

# REFORMATION TODAY



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



*Joao Antonio Sulude and his wife and family who live at Quelimane beside the Zambesi river in the province of Zambesi in Mozambique. He is pastor of a Baptist church. He has been part of a Wycliffe Translators' Team. For details of the recent FIEL Conference in Nampula see News.*



*The photo of the book table was taken at the pioneering African Pastors' Conference at Kabokweni near Nelspruit, South Africa.*

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Front cover picture – *Inland mission. Stephen Nowak in Indonesia (see News)*

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## Editorial

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### *John Stott (1921-2011) - a tribute*

John Stott passed into the presence of his Saviour on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2011. He was Chaplain to the Queen (1959-1975), a theological missionary statesman and a university missionary on six continents. In *Time Magazine* in April 2005 he was rated as 'one of the 100 most influential figures in the world' and that same year a *New York Times* writer suggested that if Evangelicals could elect a pope, Stott would be that man.

Stott's father, Sir Arnold Stott, a distinguished physician and a life-long agnostic, wished his son to seek a career in the diplomatic service. At a young age John was converted and soon sensed a call to Christian ministry. Of pacifist conviction he sought and obtained exemption from military service. In 1939 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge where he attained a first in French, a second in German and a first in Theology. He contributed energetically to the life of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union. He considered marriage but opted to remain single which turned out to be an advantage because of his extensive travels.

In 1945 Stott became assistant curate at All Souls Church, Langham Place, London. Aged only 29 in 1959 he

succeeded Harold Earnshaw-Smith as rector. He made sure that the church served all sectors of society and not just the well-educated. Every year he took parish children camping and gave them a daily wake-up call using his piano accordion. He organised the All Souls Clubhouse in the parish which reached out to young people.

When he retired from All Souls in 1975 he lived in London in a humble one-bedroom flat with a small kitchen. In 1954 Stott had bought a remote derelict farmhouse on the Pembrokeshire coast. Working parties helped him to build this into a base where he could welcome student house parties.

In 1954 he became a close friend of Billy Graham. Busloads from All Souls supported the Billy Graham Harringay Crusades. In 1974 Stott was appointed chief architect of the landmark Lausanne Covenant. His foremost vision was the expansion of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES). He maintained that 'to make Christ known in every university in the world was the most strategic work imaginable'. In week-long missions to universities he would deliver nightly lectures always carefully crafted.

Stott's ambition was to provide books and theological training in the developing world. To this end he established the Langham Partnership International. He insisted on living on a modest stipend and donated all his royalties in perpetuity to the Langham Partnership.

John Stott authored about fifty books. His method was dictation and writing by long-hand. Included are several commentaries which are outstanding for their clarity such as those on Acts, Romans and 1 John. His best known books are *Basic Christianity* (1958); *Christ the Controversialist* (1970); *Issues Facing Christians Today* (1984). If the number printed of all Stott's books were calculated it would run into millions. Books by Stott have been published in 67 languages. He considered *The Cross of Christ* (1986) to be his best book. This title has been published in 20 languages. His learning was appreciated. He received six honorary doctorates. In 1981 he was invited to put his name forward to become the archbishop of Sydney. He declined as he had other interests and felt an Australian would be better suited for that position.

Bird-watching was his hobby. One of his books is *The Birds our Teachers* (1999). He observed 2,500 of the world's approximate total of 9,000 species.

Most remarkable was Stott's diligence in sermon preparation. He reckoned on one hour's preparation for each minute in the pulpit. He was extremely disciplined without being austere. He rose every day at 5.00 am. This regime included a half-hour nap in the afternoon.

Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith was his first biographer (1995). Stott's latest authorised biography is by Roger Steer (IVP 2009). Stott's books, articles and papers, vast in extent, have been deposited in the Lambeth Palace archive.

How is it that some achieve so much? In the soon-coming world we will see that every good thing accomplished is a gift. All glory must be attributed to our Chief Shepherd. How can men of such Bible knowledge remain in the Church of England? No one addressed that question more clearly than C H Spurgeon when reviewing a book by J C Ryle. (See *The Forgotten Spurgeon* by Iain Murray, page 143). Also note the very different denominational pathway followed by William Carey. The 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth is celebrated this year. In writing this short tribute to John Stott I am indebted to Julia Cameron's obituary in *The Independent*. Two other secular newspapers *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* published full and commendatory obituaries.

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## Jesus our Melchizedek

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Do I need a priest?

Several times I have been saved from sudden death. But there is a death, not physical, from which I need to be saved. I refer to the coming great judgement day when every one of us will give an account of our lives. There will be a separation of the sheep from the goats. I dearly wish to be found among the sheep and not go with the cursed into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt 25:41).

To be sure of my salvation I need a priest. But what is a priest? I need a priest who can gain a complete reprieve for me so that not one spot of guilt remains. I need a priest who can clothe me with righteousness so that I am able to enter the presence of God myself. I need a priest who understands my griefs and pains and struggles. A priest is someone who is qualified to represent and pray for others before God (Heb 5:1-3). In some ways a priest is like a lawyer who represents the case for his client before a magistrate. The lawyer will do his best to defend his client and gain his release from condemnation. A priest is one who prays for others. All God's children now possess the right to act as priests to God inasmuch as they can pray for others. Are there different kinds of priests?

When the letter to the Hebrews was written the foremost aim was to persuade doubting Jews to hold fast to the faith in Jesus and not to abandon that faith in preference to their old Jewish religion. The Aaronic priesthood was held in the highest esteem by the Jews. It was and is a marvellous portrayal of what it means to draw near to God through sacrifice and through a priest who has authority to enter not only the tabernacle but to go through the tabernacle into the Holiest of All once a year. The high priest was adorned with the garments and jewels which richly represent the people of God. The privileged high priest wore on his mitre a gold plate with the words Holiness to Yahweh. The whole system was awesome.

The letter to the Hebrews confronts Jews with a startling reality, namely, that in fact there is a higher priesthood, one that is superior to Aaron's.

This superior priesthood is foreshadowed as a type in the person of Melchizedek. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 20.227) a total of 82 priests filled the office of high Aaronic priesthood from the time it was instituted until the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70. They all died. Jesus died but was raised from the dead and now cannot die as he affirmed to John on Patmos, ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades’ (Revelations 1:17-18). He lives for ever and combines in his person righteousness and omnipotence.

How does the Hebrews letter set about convincing readers that Jesus is a superior priest?

The subject is introduced in chapter 4:14-16 in which Jesus is set forth as a high priest who understands our weaknesses and is equipped to be the perfect high priest. The next six chapters are devoted to this subject. By way of warning the writer tells us that this subject is for those whose diet is meat. It is not for babes who can only manage milk.

The outline I will follow looks like this:

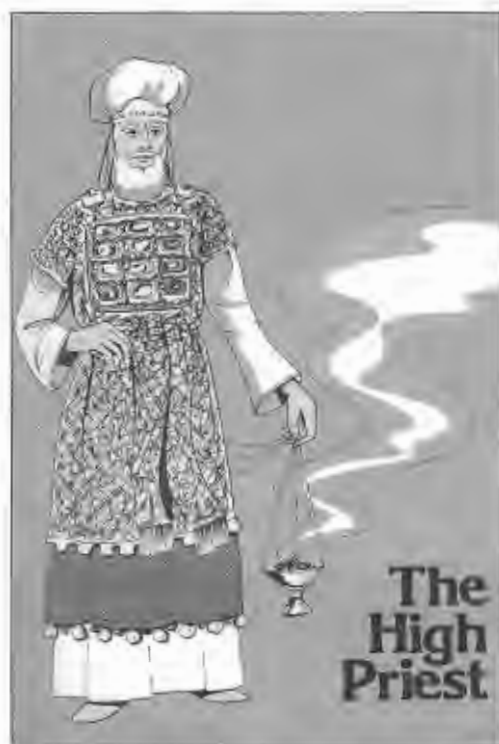
1. The Aaronic Priesthood.
2. Melchizedek - a Superior Priest
3. Jesus our Melchizedek
4. Two conclusions

## **1. The Aaronic Priesthood**

When the children of Israel were assembled at Sinai a tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. A body of priests exclusively from the tribe of Levi administered the tabernacle.



