



# REFORMATION TODAY



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Stephen Nowak with his wife Angela, along with their five children, Daniel (8), Nathanael (2), Lizzie (12), Samuel (3) and Elijah (10).

Erroll Hulse continues to be thankful for the good wishes and prayerful concern of friends. The family are grateful that he was discharged from hospital in June, and is now settling in at Grove Park Residential Home, 100 Grove Lane, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 2BG. Erroll continues to pray for friends near and far and can testify to the Lord's never-failing grace and love through difficult and painful times.

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Front cover picture. *Boniface Ochieng, a student at the Kisumu Reformed School of Theology, receiving a certificate at the African Pastors' Conference in Eldoret, Kenya. Sadly on July 2nd various structures belonging to Grace Baptist Church were destroyed by a bulldozer owing to an administration error.*

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## Editorial

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### How great Thou art! ..... And the knowledge of God

by Kees van Kralingen

THE WORDS ABOVE COME FROM THE WELL-KNOWN hymn which declares the wonderful works of the Lord in creation, redemption and consummation. We cannot be too deeply impressed with the greatness of our God. It may be a temptation especially for those who labour in the preaching and teaching of God's Word to get so used to talking about God almost daily that we forget to think about his majesty.

The prophet Isaiah conveys the Word of God in Isaiah 57:15 'For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite' (ESV). We should meditate on those words more often. They show us the enormous contrast between the two 'places' where God dwells: in the high and holy place, and at the same time with those of a contrite and lowly spirit.

It is nothing less than a miracle that we can even talk about God and that we can know he is with us. Especially when we face discouragements and difficulties in our ministry, when we feel our own weakness and inadequacy, when we confess our sinful lack of zeal and

holiness, we know he will be there with us to revive us. These thoughts can help us as we read this issue of *Reformation Today*. Mostyn Roberts continues the doctrinal series started in the last issue of *RT* with the next major article focusing on the doctrine of God: his revelation, attributes, plan and the Trinity.

This issue of *RT* has a Trinitarian emphasis with two more articles: Tony Hutter describes the authority of Christ based on an exposition of Matthew 28:18-20, and Bob Davey in his next instalment of his expositional series on John 14 this time addresses the apostolic ministry of the Holy Spirit.

God promised his work of revival in the text quoted above. We are very grateful for the review of a recent book by Michael Haykin, *Ardent Love for Jesus*, in which he describes the revival among the Baptist churches in the late eighteenth century. How much should we long and pray for such a powerful work of the Lord in our generation! May these and the other articles in this issue of *RT* not only increase our knowledge of God, but do so in a way which leads us to humble worship to the praise of his glory.

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# ‘Behold Your God’ — The Doctrine of God

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*By Mostyn Roberts*

## **Part 1: God’s Revelation and His Attributes**

**W**E ARE TREADING ON HOLY GROUND WHEN WE ATTEMPT TO FORMULATE A DOCTRINE OF GOD. THE IMPOSSIBILITY of doing so adequately is almost disabling. Yet God has revealed himself. We can be confident that he wishes to be known, and so far as our finite and sinful capacities allow, to cause us to understand him. We come humbly to the means, especially his Word, whereby he has revealed himself. We come to learn and we come to worship.

### **I How is God known?**

God, being personal and being Spirit, cannot be known unless he reveals himself. He has done so, and does so, in *general* and *special* revelation.

### **General Revelation**

1. In creation. Psalm 19 tells us that ‘the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork’ (v 1). The glory of God is seen in the world he has made, and this is true all the time and everywhere: ‘Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge; There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world’ (vv 2-4). In Acts 14:17 at Lystra Paul speaks to pagans of God not leaving himself without witness, ‘for he did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness’ and, to much more sophisticated pagans in Athens - of God so ordering mankind’s lives ‘that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us...’ (Acts 17:27).

2. In human nature. We are created in God’s image (Gen 1:26,27) so we reflect and resemble God. As we shall see, this means that we can share certain characteristics of God, but not all, and our experience even of those is restricted by our finiteness and sinfulness. What we can see of God in ourselves, therefore, is limited, though Christians are assured that they are being ‘renewed in the spirit of their minds’ and ‘created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness’ (Eph 4:23, 24) and that they have ‘put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator’(Col 3:10).

We are also told that our consciences reveal God's law to us: 'For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves...They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their consciences also bear witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them....' (Rom 2:14,15).

But what is the effect and the *value* of this general revelation? Paul writes of human beings:

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Rom 1:19, 20).

We know God, but we do not honour him; we suppress the truth in unrighteousness (v 18). We become idolaters, exchanging the glory he has revealed for false and unworthy gods (v 21-23). Moreover, because of general revelation, we are without excuse.

We need a further revelation if we are to know God as Saviour and as Father, as the true and living God who alone is to be worshipped and adored.

### **Special Revelation**

1. The Bible. The authoritative source of *saving* knowledge of God is the Bible. Had mankind remained sinless, we could have enjoyed God with the revelation of himself in creation and in our nature – though even then we would have needed him to speak to us (eg, Gen 1:28); but since the Fall 'special' revelation is especially necessary. This is revelation that brings salvation. To sinful men and women in a fallen world and (mostly) in a particular nation, 'long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets...' (Heb 1:1). He 'spoke' by visions and dreams (Gen 15:1f; Isa 6; Gen 28:17); he spoke in direct communications (Gen 12:1-3; Exod 34:5-7; Num 12:5-8), he spoke in stormy winds and a still small voice (Job 38; 1 Kings 19:12). He revealed himself in fire and cloud (Exod 3:2; 19:18; 33:9) and in personal appearances as the Angel of the Lord, the second person of the Trinity in pre-incarnate form (Gen 16:13; 31:11; Exod 33:2-23; Josh 5:13; 6:2; Judg 6:12,14; 13:16-23), where it is clear that the Angel is God and yet not all there is to God.

From Moses onwards the revelation of God was preserved in written form. The Old Testament is the revelation of the period of preparation. There was needed however a further and more perfect form of self-revelation of God, fulfilling the promises and prophecies of the Old. This came in the person of Christ.

2. Jesus Christ. 'No-one has ever seen God,' says John; 'the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.' The Lord Jesus himself said, 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father' (John 1:18; 14:9); Hebrews asserts '...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son' (Heb 1:3).

So we have come to the perfection of revelation. Of course today we do not see a human Jesus. We need the Scriptures. They speak of him though it is to Jesus *himself* that we must come for eternal life. But we can conclude here by remembering that all our knowledge of God depends entirely on revelation; and *saving* knowledge of God on special revelation, supremely given in Christ and contained for us in Holy Scripture.

## **II What is God like?**

Probably the best manageable answer to the above question is found in chapter 2 of the Baptist Confession of Faith 1689, or of the very similar Westminster Confession. Paragraph one summarises the biblical teaching about God in his many attributes (or qualities); paragraph two develops the theme of his 'self-sufficiency' and his great purpose to manifest his glory in all he creates and does; paragraph three explains the Trinity.

The Confession deals with the attributes of God before speaking of the Trinity. The attributes are true of God as one, and of each person in the Godhead. The fundamental biblical truth about God is that he is 'one': 'Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God, the LORD is one' (Deut 6:4). This means both that God is the only God (cf. Isa 45:5) and also that he is an 'indivisible unity'. It is repeated in the New Testament (Mk 12:29; 1 Cor 8: 4; 1 Tim 2:5). What is God? And what is he like? He is 'one'. The truth of his being triune (one God in three persons) explains this and amplifies it; it does not in any way qualify, much less contradict it. He is perfectly one and perfectly three, as we shall see. But it is logical to begin with his one-ness and so consider those characteristics which are true of God as God.

Where do we begin to examine the attributes of God? Sometimes these are called his 'perfections' as they are true of all that God is in his indivisible unity; 'his attributes coincide with his being' as Herman Bavinck said. A common approach has been to distinguish between those attributes which can only be true of God ('incommunicable' attributes) and those which are fundamentally true of God but which may also be true to a limited extent of human beings ('communicable' attributes). Despite its limitations this is not a bad place to begin, provided we remember that even what God communicates to us is experienced by us in a different way from the way God experiences it. For example, God may communicate 'love' but his love is eternal and infinite; ours is not and never will be. This reminds us that when we talk about God,



we can only ever talk by way of ‘analogy’, not as if ‘A’ in human terms were exactly the same as ‘A in divine terms; as many theologians remind us, God is in essence ‘the Incomprehensible’ (Bavinck; cf. Rom 11:33, 34), and always mysterious (beyond our understanding) but Scripture gives us confidence that the method of analogy is accurate enough to make meaningful discussion about God possible. As Calvin was fond of saying, God ‘accommodates’ himself to us, and ‘lisps’ – speaks in simple, even babyish, language, for us to understand (think of all the metaphors for God and figures of speech – God’s ‘arm’, God as a ‘Rock’, God as a Father, Husband, even nursing mother). We understand him therefore truthfully, but partially; we can never ‘comprehend’ him (that is, fully); indeed as Augustine reminds us, if we could, he would not be God.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that no two lists of God’s attributes will be the same; authors vary greatly in how they categorise them, though there are general similarities; and no list should be considered final and exhaustive. It is frustrating for the humble student, but it keeps us – humble.

