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239

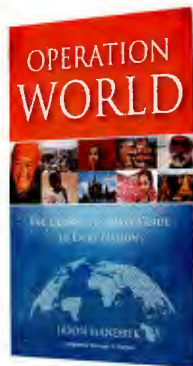
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As December began the UK experienced record snowfalls with crippling effects on public transport. The photo above was taken by Frederick Hodgson in Yorkshire. The pathway shown is the road to his neighbour covered with snow. The Automobile Association urged the Government to call in the Army to 'get Britain moving', saying ministers had to be 'more innovative' in their approach to tackling the snow. National leaders have pointed out that the severity of this early winter has had the same adverse effects on Continental countries. We sometimes see satellite photos which show that the Arctic and Antarctica are shrinking. Local wintry conditions often make it hard to believe in global warming! As the review of OPERATION WORLD suggests it is important to look beyond our national borders and conditions and think in terms of the overall global situation.



Front cover picture – We know of three arks, one in Canada, one in China and this one in the Netherlands. It was built by John Huibers, a Dutch contractor. He began his work during 2005 and opened his ark to the public in 2007. Huibers' ark has been visited by over 500,000. It is half the size of the ark built by Noah. Huibers has now begun work on a full-size ark in Dortrecht.

Editorial

The Lausanne Movement is a worldwide organisation that mobilises evangelical leaders to cooperate in the task of world evangelisation. The Movement is important because it is the largest evangelical representation so far in the history of the Church. 4,000 leaders from 198 countries gathered in Capetown from 16th to 25th October. The Chinese delegation of 200 were stopped at the airport in China and so were unable to attend. In its concept Lausanne can be traced back to the world Congress for Evangelism in Berlin in 1966. Lausanne was first designed by Billy Graham and John Stott in 1974. This event in Capetown was the third Lausanne event the second being in Manila in 1989. The purpose could not be more relevant namely the responsibility for the Church universal to fulfil the great commission described in Matthew 28:16-20. The conference sought to be biblically based with a series of expositions on Ephesians chapters 1-4. These were plenary sessions for all 4,000. There were several sub-groups specialising in different practical subjects.

Unity, maximising cooperation and forging partnerships in the task of mission characterised this assembly. The conference was inspirational. Very moving testimonies were given including one by a young North Korean girl who escaped North Korea but her father has been martyred because of his Christian faith.

The conference concluded with a manifesto which can be read on the Internet. You can also access the talks at <http://www.lausanne.org/cape-town-2010>

During the conference a leader of the World Council of Churches brought greetings. The WCC if not already dead is a dying body stricken with the mortal disease of liberalism. Lausanne is non-confrontational which is why the WCC greetings were brought.

After the second session there was concern because the sermon was by a lady preacher with a feminist agenda and an unbalanced view of the social gospel. Also discerned was a liberal under-current in the denial of eternal punishment. It only takes one skid to veer off course theologically. Lausanne reflects an increasing awareness for the need of compassion and good works and the relief of pain and suffering to accompany the gospel. That is important but sometimes good works occupy the whole stage and the gospel becomes muted.

John Piper, Tim Keller and Vaughan Roberts preached with unction. Os Guinness and Ajith Fernando were appreciated for their ministry. At the main plenary session number three John Piper masterfully brought together the social and spiritual sides of gospel witness. Here is some of his material:

‘All mankind, Paul says, are “children of wrath” apart from faith in Christ. Because of our sinful rebellious nature, we are under the wrath of God. This is why Christ had to die. Not just because we were sinners, but because he is holy. His infinite justice demanded that he punish sinners.

‘If God had not put Christ forward to bear his own wrath; if Christ had not become a curse for us, as Galatians 3:13 says, then all the nations and all Jews would have perished under God’s wrath and entered into everlasting suffering in hell, as Jesus said in Matthew 25:46.

‘The reason I draw out this implication of the cross is to hold together in this congress and in the church of Christ two truths that are often felt to be at odds with each other, but don’t have to be.

‘One truth is that when the gospel takes root in our souls it impels us out toward the alleviation of all unjust suffering in this age. That’s what love does!

‘The other truth is that when the gospel takes root in our souls it awakens us to the horrible reality of eternal suffering in hell, under the wrath of a just and omnipotent God. And it impels us to rescue the perishing, and to warn people to flee from the wrath to come (1 Thess 1:10). Don’t choose between those two truths. Embrace them both. It doesn’t mean we all spend our time in the same way. God forbid. But it means we let the Bible define reality and define love.

‘Could Lausanne say—could the evangelical church say—*We Christians care about all suffering, especially eternal suffering?* I hope we can say that. But if we feel resistant to saying “especially eternal suffering,” or if we feel resistant to saying “we care about all suffering in this age,” then either we have a defective view of hell or a defective heart.

‘I pray that Lausanne would have neither.’

The Lausanne doctrinal statements are outstanding with regard to the practical application of the gospel. However some doctrinal safeguards are missing. Hence the timely warning of John Piper.

Noah – heir of the righteousness that is by faith

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith (Heb 11:7).

Faith is stressed three times in this verse. By faith Noah built an ark. By his lifestyle of faith he condemned the unbelieving world. By faith he became an heir of the righteousness which, as the NIV translates it, ‘is in keeping with faith’.

Before opening up the text and then concentrating on the concluding clause, *and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith*, some introductory observations will remind us of the background.

The whole human race descends from Noah. The flood was a universal flood, a fact denied by those who reject the biblical account. The universal flood explains a great deal about the world as we experience it today. The presence of fossil fuels across the whole globe testifies to a former universal warm temperate climate, and probably a water canopy surrounding the globe. Many geological strata such as the Grand Canyon are much easier to understand when considered in the light of the massive power of water. Jesus confirms the account of Noah and the universal flood. His words never prove false.

We do well to observe a high degree of supernaturalism in what took place but mostly the omnipotent power of God in the cataclysm which involved the reorganisation of water levels around the globe as described in Psalm 104:6-9. The gathering of wild animals indicates supernatural or angelic activity. We could spend time discussing the problem of providing food for so many creatures. Leupold in his commentary notes that animals are shrewd about adapting their food supply to their needs. Hibernation may also have played a role. Leupold marvels at ‘the excellent divine wisdom, which laid the care of the inmates of the ark upon man and thus provided ample activity for him, guarding against morbid and dismal brooding over the fate of mankind’.

I agree with the English Puritan Thomas Manton that the best way to divide Hebrews 11:7 is as follows:¹

The ground of Noah's faith – *being warned of God*

The strength of his faith – *of things not yet seen*

The outworking of his faith –

1. *He was moved by holy fear*
2. *He built an ark to save his family*
3. *By his faith he condemned the world*
4. *He became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith*

The ground of Noah's faith – *being warned of God*

Did Noah receive instructions to build an ark by theophany which means the Lord Jesus talked to him face to face which is the way in which he spoke to Moses (Ex 33:11; Deut 34:10)? He received detailed instructions about the tabernacle and the priesthood. Did the reality of a coming flood come to Noah in a vision or dream? We know that the Lord spoke to Noah in detail in which the reason for the impending flood was given and a specification was given. The size of the ark was described. Cypress wood was to be used. The ark was to be daubed with pitch on both the outside and inside. God would cause the animals to come into the ark. As we often see in Africa wild animals are reluctant to enter spaces unfamiliar to them. A covenant promise was made to Noah and his family. The promise was part of the warning received and provided a strong ground for all the work of preparation that was required which included the leadership of his family and his work as a preacher.

The strength of his faith – *of things not yet seen*

The point to note here is that a tremendous faith was required to undertake such a formidable labour when there was no evidence whatsoever of an impending flood. This giant structure built in the countryside seemed absurd. The destruction by drowning of all

mankind was coming. The actual date is recorded in Genesis 7:11. By faith we live in expectation of a universal judgment which is described by our Lord in Matthew 25 and by John in Revelation 20:11-15. With the eyes of faith we can see this coming.

The outworking of Noah's faith

1. *He was moved by holy fear*

Engendered in Noah was a powerful motivation like a high powered internal combustion engine driving him forward. The Greek participle is *eulabētheis* which means showing oneself to be motivated by the fear of God. This is piety stemming from a well-grounded fear. There are different kinds of fear. Noah's was a reverential fear of God frequently equated in Scripture for the whole worship of God. Believers have often been described as God-fearers. Jesus taught this very clearly when he said: 'I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows' (Luke 12:4-7).

This sense of the fear of God is a vital element of true revival. It is the feature which is missing from contemporary Evangelicalism. We need to pray for the return of this kind of God-centred fear.

2. *He built an ark to save his family*

Expositors take the reference to 120 years as the time involved in preparing the ark. The apostle Peter provides a commentary on this period. He describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). Noah had to complete his work in an environment of extreme ungodliness. In Genesis six we read: 'The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created – and with

them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground – for I regret that I have made them.” But Noah found favour in the eyes of the LORD.’

3. *By his faith he condemned the world*

The text of Scripture suggests an intense spiritual battle at the time of the flood. The Holy Spirit was striving with mankind (Gen 6:3). Noah preached repentance (Matt 24:37; 1 Peter 3:19-21).