*Perspective view of the Camp of Israel*



The tabernacle represented God's dwelling place on earth. The design was 'a copy and shadow of what is in heaven' (Heb 8:5).

Aaron the high priest foreshadows the ministry of Jesus who is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Especially meaningful are the jewels on the breastplate and on the shoulders of the high priest representing the whole house of Israel.

The priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

While this ministry served to assure the Israelites of God's presence and favour among them, it was limited, as the letter to the Hebrews points out: 'The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean' but all these sacrifices were not able to cleanse the conscience (Heb 9:9 and 13-14).

An effective priesthood was needed. God foresaw this need and pointed to the future provision by providing a type or foreshadowing of it in the person of Melchizedek.

## 2. Melchizedek – a Superior Priest

The name of Melchizedek appears ten times in Scripture, twice in the OT and eight times in Hebrews. We read, 'After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

'Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
And praise be to God Most High,  
who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything' (Gen 14:18-20).

We know that Melchizedek was the king at Salem (Jerusalem – *salem* meaning peace). *Zedek* in the name Melchizedek tells us that he is king of righteousness. He was officially ordained by God to be a priest. As we see from the text Abram acknowledged the office held by Melchizedek and gave him a tenth of everything. In turn Abram was blessed by him. There



was only one Melchizedek. With Aaron the line from generation to generation in the tribe of Levi was recorded meticulously. There is a deliberate withholding of any information about Melchizedek's parents. This is because Melchizedek is a type of the priesthood of Christ who has no beginning and no end. Now Jesus descended from Judah. He was not of the priestly tribe of Levi. He was not qualified therefore for the Aaronic priesthood. Jesus represented a higher and better priesthood namely that of Melchizedek. This order or position of privilege was promised on oath by God in Psalm 110:4.

The LORD has sworn  
and will not change his mind:  
'You are a priest for ever,  
in the order of Melchizedek.'

### 3. Jesus our Melchizedek

Jesus came in fulfilment of the promise by oath made in Psalm 110:4. Jesus came as the incarnate God-man. Melchizedek was a sinful man as we all are. Jesus was sinless. Here is a description of him:

'Such a high priest meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens' (Heb 7:26).

The word (*hosios*) translated here as holy appears in Hebrews only here and means devout. It signifies faithfulness to his calling and his total loyalty to his Father and determination to carry out his mission. The word blameless (*akakos*) describes his innocence. Jesus was without spot or blemish. His sinless nature is strongly upheld in Scripture (Heb 4:15; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 John 3:5; 1 Peter 2:22). He was entirely free from the impurities of original sin, his conception by the Holy Spirit being miraculous. The word undefiled (*amiantos*) points to the fact that although he was fully involved in the affairs of a fallen race and that he moved among and ministered to sinners of all kinds, he never became defiled by them. The rays of the sun are not defiled because they shine on a world that is full of pollution.

The next description as the ESV translates it, 'separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens', moves away altogether from the earthly life of Jesus and refers to his ascension. 'The emphasis falls upon his actual entrance before the divine presence, where he accomplishes his ministry of intercession'- 'Jesus enjoys direct, unhindered access to God, which enables him to fulfil his high priestly ministry on behalf of his people.' – 'Although Jesus' exaltation to the right hand of God removes him in a quasi-spatial sense from his Church, it by no means implies remoteness from his brothers and sisters or a lack of involvement in their struggles.'<sup>1</sup>

Jesus has gone through the heavens (Heb 4:14) to the heavenly sanctuary where he ministers as we read in Ephesians, God 'raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way' (Eph 1:20-23).

#### **4. Two conclusions**

Two applications stand out in these chapters. The first is 7:25 and the second is 10:19-22.

The first: 'But he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him' (Heb 7:24-25).

Note the threefold stress on time. His priesthood is permanent. He continues for ever. He is able *for all time* to save those who draw near to God through him. Note the words in italics refer to time.<sup>2</sup> Our union with Christ is a guarantee of eternal life. He will never cease to be our high priest. Since there will be no sin in the next world, does that not mean that we do not need a mediator or priest since we will not have sins to confess and forsake? The answer is that he will represent us always as our King of

Righteousness and he will for all time be our King of Peace. He is our eternal security. He is eternal life.

The KJV translation, 'He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him' focuses on the word uttermost as meaning in every situation, in every condition of weakness, guilt or confusion. No matter how perilous or traumatic our state, we can always look to our great high priest who ever lives to intercede for us. He is able to save absolutely, perfectly, totally and completely. In other words there is no way that we can perish for as our Lord declared, 'No one can snatch them out of my hand' (John 10:28). All this is true because that is the overall teaching of the Hebrews letter although the text Hebrews 7:25 is referring to the aspect of time. He saves for all time.

The second major application is expressed in Hebrews 10:19-22.

'Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.'

The 'therefore' here is especially important as the privileges enjoyed by believers have been set out fully. The high priest of the tabernacle was permitted to enter the Most Holy Place once a year. Here we are and we have freedom at all times to do that. Why then are we so often lacking in confidence? When we do come, why are we feeble and not bold? Incentives to come with confidence are laid before us. The curtain that separates a holy God from sinners has been torn from top to bottom. That tearing and opening up of the way into the Most Holy Place came through his body (Jesus' humanity). By one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy (Heb 10:14). His sacrifice was perfect for us and that has given us the right to pray to our Father.

John Owen sums up the issue well when he writes: 'Whatever was typically represented in the most holy place of old, we have access to; that is, to God himself we have an access in one Spirit by Christ,' and he goes on to observe: 'This is the great fundamental privilege of the gospel, that

believers in all their holy worship, have liberty, boldness, and confidence, to enter within and by it into the gracious presence of God.’

If Jesus himself is present at the prayer meeting, is that not a cogent reason for us to be present? How does Jesus himself pray? The great high priestly prayer recorded in John 17 tells us. Clothed in the robes of righteousness the Messiah prays with and for his Church in Isaiah 61:10-62:7. He places watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem who will give themselves no rest in their intercessions until he makes Jerusalem (God’s cause) the praise of the earth.

This right of access and this privilege of prayer was purchased with the supreme price of the blood of Jesus. Let us value it therefore at that, the highest level.

The text removes from us the impediment of drawing back because of guilt. My soul has been sprinkled with that blood which has cleansed me of my guilt and my body has been washed with pure water. When Paul was converted he was commanded by Ananias to be immersed in water for the washing away of his sins (Acts 22:16). Jews were accustomed to *mikvah* pools for purification rites and even today take trouble to make sure the water is pure water. For us baptism is a symbol of our sins being washed away.

By way of conclusion we must not miss the word boldness (*parrēsia*)<sup>3</sup> which the NIV translates as confidence. It means both right and liberty and the liberty can be very bold. How desperately we need intercessors anointed by the Spirit to pray with humility and boldness. They will inspire others to pray with boldness. Zechariah 8:20-23 predicts great inter-city prayer meetings characterised by zeal in seeking the Lord and entreating him.

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<sup>1</sup> William L Lane, *Hebrews*, Word Biblical Commentary, volume one, page 192.

<sup>2</sup> This translation by Philip Hughes who shows that the expression *eis to panteles* is at the same time a resumption and an amplification of the *eis ton ainōna* of Psalm 110:4 enriched by its ambivalence, combining the notions of perpetuity on the one hand – thus ‘for all time’ (RSV) ‘*in perpetuum*’ (Vg) – and of completeness on the other – cf Philip Hughes, *Hebrews*, page 269, Eerdmans, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> For examples see Acts 4:13 and 29; 4:31; Eph 3:12; Phil 1:20; 1 Tim 3:13 and 1 John 4:17.