### **Attributes that God cannot share with others**

1. Self-existence. The ground of his existence is in himself (sometimes called his ‘aseity’) (Ps 90:2; Isa 40:18, 28; 44:24; John 5:26; Acts 17:25; Rev 4:11). He is therefore self-sufficient. He does not depend on anything outside himself. We may say as a corollary of this that he is the Original. Whatever we may be enabled to ‘image’, in everything God is always the original, incommunicably the prototype, we the ‘ectype’.

2. Simplicity. God is not composed of parts, but is indivisible unity. He is ‘a single and simple essence’ writes Calvin<sup>1</sup>. Each of his attributes is identical with his existence and with every other one of his attributes<sup>2</sup>. God ‘*is* what he *has*’; there are no distinctions to be drawn between God and his nature. The whole nature of God belongs to each of the three persons of the Trinity; each person is immutable, life, light, good etc. For the Puritan Stephen Charnock, according to Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, ‘divine simplicity is absolutely essential for understanding the other divine attributes; indeed, all other divine attributes depend upon this concept’<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1.13.20.

<sup>2</sup> See the excellent treatment of ‘simplicity’ in *Simply God* by Peter Sanlon (IVP, 2014).

<sup>3</sup> *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Reformation Heritage, 2012), p 62.

3. Transcendence and Immanence. Both these qualities describe ways in which God relates to creation. God is, firstly, *transcendent*: separate from everything, supreme in all things, exceeding the limits of our experience and thus beyond the possibility of being grasped by our understanding (save as he enables us to understand him). This is an aspect of his holiness. Exod 15:11; Isa 57:15. But God is also *immanent*. He fills all things. ‘In him we live and move and have our being’ (Acts 17:28). He is within our world and, as Romans 1:18-20 reminds us, known by all people. By ‘concurrence’ (the quality of acting with his creation whilst also being separate from it) God enables even sinners to draw the breath and think the thoughts they use to oppose him, while he himself is not morally responsible for sin. God’s immanence is not inevitable; he wills it. It is the vehicle of his providential ordering of affairs and of his decretive will<sup>4</sup>. Neither his transcendence nor his immanence can be communicated.

4. Immutability. He is unchangeable, for ever the same in his divine being (‘ontological’ immutability; Ps 102:25-27; Mal 3:6; Jas 1:17) and in his purposes and promises (‘ethical’ immutability; Num 23:19; Ps 33:11; Isa 46:9-11; Lam 3:22,23, Rom 11:29; Eph 1:10,11). Closely allied with this is God’s ‘impassibility’ which means that what he feels and suffers is only because he wills it, not because he can be the victim of passions or pain involuntarily as we can<sup>5</sup>.

5. Infinity. God is not subject to limitations. He is unlimited in his wisdom, knowledge, power, goodness, love etc. Ps 145:3. In relation to time (which operates within the created order) his infinity is called his eternity; all things to him are eternally present. In relation to space, his infinity is called his immensity.

6. Omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience. Although power, presence and knowledge are not exclusive to God, the ‘omni...’ is. Only he can be all-powerful (absolutely sovereign), ever-present and all-knowing (Ps 62:11; 135:6; 139:8-10; Rom 11:33-36).

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<sup>4</sup> God is spoken of as having two aspects to his will (not two wills): his ‘prescriptive’ will: what is right and what he commands us to do, and his ‘decretive’ will: how he governs the world, which includes sinful acts of human beings. Classic texts expressing the distinction are Genesis 50:20 (what Joseph’s brothers intended for evil God intended for good) and Acts 2:23 (God foreordained the cross, the greatest sin ever committed).

<sup>5</sup> Some contemporary theologians are rightly careful, in order to do justice to all the biblical data, to assert that God does feel and suffer (e.g. grief over our sins, Gen 6:6, Isa 63:10, Eph 4:30) but not in the same way as we do. Impassibility is an important doctrine, but it does not mean ‘passionless’. God is both ‘impassible and impassioned’ as Rob Lister says: see his *God is Impassible and Impassioned* (IVP, 2012); also *Does God Suffer?* (Thomas Weinandy, Notre Dame, 2000); and the present author’s article *The Passion of the Impassible?* (RT 207, Sept-Oct 2005).



7. Glory. Though creatures do have a certain glory and God's people even share in the glory which is of God in Christ (John 17:22; 2 Cor 4:6), there is a divine glory which is incommunicable. He will not share his glory with another (Isa 42:8). He is all-glorious. It is a mark of Jesus' divinity that he is the 'radiance of the glory of God' (Heb 1:3; cf. John 1:14).

8. Spirit. 'God is Spirit' said the Lord Jesus (John 4:24). We have spirits, but God is Spirit. He has no body, parts (i.e. he is 'simple', as explained above) or passions (unstable emotions that drive and dominate the personality – this is not saying God does not, in a divine way, 'feel' things). He is invisible. It is more accurate to say he is free, personal, Spirit. Remember the context in which the Lord made this statement: God must be worshipped in spirit and truth. The attributes of God are never given simply to fill out our knowledge of God for its own sake, but to cause us to worship truly – as did Moses when God revealed his goodness to him (Exod 34:5-10). This brings us to

### **Attributes of God which can be reflected in us**

These are qualities of God which are formed in us by the Holy Spirit by whose work we are transformed by the renewal of our mind (Rom 12:2) and we are conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).

1. Goodness. Exodus 34:6,7 is foundational in God's revelation of himself. Moses has asked to see God's glory (Exod 33:18). God says Moses will not see his face, but he will cause his goodness to pass before him and proclaim his name 'The LORD'. This God does in Exodus 34:5f, and describes himself in these terms: 'The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children to the third and fourth generation.' Echoes of this self-description are found in e.g Numbers 14:18-20; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalms 86:15; 100:5; 103:4,8; 111:4; 145: 7,8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2. God is merciful, gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love – these qualities of God are deeply etched on the minds of God's people.

But the foundational quality is surely God's goodness, of which these are aspects, refracted rays from that original light. It was after all God's goodness that he caused to pass in front of Moses. *The Good God* is with good reason the title of Michael Reeves' excellent book on the Trinity<sup>6</sup>. Herman Bavinck says that 'among the ethical attributes first place should be assigned to God's goodness'.<sup>7</sup> Ethical (or 'moral') attributes are not the only communicable ones, but they are the most important.

<sup>6</sup> *The Good God – Enjoying Father, Son and Spirit*. IVP, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> *The Doctrine of God* (Trans. William Hendriksen), Banner of Truth, 1977; p 203.

So beginning with goodness (Hebrew *tub*), this can mean both what is morally right, and what is kind. But it also means, when applied to God, the sum total of all perfections: none is good but God (Mk 10:18). He is 'perfect' (Matt 5:48) cf. Ps 73:1; 145:9 – he is good to Israel, he is good to all he has made, and *he is good*, period – see Ps 25:8; 34:8; 86:5; 136:1.

2. Mercy is an aspect of God's goodness – kindness to our wretchedness and helplessness. This reminds us that some of God's attributes are what is called *contingent* – wrath and mercy for example are responses to a sinful world by a God who is both just and good eternally, but before the Fall and in heaven there is no need for 'wrath' and 'mercy' as such.

3. God's grace is another aspect of God's goodness – kindness to sinners which is in the very nature of things undeserved.

4. Loving-kindness, or steadfast love – (Heb *hesed*) is an aspect of God's goodness, closely related to his covenant of redemption.

5. Faithfulness – his goodness in being utterly trustworthy (Ps 93:5).

6. Patience or longsuffering – being slow to anger – is an aspect of God's goodness.

7. Love – 'God is love' says the Bible, as he is Light and as he is Spirit (1 John 4:8; 1:5; John 4:24), but he is not 'nothing but' these attributes. God 'is' all his attributes. Love is God's goodness in his self-communication, says Bavinck. In the giving of his Son to die on the cross to bear the wrath of God against our sins, we see God's love in its most glorious manifestation.

8. Holiness is partly God's separateness (transcendence), but also his goodness in terms of blinding moral purity. (Isa 6:3). We are called to be holy, because he is (1 Pet 1:15,16).

9. Righteousness and justice – God's being perfectly *right* in all he does and perfectly fair and just in his government of the world, his punishment of sinners and rewarding of the righteous. He declares and upholds his law (Ps 92:15; 96:13.).

10. Wrath – Is this an attribute to emulate? It is not sinful in God. It is a holy reaction to sin. In a perfect world, in heaven, there will be no wrath. But it is not wrong, but right, to be angry against what offends God and spoils his world. Be angry but do not sin. Do not take revenge, but do not be afraid to be angry, though take care it is not merely the anger of man (Eph 4:26; Jas 1:20).