In what way did Noah’s faith condemn the world? When believers live God-fearing upright lives consistent with their profession of faith they provide a contrast with those who live ungodly and wicked lives. Noah’s generation was characterised by violence. A missionary family has recently been compelled to move out of Mexico because civil order has broken down and violence prevails. The same applies to an area in the Philippines where 53 people were murdered by a Mafia gang controlling that part of the country. Civil order has collapsed in Somaliland. Pirates venture out to the high seas from Somaliland and seize captives for high ransom. Genocide of appalling proportions has taken place in Armenia, Cambodia, Croatia and Ruanda. The loss of life in two world wars testifies further to the appalling wickedness that can prevail in this world. That was the kind of society in which Noah lived as is expressed in the verse, ‘Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence’ (6:11) and ‘every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time’ (6:5). Noah’s actions in building the ark and Noah’s preaching served to condemn the unbelieving world around him. That generation should have repented but did not. When Jonah warned Nineveh, a city notorious for its violence, it did repent and God turned away from his intention to destroy its people.

‘To stand one’s ground and to remain uninfluenced by the attitude and conduct of all men to the contrary, give indication of a strength of character almost without parallel in history. All the world said he was wrong in holding fast to his piety: he knew they were wrong and he was right’.² We do not have biblical evidence that the people mocked Noah. Jesus tells us that they were supremely indifferent to their spiritual depravity and were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage (Matt 24:37-38). But Noah continued to prepare the

ark by which he saved not only his family but the animal kingdom with which to begin a new world.

There is a parallel in Western society to this today. We observe a rise of secularism and atheism. Our media exclude creationism and constantly promote evolutionary humanism. In the face of this propaganda we must hold firmly to a six-day creation and a young earth. The flood narrative confirms the brevity of the human record from Adam to Noah and the generations that followed. Nature programs today demonstrate the complexity of intelligent design. Millions of years are suggested to accommodate the theory of evolution. Even if you threw dice for billions of years you would never ever even remotely reach the complexity of the DNA. Also researchers have shown the fallacy of the claims of these vast ages.³ DNA is the silver bullet that destroys the theory of macro-evolution.

4. He became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith

It is important to note the emphasis on faith. This was justification by faith and it was by imputed righteousness. It is wrong to infer that Noah earned this righteousness through building the ark. Noah became an heir of the righteousness by faith. The word 'heir' reminds us that righteousness is a gift. If you inherit an estate that is gifted to you. It is not something you earn. 'We are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ' (Rom 8:17). There will be evidence of the genuineness of our faith if we patiently suffer for Christ. The evidence of Noah's faith and of his standing with God is seen in his life and work. Noah's righteousness is exactly the same as the righteousness which was imputed to Abraham and which is imputed to every person united to Christ by faith from the beginning to the end of time.

The word 'righteousness' is one of the great words of the New Testament. The righteousness which is provided by God for our justification is the righteousness of Christ (Rom 1:16,17 and 3:21-26). The perfect merit of Christ in his life and death is imputed to us, or credited to us, when we are joined to him by faith. Christ's righteousness is put upon us or wrapped around us with a perfect fit like armour. In Ephesians 6:10-18 we read of the full armour of God. The breastplate of righteousness must be kept in place. It is a perfect fit because it is a perfect provision.

On the basis of righteousness imputed the Father justifies us (Rom 8:33). This gives the Christian a strong assurance. The devil's accusations bounce straight off this armour. His tactic is to accuse the believer and discourage him, but if God accepts him, who can condemn him?

Justification by faith is the foremost and foundational truth of the Bible. It is a glorious provision for the believer to possess the Lord as his righteousness (Jer 33:16). This righteousness is perfect and complete. Therefore our justification is perfect and complete. Justification can never be partial. Either a judge acquits or condemns. We are externally perfectly righteous in God's sight. Christians must understand and appreciate the great importance and relevance of justification by faith. This is vital. This truth must fit them perfectly. They will find it a glorious defence in the battle. Christ's righteousness is impregnable.

Imputed righteousness is entirely passive. It is put upon the believer. It is perfect because it consists of the complete active and passive obedience of the Son of God (Rom 3:21-26). This righteousness is God's gift. It is vertical because it comes from above. It is alien in the sense that it comes from another, that is, from a source outside us.

Simultaneous with this gift is the further gift of the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit by which we are enabled to live a holy life which is consistent with the external gift of righteousness. Imparted righteousness works in the believer and is expressed in every area of life, although not without conflict. That is what we call progressive sanctification. It is horizontal inasmuch as it affects every part of living. It is 24/7 – twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. This horizontal righteousness is never the basis of our justification.

Imagine a scenario after the deluge and after Noah had fallen into the sin of drunkenness. (We certainly would take as a temporary lapse and not a permanent addiction). Says Satan, 'So how can you have the nerve to say you are acceptable to God? Look at what you have done.' Noah's answer: 'Yes, I am flawed and I am a sinner and I always repent. Yet I am an heir. I have inherited the gift of God's perfect righteousness.'

When you are accused by Satan what is your answer? He will always point to your sins and accuse you wishing to damn you. If you plead your own performance you will find that it is always flawed. Sanctification is never perfect in this life. We strive to be perfect. The righteousness of Jesus imputed to us is perfect. That is the basis of our justification. Satan cannot deny the perfect righteousness of Christ. On this basis we can always repel his accusations. If we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Even when that is done we never ever plead our performance or our good works for by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in God's sight. If in the day of the judgment seat of Christ we are commended and rewarded we will be surprised because we have a low view of even our best efforts.

The apostle Paul has expressed this so clearly in his letter to the Philippians: 'What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith' (Phil 3:8-9).

Important lessons

As I asserted at the beginning the most important issue stressed in Hebrews 11:7 is the example of Noah's faith. Faith is the central theme of Hebrews 11. It is Noah's strong persevering faith that brought honour to God.

Hebrews 11 describes the activity of faith in a variety of circumstances in the lives of widely different believers. Throughout the history of the Church many have been tested to the limit in terms of martyrdom. Deny Christ or die! During the great Reformation of the 16th Century for many it was a matter of Conform to the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation or be burned at the stake. Anne Askew of Stallingborough (1521-1546) held firmly to her faith in Christ through severe torture and then was burned alive at the stake aged 25 for refusing to believe in the mass. Hebrews 11 concludes with a description of those endured terrible persecution by faith. Others have

had their faith tested through prolonged trials and tribulations on foreign mission fields. A great number have had their faith tested by long periods of painful illness.

Yet others have shown their faith like Moses who declined the advantages of wealth and prestige and chose rather to ally with the people of God.

The trials of faith vary. Our faith is often tested by the spiritual barrenness which characterises much of Western Society. We must never lose sight of the great commission to 'go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt 28:19-20). Jesus promises to be with us always, *literally every day*, to the very end of the age.

We must not be distracted by the bankrupt no-hope atheist agenda purveyed by the media. Spiritual awakenings and successful gospel work is going on all over the world and especially in developing countries. Future leaders are emerging who will continue to reap the harvest. We have gospel promises galore to be claimed. Noah exercised faith in building the ark. We must exercise faith in persevering labours for the gospel. We have missionaries to support. We have a rich variety of reformed books that exceed in quality anything so far in the history of the Church. We have gospel publishing industries busy translating the best expository books into other languages. We have new ways of net-working. The internet, radio and TV can be used to reach multitudes living in lands of Islamic oppression. By faith we take hold of the promises and cry with the Psalmist, 'Blessed be your holy name for ever, and may the whole earth be filled with your glory!'

¹. Thomas Manton, *Works*, volume 14.

². Leupold, *Genesis*, Evangelical Press, page 264.

³. *Thousands not Billions* – challenging an Icon of Evolution – Questioning the age of the earth, Dr Don DeYoung, Master Books, 183 pages, 2005.

This material is based on a sermon preached by the editor at Kingston Evangelical Church, Hull, on 28 November, 2010.

The Monod Brothers

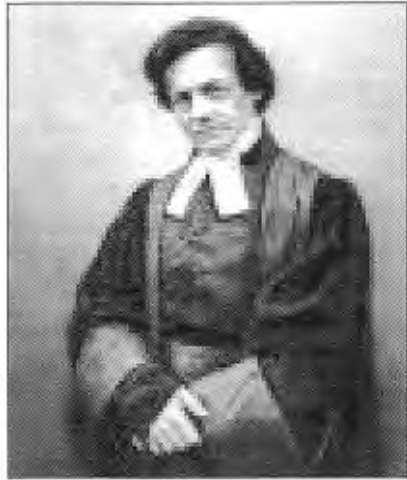
Black, White and Grey in Nineteenth-Century France

Frederick Hodgson

The previous article described the beginnings of an evangelical awakening in France. The awakening promised new hope and light for a land that was suffocated by the rationalism prevalent in study centres such as Geneva and Montauban, starved by biblical ignorance and stunned by centuries of persecution of godly believers. A sudden brilliant flash of light had arisen in France like that of a rocket exploding in the dark sky and sending out its 'stars of light'. Gospel teachers, preachers and writers like Louis Gaussen, Felix Neff, Frédéric Monod, Ami Bost, César Malin and Merle D'Aubigné were liberated from darkness to illuminate France and elsewhere.