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## William Carey

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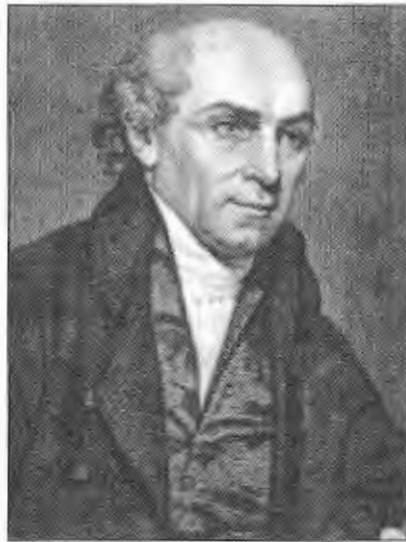
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*William Carey – a light for India*

*By Nigel T Faithfull*

*The glow of dawn*

**W**illiam Carey was born at Paulerspury, Northamptonshire, on 17 August, 1761, where his father was village schoolmaster and parish clerk. Carey loved nature and filled his bedroom with insects and collected plants and birds. At the age of 12 he began to learn Latin



from Thomas Jones, an educated weaver, so he could understand the botanical names – the first of his many acquired languages. In 1775 Carey was apprenticed to Clarke Nichols, a shoemaker at Piddington. His fellow apprentice, John Warr from Potterspury, was three years older and a Dissenter. They had vigorous discussions, each strongly defending his denominational views, but Carey soon saw the merits of Nonconformity and in 1779 joined the Congregationalists in the next village of Hackleton. He was converted under Mr Chater from Olney who stressed Hebrews 13:13. After noticing some Greek text in Nichols' New Testament commentary, Carey again approached Jones for tuition in Greek.

After Nichols' death Carey moved to neighbouring Hackleton to work for Thomas Old, where he met the young clergyman Thomas Scott from Ravenstone, who had led Old's aged aunt to Christ. Here Carey formulated his broadly Calvinistic doctrinal views. He attempted to defend these at a meeting led by the revered mystic William Law, who equated intuition with Scripture, but returned somewhat confounded.

Aided by Scott, Carey delved ever deeper into the Scriptures, and found benefit in Robert Hall's *Help to Zion's Travellers* (1781).

In 1781 Carey joined the newly constituted Hackleton dissenting church, which accommodated differing views on baptism – later to be applied in Calcutta. This year, aged 19, he married Dorothy Plackett, Old's sister-in law. Within two years a fever left Carey virtually bald, but more tragically killed his first child Ann. Old also died, and Carey was left to care for Mrs Old and her four children.

### *Baptist convictions*

In 1783 a sermon by John Horsey and further study of the New Testament convinced him that baptism was an ordinance appointed for conscious faith and consecration, and he was subsequently baptised at 6 a.m. in the River Nene at Northampton by John Ryland (Jr.). He now preached at the Baptist Church at Earls Barton, walking the 12 miles every fortnight, and monthly at Pury End. His ordination was refused in 1785, but allowed the following year, Ryland (Jr.) commenting, 'I would I had a like deep sense of truth.' He added Hebrew to his languages, and moved to become pastor of the church at Moulton. Here Felix, William and Peter were born. The poor stipend of 4s per week, less than that of a farm labourer, meant he again had to augment his income by shoemaking for Thomas Gotch of Kettering, and ran a school for a time. Gotch soon told Carey to cease the shoemaking and he would make up the difference from his own purse.

He next moved to become pastor of Harvey Lane, Leicester, and soon had the sorrow of burying his only daughter Lucy. His straitened circumstances necessitated his keeping a school as well as shoemaking. He drew a world map for the wall and made a leather globe, with continents in different colours. Wearing his leather apron, and with his books beside him, he toiled away in his small one-bedroomed cottage. Somehow he found time to hear such lecturers as Priestley at Leicester's Philosophical Institute, and became acquainted with the latest scientific discoveries.

Following publication of *Captain Cook's Voyages* in 1788 Carey became intensely concerned for the spiritual welfare of newly discovered peoples, and published his 87-page pamphlet *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* (1792). Cook argued that Christian mission would never happen because it would not serve man's avarice or ambition. Carey determined to prove him wrong, and exhorted the Association to action, 'We must plan and plod as well as pray,' and be as much in earnest as the traders. He began his life of mission by helping to lead his two sisters to Christ.

His zeal caused some to brand him an Arminian, and they would not attend the Association meeting if he were preaching. Carey argued that if we accept the promise, 'Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age,' we must also accept the accompanying command, 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19-20). Ryland senior reportedly said, 'Young man, sit down, sit down. You're an enthusiast. When God pleases to convert the heathen, He'll do it without consulting you or me. Besides, there must first be another Pentecostal gift of tongues.' This reflected the hyper-Calvinism which was prevalent.

Carey preached at the Association meeting at Friar Lane, Nottingham, from Isaiah 54, 'Enlarge the place of thy tent ... thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles,' memorably bidding them, 'Expect great things from God. Attempt great things for God.'

Carey fashioned these phrases to be the right and left boots in his missionary march for Christ. The Association were unmoved until Fuller espoused the cause, and then the proposition to form the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen was passed. It was at Kettering, 2 Oct. 1792, that the Society was born, later to become the Baptist Missionary Society.

### *The Macedonian call*

John (Jack) Thomas from Fairford, Gloucestershire, was a lone pioneer missionary doctor in Bengal, and returned home to find an assistant. He

read a letter to the Association from two Brahmin enquirers, 'Have compassion on us, and send us preachers and such as will forward translation.' This was Carey's Macedonian call; his valedictory took place on 20 March, 1793, and Andrew Fuller gave an emotional charge. Afterwards, Ryland, Sutcliff, Fuller and Pearce covenanted to stand by Carey until their deaths.

Dorothy at first refused to accompany her husband, but relented under pressure from Thomas, on condition that her sister Catherine came too. Carey was the first missionary to be sent overseas by an evangelical mission, and his example provided the stimulus for the founding of the London Missionary Society (1795), the Church Missionary Society (1799), and also the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804).

### *The challenges of India*

After a tedious five-month voyage, calling at no ports, they navigated the Hooghly river to Calcutta. The East India Company had chaplains for its English staff, but banned missionary work amongst the Indians. They didn't want to upset the people they were trading with and feared mutinies. Dorothy and Felix, their eldest boy, were stricken with dysentery, and as Thomas had overspent, they ran out of funds and had to borrow a dilapidated shack on a malarial infested marsh. Carey still needed to buy seeds and tools to cultivate an allotment, and the whole episode plunged Dorothy into a mental disorder from which she never recovered.

Carey again resorted to shoemaking and repairing, and in all this adversity could write in his Journal, 'I rejoice in having undertaken this work; and I shall, even if I lose my life therein.' What was his cordial in such straits? 'When my soul can drink her fill at God's Word, I forget all.' Eventually a few acres of cleared jungle at Debhatta became available – there was a snag, the area was infested with cobras and man-eating tigers, which had devoured 20 men in the past season. They came across a stranger, Charles Short, who worked for a salt company, and he asked them all to share his house. He later married Catherine,



but Carey was concerned that, though a gracious man, he remained an unbeliever.

While living here, Carey witnessed the many disturbing and cruel practices fuelled by the teaching of the Hindu Brahmins. Men swung from hooks piercing their backs, fakirs impaled themselves on spikes, widows were burned or buried alive with their late husbands (*sati*), and barren women would vow to the Ganges that they would throw a baby into the river to be drowned or eaten by crocodiles. Lepers would roll into fiery pits believing they would be reincarnated into a pure existence. This spurred Carey on to master the language of these people – Bengali.

Needing paid employment he moved to Mudnabati where he learned the process of making blue cubes of indigo dye from the green liquid extracted from the plant. Sickness again struck, and his 5-year old son Peter died, Dorothy had dysentery and became more disordered, twice trying to take his life. Carey commented (3 Feb. 1795), ‘This is indeed the Valley of the Shadow of Death to me.’ Thomas counselled, ‘Think of Jesus. Only a little while, and all will be over.’

His Christian employer allowed him time for study and preaching in the surrounding 200 villages, where up to 500 would gather to listen, but being low ‘caste’ made them passive and resistant to change. By the spring of 1797 he had translated all the New Testament into Bengali, but still awaited his first conversion, and felt his preaching had become a mere formality. On seeing Carey’s enthusiasm for the newly installed printing press at Mudnabati, the natives thought it must be the white man’s idol!

### *The day dawns*

God opened a door in the form of an invitation by the Governor of Danish Serampore to establish a Protestant Church in the Settlement, with schools and permission to print and publish Scriptures. William Ward, a printer and editor from Derby, and Joshua Marshman, a master

at the Broadmead Baptist School, Bristol, had come out in 1799, and all arrived by boat at Serampore on 10 January, 1800.

