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**Websites** [www.reformation-today.org](http://www.reformation-today.org)  
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*The Auditoire in Geneva is a simple but elegant 13th-century Gothic chapel built over a 5th-century church. At the Swiss Reformation it became a Protestant lecture hall, where Knox preached and Calvin taught missionaries his doctrines. He also encouraged Protestant refugees from around Europe to hold services at the chapel in their native English, Italian, Spanish, German, and Dutch. See pages 12-14.*



*For the persecution waged against Christians in Nigeria see News.*

Front cover picture. *Matthias Lohmann and Don Carson at the Evangelium21 Conference in Hamburg. For details see Editorial. Matthias Lohmann is pastor of the Free Evangelical Church in central Munich. In the conclusion of his biography of Johann Oncken he refers to the present state of the churches in Germany.*

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## Editorial

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**E**SCHATOLOGY AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT ARE THE MOST NEGLECTED SUBJECTS IN THE CHURCHES TODAY. In eschatology we see that Jesus actually means it when he says he has all power in heaven and on earth and that we are to evangelise all nations (Matt 28:18-20). We must realise that this is an achievable task in this *eschaton* (the last time, Malachi 1:11). Planting churches in every nation will only be achieved through pastors called to go to the ends of the earth to all unreached people groups.

In his article Dr Kevin Bidwell challenges our thinking with regard to mission. He urges us to re-evaluate the direction of our missionary methods. He points out that Ecumenism will always blur the distinctions of the most basic issues, namely, *What is a Christian?* and *What is a church?*

Two outstanding examples of missionary work are described in this issue. The first is John Calvin's amazingly successful evangelisation by church-planting of his native country of France. This he organised by training missionary pastors in Geneva. A brief overview of what was achieved is included in the article *What is a Pastor?* ('Calvin the Missionary' by Dr Jonathan Bayes was published in RT 231). The second remarkable record of missionary work by church-planting is described by Pastor Matthias Lohmann in his biography of Johann Oncken.

Through missionary enterprise Presbyterian and Baptist denominations have multiplied. They started well but have ended badly. Not all but most have succumbed gradually to liberal theology. We see that in the so-called Reformed churches of France today.

The churches in Germany are not in a good state. Officially more than 60% of all Germans are Christians, with roughly 30% (or 24 million) being – mostly only nominally – members of the Roman Catholic Church and another 30% in the membership of the Protestant State Churches (mainly Lutheran). But sadly Germany is not only the land of the Reformation, it

is also the home of liberal theology, which has caused most of the Lutheran State churches to move far away from sound doctrine and practice.

The corruption of the State churches led in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the formation of non-state church congregations and denominations. But these account according to official statistics for no more than roughly 330,000 members (less than 0.5% of all Germans). And even these churches are seeing troubling liberalisation tendencies. While there are a fair number of churches that are committed to sound doctrine, there are a growing number of evangelical churches that question the complete trustworthiness of Scripture and are denying the biblical teaching on gender roles in the home and the church. In some of these already small 'evangelical' circles the erosion away from sound doctrine is going even further. Even the doctrine of penal substitutionary atonement is coming under attack.

For this reason it is encouraging to hear of the recent Evangelium21 Conference which recently took place in Hamburg in Germany. 'Evangelium' is German for gospel and '21' indicates the purpose of promoting the old Gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The emphasis in Evangelium21 is the recovery of the gospel of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation. The visiting preachers were Don Carson and John Piper. Over 1,000 mostly young attendees came including several hundred pastors.

The pathway to decline is amnesia (forgetfulness). Church officers, elders and deacons are required to know and adhere faithfully to the Westminster Confession (Presbyterian) or the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith known as the 1689. With regard to the Confession of Faith you will often find that church officers do not possess a copy let alone know its contents. Once we were visited by two Presbyterians. In opening a conversation I welcomed them by saying we were glad to know Presbyterians loved the Westminster Confession of Faith. They looked blank and confessed they had never heard of such a thing! History tells us that there is a first generation who discovers the truth, propagates it and is ready to die for it. The next generation often has only a vague idea of that truth. The generation that follows forgets the truth and begins to despise it and even hate it. Of course that is a very general observation. The only antidote to this decline is a heart knowledge of Christ in salvation rather than a mere intellectual assent to the gospel.

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## Mission Sidetracked?

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*Is John Stott's Incarnation Model for Mission Valid?*

*Kevin J Bidwell*

*Introduction*

'MISSION' IS DERIVED FROM A LATIN WORD MEANING 'TO SEND' AND THIS SUBJECT REMAINS the centre of much discussion as the Church seeks to understand how to apply the unchanging Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ to a rapidly changing world. The question of priorities is commonly posed but we must ensure that our mission vision can endure rigorous exegetical tests. So often mission ideas gain sway within evangelicalism without having undergone critical evaluation.

The incarnation mission paradigm of John Stott is to be analysed. It is recognised that Stott holds sway in many circles with respect to the Church's mission and yet his contribution to this topic has been rarely subject to scrutiny. John's Gospel and the degree of continuity and/or discontinuity between the ministry of Jesus and that of the Church is also in view. This is because much of Stott's theology of mission revolves around John 17:18: 'As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world' and John 20:21: 'As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.'

Hopefully this short article will stimulate the re-evaluation of our own mission methods and provide a mirror for any untested assumptions that we may hold. This is especially needful in the face of the emergent 'missional movement' which is moving the Church into uncharted waters.

*An Introduction to Stott's Theology of Mission*

An 'incarnation model' is woven through the tapestry of Stott's theology of mission. His approach includes a commitment to seek to

understand the ‘sending paradigm’ revealed in John’s Gospel. The two verses in John 17:18 and 20:21 are linked together to answer three questions: What is the degree of continuity between the ministry of Jesus and ours today? What is the Church sent out to do? and How are we to approach being sent out into the world?

Stott has a lifetime of commitment to world mission to his credit and his writings exert global influence. The landmark book *Christian Mission in the Modern World*<sup>1</sup> encapsulates Stott’s influence upon the 1974 Lausanne Covenant<sup>2</sup> (both ecumenical and evangelical) and the primacy he gives to John’s Gospel. He states that ‘the crucial form in which the Great Commission has been handed down to us is the Johannine’ and that Jesus ‘made his mission the *model* of ours’.<sup>3</sup> Stott defines ‘mission’ as ‘everything the Church is sent into the world to do’ and the continuity from Christ’s mission to ours, based on ‘so send I you’, has two strands: a ‘model of service’ and the ‘principle of the incarnation’.<sup>4</sup> These strands can be seen as two guiding lights in all of his thinking and practice as he frames a broad concept of mission by amalgamating the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.<sup>5</sup>

A key book is *The Contemporary Christian*<sup>6</sup>, where Stott calls for a ‘double listening’ by Christians to the ‘ancient Word and the modern world’ in order to ‘avoid the opposite pitfalls of unfaithfulness and irrelevance’.<sup>7</sup> Stott’s style is always lucid, compelling and easy to read as he describes his trademark concepts of ‘holistic mission’, formerly called the ‘model of service’ and the ‘Christology of mission’ that includes his ‘incarnational principle’. Everything is set against a background of understanding that God’s character is that of a ‘missionary God’.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Stott’s Incarnation Model*

Stott’s vision appears to fuse what were previously two polarised views that leaned either towards evangelism or to social responsibility. He proposes a dual mission in pursuit of the words and works of Jesus so as to reveal the God of justification and justice, a process whereby the Church can demonstrate a love both for God and for its neighbour. The warrant is made for holding both evangelism and social activity as part



of the Christian duty but, in the last resort, primacy should be given to evangelism.<sup>9</sup> In essence this relationship is a marriage likened to ‘two blades of a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird’, where social action is seen as a consequence of evangelism, a bridge to evangelism and accompanies it as a partner.<sup>10</sup>

The motivation for this service is love that ‘expresses itself wherever it sees need’ and an influential text for Stott to support this notion is 1 John 3:17-18, especially the words ‘sees his brother in need’. Surprisingly, in Stott’s mind ‘brother’ includes unbelievers and he contends that Christians must ‘see and feel man’s need’ and then act in ‘divine love to alleviate that need’.<sup>11</sup> This creates serious exegetical problems because John is not using ‘brother’ in such a wide understanding but this refers to a Christian. This endorses the opinion that our exegesis shapes our practice. This is exemplified by Stott who proposes that the Church’s works are to go ‘beyond healing bodies to building hospitals’ and ‘beyond feeding the hungry to the establishment of a new international economic order’.<sup>12</sup> The scope of this vision is breath-taking and inevitably includes socio-political involvement and legislative change.

If ‘holistic mission’ defines what the Church is to do in Stott’s view, then how should that task be accomplished? The ‘principle of incarnation’ is included in Stott’s ‘Christology of Mission’<sup>13</sup> where lessons are drawn from six major events in Christ’s saving career:

- *The Model for Mission* is the incarnation of Christ which is the pattern for our being sent into the world. Stott writes: ‘Our mission is to be modelled on Christ’s. Indeed, all authentic mission is incarnational mission. It demands identification without loss of identity. It means entering other people’s worlds as he entered ours.’<sup>14</sup>
- *The Cost of Mission* is founded on the cross of Christ that encourages the messianic community when they suffer persecution, hardship and tribulation in their service to Christ.
- *The Mandate for Mission* is the resurrection of Christ.<sup>15</sup>
- *The Incentive for Mission* is the exaltation of Christ that explains the ‘why’ of our task.