11. Wisdom – to be sought after like precious silver (Prov 2:4) but ultimately found in God alone (Prov 2:6; Rom 11:34).

All these are what are sometimes called ‘moral’ attributes, which means they are good as opposed to evil. There are ‘non-moral’ attributes which are not inherently good; they may in themselves be devoted to wrong ends; but when they are describing God or commanded for us they are of course good.

12. Jealousy – This may sound like a vice, but in God it is a reflection of his passion to uphold his glory and his concern for his people’s holiness and happiness (Exod 20:5; 34:14; Deut 4:23-25). We too should be jealous for God’s glory, not content when it is given to another (Num 25:10; Acts 17:16).

13. Sovereignty – only God is absolute sovereign but as he created Adam his representative to exercise dominion over the earth (Gen 1:28f) so Christians are called to exercise dominion by obeying Christ in every area of life. As we are all priests, so we are all kings (Eph 2:6; Rev 1:6; 2:26,27). Power is closely related to sovereignty.

14. Delight and joy – God is the happiest of beings and wants his creatures to know that joy (Isa 65:19; Zeph 3:17; Lk 15:7; Neh 8:10; Ps 33:21; Isa 55:12; 61:3).

15. Creativity – made in the Creator’s image, we should be creative.

16. Knowledge – God is ‘omniscient’ but knowledge of him in particular is something in which we should grow. Along with true righteousness and holiness it is one of the qualities being renewed in us (Col 3:10; cf. Eph 4:23,24).

17. Being. God is perfect being; our being is derived.

The whole range of divine attributes in which we ‘image’ God, and are predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son (Rom 8:29) could be listed under the communicable attributes (moral or non-moral) of God – that is the range of qualities in which we are distinguished from the animals, and yet because we cannot by nature be God, and in this age are also sinful, we do not experience these qualities as he does. We might, for example, list the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22,23). Yet the prototype of all these virtues is in God and perfectly humanly demonstrated in Christ.

## **The Doctrine of God (part II): The Triune God — Applications**

### **III What is God's 'Big Plan'?**

Ephesians 1:9,10 tells us that God made 'known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite [or 'reunite'] all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth'. This is all to the praise of his glory, or his glorious grace (vv 6,12,14). This great purpose of God is especially 'set forth' in the great work of redemption in Christ, but the glory of God is the purpose too of creation and providence, indeed of all the works and words of God.

This decree is eternal (Eph 3:11) and founded in wisdom (Eph 3:9-11). It is effectual – it will certainly come to pass (Isa 46:10) – and unchangeable (Job 23:13,14; Ps 33:11). It is all-inclusive – nothing that happens is apart from God's decree, including wicked things, such as the crucifixion of Christ (Acts 2:22,23) though God is not the author of evil. It is from the 'mouth of the Lord' that both good and bad come (Lam 3:38). Nothing thwarts God's purposes (Job 42:2). God 'disposes and governs all creatures and things, from the greatest to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, to the end for which they were created (that is, the praise of his glory)'<sup>1</sup>.

In relation to people, God's decree includes predestination, that is, fore-ordaining people to a destiny. 'Election' is the fore-ordaining of people to be his people (John 6:37; Lk 10:22; Eph 1:4; Rom 11:5; 1 Thess 1:4). Those who are saved have been chosen to eternal life in Christ before the foundation of the world; but others are 'passed over', and are punished for their sins – the aspect of God's predestination called 'preterition' or 'reprobation' (Rom 9:13, 15, 18, 22-23). These are not easy truths, but we must always remember we have no claim on God. Salvation is of his grace, not because we have a right to it (Matt 20:14,15). Justice would see us all in hell; his mercy alone determines that a 'multitude whom no-one can number' will not be there but in heaven.

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<sup>1</sup> Baptist Confession 1689 chap.5:1.

## IV The Triune God<sup>2</sup>

God is God in three persons. This is not, whatever Jehovah's Witnesses or other religions may have you believe, an unimportant detail peculiar to Christians; it is who God is and any other definition of God is simply wrong.

The doctrine is that while God is one, he exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These are not three individual persons, or self-consciousnesses, in the ordinary sense of the word, but 'personal self-distinctions within the divine being, who can use of themselves the word 'I', and of the others 'you' and 'he''.<sup>3</sup> They must not be thought of as three separate individuals, as it were holding hands in a circle. One person can be said to be 'in' another (John 17:21) and the three have one intelligence, one will. We cannot conceive of it, but it is true.

Each person possesses the whole of the divine essence, and that essence has no existence outside of or apart from the persons.

The three are not subordinate in being to one another, though there is an order within the Trinity— the Father first, the Son second, and the Holy Spirit third. This order which is true within the eternal Triune being (the 'immanent' Trinity as it is called) is reflected in their work (the 'economic' Trinity) and there is a 'functional' subordination of the Son to the Father, in the work he came to do in his incarnation.

The doctrine can be summarised under these headings<sup>4</sup>:

1. There is one undivided divine substance (the 'Godness' of God).
2. Possessed of this single divine substance there are three distinct persons, who are not to be confused with each other.
3. All three persons share all the divine attributes.
4. Each person is fully God. The three persons are equally God, equal in time (none comes before the other) and equal in status; the Son and the Spirit are not less God than the Father, though sometimes the word 'God'

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<sup>2</sup> For an excellent, brief and easy treatment see *The Three Are One* by Stuart Olyott (EP, 1996); for a large, thorough discussion see Robert Letham, *The Holy Trinity* (P&R, 2004); and more recently two excellent works by Michael Reeves (*The Good God*, Paternoster 2012) and Peter Sanlon (*Simply God*, IVP 2014). Any reliable systematic theology will cover the subject adequately, as do, in summary form, our Confessions of Faith (chapter 2:3), and the Athanasian Creed (c. AD 500, paras 3-27).<sup>3</sup> Olyott, 59.

<sup>4</sup> I am drawing, with variations, on Jonathan Bayes' *Systematics for God's Glory* (Carey Printing Press, 2012), 49-52.

is applied to the Father alone, which reminds us of the order within the Trinity (1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:6).

5. Each person is at the same time distinct from the other two and has certain properties which make him distinct. The Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, but all three are God.

6. The Son is said to be eternally generated (or begotten) by the Father. See John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18.; Col 1:15, Heb 1:6; Mic 5:2. This doctrine is the attempt of the church in history to account for the fact that the Father is always the Father and the Son is eternally the Son; references to the 'Son' do not apply only to Christ's incarnation. It is generation (eternal – always going on) of his personhood, not his divine essence. Calvin balanced this teaching with the insistence that the Son as far as his deity is concerned is always *autotheos* – God from within himself.

7. The Spirit 'proceeds' eternally from the Father and the Son<sup>5</sup> – John 15:26, Gal 4:6.

Louis Berkhof writes: The distinctive characteristic of the Father is that he generates the Son from all eternity; the works ascribed particularly (but not exclusively) to him are planning the works of creation and redemption; the special characteristic of the Son is that he is eternally begotten of the Father, and the works particularly ascribed to him are those of mediation in creation and redemption; the special characteristic of the Spirit is that he proceeds eternally from the Father and the Son and his special work is to execute, apply and bring to fruition the plan of the Father and the accomplishment of the Son in creation and redemption.<sup>6</sup>

### **Biblical evidence**

Only a taste of the vast array of such evidence can be given here.

1. For the Trinity: in the Old Testament: more than one person in God – Gen 1:26, 11:7; the Angel of the LORD - God yet distinguished from God – Gen 16:7-13; 18:1-21; Exod 3:6,14; prophecies of a divine Messiah – Ps 110:1; Isa 7:14, 9:6; of God anointing God – Ps 45:6,7; of the Spirit spoken of as a distinct person – Isa 48:16; 63:10.

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<sup>5</sup> It was disagreement with the phrase '...and the Son' that was prominent among reasons for the Eastern Orthodox Church breaking from the Western Roman Catholic Church in 1054.

<sup>6</sup> *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Banner of Truth, 1960) 39-40.

In the New Testament the evidence is far clearer; indeed, it can be said that the New Testament assumes the Trinity of God, and the deity of each person of the Godhead. For example: express mentions of the three persons – Matt 28:19, 20 (the great commission); 2 Cor 13:14 (the blessing); or close identification of the three — Matt 3:16,17 (Jesus’ baptism).

2. As to the deity of each person: the *Father* is evidently God – Father of all creatures, of Israel, of believers (Matt 6:9), but most significantly of the Son – John 1:14,18; 17:1-3. Our prayers should be addressed primarily to God the Father (Eph 2:18). The *Son* is God; (i) direct statements: John 1:1-3 – the eternal Word; 20:28 – Thomas’ confession; Rom 9:5 – he is God over all; (ii) he shares divine attributes that are incommunicable as far as we are concerned: he is eternal, as God is – John 8:57-8; Heb 1:11,12; Rev 1:8,17; he is omnipresent as God is – Matt 18:20, 28:19,20; he is immutable as God is – Heb 1:3; 13:8; he is omniscient as God is – John 2:24-25; and omnipotent Heb. 1:3; he forgives sins – Mk 2:5; he will be the judge of all men – Matt 25:31f; and he gives eternal life – John 10:27,28. The *Spirit* is also God – a divine person not merely a force; he too is omnipresent – Ps 139:7-10; omniscient – Isa 40:13,14; omnipotent – 1 Cor 12:11; Rom 15:19; he is a person – it is a sin to lie to him – Acts 5:3,4; he raises the dead – Rom 8:11; he knows – 1 Cor 2:10,11 – even the depths of God.