Joshua and Hannah Marshman opened boarding schools which provided the major source of income for funding the printing of the Scriptures. Carey's two eldest boys, Felix (15) and William (12) helped Ward in the press, with their ability to speak Bengali and Hindustani fluently. Felix was saved later that year, and the following day preached in the open air. Ward said that he 'never heard a message better fitted for India'. William also soon came to faith.

*The first Indian convert and New Testament*

A carpenter and Hindu guru, Krishna Pal, came to Thomas to set his dislocated shoulder, and took away a tract in the form of a Bengali chant.

*'Sin confessing, sin forsaking,  
Christ's righteousness embracing,  
The soul is free.'*

This met his deepest needs and he became their first native convert, being baptised with Felix on 28 December 1800. This was no light decision, as two thousand had recently gathered to curse him, and cast him in prison. He was only saved from death by the intervention of the Governor. Marshman's free translation of Krishna Pal's hymn is sung today:

*O thou, my soul, forget no more  
The Friend Who all thy misery bore:  
Let every idol be forgot,  
But, O my soul, forget Him not.*

The 5<sup>th</sup> March 1801 saw the first people's book ever printed in Bengali, a bound New Testament, which had taken Carey seven and a half years of toil. He despatched 100 copies to Ryland, together with a case of butterflies!

A month later Carey was petitioned to become the first Professor of Bengali at the new Calcutta Fort William College, established by the Governor-General Lord Wellesley. His being a Nonconformist, however, required his title to be changed to Tutor. Soon assembling a team of pundits, he initiated the publication of books which would become the foundation of modern Bengali literature. Teaching Sanskrit was also added to his duties, and on Speech Day Carey had to address the Governor-General and his brother, the future Duke of Wellington, in that language.

In 1806 Carey asked for and was granted equality with the Hindustani Professor, whereupon his salary was doubled to £1500 per year, plus the title of Professor. All his surplus income, however, was vowed to the Mission. His Bengali dictionary boasted 80,000 words and was praised by the Oxford don Professor H H Wilson as exhibiting a correctness only obtainable by Carey's long domestication among the people. His wife Dorothy died at Serampore on 8 December 1807. In the following year, on 9 May 1808 Carey married Charlotte Rumohr, daughter of a Danish count. She had a physically weak constitution, yet took oversight of the education of Hindu girls and was very caring, especially for the blind and lame.

### *The light spreads*

Carey's vision now enlarged from Bengal to the whole sub-continent with its many languages. The first task was a Bible in Hindustani; next, the need to learn the other languages, and produce types for previously unprinted languages. Additionally a Sanskrit Bible would enable scholars to translate it into many derivative Asian languages, and this task was completed in 18 years.

His Calcutta chapel was built in a red-light district, surrounded by the grog-shops and brothels frequented by sailors. Their Communion had, under Fuller's insistence, been strict, fencing non-Baptists from the table, but this was an embarrassment with visiting evangelical Congregational and Anglican friends, so they opened it to such.

Johannes Lassar from Macao arrived at Serampore and began Chinese classes, which led to Marshman's Chinese Bible in 1823. In 1806 Henry Martyn was inspired to go to India as a military chaplain after hearing of Carey's work from Charles Simeon. On arriving, he was surprised to find 150 sitting at the Serampore Mission's tables and declared the Brahmin converts 'a miracle as convincing as the resurrection of Christ'.

In 1807 Carey was awarded the degree of DD by Brown University, USA. He now had Burma, Malaya, Nepal and Tibet in his sights, and appealed for 40 new missionaries. Felix went to Rangoon, and Carey charged him to study the construction, accents and idioms, compose a grammar, frequently use the language, and start translating with Mark's Gospel. He was appointed an Ambassador with 50 attendants and a gold sword, withdrew from the Mission and became worldly to his father's grief, but later rejoined. Carey's third son Jabez went to Amboyna (Ambon Island, Indonesia).

### *A brighter light in the darkness*

In 1810 there were 105 converts, bringing the total to 300, and by 1812 Serampore had 8 printing presses, printing in 15 languages, and translating into 18. Eventually Carey and his Indian pundits were responsible for the translation of the entire Bible into six Indian languages – Bengali, Oriya, Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, and Assamese – and of parts of it into a further twenty-nine languages.

Having studied the role of education in the Reformation, Carey's team established a college at Serampore in 1819, providing a 7-year course of a broad range of subjects taught through Bengali. The daughters of Marshman and Ward established 10 free schools for Indian girls – a unique provision, as Hinduism forbade the education of females. At this time, when a certain Rajput Raja died, his 33 wives were burned alive with him! Slavery was rife – 9 million were brought from East Africa to fill the harems of the Mohammedans and zenanas of the Hindus, and was not made illegal until 1843. Such was the prevalent darkness.

### *A dark cloud or two*

A great fire at the Serampore printing works occurred on Wed. 11 March, 1812. It spread from the paper store and destroyed priceless manuscripts and dictionaries, grammars and Bibles, and reduced the immense 200 x 50 ft premises to a shell, and melted newly cast types. Over £10,000 was soon subscribed to cover the damage and the news of the disaster actually increased the interest in the work,

A darker cloud now arose from within the Mission. Most of the original Home Committee had died, being replaced by younger men who had never met Carey. They gave too much credit to ill-founded rumours and sought to restrict the authority of Carey's team, which the senior missionaries resisted. Some of their younger colleagues, including his nephew Eustace, decided to break away and begin a similar work on their doorstep in Calcutta. The whole episode caused Carey more heartache than any other difficulty in his life, and took many years to resolve.

### *The two lights*

Carey was a man of two books, the Word and the Works of God. He avidly collected vegetable, animal and mineral specimens, and studied horticulture and agriculture, recording his observations in separate books for each subject. His 5-acre garden at Serampore was laid out on the Linnaean system, and he planted a noble avenue of trees, known as Carey's Walk, where he would pray and meditate. He founded the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India in 1820, open to all nationalities. Lord Hastings became patron and added an experimental farm to the Botanic Garden. It formed a model for the Royal Agricultural Society of England (1838).

In 1823 Carey was elected a member of the Horticultural Society of London, the Geological Society, and a Fellow of the Linnaean Society. But in October a great flood of the Damodar River destroyed his house and submerged his garden, devastating his botanical treasures and

leaving a deep deposit of sand everywhere. He was carried from his tottering house with a fever and damaged hip, and thinking he would die chose Psalm 51:1-2 as his funeral text, and was comforted by repeating to himself the line ‘Hangs my helpless soul on thee,’ meditating on the value of Christ as an atoning Saviour. Eventually he recovered and immediately set about reinstating his garden, but in 1831 a cyclone felled some of his noblest trees which had escaped damage by the flood, crushing his splendid conservatory.

### *Sunset*

Apart from Bible translation work Carey planted 26 gospel churches and had 40 local workers. He had founded a college and many other schools, a hospital for lepers and an institution for the poor of Calcutta. As he lay dying, he said to Mr. Alexander Duff, ‘You have been talking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey; when I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey – speak about Dr. Carey’s Saviour.’

For his memorial, he just wanted two of Watts’ lines:

*A wretched, poor and helpless worm,  
On Thy kind arms I fall.*

Carey died on 9 June 1834 at Serampore, where he is buried.

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## Pray for the Persecuted

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*Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering. (Heb 13:3).*

Persecution has been the experience of Bible-believing Christians throughout this dispensation. Never was it more prevalent than now in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Martyrs enter the kingdom every day as the following examples will show.

The new edition of OPERATION WORLD (2010) has given up on keeping a persecution index which was the case for the last edition in 2001. This is not a criticism because the factor of the unknown makes it impossible to make a reliable scale. For instance in Burma the regime can practise genocide against the mostly Karen people and succeed in hiding the facts from the outside world. Some places of persecution are recorded in OPERATION WORLD. North Korea is an example:

### **North Korea**

There are four propaganda ‘show case’ churches in the capital city but up to 100,000 Christians are interned in labour camps. Possessing a Bible,

saying ‘God’ or ‘Jesus’ and meeting as believers are all punishable by death. Prayer networks for North Korea have multiplied, too many to list, and most have an Internet presence. Many thousands of believers form an unbroken chain of intercession for this nation

Barnabas Fund website gives short descriptions of persecution in about twenty countries. Here are some examples:

### **Nigeria**

Mobs armed with machetes and poison-tipped arrows wreaked havoc in the Muslim-majority Northern states of Nigeria following the re-election of Christian president Goodluck Jonathan on 16 April, leaving a trail of devastation and killing or injuring scores of people. At least 194 churches and over 1,200 houses were burned or destroyed and thousands of people were displaced. Pray for all those who lost loved ones and/or property in the post-election violence; pray that they will be comforted and provided with all they need to rebuild their lives. Pray for peace between Nigeria’s Muslim and Christian communities.

