

# REFORMATION TODAY



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2012

245

**Websites** [www.reformation-today.org](http://www.reformation-today.org)

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

<http://africanpastorsconference.com>

*26th November saw the recognition service of Peter Howell (see page 15) as pastor of Montpelier Place Baptist Church, known over the years as the Brighton Tabernacle. The service included a Concert of Prayer for revival but especially with Montpelier Place in mind. There is a board recording the pastors of this church from its inception in 1834. It was out of Brighton Tabernacle that the church at Cuckfield was revived. It had declined down to one elderly lady member. And it was out of that reviving that this magazine was born in 1970 along with the Carey conferences, church plants and several missionary enterprises.*



*Stephen Nowak (see front cover photo and News about Indonesia in RT 243) was inducted into the pastorate at Stowmarket Baptist Church on September 3rd. Stephen served as pastor of Montpelier Place,*

*Brighton, for nine and a half years. The Stowmarket church has undertaken to support Stephen in his missionary journeys to Indonesia, Tanzania and the Philippines. The photo from left to right: David Barker (elder), Stephen Nowak, Erroll Hulse and Jim Spencer (elder). Erroll gave a scriptural challenge to the pastor on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday morning reminded the congregation of their responsibilities as church members.*

---

*Cover picture. Montpelier Place Baptist Church, Brighton. The church building has been refurbished. This photo was taken before the auditorium was filled for the induction service and Concert of Prayer.*

---

---

## Editorial

---

---

But you, LORD, sit enthroned forever;  
your renown endures through all generations.  
You will arise and have compassion on Zion,  
for it is time to show favour to her;  
the appointed time has come.  
For her stones are dear to your servants;  
her very dust moves them to pity.  
The nations will fear the name of the LORD,  
all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.  
For the LORD will rebuild Zion  
and appear in his glory.  
He will respond to the prayer of the destitute;  
he will not despise their plea (Ps 102:12-17).

Five points stand out to encourage us in the Concert of Prayer for spiritual awakening.

1. The history of this world only makes sense when we see that the glory of God is the key. '*Your renown endures through all generations.*' History is his story. History is the story of his renown. Throughout the Old Testament history and through the centuries since Christ, up until now, the renown of the Lord has been maintained by revivals. Revivals have a central place in the revealed purposes of God. There is present decline in the West. This

### *Contributors to this issue*

Brian Beevers served as an elder of Leeds Reformed Baptist Church from its inception in 1972 until his retirement in 2005.

Dr Kevin Bidwell is the pastor of the recently planted Presbyterian Church in Sheffield a church centrally situated in that city.

Tom Wells of West Chester, Cincinnati, USA, is a well-known author and frequent contributor to these pages.

Bob Davey is the author of *The Power to Save - A History of the Gospel in China*, (354 pages, paperback, EP). This volume began as a series of articles in this magazine. His highly commended book is enhanced by illustrations. It sells in the UK at £9.99.

we observe more and more. This decline drives us to prayer. We must unite and call upon the Lord. This Psalm inspires us to do that.

2. The story of the Church is very precious. *'For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to pity.'* The inside front cover of this issue is unusual. It is a record of the names of pastors who poured out their lives into the work of the gospel. The survival and revival of a church is precious. There were Jews from Persia who settled in China during the Han dynasty, c.58-76 AD. During the last 40 years they lost their identity in stages. They lost their synagogue, then their rabbi, then their scrolls, then their Hebrew language. Finally through inter-marriage they diminished from about 400 to five or six. (*China Insight*, Nov-Dec 2011, Tony Lambert). Many churches in the UK today, some centuries old, are in danger of demise. In ten years or so, if there is no revival, their doors will close. *'Her very dust moves them to pity.'*
3. A stupendous revival on a global scale is coming. *'The nations will fear the name of the LORD, all the kings of the earth will revere your glory.'* This promise is of such magnitude that we simply cannot grasp it. It must refer we think to the judgment day when every knee will bow, even unwillingly. But there are many passages of Scripture including 1 Corinthians 15:25 which describe global revival. Even though we do not fully grasp this it does inspire us in our prayers. We should never pray with defeat in our minds, only ultimate victory. We never pray, 'Lord, show us the quickest route to a concrete bunker where we can hide away from the wrath of our enemies.' We always pray, 'Lord, forgive us our sins, rebuild Zion and demonstrate your glory.'
4. God is most glorified in revival. *'For the LORD will rebuild Zion and appear in his glory.'* Jonathan Edwards insists on the fact that 'revivals are the most glorious of all God's works in the world'. 'It is a more glorious work of God than the creation of the whole material universe'. (*Works* vol 1, page 379).
5. The prayers of God's people precede and prepare for revival. *'He will respond to the prayer of the destitute; he will not despise their plea.'* We are weak. We are destitute. We have so many reasons to discourage us from prayer. But it is our destitution that is attractive to an omnipotent God. 'When great kings are building their palaces it is not reasonable to expect them to turn aside and listen to every beggar who pleads with them, yet when the Lord builds up Zion, and appears in the robes of glory, he makes a point of listening to every petition of the poor and needy. He will not treat their pleas with contempt; he will incline his ear to hear, his heart to consider, and his hand to help' (Spurgeon, *Treasury of David*, Psalm 102:17)

---

---

## Prophet, Priest and King

---

---

If we take an overall view of everything Christ does for his people we can say that he is our only mediator (1 Tim 2:5) and as such occupies three offices on our behalf, namely those of a prophet, priest and king. Under these three can be included all his activities for us including his work as the great shepherd of the sheep which can be subsumed under the umbrella of priesthood.

In the Old Testament there were prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel. There were priests such as Aaron and Samuel. There were kings such as David, Solomon and Hezekiah. These offices were distinct. There are exceptional instances of a leader occupying two offices such as David who was both a king and a prophet and Melchizedek who was both a priest and a king. Samuel was both a priest and a prophet. Christ alone fulfils all three offices of prophet, priest and king and that in a superlative manner.

Anointing with oil was the mark of calling to these offices of prophet, priest and king. In the days of the tabernacle a very special ointment was made. The loveliness of the fragrance made the one anointed desirable in the presence of others. Absolute prohibition surrounded the making of this anointing oil (Ex 30:32-33). It was unique and was used to anoint Aaron and his sons. Later it was also used for anointing prophets (1 Sam 10:1; 16:13) and kings (1 Kings 19:16). 1 Samuel 16 describes how Samuel traced David and anointed him to be king. Christ in conformity to the high office to which he was ordained was anointed by the Holy Spirit (John 3:34). In the synagogue at Nazareth Jesus confirmed that he was Yahweh's sent Servant by anointing: 'The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor' (Luke 4:18; Isa 42:1). In Hebrew Messiah means anointed (Dan 9:25). Christ means the anointed one. 'We have found the Messiah' (that is, the Christ) (John 1:41).

### Christ as prophet

The promise made in Deuteronomy 18:15 was well understood: 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.' In the words of Calvin, 'This expectation penetrated even to the Samaritans, though they never had known the true religion, as appears from the words of the woman: "When the Messiah comes, he will teach us all things" ' (John 4:25). The NIV translates that part

of the conversation with Jesus and the woman at the well as follows: ‘The woman said, “I know that Messiah (called Christ) is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”’ Perhaps the Samaritans knew more of the true religion than Calvin conjectures because they were favoured with a revival as we read in Acts 8:4-25.

à Brakel outlines essential principles concerning the office of prophet as follows: ‘1. Reception of immediate revelation from God concerning divine mysteries which occurred among prophets with an extraordinary calling, 2. The proclamation and exposition of the Word of God, 3. The foretelling of future events, and 4. Confirmation of revelation by means of miracles.’ These features are wonderfully fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus.

The Olivet discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 foretells events fulfilled in the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD. As for miracles none on record surpass those of Jesus.

The endorsement of Jesus’ ministry as prophet was given on the Mount of Transfiguration. ‘While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”’

The opening verses of Hebrews describe the supremacy of Christ among the prophets: ‘In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.’

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made.’ When John used the word *logos* (Word) it was full of meaning because the Greeks understood *logos* to mean the possession of all knowledge and all power. Jesus is the Word who created the universe. In him is the knowledge of all things. ‘In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge’ (Col 2:3). He is the source of all true knowledge and wisdom. How appropriate then that he should, in a superlative way, be our teacher or prophet.

If we take an overall view of the Bible we see that our Lord from the beginning was inspiring the calling and equipping of the prophets. In the burning bush Christ called Moses to his work. Subsequently he visited Moses regularly by way of theophany. He taught and guided Moses in the establishment of law;

moral, civil and ceremonial and in organising the structures and fabric of the society of Israel. Twice he personally inscribed the tablets of stone with the moral law which law later he alone would keep perfectly.