Adolphe Monod and his conversion

Frédéric, the eldest son of Jean Monod, had a younger brother called Adolphe, born in 1802. They were sons born into a large close-knit family of eight sons and four daughters. The Huguenot father Jean was a pastor who ministered in Copenhagen, Denmark. His father Gaspard-Joël Monod also served as a pastor in Geneva and Guadeloupe. Jean Monod met his wife Louise in Copenhagen and the family moved to Paris in 1808. Jean directed the



Adolphe Monod

education of his sons with the aid of private tutors and then by courses in colleges in Paris. Four of them followed him into the ministry, and all the children were encouraged and helped by Louise who faithfully corresponded with them when they left home. The Monod family were destined to be highly influential in France; subsequent generations included several pastors, a well-known historian, naturalist, Nobel Prize winner in biochemistry and an international film director. Not all of them by any means could be described as being evangelical believers, but Adolphe was to become a pastor famous not only for his oratory (at one time queues formed outside the Oratoire in Paris two hours before he started to preach) but for his immense

piety. Professor de Félice said, 'He was twice over the first of the Protestant preachers of France, first for the excellency of his oratorical genius, and then for the holiness of his life.' The introduction to his farewell sermons, preached on his deathbed and published by the Banner of Truth, described how 'he was a man of prayer. He visited the poor and the sick, instructed his own family, and until his health began to decline, he continued his preaching tours sometimes as far afield as Scotland which he visited in 1849.'

Although Adolphe was brought up in a Christian home and many of his family were Protestant ministers, and despite having an inward desire to be a pastor from the age of 14, he had not truly trusted in the grace and power of Christ when he arrived with his brother Guillaume to study in Geneva in 1820. By this time his older brother Frédéric had left this city, although he continued to give guidance to his younger siblings. Adolphe was tossed around by various winds of doctrine although generally he believed that the gospel was true. It was to be seven years before he found peace through faith in Christ. Frédéric had been helped and encouraged by the teaching of the Scotsman Robert Haldane. Although Haldane had left Geneva years before Adolphe arrived, Thomas Erskine another Scotsman taught and preached there leaving a powerful influence for good upon Adolphe. However, he was still left without any sense of being accepted by God when he was ordained at the end of his studies in 1824.

A year later he wrote that the letter to the Romans left him in darkness. He said, 'I read the Epistle to the Romans. What obscurity, what astonishing language!... I read it, I reread it, and nothing; I see nothing there.' In 1826 Adolphe was travelling through Italy and came across a group of French-speaking Protestants in Naples who were without a pastor. He gathered them together and agreed to be their interim pastor, but his personal spiritual struggle reached crisis proportions. He was in inner turmoil as he tried to preach a gospel that was not real to him. He alternately 'intensified and abandoned his search for clarity'. He felt he could not abandon his congregation but at the same time he realised that he could not confide in them about his inner turmoil without discouraging them. He concluded, 'I choose the necessary course, which is still painful to my candour, of preaching what the gospel teaches without considering whether I believe it or not.' By 1827, convinced that he had lost his faith, he was ready to leave the ministry but his friends and loving supportive family dissuaded him. His sister in London, Adèle Babut, having lost her only child wrote, 'How wrenching is the agony through which I have just passed... Adolphe, dear Adolphe, give him your heart. Love him for the good that he has done for me, while waiting for the time when you will love him for the good that he will do for you.'

At the height of his crisis Thomas Erskine visited Naples and spent many days talking to him. Adolphe was

struck by the happiness, peace and order possessed by Erskine and other believers. He acknowledged that he had a sinful attitude in that he wanted to make his own religion, rather than taking it from God. In July 1827 real peace came into his life and he expressed himself, ‘Previously I was without God and burdened with my own wellbeing, while now I have a God who carries the burden for me. That is enough for me.’

Adolphe Monod and independency in Lyon

At the age of 26 he received a call to join the pastoral team at the large Reformed Church of Lyon. It was here that he met his Scottish wife, Hannah Honyman. Her family lived in Lyon and Adolphe ministered to the family. Hannah and Adolphe fell in love, married and were eventually to have seven children.

He boldly proclaimed God’s plan of salvation and denounced national injustices. Some Evangelicals were drawn back to the church by his clear uncompromising preaching. However, the ruling body of the church were angered and commanded him not to preach on salvation by grace. Upon his refusal, they demanded his resignation, which he refused to give. The elders then circulated rumours about him and tried to get the government’s approval to dismiss him.

Adolphe meanwhile was troubled about those who lived ungodly lives and were allowed to partake of the



The interior of the Chapelle du Nord where Frédéric Monod preached to the Paris congregation of the Union of Free Evangelical Churches

Lord’s Supper. He preached a sermon with vivid language outlining those who should take communion. The Consistory, or ruling power in the church forced him into a corner of preaching and serving communion at the same service. His response was to preach and then leave the church before the elements were distributed. The following day the Consistory met and voted to dismiss him so Monod was obliged to leave in 1832, after three years of bitter struggle. The government agreed to his dismissal, even though no specific reason was given. This was a cause of much dismay to Evangelicals throughout the country.

Monod’s faith remained strong and he turned down a teaching position at the new School of Theology in Geneva. However, he agreed to pastor an

independent group of about seventy people in Lyon. They had already left the Reformed Church of Lyon. Although many of them were poor, his brother Frédéric encouraged him in this decision with the words, 'The Christians of Lyon must not be abandoned. It is of great importance to show the Consistories that if they can remove faithful pastors from the national church, they cannot remove the gospel from those places where it has begun to be preached.' Monod remained as pastor of this independent church for four years as it grew steadily.

We are forced to pause and reflect upon the faith of Monod as it had been severely tested during this period at Lyon. He could have simply conformed to what the Consistory expected of him. As a relatively young man he could have been intimidated and in any case he had a growing family to care for. After being forced out of office, he must have been attracted to a relatively peaceful, secure life in Geneva. The believers in the independent church of Lyon were needy but he was being called to pastor them in a city that contained many that hated and despised him. It is also of interest to note the sentiments of his brother Frédéric. Although he had ministered alongside his father in the French Reformed Church of Paris from 1820, by 1832 he showed his sympathy and pastoral concern for those who had chosen a church independent of the Reformed Church of France.

Adolphe Monod and his return to the French Reformed Church

The Evangelical Church in Lyon grew over the four years that Adolphe was pastor there and by 1836 two pastors and two laymen were needed to lead the work. He felt that the church was sufficiently secure at this point to allow him to accept an invitation to become Professor of Moral Theology at Montauban, the theological college belonging to the French Reformed Church. He remained at Montauban for a decade, also holding the chair of 'Sacred Eloquence'. At Montauban, having been released from the burden of pastorship, he was able to spend more time with his growing family, engage in writing and preach in the local chapel, and during breaks in the academic year was able to travel extensively on preaching tours in France and elsewhere in Europe. He and his wife opened their home to astonished seminary students, who, although embarrassed at first, appreciated his friendship long after their student days.

His biographer, Constance Walker, suggested that there was a change in the climate of opinion at Montauban and that his usefulness there was becoming curtailed. He began to consider a return to the pastoral ministry. Surprisingly he was invited to move to Paris in 1847 and assist in the pastoral work in that city, helping the ageing M. Juillerat, president of the Consistory there. His brother Frédéric was still on the staff and he would be closer to his mother and other family members.

He was not going for a life of ease. There were tens of thousands of members of the Reformed Church in Paris and they were spread out across the city, based in three houses of worship. The team of pastors shared the duties on a rotating basis. In addition to preaching to the main congregations, he spoke in secondary schools and prisons. On Sunday evenings with the encouragement of Frédéric he was able to preach for a group meeting at the Church of the Oratoire.

Adolphe, described as ‘modest, humble, simple in his appearance and dress’, was ‘orderly and disciplined’, a man of prayer, ‘praying constantly for guidance during sermon preparations, and rising early each day to devote himself to meditating on the Word and to prayer’. His preaching was designed to awaken the unconverted and help Christians ‘live more closely with their Lord and be more and more conformed to his image. He expounded the truths of Christianity simply and carefully as they were revealed to him in Scripture. Yet he found ways to do so that made the familiar seem fresh and vivid.’ He was ‘quick to allude to his own need to hear the very truths he was preaching to others’.

A week before his death in 1856 he said, ‘I have a Saviour! He has freely saved me through his shed blood, and I want it to be known that I lean uniquely on that poured out blood. All my righteous acts, all my works which have been praised, all my preaching that has been appreciated and sought

after – all that is in my eyes only filthy rags.’ Adolphe Monod, who died from liver cancer at the comparatively young age of fifty- four, is probably best known for his farewell sermons preached to those who gathered around his bedside over the last six months of his life and published as the book, ‘Adolphe Monod’s Farewell’.

Frédéric Monod and his problems with the French Reformed Church

Frédéric, the older brother, converted through the ministry of Robert Haldane was an active pastor in Paris, visiting hospitals and prisons and establishing the first Sunday School in Paris. Although not so gifted a preacher as Adolphe was known for the fervour and beauty of his pulpit prayers at the Oratoire. He did preach on grace and the new birth and was presented with a problem in 1827. This problem showed that evangelical pastors in Paris were not as discerning as they ought to have been in making appointments to the ministry team there. Charles Grawitz, a native of Paris, but who studied theology at Montauban, wanted to be part of the pastoral team in Paris. Jean Monod and the majority of the Consistory approved his request but Frédéric and Jouillerat declared that their conscience would not allow them to take part in his consecration as Grawitz had ‘professed fundamental erroneous doctrines in opposition to Scripture’. He refused to sign a statement of faith indicating his orthodoxy and eventually became a pastor in Montpellier.

Grawitz was unable to take up a pastorate in Paris because of his heterodoxy but another man, having studied theology at Geneva and Montauban, was accepted by the Consistory in Paris and he became a frontline, popular preacher in Paris. Athanase Coquerel (1795 – 1868) settled in Paris in 1830 and remained a pastor there until his death. He was a remarkable orator and highly cultured. He was driven by two forces. On the one hand he had a liberal attitude towards the Bible, but on the other hand he was intent on remaining within the church. He was consequently described as a moderate liberal. Essentially he was a moralist who believed that God would judge men, but regarded the gospel as a 'set of precepts and simple truths to be followed in the conduct of life'. Evangelicals attacked him because he supported liberals of extreme positions. In fact from 1844 onwards he no longer had the right to minister in the Protestant church in the village of Batignolles, even though he had been responsible for having it built.