The fourth-century teacher, Gregory of Nazianzus, truly said, ‘I cannot think of the One without quickly being encircled by the splendour of the Three; nor can I discern the Three without being straightway carried back to the One’.<sup>7</sup>

## V Errors to avoid

### *Against Christian Theism*

1. Pantheism – in which everything that exists, no more, no less, is God. This is a clear denial of the Christian insistence on a personal God and the distinction between the Creator and the creature. It leads to ‘mysticism’, that is, we come to know God not by relationship with Christ through faith on the basis of his saving work, but through direct and immediate knowledge of ‘the divine’.

2. Panentheism – in which creation is in God but God is more than creation. This is not simply the biblical ‘in him we live and move and have our being’. Panentheists believe that God and the world are somehow united, and even that God is in ‘process’ of developing, along with history

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, Roger Weil, (Grace Publications, 2007) p 66.



and nature. Traces of this have crept into some ‘evangelical’ circles, in the form of ‘Open’ or ‘Free will’ theism<sup>8</sup>, in which God is held to be ‘open’ to the future and does not foreknow, much less control, the free decisions and acts of his human creatures so that they may have what is called true or real freedom. True Christian theism however keeps a very definite distinction between Creator and creation and asserts the Creator’s omniscience and complete control over it while also asserting equally the real freedom of human beings.

3. Polytheism – the belief, common in biblical times and for example in Hinduism, that there are many gods.

4. Deism – God created the world but is now uninvolved and lets it run on mechanically. This was the god of the Enlightenment.

#### *Against Trinitarianism*

1. Tritheism – that there are three gods – which can happen when we think of the word ‘person’ carelessly and think of God as three individuals somehow linked together.

2. Monarchianism – so emphasising the oneness of God that the second and third persons are subordinate to the Father and perhaps ‘derived’ from him, so in the end only the Father is truly God. Arianism (denying the deity of Christ) sprang from this. Today we have Unitarianism and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

3. Modalism – that the persons are not distinct, but different ‘modes of appearing’ of one divine essence. Father, Son and Spirit are simply different ‘faces’ of the one divine person in the way that water, ice and steam are three ‘modes’ of H<sub>2</sub>O. Inevitably this led, for example, to the Father being said to suffer on the cross (patripassianism).

Be careful with illustrations of the Trinity (the three-leafed clover; the circle divided into three parts; water, ice, steam); they will invariably lead to one or other of these errors!

## **VI Some practical applications**

1. Belief in the Triune God is essential for salvation. There is no other god; belief in any other name will not save.

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<sup>8</sup>This is not to suggest that Open Theists would actually be panentheists.

2. Belief in this God is to lead to worship. His purpose is the greater manifestation of his glory — glory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How does your church worship reflect the Trinity of God? Look at some of the older hymns especially and the way our hymnbooks are structured. Do our services reflect that balance, richness and theological sensitivity?

3. Belief in this God is the basis for prayer. We have access to the Father in the Son through the Spirit (Eph 2:18). Read John Owen's *Communion with God* for an excellent study of how we are to worship and enjoy each person of the Godhead<sup>9</sup>.

4. Belief in this God is the basis for sanctification. In the power of the Spirit we are transformed from one degree of glory to another; we are renewed in the image of our Creator. Our character is more conformed to his communicable attributes. Because he is Triune, the summit of sanctification is love.

5. The Triune God reminds us that relationships are fundamental to who God is and who we are. Marriage, family, church and society – all are rooted in the fact that God is the Father from whom every family on earth and in heaven is named (Eph 3:15). As Augustine argued long ago, only the Triune God can truly be love. Only he did not need to create; only he is not dependent on his creation; only he can love selflessly and without end.

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<sup>9</sup> There is a good abridged version by RJK Law, published by Banner of Truth.

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## The Authority of Christ

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*By Tony Hutter*

THERE IS SOMETHING IN ALL OF US THAT SIMPLY DOES NOT LIKE BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO. WE DON'T WANT TO submit to authority. We can sense a surge of that spirit when we hear a song like Frank Sinatra's 'My Way – I did it my way!' Apparently that song has been one of the most popular played at funerals, now that many don't want a religious service. 'I did it *my* way, nobody else's way, not God's way, and I am defiant to the end, to the final curtain. Regrets? I've had a few, but then again, too few to mention!' But what a truly disastrous attitude to carry into eternity! To stand before God's judgment throne and say, 'I didn't do it Your way – I did it my way!'

The truth is we don't like being given orders – by parents, teachers, bosses, policemen, the government, and ultimately by God himself, the One who gives authority to all human authorities. Why is that? Because we are fallen creatures, sinful creatures. Rebellion against rightful authority is part of our make-up.

In the last three verses of Matthew's Gospel we are informed of Christ's parting message to his disciples. He said, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age' (Matt 28:18-20). Here we have the Great Claim, the Great Commission and the Great Comfort. We are going to focus on that Great Claim.

**1: Authority Claimed.** 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.' What a simple statement this is, but at the same time how profound and majestic. How far-reaching it is! It is one of Christ's greatest statements, in fact *the* greatest claim ever made by anyone. Of course, during his ministry he made the most amazing claims, and these seemed to expand as time went by. He said that he has authority on earth to forgive sins, then that he has authority as the final Judge of all men, and later still he speaks of authority given him over all people; but here is the climax, the pinnacle – 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.'

Maybe this claim even goes beyond anything that the apostle Paul wrote of him. Certainly Paul said some great things concerning Christ – that he is the image of the invisible God, that in him and through him and for him all things have been created, and that he has been given the Name which is above every name. Magnificent statements! But perhaps this is the ultimate one – ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.’

Never did man speak like this Man. Never did a man say this about himself. Dictators have made some bold claims, but this surpasses them all! He is either mad, bad, or he is God. You’ve only got to read his life-story to see that he was neither mad nor bad! So he must be God, God the Son, and his claim must be true and genuine.

Christ claims to have authority. This is not only the *ability* to do something – it is the *right* to do something. He has the right and he has the might, and his might backs up his right. But what does this claim actually mean? Having authority like this means that he can do whatever he wishes. It is freedom without limitation. Jesus Christ is free to do what he wants, where he wants, how he wants, and with what and whom he wants. He has absolute freedom of choice and action. He claims inexhaustible, unrestricted, universal sovereignty. To put it simply, he is saying, ‘I’m in control of everything and everyone!’ And when we try to grasp what this means our minds are stretched as far as they can go - and beyond! Gigantic vistas begin to open up before us which are unbounded and limitless! We begin to realise that this Christ isn’t what someone called a ‘warm fuzzy buddy’ who has some nice ideas on how to make your life happier. No, he is Lord, sovereign, almighty! We come back to that basic but stupendous confession of faith: ‘Jesus Christ is Lord!’

**2: Authority Given.** ‘All authority has been *given* to me in heaven and on earth.’ It was given to him by the Father. No one but God the Father could have given him this authority. In fact the claim goes back to a promise. In Psalm 2:8 the Father speaks to the Son in this way: ‘Ask of me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession.’ The Father now keeps his promise and gives his Son universal authority. Someone said, ‘He was given heaven and earth to do what he liked with them.’

**3: Authority Now.** Christ didn’t say, ‘All authority *will be* given to me...’ He said, ‘All authority *has been* given to me.’ He has it *now*! The disciples were not sent out in order to get power and authority for Christ. Nor are we sent out to win the world for him – he has it already! He isn’t waiting to ascend to the throne – he is already enthroned! He isn’t looking forward

to being crowned – he is *now* crowned King of kings and Lord of lords! Certainly that authority and sovereignty are not acknowledged by most people today – in fact the world since the Fall has always been in rebellion against the authority of Christ (as Psalm 2 makes plain), but he *is* Lord! And that is great news for us! Our Saviour and Friend is Lord. The One who died for us now lives for us as the King! We face the world knowing that all authority is his *now*.

**4: Authority in Heaven.** ‘All authority has been given to me *in heaven*.’ All power of any kind that has to do with heavenly things and heavenly places is in the hands of Christ. He has authority over all the angels, the cherubim and the seraphim and all the other angelic creatures. And they continually praise and worship him and serve him. They recognise his authority and gladly submit to it. Who else is in heaven? Countless believers. They have gone before us and have reached that wonderful place. You knew some of them. You can still picture their faces in your mind’s eye, hear their voices in your memory. And they are there now, in that place where Christ exercises authority.