- *The Power for Mission* is the Spirit-gift of Christ.
- *The Urgency of Mission* is taught by the Second Coming of Christ.

These points are not drawn exclusively from John's Gospel, but the commission in this Gospel undergirds the whole approach. The role of Christians in a non-Christian world is set out in *New Issues Facing Christians Today*<sup>16</sup>, where Stott makes suggestions concerning the Church's engaging in social issues as far-ranging as human rights or the environment. In conclusion, Stott's broad mission vision of evangelism and compassionate service is for the whole Church to step into this world of need and is not restricted only to cross-cultural missionaries or the ordained ministry.<sup>17</sup>

### *Is Stott's Incarnation Model for Mission Valid?*

Stott's main strength is the clarity by which he explains himself, thereby leaving readers in no doubt as to what his view of mission is. There are five areas of concern though, as to the validity of Stott's model for mission. Firstly, it is a theology derived from an Anglican State Church paradigm with a strong ecumenical thrust. The complaint is not that he is Anglican, but that his State Church perspective causes him to lead the charge into realms of extensive socio-political engagement for the Church. This agenda does not do justice to the boundary lines that the New Testament teaches that exist between the authority of the Church and state (Romans 13:1-7).

Secondly, his mission paradigm is founded upon a far too weak exegetical footing. The impression that is left from this persuasive style is that compelling conjectures are made but with broad brush strokes, such as his 'Christology of Mission'. A single clear example as already stated is his move to wrongly use the notion of 'brother' in 1 John 3:17-18 as a platform for social and community engagement. This is a reminder that mission theologies must be tested against the measure of biblical exegesis alone and not on the basis of pragmatism.

Thirdly, Stott's emphasis on an almost bottomless pit of human need could rapidly involve endless hyper-activity or extensive project management that neglects the gospel. Has Stott considered that Jesus



‘only did that which he saw the Father doing?’ The Lord Jesus emphasised the primacy of gospel proclamation (Mark 1: 14-15, 16: 15; Luke 24:46-47) but unfortunately, after all of his hard work, Stott does not give sufficient emphasis to the priority of preaching as the primary means of Church expansion. David Hesselgrave’s *Holes in Holistic Mission*<sup>18</sup> offers a serious critique of models that propose an ‘incarnation model’ which always leads seemingly to holistic mission. Perhaps someone could write an article called ‘Is holistic mission in fact the old liberal agenda dressed in new clothes?’.

Fourthly, Stott’s theology of mission is in danger of leading the Church away from the ‘ancient paths’ of the clear activity for a true Church. Ecumenism will always blur the distinctions of the most fundamental issues, such as, ‘*What is a Christian?*’, ‘*What is a church?*’ or ‘*What is the basis for the forgiveness of our sins?*’. There appears to be a general assumption by Stott that all congregations are more or less on the right track; however to mobilise Christians into activity without a clarion call for ‘sound doctrine’ is neither safe nor prudent. The Reformers such as John Calvin had a different perspective. For Calvin mission was the Church and the Church was mission. Mission was to uphold the three marks of the Church, which are the preaching of pure doctrine, the right administration of the sacraments and church discipline.<sup>19</sup>

Calvin was not a detached theologian; he was a pastor at heart, and one who refused to drive a wedge between theology and practical ecclesiology. Calvin writes that ‘there are three things on which the safety of the Church is founded, namely, doctrine, discipline and the sacraments’ and also that ‘the body of the Church, to cohere well, must be bound together by discipline as with sinews’.<sup>20</sup> This third mark is arguably a vital component for the maintenance of the first two, which may well stand or fall by the effective upholding of church discipline as part of the exercise of the ministry in the congregations.

Fifthly, the apostolic mission exemplified by Paul of church-planting in new territories, with the instalment of elders for church government, seems to get lost amid Stott’s quest for ‘extra-curricular’ activities. Acts chapters 13 and 14 provide a safe blueprint for the Church in the twenty-first century, not least in the secular and multicultural West

which is now clearly a mission field. Paul devoted his life to preaching the gospel, the making of disciples, encouraging souls to continue in the faith and the appointment of godly elders in every church (Acts 14:21-23). Let nothing distract us from this intensive, challenging but biblically faithful task.

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- 1 John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, London: Falcon Books, 1975.
  - 2 John Stott, *The Lausanne Covenant*, Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1975.
  - 3 John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 23.
  - 4 *Ibid*, 30, 24-25.
  - 5 *Ibid*, chapter 1 on 'Mission'.
  - 6 John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992.
  - 7 *Ibid*, 13.
  - 8 John Stott, *Our God is a Missionary God* (in) *The Contemporary Christian*.
  - 9 John Stott, *The Contemporary Christian*, 339, 343.
  - 10 *Ibid*, 340.
  - 11 John R W Stott, *Motives and Methods in Evangelism*, London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1962, 6-10 and John R W Stott, *The Letters of John: An Introduction and Commentary*, Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964, repr. 1988, 147-148.
  - 12 *Ibid*, 350.
  - 13 John Stott, *The Christology of Mission* (in) *The Contemporary Christian*.
  - 14 *Ibid*, 358-359.
  - 15 *Ibid*, 365-366.
  - 16 John Stott, *New Issues Facing Christians Today*, London: Marshall Pickering, 1984, repr. 1999.
  - 17 John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 32-34.
  - 18 David Hesselgrave, *Holes in Holistic Mission* (in) Trinity World Forum, Chicago: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1990, 19, no. 3.
  - 19 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Volume 2, ed. John T. McNeill, Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster Press, 1960, repr. 2006, 4: 1: 4 and 9, 1016, 1023.
  - 20 John Calvin, 'Reply by John Calvin to the Letter by Cardinal Sadoletto to the Senate and the People of Geneva' in Calvin's Tracts Relating to the Reformation, Vol. 1, Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1844, 38, 55.

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## What is a Pastor?

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*The Editor*

**T**HERE IS NO CLASS OF MEN AND NO PROFESSION UNDER HEAVEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN THAT OF PASTORS. They are the spiritual eyes of the community. They keep open the highway to heaven and constantly call all to take that route. At the same time they warn about the broad road that leads to everlasting hell. For these reasons pastors suffer opposition and Satanic attack. Of this we can be sure, a faithful godly pastor is one in a thousand (Job 33:23).

And so the question before us is, What is a Pastor?

The distinction between ruling elders and full-time elders is that pastors are called to leave everything secular and give themselves to full-time ministry. The preaching ministry is more demanding than ever before. Pastors are required to be skilled as apologetes as well as dogmaticians. Special gifts and skills combined with much labour are required to preach in an expository, systematic way which is practical week after week, in a way which captures the imagination and builds up and inspires a congregation. A minister who cannot maintain an authoritative, systematic, expository, and attractive preaching ministry in an increasingly secularistic and pluralistic society represents a lost cause. Such work requires total dedication and full-time attention.

A pastor must have eldership qualifications. The two words *episkopos* and *presbuteros* are used interchangeably as we see in Acts 20:17 and 20:28 and also in Titus 1:5 and 1:7. Elders and overseers refer to the same office. The word *episkopos* is found in Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1,2; Titus 1:7 and 1 Peter 2:25. The word *presbuteros* is used by Peter in 1 Peter 5:1 where he refers to himself as an elder and in James 5:14. Before an elder is elected and set apart he must pass the tests set out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.<sup>1</sup> He must be called by God and have that call recognised by the members of his local church and the approval of the church officers of his local church.

In relationship to ruling elders pastors share equality (parity) but in leadership the pastor is first among equals. In larger churches where there are two, three or more pastors a team spirit is required whereby all the gifts are used to the full in harmony and unity.

Very few men are talented enough to sustain two occupations. The apostle Paul himself was so gifted that he could, if necessary, earn his living at tent-making and minister the Word effectively at the same time. Sometimes ministers are forced by circumstances to labour with their hands. In some countries pastors receive such meagre stipends that they are compelled to work on the land to provide food for their families. Jewish rabbis were required to learn a trade or some secular skill before their entrance to full-time religious work. Perhaps that accounts for Paul's skill as a tent-maker. This same apostle declared, however, that secular employment for pastors ought to be avoided, and he used the analogy of military service which requires total concentration (2 Tim 2:4).

The difference between overseeing elders and full-time called pastors is the call to leave what may be for some a lucrative calling to serve as a minister of the gospel. A pastor is one who lays his life on the line. If things go wrong and he is dismissed from a church he and his family face a very serious crisis. A part-time elder faces no such quandary. Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones was very well aware of this factor and was enormously sympathetic with full-time pastors and wonderfully pastoral and supportive of those in difficulty. It was the practice of Dr ML-J to restrict membership of the Westminster Fraternal to full-time pastors.

Let us take good note of the many examples in Scripture which show that men are divinely called to serve in a church. The Bible storyline is linked from beginning to end with accounts of divine calling to office. The more demanding the call and service required the more elaborate the divine calling. Hence note the phenomenon of Moses and the burning bush. Moses argued. He resisted the call. However he was placed firmly in the saddle of leadership by the Lord himself. The manner in which the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were called should be noted. Jesus was called from among men to fulfil the role of the sent Messiah (Isa 61:1-3). He made this plain in the synagogue at Nazareth. With fury his claim to be the called Messiah was rejected by the congregation (Luke 4:14-30). By contrast we rejoice in the calling of Jesus as the sent Messiah. We note

that the apostles were called one by one to leave their fishing nets and their homes to work as full-time disciples alongside our Lord.