One such liberal friend was Edmond Scherer (1815 –1889). He gained a doctorate in theology in Strasbourg and initially embraced the evangelical awakening in France. In 1845 he actually accepted the chair of Church History in Geneva at the Evangelical Seminary there. Despite teaching at this college, whose doctrinal basis included the full inspiration of the Bible, by 1849 he was wavering. In 1850 in a book entitled 'Criticism and Faith' he explained that having studied the work of modern theologians, it had

become impossible to accept the theory of divine inspiration of Scripture. He eventually entered politics and became a senator in 1879 and was very anti-clerical, being a defender of the Third Republic. He asked that his funeral should be 'strictly civilian'.

Athanase Coquerel eventually supported another extreme liberal. Jules Steeg (1836-1898), having studied at Basel, Strasbourg and Montauban, refused to hold any religiously orthodox views and in 1877 resigned as a pastor. He too was a politically-minded person. Edward Reuss (1804-1891) a brilliant Lutheran scholar was also influential in France. Although most of his writing was in German he combined with Timothée Colani in 1850 to start the *Journal of Theology and Christian Philosophy*. It was better known as the Journal of Strasbourg and its aim was to introduce new methods of studying the Bible to French-speaking Protestants. Trying to maintain the authority of the Bible, he had the purpose of reconciling science and faith. His work had an impact in France and abroad, especially in Britain.

The presence of these men posed a problem to French Evangelicals who were not agreed on how to treat them or how to work for the reformation of the church. Some settled for the option of working alongside them. One of these was Jean Henri Grand Pierre.

An internationally famous evangelical French preacher, Grand Pierre started his ministerial work in Basel in 1823.

The New York Times wrote of him, 'His piety, his eloquence, and his success as a preacher attracted general public attention, not only in Switzerland, but in France, and in 1827 he was called to Paris to take charge of the House of Missions, which was a theological seminary for training missionaries. From this institution have gone forth most of the French Protestant missionaries.' In 1830 he was called upon to preach in a chapel upon 'one of the finest boulevards in Paris'. As this was soon too crowded a much larger one was obtained in the street called Taitbout. Crowds flocked to hear him here too. His hearers included Roman Catholics and they were disappointed that he was unable to preach in one of their large church buildings. At the time of the 1848 revolution Grand Pierre was prevented from using the House of Missions and he was called to preach at the Oratoire and admiring crowds regarded him and the liberal Coquerel as the most eloquent preachers in the French Protestant Church until Adolphe Monod and other younger men became prominent. He remained at the Oratoire for over twenty years, retiring in 1872. He was not only preacher and pastor, but as President of the Consistory of Paris he had to direct many of the church activities. The Catholics used to call him 'the Protestant pope'. He was editor of *L'Espérance*, the chief Protestant journal in France and had the ability to avoid censure during difficult, tempestuous and even violent political times. Grand Pierre was hospitable to foreigners and popular in America which he visited twice. With his wife

he also gave the practical help in attending to the needs of the wounded men. This they did in their own house during the Siege of Paris (1870-71) in the Franco-Prussian War.

The warm hearted Grand Pierre was widely respected and he represented a significant strand of French Evangelicalism that was content to work alongside a theological liberal like Coquerel in addition to men of an orthodox but passionate spirit like Adolphe Monod.

French Protestants in the nineteenth century had three strands to them. Many were liberal in theology. They were influenced by the German philosopher Schleiermacher and believed firstly that it was important for the church to keep up with modern thought and that Christians should have a good general education, be cultured and be able to engage in debating current affairs. Secondly they refused to oppose faith and reason, with the result that the supernatural aspects of Christianity were limited. They wished to have a well thought out faith but only a few of them were rationalists or 'unconditional intellectuals'. 'They were influenced by the then prevailing romanticism, and insisted on religious experience, on concrete action, and on strict morality, all of which brought them close to Revivalists.' Thirdly they considered that dogma is not a matter of faith, declaring what must be believed in. It is an expression of faith stating how a human group, within its own culture and with its own sensitivity, expresses its beliefs. It is therefore relative and can be revised.

Essentially they rejected the confessional Christianity of the Lutherans and Calvinists, scorning doctrines like total depravity and predestination. Unlike the secularists they believed that men need the help of God to be better. These men such as Samuel Vincent of Nîmes (1787-1837) and Athanase Coquerel (1797-1868) were determined not to break with the Church and not abandon Christianity.

A second strand were those who were called 'orthodox' (the right or correct opinion) claiming the name 'Evangelical'. These men believed in the infallible or unerring text of the Bible, making no distinction between the Word of God and the Holy Scriptures. The correct doctrine was that taught by the Scriptures and explained by the Reformers such as Luther or Calvin and embodied in their writings.

The third strand has been described as 'moderate orthodox theologians', such as pastor Edmond de Pressensé (1824-1891), ordained at the Chapelle Taitbout in 1847 and remaining as the pastor of that Free Church throughout his life. Pressensé considered 'knowledge and thinking as being compatible with the acceptance of essential elements of traditional doctrine. Men of this attitude were close to moderate liberals, and were sometimes referred to as "right centre" and "left centre".'

It is likely that Frédéric Monod could see where accommodation with liberal theologians who wished to remain within the French Reformed Church would lead. The son of Athanase

Coquerel (1820-1875) was responsible for setting up the Protestant Liberal Union in 1861. He began his ministry in Nîmes, where Samuel Vincent had ministered and became chaplain at the *Lycée Henri IV* in Paris, and was to become the favourite preacher of the liberal movement. He was very antagonistic to confessional Christianity and did not accept the divinity of Christ. He viewed religion as moral development taking Jesus as an example. He had even closer relationships with extreme liberals than his father and even allowed men such as Colani and Réville to use his pulpit. The Consistory, made up largely of Evangelicals, refused to renew his suffragance. He refused to set up a new church but continued to preach in halls rented out to the Protestant Liberal Union. Many of these more extreme liberals left the church altogether.

Formation of the Union des Églises Évangéliques Libres (UEEL)

Was there an alternative to the Reformed Church? From the time of the Concordat between Napoleon and the Pope in 1801, the state only recognised three different types of churches. No new churches were envisaged or covered by this Concordat. The pastors of Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches were all regarded as state functionaries and received a salary from the state. The organic articles allowed 2 Consistories in Paris and 78 in the whole of the country. No general synod was allowed for political reasons. A few

large churches (3 in Paris) had been given to the Reformed Church and 'miserable halls were built elsewhere by the state for this church.' Consistories (no more than 6000 followers were allowed in any one grouping) could elect pastors to serve the members of the church but their election had to be ratified by the state. This arrangement continued well into the nineteenth century and it did not encourage any new movements. Evangelicals were kept in a weakened state by not being able to associate together in national conferences. In fact after Napoleon was defeated and the Bourbon dynasty installed into power, Evangelicals were again persecuted, resulting in some deaths during the 'White Terror' in the south of France in 1815.

There was some limited freedom for new developments after the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty. It was recognised that there was a shortage of Bibles available in the country and in 1818 the Bible Society was formed in Paris. Within a very short time hundreds of auxiliaries sprang up in various parts of the country. In 1822 Tract Societies came into being in Paris and Nîmes and the Society of Missions was formed which sent missionaries to South Africa and islands in the Pacific. The formation of two home mission societies (The Evangelical Society and the Central Society) occurred in 1833 but it was against the law for Protestants to evangelise French Catholics. These home missionary societies could only work to instruct or confirm people in the Reformed constituency.

Frédéric Monod was unhappy with tendencies within the State-sponsored Reformed Church in France with its liberalism and lack of evangelistic zeal. His own experience at the Oratoire where he crossed swords with Athanase Coquerel informed him of the dangers to congregations when they are exposed to truth and error. He had first-hand knowledge of his brother's difficulties in Lyon which came to a head in 1832 and knew of independent evangelical churches in France in addition to that of Lyon. A number of these had come into existence between 1820 and 1848. The Concordat of 1801 did not cover these new churches which insisted on a doctrinal statement of faith.

During the reign of Louis-Philippe, the 'Citizen King' (1830-1848), considerable social unrest developed. This was brought about because of a number of things. Only 1% of the population were allowed to vote. This angered the middle classes who compared the privileges of English voters with theirs. Although freedom of the press had been granted subsequent to the revolution of 1830, Paris was suffering from great economic problems. One third of workers was 'on the dole'. In 1846 socialists had campaigned for the right to work. Political gatherings were outlawed, although an attempt to circumnavigate this prohibition was attempted by 'fund raising banquets'. In February 1848 Louis-Philippe fled to England and the 'Second Republic' was ushered in.

The Republicans were more sympathetic to Evangelicals meeting together. For a few months there was an opportunity for a general national synod of the Reformed churches. This was actually the first national synod since the sixteenth century. The attention of the synod, dominated by liberals and their sympathisers was initially centred on the question of the separation of church and state. The government refused to recognise this and insisted on the arrangements of the 1801 Concordat being kept in place.

