK, TOM NETTLES, USA,
JOHN CAMPBELL, AUSTRALIA, MICHAEL HAYKIN, USA
Subscriptions General Enquiries: FREDERICK HODGSON, c/o Eskholme,
Darnholme Road, Goathland YO22 5LA
frederick.hodgson@gmail.com

**Readers can subscribe on-line using a credit card – www.tentmaker.org.uk
(Contact Phil Roberts in the UK for further details – 01782 746879)**

Donations can be made anytime via the following agents.

(UK taxpayers may use gift aid.
Reformation Today is a registered UK charity – number 1017000)
Please make any cheques out to 'Reformation Today'.

Subscriptions for UK/Europe:
Frederick Hodgson – details above
(£13 for 1 year or £22 for 2 years)

Subscriptions for Australia:
Ray Levick – 57 Childs Street, Melton South, Victoria 3338
e-mail: raylevick@yahoo.com.au
(\$20 for 1 year or \$35 for 2 years)

Subscriptions for New Zealand:
Mrs Priscilla Drake –
43 Pilkington Road, Panmure,
Auckland 1006
e-mail: rt@tamkirb.org
(\$25 for 1 year or \$45 for 2 years)

Subscriptions for USA:
Tom Lutz – Edgewood Baptist Church,
3743 Nichol Avenue, Anderson,
IN 46011
e-mail: tomlutz41919@aol.com
(\$25 for 1 year or \$42 for 2 years)
or **Steven Frakes** – Chapel Library;
MZBC 2603 W. Wright St.
Pensacola, FL 32505
e-mail: www.mountzion.org
(\$25 for 1 year or \$42 for 2 years)

Subscriptions for Republic of Ireland:
Matthew Brennan – Ballingarrane
North, Clonmel, Co Tipperary
(£13 for 1 year or £22 for 2 years)

Subscriptions for Canada:
Max Latchford – 402 - 787 154th
Street, Surrey, BC, V4A 4S1
or **Janice Van Eck** – 52 Paulstown
Crescent, Guelph, Ontario, N1G 5H7
e-mail: janicevaneck@rogers.com
(\$25 for 1 year or \$41 for 2 years)

Subscriptions for South Africa:
Roland Eskinazi – PO Box 182,
Goodwood 7459 e-mail: e-mail:
eskinazi@mweb.co.za
(R75 for 1 year or R140 for two years)

Subscriptions for Singapore & Malaysia:
Shalom Christian Media – 8 New
Industrial Road, LHK3 Building
03-01, Singapore 536200
e-mail: contactscm@shalomrb.com
(\$35 for 1 year or \$60 for two years)

Subscriptions for Kenya:
Naphtally Ogallo – Grace Baptist
Church-Eldoret, PO Box 170-3000
Eldoret
e-mail: nandhogallo@gmail.com
(70Ksh for one year)

Single copies may be purchased. In this case the cost is one-sixth the above cost. Postage is included, but please note that we have to charge extra for airmail. A 1-year subscription has surcharge of £4.50 (£9.00 for 2-years) if airmail delivery is required.

Bound volumes are available: 71-90, 91-110 and 111-130 are £22 (\$35) each, 131-148 is £25 (\$40), 149-172 is £40 (\$60), 173-190 and 191-208 are £25 (\$40) each and 209-226 is £35 (\$56)

Donations to APC: These should be sent to Rachel Rothwell, 4 Hall Close, Bramhope, Leeds, LS16 9JQ. Cheques should be made out to 'African Pastors' Conferences'. Could UK donors please let Rachel know if they intend to use gift aid?

RT

2010

No. 238

NOV - DEC

CONTENTS

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. | Editorial | learning from Presbyterians | |
| 3. | How Justification by Faith was Lost | | Editor |
| 11. | A Heart for Missions | | Bob Penhearow |
| 16. | Deaconesses? | | Bill James |
| 21. | The Gospel in China 1949-1952 | | Bob Davey |
| 29. | News | | |
| 33. | The Reality of Hell | | Jerry Marcellino |
| 34. | A Tiberias Rabbi | | W M Christie |
| 39. | Book Review | | Matthew Seymour |