Many Christians living in ongoing situations of discrimination and persecution are weary and faint, worn down by the year-in, year-out struggle to survive and the frustration of the injustices they suffer.

### **Eritrea**

Eritrean Christian Mogos Solom Semere was only 25 and about to get married when he was arrested by Eritrean officials and put in prison for the 'crime' of evangelism. He was told that he would be released if only he denied Christ. He refused. After several years in prison he caught pneumonia. Again he was given a choice: deny Christ and you will get medical treatment. Again, he refused. Weakened from severe torture, his body succumbed to the pneumonia, and Mogos died in prison on 15 February 2007.

The post-communist Eritrean government is cracking down hard on churches, especially evangelical ones, but even Christians from registered churches can face harassment and persecution. Some 2,000 Christians are believed to be imprisoned, many of them without ever having been officially charged and tried. Many are held in metal shipping containers or underground prisons, in which up to 100 prisoners are locked in utter darkness. Torture is common, and some die during their imprisonment; others lose their

eyesight because of the prolonged darkness, and some become paralysed because of torture and beatings.

### **Iraq**

The situation for Christians in Iraq has steadily got worse over recent years. Baghdad and Mosul appear to be particularly dangerous places for Christians, with numerous examples of horrendous anti-Christian atrocities including rape, kidnapping and murder.

Women and church leaders are particularly targeted. Car bomb attacks occur on churches, especially at times when there will be worshippers present. In the chaotic situation, churches now find it difficult to generate the resources to care for the vulnerable and poor among the faith community. Many Christians have fled, either abroad or to the ancient Christian homelands in the north of Iraq and now live in refugee conditions. The Christian population has been reduced from 1.5 million in 1990 to an estimated 400,000.

Surely prayer for the persecuted family of God should be high on our agenda. Information is important. Is there someone in your church who can devote time to research the facts to fuel intercession?



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## Should Christians Embrace Evolution?

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– a review article

Kees van Kralingen

Norman C Nevin (ed.) *Should Christians Embrace Evolution? Biblical and Scientific Responses* (Nottingham: IVP, 2009) 220 pp.

The creation versus evolution debate has accelerated in recent years following the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *On The Origin of Species* (1859). This has caused an increasingly aggressive attack on the credibility of the Christian faith. So-called new atheists like Dawkins and others argue that any form of faith or religion is opposed to science and its progress. Not accepting evolutionary theory is seen as a sure sign of ignorance and a lack of intelligence. Pressure on Christians maintaining belief in creation has also mounted as some well-known evangelical Christians have now adopted the theistic evolution position. The recent publication by Denis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution. Do We Have to Choose?* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2008) is an example.

The key question for evangelical Christians is: what to believe? Why are some Evangelicals now embracing evolution? What has changed? Have we missed news about major scientific discoveries putting evolution beyond doubt? Should we expect a second Copernican revolution? The current book edited by Norman C Nevin is a response to the call for Christians to accept evolution and in particular to Alexander's book. Their answer to the question in the title is a resounding 'No!' The aim of this review is to show why they have come to this conclusion.

The book is a collection of chapters written by several evangelical theologians and scientists. The question in the title of the book is addressed from both biblical and scientific perspectives.

The first seven chapters address the theological implications of adopting evolution. The authors are committed to the authority of Scripture and they want to begin with an exegesis of the relevant biblical texts rather than a scientific paradigm. The authors clearly show that evangelical Christian doctrine remains fundamentally incompatible with evolution theory. I will now summarise their main points.

Theistic evolutionists like Alexander accept the view that man has developed gradually and shares a common ancestor with the great apes. How do they square this with the biblical view of Adam and Eve as the first human beings? In their view *Homo sapiens* constitutes the first real human being with Adam and Eve belonging to this group. They have all been made in the image of God. The Bible supposedly regards Adam and Eve as the first human beings *only* in the sense that God chose to reveal himself to them and *made them aware* of bearing God's image. In this way Adam became the first *Homo divinus*. The authors of the book show that this approach is fundamentally flawed and incompatible with Scripture:

Secular evolution theory has no place for the uniqueness of man in contrast to animals. The book of Genesis and other texts in Scripture, however, clearly put man in a completely different category *because of his creation in the image of God and not because of God's revelation*. If Adam was not the first man created in the image of God, who was?

The theistic evolution view implies that pain, suffering and death are not the consequence of Adam's fall in sin, but did already occur before. This is the dark but necessary side of evolution theory's mechanism for the development of all living organisms by the process of mutation and natural selection. Theistic evolutionists suggest that the judgement of death following the fall refers to spiritual death only, and not physical death. This contradicts what we read in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22. The latter text and its context is written with the explicit aim to demonstrate the truth of the *historical and physical* resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has overcome death including physical death. If he has not dealt with physical death, and if physical death is a natural phenomenon that existed already before the fall, we have no hope whatsoever of a physical resurrection of our bodies. Is all the death, decay and disease that occurs God's design for the development of life, as evolution says? And is this part and parcel of creation which God declared as 'very good'? Did not Christ come into the world to destroy the works of the evil one? Is not death the last enemy which will be destroyed at the return of Christ? As Alistair Donald rightly observes, this issue also has major pastoral implications affecting how we talk about pain, suffering and death.

This theistic evolution view also raises the question about the spiritual state of Adam's supposed predecessors and contemporaries. Were they not 'in Adam' to use the language of Romans 5:12-21? If they were created in the image of

God, but did not relate to him, they were sinners even before the fall of Adam. And what about later human beings who did not physically descend from Adam? How would it be possible for them to be 'in Christ' if they were not first also 'in Adam'? The whole glorious argument of Paul in this text will be completely lost. As Alistair Donald puts it: '.....it is very difficult to understand how one among several millions and who had been predated by others could properly be said to represent the whole. This is not secondary, it is central to our understanding of the Christian faith.' And Michael Reeves concludes: 'The historical reality of Adam is an essential means of preserving a Christian account of sin and evil, a Christian understanding of God, and the rationale for the incarnation, cross and resurrection. His physical fatherhood of all humankind preserves God's justice in condemning us in Adam (and by inference, God's justice in redeeming us in Christ) as well as safeguarding the logic of the incarnation. Neither belief can be reinterpreted without the most severe consequences.'

The theistic evolution view also undermines biblical eschatology. Evolution implies that man may become extinct and/or evolve into a different species leaving a major problem in explaining how this view fits into the eternal purposes of God for man as identified in the Bible.

### *Scientific responses*

As Andrew Sibley and others show, science is not infallible and is characterised by uncertainty; scientific theories are being developed and rejected frequently in the light of fresh evidence. Hence, the authors give the following warning: '....It would be extremely unwise to build one's theology around the shifting sands of a rapidly changing scientific field.' Doing science independently of God leads to deifying science. The religious zeal of the defenders of (theistic) evolution shows that this is no imaginary risk. As Sibley concludes: 'Instead, Scripture and Science must be held in a proper relationship that respects the integrity of God's Word.'

The scientific responses in chapters 8-11 examine the claim that evolution has become 'incontrovertible'. Although well written, these chapters are obviously more scientific and technical, focusing mainly on the biological, genetic and biochemical aspects. The authors use the latest insights from scientific literature thus refuting the claim by Alexander that creationists do not cite (peer-reviewed) scientific literature. Recent scientific findings in these fields (e.g. the results from the human genome project) have given more problems for evolution than answers.

Andy McIntosh highlights the point that the genetic material of living organisms contains a large amount of information. Information requires a language or code to be transmitted. The language is not defined by the material on which it is written, in the same way that English is not defined by the paper and ink of this magazine. In addition, it is important to realise that information or a message is not defined by the code used (e.g. a message can be expressed in different languages or codes). All of this points to the fact that information must be given by an intelligent source. Information does not arise spontaneously in a material form (e.g. DNA). Instead, Prof. McIntosh points to Christ's being involved in creation (John 1:3; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 1:2-3). He says: 'In a very real sense Christ as the Word of God has left his imprint as it were on all living systems through the information-rich biochemistry of the natural world.'