Significantly, the synod refused even to consider the question of a confession of faith. Frédéric Monod, along with others such as Agénor de Gasparin, chose this time to secede from the Reformed Church. During the synod they had insisted upon 'orthodox doctrine and Presbyterian policy' even though it meant rupture. The resulting union of free churches did not include many churches but was 'more influential at least at its beginning than any other Protestant body'. It was made up of an elite who left the established church for weighty conscientious motives.

The group held their first synod in September 1849. It must have been disappointing to Frédéric that initially only a few churches supported him. (It was reported that only thirteen churches and eighteen church plants were included at the outset.) It is surprising that his own brother Adolphe did not join him, but the Free Church of Lyon, established by Adolphe was one of those included.

Nonetheless the two brothers remained good friends and continued to support one another.

There was clearly a lack of funds available for the Union des Églises Évangéliques Libres de France and Frédéric travelled to the United States and obtained funds to build a place of worship that was completed in 1862. This is the North Chapel at 17 Rue des Petits-Hotels. The North Chapel remained in this grouping until 1938 but in the following year it joined the Reformed Church of France.

The events of 1848-9 are significant in that they raise questions that are alive today. Pastors and their churches sometimes face the difficult questions of whether or not to secede from their affiliated bodies. These decisions are painful to make. The French Church went on to experience new challenges and encouragements after 1849. These will be described in a future article. It is important to note that liberalism was allowed to flourish and actually become more extreme among the Reformed churches supported by the state.

Frédéric Monod received help from the United States. The influence of the Christians from the United States upon French Evangelicalism was profound and will also be described in a future article. This is a reminder of the importance of evangelicalism in areas where help is needed. In the early part of the nineteenth century Christians in the United States and Great Britain were very conscious of the needs of mainland Europe where gospel work was impoverished.

OPERATION WORLD – 2010

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Jason Mandryk

978 pages plus 35 prelim pages

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The last edition of OW was published in 2001. The concept of a volume like this began when the famous pioneer missionary William Carey published the first global survey in the 1790s. Dr Andrew Murray (1828-1917) of South Africa inspired the idea of weeks of prayer for the world. In 1943 Hans von Staden founder of the Dorothea Mission organised evangelism in the urban slums of South Africa. Following the example of Andrew Murray von Staden combined this enterprise with vision for world evangelisation and weeks of prayer for the nations. He encouraged Patrick Johnstone, an English missionary with the mission, to develop OPERATION WORLD. Five editions followed. After the sixth edition, Johnstone handed the baton to Jason Mandryk. Now we have the seventh edition. Every nation is described from a Bible-believing perspective. The work of OW has been translated into fifteen other major languages over the years. The ethos is broad in its scope and includes all denominations. The skills involved have had to be learned along the road of hard persevering labour and there has been no mega group financing this work. It has been sustained through prayer and faith. The main design is to inspire prayer and missionary enterprise.

In the prelims practical advice is given as the best way to use OW. Statistics and abbreviations are explained. It is urged that, among other uses, OW be utilised as a resource to prepare regular brief presentations in church services. Obviously with so many countries selectivity and flexibility is required. OW is ideal for use in family devotions. See if your children can locate the different nations on the globe. There are 232 in all.

It is important in this resource to understand the difference between Pentecostals and Charismatics (page xxxi). Not all Charismatics are evangelical. Statistics of the world population show a large increase in population from 2,429 million in 1950 to 8,309 million in 2010. 'City Proper' and Urban Conglomeration are defined. For instance the largest City Proper is Shanghai at 13.8 million and the Largest Conglomeration is Tokyo at 36.7 million.

The persecution index is omitted in this edition due to its being produced annually by Open Doors; readers are better served by getting an up to date version of it directly from Open Doors themselves.

The outstanding character of OW throughout is its cogent emphasis on worldwide evangelisation and the centrality of prayer and missionary action.

World trends are portrayed. There is an increasing appreciation that the Church is multi-racial and that the great commission will be fulfilled by international co-operation and unity. Globalisation means that there is an increasing inter-flow of peoples across the world. In this way the gospel spreads everywhere.

Sending out missionaries has gained momentum in countries such as Ethiopia, Nigeria, Brazil, Philippines and South Korea. Involvement by the more traditional sending regions of North America, Europe, and the Pacific has stayed level at best and often declined. The world missionary army is more multi-cultural and multi-national than ever before. Twenty OW pages are given to information about international and national missionary organisations. A page is devoted to statistics for missionary sending countries. These are some of the estimates: South Korea 19,950, Chile 280, Congo-DRC 350, El Salvador 165, Malaysia 380, Peru 318, Romania 130, Switzerland 1712, Netherlands 2,000, Thailand 468, India 82,950, USA 93,500, Canada 5,200 (for her population of 33 million that is better than the UK with her population of 62 million and 6,450 missionaries).

Countries with most unreached people groups (page 919) are listed, India 2,223, China 427, Pakistan 374, Bangladesh 353, Nepal 325, Indonesia 200, and Sudan 138 head the list.

For Vietnam, OW reports that a growing, witnessing Church is emerging from years of persecution. Three main groups where church growth is occurring include the mountain tribal peoples, the Hmong of Northern Vietnam and the ethnic Vietnamese themselves. This comment follows: 'As numbers increase, so does the potential for false teaching and error. Opportunities for training are still highly restricted and piecemeal.' This observation is applicable to most countries round the world.

The layout and maps of this new edition are very attractive and clear and show a major improvement on the previous edition.

This is a most valuable resource for every Christian household.

I obtained my copy from ICM book for £9.75 plus dispatch. Phone 02803 832 1488. *Editor*

Nine Days of Tribulation

A short overview of the history of the Romanian Baptists

Rev Ilie Martinovici, pastor of Sola Scriptura Romanian Baptist Church, Oatlands, New South Wales, Australia.

In spite of its presence in Britain from the very dawn of the 17th century the Baptist faith did not make a notable presence on the continent until 1820. England's missionary zeal and interest in evangelising Europe was born during the Napoleonic wars, at the beginning of the 19th century.

Two Scottish brothers, Robert and James Haldane, very rich and very godly men, were converted to the Baptist faith in 1808. In 1818 they founded the Continental Society for Evangelism. It was meant to send missionaries and literature all over Europe. The first decision they made was to send Henri Pyt and Felix E Neff (both Swiss) to France, and the appoint Johann Gerhard Oncken, a German Baptist, to the evangelistic work in Germany. He was primarily the instrument by which the Baptist faith came to the Romanian provinces.

Romania had the disadvantage of being divided among different foreign powers. However, God used this situation to bring the light of the gospel to these separated provinces. Transylvania and the western province of Banat had the 'advantage' of being incorporated into Hungary, and from 1867 they became part of the dual crown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Anabaptists were present in Transylvania from their early days. Following the exterminating persecutions of 1767 the Anabaptists ceased to exist as a denomination in Transylvania.

From Germany Baptist beliefs started to spread throughout Hungary and Transylvania. Following the treaty from Adrianopole on 14th of September 1829 the southern province of Wallachia started close political and economic relationships with the industrialised countries of Europe, especially with Germany.

German Baptist Karl Johann Scharschmidt, a carpenter by trade, moved to Bucharest with his family. His life was governed by Johann Oncken's motto: 'Every Baptist, a missionary'. In 1859 they started a society for spreading tracts. There were some 20,000 Germans in Wallachia at the time, and this society could not cope with the size of the 'opportunity'. The society turned into a good sized church and the first converts asked to be baptised. They called upon Oncken to send an ordained minister to baptise them. August Liebig arrived in Bucharest on the 27th of September 1863.

On the 12th of September 1864 the first missionary youth association came into existence in that church. Wallachia was under Turkish suzerainty at the time. Because of this the Wallach rulers were not under the control of the Orthodox Church. This resulted in freedom of religion, which gave time to the first seeds of the gospel to grow roots. From Wallachia, at the direct counsel of Johann Oncken, August Liebig undertook missionary trips to Moldova and Bucovina, where large German communities lived.

The first Romanian, Constantin Adorian, a pharmacist, was converted in the German church in 1902. He was sent to the theological college in Hamburg, and upon his return in 1912 he started the first Romanian Baptist Church in Bucharest. From Bucharest they started evangelising Dobrogea, the province between the Danube and the Black Sea. Thus the seeds of the gospel were spread throughout what was called the 'Old Romania'.

The greatest progress was achieved in Transylvania. The county of Bihor, with the centre in Oradea, was probably the richest and most prominent part of the principality. Very rich and well developed economically, it had a mixed population and the nationalities lived closely together and with good community relationships.

Baptist teachings came to this region through a Bible distributor called Anton Novak, a German from Vienna. He was employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society for Hungary and Transylvania.

The work of spreading the gospel throughout Transylvania and Banat was carried out jointly by German, Hungarian and Romanian believers. The

emphasis was placed on reading the Bible and applying the biblical principles to daily living. The Romanian Baptist Churches looked very much like a return to the 'primitive' Christian faith. It had a strong impact on the people and the churches grew at a rapid rate.

This did not pass unobserved by the leaders of the Orthodox Church. Persecutions started right across the country. The situation was somewhat better for the provinces of Banat and Transylvania. The Baptist denomination was officially recognised by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1905. The Orthodox clerics therefore could not obtain a 'state endorsed' (legislated) persecution against Baptists, as they did in the other provinces.