The calling of Isaiah is vivid, 'I saw the Lord seated on the throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple' (Isa 6:1) Ezekiel too was commissioned by the supreme prophet. Ezekiel saw high above on the throne the figure like that of a man. 'I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell face down, and I heard the voice of one speaking' (Ez 1:27-28).

The supremacy of Christ as prophet is seen in his ascension: 'He gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers' (Eph 4:11). When the Bible was completed with the book of Revelation the apostle John received the revelation directly from Christ (Rev 1:12-20). Thus from the beginning of Scripture initiated in the call of Moses to the sealing up of the whole Bible in the giving of the book of Revelation Christ is the supreme prophet.

à Brakel turns this office of Christ our prophet to practical use when he urges the blind, the ignorant and strangers to the life of God to come to Christ the light of the world for no one can be saved without faith. 'By his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many' (Isa 53:11). He is our prophet and teacher. He imparts knowledge which saves.

### **Christ our great high priest**

It is not enough to know and receive the truth from our prophet of truth. We need a priest to pray for us and keep us for we are sinful and weak and often stumble. Jesus prayed for Peter that his faith would not fail. The letter to the Hebrews is the book of the New Testament devoted to describing Christ as our great high priest. In a small space I can only summarise the work involved in this office. In coming to this earth Jesus lived for us perfectly, and died in our place, thus achieving by his life and atoning death a righteousness which is imputed to those joined to him by faith. But that is not all. Now that he is risen and ascended he represents us and prays for us. When he returns in glory he will carry forward a further phase of his work because he will welcome us into the mansions he has been preparing for us (John 14:1-2).

We can view his office of high priest under two principal headings. First his achievement for us as high priest and second his ongoing work for us as high priest.

First we consider Jesus' achievement on our behalf. 'Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy' (Heb 10:11-14).

Second we consider the ongoing work of Christ as our great high priest.

Wayne Grudem in his *Systematic Theology* describes Christ's work as priest for us under two headings

1. Jesus continually brings us near to God and 2. Jesus as priest continually prays for us.

The fact that Jesus continually brings us near to God is vital because that gives us confidence in our praying. We are so weak and often terribly distracted with cares. We sometimes feel so unworthy that we lose any desire to prayer. Then we remember that our great high priest is there and it is not by our merit that we can pray but by his imputed righteousness and he is there representing us and drawing us near. The Holy Spirit enables us to pray on this basis of the finished complete work of Christ and the power of his representation of us at the throne of grace (Rom 8:34).

Then in addition Jesus prays for us (Rom 8:24). To the self-confident Peter Jesus said, 'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail' (Luke 22:31).

There is a third important factor in the ministry of Jesus as our great high priest and that as such he is the eternal security of believers. The old Levitical order of priests was temporary, '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 7:25).

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 my italics to emphasise time. 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 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.

### **Christ as our king**

à Brakel defines a king as a person in whom alone the supreme authority over a nation is vested. Thus, the Lord Jesus is king, and none but he.

The nature of Christ's kingdom is different from all worldly kingdoms. His kingdom resides in the hearts of his people who are loyal to him. Jesus said that his kingdom is not of this world. He does not advance his kingdom by force of arms. Symbolical of that reality is his riding into Jerusalem in his last journey on the foal of a donkey.

'Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth' (Zech 9:9-10).

The earliest promise of a coming king is found in Genesis 49:10. 'The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.'

The Psalms describe the coming Messiah as king. In response to the opposition from earthly kings Yahweh's answer is emphatic, 'I have installed my King on Zion my holy hill.' From the verses that follow it is clear that all power and authority is given to his King whose rule will be universal (Psalm 72). The glory of Yahweh's king is described in the ascension Psalms 24 and 47. That the Messiah king will come from the line of David is affirmed by the psalmist declaring, 'The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke: One of your own descendants I will place on your throne' (Ps 132:11). and again, 'I have sworn to David my servant, I will establish your line forever' (Ps 89:3-4).

Psalm 110:1. 'The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."' ' This is taken up by Paul in his first

letter to the Corinthians. There is a third important factor in the ministry of Jesus as our great high priest. That is, he is the eternal security of believers. The all-embracing omnipotent power of this king whose voice will raise our physical bodies out of their graves is affirmed in his title KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev 19:16 cf 1 Tim 6:15).

The predictions and promises in the Psalms are confirmed by the prophets. Jeremiah wrote: 'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Saviour' (Jer 23:5-6).

In similar vein Ezekiel: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offences, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees' (Ez 37:21-24).

When questioned by Pontius Pilate "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say" (Matt 27:11-12). When he was taken to stand trial before the whole Sanhedrin the high priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the blessed One?" "I am" said Jesus, "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven." This quotation from Daniel points to the universal power and authority of King Jesus.

Calvin ministered in times of extreme turmoil and danger. He was brilliant in his ability to encourage pastors whose lives were at risk. With reference to Christ's kingship he wrote: 'No matter how many strong enemies plot to overthrow the Church, they do not have sufficient strength to prevail over God's immutable decree by which he has appointed his Son eternal King.' And 'Christ enriches his people with all things necessary for the eternal salvation of souls and fortifies them with courage to stand unconquerable against all the assaults of spiritual enemies.'

## From the Catechism for Boys and Girls

83. How were godly persons saved before the coming of Christ?

**They believed in the Saviour to come**

John 8:56; Galatians 3:8-9; Hebrews 11:13; Job 19:25-26

84. How did they show their faith?

**By offering sacrifices on God's altar**

Hebrews 9:19-23; 10:1; Genesis 22:8

85. What did these sacrifices represent?

**Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to die for sinners**

John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18-20; Revelation 13:8

86. What does Christ do for his people?

**He does the work of a prophet, a priest and a king**

Hebrews 1:1-3; Acts 3:20-23; Hebrews 5:5-6; 4:14; Revelation 5:5; 17:14

87. How is Christ our Prophet?

**He teaches us the will of God**

Deuteronomy 18:15,18; John 1:18; 4:25; 14:23-24

88. Why do you need Christ as a Prophet?

**Because I am ignorant**

Matthew 11:27; John 6:67-69; 17:25-26

89. How is Christ our Priest?

**He died for our sins and prays to God for us**

1 Timothy 2:5-6; Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:24-25

90. Why do you need Christ as a Priest?

**Because I am guilty**

Romans 3:19-23; James 2:10; 1 John 1:8-9

91. How is Christ our King?

**He rules over us and defends us**

Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 1:18; Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 33:22

92. Why do you need Christ as a King?

**Because I am weak and helpless**

John 15:5; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

This catechism was first published in 1969, and since that time has gone through numerous reprints. It has enjoyed wide acceptance by parents, pastors and children's workers. This catechism is very helpful in giving a simple introduction to basic Bible doctrines. Children have a marvellous capacity for memorization. A catechism for boys and girls can be used in family worship. It can form the basis of a children's talk on Sunday mornings. This catechism is available from Evangelical Press at £1.99.

## Christ as prophet, priest and king – commended sources

Who first conceived of all our Lord's work for us summed up under these three offices of prophet, priest and king? This concept can be traced to the early Church Father Eusebius (265-339). Luther's small catechism says Christ was anointed to be our prophet, priest and king. John Calvin in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* has a section of nine pages in which he expounds the threefold saving activity of Christ (*Institutes* John T McNeill edition, volume one, chapter 15).

Francis Turretin (1623-1687) in his three-volume *Institutes* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1994) describes Christ as the only mediator whose offices are three, namely, prophet, priest and king. Turretin employs a lucid question and answer style. His exposition on this theme is 120 pages.

Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711), was a most gifted Dutch Puritan. His *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (A Systematic Theology in four volumes) was published in 1992 by Reformation Heritage Books. Joel Beeke describes à Brakel's work thus: 'The uniqueness of à Brakel's work lies in the fact that it is more than a systematic theology...à Brakel's purpose in writing is inescapable: he intensely wishes that the truths expounded may become an experiential reality in the hearts of those who read. In a masterful way he establishes the crucial relationship between objective truth and the subjective experience of that truth.' In volume one of the above described work à Brakel devotes three chapters (19-21) to Christ as prophet, priest and king. This very readable exposition runs to 57 pages.

The Baptist theologian J L Dagg ministered in America during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (exact dates of his birth and death unknown). In his *Manual of Theology* (Gano books, 1992), he begins with comments on the mediatorial ministry of Jesus and then in 26 pages opens up the roles of Christ as prophet priest and king.

Thomas Boston (1676-1732) was a Church of Scotland minister first in Simprin and then at Ettrick. He was an accomplished Hebraist and a cogent and practical author in the tradition of the English Puritans. His twelve-volume *Works* was published in 1980 by Richard Owen Roberts in the USA. His most famous book was *The Fourfold State of Human Nature*. Boston's work on Christ as prophet, priest and king is found in volume one of his *Works* and extends to 87 pages. It is excellent.