**5: Authority on Earth.** ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and *on earth*.’ Earlier in his ministry, Christ displayed his authority. He speaks, and illnesses and diseases vanish! He speaks, and demons run and flee! He speaks, and sins are forgiven and pardoned! He speaks, and winds and storms are stilled! He speaks, and men say, ‘With what authority he preaches!’ He even claimed that he had the power to lay down his life and to take it again – and that is exactly what he did! But now he expands his claims, and makes one which cannot be overtopped. He has all authority in all places at all times. Nowhere and no-one is outside that authority. He says, ‘Mine!’ over every inch of the universe. He is free to exercise that authority however he chooses. Nothing can happen outside the authority of Jesus Christ. He has authority over men and nations. Think of all those world leaders who have authority – kings and queens, prime ministers and presidents, dictators and generals. They walk the world stage. They make their pronouncements and people take notice. They are famous, sometimes infamous. But Christ claims authority over them all. There is no-one who can withstand his authority. There is no-one who can question what he does. Total, complete, sovereign authority. It is mind-expanding. It stretches us further than we can go!

**6: Authority Accepted.** ‘All authority has been given *to me* in heaven and on earth.’

We must bring this down to the personal level. Christ makes this claim, and we believe it. We accept that it is true, And it becomes a cause for rejoicing! This is good news! It is good to know that authority and power are in the hands of our Saviour. Would we like them to be in any other hand? Spurgeon said, ‘Do we not feel ready to shout, “Hallelujah! Hallelujah!” when we know that this is really the fact?’

‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth’ – therefore we know that it will be rightly used. Power in the hands of some people is dangerous. History shows us that again and again. We could name those who have been given authority and the result has been utter disaster. But no-one could better use authority than Christ. Let him do what he will, for he cannot do anything but that which is right and just, true and good. This, however, as we well know, does not mean that life will always be easy for us. We receive some hard knocks and some baffling challenges in life. Problems confront us, illnesses assail us, disappointments frustrate us. At such times we must find comfort in the fact that ‘all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.’ He is in control. He knows best. His sovereignty covers our little lives and the things that happen to us. He has all authority over cancer and heart disease, over incidents and accidents, over every aspect of your life.

Despite the fact that he is so exalted, he is always ready to receive us. How difficult if not impossible it would be for us to speak to human rulers, to talk to the Prime Minister, to have a chat with the Queen. But we can so easily go to the One with all authority, and tell him all about it. The door to the throne-room is always open.

**7: Authority Obeyed.** We might have thought, ‘If all power is Christ’s, then we have no need to do anything. He will do everything!’ We might have expected him to say, ‘All power and authority are mine, therefore sit down and do nothing. Just watch me!’ But he doesn’t say that. What does he say? ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore...’ he says, ‘All power is mine, therefore *do* something!’ He says ‘Go’ because he has all power. It is because he is King of kings and Lord of lords that he sends his disciples into all the world. Notice the order. Before telling us what we should do for him, he tells us about himself. In fact verse 19 makes no sense without verse 18. How can this small band of uninfluential and uneducated people go out into this dark and sinful world and evangelise? They could not – unless the One who

sends them has all authority in heaven and on earth – and he does! Those few disciples needed the truth of verse 18 if they were to begin to fulfil the *Great Commission*. The *Great Commission* is based on the *Great Claim*.

We must position ourselves in the place of obedience and submission. If Christ has all authority, we must happily and voluntarily place ourselves under that authority. ‘Jesus Christ is Lord’ must be expanded to ‘Jesus Christ is *my* Lord!’ We must say, ‘Lord, take over! Nothing in my life is private so far as you are concerned! Here are the keys!’

**8: Authority Revealed.** A day is coming when Christ comes with the fullness of his authority, when he gathers the kingdoms of the world to himself, and when he destroys all that is evil and sinful and godless. ‘Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever!’ (Revelation 11:15). All the kingdoms of the world will come to an end, every knee will bow to him, every tongue acknowledge that he is Lord, the One with all authority and power in heaven and on earth. All will confess that the claim he made is true – ‘All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.’

A question to ask after looking at any Scripture is – so what? If Christ’s claim is true, obey him. Submit to him. Do what he says. Acknowledge that he is Lord. Rejoice in his Lordship! Stand up and sing the Hallelujah Chorus!

*Tony Hutter is a retired Reformed Baptist Pastor who lives in Perth, Scotland. He has written a series of three books for children, each containing 52 true stories about the life of Spurgeon. They are published by Day One Publications and come under the general title of 52 Spurgeon Stories for Children.*



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## Apostolic Ministry and the Holy Spirit

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*By Bob Davey*

Part 3 of a series of expository articles on John 14.

John 14:12-17

**T**HE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS WERE TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHURCH (EPH 2:20). THEIR WORK was completed with the writing of the New Testament Scriptures.

Jesus continues to encourage the eleven faithful apostles in the upper room with promises for the future. We come to the fourth and fifth encouragements which Jesus gives them.

#### **4. Their work for Jesus will still go on and be a success 14:12-14**

**Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to my Father.**

The apostles had already been told that their apostolic ministry was not over (13:20). But how were they to carry on the work if Jesus were not there to help them? Jesus answered this fear by giving a great and solemn promise.

*Most assuredly, I say to you,* Jesus gives this great and solemn promise to the apostles.

*He (in the singular) who believes (keeps on believing) in me,* Each of the apostles must individually carry on believing in him, as only work done out of personal faith in him would be blessed by God.

*The works that I do he will do also,* Each of them must carry on the work of Jesus just as he had done, through preaching, teaching and works of compassion. They would also have authenticating miracles accompanying their ministries, as before (Matt 10:1; 2 Cor 12:11,12; Heb 2:3,4). The apparent disaster that they faced now would actually be turned into success.

*Greater works than these he will do,* Obviously no one can do greater miracles than Jesus had done, in a literal sense. So in what sense would this be an encouraging promise for the dispirited apostles? The greater

works were *spiritual* rather than physical works. Each of their ministries will result in the salvation of a great number of souls. Jesus was the sower of the harvest; they were to be the reapers.

This promise of Jesus is wrongly understood by some to mean that believers with sufficient faith will be able to do miracles today, just as Jesus had done. That was not what Jesus was promising.

*Because I go to my Father,* This great harvest of saved souls was to begin on the day of Pentecost. The foundation for Pentecost was to be laid by the death of Jesus, his resurrection and ascension into heaven to the right hand of the Father. Jesus had to go to the right hand of the Father before the Holy Spirit could be sent. This is because everything had to be done in its right order.

**And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.**

The ministry of the apostles will be carried out by faith and through prayer. These two are linked. They are the two principles underlying the work of the kingdom of God in all ages (Heb 11:6).

*And whatever you ask in my name, that I will do,* Jesus himself, from the throne of God, will answer all prayers in his name. Prayers are ‘in his name’ if they are prayers made in the true interests of the kingdom of God. Such prayers are answered by him, out of the authority given to him by the Father. This rules out selfish prayers, sinful prayers, and unwise prayers (James 4:3). As only God knows what is in the true interests of the kingdom, it is right to add to our petitions, ‘If it be your will.’ To do that is not evidence of lack of faith, but rather evidence of humble, mature faith. Within this framework many prayers are wonderfully answered.

*That the Father may be glorified in the Son.* All things have been entrusted into the hands of Jesus to forward the kingdom of God (Matt 28:18-20) for the glory of God the Father. Because the Son does nothing except what his Father wills, the Father is glorified by everything the Son does.

*If you ask anything in my name, I will do it.* The promise is repeated to give emphasis and assurance to the promise. The condition for answered prayer is also repeated. What an encouragement to know that Jesus hears and answers prayer. The great love of Jesus for his own people is demonstrated by such intimacy of dealings with them. There is only one way to keep in touch with Jesus directly, and that is through prayer. Everything should be done with prayer (1 Thess 5:17; Eph 6:18).

## 5. They will have the help of the Spirit 14:15-17

**If you love me keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Helper, that he may abide with you for ever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; but you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.**

*If you love me keep my commandments,* Only a true Christian aims to love Jesus with heart, soul, mind and strength. This love is full of wonder and gratitude towards him 'who loved me and gave himself for me' (Gal 2:20). As a result the response of obedience to his commands is gladly given.

*And I will pray (request) the Father.* Jesus promises that he will make requests to his Father for them. The future tense points to Christ's present continuous intercession in heaven for all his people (Heb 7:25). He has the right to request on the basis of the merits of his finished work of redemption on the cross. The apostles were not being left to fend for themselves as best they could. They were to be watched over and cared for from the throne of God itself, by both God the Son and God the Father.

*and he will give you another Helper (Advocate, Comforter).* Literally, 'paraklete', 'one called to be with, alongside'. The apostles were not going to be left alone upon earth. They were to be given the Holy Spirit by the Father in response to the intercession of Christ. The Holy Spirit would be able to stand in the place of Jesus fully because he himself is a divine person. The Holy Spirit would be a Helper, Advocate and Comforter *of the same kind* as they had been used to in Jesus the Son of God. The Holy Spirit, in this sense, was given to the apostles and the Church on the day of Pentecost.