The history of the Romanian Baptists recorded nine waves of persecution:

- The first wave – (1920-1921) although there were local events even in 1919. This started after Transylvania reunited with the rest of Romania. The Orthodox clerics accused the Baptists of being traitors to the nation, and being guilty of subversive activities against the state.
- The second wave – (1923-24) – created a strong international reaction against the Romanian authorities.
- The third wave – (1925-27) – During this wave of persecution the government officials acted as puppets of the Orthodox Church. Direct interventions of the USA to the Queen of Romania were fruitless. This wave of persecution ended after the intervention of the League of Nations, and was also favoured by the victory in elections of a liberal government that was promoting freedom of religion and conscience.
- We have inadequate documentation of the fourth wave.
- The fifth wave – (1937) led to the closing down of countless places of worship for imaginary reasons. It ended after international pressure lobbied by the World Baptist Alliance.
- The sixth wave – (1938) All Baptist churches in Romania were closed by the Department of Religion and Arts, which had an Orthodox priest as Minister.
- The seventh wave – (1939) – All kinds of absurd laws were passed with the purpose of closing churches which did not meet the requirements.

- The eighth wave of persecution – (1941-44) – This was the period when Romania, like many other countries in Europe had a Fascist government. The nationalist government was playing the game of the Orthodox Church, which said that ‘being Romanian means being Orthodox’. Everyone else was a traitor. On 23 August 1944 the Fascist dictator Ioan Antonescu was arrested, and a new government was installed. On October 31, 1944, the freedom of religion is reinstated. In 1948 Romania becomes a republic, with a new Constitution and a Communist government. The freedom of religion and of conscience is highlighted in the new Constitution. However, this did not mean anything, for in a very short time the communists proved their true colours, and so, the longest ongoing wave of persecution started.
- The ninth wave – (1948-89) – was more ferocious than all the others. The tactics used by the regime in order to divide the leaders and the believers defy imagination. They made the physical and emotional torture even harder to endure. Many kept their faith, but many collapsed under the unimaginable repressive machinery of the Communist system.

All the persecutors have gone, one by one. The church emerged victorious and glowing, purified like the purest gold. Today the Romanian Baptist Church is, arguably, one of the strongest and most conservative in Europe. Two Baptist Universities and a few Baptist Theology departments in the largest secular universities train pastors and missionaries for Romania and many places around the world.

A few years after the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989 the Orthodox Church tried very hard to lobby a bill in parliament to declare the Orthodox religion the State Church. They were laughed at by former Communists who made it into the new parliament. We only hope that the ‘nine days of tribulation’ will not become ‘the ten days of tribulation of the church in Smyrna’ – Rev 2:10.

May we who are living in relative freedom and sometimes excessive prosperity learn not to take anything for granted! *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Reviews

What the Bible teaches about Marriage

Anthony Selvaggio
Evangelical Press, 233 pages.

One of the indicators of a helpful book is how much text is highlighted or underlined for future reference. In this case I found I was underlining at regular intervals. Given the wide array of material available at present Selvaggio has produced a very clear and helpful book on Christian courtship and marriage.

He draws wisdom from a correct (in the opinion of this reviewer) interpretation of the Song of Songs (Hebrew love poetry). In that sense the title 'What the Bible teaches about Marriage' may be overstating it a bit. Nevertheless, Selvaggio has presented us with a coherent and very beneficial treatment of the subject. After a brief introduction he arranges his material under three main headings:

1. the prerequisites of true love: maturity and purity (before marriage)
2. The nature of true love: exclusive, enduring, priceless (God's intention for marriage)
3. Maintain true love: foster friendship, complement one

another, encourage one another with compliments, a glorious reunion (growing God-honouring marriages).

A final chapter explains the link between the Song of Songs and Genesis 1-3.

Each chapter is rooted firmly in Scripture, with plenty of biblical illustration. He clearly establishes what God requires of us in the area of sex and marriage, covering areas ranging from marrying 'only in the Lord' to sexual purity before marriage to the nature of pornography as 'virtual adultery'. But it's not all negative! Every chapter takes us back to the Saviour and there is comfort and encouragement given for those who have fallen sexually. There is also a wealth of practical advice on how to maintain exclusivity, love and friendship within marriage.

His comments on maintaining the exclusive nature of the marriage relationship also give a salutary warning for those engaged in Christian ministry to beware the danger of 'the church as mistress'. 'It is very easy for those engaged in callings of this order to excuse the neglect of their spouses with platitudes about serving God' (p.76).

In chapter 10 Selvaggio affirms that 'sex is part of who we are and what we are called to do in God's world' (p.188) and he goes on to explain that we need to get back to a puritanical view of sex! This is far from negative as reference to Leland Ryken's 'Worldly Saints' makes clear. If you haven't read Ryken's work on the Puritans then shame on you, but you can get a potted version of their approach to sex and marriage here!

Selvaggio summarises his work as follows: 'The greatest benefit of the Song of Songs is not that it teaches us about romance and relationships, but that it points us to the necessity of the redeeming work of Christ in our lives. In essence the Song reminds us that the purpose of romance and sexuality is to drive us to the Saviour' (p.217) I heartily recommend this work. *Wes Johnston.*

Heart cries to Heaven

David Campbell

Compiled by Sara Leone

A Book of Prayers

Day One. 108 pages.

Most of us stand in need of help in our prayer lives. The prayers are prayers of Invocation and Adoration, Confession, Illumination, Application, Intercession and Benedictions. They are contemporary in style. The length is mostly short and if read aloud vary from one to

three minutes. They are spiritually stimulating and overall remind the reader of the wide range of subjects we need to remember in prayer. These prayers are especially helpful for beginners in the Christian life. David Campbell was pastor of a church in Darlington, England before becoming senior pastor of the Grace Baptist Church, Carlisle, Pennsylvania in 2002. *Editor*

What happens when...?

Answers to questions for new Christians

Peter Currie

Day One. 145 pages

We need books to give to new Christians. This one is straightforward, easy to read and answers clearly basic questions. Fourteen questions are asked and answered. Here are some of the questions: What happens when sinners trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? When Christians want to be sure? When Christians go to church? When they are tempted? When they sin? When they get tired? When they want to make progress? When they die? This is the right kind of book to give to those who need to get into the way of reading Christian books to assist spiritual progress. The book concludes with two appendices, Five reasons why the Bible is true and What Christians believe about God.

News

Libya

Libya's constitution states that 'for the stability of the country there needs to be only one religion'. Hence change religion and you are accused of treason against your country. When one thinks of Arabs, often the first thing that comes to mind is 'Muslim fundamentalists!' – who are out to destroy the West and Christianity. This is far from the truth as the vast majority of Arabs are law-abiding, friendly people who would never harm anyone. They are people that are held captive by a religious system.

North Africa is the western end of the 10/40 Window. Covering more than 1,830,000 square miles, well over four-fifths of the region are desert. The native peoples of North Africa resisted successive Punic and Roman invasions. When the Arabs finally conquered the region in the seventh and eighth centuries, they imposed their language, Arabic, and their religion, Islam, on the native peoples. Yet most North African societies have preserved their cultural identity throughout the centuries. The North African soul seeks peace between contradictory poles – centuries-old traditions and modernisation, instinct and reason, pleasure and asceticism. North Africa is a land where the old meets the new. Once it had a great Christian heritage. Now, you hear the call to worship from



Tripoli, Libya

the minarets. Islam came and has totally influenced this area since the seventh century. Because of the threat from Islam to people who proselytise, evangelism in this region is a great challenge. Converts usually find it very hard to live a Christian life here, so a big percentage of converts migrate to the West. In recent years more and more North Africans are finding peace in Jesus Christ. Political changes have given them more freedom. The church is growing and becoming more visible day by day!

Nigeria

This description came from Maciek Stolarski while he was travelling in Nigeria. A description on the two recently concluded Reformed Baptist conferences by Maciek forms this month's IFRB newsletter.

When we told folk that we would be staying overnight in Maiduguri the

expression of their faces gave away their thoughts, 'It is a dangerous place'. The city is part of the Muslim north where some of the radical groups are situated. There have been violent outbursts in the last few months resulting in the burning down of many churches. The uprisings have not been anti-Christian but against uniformed authorities. One of the leaders of the fanatical groups kept being released when arrested. This time he died in police custody thus sparking off reactions. In any such agitation churches become targets for the crowd to vent their feelings. There was no real danger for us otherwise our host would never have taken us into the city to lodge.

A number of people are concerned that Britain and other western countries are blind to Islamic goals and strategies. They would like to use Jos as a case study to expose how the Islamic movers and shakers operate. Jos is the last stop of our trip before we move on to Abuja tomorrow morning to catch our flight home on Thursday. It is the capital of Plateau State, where the elevation of more than 3,000 feet presents the northern European with a far more conducive climate. It is why many western missionaries set up their headquarters in the city, followed by the church denominations. The state is predominantly Christian and until twenty years ago was a peaceful place where Christian happily lived with Muslim side-by-side. That has been changed and there have three major

outbreaks of violence, each one coinciding with a push to clear out Christians from a particular district and to make it predominantly Muslim.