More recent writings include Wayne Grudem (*Systematic Theology*. IVP), in which he defines the threefold offices of Christ (pp 624-633). Very profitable reading on this subject is found in James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, pp 295-310, IVP, 1986.

A twelve-page exposition of Christ as prophet, priest and king is included in Mike Abendroth's book *The Sovereignty and Supremacy of King Jesus* (238 pages, DayOne, 2011).

---

---

## **The Gospel in China – looking to the future**

---

---

*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 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 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 are

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 popularises 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 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 a greater social stability.' 'We only do what is beneficial to the people.' Jesus said that it is spiritual character that produces such good disciples (Matt5:3-12). They are the 'salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world' (Matt 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.

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.

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.

---

## Concert of Prayer

---

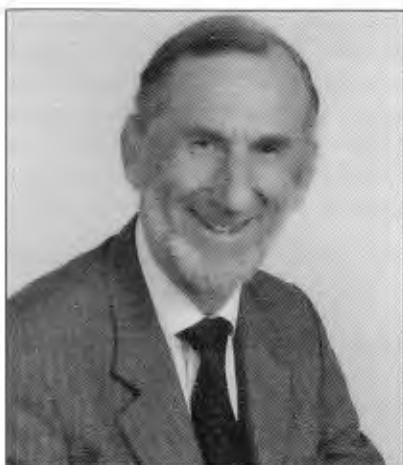
Jonathan Bayes reports that the Yorkshire Concert of Prayer for the outpouring of God's Spirit continued on November 5<sup>th</sup>. It was a thrilling experience. After a brief introduction the meeting in Leeds was thrown open for prayer at 11.15. About 100 people were there, and one after another led in prayer. We had planned two one-hour sessions. However, human plans had to be abandoned, as the Holy Spirit prompted fervent, incessant prayer.

The subsidiary meeting was equally encouraging. The largest attendance yet at Whitby was recorded with 50 earnest intercessors assembling. Here too prayer flowed.

The next special time allotted for the Concert of Prayer in Yorkshire is Feb 11<sup>th</sup> 11.00AM to 1.00 PM. This time the satellites will operate (see front inside cover RT 244) with some variation in leadership and venues. A similar Concert is planned at the same time for the North East. Leaders: David Gregson (telephone 01748 884401) and Ray Simons.

Interest has been shown in other counties. The recent 'Concert' organised by Pastor Peter Howell in Brighton was significant (for more detail see front inside cover).

Revival, times of spiritual refreshing (Acts 3:19) is a colossal subject. 'The next great spiritual awakening may be utterly unlike any that has gone before.



*Peter Howell*

We must beware, then, of an undue fixation in our concept of revival. The Holy Spirit is not limited to a stereotype. He enjoys and exhibits an unconditional liberty.

'The Lord Jesus may at any time and under any circumstances grant us a fresh bestowment of his Spirit. And we can be certain that nothing will defeat God's purpose whenever he chooses to renew a season of unusual richness. How can any opposition down here on earth restrain the outpouring of the Spirit from on high? ... At any time, in any measure, upon any church, the Sovereign Lord is able to send the showers of his Spirit, for his greater glory, our richer joy, and the salvation of the nations.' (cited from Raymond C Ortland, Jr, *Revival sent from God*, IVP, pp. 27 and 93).

---

## African Pastors' Conferences

---

The recent conference in Livingstone, Zambia, November 15 to 17 was attended by 100 and 1,307 books were sold. There was some tension when the vehicle ran out of fuel in lion and elephant country because of the long distances and lack of fuelling stations.

The scheduled conference in Botswana has had to be postponed.

Intense preparation has been made and continues to be made for seven APCs in South Africa in January. The preachers are Raymond Zulu, Lawrence Lama and Kennedy Sunkuthu of Zambia, Irving Stegges, Clinton Stone and Dr Paul Stoltz of South Africa.

The editor was reproved with regard to the four-page newsletter about the APCs which was part of the dispatch of RT 244. This reproof was deserved because he failed to give details for those who wish to donate to this work. For this error he heartily repents.

Cheques should be made out to African Pastors' Conferences and posted to the APC treasurer Mrs Rachel Rothwell, 4 Hall Close, Bramhope, Leeds, LS16 9JQ. Donations can be gift aided.

It takes about six or seven years for a conference to be well established and trusted by a wide constituency of Bible-believing pastors. Much hard work has to be invested in pioneering in the sprawling townships and shanty-towns. Churches that claim to be evangelical are many. Perhaps the greatest threat is



the prosperity gospel which is utterly scandalous. Christ did not suffer to make sinners healthy and wealthy and to fill the purses of dishonest false prophets. He suffered to save us from our sins. Islamisation which wiped out the African churches in north Africa in the mid 600s is spreading widely from the North. The split of North and South Sudan illustrated this as does the severe unchecked persecution of Christians in Nigeria.

The need to equip pastors to teach the Word of God faithfully is clear. Assistance from local churches is encouraged. Books are sold at substantial discounts. In all conferences all pastors who attend receive several books free of charge.

The number of conferences has increased to sixteen.

---

## News

---

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Southern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Thomas J Nettles was given a Festschrift on Nov. 10 at a seminary event, honouring a 35-year teaching career that helped influence the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative resurgence. A Festschrift is a volume of writings contributed by different authors presented as a tribute to a scholar. It is a rarity in the academic world.



Tom Nettles

Nettles, professor of Historical Theology at Southern Baptist Seminary since 1997, co-authored in 1980 *Baptists and the Bible*, a book that played a key role in the Southern Baptist conservative resurgence, calling for the denomination to return to biblical inerrancy as a core belief. Nettles' co-author was the late L Russ Bush; both men were on the faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Texas at the time. 'Teaching is such a high calling and Tom Nettles embodies that calling,' Southern Seminary President R Albert Mohler Jr. said. 'It was personally gratifying to see Professor Nettles honoured in this way. It was a day he, and we, will not forget.'

In the foreword of the Festschrift, called 'Ministry by His Grace and for His Glory', Mohler writes: 'Tom Nettles was born to be a teacher, called to be a preacher, and trained to be a scholar. He has produced a library of scholarship and has shaped a generation of Baptist ministers and leaders. He has also done what few scholars ever have the opportunity or courage to do – he has reset the terms of debate for an entire denomination of churches.' Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Fl., presented Nettles with the book in front of Southern's student body, several of the book's contributors and Nettles' wife, son and daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Ascol, along with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Nathan A Finn, edited the book project. 'The Apostle Paul instructs us to give honour to those to whom honour is due,' Ascol said: 'And it's my distinct privilege today to obey that apostolic injunction by making a presentation to a man to whom honour is due. He is due honour because of his faithfulness and usefulness in Christ's

kingdom during the last several decades,’ Ascol said of Nettles. ‘This marks the 35th anniversary of Dr. Nettles’ teaching career. In honour and celebration of that, 22 of his friends, colleagues, associates and former students have joined together to compile a book of essays in his honour.’ (Tom Nettles is an associate editor of *Reformation Today*.)

## **Malaysia**

### **Kuala Lumpur All Asia Creation Conference**

There were about 600 delegates which far surpassed all the hopes of the organisers. About 500 believers came from the Kuala Lumpur area and the remaining 100 from over 15 countries including Japan, Korea, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Myanmar and India. At the Kuala Lumpur conference in November there were a number of excellent papers on creation including one by Dr Joseph Paturi from Ohio who gave an inspiring talk on design in the human body and Dr Jerry Layton who spoke on the setting up of a creation ministry in the Philippines which has reached many both in the church and evangelistically right across that land. Many other reports from other countries such as Japan were also given.

The Kuala Lumpur conference was organised by a superb team of local believers led by Joseph Tan who with his wife Debra were hosts for the event. David Crandall, Director of our Answers in Genesis Worldwide Department, had spent many long hours with Joseph organising the conference over many months, and we are extremely grateful for their labours and many others to make that conference happen and to attract so many more than were at first anticipated.

There are already plans for further conferences. The errors of the Western Church in attempting to compromise on Genesis have already had a big effect in the vast harvest field of Asia, so this conference came at an important time.