John Walton builds on this from the perspective of (bio)chemistry. He explains that even the simplest living organism is still incredibly complicated and rich in information as stored in the DNA. The many proteins in a living cell are made on the basis of the codes present in the DNA. The development of these molecules with their very long and very precise sequences of building blocks by a random process is simply impossible. Even all of the atoms in the universe are not sufficient for the formation of one single, protein molecule by this alleged trial-and-error process in the time since the putative Big Bang. Scientists have therefore tried to come up with mechanisms by which the formation of such highly specific molecules has been directed. Evidence for such mechanisms, however, has never been found. This simply means that the foundational step to all evolutionary processes, the formation of even the simplest life form, cannot have taken place as evolution claims.

### *Conclusion*

This book is a timely warning against the adoption of evolution theory by Christians. Embracing evolution is neither a scientifically unavoidable step, nor an innocent change of mind on behalf of Christians as theistic evolutionists claim. Embracing evolution has major consequences for an evangelical theology that seeks to be faithful to Scripture. Theistic evolutionists have failed to demonstrate a theology consistent with the supremacy of Scripture. In addition Christian scientists do not have to give up their scientific integrity by remaining faithful to Scripture as the contributions by the various scientists in this book show. Theistic evolution is doomed to be a failure; it satisfies neither Neo-Darwinists nor evangelical Christians. This book is strongly recommended.

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## A Lamentation

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Are we surprised at the looting louts of London (and elsewhere)? Since there is criminality among politicians, the press, the police, the private investigators, the priests, etc., do we imagine the looters remain 'uninspired' by such public role models?

How then do we make sense of all the mayhem? First, away with the excuses – the Duggan killing, tuition fees resentment, unemployment, summer holidays, etc. Yes, don't cut police resources during a recession, then blame them when they're overstretched, etc.

So what is the root of the rot? We are reaping what we have sown. Our secular, evolution-based culture, driven by the prophets Darwin and Dawkins *et al* has abolished God, the Ten Commandments and our law-abiding Christian heritage. We are witnessing the horrors of humanism. Secularism has poisoned the churches as well as society. Clergy have caved in to materialism and perverted values. With pornography and promiscuity no longer frowned upon, infidelity, marital breakdown and rising divorce have devastated families. Parental failure surely lies behind the current criminality of their rampaging kids.

But parents are not helped when corrupt entertainment and relativistic education pervert their offspring. Is there any hope? Not with those in power or with so called democratic values shorn of their Christian origins. Humanism leads to hell, so vividly presaged by the fires of London.

With regard to looting we must remember the commandment, 'You shall not steal.'

'YOU SHALL NOT STEAL'

(Exodus 20:15)

God's Law – summed up in the Ten Commandments – protects all concerned from injustice. It is a rule of righteousness in our dealings

with God and our fellow human beings. The theme of protection is sharply focused in the eighth commandment. It highlights what is relevant to every commandment. It protects all that is sacred: God's honour and glory (1-4), and our neighbour's person (5, 6), marriage (7), possessions (8) and reputation (9). The commandment clearly implies that everyone has rights of possession which should never be violated.

### STEALING PRESUPPOSES LAWFUL POSSESSION

If no one owns anything, stealing has no meaning. Thus nationalisation of private assets without compensation is stealing by the government. However, a secular or humanistic view of private ownership is very different from the Judeo-Christian concept. Where the humanist insists 'X is mine absolutely, forever and in all circumstances,' the Christian affirms 'X is mine by divine donation, held on trust from God.' Unlike atheistic-secularism, Christianity holds that we are stewards who are ultimately accountable to God. God gives us strength to earn and own (Deut.8:17-18) and we are responsible to him in the management of his provision (see Matt 25: 14-30 – the parable of the talents; 1 Cor 4:1-2).

### STEALING IS SELFISHNESS

The thought and act of stealing is selfishly sinful. It is the 'ME FIRST' syndrome. It is a form of personal fascism: 'I have an exclusive, absolute right to your X, you do not.' Both deed and thought are driven by discontent, a state specified by the tenth commandment - 'You shall not covet.' The Bible gives numerous examples of this, notably Rebekah's and Jacob's conspiracy to obtain Esau's blessing from Isaac (Gen 27:1-29), and King Ahab's acquisition of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-16). Robbery and violence (and more!) often go together as Ahab's actions show. In fact, eight of the Ten Commandments were violated by Ahab: 1-2 (Ahab was an idolater, v.26), 3 (God's name was taken in vain, v.10), 5 (Naboth was denied the possibility of honouring his parents, v.3), 6 (Naboth was murdered, v.13), 8 (his vineyard was stolen, v.16), 9 (he was falsely accused, v.13) and 10 (Ahab coveted what belonged to Naboth). Covetousness 'which is idolatry' (Col 3:5) also violates commandments 1 and 2. It is the source of every related

A photograph of Miss Konczyk, 32, jumping from her home has become one of the most startling images of the riots.

Monika Konczyk was forced to leap out of her flat window as a fire raged during the riots in Croydon

‘I came to England because I thought it was a great country full of kind and gentle people. I thought London was a civilised society full of gentlemen and ladies. But it is not like that. England has become a sick society,’ she told *The Sun*.

‘I found myself jumping for my life after being attacked by thugs and thieves. They set fire to my building without any thought for anyone’s safety. They were happy for me to die. They were like animals, greedy selfish animals who thought only of themselves.’

evil (James 4:1-4, 1 Tim 6:10) and the very denial of trust in God (James 4: 2, 7-10).

#### VARIATIONS ON A THEME

Many people would condemn blatant robbery. Even then, businesses increasingly have to budget for stealing these days. Petty pilfering and shop-lifting are more and more common. However, the ‘theme’ of stealing comes in various forms in many real-life situations:

1. Time is stolen by lack of punctuality, excessive tea and lunch breaks.
2. Tax evasion, dubious stock market trading, fraudulent social benefit and expenses claims are stealing.
3. Failing to give value for money in goods and services is stealing.
4. Delayed payment of bills is stealing.
5. Late payment of wages and salaries is stealing.
6. Failure in honouring promises (to God and others) is stealing.
7. Failure to return borrowed books and other items is stealing.
8. ‘Character assassination’ is stealing a person’s reputation. ‘Who steals my purse, steals trash, but he that filches from me my good name makes me poor indeed’ (William Shakespeare).

For Scriptural examples, see Deut 25:13-16; Ps15: 5; Prov 11: 1;

Ezek 45: 9-12; Luke 6: 35; Micah 6: 9-11; Luke 3: 14; James 5:1-6.

### THE ULTIMATE ROBBERY

One of the biblical definitions of sin is the 'robbing of God' (Mal 3:8). Failing to give him our worship, gratitude and obedience are all stealing what is his due. Hence the need to pray 'Forgive us our debts' (Matt 6:12). We are always debtors, worthy of hell - the debtor's eternal prison.

### THE ULTIMATE REMISSION

A world of guilty debtors would have no hope unless another paid our debts for us. With all the resources of heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ came to rescue guilty debtors: 'it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name...' (Luke 24: 46-7).

Through his sacrifice for our sins, the Lord Jesus Christ has provided sufficient merit to pay the 'debts' of all the world (1 John 2: 2).

### REPENTANCE AND REMISSION

As with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:8), restitution goes with remission. We should make amends where possible. Not to do so is to perpetuate stealing. Not to show our faith by love and care to the needy is to 'rob' them. 'Owe no one anything except to love one another' (Rom 13: 8). Our worst robbery of others is to withhold the gospel from them (Rom 1:14-15). May the generous grace of God make us generous to all the world for Christ's sake!

Dr Alan C. Clifford  
Norwich Reformed Church

*For the record, riots and looting broke out in Tottenham, a suburb of London, on August 7 and spread during the week to other cities which has provoked much heart-searching.*



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## John Stott and Leading Theologians

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During July the evangelical Christian world experienced a conflict of emotions, sadness and sorrow at the passing of John Stott, but also joy in knowing that he has now seen the God and Saviour he spent his life serving. Indeed the Church owes much to John Stott. His contribution has been invaluable and many of us have benefited from his work. Sure John Stott, like all of us, was not perfect; his theology had its faults; but he had a sharp mind, an ability to express himself with clarity and he was able to communicate great and deep truths with simplicity.