The fear expressed by those in the know is that the West is being hoodwinked by the façade of a peace-loving agenda of Islam. Right at the heart of the Koran is that only Allah counts. Isus (Jesus) was a prophet, but it was Mohammed who brought in Allah's revelations. All must follow Allah; Christians and Jews are misguided because of the prophet Jesus. Where a person does not follow Allah then violence may be used against him. A Muslim population will remain peace-loving and not be a threat when they are less than 2% of the population. Between 2% and 5% they begin to proselytise from other ethnic minorities and disaffected groups, including prisoners and street gangs. From 5% upwards they begin to push for certain things such as *halal*. The threat level starts and they will work to get the ruling government to allow them to rule themselves in their ghettos under Shari'a law. When they reach 10% lawlessness arises because the means of complaint with uprisings and threats being used against anything that is considered offensive to Islam. Above 20% jihad militia form and churches and synagogues are burnt. The 40% mark will see the nation experience widespread massacres, terror attacks and militia warfare. 60% will see persecution of all non-believers, which will include

non-conforming Muslims. The ultimate aim is 100% Islamic domination, not only of that country but of the world. The violence we hear of in Plateau State fits into the 40-50% bracket. Nigeria is to have Presidential and State Governor elections in 2011 and the Muslims want to have just one candidate from the north to stand for President. The State is responding by saying that this would be unconstitutional and undemocratic. The battle for Plateau State will be a big one.

South Africa

A letter from Karl Peterson

What is the largest religious cult in your city? Ours is called Zionism. In the late 1800's in a Chicago suburb the Zionist church began well when they sent out a missionary to South Africa to proclaim Christ. The problems began when this brother had to return to the US only two years after arriving on the mission field. He left a church packed with people and leaders who were undertrained. Without an adequate knowledge of the Bible, the church quickly mixed African traditions with the worship of Christ in a distinct Old Testament flavor. They splintered into many factions and spread across southern Africa. Today some Zionists speak of Christ and also venerate ancestral spirits, practice animal sacrifices, wear robes, baptize weekly to drive out demons, and many other things. A missionary asks, 'Is there any

hope among these people?' But the gospel is powerful and some Zionists are returning to their biblical roots.

Recently I preached in a Zionist church here in Barberton. If you can put up with having to remove your shoes before you enter the church and a bit more dancing than most of us are used to, you can participate in the wonderful privilege of preaching the gospel of the grace of Christ to people who scarcely hear the Good News. The local leader of this church is eager to bring these people back to the Bible and it was a privilege for me to have a part in this. Watch the two short video clips at www.zema.org and be encouraged with the power of the Bible among the Zionist churches in southern Africa.

I saw a new AIDS statistic today which states that 46% of people in our town are HIV+. That's 10% higher than last year. Our community is dying! Yesterday a few of us went to visit a woman in her 50's in our squatter camp church plant who is HIV+. Her adult daughter, living next door, has completely abandoned her and so our church is doing all we can to help this woman live and die well. One of our sisters is caring for her (feeding and bathing her and administering her medication). She was so weak this morning when I returned to visit that we admitted her to the local hospital. Because her daughter has the reputation of stealing her mother's monthly \$150 pension income, this widow was clutching to all the money she owned and sleeping with it under her pillow –

\$3.50. The opportunities we have to minister Christ's grace and truth are far more than we have time for. Pray we would be faithful to serve 'these, the least of my brethren'.

Australia

This interesting advert appeared in the Australian Press under the title

A Fresh Alternative – Hills Bible Church, Mont Albert

HILLS Bible Church is a new church in Mont Albert, Melbourne, Australia, a Baptist Union of Victoria Fellowship. Don Barton, one of the leaders of Hills Baptist Church, explains:

We want to provide a fresh alternative to the US trend to "seeker-friendly churches", whose concept sounded so right for Ozzies, but whose danger is "the dumbing down of the Gospel" so that a whole generation has grown up in the church learning little or nothing about theology.

The concept of "seeker-friendly" worship services was eagerly embraced by many churches, speaking the everyday language, avoiding hard to understand terminology, tailoring services to appeal to those who have no church background at all.

Now, there is nothing wrong with this. Preaching and the proclamation of Gospel truths need to be in contemporary language. However, if the result is a "dumbed-down Gospel", it results in no Gospel at all.

Many people have rediscovered the relevance of the Bible to modern life, with a resurgence of interest in the teachings of the Reformers, like Martin Luther and John Calvin, the 17th century English Puritans, the 19th century expositors like C H Spurgeon, or contemporary preachers and scholars like D A Carson, Tim Keller, Mark Dever and John Piper. As a result, many serious or would-be serious Bible students are longing for a church where solid foundational Scriptural teaching is taught and modelled.

We have deliberately decided to offer a fresh alternative, with our Bible teaching focus growing a sound well-grounded church over time. Our worship service is God-focused, not performance-focused. Our teaching is solid, expository rather than topical. God has blessed us with excellent Bible teachers committed to the opening up and application Scripture, and we are trusting him to bless our emphasis as we proclaim the teaching of his Word. We have some exciting plans for the future and are patiently waiting on God to add spiritually gifted members to our fellowship who can help us implement these. We want to see people KNOW God's Word, LIVE BY God's Word, COMMIT TO God's work and IMPACT God's world.'

Hills Bible Church, 43 York Street,
Mont Albert, VIC.

Website: www.hillsbiblechurch.org

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The Words, The Word and the Way of Life

Tom Wells

If we ask the question: Is Christianity a theology or a way of life, most Christians would answer rightly that it is both. However if we ask which of these things looms largest in the mind of the Christian believer over the span of this life, we would likely find that some Christians would major on one or the other of these choices. What I would like to point out in this article is that the three things in my title, regardless of how much thought we give them, exist in a logical order that every believer benefits from, whether conscious of it or not.

The Words

Our first exposure to the truths of the gospel comes to us in words. These words are hopefully based on the words of the Bible. If that is not the case, the message we hear is false. The Bible is God's revelation to us contained in two kinds of words that are very important to us, though when we first hear either kind we can hardly imagine how important they are.

What are these two kinds of words? They are first the words in the original manuscripts of the Bible. Though you may not have been aware of it, the Bible contains a good number of words in three ancient languages. In the Old Testament those languages are Hebrew and Aramaic. In the New Testament we find a single major language, Greek, the common Greek of the first century. There are also a very few scattered words in other languages, but the three languages I have just mentioned are by far the most significant ones. The second kind of words that confront us are the words in the language that the speaker or writer uses in giving us the gospel. For all practical purposes we can assume that the language will be one we understand. Usually it will be our native tongue. Relatively few people know the ancient languages I have mentioned, but virtually every man or woman in the world has a native language and many have mastered more than one. These two sets of words are very different from one

another. The first set in the ancient languages was written down under the inspiration of God and conveyed to us by the authors of Scripture, people who had various titles such as ‘prophets’ and ‘apostles’. We call their words infallible and inerrant. We use ‘infallible’ and ‘inerrant’ to convey the notion that they are absolutely trustworthy. I aim to make my words like that, but I often fail for two reasons. I am both ignorant and sinful. In my case God has not guaranteed that anything I say is perfect. Nor am I on the verge of perfection. Of course I know that most of you understand this, since it is the common lot of fallen men and women. Some are more accurate than others, but no one is perfectly so. And none is on the verge of perfection.

Above I spoke of ‘logical order’. In the case of coming to know and serve Jesus Christ these two sets of words function very differently, but they have a logical relation that I want to write about first of all.

Logically the words in the ancient languages come first. In almost every case, however, we experienced them later or not at all. Yet without them there would have been no message of the gospel to proclaim to anyone. From the beginning we were fully dependent on them even though we were probably unconscious that they existed. Almost all of us who heard the gospel as a child heard it put simply in our native spoken language. We knew little or nothing of ancient manuscripts. But the words in those documents underlay the message we heard. They came first, not in our experience, but as a foundation on which our Christian experience was to be built.

The person who spoke to us of Christ may have known something of the ancient words, but perhaps not very much. He or she did not need such knowledge because those words were not ends in themselves. They were the means by which people who did know those languages could convey it to others. Those words were not magical words that would affect you simply if you heard them. In fact, hearing them would have meant nothing to us.

Let me explain what I meant when I wrote that these words were not ends in themselves. We call something ‘an end in itself’ when it is the last thing

in a series that brings us to a goal we're aiming at. For example, let's suppose you want to buy a computer. That's your goal. How do you get to do that? By taking some intermediate steps. You decide what kind of computer you want. Then you decide how you will get to a computer store. After that you get into a bus or auto to get there. These are just samples of steps that come before you reach your goal of getting a computer. Finally you have the computer, and that is the "end" or goal or aim you hoped to achieve. None of the earlier steps were the end of the process, but buying the computer was the end. We carry out this kind of series in about everything we do.

The Word

The aim of those two sets of languages was to bring you 'the Word'. If that makes no sense, hang on a minute while I try to make it clear. Since most common words and phrases have many meanings, I have to explain what I mean by the Word here. You all know what a word is, it's what is called a part of speech. We use words to convey ideas, to get our point across. But that is *not* what 'the Word' means in this context. The phrase, 'the Word' can also be a name for the Lord Jesus, but that too is not what it means as I am using it here. By 'the Word' here I mean the truth contained in the ancient words and the words used by the one who tells the gospel. Neither set of words is an end in itself, but a means to convey important truth to you and me.

Perhaps it will help you to understand what I am saying by reminding you that common words often have a great number of meanings. I have a dictionary on my desk in which I looked up the word, 'cut'. The dictionary is not a child's dictionary but neither is it an exhaustive dictionary. It was compiled for adults. In that volume I found over 90 meanings for 'cut'. Now a word that has ninety meanings has for all practical purposes no meaning at all, unless we see it in a context of other words and phrases or in a social context that shows what it means. What is true of words is also true of phrases and sentences. I was in a building once where a sign said, 'Children going to the bar must be accompanied by an adult.' In some places I would have asked the question, 'Why would a child be going to a

bar at all?’ But I was in a cafeteria, a place that has what are called in America ‘food bars’, that is places where vegetables, meats or desserts are kept together.