The labour involved is described in 1 Timothy 5:17: ‘especially those who labour in the Word and teaching’.<sup>2</sup> These labourers are to be given an adequate salary because, declares Paul, the labourer is worthy of his hire. The teaching elder is likened to the ox when it treads out the grain. The work is laborious. The verb *kopiaō* means to toil and Paul uses the word frequently to refer to his own mental and spiritual toil (1 Cor 15:10; Gal 4:11; Phil 2:16; Col 1:29; 1 Tim 4:10).

Included in the gifts given to the Church following the ascension of our Lord are pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11). As emphasised above pastors are called to full-time work in preaching and shepherding. The pastor will be faced with the need of training. A pastor is different from the ruling elders of the local church because he is called to give himself wholly to the ministry. In that complete commitment he must dedicate himself to acquiring the skills necessary for the full-time ministry.

*What about training for pastors?* When it becomes clear that an elder possesses the gifts and calling to be full-time in the work of the church what procedure should take place?

A variety of options are open.<sup>3</sup> He can join a local part-time training scheme and combine that with practical work in his own and neighbouring churches under the mentorship of his own church leaders. Or he can follow a guided reading scheme with his pastor, maybe calling on other local men with particular expertise in different subjects, at the same time as pursuing some practical ministry. Alternatively he can follow a distance learning course. If possible he can go to Bible College, either full-time or part-time. This can be costly. Relocation will be an upheaval for his family.

Whatever line is followed the fact is that preparation for gospel ministry requires *time*. In a secular context it takes ten years to qualify as a doctor, between six and nine years to become an actuary and about the same for a solicitor. Why so long? The reason is that preparing to enter any of these professions involves the acquisition of large amounts of information, understanding and skills. There are no short cuts – doctors have to know a great deal about how the body works if they are to treat their patients.

Architects take six years to graduate. Add another five to that for an architect to go forward to be a qualified town planner. Gospel ministry is in this respect no different. It is more than the acquisition of knowledge. It is the skill to apply that knowledge and the skill to teach and preach week in and week out. Knowledge includes Church History which provides much inspiration from exploits of the past and also lessons learned to avoid the errors and heresies of previous epochs.

A pastor is required to rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim 2:15). He must have a profound knowledge of the contents of the whole Bible. This means a clear understanding of the arguments and themes of each book and the principal issues which they address, as well as a sound grasp of how the Bible storyline unfolds. He must master the technical skills needed to get at the true meaning of the text and understand how to deal with the different kinds of literature in the Scriptures. He must know how to explain difficult passages. A knowledge of the Scriptures in their original languages is necessary. This all needs time – to study, to think, to pray in order to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in these areas.

The pastor then is one who constantly refines his skills. He is a doctrinal person. Why? There is the doctrine of the Trinity. There are the great truths of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. There is the question of the human and divine natures of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is antinomianism to be avoided on one hand and legalism on the other. The pastor must have a firm grasp of how Systematic Theology works. This will ensure that he teaches truth accurately and avoids heresy (Acts 20:29-31).

Training for gospel ministry should not take place in isolation from the fellowship and discipline of the local church. There are Bible colleges which guarantee that students are settled in a church fellowship nearby, where they can live, work and worship as part of a community of believers.

### *The example of John Calvin*

Church history bears its own testimony with regard to pastors and training pastors for their work. John Calvin (1509-1564) is the most helpful. His greatest work was to train and organise the sending of pastors into France



to plant churches. A similar testimony comes from Martin Luther who was a seminarian most of his working life. During the last ten years of his life Calvin trained pastors. Eighty-eight were recorded as pastors trained in Geneva who planted churches in France. There were many more than that but for security reasons their names were not recorded. Eventually there were between two and three million members of the churches that were planted. That is an amazing record in the annals of Church History.

Calvin had a four-tier system which reflects the way the Holy Spirit has worked throughout history.

1. Deacons 2. Ruling elders 3. Pastors 4. Seminarians.

Full-time pastors emerge from the ruling elders and from full-time pastors emerges a small number of seminarians. Calvin called them ‘doctors’. They are the ones who possess the gifts and calling to train pastors. Today America and South Korea are the best examples of seminaries where pastors are trained for their work.

The most gifted pastors make the best seminarians. This is illustrated in an outstanding way by the example of John Calvin.

Geneva during Calvin’s time has been described as ‘the hub of a vast missionary enterprise’.<sup>4</sup> The city became a temporary haven for thousands of refugees fleeing from Catholic persecution in other European nations. Refugees came from Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Poland, Bohemia, and elsewhere. While there they studied God’s Word in depth. When they later returned to their homelands, they were effectively Genevan pioneer missionaries, carrying the torch of the gospel across the continent.

Europe was largely an unevangelised, pioneer mission field in the sixteenth century. The unavailability of the Scriptures in the common languages of the time, and the fact that church services were also held in Latin, meant that the vast majority of Europe’s population had never had *the* gospel preached to them in an understandable manner. Calvin spearheaded an evangelistic campaign which brought the gospel to the peoples of Europe for the first time for many centuries.

The majority of foreign refugees in Geneva came, like Calvin himself, from France. Although now settled in Geneva Calvin retained a missionary burden for his homeland. From the city of Geneva he sent out a body of missionaries determined on taking Roman Catholic France for the gospel.

A first missionary pastor was sent from Geneva to France in 1555. More and more were sent in following years, reaching a climax in 1561 and 1562. This missionary movement developed from a trickle in 1555 to a flood in 1561.

Research has revealed that 142 missionaries left Geneva for France in 1561. However, the register names only twelve of them. If that discrepancy is typical, many hundreds of missionaries must have been commissioned in the final period of Calvin's life. Of the 88 missionaries whose names we know, 62 were French by birth. That means that 26 were cross-cultural missionaries in the fullest sense of the term. Nine of the 88 were martyred.

When sufficient people were converted, a church would be constituted. In the four years from 1555 to 1559 nearly 100 churches were planted and constituted. By 1562 that number had risen to well over 2000. Underground religious networks of individual converts worked to bring in friends, relatives and neighbours. These were guided by professional missionary secret agents.

Calvin did not send uneducated missionaries back to the dangers of Catholic France. He believed that a good missionary had to be a good theologian first. He first inspired and educated them. The final assessment in front of the Company of Pastors included a test of a candidate's preaching ability. The pastors also scrutinised his moral integrity, and questioned him on personal matters to satisfy themselves that he was of sufficient calibre for what was sure to be an arduous task.

In 1559 the training became more formal with the establishment of the Geneva Academy, under the leadership of Theodore Beza. This was intentionally set up as a missionary training college. Its express purpose was 'to train missionary pastors to plant churches throughout France and all Europe'. From this base competent men would carry the gospel message to the nations. By 1564 the Academy had several hundred students.

Before a missionary candidate was allowed to leave for his assignment, he had to undergo a rigorous examination before the Company of Pastors. They examined his theology to ensure his orthodoxy. They examined his linguistic ability, to verify that he was capable of interpreting Scripture from the original texts.

In addition to their studies at the Academy missionary candidates were given practical experience. Some served as preachers in village churches around Geneva. Others worked as chaplains in the city, or as tutors to well-to-do families.

### *Conclusions*

Only a careful distinction of offices in the church will preserve the proper functions of each. Where deacons take the place of ruling elders inevitably they end up doing the work of ruling elders. Where there are deacons and ruling elders and no pastor or pastors the decline in preaching standards takes place. This is a very serious and harmful lack as we see illustrated in the decline of Brethrenism. When everyone is minister, no one is.<sup>5</sup>

The advantages of the three-fold view; deacons, ruling elders and pastor are many. The equality of the ruling elders with the pastor or pastors protects the church from autocratic rule. The pastor does not rule alone. It is inappropriate for a pastor to implement discipline on his own. With ruling elders in parity there are checks and balances. The three-fold view encourages leadership. Unhindered by a multitude of concerns which are taken care of by the deacons and ruling elders the pastor can concentrate on prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4). By this means the whole assembly is nourished as one writer stated it, 'Ministers are like the head from which proceeds the stimulus, guidance and direction, which are essential for the vitality, the activity, the dignity, and the harmony of the system'<sup>6</sup>

Harmonious working relationships need to be cultivated among deacons, ruling elders and pastors. Confidentiality is important. Where there are differences of judgement among the elders humble submission to the majority vote must be maintained.

By providing for and supporting seminaries and seminarians provision is made for training future generations of pastors. Thus the principle of 2

Timothy 2:2 is fulfilled, ‘And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.’