More information is on Ken Ham’s blog – see

<http://blogs.answersingenesis.org/blogs/ken-ham/2011/11/15/all-asian-creation-conference-started-yesterday-in-malaysia/>

*Prof Andy McIntosh*

## **Cuba**

Few ministries give us more motives for prayer and praise than God’s work in Cuba. Association of Reformed Baptist Churches in America (ARBCA)

Pastor Don Lindblad arrived in Cuba on November 22 to preach in churches and teach the book of Romans to a group of twenty-five students. We are praising God for the thousands of dollars that came in during the last couple of weeks, for his help in locating some 40 Spanish copies of Steele & Thomas' helpful *Outline of Romans* (out of print), and that Pastor Daniel Perez was approved to do the translating for these meetings—an amazing cluster of answered prayers! Could God yet do a work through the teaching of the book of Romans that will transform a whole generation of churches? God did just that through a Scottish Baptist in Geneva, Switzerland in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Some of you may remember a message by David K Straub about how the gospel came to be preached again in Geneva: he reminded us that at that time God used the teaching of the book of Romans to students of Robert Haldane. *This report was extracted from an ARBCA newsletter.*

## Nigeria

Recently there was an attack on Damaturu in the Yobe State during which 150 were killed (130 of whom were Christians). Islamic Extremist Boko Haram Sect was involved in the violence and killed any Christian who could not recite the Islamic Creed. A US Congressional report says Nigeria's militant Islamist group Boko Haram is an 'emerging threat' to the US and its interests.

Boko Haram has carried out a spate of bombings, including in the capital, Abuja, as well as in the mainly Muslim north where the group originated. The report said it may be forging ties with al-Qaeda-linked groups in Africa. It comes as Nigeria's defence minister said pro-Gaddafi fighters from Libya were smuggling weapons into the north. The chairman of the US Congressional committee which drew up the report, Patrick Meehan, told the BBC that the US should work to improve its relations with the Nigerian security services.

## Columbia



Fifty Colombian pastors gathered in the week of October 23 through 28 for the third theological module of Reformed Baptist Marrow of Theology program. Approximately 10 of these pastors are from Reformed Baptist churches. The other 40 come from ecclesiastical bodies that are not Reformed.

Dr Sam Waldron taught on the doctrine of God and his decree. In addition to 21 lectures, there were times given for Q&A. Dr. Waldron fielded and answered many relevant questions raised by the students. He had the excellent and expert help of Luis Arocha as translator throughout the lectures and interaction with the students. One of the pastors from a Pentecostal church said with tears in his eyes that the modular training was providing him with a ‘rock to stand on’.

Pastor Keith Maddy of Heritage Baptist Church was able to accompany Dr. Waldron and bring the pastors excellent literature that has been translated into Spanish, including Dr Waldron’s Exposition of the 1689, as well as the Systematic Theologies of Louis Berkhof, Charles Hodge and Wayne Grudem. Moreover, Keith brought a flash drive with several PDF files of theological lecture notes and solid Reformed literature in Spanish used by the ministerial academy in Santiago, Dominican Republic. Needless to say, the Columbian pastors were extremely grateful.

Another benefit of these modules is the fellowship and camaraderie cultivated among the students during the modules. The men come from different locations and, as noted, different theological backgrounds. They lodged together during the week, discuss the topics they’re learning, and pray together. We hope these bonds of friendship will further contribute to theological and ecclesiastical reformation among the Columbian pastors and churches represented.

## **Fiji**

Pastor Vijah Chandra reports that recently he was asked to conduct a funeral service for a believer who died at the age of 78. She was the only believer in her family. ‘Her son-in-law asked me and our elder to conduct this service. The son-in-law is a Hindu priest who has his own temple in his yard. This was a very good opportunity to proclaim the Word to those Hindus who attended this service. On Friday evening I preached on death and judgment and on the day the funeral was held I preached on John 14:1-7 that Christ is the way, the truth, the life and no one can come to the Father except through him. In the evening I preached on John 3:1-16, the necessity of being born again. There were about 200 people, mostly Hindus and some Muslims. We were told that the message was received well. Please continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will use the words to convict these lost souls. We will be in contact with the family.

---

## Ami and Jean Bost

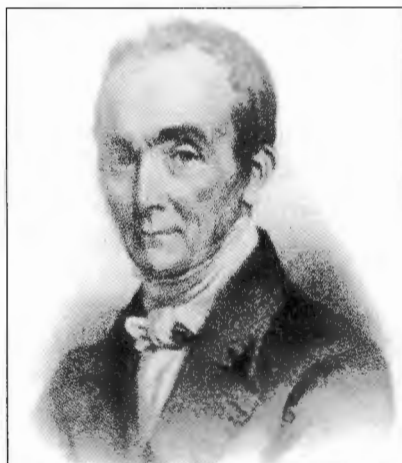
---

*Frederick Hodgson*

RT 237 described the work of the brothers Frédéric and Adolphe Monod during the middle of the nineteenth century. This article featured the struggles of the two godly preachers and pastors as they faced the enormous problem of whether or not they should continue to work within the largely apostate French Reformed Church. Although they reached different conclusions in this matter, in their different ways these two brothers had an enormous influence upon the life of the French Church and beyond.

Although the French Reformed Church at the time was generally enfeebled by rationalism, a remarkable revival had broken out in Geneva at the time the Scotsman Robert Haldane visited that city in 1817. Frédéric had been converted in Geneva then and a few years later Adolphe was converted after a period of intense spiritual struggle. The Monod family, including Théodore, the son of Frédéric, was to be very influential in the history of the French Church of the nineteenth century.

The aim of this article is to describe the parts played by a lesser-known family in France. Ami Bost and his son Jean were both zealous believers



*Ami Bost*

who encountered great difficulties in their service of the Lord, deserving a place in the hall of fame of faithful French leaders. Their personalities and contributions to the life and ministry of the French Church were very different. Ami Bost was a warrior preacher who served in the Continental Society and his son Jean was best known for his works of mercy.

In order to understand their background it is necessary to trace our steps back to Robert Haldane.

### *The formation of the Continental Society*

After his momentous visit to France (1816-1819) Robert Haldane returned to Scotland with his wife owing to his

father-in-law's serious decline in health. They arrived in September 1819 and Robert was never to return to the continent of Europe after this. His concern for Europe and France in particular did not stop when he returned to Britain.

Towards the end of 1818 Henri Pyt, one of those young men who had fed on the teaching of Robert Haldane in Geneva during his stay there, came to confer with Haldane whilst he was staying in Montauban, near Toulouse. Pyt wanted to clarify in his mind what would be the best way for him to evangelise Saverdun, also located in the south-west of France. He was anxious not to compromise his friends in the national Church. As a result of conversations with Haldane and others Pyt reached the conclusion that he should take up the position of a 'simple evangelist, unfettered by any ecclesiastical engagement, and preaching salvation from place to place'. (The role of Pyt and the establishment of Baptist churches in France was described in RT 244).

Haldane's advice was coloured by his own experience of setting up 'The Society for Propagating the Gospel at Home' in the winter of 1797-8 in his own native Scotland. Haldane recognised the vastness of France and the scarcity of pastors at the time. In 1807 there were fewer than 200 pastors in the French Reformed Church and even by 1853 there were

only about 400. In 1818 'there were scarcely any who really knew or loved the truth'. Haldane advised Pyt that in his opinion, although there were few who could pastor churches, there were several converts 'in the humbler walks of life' who could be used as Scripture-readers. He suggested that just as in the days of Calvin the old system of colporteurs could be introduced. Pyt immediately accepted Haldane's idea and Haldane supplied portions of the Bible for distribution without delay at his own expense. Several of the converts 'in the humbler walks of life' were encouraged to serve under Pyt in distributing gospel literature. Robert Haldane, although a convinced Baptist, cautioned Pyt against preaching baptism, but at the time Pyt was fully persuaded that he 'ought only to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and risen for us'.

When Haldane returned to Britain he and others such as Henry Drummond formed the Continental Society, based in London. Although the Society was formally established in 1819 for the propagation of the gospel on the continent of Europe, Henry Drummond had actually set things in motion using Haldane's Scottish model when he was in Geneva. Drummond had found himself surrounded by preachers who had been rejected by the 'Venerable Company' of pastors in Geneva. These men had refused to

compromise on the matter of the Lord's divinity and the doctrines of grace and because of this the Venerable Company refused to ordain them. Similar companies at Berne and Lausanne also opposed the faithful preachers.

An auxiliary was formed in Edinburgh in 1821 where Haldane spoke at a meeting held in the Waterloo Rooms with great force on the prevailing spiritual condition of Europe and the need for gospel-believing Christians to lay aside differences on matters of church polity and concentrate on reaching Europeans with the central truths of the gospel. People at the meeting listened with rapt attention as he described the way those coming from Arian darkness had embraced the gospel.

#### *Missionaries of the Continental Society and their work*

Pyt continued to labour for many years in the south-west of France both in the Pyrénées and the Béarne. The Continental Missionary Society also supported Felix Neff as he worked in the Alps of Dauphiny and among the Vaudois. Other missionaries supported by the Continental Society included Mejanel, one of Haldane's converts, who went to labour for the gospel in Paris, Le Pas de Calais and other areas in the north of France. Guers, Porchat, L'Huilier, Ladam, Caulier,

the two Oliviers and Calderon carried the gospel to other areas of France.