Let me take a biblical example. What could you make of Paul’s saying, ‘I tell you that... no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit’ (1 Cor 12:3). It’s obvious, isn’t it, that anyone who reads Paul’s letter aloud can say it without special help of the Spirit. But if one knows Paul and his theology, he realises that Paul means it cannot be said as a believer must say it, that is with some knowledge of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the believer’s life. It is important that we understand this because if we miss it we may get hung up on the words of the one who tells us of Christ, rather than concentrating on the truth they convey. We may do the same with the ancient languages if we know them.

To summarise this point, then, let me repeat: neither the inspired words found in the original manuscripts nor the words of the person who pointed you to Christ were ends in themselves. Rather they were the means to convey certain truths to you concerning Jesus Christ and his eternal salvation.

The Way of Life

For the purposes of this discussion the end or goal of bringing those words to you was to change your life so that you would both worship and serve God as he has revealed himself in the life and service of our Lord Jesus. That was/is the goal or end of those words. Why do I say, ‘for the purposes of this discussion?’ Because when you think about it, the words you heard that transformed your life were no doubt a part of a greater series that will stretch into eternity. Earlier I listed a series of things you might do to obtain a computer. You had to decide what kind of a computer you wanted, where to buy it and how to get there. Then the series became complete. You got the computer – wonderful! But in another sense that computer was also not an end in itself. You wanted it for some reason, to write with it, or to search the internet or to find bargains when you shopped.

The same thing is true with the series that ended with your coming to serve and follow Christ. That was the high point or the goal, but in fact that may lead to other goals in time and eternity of which you and I have no knowledge at all. That too is in the hands of God.

I started this article by asking whether Christianity is a theology or a way of life. I said that given that bare choice almost every Christian would answer, “Both!” I also pointed out, however, that there is a logical order in these things as they enter our minds, and we do not want to miss it. Jesus showed his disciples that a way of life was their goal in several passages in the Gospel of John:

If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me (Jn 14:23-24).

Again Jesus makes the same point in two verses in John 15, verses 10 and 14:

If you obey my commands you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love... You are my friends if you do what I command.

In these two passages we see that learning to know Jesus was not simply an intellectual experience to be enjoyed. It was a pattern to be followed daily and hourly. And it would be hard! Christian experience was patterned after the experience of the Lord himself. It has been summed up in the phrase: “suffering, then glory” (cf Luke 24:26; 1 Pet 4:1-2).

Do these passages suggest that theology is unimportant? Not at all! But they make clear that practice – imperfect as it must be in this world – remains an absolutely essential product of sound theology.

The apostle Paul makes this same point in two different ways. First he shows it by the way he arranges some of his letters including Romans and

Ephesians. In those epistles he lays an extensive groundwork of theology and then applies it to how we must live. Second he shows it by making what he is doing explicit in verses like Romans 12:1-2:

Therefore [that is, in light of the theology I have put before you], I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Charles Spurgeon once wrote about this logical order in telling preachers the goal they must have in mind in handling Scripture:

The chief part of your commenting [on Scripture], however, should consist in applying the truth to the hearts of your hearers, for he who merely comprehends the meaning of the letter without understanding how it bears on the hearts and consciences of men, is like a man who causes the bellows of an organ to be blown, and then fails to place his fingers on the keys; it is of little service to supply men with information unless we urge upon them the practical inferences therefrom.¹

Spurgeon's point is easily seen, but it is hard to carry out. He is telling us that the grand end of theology is the transformation it works in the heart and mind of the person who is exposed to it. Is theology important? Immensely so! But it is wasted on us, if we fail to see that all the words, ancient or modern, exist primarily to convey truth. And in its turn, truth must change us. The intended effect of the Bible is short-circuited if it does not produce lives that reflect a love for God and a passion to serve him as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ.

¹. C.H.Spurgeon, *Commenting and Commentaries* Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, repr. 1954, page 29.

A Battle in Brazil

The following report highlights a battle which is relevant for many countries.

In Brazil, a bill (PL 122/2006) has been proposed in order to pass a law with the objective of “combating homophobia.” The project characterizes as a crime ‘any intimidating or vexing action, of moral, ethical, philosophical or psychological nature’ that involves homosexuality. Based on this project, homosexual activists in Brazil initiated active opposition to Christian psychologists who offer treatment for those who wish to leave homosexuality (as with Rozangela Justino) and to pastors (such as Lutheran Rev. Ademir Kreutzfeld) who have publicly counselled their flock to avoid homosexual lifestyle. In 2007, evangelicals and Christians in general believed that if the law should be approved, they would be punished for publicly treating homosexuality as sin, which would be contrary to the freedom of religious expression granted by the Brazilian Constitution. Thus, Mackenzie Presbyterian University in São Paulo, a centenary institution of higher learning, with a body of 45,000 students and 1900 professors, whose lifelong associate is the Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB), published a portion of the position taken by the denomination on this matter on its website. This post was signed by its Chancellor, Rev. Dr. Augustus Nicodemus Gomes Lopes. Recently, this text and the institution have come to be accused of being homophobic by gay organizations, with ample support of the media. Its position has been distorted and presented as if it is ‘intentionally promoting the right to be homophobic.’ Rev. Augustus Nicodemus’ photo is being shown on various gay websites on the

Internet, accompanied by words of hate and insulting comments directed at him, evangelicals and the Bible.

Therefore, we, as evangelical Christians in Brazil, seek the prayers and support of fellow believers in other countries. We have also decided to issue the following manifesto, for which we seek widespread circulation:

MACKENZIE UNIVERSITY: IN DEFENSE OF FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

Mackenzie Presbyterian University (Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie) has recently come under attack for an allegedly ‘homophobic’ text that has been on its website since 2007. We, from several Christian denominations, wish to express our solidarity with this institution. We rise up against the indiscriminate use of the term ‘homophobia,’ that is being applied not only to murderers, assailants and discriminators of homosexual persons, but also to Christian religious leaders who, according to the light of Holy Scripture, consider homosexuality a sin. After all, our freedom of conscience and expression may not be denied us, nor may it be confounded with violence. We believe that mentioning sins in order to call people to voluntary repentance is an integral part of announcing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. No declaration of hate may be based on the preaching of the love and of the grace of God.

As Christians, we have the biblical mandate to offer the Gospel of salvation to all people. Jesus Christ died to save and

reconcile human beings with God. We believe, according to the Scriptures, that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). We are sinners, every one of us. There is no division between “sinners” and “non-sinners.” The Bible presents us with long lists of sins and informs us that, without God’s forgiveness, human beings are lost and condemned. We know that the following are sins: “sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; murders, drunkenness, orgies, and the like” (Galatians 5:19). In their traditional and historical interpretation, the Judeo-Christian Scriptures deal with homosexual conduct as sin, as can be shown by texts like Leviticus 18:22, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Romans 1:18-32, as well as others. If we desire the repentance and the conversion of the lost, we must also name this sin. We do not desire legally-enforced changes in behavior but, rather, conversion of the heart. And conversion of the heart does not occur because of external pressure, but by the gracious and persuasive act of the Holy Spirit of God who, as Jesus Christ taught, convicts of “sin, righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8).

We therefore wish to certify that the eventual approval of so-called anti-homophobia laws will not hinder us from extending this invitation freely to all, an invitation that may also be refused. We are not in favor of any kind of law that forbids homosexual conduct; in the same manner, we are contrary to any law that goes against a principle that is very dear to Brazilian society: freedom of conscience. The Federal Constitution (Article 5) guarantees that “all are equal before the law,” stipulates that “liberty of conscience and of belief are inviolable,” and specifies that “no one may be denied rights by reason of religious belief or due to philosophical or political convictions.”

We are also opposed to any external force – intimidation, threats, verbal or physical aggression – that is intended to change a person’s mind-set. We do not accept that the criminalization of opinions be a valid instrument for social transformation because, besides being unconstitutional, this foments an undesirable wave of authoritarianism, undermining the foundations of democracy. In the same way that we do not seek to repress homosexual conduct with coercive measures, we do not want these same means to be used to make us stop preaching what we believe. We want to maintain our freedom to announce repentance and God’s forgiveness publicly. We want to maintain our right to open confessional educational institutions that reflect our Christian worldview. We want to guarantee that our religious community may express itself about all matters that are important to society.

We, therefore, manifest our full support for the pronouncement by the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, published in 2007

(http://www.ipb.org.br/noticias/noticia_inteligente.php3?id=808)

and partially reproduced, also in 2007, on the website of the Mackenzie Presbyterian University, by its chancellor, Rev. Dr. Augustus Nicodemus Gomes Lopes. If homosexual activists intend to criminalize the posture of the Mackenzie Presbyterian University, they should also prepare to equally face the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, all of the country’s evangelical churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Jewish Congregation of Brazil and, in the last instance, to censure the Judeo-Christian Scriptures themselves. Our law guarantees that individuals, religious groups and institutions have the right to express their confessional position and conscience in subjection to the Word of God. We take this firm stand so that this freedom may not be taken away from us.

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RT

2011

No. 239

JAN - FEB

CONTENTS

1. **Editorial** about Lausanne
3. **Noah – heir of the righteousness that is by faith** Editor
11. **The Monod Brothers** Frederick Hodgson
21. **OPERATION WORLD – 2010**
23. **Nine Days of Tribulation in Romania** Ilie Martinovici
27. **Reviews**
29. **News**
33. **The Words, the Word and the Way of Life** Tom Wells
39. **A Battle in Brazil**