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- <sup>1</sup> Essential is the requirement that the elder must be a ‘one-woman man’. Over a lifetime in which I have been actively engaged in four ministers’ fraternals in different parts of the UK I have noted that more have fallen into sexual sin than in any other area of life. I would say the casualty rate has been one in twelve. That is always catastrophic for the local church involved and for the family involved. It is the sin that stains. There is no way back. See John Armstrong, *The Stain that Stays*, Christian Focus, 194 pages, 2000. The statistic of one in twelve is similar in the USA. Also I have noted that the fellowship provided in a pastors’ fraternal acts as a means of spiritual health and preservation. When pressures threaten to overwhelm a member of the fraternal these can be shared and be made a subject of prayer by the pastors. Pastors who isolate themselves make easy targets for Satan.
- <sup>2</sup> I Timothy 5:17 was debated in great detail at the Westminster Assembly. Subsequently it was the centre of a protracted discussion in Presbyterian circles. *Ruling elders – a sketch of the controversy* by Iain Murray is one of 14 chapters in the volume *Order in the Offices*, edited by Mark R Brown and published in 1993 by Classic Presbyterian Government Resources. In 1995 Poh Boon Sing of Malaysia published his book *The Keys of the Kingdom*. ISBN 983-99576-9-4. This 417-page study argues for Independency in lieu of Presbyterian or Episcopal Church government. Poh reasons cogently for full-time pastors as distinguished from ruling elders and uses 1 Timothy 5:17 as a key text supporting his view. With regard to this book I note that too soon Independency declines into isolation. Unity is the underlying strength of Presbyterianism. I have observed that Baptist pastors revert to Presbyterianism not because of infant baptism which rests on flimsy reasoning, but because of security. The best way forward for Reformed Baptists is to follow the 1689 Confession of Faith chapter 26 paragraph 15 and to build strong associations as did the first generation of Particular Baptists. See David Kingdon in *Our Baptist Heritage* published by Chapel Library.
- <sup>3</sup> In this section which highlights the importance and dimensions of theological and practical training I follow an article published in *Evangelicals Now*, April 2012 written by Robert Strivens who is the Principal of London Theological Seminary.
- <sup>4</sup> I derive all this material describing Calvin’s missionary work into France from Dr Jonathan Bayes’, article ‘Calvin the Missionary’ published recently in *Reformation Today* issue 231.
- <sup>5</sup> *Order in the Offices*, page 251.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, page 252.

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## Johann Gerhard Oncken

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*Matthias Lohmann*

**T**HERE IS PROBABLY NO BAPTIST WHO HAS SPREAD THE BAPTIST faith to more countries than Johann Gerhard Oncken. He was the foremost Baptist pioneer in Europe. Yet his name is not well known and his legacy is little felt in his homeland of Germany. Oncken's amazing ministry and the convictions that inspired him should stir us to missionary zeal.



*Johann Gerhard Oncken*

### **The early years – Oncken's early travels and conversion**

Oncken was born on January 26th, 1800. His parents were not married and he never met his father. He grew up in his grandmother's home and worked in a pub in his home-town. That is where in 1814 he met the Scottish business man John Walker Anderson who hired Oncken as his apprentice. For the next nine years Oncken was in Anderson's service, travelled with him through Scotland, England, France and Germany and became fluent in English and French.

Anderson probably wasn't a believer but he bought Oncken his first Bible. Anderson's mother took him regularly to the worship services of the Scottish Reformed Presbyterian Church in Edinburgh. There he first heard the gospel. He was exposed to the doctrines of grace, but remained unconverted. In 1819 Anderson and Oncken moved to London. Oncken lived with a very pious family.

He was asked to join them each night for family worship. There he experienced how the head of the family prayed for his conversion. Later that year Oncken visited a Methodist church where he heard a sermon on Romans 8:1. He heard about the liberating power of the gospel ('There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus'). This made a strong impression on Oncken and he was converted right there and then.

Immediately upon his conversion Oncken started to share his faith. He wrote many letters to friends and family members in Germany and also witnessed to many young men whenever he could. It soon became clear that Oncken was gifted by God as an evangelist. He had a strong burden to bring the gospel to Germany and so he sought support. The Scottish revival preacher Robert Haldane wrote a letter of recommendation which led to Oncken's employment as an agent for the Continental Society. He moved back to Germany in the fall of 1823.

### **Oncken's pioneering work in Hamburg**

Back in Hamburg Oncken's assignment was to distribute Bibles and other revival literature and to preach the gospel to his fellow Germans. Oncken's preaching of God's Word immediately found an audience and after a few months his preaching frequently attracted several hundred listeners.

However, the Lutheran Church held a legal sanction to the holding of all services. Oncken held his meetings under the protection of the English Reformed Church, an international Church approved by the state to serve internationals. When it became obvious that Oncken's ministry was targeted towards Germans, he came under threat of being expelled from Hamburg.

One of the strongest opponents was the Church itself. For example, Oncken was dependent on the Lutheran pastor in charge of the Hamburg Bible Society. One day he refused to provide Oncken with any more Bibles. The Lutheran pastor said: 'Ahh – you are the guy who is constantly preaching in the attics and basements. Your damned preaching!' Oncken replied: 'The Lord Jesus has commanded me to do this.' Pastor Rentzel stood up from his chair and said: 'The devil told you to do this.' Oncken was shocked by such strong opposition.

Oncken, by christening, was a member of the Lutheran Church, but through his study of Scripture, he became increasingly convinced that the Bible teaches believer's baptism. Through his preaching about 75 people had become Christians. Most of these were still attending the State Church. Some also came to the conviction that they should be baptised. They and Oncken longed for a faithful gospel church, with regenerate members, who had professed their faith in baptism. However, there was no Baptist church. Oncken turned to Robert Haldane to seek help. Haldane advised Oncken to baptise himself and then to proceed in baptising the others. Oncken was



convinced that this practice had no biblical warrant nor did he want to leave his work in Hamburg to be baptised in England.

Help finally arrived in April 1834. The Baptist theologian Barnas Sears was planning to spend a Sabbatical year at German universities. Encouraged by some friends Sears decided to visit Oncken and his group. After interviewing the seven initial candidates for baptism, he baptised them on Saturday, April 22nd, 1834. The following day the small group formed the first Baptist congregation in Germany under the leadership of Barnas Sears and Oncken. Within two years this church grew to a membership of 68.

### **From Hamburg to the rest of Germany**

In 1836 Julius Wilhelm Köbner – originally from Denmark – joined the church and from 1836-1852 Köbner was Oncken's right hand man.

Oncken was likely involved in a group in Berlin, led by Gottfried Wilhelm Lehmann, becoming convinced of believer's baptism. In 1837 Oncken visited them, baptised them and helped to constitute the first Baptist church in Berlin. Oncken, Köbner and Lehmann later became a threesome called the 'cloverleaf' of the German Baptists.

In the late 1830s and 1840s many more Baptist churches came into existence. In many instances people had heard of Oncken's work and doctrine and became convinced of their truthfulness. By the end of 1840 twelve Baptist churches had been established with a total of 302 members. The Hamburg church was by far the largest with 110 members in 1840 and roughly 600 members by 1860. In the first 25 years 1300 people were baptised. Oncken remained the main pastor and the driving force in the spread of Baptist churches throughout Germany.

Despite its remarkable size and far-reaching ministry the Hamburg church remained illegal until 1858 when it received a 'concession'. In the first years Oncken had to endure various attempts by the police and city officials to end his work. He was imprisoned numerous times, his belongings were confiscated and he and his family had to suffer through many hardships. Oncken joyfully accepted these hardships. 'After the prison guard left me by myself in my prison cell, I threw myself on my knees, praised and worshipped my Saviour, who had counted me worthy to suffer for his name's sake. I feel well and blessed, committed my dear church into the Lord's hands and prayed for the conversion of those who persecute me.'

In 1837 the city officials in Hamburg requested the Baptists to make public what they believed. Oncken had already been convinced that a confession of faith was 'a necessary item of discipline and witness for a local congregation'. When the confession was presented to the church, some members objected because of statements about election and sovereign grace. For Oncken, who held strong Calvinistic convictions, the doctrines of election and perseverance of the saints were of great importance and he was not willing to leave these undefined. Oncken insisted that all church members should be willing and able to subscribe to the Confession, so it states that members do not need to agree to the article on predestination and eternal security. The paragraph on predestination ends with the following clause: 'Since this precious truth has – by beginners in the Christian faith – oftentimes not been understood, we feel obliged to accept even those into membership, who have become believers in the Lord, yet have not advanced to the understanding of the truth described in this article.' This clause didn't help much and some of its members resigned. While Oncken was grieved by this, his desire for sound doctrine was greater than his zeal for unity.

In the early 1840s the Berlin church was also asked by the city authorities to provide a statement of faith. Lehmann took the Hamburg Confession and modified and enlarged it. Interestingly both the Hamburg and the Berlin Baptist Confession were thus drafted in response to a request from the city authorities a few years after the congregations had constituted themselves.

When Oncken heard about the modifications, he was concerned about the lack of unity and its strong Lutheran influences. Eventually in 1847 Lehmann, Oncken and Köbner reached a compromise. It displayed much commitment to Reformed Theology and was the basis for the formation of the German Baptist Union. While Oncken was strongly committed to his theological convictions, he was always willing to cooperate with other Christians – especially for the sake of evangelism and missions. Indeed Oncken participated in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846 and the formation of the German branch in 1851.

Expansion necessitated a new building in Hamburg which was opened in 1867. C H Spurgeon was one who came to preach at the opening services. Earlier Oncken had shared the New Park Street pulpit in London. Spurgeon had great respect for Johann Oncken. He once described him as 'the Apostle Paul of Germany'.

## ‘Every Baptist a Missionary’

Oncken saw his calling as not limited in Germany. He travelled tirelessly to visit and teach Christians who had come to Baptist convictions. Wherever he went he looked for men who could champion the Baptist faith in their homelands. All this was only possible because Oncken received much funding from various sources. He was apparently a very gifted fundraiser.

After he had helped start the first Baptist church in Denmark in 1839, he took his first longer trip to the east in 1841 where he baptised 29 people in Memel in East Prussia (Lithuania). In 1840 the Dutch Reformed minister Johannes Feisser heard about Oncken, visited him – and then became fully convinced of believer’s baptism so that he and seven others desired to be baptised. Later Oncken and Kōbner helped organise churches in the Netherlands. In 1846 Oncken initiated the Baptist work in Austria and Hungary in close cooperation with Karl Rauch, Edward Millard and Heinrich Meyer. Meyer adopted Oncken’s strategy of multiplying his work by training particularly gifted men. Many of the future leaders of the Baptist movement in Hungary were disciples by Meyer.