### *Helper*

Just as Jesus had looked after, and watched over the apostles as Helper, so too the Holy Spirit will care for, look after, and watch over them. All their needs will be met in the future, as in the past.

We can note here that the Holy Spirit will help the apostles by infallibly guiding them into all truth (16:13). This includes remembrance of Jesus' words (14:26) and knowledge of the future (16:13). Also the Holy Spirit will be a Helper by convicting people of 'sin, righteousness and judgment' (16:7-11). Only God can save people.

### *Advocate and Comforter*

An advocate is one who represents someone, in order to plead his cause. Jesus is Advocate for his people *in heaven* (1 John 2:1) and the Holy Spirit is God's Advocate on earth *within* every believer. Just as Jesus was comforting them, so the Holy Spirit will also comfort them.

*Helper* is the best translation, as long as *Advocate* and *Comforter* are included in the meaning.

*That he may abide with you for ever*, The Holy Spirit will never leave them. When he comes, they will never worry about being left alone, ever again. This promise is for the whole church of Christ to the end of time. This should be the source of the greatest comfort for every true believer, especially those who have to go through the hardest times and have to face the most dangerous situations.

*The Spirit of truth*, All the divine attributes belong to the Holy Spirit. So why, here, did Jesus call him the Spirit of truth? Jesus did so because the Spirit was to be a trustworthy witness for Christ in every way. The Spirit is absolute truth in the same way as Jesus is (verse 6). The Spirit 'bears witness because the Spirit is truth' (1 John 5:6). It was of great comfort for the apostles to be told that the Spirit could be relied on in the same way as Jesus had been relied on.

*Whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him*; The person and work of the Holy Spirit is a complete mystery to the world. The world does not even recognise his existence! This is an astonishing statement by Jesus. This truth defines the relationship of the world to the Christian and the Christian to the world. There is an unbridgeable gulf between, that only the grace and power of God can bridge. That is why Christians pray for the conversion of others. That is why Christians pray to be led by the Spirit in all their witness for Christ.

It is written that 'the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; *nor can he know them*, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor 2:14). In contrast to this, the Christian has been taught of God (6:45) by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 2:9-12).

*But you know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you*, The Holy Spirit lives permanently in the believer through the new birth. *you know him*. This personal relationship with the Holy Spirit is a fundamental aspect of Christian experience. 'The Spirit himself bears witness with our

spirits that we are children of God' (Rom 8:16). This is the highest form of assurance of salvation, the believer's birthright.

Let us never forget that the fundamental difference between being a true Christian and a non-Christian is the question of having the Spirit or not having the Spirit. 'You are not in the flesh (an unregenerate state) but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ he is not his' (Rom 8:9). Born again believers have the Spirit (John 3:6-8). Unregenerate people do not have the Spirit (Jude 19).

*You know him*, Do you have personal fellowship with the Holy Spirit? Does the Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?

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## Juan Calderón and the Réveil

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by José Moreno Berrocal

### Introduction

WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND EVANGELICALISM IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY without taking into account a movement of the Spirit of God called the *Réveil* — a French word for Revival. The *Réveil* was, first of all, a return to the teachings of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century: *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide*, and *Sola Gratia*. These principles had been largely neglected and even despised by many Protestant churches on the continent at that time. Before the *Réveil*, there was, among many in the churches, a distrust of the Bible as God's Word. The divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ was openly denied, too. At best, there appeared to be among some of those people a cold and barren morality that presented no barriers to the enticements of sin, a poor substitute in place of the holiness produced by the gospel. This was significantly changed in those places where the gospel came back with the power of the Holy Spirit. The rediscovery of these Reformation doctrines was also accompanied by a new missionary zeal to spread the gospel of salvation by Jesus Christ to others, far and near. It was marked by a renewed concern for education and the welfare of the poor, the sick and the downtrodden.

The *Réveil* had a strong connection with what has been called *The Forgotten Revival*. Again, this was another work of the Holy Spirit, particularly in the British Isles, that can be dated, according to some, from the death of John Wesley in 1791, to at least 1865. In many ways *The Forgotten Revival* was a continuation of *The Great Evangelical Awakening* that under the preaching of George Whitefield, the Wesley brothers and so many others, affected Great Britain and its colonies in America from 1735 onwards. The *Réveil*, in turn, touched many European nations: Switzerland, France, Germany, Holland, Denmark etc. But few know it also had a limited impact in Roman Catholic nations like Spain.

### ***The Réveil***

The *Réveil* started in Geneva in 1816-1817, as a result of the labours of Robert Haldane in the city of John Calvin. Haldane was a member of the Scottish aristocracy and a sea captain. But above all he was a zealous preacher who was instrumental in bringing the gospel to some parts of Europe. In Geneva he expounded the Epistle of Paul to the Romans to a number of students for the ministry. A revival broke out and various conversions took place. Among those whose lives were changed at that time of spiritual awaking we can highlight a few names:

César Malan was a great evangelist and hymn writer and the spiritual father of one of the most fascinating Scotsmen in those days, John Duncan, better known as *Rabbi* Duncan.

JH Merle D'Aubigné was a pastor in Hamburg and Brussels and wrote the famous *History of the Reformation* and a wonderful biography of one of the greatest Englishmen ever born, *The Protector, Oliver Cromwell*.

Frédéric Monod founded the Union of the Evangelical Churches of France. Louis Gaussen was the author of the justly famous work *Theopneustia* or *The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. He was also the pastor of *The Church of the Oratoire* in Geneva, where Henri Dunant attended church with his believing parents. He later founded the Red Cross.

Another man who was in contact with Haldane at that time was Henri-Louis Empaytaz. He was a pastor and theologian in Geneva. Later on, his son, Alejandro Luis, started an evangelistic work in Barcelona, Spain, in 1869, under the *Société Evangélique* of Geneva. This Mission also supported the Spanish workers Francisco Albricias and Antonio Martínez de Castilla.

Henri Pyt (1796-1835) was another student in Geneva. He played a key part in the extension of the *Réveil* in Spain. Henri Pyt is not as well known as the other students but he was a chosen instrument in the hands of the Lord to spread the gospel in France. Under the auspices of *The Continental Society of London* he started a work in the city of Bayonne, in the south-west of France near the Spanish border. There the Lord granted him great blessings. It was in this beautiful city that he became instrumental in the conversion of a Spaniard called Juan Calderón.

### **The Life of Juan Calderón**

Juan Calderón was born in 1791 in Villafranca de los Caballeros, in La Mancha, in Central Spain. His mother was from the nearby town of Alcázar de San Juan, where his father, from Arganda (Madrid) had settled down as a medical doctor. Juan Calderón studied for the Roman Catholic priesthood in Alcázar and later on in Lorca in the south-east of Spain in the province of Murcia. He was ordained in 1815. As a priest, he also taught Philosophy in the Franciscan Convent in Alcázar de San Juan. By then he was already heavily influenced by Spinoza, and the Enlightenment philosophers D'Holbach, Dupuis and Condillac. He also embraced the Liberal *Cádiz Constitution*, teaching it from 1820 onwards in Alcázar de San Juan. In 1823 the Absolutist monarch Fernando VII returned to power. Juan Calderón was shot at one night in Alcázar. The king's supporters who lived in the town were apparently responsible for this crime. They narrowly missed him. He was then forced to flee to Madrid and in the end he had to go into exile in France. By then, he had already given up his religious views and had become an atheist. But he also found that, in that moment of great anguish and anxiety about his future, his atheistical principles did not give him any hope. He was then so low that he even contemplated suicide.

Calderón arrived at Bayonne in France as an exile with no means or work to do. However, he was able to survive making shoes. He began to attend the meetings held by the Swiss evangelist and pastor Henri Pyt. Gradually he started to read the Bible and the works of the great Thomas Chalmers, Thomas Erskine and Robert Haldane that Pyt provided for him. Calderón was converted in 1825. He soon became an evangelist himself, helping Pyt. He also taught Spanish. In 1829 he worked for the *Continental Evangelical Society* in London. In 1830 he married a French lady, Marguerite. His son, Felipe Hermógenes Calderón was born in 1833. He became a famous English painter and a member of the *St John's Wood Clique*.



In 1841 Juan was busily writing apologetic works in Spanish for the evangelical faith. The most famous is his *Friendly discussions with my priest* that won a prize at the *Protestant Academy of Montauban* in France. He also wrote about the Spanish language and a thorough commentary on the novel *Don Quixote*.

He returned to Spain in 1842 and stayed there until 1845. He did evangelistic work in Madrid but persecution broke out again, forcing him to leave his beloved country for ever in 1845. He settled down in London in 1846; his main work was still ahead of him. In 1851 we find him preaching in Spanish in London at the time of the Great Exhibition. He was the publisher of the first Protestant paper in Spanish in 1849. In fact, he produced two evangelistic papers called *Catolicismo Neto*, later renamed as *El Examen Libre*. In London he made numerous friendships that helped him tremendously in his labours for the Lord. Among them we find James Thompson, a Scottish Baptist minister, who had known the Haldane brothers. He was a member of the British and Foreign Schools Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society.