The preachers found 'nothing but spiritual death' but 'in the hands of the Lord they became for multitudes the instruments of life and salvation'. The Continental Society was the only society engaged in the evangelisation of France during the government of Charles X who was a supporter of the Catholic Church and made a 'noiseless war against the religious movement'.

The Rev Mr Burgess of Chelsea spoke to the Edinburgh Continental Society in 1848 of the way that its missionaries went about their task. 'First a colporteur, dressed in the garb of a peasant, with a leathern bag slung over his shoulder, in which he carries a supply of Bibles, Testaments, tracts etc., penetrates into the most remote districts of the country, and sells them to the peasants. Sometimes he disposes of a good many in one village, which instantly communicates to an evangelist, who immediately pays a visit to the village, and expounds in a plain, unpretending manner, portions of the Scripture to the people, until at length he is followed by a pastor, who forms the converts into regular congregations.' He went on to say that up to 1848 French laws made evangelism very difficult. In spite of the opposition by this date there were 200 pastors who had embraced and taught the 'orthodox faith'.

### *Opposition to the Continental Society*

It wasn't just the law that made the work of the missionaries difficult. Opposition came from Arian, Pelagian and Arminian enemies of the gospel in Paris who were jealous of their success. Some were prejudiced against them because they originated from Switzerland. Various individuals and groups in Paris prepared a public document remonstrating against the missionaries. These included 'a formidable array of Lutheran and Reformed pastors, chiefly Arians or Neologians, as well as Peers of France, members of Chambers, and even agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society'. Robert Haldane was invited by the London Committee of the Society to respond to this attack. He asserted that the Word of God gave evangelists the right to preach the gospel wherever a door was opened for them. He warned the remonstrants of the criminality of fighting against God and trying to stop the progress of the truth.

Sadly most opposition to the missionaries continued to come from Bible Societies based in Europe that were led by men who were essentially opposed to the gospel message and wished to undermine faith in the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures by insisting that Apocryphal writings should be

included in the Bibles they distributed. M. Blumhardt, the head of a missionary institution in Basle, although a strong Arminian himself declared that 'the Socinian party, which continues very strong, was particularly interested in maintaining the Apocrypha for the sake of "enveloping in obscurity, and lowering the idea attached to inspiration" '.

It was against this background that Ami Bost conducted his ministry.

#### *Ami Bost (1790-1874)*

Ami Bost, a talented musician and hymn-writer, was born in Geneva and was educated by the Moravians before studying for the ministry in that city. He was unlikely to have had a sound biblical training from the academics of Geneva and it may be assumed that his knowledge of the gospel came from the Moravians. He worked in Geneva as a teacher for two years after his ordination in 1814. His first official appointment within the Reformed Church was that of a trainee pastor in the Bernese Jura. Before breaking with the French Reformed Church in 1819, he spent some months working as an itinerant evangelist. He met Robert Haldane in Geneva and joined the Continental Society.

Ami Bost was sent at Henry Drummond's own expense to Alsace where 'striking results' were

achieved. As the Continental Society missionary in Strasburg he found himself in a conflict that nearly cost his life. Professor Haffner, sometimes called the pope of Strasburg, had written a preface to the Bible published in that city. Haffner was a rationalist, but not an atheist, and he used the preface to undermine the authority of the Bible by presenting it as merely human literature. (For example the prophets were men to whom God had given 'superior mental endowments' and in Revelation, John 'modelled' his vision after those of Ezekiel and Daniel. Furthermore the Lord was said to have had merely a 'presentiment of his death'.)

#### *Ami Bost's conflict with Haffner*

Bost believed that it was his duty as a Christian and as a minister to refute this subtle, dangerous attack on Christianity. He wrote forcefully against the preface of the feared Haffner comparing his words with the Word of God. Friends of Haffner called Bost's attack a sacrilege and the students at Strasburg, filled with hatred, gathered outside his house. They knew he was a lover of music and they tried to tempt him to come out by singing a German hymn, whilst they had armed themselves with stones to throw at him. Happily the professors at Strasburg, learning of their intent, ran in among the students and dispersed them before



*Jean Bost*

they could fulfil their murderous plot. Although they were not prepared to support his murder they did try to secure his banishment from Strasburg, but were foiled by the government of Louis XVIII. Bost's fortitude did result in an older pastor of Strasburg overcoming his fear of Haffner and writing a letter to him.

The British and Foreign Bible Society found itself with the problem of pleasing continental Bible societies that were opposed to the truth and supporting the missionaries of the Continental Society. Incredibly in order to avoid offending Bible Societies in Strasburg, Lausanne and Geneva, they refused to provide Bibles to holy, zealous men like Bost, Pyt or Neff for distribution. This led to Sir Thomas Baring, president of the Continental Society, writing indignantly to Lord Teignmouth of the British and Foreign Bible Society, in which he described the continental

societies as being composed of 'largely free thinkers, who have neither the glory of God, nor the good of men at heart' and are not 'fit agents to be employed by the British and Foreign Bible Society'.

#### *Further labours of Ami Bost*

Opposition to Bost was so intense that he felt obliged to leave Alsace and he went to serve as a pastor in Germany before returning to Switzerland as a Nonconformist pastor. In 1840 he was actually welcomed back into the Reformed Church in Geneva, but left to go to France in 1843. After the revolution in Geneva, led by James Fazy in 1846, his position in France became more settled and he became pastor of two churches in France (in Cher and Melun) before retiring from the ministry in 1848. During part of this time he served as a prison chaplain, but ran into trouble with the prison authorities because of his support of the prisoners. None the less Tocqueville, the chairman of the prisons board, supported him. Upon leaving the ministry Ami Bost became a teacher in Neuchâtel for a time before spending periods in Jersey, Paris and Pau. He later settled down near La Force in the Dordogne where his son Jean Bost lived and worked.

Ami Bost wrote a number of leaflets, books and translations of books during his life. His memoirs provide insight into the revivals in France and Switzerland that he experienced.

#### *Jean Bost and the La Force Care Homes*

Jean Bost was the second of the ten sons of Ami Bost. Jean himself was born in Moutier-Grandval situated in the canton of Berne in Switzerland. He was born in 1817 in a family that endured great poverty brought about at least in part by his father's work as a pastor. (His ancestors were Huguenots who had been driven from Dauphiny upon the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.) His early experience of poverty would have implanted in his heart sympathy with the poor, needy and despised.

He was a gifted musician and somehow or other he managed to secure sufficient funding to go to Paris as a student in 1839. One of his tutors was Franz Liszt the famous composer for the piano. Whilst he was in Paris he visited Pasteur Louis Meyer, suffering an agony of soul. By 1840 he was 'a new man in Christ Jesus'. After a brief visit to Ireland he joined the seminary at Montauban and remained there for eighteen months, benefiting from the counsel and instruction of Adolphe Monod. As a result of ill health he left Montauban before completing his studies. He was exceptionally gifted and this setback did not prevent him from being ordained in 1844 in Orleans.

The villagers of La Force, situated on a small hill about three miles from

Bergerac in the Dordogne had a disagreement with the local consistory in the French Reformed Church about how a pastor should be elected. They came across Jean Bost and called him to be the pastor of the dissenting church that they formed. Although not in principle opposed to the National Reformed Church, Bost agreed with the intention of turning them from a narrow party spirit 'towards a devout, active, Christian life'.

Whilst he was studying at Montauban, Bost had developed a desire to establish a home for orphans. He was disturbed by the Protestant policy at the time which involved only looking after children aged between six and twelve years old and a policy of closing their doors to illegitimate and abandoned children. Upon becoming pastor at La Force, Bost shared his vision with Adolphe Monod and two other professors at the college and in addition consulted Marzials, the president of the consistory at Montauban. Their support was necessary as there was some degree of prejudice against him as he had left the Reformed Church.

Bost travelled through France and England in 1846 in order to raise money to realise his plan. On his return to La Force, he found that his congregation had built a chapel and he decided that the orphan house should be built next to it. The hard-



*Main square of Pericord (La Force)*

working farmers who made up the congregation at La Force completed its construction in 1848. Celebrations were held for the completion of the building, a lady to look after the orphanage and the first group of children to arrive. These celebrations were barely completed when opposition came from the local Catholic establishments focusing their antagonism through the Inspection Académique. They conspired to bring about the closure of the new work at La Force, but Jean Bost spent days of fervent prayer and was delighted when the Préfect of Dordogne declared that the only fault with the orphan home was that it wasn't large enough! Three months later the establishment received commendation from the Minister of Instruction and an order was signed for the closure of the free Catholic school in the area. Bost named his establishment the *Famille Evangélique*. Within a short time there were fifty girls who crowded into the schoolroom and dormitory

and they came from all directions. It is not difficult to see that provision of funds for the *Famille Evangélique* was a major problem that had to be grappled with.