In 1847 Oncken baptised the Swede Fredrik O Nilson and sent him back to Sweden where he eventually helped establish the Baptist Union of Sweden. After a preaching tour through Switzerland Oncken sent Friedrich Maier to support the baptised believers. In 1849 Maier founded a Baptist church in Zürich. Oncken trained Gottfried Friedrich Alf (and others) in Hamburg. After ordaining Alf, he sent him back to Poland in 1859 and in 1861 Alf founded a Baptist church in Adamowo. Alf followed Oncken’s example and trained many more men who pioneered work in many parts of Eastern Europe.

In all his travels Oncken was concerned to train men. In 1864 and 1869 he took especially long trips, first to Russia and from there further south to south-east Europe. During these trips he placed trusted men in various strategic places; he taught tirelessly, baptised many believers and saw much fruit of his labours. He reported about his 1869 trip that the happy results included three churches formed in the south of Russia and one in Turkey. Furthermore, valuable connections were formed at Odessa, Bucharest, Vienna and other places.

Oncken’s mission strategy was a combination of travelling, identifying gifted men and then training them to carry the work forward in their home countries.

It can probably be said that, next to Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Johann Gerhard Oncken was the most influential Baptist in the 19th century.

### **Others taking the lead**

Oncken sought to maintain unity by insisting that all the German Baptist churches related in some way to the Hamburg mother-congregation and that in one locality only one Baptist church could exist. This caused significant tensions and in 1871 the Baptists in the Hamburg suburb Altona officially formed a separate congregation. The resulting conflict was the subject of several nation-wide Baptist conferences, that finally concluded that the church in Altona was a legitimate sister-church of the Hamburg church. Oncken couldn't agree and took four years to make peace with the leadership of the German Baptists. His ministry came to an end in 1879 when he suffered a stroke; he died in 1884.

### **His legacy**

Oncken's life was truly remarkable. During his ministry as a Baptist he and his associates constituted over 280 churches, 1,222 preaching stations, and they formed 771 Sunday schools in Germany. They also founded over 170 churches abroad, mainly in Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia. It is estimated that he was responsible for distributing over two million Bibles and untold millions of gospel tracts.

Sadly Oncken's legacy is little felt in Germany today. Amongst German Baptists there is theological diversity and increasing liberalism. The statement of faith Oncken, Köbner and Lehmann agreed upon has been revised and weakened and in 1977 a completely new confession was adopted. Whereas the first German Baptist church embraced the doctrines of grace, today the Reformed faith is weak in Germany and few German Baptists hold to the teachings of their founding father. But there are hopeful signs on the horizon. A number of young Germans, among them a good number of Baptists, have come together to promote gospel-centred ministry based on a joint platform of Reformed theology. This movement, called Evangelium21, attracted more than 1000 mainly young attendees to its 2<sup>nd</sup> conference in May 2012. The conference was held in Hamburg – the city where Oncken once founded the first German Baptist church.

His motto, 'Every Baptist a Missionary' should be our motto!

A bibliography of mostly German sources and references is available on request from the editor. [erroll.hulse@gmail.com](mailto:erroll.hulse@gmail.com)

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## Bernard of Clairvaux

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*Frederick Hodgson*

**T**HE LAST ISSUE OF *REFORMATION TODAY* DESCRIBED THE COSTLY, CRUEL FIRST CRUSADE THAT EVENTUALLY LED to the defeat of the Saljuk Turks and the long-term disastrous consequences for relationships between Eastern and Western churches and future evangelisation of Muslims.

France was a major contributor to crusades in the Middle East. This article continues to describe the part played by Frenchmen in pursuing crusades against the Turks. These religious wars were a consequence of the belief in Christendom as a religious-political entity. Sadly warfare and physical coercion were conducted within France against those who were judged as being heretical in an attempt to ensure uniformity of belief. Cruel crusades were mounted against French citizens living in the south-east of the country. The Inquisition then mopped up remaining dissent. Reliance on worldly methods to create harmony was inevitable in a climate where sovereign grace was largely unrecognised. It mattered not whether the victims held a true biblically informed faith or a deviant collection of beliefs. There were financial rewards for the victors. Not all those who promoted the use of force in securing the prosperity of Christendom were motivated by the love of money.

*The enigma of Bernard of Clairvaux*

One of the crusading knights that captured Jerusalem in 1099 was Tescelin Sorrel. He had six sons, five of whom were trained to become knights. The exception was Bernard (1090-1153), who was born in Fontaine near Dijon in eastern France. Bernard's mother Alice was a devout lady and, responding to a dream, she believed that Bernard was to become someone special in the purposes of God. Bernard was sent to a theological college in Chatillon, where priests taught him grammar, logic, rhetoric and the Scriptures. Bernard was imaginative and had vivid dreams. One of these dreams involved the Virgin Mary and her child. This dream had a dramatic and lasting influence on Bernard, who was only a teenager when his mother died. He was thrown into inner conflict at this time and felt a pull to the life of a worldly, carefree noble having all the riches necessary to indulge

himself in pleasure on the one hand and on the other the drawing to live as a monk.

He chose the self-denying life of a monk and joined a Cistercian monastery. The Cistercians were known for their very plain simple liturgies, monastery buildings and lifestyle. They refused to spend vast amounts of money on adorning their churches. In 1115 Bernard and twelve other monks set up a new monastery in Champagne, in a desolate valley called the 'Valley of Wormwood'. Bernard was the Abbot of the community of monks and he renamed it the 'Valley of Light'. Its French name is Clairvaux. This monastery spawned a further 68 Cistercian monasteries scattered over various parts of Europe and even the Middle East.

Bernard was a complex person. He venerated Mary. He used the exhortation, 'If you are terrified by the thunders of the Father, go to Jesus. If you are afraid to go to Jesus, then run to Mary.' In the early Middle Ages use of Mary as a mediatrix was not so prominent as later on. Bernard was one of those responsible for increased veneration of Mary although he denied that Mary was conceived without sin. On the matter of the sovereignty of God in salvation he was a follower of Augustine. He was one of the greatest preachers of the Middle Ages and was called 'The Honey-flowing Teacher'. His aim in preaching was 'not so much to explain the words as to reach people's hearts'. Martin Luther said of Bernard's written sermons, 'Bernard is superior to all the teachers, even to Augustine himself, because he preaches Christ so excellently.' Bernard preached inside and outside Clairvaux Abbey. It is said that mothers hid their sons from him and wives hid their husbands from him in case they were converted by his preaching and ran away to become monks. He wrote theological and devotional books and well-known popular hymns like 'Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts', 'Jesus, the very thought of Thee', 'O Jesus, King most wonderful' and 'O sacred head, sore wounded'. Bernard was known as a man of effectual prayer. He was respected by the great men and kings of his time and yet they rejected the idea that he should ever become greater in the world than simply Abbot of Clairvaux.

### *Further crusades and the start of the Inquisition*

In 1144 a Turkish army captured the Latin kingdom of Edessa and this brought about a second crusade (1147-49). Pope Eugenius III, a former monk who was under Bernard's jurisdiction, asked Bernard to preach



sermons with the aim of enlisting soldiers for this crusade. Bernard's passionate appeals were successful and the army of the Second Crusade led by Louis VII of France went to war against the Turks. They were defeated and demoralised by lack of support from the Byzantines, by disease as well as by being overcome by the Turks. Bernard's response to the defeat was to blame the ungodly lives of the western Catholics and the judgement of God being poured out in response to this wickedness.

His involvement in the crusades was inconsistent with his normal peace-loving attitude towards heretics and Jews living in Western Europe. He generally believed that men should be won by argument and persuasion. It is easy to be critical of Bernard's bellicose attitude towards the Turks, but Christians in the twenty-first century should be wary lest they also approve of the use of war to achieve religious ends. Bernard was a respected, pious Christian but was sadly responsible for promoting erroneous devotion to Mary. Others were to distort veneration of Mary to greater depths.

The Third Crusade (1189-92) was mounted against the great Kurdish general Saladin, who took control over Jerusalem. This was the crusade in which Richard I of England took part along with the king of France and the Holy Roman Emperor (Germany). Richard and Saladin held each other in mutual respect. Saladin's ventures were inspirational for twentieth-century Muslim opposition to Zionism. The Fourth Crusade (1202-04) only involved French soldiers and it was disastrous in that it was deflected from its initial aim of capturing Egypt and landed up conquering the Byzantines and imposing Catholicism upon them. Further crusades followed against Muslims and the weapon of the crusade became a tool in the hands of popes whenever they had to deal with those who disagreed with them within Europe. The apostle Paul taught that the kingdom of darkness was to be assaulted with spiritual weapons. The bishops of Rome used carnal weapons in their war against those they regarded as heretics.

#### *Peter the Venerable and his writings against Muslims and Baptists*

A figure that deserves extra study is Peter the Venerable or Peter of Montboissier (1092-1156). He was Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Cluny. He was strongly condemned by Bernard for his support of the brilliant academic French theologian Abelard who was based in Paris. Abelard had serious moral failings and Bernard regarded his independent thinking as being dangerous but still he held his intellectual abilities in great

respect. Abelard, who was condemned at a Church council held at Sens for his views on the Trinity, died at Cluny under Peter's protection. Peter considered that Abelard died with a humble, repentant attitude. Within the Catholic Church Peter was known for his astute, conciliatory attitudes and skills.