The question in my mind is this: Does not the loss of John Stott remind us that the wider Church has also recently lost John Gerstner, Roger Nicole and Rousas Rushdoony? While we still have J I Packer, Sinclair Ferguson, Don Carson, Albert Mohler, Wayne Grudem, David Wells, R C Sproul and several others, the number of younger theologians is in marked short supply. With the rise of outstanding talents in Zambia this shortfall might change. Hopefully the Holy Spirit is at work in other nations too. Yet overall we must be concerned about the drift away from theology in depth.

Are the bright lights mentioned above part of a dying generation? Is the office of theologian on the wane? Is it experiencing a demise?

Has the cry of our generation, 'The Church must be relevant to the post-modern age,' led us into the trap of spending more time debating and studying culture, and people, to the point that we have neglected theology? Have the subjects of relevance, pop-culture, psychology and management, become more important and of greater benefit to the Church than studies in theology? Surely, we know that even if you understand the times, culture, post-modernism and people, but are lacking in theological knowledge you will not be able to minister and teach the gospel effectively? Would not the continued practice of this produce churches that are a mile wide, but an inch deep? Is this not already the case in so many churches, happy with superficial truths, that keep the numbers up, and steer clear of the deep, profound and difficult truths of the Bible, so as not to bore people, or risk being irrelevant? Is not the writing on the wall already, by virtue of the fact that 'Church Growth', 'Effective Leadership, and 'Purpose-Driven' books outsell the latest theological works by some of the sharpest minds of our time? Does that not then reveal that our desire for numerical growth and personal success is more important than the maturity, spiritual growth and nourishment of our congregations?

Troubling questions mean troubling times!

Spurgeon can instruct us here. In chapter 15, *Lectures to My Students*. ‘The Necessity of Ministerial Progress’, Spurgeon maintains that theology is the foundation and starting point as we grow and progress as ministers.

‘Study the Bible, dear brethren, through and through, with all the helps that you can possibly obtain: remember that the appliances now within the reach of ordinary Christians are much more extensive than they were in our fathers’ days, and therefore you must be greater biblical scholars if you would keep in front of your hearers. Intermeddle with all knowledge, but above all things meditate day and night in the law of the Lord.

‘Be well instructed in theology, and do not regard the sneers of those who rail at it because they are ignorant of it. Many preachers are not theologians, and hence the mistakes which they make. It cannot do any hurt to the most lively evangelist to be also a sound theologian, and it may often be the means of saving him from gross blunders. Nowadays we hear men tear a single sentence of Scripture from its connection, and cry “Eureka! Eureka!” as if they had found a new truth; and yet they have not discovered a diamond, but a piece of broken glass. Had they been able to compare spiritual things with spiritual, had they understood the analogy of the faith, and had they been acquainted with the holy learning of the great Bible students of ages past, they would not have been quite so fast in vaunting their marvellous knowledge. Let us be thoroughly well acquainted with the great doctrines of the Word of God, and let us be mighty in expounding Scripture.

‘I am sure that no preaching will last so long, or build up a church so well, as the expository. To renounce altogether the hortatory discourse for the expository would be running to a preposterous extreme; but I cannot too earnestly assure you that if your ministries are to be lastingly useful you must be expositors. For this you must understand the Word yourselves, and be able so to comment upon it that the people may be built up by the Word. Be masters of your Bibles, brethren: whatever other works you have not searched, be at home with the writings of the prophets and apostles. “Let the Word of God dwell in you richly.” ’

*For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the LORD, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel (Ezra 7:10).*

*Gordon Bull who wrote this is a pastor in South Africa.*

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## The Gospel in China

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*- looking to the future*

*by Bob Davey*

As the Protestant Church, both official and unofficial, looks to the future it can do so with encouragement. The power of the gospel of Christ will continue to bless China with spiritual and social good. Official church buildings remain packed with keen worshippers and enquirers and there is a demand for new church buildings. As far as the house-church movement goes, confidence is evident in their missionary vision.

*An emerging missionary Church*

With the rapid expansion of the house-church movement in the 1990s, the missionary vision to take the gospel of God's saving grace beyond

If a new believer from an emerging country asks me, How is Christianity faring in the world today? Answer: I recommend that you buy THE POWER TO SAVE by Bob Davey which is a book describing the history of the gospel in China. Generously illustrated this 354 page volume unfolds the way in which the Church in China has, from very small beginnings in the early nineteenth century, grown to large proportions in spite of fierce persecution and formidable obstacles. This account provides inspiration to persevere in other nations where there are frightening spiritual enemies.

But what of the future? Will China emerge as a free country to take a leading role in missionary work? This short chapter from the book which is published by Evangelical Press shows that there is kindled among the Chinese believers a missionary vision. It is very important that we pray earnestly that this vision will become a reality. Please note well the guidelines for prayer at the conclusion of this article.

the Chinese borders was rekindled. Up to that time, the days had been so dark for believers in China that their prayers and energies had been taken up with just seeking the survival of the faith. Now their prayers and energies could embrace the Great Commission of Christ to take the gospel to everyone in the world.

In 1981, when Simon Zhao was released from prison in Kashgar, after surviving thirty-one years of appalling circumstances and cruelties, nobody was waiting for him. He had nowhere to go and had no money. However, he was looked after by the local Christians in Kashgar. In 1988 some workers from the Henan network of house churches were in Kashgar. They heard about this original 'Back to Jerusalem' worker and leader. They were eager to meet him and learn from him. The vision for Chinese churches to take the gospel to the nations west of China, all the way along the ancient silk-road to Jerusalem, had originated with Mark Ma as far back as 1942.

A group of house-church leaders then visited Simon Zhao. He looked like a wizened old sage. They could not persuade him to travel east to speak to the churches in Henan. He just wanted to be left in peace and quiet. Certainly he dreaded becoming the centre of attention. This was the understandable reluctance of one who had suffered so much and was now over seventy years of age. This reluctance was finally broken around 1995 by the very patient and prayerful arguments of Xu Yongling, sister to the Tanghe Fellowship leader Xu Yongze. She persuaded Simon Zhao to go to Henan 'where thousands of new troops need training and equipping if the "Back to Jerusalem" mission is to be rekindled in the life of the Chinese church'. His ministry turned out to be very powerful and many tears flowed as he gave his moving testimony and shared the original vision.

Just how successful his ministry proved to be can be measured by the fact that many Christians within China today know and pray for the 'Back to Jerusalem' vision to be realised. A motivation for many is the belief that Chinese Christians should be present in Jerusalem to witness the Second Coming of Christ, as a reward for their evangelising the nations between China and Jerusalem. Wenzhou Christians see a



*The original Back to Jerusalem Band (Mark Ma is in the centre of the front row)*

second route back to Jerusalem, the ocean route to the Persian Gulf. Simon Zhao died on 7 December 2001, rejoicing in the faithfulness of God and the perfection of his ways.

The majority of the nations west of China are Muslim, and the Chinese Christians with missionary vision have taken this to heart. They consider that this constitutes a special call for them to do the evangelising. Rightly or wrongly, they believe a Chinese Christian will be more acceptable than a Western Christian. In their view, the legacy of the Crusades has raised an insuperable barrier of prejudice against Westerners. The Chinese do not have this particular millstone around their necks.

Missionary vision is not confined to 'Back to Jerusalem'. That has been a catalyst. It is a beginning. As Chinese Christians are able to be more mobile within China, there are 520 people groups within the borders of China to be reached, including Muslims. That is a starting place for mission. The task cannot be easy, but a start has been made.

When they are able to link up and work in partnership with strong Chinese churches already established abroad, they will be a spiritual force to reckon with. They could evangelise south-east Asia and re-evangelise the West. The vision for 100,000 Chinese missionaries on a global scale is already in circulation within China! That would represent just one in a thousand of the Protestant believers in China. It is only a dream under present circumstances, but a noble one.

If ever the time comes to implement the task of overseas missionary work seriously, then biblical standards will need to be upheld. It must be realised that it is not a human programme, but a divine purpose and calling to be followed. For all missionary workers it is spiritual quality and not numbers that is of paramount importance. Good candidate selection is crucial for the success of any mission endeavour. Thorough training and mature character is essential. A local church should do the sending. Lessons can be learned from the story of foreign missionaries to their land of China. The lives of the pioneer missionaries to China, in particular, have good lessons to teach, as well as being excellent models for inspiration.