Meanwhile Jean Bost came across a poor, helpless beggar lying on the grass at the side of a road. The destitute, exhausted man depended upon carrying a wax image of the Virgin Mary with him in order to elicit sustenance from anyone who took pity upon him. The beggar, called Bartier, was taken into the parsonage of Bost and looked after for eighteen months until he gained some strength as a result of enjoying rest, warmth and good food. Bartier, crippled from infancy, was very intelligent and quickly learned to read and write. Even more importantly he received Christ as his Saviour and his attitude to life was transformed. Although he had not been able to have a job because of his disability, he decided that he would train as a teacher and was admitted to a training school at Courbevoye. After two and a half years studying and training he was given a licence to teach, passing out as the best student of the sixty-five who had trained with him. He was appointed as the teacher at La Force, married and showed compassion on his father by taking him into his own house.

There was such a great need for accommodation of destitute children

that further buildings were required almost immediately. The new buildings included a two-storey edifice containing a sewing-room, schoolroom, dining room, and dwelling-rooms for the lady director and dormitories on the first floor. Other buildings housed a bakery, washhouse, bathroom, butchery and stable.

Meanwhile the *Famille Evangélique* grew and fresh demands were placed upon it by the many who flocked to it for help. Many of those seeking help were suffering from physical and mental problems. One of the girls who arrived was incapable of speaking or showing any emotion. She seemed to be most unattractive and was written off as being a hopeless case and the local doctors thought that Bost was more likely to get a response from a monkey or a dog. He took her into his own house and prayed for her continuously. On one occasion it was noticed that she responded to the singing of a hymn during evening worship by making a sound that was in harmony with the music. The musically gifted Jean Bost immediately realised the potential for reaching the child through music. She slowly developed the ability to produce sounds and then syllables and eventually words. Her general health and nervous system improved and eventually she spoke well, learnt to sew and knit and even reached the condition of possibly being able to teach others with the

same limitations that she had when she arrived at La Force.

It was clear that even more was needed in terms of finance and Bost travelled to Scotland, England, Holland, Switzerland and elsewhere to obtain support and the work continued to grow. Up to this point only girls had been admitted for help, but he was placed under pressure to take boys who were orphaned and suffered from a range of disabilities and he eventually agreed to this, his reticence being caused by an awareness of the financial costs involved. Two run-down buildings were purchased and renovated and after two years there were fourteen boys under the care, and direct supervision provided in 1858 by Mr and Mrs Deymier. They were not able to continue in the work for long and were replaced by a retired minister and his wife. M. et Mme. Castel gave great service to the work that continued to expand as more houses were added to the building work already described. Boys and girls suffering from a range of serious impediments were taken in and enquiries for help were received from distant parts of Europe including Russia. Nine asylums were created during his life. The work at La Force continues to this day and residential care is provided the elderly, and those needing special care, including those suffering from serious mental problems. ([www.Jeanbost.org](http://www.Jeanbost.org))

Jean Bost married Eugénie Pontérie in 1861 and his hard work was aptly described by his biographer, 'Jean Bost, at the end of thirty-six years of public life, so full of labour, of touching scenes, of anxieties and struggles, but also of consolations, and even of triumph, was enabled to finish his work, to garner his sheaves, and to say to his Father, in a measure, as did his Master, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."'

The work of La Force was an exceptionally amazing work, which sprang from the evangelical faith of Jean Bost leading to his compassion towards the needy. It underwent powerful opposition from others and this led to earnest prayer and the support of many Christians in different parts of Europe. Readers are probably reminded of the faith and struggles of George Müller (1805-1898) in the establishment of the orphanage at Ashley Down in Bristol. *Caring for Life* at Craghouse Farm, Leeds is a modern counterpart where evangelical faith has resulted in care for those who were regarded as helpless cases that no other organisation could or would care for. ([www.caringforlife.co.uk](http://www.caringforlife.co.uk)) Elsewhere in the world Morning Star in Welkom, South Africa, in which children affected by AIDS are cared for, illustrates the same faith, Christian compassion and struggles. ([www.morningstar.org.za](http://www.morningstar.org.za))

---

---

## Book Reviews

---

---

### **Foundations for the Flock.**

*Truths about the Church for all the saints.*

Conrad Mbewe.

*Published by Granted Ministries.  
Hannibal, Missouri.*

ISBN: 978-0-9817321-9-0;  
Hardback, 338 pages.

*Brian Beevers*

Conrad is an outstanding pastor and preacher in Zambia. He is the founder and pastor of Kabwata Baptist Church in Zambia. In the foreword Dr Fred A Malone refers to him as the 'Lloyd-Jones' of Africa; he has also been called the 'Spurgeon' of Africa. He is a model of clear and powerful teaching. He also has a thorough knowledge of Scripture and a clear vision of the needs of the Church today. Although the book is written mainly from the standpoint of Africa it is equally relevant to churches everywhere.

As pointed out in the foreword and in the author's preface, this book is actually a compilation from booklets and addresses produced over a twenty-year period. They cover a variety of topics relating to the Church today as delivered to various types of audiences, from young converts to pastors. However, taken together, they form a thorough and comprehensive treatment of most

areas of church teaching, life and practice.

The book consists of ten main chapters, each of which is divided into sections. I will comment briefly on each chapter and pick out some of the sections. This will, I hope, give you a flavour of the book as a whole. I have numbered the chapters, but they are not numbered in the book.

#### *Chapter 1: Your Baptismal Class Notes*

This chapter is clearly written for young Christians preparing for baptism and church membership. It deals in a simple way with conversion, Christian growth, baptism and church membership. Conrad teaches that baptism is the means by which a believer joins the church. In the section on church membership he gives seven headings, including: maintaining a godly lifestyle; attending all meetings of the church; seeking the welfare of all other members; submitting to the elders and cooperating with the deacons.

#### *Chapter 2: Biblical Church Government*

This is a much longer chapter, divided into six sections, dealing with the Church's Head, Eldership,

Pastorate, Diaconate, Membership and Discipline. It consists of a seminar given to Kasama Baptist Church in 1991. Conrad firmly believes that the New Testament contains a pattern for church government. There is not room here to look at all the content of this important chapter; I will just call attention to some important matters.

After stating that elders are the stewards of Christ's headship of the Church (p 38) Conrad gives various erroneous models of church government such as 'in some churches the pastor holds the reins in the church, he operates as the top man, with elders and/or deacons assisting him'. He goes on to stress the parity of eldership' but says that where there is a pastor who shoulders the load of teaching and preaching (1 Tim 5:17), he will inevitably have the greatest level of influence. Later on he describes the office as that of an elder who labours in the Word and in doctrine. They do not have extra authority, but extra esteem. They are not above the rest of the elders but are the first among equals.

There follow sections on Deacons, Membership and Discipline. Regarding deacons Conrad stresses that they are a serving ministry. They are under the direction of the elders and a church should not have deacons without elders. Women clearly have a serving ministry but Conrad leaves it as an open question as to whether or

not women should be appointed as deacons.

In the section on membership Conrad quotes from the 1966 Baptist Affirmation of Faith: 'Church members should be prayerfully involved directly or indirectly in every decision of the church including the setting apart of elders and deacons, the sending out of missionaries and the practice of discipline.' Conrad says that the elders should take the lead, but important matters should be referred to the church meeting.

Regarding church discipline Conrad gives six important reasons why discipline should be maintained. Here is the first: 'A pure and orderly church brings glory to the Lord Jesus Christ, the great head of the church, while a wicked and disorderly one brings reproach to his most holy name' (p 75). He goes on to deal with Formative and Restorative Discipline, regarding the former he comments: 'The church has been reduced to a situation where community responsibility and accountability are non-existent. A handful does all the work, while the rest just look on and criticise. Bible studies and prayer meetings are organised so that they take place right under people's noses, but the same people miss them at will and see nothing wrong' (p 76).

### *Chapter 3: The Lord's Supper*

Here he deals with its spiritual nature, its proper administration and its qualified recipients. He traces the origin of the Lord's Supper to the Passover. At one point he describes the Lord's Supper as just a memorial, but he does also say that it is a means of spiritual blessing if properly received. Regarding open or closed communion he takes a middle course. He says that the Lord's Supper is open to all believers and that the onus of self-examination lies with the person receiving the ordinance, not with the elders. However, he does also say that the Lord's Supper should only be received by believers, baptised upon profession of faith. This would exclude all paedobaptists from communion in a Baptist church. He says that this is not the usual view.