Peter was a diligent student of Islam and was responsible for the translation of the Qur'an into Latin. His Islamic studies took him to Toledo in Spain and probably to La Rioja where there was a Cluniac monastery. He worked in these centres with others. The translation was completed in 1143. He published books on Islam such as *The Summary of the Entire Heresy of the Saracens* and *The Refutation of the Sect or Heresy of the Saracens*. Interestingly, his view on Islam was that it is a 'Christian heresy' that approaches paganism. His efforts to understand Islam were not widely appreciated among European scholars in the Middle Ages.

Peter was one of several Catholic academics who were encouraged to write against the growing reformed movement in France during the reign of Innocent II (1130-1143). Bernard of Clairvaux joined him in this work. At that time Peter the Benedictine and Bernard the Cistercian were the two leading theologians of France.

In his famous *Book of Martyrs* Foxe mentions the pious, learned, eloquent but timorous Berengarius of Tours (999-1088), who opposed the teaching of Radbertus regarding the eucharist and was placed under great pressure (including a period of imprisonment) to change his views. Foxe claimed that by 1140 'the number of the reformed was very great, and the probability of its increasing alarmed the pope, who wrote to several princes to banish them from their dominions, and employed many learned men to write against their doctrines'.

Peter the Venerable wrote against the 'errors' of Peter de Bruys which were identified as 1) denying infant baptism and teaching that only believers should be baptised, 2) denying the holiness of buildings and altars, 3) refusing to venerate the sign of the cross, 4) denying the doctrine of 'transubstantiation' as it came to be called, 5) denying that good works and prayers performed for those who had died had any value. Foxe mentioned that Peter de Bruys was allowed to preach openly as he was under the protection of an earl named Hildephonosus. Peter de Bruys separated from the Catholic Church and the reasons for this separation were given in his book *Antichrist*. Jarrel claimed that the Petrobrussians, located largely in

Languedoc and Provence, could be numbered in hundreds of thousands and stated, 'He rejected the outward or visible church, and only acknowledged the true, invisible church in the hearts of believers.' It is claimed that he publicly burned wooden crucifixes and ended his days being burned at the stake round about 1126. After his death Henry of Lausanne, a Benedictine monk, actually born in Italy, took over the leadership of the movement. Henry, a pious, eloquent and popular preacher was imprisoned after being condemned at a council held at Rheims and nothing seems to be known about him after his incarceration. Sadly Bernard, called in to silence the Petrobrussians, criticised Henry for emptying the churches, taking away the flocks of the priests and discouraging people from attending and respecting the communion services. He also complained that parents neglected to have their children baptised.

### *The Waldensian Movement in the south of France*

The feudal system based on ownership of land began to disintegrate during the twelfth century in Western Europe. In its place a new economy based upon money began to flourish. This appearance of capitalism led to the growth of towns and cities and some tradesmen and merchants became very rich. At the same time marked poverty became obvious among the 'peasant class' that had left the land to work in the towns.

One rich merchant living in Lyons was Valdes, more commonly called Peter Waldo today. Some time between 1173 and 1176 he was deeply disturbed by the Lord's words to the rich young man recorded in Matthew 19:21, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.' Valdes literally did this and gave all his wealth to the poor and he became a preacher, relying only on the gifts of food, clothing and shelter that others gave him. He was soon surrounded by a band of followers known as the 'poor men of Lyons'. The Catholic Church forbade unauthorised preaching and Pope Alexander III ruled that he could not preach without the permission of the local bishop but praised his kindness to the poor. Valdes and his followers persevered in their preaching and the archbishop of Lyons excommunicated them in 1182. They immigrated to Languedoc and Lombardy and were excommunicated by Pope Lucius III. (Foxe reported that Valdes was eminent for his piety and learning and was strenuous in his opposition of popery. He reported Alexander III as having excommunicated Valdes and commanding the archbishop of Lyons to exterminate them if possible, from the face of the

earth. Valdes remained in hiding in Lyons for three years before he himself escaped to the mountains of Dauphiny and his doctrines were then spread from here into Picardy to the consternation of King Philip of France, who persecuted Valdes' followers and drove many into Normandy and Germany.)

The Waldensians, having been forced out of the Catholic Church, gave attention to their own doctrine and decided that the Bible was the supreme source and rule of faith, rather than the pope. They rejected any notion of transubstantiation, purgatory, prayers for the dead and indulgences but continued to venerate Mary. They had the Scriptures translated into their own tongue and set up colleges to train preachers, sending out male and female missionaries into the rest of Europe. Painstakingly and manually copied Bibles were carried wherever these missionaries went. The missionaries carried the Bible truths by sermons and by song and their influence was felt over huge areas of Europe. In time many of them joined other reformed groups in Europe, being linked to the Bohemian Brethren for example. Many Catholics sympathised with them and these friends, although not joining them, did support them financially and even attended their Bible studies. Although the Waldensians rejected the idea of military service they were prepared to defend themselves if they were attacked. The time was to come when they were obliged to fight off armies sent against them as they sheltered in the mountains between France and Italy.

### *The Crusade against the Cathars (Albigenses) and their extermination*

The Catholics were much more concerned about the Cathars. They were a Gnostic cult originating in Northern Europe but which migrated south, and concentrated in south-east France. Many French nobles sided with them against the Catholic Church, partly because of the corruption that they saw in the Church but also because they objected to paying the tithes to the church and were desirous of seizing Church land. They believed that Satan, a being having as much power as God, made the created world. They denied that Christ had a physical body and that he died and was raised from the dead. They also condemned all sexual relations as being sinful. Rather than teaching that salvation was through the cross, they taught that salvation was gained by receiving secret knowledge. They rejected water baptism and communion and believed that there was no salvation apart from belonging to them. The pope was the great prostitute of Revelation 17.

Dominic Guzman (1171-1221), a Spanish monk, was an outstanding scholar from his youth. He was sent to the south of France in 1206 with a view to reclaiming the Waldenses, Cathars and other dissenting groups to the Catholic Church, using his sharp mind and learning. He had a simple lifestyle and went around the area preaching and relying on the charity of his hearers for food and shelter. He was forced to stop this when war broke out in 1209.

The dissenting groups in the south of France were divided into different sects and were sometimes called Albigenses after the town Albi in the south of France. Their greatest protector was the nobleman Raymond VI of Toulouse (1156 –1222). He was excommunicated by Peter of Castelnau, a legate of Pope Innocent III (pope from 1198-1216). One of Raymond's servants killed Peter of Castelnau and this brought Innocent to declare a crusade against the Albigenses commencing in 1209. This crusade, supported by the French king Philip Augustus, who wanted to weaken the power of his southern nobles, lasted twenty years. It was marked by savage brutality and destruction. The worst atrocity was at the town of Béziers, which was populated by Catholics and Albigenses. Before the large army with its knights swarmed into the town, one knight asked the papal legate, the Abbot of Citeaux, how they could distinguish between Catholics and heretics. The Abbot replied, 'Kill all! Kill all! The Lord will know his own.' The town was reduced to smouldering ruins after this blood bath ensued. The French noble Simon de Montfort led the crusading army and was rewarded by the gain of the lands owned by southern French nobles such as Raymond of Toulouse and Raymond Roger. The latter was imprisoned by de Montfort and simply allowed to die. Raymond of Toulouse eventually fought back for most of his lands, but during his life he was excommunicated two or three times for his support of the Albigenses. Simon de Montfort also had land in England and was known as the Earl of Leicester, not to be confused with his son who was also called Simon de Montfort. The son was a political reformer who believed that the influence of parliament should hold kings in check. The Albigensian crusade destroyed the movement in France, and drove the Waldensians into the Alpine valleys of Italy.

### *The Dominicans and the start of the Inquisition*

Meanwhile Dominic Guzman visited Rome in 1215 and persuaded the fourth Lateran Council to establish an order of preaching monks, in the first

instance under the Augustines, with the backing of Innocent III. However, Pope Honorius III, who became pope in the place of Innocent III in 1217, commissioned him to found the order of the Dominicans (sometimes called the Black Friars because of their habit). The Dominicans quickly spread over much of Europe, but initially concentrated their efforts in the south of France. Here their task was to ‘clean up’ what was left of dissension. In general their role was to provide scholastic backing for Roman Catholicism. The Dominicans were very influential in centres of learning like Paris, Bologna and Rome. Their most famous academic was Thomas Aquinas who was himself taught by a leading expert on the work of Aristotle called Albertus Magnus in Cologne. Aquinas (1225-74) had a huge impact on subsequent Catholicism as he wove together the teaching of Aristotle and that of the Catholic Church. In particular he believed that the existence of God could be proved by logic. He believed that the knowledge of God could be gained by the use of analogies with men and then stating that all this falls short, as God is much greater. He further developed the teaching of the doctrine of transubstantiation using logic derived from Aristotle and building on what had been taught by Radbertus and others. Aquinas provided a logical framework to support transubstantiation.