He was also involved in missionary work in South America. Olive Hargreaves, a friend of his wife, and William Cotton, a wealthy banker, were among his supporters. He was also appointed as a teacher of the Spanish Language and Civilization at King's College in London. He helped in several translations of the Scriptures into Spanish. At the same time Calderón copied some of the manuscripts of the works of the Spanish Reformers that were kept in the library of the British Museum. These works make a collection of twenty volumes called *Colección de Reformistas Antiguos Españoles*. These books are an invaluable window into the theology of the Spanish Reformers of the sixteenth century. Juan Calderón died rather suddenly in his home in St John's Wood on the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1854.

His various writings, particularly his evangelistic papers, were one of the means used by the Lord to spread the gospel in Spain, particularly in Madrid, Cordoba, Sevilla, Cádiz, Granada and Málaga, in what has been called *The Dawn of the Second Reformation in Spain*. Calderón is a direct link between the *Réveil* and the work of the gospel in Spain. Later in the nineteenth century there were other efforts made from France to take the gospel into Spain. These were also the fruits of the *Réveil*. The work was quite difficult as Spain remained closed to the gospel until the latter part of the nineteenth century, when a limited measure of religious freedom was granted in 1869.

## *Juan Calderón and his Autobiography*

Calderón's most famous work, however, is his *Autobiography*. He wrote it at the request of Pyt. The book traces his life until his conversion in Bayonne. Written in most beautiful Spanish, it constitutes a wonderful testimony to the power of the gospel to save sinners. After a lengthy discussion of the various philosophical systems he was acquainted with in his youth, Calderón comments on his spiritual state when he met Pyt. He mentions the kindness of the Swiss evangelist to him and how he guided him to examine the evangelical faith for himself. Calderón acknowledges the hand of the providence of God that led him to the Lord Jesus Christ, alluding to the words of the Lord recorded in John 6:44, 65, that no one can come to him who is not given to him by the Father.

However, the main part of the book is devoted to explaining his conversion. Calderón dwells on a vivid description of his rich spiritual experience at that time. We cannot understand his conversion unless we realise that his turning to God in Christ was built on a renewed confidence in the trustworthiness of the Bible. The works of Chalmers, Erskine and Haldane laid the foundation for his study of the Bible. He then realised, for the first time in his life, what it really means that it is God's Word. The robust defence of the Bible undertaken by the Evangelicals was intellectually fulfilling for Calderón. Furthermore, he said that he now reads 'the gospel in the Gospels' — this is his own expression; he is conscious of a new power of the words of the Bible on him. It is as if God himself came into direct contact with him through the words of Scripture.

Finally, Calderón expounds the way in which he found rest in Christ alone for salvation. He says that what brought about his conversion was discovering the wonderful adequacy of the doctrines of the gospel. The free forgiveness of sins in Christ was brought to his heart and mind at that time. He had already felt the bankruptcy of the best philosophical systems of his day to grant stability to his life. This had led him to the only name given to man in whom we can find salvation (Acts 4:12). He now recalls his experience of the inability of his best efforts to procure him peace with God. This again confirmed to him the scriptural statements that affirm that there is no justification with God by observing the Law (Rom 3:20). In that state Calderón was brought to see the fullness of salvation that is to be found in Christ and his work for sinners like him. There follows what is probably the most moving part of his testimony. He describes his coming to Christ by faith to receive forgiveness and eternal life. He depicts the

work of Christ for others and how he himself, lost and enslaved to sin, was enabled, by God's grace, to take hold of that sufficiency as well. He concludes with the assurance provided by the statement of Romans 8.1: 'There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.'

This book was widely used in his days and it still is a powerful evangelistic tool. The *Autobiography* contains much of the spirit of the *Réveil*, the power of God's Word to change people, a Calvinistic view of salvation as a work in which the initiative lies solely in God's grace alone, a rich understanding of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross for sinners and finally, a new life characterised by faith in the Saviour, praise to God for his mercy, and a zeal for the spread of the gospel.

Recently the Town Hall in Alcázar de San Juan has made considerable efforts to promote Juan Calderón. With the help of several scholars they have edited some of his works. They have organised several conferences on his thoughts. They have even named a street after him. After all he was also a scholar and one of the key figures in the Protestantism of his day. Today evangelical Christians in Spain and in La Mancha are seeing some of the fruit for which Calderón prayed and laboured. His example provides us with a considerable motivation to go on preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ in Spain.

*José Moreno Berrocal is a missionary with the European Missionary Fellowship (EMF) He is a Reformed Baptist Pastor in an Evangelical Church in Alcázar de San Juan, La Mancha, Spain. He studied at the School of Biblical and Theological Studies of the EMF in Welwyn, Herts. At the same time he was student pastor in the Welwyn Church with Bob Sheehan. He has written several books in Spanish, among them a biography of Jonathan Edwards: Jonathan Edwards: Passion for the glory of God and another on William Wilberforce: William Wilberforce and the fight for the abolition of slavery. He has also written The Bible and Don Quixote. Furthermore he has also been a contributor to a number of books in Spanish, the last one a summary of the Spanish Reformation: The Reformation Yesterday and Today.*

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## Books

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### **Ardent Love for Jesus — Learning from the 18th-century Baptist Revival**

by *Michael A G Haykin*

Bryntirion/EP, 2013, 140pp

Paperback

ISBN: 9781-850-492481

*Review by Peter Howell*

**A**S WE ALL WITNESS THE EFFECTS OF THIS OVERWHELMING ATsunami OF ATHEISM WASHING ACROSS OUR NATION there is here and there a little gathering of believers meeting together to pray that the mighty God of grace will visit us with something yet more powerful – the power of Holy Spirit revival. Some of those little gatherings have met for this purpose through the encouragement of the beloved Editor of this magazine and it is he who has summoned me from his hospital bed to review this book. Surely we need to gather every scrap of encouragement to help us continue in prayer. One way is to remember the mighty acts of God in past generations – that he, the unchanging God, is predictably merciful and cannot relinquish his title to sovereignty over the nations.

The setting of this book is the late 18<sup>th</sup> century when the fruits of Whitefield's ministry had died back and the churches were receding either into Unitarianism (denying the deity of Christ) or Hyper-Calvinism (denying that hearers of the gospel are duty-bound to believe it). Michael Haykin tells us how the Baptists had declined to the point where Andrew Fuller, later to be prominent in their recovery, summed up this situation in his own inimitable style when he declared that if the situation with the Baptists had continued much longer they 'should have been a very dunghill in society'.

An explanation of the causes of all this comprises the first chapter of the book. Then we are introduced to some of the Lord's servants of that time – men who faithfully prayed and preached and who before the end of their lives would witness the most thorough and prolonged period of REVIVAL in the life of our nation.

The greatest encouragement coming from this book seems to be that the Lord took hold of a group of quite ordinary pastors, none of whom became great household names like Wesley or Whitefield and through the time-honoured method of resorting to God in a ‘Concert of Prayer’ he began to pour out his Spirit upon the churches.

The author gives us sketches of the lives of Carey, Fuller, Sutcliff, Pearce and Ryland and how they were stimulated to commend a Concert of Prayer at first to their own Association of 16 churches in Northants, and then further afield.

From this ‘little band of brothers’, readers will be reminded, came a colossal turning to the Lord which would change the entire mood of the nation and begin a missionary endeavour worldwide.

May the reading of this book have the same effect on us that the call to prayer had on our predecessors.

***About the Author:** Michael A G Haykin is Professor of Church History & Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Director of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, based at Southern Seminary. He is the author of a number of books on eighteenth-century Baptist life and thought. He and his wife Alison live in Dundas, Ontario.*

## **Sojourners and Strangers:**

### **The Doctrine of the Church**

*by Gregg R Allison*

Crossway, 2012, 496pp

Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-58134-661-9

PDF

ISBN: 978-1-4335-3601-4

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### *Review by Bill James*

**I**N JANUARY THIS YEAR GREGG ALLISON SPOKE ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AT THE CAREY CONFERENCE (UK). His addresses were based on his book *Sojourners and Strangers*, a substantial volume on ecclesiology from a Baptist perspective. Dr

Allison is Professor of Christian Theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and is perhaps better known for his work on *Historical Theology*, which complements Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. In both works the author demonstrates a clarity of thought and depth of study which is most helpful in leading us to a fuller understanding of the subject. We look forward with anticipation to Dr Allison's forthcoming volume on Roman Catholicism later this year.

*Sojourners and Strangers* is set out in six major sections. The first section addresses foundational issues. While drawing on the wisdom of church history, Allison's approach to the subject is rooted in the sufficiency of Scripture. Any doctrine of the church depends very much on your view of Biblical Theology (obviously Presbyterians and Baptists have different views here and hence come to different conclusions on ecclesiology). The author's approach is described as one of 'Moderate Discontinuity'. Hence he is baptistic. However, he would not subscribe to the 1689's view of the Sabbath. The church is defined as '...the people of God who have been saved through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ and have been incorporated into his body through baptism with the Holy Spirit'. This is manifested as both the universal and the local church.