A popular and sensational book is called *The Heavenly Man*. It describes the life and views of Brother Yun. He now lives abroad and is a populariser of the 'Back to Jerusalem' vision. Despite the claims, he does not represent the house churches in China. His ideas for sending abroad ill-prepared young peasant missionaries are unbiblical. It is sending lambs to the slaughter. This matters because much harm is done and the name of Christ is brought into disrepute.

### *A moral Church*

Many Christian families have received government awards as model households and many Christians have received rewards for the quality of their contribution in the workplace. Christians demonstrate a healthy lifestyle and set a good example. The reason is that Christians have to answer to God, a higher authority than that of the state. Their self-sacrificing care often puts to shame the empty slogans and, only too often, callous indifference of Communist Party members.

The 1998 House Church Policy (reproduced in Appendix 6) made the claim that 'the persecuted Christians have a heart that loves their country and people', and 'have high moral integrity'. 'As a matter of fact', they state 'wherever there are more believers, there is also greater social stability.' 'We only do what is beneficial to the people.' Jesus said that it is spiritual character that produces such good disciples (Matthew 5:3-12). They are the 'salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' (Matthew 5:13-16). 'Love your enemies' and 'overcome evil with good' must continue to be the standard.

## *Conclusion*

China is a huge country. The extraordinary variety of conditions means that a complete overview of current conditions of the Church in China is difficult to achieve. Strictness by the authorities in one part of China is matched by toleration in another. We need to be cautious. Two extremes are to be avoided; one, an over-optimistic, starry-eyed triumphalism; the other, a cynical detachment that sees only the faults of human imperfection and a future impending doom. The real question is, what is God doing in China? The answer is, He has done much and is doing much today.

What is God yet going to do in China? The fact is that Christianity is a minority religion in China and still marginal in the life of the nation. The remarkable spiritual revival in China needs to continue to grow unabated. The key is in the word 'unabated'. Historically, when a genuine revival has progressed unchecked for over a hundred years within a nation, that nation has been radically changed for the better, spiritually, morally and socially, whatever the obstacles. There have been no exceptions to this rule. Britain and the USA have been privileged to experience such periods, but have experienced no genuine revival of extensive length in the last 150 years.

Our prayer must be that in God's mercy and grace:-

- the revival will continue and retain its spiritual power.
- the revival will remain pure as to doctrine and practice.
- the revival will continue to mature the Church.
- the revival will renew China spiritually, morally and socially.
- that out of the revival will come a host of missionaries to the rest of the world.

This would all be the fitting repayment of the debt the Chinese owe, in love and in the providence of God, to Robert Morrison, the pioneer of the gospel to China, and to all who have given their lives in the service of the gospel to China, whether they be Chinese or foreigners, whether known or unknown.

Jesus said 'I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.' In China today Christ is building his Church. The power of God to save is at work.

### Indonesia

I have just had another wonderful opportunity to minister for the fourth time in Indonesia. I was there from 27 May to 21 June. My previous three times of ministry were centred on the large Setia College in Jakarta. This time I travelled more widely as I will now explain.

The first week was in a Setia Bible College on the island of Kalimantan. There are about 120 students there. We spent the week looking at Christ in the Old Testament. A number of the teaching staff were present and most of the biblical material we studied was new ground. The main purpose or vision of Setia is to plant churches among the unreached people groups of which there are many. This is ambitious because the obstacles are formidable. The life-style of the students is humble. For instance there is little meat and fruit in their diet. The library is far too small for their needs. I managed to take 200 books in Indonesian to share among the students.

The second week I spent teaching in a smaller new college just

outside of Jakarta called Arabona. Here there is determination to concentrate on quality rather than quantity. Being a missionary/evangelist/church planter/pastor in Indonesia is exceedingly challenging. Many of the college graduates do not last very long in full-time ministry because of poverty and persecution. Arabona has been set up to really grapple with these issues and train leaders who are able to persevere. Because this college is in Java I was able to give them considerable numbers of books for the library and about fifteen books to each of the twenty students. Theology forms the spiritual diet of every truly-called missionary. A library is essential.

The third week I travelled into central Java to a college which exists in a very hostile environment, an area where most of the radical Muslims in Indonesia come from. I could not stay in the college and had to be taken in and out in a car with tinted windows. I went out to preach in a few of the churches and also spoke at the pastors' fraternal. The Christians keep to small groups so as not to attract attention. Their love for the Lord, joy in his salvation and



confidence in the absolute Lordship of Christ was refreshing and humbling.

Reformed theology has made an impact especially among the younger generation. This is mostly because of the Momentum publishing company from whom I am able to obtain supplies of books. The 1689 Baptist Confession in Indonesian is distributed in quantities. I gave a copy to one pastor which he studied and began to teach in his adult Bible class. All the pastors joyfully received the books I gave them.

I was taken inland to a small village where I was the first Westerner to visit. We travelled (see cover photo) for two and a half hours on a small boat. There were about two hundred homes in this remote village. The work of evangelism began about five years ago. There are fifteen converts. We met in a house, sat in a circle, had a meal, prayed, sang and opened the Word. Their simple yet sincere love for the living God refreshed my soul.

The unreached tribal peoples are mostly receptive to the gospel. The large majority are steeped in Islam. This is one reason why pioneers need to be robust in the sovereignty of God and clear-minded in Christian doctrine.

My small contribution in this massive country of 232 million is to provide the most relevant and powerful literature materials. I take about fifty books in English to give to leaders and the rest in Indonesian I procure from publishers in Indonesia. The number of my contacts is increasing. There are many islands in Indonesia and that makes the distribution of books more difficult.

If you wish to support this work please e mail for details [stephennowak@btinternet.com](mailto:stephennowak@btinternet.com) or write to me at Pastor Stephen Nowak, 25 Finborough Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1PN.

### **Cambodia**

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith has been published in Khmer (Cambodia). This came about through Pastor Cheng Nuon of the Church of Mercy Prek Ambel. He was sent out by the First Baptist Church of Parker, Texas, USA and has served in Cambodia since 1999, planting churches. He has seen the need for teaching his flock the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith. It is our prayer that this Confession of Faith will be a blessing to other Christians in Cambodia. Special thanks to Shalom Church, Singapore, for their support, encouragement, and

commitment to translating good books into the Khmer language.

### **Mozambique**

Around 330 pastors, evangelists, other church leaders and their wives attended. Our theme was Christian Worldview. There was brilliant preaching by Ronald Kalifungwa (Zambia) and Aduino Lourenço (Brazil).

The Lord truly honoured his Word; this may have been the most effective conference yet. For the first time in twelve years, a united public call was made by Mozambican pastors for a deep reform of the Church. A manifesto was drafted which we are working on which has much potential to inspire the pastors to work together in unity for reformation and rejection of false gospels.

*Karl Peterson*

### **Malta**

Malta with a population of 409,000 is regarded as the most religious nation in Europe. The official languages are Maltese and English. Overwhelmingly Roman Catholic there are only about 500 Protestant Evangelicals. Paul Mizzi is the pastor of the Trinity Reformed Baptist church. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* has just been published in Maltese.

### **The Carey Family Conference**

The recently completed 40<sup>th</sup> Carey Family Conference took place at Clovelly Hall in Shropshire. This conference is fully subscribed. Each day begins with a prayer meeting of 45 minutes. Pastor Ray Evans of Bedford was the main preacher. Spiritual momentum increased through the week. Parents are always concerned for the spiritual state of their children. The policy is reformed in the sense that we look to the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin, repentance and saving faith. We rely on clear gospel preaching not pressure from us. One young man, son of a pastor, testified on the final evening that while on his own he had come under an irresistible conviction to repent. He sought out an experienced Christian with whom he could pray and then came to a full assurance that he was saved. On the last evening about thirty young people organised their own prayer meeting. Next morning I met a young man in the corridor and 'How did the prayer meeting go last night?' He said, 'Marvellous! I was saved!' Of course time has to test all professions. We must not expect our young people to be instantly perfectly sanctified. But of this we can be certain, the Lord is faithful in building his Church from one generation to the next.

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