### *Chapter 4: The Role of Women in the Church*

This was a paper presented to a Reformation Study Group of the Reformed Church of Zambia in 1999.

The Reformed Church of Zambia was in the process of ordaining female elders and pastors but some people invited Conrad to express his dissenting views. The meeting was cancelled but Conrad put his address into print and distributed it.

Conrad bases his message on 1 Tim 2:11-15. Conrad tackles the whole matter head-on saying that women

should not teach or lead in the church but should have a role of quiet service and submission. He says that Paul does not teach that women are inferior to men but that they have a 'strong subjective element, which makes them more vulnerable to deception in matters of objective truth, and this must preclude them from an authoritative teaching role'. At the end of this chapter he lists ways in which women should play their role in the church. (1) Domestic employment. (2) Diaconal usefulness, including the office of deacon. (3) Ministerial support. (4) Teaching ministries, to children, other women, or sometimes, to men (Acts 18:26) (5) prayer meetings. (6) Evangelistic endeavours.

### *Chapter 5: Challenges in Today's Pastoral Ministry.*

This is one of the longest chapters in the book. It is divided into three broad sections: the Pastor's Prophetic Role, the Pastor's Priestly Role and the Pastor's Kingly Role. Each of these sections is subdivided under three heading: in his personal life, in the church and in the world. These were messages from the Pastoral Epistles delivered at the Theological College of Central Africa in 1999.

I will just give you the gist of the first section: the Pastor's Prophetic Role. He bases his messages on 2 Tim. 3:14 – 4:2. In the first sub-section: in his personal life, he states that the pastor

must be a life-long student. He says: 'To be able year after year to stand before your people with freshness of thought is no small achievement...you must have a programme of reading that enables you to read widely: Church history, systematic theology, biographies, biblical studies, practical theology, ethics etc. In the second sub-section on the Church, he says: 'As a kind of spokesman for God you should sense the conviction that God is speaking through you, that the Holy Spirit is moving you. Your people should have the same expectation – that they have come to hear a word from God.' In the third sub-section: in the world he says that all pastors must 'do the work of an evangelist' (2 Tim. 1: 8-12). To quote: 'I fear that the world's false respect for us as pastors has neutralised our ability to confront them with their need of Christ.'

I hope that this will give you some idea of the content of this chapter; the other sections are developed in a similar way.

### *Chapter 6: Worship in Spirit and Truth*

He deals with this important and topical matter under three headings: (1) Worship as encapsulated in the Old Testament. (2) Worship as liberated in the New Testament (3) Worship as purified by the Reformers and the Puritans.

In the first section he first looks at the first five of the Ten Commandments. He then goes through the worship in the tabernacles and the temple; he concludes with the synagogue. He then shows how the New Testament derived from the synagogue, consisting basically of four parts: (1) The public reading of Scripture and the preaching of the Word (2) Prayer in the form of thanksgiving and intercession (3) The singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (4) the administration of the sacraments.

Under the third section on worship as purified by the Reformers and Puritans, Conrad gives a useful summary of the regulative principle. He says that the *elements* of worship are determined by Scripture and they consist of the Word, prayer, singing and the sacraments. Note that, for the Puritans, these did not include tithes and offerings. Each element then has its possible forms so that singing can include psalms, hymns, spiritual songs and choruses. In turn these can have different circumstances such as how many songs, at what part of the service, how they are displayed, what accompaniment is used, whether congregational or by a choir or soloist. etc. Only the elements are determined by Scripture, the rest may be determined by 'the light of nature and human prudence', to quote the 1689 Confession.

## *Chapter 7: Relationship between Church and State.*

This was a paper presented at the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia Political Seminar in 1991, on the occasion of the first multi-party elections in Zambia for 20 years.

I have only space here to make brief comments. To quote Conrad, 'Whereas the Church and the State as organisms cannot be entirely separated, as organisations they must be kept separate.' At the end of the chapter he gives five ways in which Christians should serve the state: (1) Honour and submission (2) Hard work and industry (3) Professional input (4) Prayer (5) Evangelism.

## *Chapter 8: Biblical Inter-Church Relationships*

This is the longest chapter in the book. It is a summary of messages delivered during a church-based seminar held at Kabwata Baptist Church in 1993.

The chapter is divided into five sections: (1) The biblical basis of inter-church associations. (2) Boundaries of inter-church associations. (3) The bonds of inter-church prayer concern. (4) The bonds of inter-church purposeful cooperation. (5) The bonds of inter-church pastoral counsel.

The first section is divided into two (a) Christ's body is universal and (b)

The great commission demands it. In part (a) Conrad considers Christ's high priestly prayer in John 17. He says that the unity for which Christ prays is not organisational but organic and that it has already been prayed into existence by Jesus. In part (b) Conrad explains that missionary work and church planting are done most effectively by cooperation between churches.

The next section 'boundaries of inter-church associations' is concerned with the question of with which churches we can associate. Conrad's answer is that it is with churches of a common doctrinal confession and church order. He supports this from Galatians 1:6-9, showing that Paul will not be associated with those who preach a false gospel. With regard to church order, which concerns the worship and conduct of the church, he refers to 1 Timothy 3: 14-15.

I must deal briefly with the remainder of this chapter. The next section deals with the matter of churches exchanging news and praying for each other. We should have a wider scope in our prayers than just Christians in our own church. The next section considers ways in which churches can effectively work together. Here Conrad gives three areas of cooperation: setting up inter-church teams, helping needy churches and supporting preachers. The final section deals with how churches can help each other in

doctrine and practice. Reference is made to the use of ‘messengers’ or delegates from different churches as referred to in the 1689 confession.

*Chapter 9: Partners in the Harvest and Chapter 10: Missions at Kabwata Baptist Church.*

I will consider these two chapters together as they are both concerned with missions. In the author’s note Conrad observes that, since 1993, Kabwata Baptist Church has been involved in planting about twenty churches in Zambia and in neighbouring countries. This chapter is divided into three sections (1) Missions demand gospel proclamation (2) Missions demand practical partnerships (3) Missions demand persevering partnerships.

In section 2 Conrad considers ‘the front runner’, ‘the working team’ and the ‘rope holder’. The analogy of the ‘rope holder’ is of someone going down a mine and someone on the surface holding the rope so that he can come out again. Conrad makes reference to William Carey, whose ‘rope holders’ were Andrew Fuller and John Ryland.

This chapter is a very valuable one with great emphasis on the need for partnership between those on the mission field and the ‘rope holders’ at home.

The last chapter is a valuable statement of the mission’s policy of

Kabwata Baptist Church, which is thorough and detailed.

I hope that this quite lengthy review gives you some idea of the great merit of this book. Although written initially with regard to the situation in Africa most of what Conrad has to say is equally relevant to churches in the West. Conrad is a clear and authoritative teacher who does not pull his punches when he thinks that something needs to be said. The book is particularly relevant to church officers but will also be helpful to all believers. I have found it very challenging personally and do heartily recommend it.

**Everyday Church: Mission by Being Good Neighbours**

Tim Chester & Steve Timmis  
*Inter-Varsity Press, Nottingham,*  
2011, 197pp, paperback.  
ISBN: 978 1 84474 520 3

*Kevin Bidwell*

Tim Chester and Steve Timmis appear to be carving out a popular brand of the church. However, their vision for ‘gospel communities’ amounts to a radical reshaping of traditional beliefs about the church. This latest printing moves beyond *Total Church* (2007) by presenting a myriad of more developed proposals for evangelism to be carried out by ‘missional churches’ (10, 51).

*Everyday Church* has seven chapters, and the Epistle of 1 Peter forms

something of a spinal column throughout. It is not intended to be a commentary on 1 Peter, but rather a 'dialogue with the first letter of Peter' (11). The initial chapter 'Life at the Margins' offers a brisk analysis of the changing face of the UK, one that is perceived to be a 'post-Christendom context and culture' (20-28). They should rightfully gain a sympathetic audience from any Christian who is concerned about the sad state of our nation. An evangelistic fervour shines through, one that is commendable; especially given that '*70% of the UK population have no intention of attending a church service*' (28). Their analysis though leads them to unfortunate conclusions which are unsupported by biblical exegesis and which should make people committed to reformed convictions nervous.