The establishment of the Dominican order was both tragic and momentous. Wylie described how Dominic received a commission to ‘judge and deliver to punishment apostate and obstinate heretics’. The meeting between Innocent III and Dominic marked the start of the infamous Inquisition. After the armies had crushed Albigensian resistance the Inquisition was unleashed on what remained offensive to the Catholic Church. The Inquisition operated independently from local bishops. Legates from the pope would pick up information about those suspected of heresy. Those accused would face the Inquisition. If a heretic confessed, some punishment, possibly the imposition of a financial penalty would be handed out. If there were no confession made the suspect would be tortured until guilt was acknowledged. If confession were withheld the suspect would have property taken away from him or else he would be imprisoned or in the worst cases the victim would be handed over to the secular power to be burnt at the stake.

Gospel truths were snuffed out by the Albigensian crusade and the Inquisition in France and the scholasticism of Aquinas was largely unchallenged for almost three centuries until the time of the Reformation.



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## Book Reviews

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*The Elder – Today's Ministry Rooted in All of Scripture*, Cornelis Van Dam, P&R Publishing (Distributed in the UK by IVP), 2009, pbk., 283 pages, £12.75

**A** GOOD BOOK ON THE OFFICE AND DUTIES OF 'THE ELDER' IS A rare treasure and in this volume Cornelis Van Dam has provided the Christian Church with a spiritual gem. The author, as his name implies, is of Dutch extraction and has been able to draw upon the rich Dutch sources that are available on this subject. Since these sources are not as accessible to British or North American scholars this is a specific strength of the book. A further strength is the author's ability, as an Old Testament professor, to show how the office of elder in the Christian Church has its roots in the Old Testament.

The book is well organised into 5 parts, with 2 chapters in each. In a very useful introduction the reader is given an overview of the office of elder and is guided through a discussion about the appropriate age to enter the eldership. A Levite,

before assuming all the responsibilities of the weighty levitical office, had to be 30 years of age. Van Dam doesn't conclude that this regulation is to be legally binding for the New Testament elder. Rather he wisely points to the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 where the emphasis is on spiritual maturity.

The second part of the book explores the Old Testament origins of the eldership. In this section the reader is taken on a spiritual journey through the Old Testament, showing the office and function of the elder prior to the monarchy, during the monarchy and during and after the exile.

When we come to the section handling the office of elder in the New Testament Van Dam points out that Christ is 'the ultimate reason and source of authority for the ecclesiastical offices'. He then demonstrates how that authority was mediated through the apostles and that it was through the apostles that a functioning eldership was established in each Christian church.

After recognising that there are essentially two roles within the eldership, teaching (the minister) and ruling, Van Dam opens up the debate as to whether there are two offices in the New Testament Christian Church or three. He informs the reader that ‘the classic Presbyterian and Reformed understanding is that there are three church offices; the teaching elder or minister of the Word, the ruling elder, and the deacon’. Van Dam leans towards this position because he believes the minister of the Word, the teaching elder, fulfils the function of the Old Testament levitical priest. He points, for example, to Malachi 2:7 to support such a conclusion. ‘For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.’ Although believing that there are two offices within the eldership, Van Dam recognises ‘the underlying unity in the offices of teaching and ruling elders’. This section of the book should open up useful discussion between those who hold to a different position.

An extremely helpful section of the book handles the subject of church discipline and carefully explains the meaning of ‘the keys of the

kingdom’ (Matthew 16:18, 19). We are instructed as to what this term meant for the apostles and then for their successors, the elders of the Christian Church. Wise advice is given as to how cases of discipline are to be handled by the elders and the congregation. In a very balanced way he warns against a pharisaical legalism that can so easily creep into churches that are concerned for purity.

The final section of the book considers two subjects – ‘female elders’ and ‘elders for life’, the former being a debating point in many Presbyterian churches world-wide. With respect to the question of female leadership Van Dam takes us through the relevant Scripture texts. He shows us how these texts have been interpreted by the advocates for woman elders. However, in a gracious and skilful manner he pinpoints the flaws in their exegesis and the weakness in their method of interpretation.

With respect to ‘term eldership’ we are taken back to Calvin, who in Geneva favoured elders serving for one year. That position was reflected in Scotland in the *First Book of Discipline* (1560). The influence of Andrew Melville is in evidence in the Scottish *Second*

*Book of Discipline* (1578) where the office of elder is recognised as perpetual. All this and many more interesting facts are brought to light in this discussion.

The last chapter brings this excellent book to a fitting conclusion with a look at 'The Privilege of the Eldership'. The eldership is a privilege for those called to occupy the office and a privilege for those church members who experience the oversight of biblically qualified, wise and supportive elders.

Without hesitation this book is highly recommended. Every elder in the church would profit from this scholarly and attractively written publication.

*Robert McCollum*

*Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, Eckhard J Schnabel, IVP (Apollos), 2008, pbk., 518 pages, £16.99

Almost a century has passed since the publication of Roland Allen's ground-breaking *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours?* Since then the church has become truly global and our knowledge of the Greco-Roman world has increased enormously, which has led Eckhard Schnabel to offer this re-working

and development of Allen's fundamental, unsettling question: How closely are we following apostolic precedent in our missionary endeavours? The author, professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, is building here on the foundation of his massive two-volume *Early Christian Mission* (2004), which has gone far to establish him as the doyen of contemporary students of mission. This is a detailed, provocative and absorbing work.

The book is divided into three main sections. Parts 1 to 3 are descriptive, surveying from the New Testament documents Paul's missionary work, his understanding of his task and the message which he preached. Parts 4 and 5 are synthetic, as Schnabel systematises his material into the methods and goals which the apostle followed. Part 6 is hermeneutical and pragmatic, as these principles are applied to the task of missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There are few ground-breaking discoveries in these pages. We are told, for example, that Paul's goals were: to preach the gospel, especially to Gentiles; to reach as many people as possible; to lead

individuals to saving faith in Christ; to form and build up communities of believers; and to train new missionaries. His methods were: oral proclamation of the gospel; geographical movement; going to wherever people were willing to listen; bringing the message to every nationality, class and culture; and standing apart from the approach and rhetoric of the professional speakers of that era. Schnabel's treatment is thorough – at times exhausting as well as exhaustive – and tighter editing might have improved the whole by pruning a few dozen pages. As the author himself acknowledges, 'This book is already too long' (p.419). But occasional prolixity is a minor fault in a work so satisfying, where every passage is examined and conclusions are grounded so solidly on Scripture. To read these pages carefully is to obtain a firm grasp of exactly what was happening in Paul's ministry.

The final chapter is outstandingly helpful. In it Schnabel exposes the weaknesses in much current evangelicalism: dumbing down the gospel to make it more acceptable; infatuation with methodology and technology; success measured in worldly terms; the practice of targeting homogeneous people

groups; seeker-driven and purpose-driven churches; the idolisation of individuals. He writes, 'The cause of missionary "success" is not rhetorical brilliance, refined communication strategies or any other method or technique of evangelism or church administration. The effective cause of people coming to faith in Jesus Christ and becoming active members of local communities of followers of Jesus is the power of God and of the Holy Spirit' (p.401). He concludes, 'Theology, the discipline which teaches followers of Jesus about God, the Son and the Spirit, is central and must remain fundamental for churches and for their missionary work... Christians truly worship the one true and living God only when they let God be God. And when they do, they will be a light to the world and the salt of the earth' (p.458).

Today's Church needs to understand and act upon this book.

*Edward Donnelly*

*These reviews first appeared in the Reformed Theological Journal of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, 37, Knockbracken Road, Belfast Northern Ireland, BT8 6SE, and are printed here with kind permission.*

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## Same-Sex Marriage

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*In August, the Scottish Government announced that it is bringing forward legislation to introduce same-sex marriage. This was despite overwhelming opposition expressed in the responses to the government consultation. Two thirds of the nearly 77,000 responses opposed the idea. The Rev. James Gracie delivered this address before the government announcement.*

**T**HE DEMAND BY A MINORITY TO CHANGE THE DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE HAS, IN OUR OPINION, LITTLE to do with equality, but has everything to do with imposition. ‘Equality’ is already enjoyed within civil partnerships. ‘Marriage’ will add little to this. What then will redefining marriage achieve? We believe it will achieve exactly what its proponents want it to achieve: the imposition upon society of same-sex marriage. Many may innocently ask what is wrong with that. Surely this law will bring equality within Scotland and at the same time no minister will be required to perform such a marriage against his conscience. What is the problem?

We believe this will have a major impact on virtually every family in the country. We believe this is but another step towards homosexuality being imposed on our children. Schools will no longer be able to speak about marriage without teaching the equality of same-sex partnerships. Children’s books from infants upwards will be required to recognise it. Why? Because the law recognises it.

While it is stated that a minister may not be forced to perform a same-sex marriage, will that same minister be persecuted as others have been in our nation for speaking out against homosexuality once same-sex marriage is legalised? Surely if something becomes law, every institution will be expected to at least acknowledge that law. Will parents be persecuted when they remove their children from classes and maybe even be forced to remove them from state schools altogether to protect the moral upbringing of their children? Will private schools be prosecuted for failing to acknowledge such unions? The humanists, of course, support same-sex marriage and one can understand why. Humanists remove their children from religious education. With the introduction of same-sex marriage into

the school curriculum Christians would be forced to remove their children. Herein is a very subtle way of ensuring that religious education is removed from the school curriculum altogether. This, of course, is a prime aim of the humanist movement, but such an outcome will deprive many parents of the right to have their children taught some decent moral standards in school.

School plays are a reality in most schools. Will such plays now have to reflect the new law? Will school plays have to include a scene with a same-sex couple just as virtually every television drama and soap does? We believe the parents of Scotland should be made aware of these things. They have a right to know the consequences for their children should this become law.