Chester and Timmis suggest in chapter one that 'Sunday morning in church is the one place where evangelism cannot take place in our generation because the lost are not there' and that the 'bedrock of mission will be ordinary life' (31). The next chapter 'Everyday Community' places great stress on the development of gospel communities 'with a commitment to being a family', whereby Christians live as part of an 'everyday community of grace', which becomes for them 'God's missionary strategy' (64-6). 'Everyday Pastoral Care' (chapter 3) outlines that pastoral care is a community responsibility and

that 'we need to get away from the idea that "a minister" in the sense of an ordained church leader does gospel ministry in the pulpit on Sunday' (79-80). The authors acknowledge that their suggested approach will mean that 'we should be ready for mess and indeed welcome it' (83). Perhaps this anticipated 'mess' is what the apostle Paul calls 'confusion' (1 Cor 14:33). Paul suggests a different solution for 'churches who are at the margins', as he counsels the elders at Ephesus to 'care for the church of God' (Acts 20: 28).

In the remaining chapters, the authors recommend that we should drop our preoccupation with 'church' (99); it is the gospel communities where the main action of fellowship, evangelism and encouragement takes place, some of which do not meet on Sunday for worship at all (111, 122). For a book that is supposed to be about the church, there are a number of gaps. There is, for instance, little mention of the centrality of propositional preaching, the sacraments, the Lord's Day, and the use of the moral law for sanctification. For those readers who desire a completely new approach to the way that we do church, it will be welcome: for those readers who are committed to the historic marks of a true church (preaching, sacraments and discipline), there will be any number of red flags raised.

---

## The Deceitfulness of Wealth

---

*Tom Wells*

In preparing this article I learned something I should have learned years ago. I had no idea how often and how much our Lord spoke about wealth while here on earth. The passages I found were all familiar to me, as they will be to most of you. But I found the number of them to be startling. In the course of this article I will share just a small number of them with you. In addition I will add some words of the apostle Paul.

My title for this article is taken from Mark 4:19. There Jesus explains the parable of the sower. He says of the seed sown among thorns, 'The worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires of other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.' The phrase 'deceitfulness of wealth' is striking. Why? Because we usually use deceitfulness of persons, not things. For instance, the NT speaks of Satan as a deceiver. It uses the same language against false prophets. But Jesus tells us here that riches or wealth may deceive us. Unlike humans, riches do not plan to deceive. Only persons can do that. However riches share this power. This leads us to ask, 'How does wealth deceive us?' Some deceit will come from the mere thought of becoming wealthy. Others will come from

actually having some wealth. Let me suggest four ways wealth may deceive us.

1. *Wealth Has the Power to Make us Love it.*

Wealth may do this in at least two ways. First, if you do not have sufficient wealth to satisfy your needs it will make you suppose wealth can bring happiness. We love those things or persons who make us happy. We all want to be happy. A recent study of people who are happy shows that on average such men and women live longer than others. That makes sense. Most of us feel that sorrows and cares shorten our lives on this earth. But clearly wealth cannot make us happy. For example, those with huge salaries, such as professional athletes and movie stars, seem to have more trouble with their marriages than the rest of us.

Second, if you have a great deal of wealth that fact can make you feel independent of others. You may not feel that you need your spouse or your family as you once did. The media treat us to a parade of such cases. As I write this a current news story here in the USA tells of a couple in Hollywood that spent more than a million dollars on their wedding only days ago, and have now decided to divorce.

Beyond these things wealth affects almost all our thinking. The next three points in this essay will show this fact. Jesus warns us of this in Luke 12:15-21. 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.' And he told them this parable: 'The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, "What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops." 'Then he said, "This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.' " 'But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" 'This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.'

## 2. *Wealth May Dampen the Desire to 'Love His Appearing'.*

We read in 1 Timothy 6:9-10: 'People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.'

If we ask, 'How may we wander from the faith?' Paul gives one answer in 2 Timothy 4:8: 'Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.'

The promise of the crown of righteousness is joined to a desire for the return of Christ. In the midst of our busy lives that desire sometimes fades into the background. It is nearly lost as we absorb ourselves in the necessary business of life. But to believers it repeatedly returns! Each one who has been a Christian for years thinks of it again and again. He or she longs for that day! Then the Lord will come and take his bride to himself. Then we will enjoy his visible presence forever.

You will see that I've suggested that the best of Christians may sometimes lose the longing for Jesus' return. I believe that is true. How then can I think it will return to those with a true faith? The answer does not lie in what wonderful persons we are—not at all! That return is a product of the magnificent grace of God. Remember Paul's words to us in Philippians 2:12-13: 'Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed - not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence - continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.' Paul's point is plain: we believers are not left to our own

devices. God does not save us only to stand back and wait to see how we will live. Instead he works in both our wills and our acts to carry out his purposes. And one of his purposes in saving us was to keep us forever!

### 3. *Wealth Breeds Arrogance.*

Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:17: 'Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.'

Two things jump out at us in this verse. First, Paul does not treat having wealth as sinful in itself. If he thought that, he would have told the wealthy what Jesus told the rich young ruler: 'Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven' (Lk 18:22). God deals with each of us in keeping with our need. Jesus saw that ruler as already ensnared by his riches. So he told the ruler to dispose of them in a godly way. Others, however, use wealth wisely and Paul no doubt recognises that fact.

Second, Paul warns against arrogance. Why arrogance? I wrote above that a great deal of wealth can make you feel independent of others. Such independence often makes people arrogant. It need not do so, but Paul thinks it worth his time and ink to warn us. And since most of us in the western world are rich by the standards of others, our time will be

well spent to take the warning. Sadly the rich young ruler did not take it at the time. He left Jesus and his counsel sorrowfully. Perhaps God used that sorrow as one element in a later repentance. The fact that Jesus looking on him loved him (Mk 10:21) may suggest that at some point later in his life he did repent. However, we do not know.

### 4. *Wealth Lies at the Heart of Many Other Unexpected Evils.*

Paul makes this point in 1 Timothy 6:9-10: 'People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.'

Notice how Paul develops this idea. He speaks of men and women 'falling'. That suggests an accident, not a purposeful choice. Further he confirms that with the word 'trap'. Men have used traps and snares to catch birds and other animals for thousands of years. The NT uses these words as figures for things not foreseen by us. We do not expect them. Nevertheless, they come on us. In Romans 11:9, Paul quotes David saying of unconverted persons, 'May their table become a snare and a trap, a stumbling block and a retribution to them.' Here both Paul and David press home the idea of surprise. These are

not things we look forward to. But they come.

Paul drives home the same lesson on a wider scale in verse 10 when he writes, 'For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.' The Greek speaks simply of 'all evil', but the NIV has caught Paul's point. He does not say that every evil in the world can be traced up to love of money. If we want to find a single root of all evil, we look to the fall of Adam and Eve. Or behind them to the lie of Satan. 'Money' came along later. And of course it can be a blessing. But those who long for wealth and riches bring on themselves many curses that they did not foresee. They suffer these in this life. More than that, if they are characterised by such love, they will meet a worse curse in eternity.

You will remember the words our Lord spoke of the widow at the temple treasury and her two mites. 'All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on' (Lk 21:4). Applications will illustrate the extremes we must admire.

### 5. *Applications.*

We may apply these truths in a number of ways. First, when we receive money we are likely to think of it as a blessing. There is nothing wrong with that, but we must keep a balance here. How? By reminding ourselves that blessing for us is not the whole story. Having any amount of wealth is not bad in itself, but how we think of it

and how we use it are the main points. We must not think of it as ours, but rather as a stewardship from God. That means it is something put into our hands by the real owner, God. We must use it for his glory and to help others. Of course the care we practised as stewards is one way God gets glory to himself. But it is a great deception to think of that as the only way he aims at his glory when we receive goods or money.

Are there rules, then, as to exactly how we must use money? There are in fact very few beyond what I have just mentioned. We have Christian liberty to prayerfully consider what to do with it. Isn't that dangerous? On occasion it is, but the overriding principle remains true as we saw above. We are not simply left to ourselves. God turns our acts and thoughts in godly directions.

Second, we must nurture a sense of godly priorities. Christian liberty is a great gift. But as we grow in Christ we must learn to put both God and others before ourselves. Ponder the words of Paul to Timothy where he tells him to command believers 'to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life' (1 Tim 6:18-19). Paul adds, 'Grace be with you.' In saying that he recognises that God's goodness or grace toward us is our only hope of success. For believers it is enough!

---

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

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

**Donations** can be made anytime via the following agents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Subscriptions for Kenya:**  
**Naphtally Ogallo** – Grace Baptist Church-Eldoret, PO Box 170-30100 Eldoret  
e-mail: nandhogallo@gmail.com  
 (70Ksh for one year)

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

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

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

## CONTENTS

1. Editorial
3. Prophet, Priest and King Editor
11. The Gospel in China – looking to the future Bob Davey
15. Concert of Prayer
16. African Pastors' Conferences
17. News
21. Ami and Jean Bost Frederick Hodgson
30. Book Reviews Brian Beevers and Kevin Bidwell
37. The Deceitfulness of Wealth Tom Wells