The people of Scotland are well aware that homosexuality is a sin. The Bible says so. An examination of history confirms it. Conscience cries out within as an echo of God's truth. However, men hold such truth in unrighteousness (Romans 1:18). There are really only two ways in which this truth can be readily suppressed. The first is to normalise homosexuality and to try to make it the same as marriage. This is why there is such a vociferous campaign on the part of many homosexuals for same-sex marriage. The second way of suppressing the truth is to close the mouth of anyone who expresses any counter opinion. The germ of this has already been witnessed in our land. Is it yet to get worse?

We would caution the Scottish Government that the passing of such legislation would be the means of introducing persecution against the Lord's people. The small but belligerent homosexual lobby will not be satisfied until all opposition to their way of life is snuffed out. We do not imply that this is what is intended by the Scottish Parliament in considering these proposals, but we fear that this will almost certainly be the unwelcome outcome. We would therefore plead with the parliamentarians of our day not to succumb to the idea that the introduction of this legislation is all about equality. In reality, equality has, in our humble opinion, got very little to do with it.

This material is cited from the *Free Church Witness* July/August 2012 Issue being part of an address given by the moderator of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) Rev. James Gracie.

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## Concert of Prayer

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*Jonathan Bayes*

**S**EVERAL PEOPLE HAVE SAID TO ME THAT THESE HAVE been the best prayer meetings they have ever attended. I agree: they have certainly been the best prayer meetings which I have ever attended in this country. The passion and fervour have reflected a genuine seriousness about our need for God to come in mighty power and to revive the flagging fortunes of his work in this land. But it has been so heartening to hear prayer offered not just for the United Kingdom, but for the whole world. Specific countries have often been highlighted, and much prayer has been made for a powerful work of the gospel amongst the Jews and the Muslim nations.

Since the beginning of 2012, the Concert of Prayer has begun to spread to other areas, as friends have heard about what is happening in Yorkshire, and have wanted to become involved. In July, 21 prayer meetings took place around the country, 8 in Yorkshire, and the rest as far afield as Exmouth and Edinburgh. 'There were 25 people at Grace Baptist in Lancaster. These were from three churches: North Preston Evangelical Church, and Grace, Southport. There was a good spirit of prayer. Next time there is a concert of prayer we would probably have it in Preston as more central, unless we could involve other churches from Lancaster.' 60 gathered from 12 churches at Stowmarket. It was an excellent time of prayer.

We trust that such a response implies that the call to prayer was indeed prompted by the Spirit of God, and that it is God's pleasure at this time to move his people to earnest, extraordinary, united prayer. That

being so, we dare to believe that it is his purpose to return to us in mighty power in the near future.

It has been truly uplifting to hear of early signs that the Lord is at work in a fresh manner. In the church to which I belong, we are thrilled at the way some of the young people with whom we have contact from non-Christian homes have started attending the Sunday services. One in particular is reading the Bible with real enthusiasm.

The proposed gay marriage legislation is something of a barometer showing the way that things are going in the country now. Surely, as a nation, we are ripe for judgment, as several people have reminded me recently. However we must not be defeatist in this matter. In California this kind of legislation was rejected. Pray on that it will be rejected here in the UK.

The wonderful truth is that when a nation is ripe for judgment, that is precisely the moment when it is ripe for mercy. And God has revealed himself as one who would always rather be merciful than inflict judgment. He is slow to anger, but in a frenetic hurry to show mercy. So we have every reason to pray with excited hope. Let's keep at it!

But we must also remember that prayer may never become an alternative to gospel action. Prayer and evangelistic effort must always go hand-in-hand. Let's keep at it also in seeking to reach out to the lost, both in organised church activities and in personal testimony.

Next CONCERT 6<sup>th</sup> October from 10.00AM to 12.00 Midday at City Evangelical Church, Leeds.

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## APCs in Malawi

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**F**OR THE FIRST TIME AFRICAN PASTORS' CONFERENCES (APCS) ARE PLANNED IN MALAWI WHICH IS A DENSELY POPULATED NATION OF some 16 million. The official languages are Chichewa and English. Landlocked Malawi extends along Lake Malawi in the north and along its outflow river Shire in the south. Malawi is a poverty-stricken country. The average income is one percent of what it is in the USA. High unemployment drives many to emigrate to seek work. AIDS is endemic. There are over 500,000 AIDS orphans.

Nyasaland gained full independence in 1964 and was renamed Malawi. Hastings Banda remained president until 1994, when he was ousted from power. Joyce Banda (no relation) is the current president following the death of President Bingu Mutharika in 2012. She is the first female leader in Malawi.

There is freedom of religion. 76% profess to be Christian. The estimate for evangelicals is 19%. Over 80% of the Yao people are Muslim and receive much aid from Islamic sources abroad. 17% of the overall population is Muslim.

The program for the forthcoming APCs is as follows:

Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September – Lilongwe  
Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September – Monkey Bay  
Friday 21<sup>st</sup> September – Mzimba  
Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> September – Zomba

The theme is the Supremacy of Christ in the whole of Scripture. The visiting preachers are Pastor Albert Ngoma and Pastor Lichawa from Zambia. Irving Steggle and Mike Marsland will be participating in the preaching. Sessions on preaching Christ from the Psalms, from Isaiah, and from the OT narratives are included. An excellent array of books will be presented at lowest prices. It is important to pray that the books will get through Customs and not be barred as they were in Swaziland recently.

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



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# News

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## **Nigeria**

Nigeria with about 160 million is the most populous nation in Africa comprising 36 states. The country is roughly split in half between Muslims in the north and Christians in the south.

Since 2002 a violent Jihadist terrorist organisation with the name Boko Haram have followed a ruthless crusade to drive out the Christians and impose Sharia Law. So far Sharia Law applies in nine states.

Since the establishment of Sharia Law in Northern Nigeria, in 2001, over 13,750 Christians have been killed for their faith by Muslims. Just since December 2011 over 300 churches have been destroyed in Northern Nigeria.

Five million Christians in Northern Nigeria live under severe persecution. Radical Islamic groups regularly issue ultimatums to Christian communities: *'You have three days to leave, or you will die!'* Christians throughout Northern Nigeria are continuing to suffer a series of attacks which are often pre-planned and well coordinated. There are many attempts to force them to convert to Islam under the threat of death. Many have courageously died as martyrs rather than deny Christ.

The future of Nigeria is bleak. Added to the persecution of Christians is corruption.

OPERATION WORLD describes corruption in Nigeria as staggering. It is widely regarded as one of the world's most corrupt societies and is infamous for e-mail scams, international crime and drug-running. Graft, bribery and embezzlement are commonplace at every level of society. Since the 1960s over \$400 billion have been lost through corruption.

On the positive side Evangelicals have increased from 2.1 million in 1960 (5.7%) to 49 million in 2010 (30.8). Generally the level of teaching is poor and understanding is shallow.

A great reformation is needed if believers are to be light and salt in Nigeria, especially salt, which will halt bribery and corruption. Leadership of extraordinary courage is urgently needed to outlaw and curb the atrocities of the Boko Haram.

## **Tanzania**

*Stephen Nowak of Stowmarket*

My next mission project is to go back to Tanzania on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September till the 12<sup>th</sup> of October. It takes about 50 hours to get to Mbeya so I will be left with 19 full days of ministry. The Lord has provided very generously and we

now have nearly eight thousand books printed in Swahili. The books were translated in Kenya, printed in Spain and then air-freighted into Tanzania. This has been a huge answer to prayer. I have contact with eight Bible colleges and hundreds of Moravian, Pentecostal, Lutheran and Baptist churches. A schedule is being arranged to meet as many as possible to give the books directly to the preachers and students rather than through denominational leaders.

Tanzania is a very poor country and has had very little Reformed Theology taught in its churches and colleges. I have distributed a number of English books to pastors and Bible College teachers but there are not a large number who speak English fluently. I had one thousand Swahili books last time I visited but that does not even begin to cover the contacts that I have. There were four titles so I only had 250 copies of each. This time I have twelve different titles among them including J C Ryle's commentaries on the four Gospels and his classic on Holiness. The translators who are full-time missionaries in Kenya have very wisely chosen these books from the wealth of English literature. This will give 1000 full-time teachers, pastors, preachers and students the beginning of a Swahili library of books. It has been a very difficult and time-consuming project so far in raising the funds, printing and organising.

A Bible-subsidising ministry has been set up so people can buy Bibles at a subsidised rate and pay over the space

of a few months. There are thousands of Christians who go to church regularly, can read but do not have a Bible. We buy in bulk and sell for about half the price a Bible bookshop would sell for. This makes the Bibles accessible to the poor rural families we work with who live miles from the nearest Bible bookshop and struggle to feed and educate their children.

### **Iran**

Many have embraced the gospel. It is estimated that from only 500 Muslim-background believers in 1979, there may be as many as over 100,000 MBBs in Iran, a number which is rapidly increasing. Some, more optimistic, place this number as high as a million. Never since the 7<sup>th</sup>-century has the Church in Persia grown so fast as post-1979, and the most recent years are the most fruitful. In a country able to apply the death sentence for apostasy, this underground church multiplication is a remarkable move of the Holy Spirit.

Repression has been increasing. An example is the Emmanuel Church in Tehran which has for several years had a congregation of about 300. The leaders of the church have been forced into exile and the only remaining elder Mr Mehrdad Sajadi and his wife Furoogh have been arrested and imprisoned this year. Harassment has continued, forcing this church to close and go underground.

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