In the second section we see the characteristics of the church. If we are to understand the practice and mission of the church, we must first grasp its nature – ontology determines function. There is not space here to develop this theme, but only to list the headings. The church is:

**Doxological** – oriented to the glory of God

**Logocentric** – focused on the Word of God, both incarnate and written

**Pneumadynamic** – created, gathered, gifted and empowered by the Holy Spirit

**Covenantal** – in covenant relationship with God, and with one another

**Confessional** – united in personal confession of faith in Christ and shared confession of the historic Christian faith

**Missional** – called and sent to proclaim the gospel and advance the Kingdom of God

**Spatio-Temporal/ Eschatological** – located now in space and time (including a discussion of church buildings), but looking forward to a certain and glorious destiny (and hence sojourners and strangers in this present age).

The third section of the book deals with the purity and unity of the church,

including church discipline. These themes of purity and unity belong together, and indeed are set together by the Lord Jesus Christ in his prayer of John 17. Clearly we are called to holiness, and set apart for the service of Christ, but none of us, and none of our churches, have yet arrived at perfection. So, there is the reality of churches which are 'more pure' or 'less pure'. As we measure ourselves against the seven characteristics of a true church, we find that we have strengths and weaknesses in different areas. Some are so aberrant that they cannot be regarded as true churches at all, but false, and in this case we must separate from them. But if a church is true we are to strive for unity. When are we justified in moving from one local church to another? When is our search for greater purity in fact an agenda for divisiveness? There are some helpful thoughts on this theme:

*Have I expended all of my opportunities to effect change in this church? Will continued participation in this church exert a negative impact on my relationship with and worship of God, my ministry for Jesus Christ, the use of my spiritual gifts, etc.? Do I have to compromise too much—essential doctrines and practices, a lifestyle in accordance with biblical values and principles—in order to remain in this church? Do I have a legitimate reason for leaving?*

For those in leadership Allison also asks if the Lord has released us from our responsibilities to the local fellowship.

Section four deals with church government and the characteristics and function of elders and deacons. Allison takes a complementarian position, that eldership is male but the office of deacon is open to women. Forms of church government are compared and contrasted, including episcopalianism, presbyterianism, and various forms of congregationalism. The case is made for strong connections between congregational churches.

In section five we look at the ordinances of the church. There is a helpful overview of the history and theology of baptism, comparing and contrasting the Baptist and Paedobaptist approaches. Likewise, there is a good summary of the different positions on the Lord's Supper, from Roman Catholic transubstantiation, through consubstantiation, to the 'memorial' and 'spiritual presence' views. There is a discussion of 'open' and 'closed' communion (Allison takes the latter position), and some consideration of what 'worthy participation' means.

Finally, we consider the ministries of the church. Allison is not cessationist. He takes a view similar to that of Grudem, and so embraces some form of continuing prophecy and tongues (though the outworkings of this



are not developed). Regulative and normative principles of worship are discussed, but no clear conclusions are reached except to urge that we approach the worship of God with proper focus and perspective. The proclamation of the Word is central. Other church ministries are discussed briefly, including prayer, discipleship, giving, community life and caring for church members.

In his introduction to the book the author openly confesses that his ecclesiology has been shaped largely by his own experience. That is true of us all. Sadly, we can sometimes drift into forms of ministry, church life and practice simply out of personal preference. As Allison remarks in his discussion on worship, the normative principle is most common in evangelical circles 'by default'. However Protestant we might claim to be (notice the capital P !), we are too often governed by our personal and local-church traditions. So it is most helpful to read through this important volume on ecclesiology. We will not agree with everything, but we will enjoy Allison's clarity of thought and conscientious grappling with important issues. Most of all we will be driven to reflect again on our own thinking and practice, and by the grace of God strive for more biblical models of church life and ministry. *Semper reformanda!*

*Bill James (Pastor, Emmanuel Evangelical Church, Leamington Spa).*

## **New books**

The last few months have seen the publication of a number of important new and reprinted books:

### ***Banner of Truth Trust***

CH Spurgeon, *Christ's Glorious Achievements*. This is a collection of seven sermons which together are not only a great introduction to the vast collection of sermons by the famous 19<sup>th</sup>-century preacher, but also form an excellent illustration of what it means to preach Christ. The sermon topics are: Christ the End of the Law, Christ the Conqueror of Satan, Christ the Overcomer of the World, Christ the Maker of All Things New, Christ the Spoiler of Principalities and Powers, Christ the Destroyer of Death, Christ the Seeker and Saviour of the Lost. Highly recommended!

John Flavel, *None but Jesus*. A pocket edition of a collection of thought-provoking quotations drawn from the writings of this Puritan preacher also including topics such as providence, conversion, suffering, heaven, and glory.

**Reprints** of evangelistic resources: John Blanchard, *Right with God* (the great evangelistic classic by the internationally known evangelist, Bible

teacher and Christian apologist), and John Benton, *Coming to Faith in Christ* (a straightforward summary of the gospel). We pray that the use of this new edition will lead to much lasting fruit.

Other important reprints include: Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*; Walter Chantry, *Signs of the Apostles. Observations on Pentecostalism Old and New*; and *Sermons of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*.

### **Reformed Heritage Books**

Paul Washer has now completed a trilogy with the general title *Recovering the Gospel*. The titles of the three volumes are: *The Gospel's Power and Message*, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion* and *Gospel Assurance and Warnings*. We are planning to review these 3 volumes in a forthcoming issue of *RT*.

We can still learn so much from past times of great blessing in the church. Two recent authors draw our attention to the rich heritage we have in the ministry of the gospel and preaching of men whom the Lord has used: James M Garretson, *An Able and Faithful Ministry: Samuel Miller and the Pastoral Office*; and Tanner G Turley, *Heart to Heart: Octavius Winslow's Experimental Preaching*.

### **EP Books**

Bringing up children and teenagers in particular in this day and age is the greatest challenge for Christian parents. We can rightly be very grateful to EP Books for publishing two books by Chris Richards and Liz Jones: *Growing up God's Way – for girls*, and the equivalent for boys. These little booklets are colourful and fully illustrated and available as separate versions for boys and girls. They are intended for children approaching or experiencing puberty, typically represented by the 10-14 year-old age range. The artwork has been specially produced for the book and includes accurate biological drawings as well as 'cartoon' illustrations to keep the young reader interested. Most importantly of all, the Bible is the constant reference point, so that what the Bible has to say about the matters dealt with is always front and centre. They have already been reviewed extremely well on the internet.

The number of publications by EP Books has rapidly increased over the last year and includes the following titles: John Blanchard, *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to Heaven*; Melvin Tinker, *What Do You Expect? Ecclesiastes for Today*; Joel Beeke, *Developing Healthy Spiritual Growth, Knowledge, Practice and Experience*; Kieran Beville, *Be My Witnesses: Christ's Last Words: our First Concern*; Dale Ralph Davis, *True Word for Tough Times*. The popular Bitesize Biography series has been expanded further with volumes on Joseph A Alexander and Girolamo Savonarola.

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## News

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### **African Pastors' Conferences update, June 2014**

*African Pastors' Conferences* have had a busy, but blessed, couple of months. New Conference Manager Blake Cassell is settling into his duties, having led his first round of conferences in Swaziland and Mpumalanga Province in eastern South Africa in May. Four conferences were undertaken on that run, with around 180 pastors served. Of particular note was the question and answer session that took place in Barberton, South Africa. During the session several questions and objections were posed by those arguing for women in pastoral ministry. Each question was answered biblically by either Pastor Joseph Phiri of Zambia or Blake Cassell. God was gracious to grant a time of biblical discussion with much light and little or no heat. By the end of the session this contingent had no more questions.



*Naphtally Ogallo & his wife Helida (APC team: Irving Steggles, Gayle Staegemann & Raphael Banda) and Sam Oluoch.*

During June APC experienced two exciting firsts! The largest attended APC to date occurred in Ndola, Zambia on 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> June. There were 254 delegates present at the conference. This conference also resulted in the greatest number of books distributed at a single APC. The second-largest distribution of books occurred at the following conference in Lusaka on 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> June. We praise God for his kindness and ask you to pray that the truths presented about preaching *Christ Crucified* will remain with the delegates. We also ask you to pray that the books will be read and passed around.

The other exciting first for APC is that, during the Zambian conference run, a second team led by Director Irving Steggles was busy running three conferences in Kenya and Uganda. The conferences took place in Nairobi and Eldoret in Kenya, and Mbale in Uganda. This is the first time two conference programmes have run concurrently. We at APC are thankful for the continuing prayers of our brothers and sisters around the world as we seek to better equip African pastors.

*Blake Cassell (APC manager)*

### ***New Conferences in Kenya and Uganda***

‘We were much blessed with a well organised conference in Trinity Baptist Church in Nairobi, the first Kenyan APC, and the benediction of being on “home” territory in a thriving Reformed Baptist Church and singing great hymns between sessions. As we had hoped, there were many Bible-believing Pentecostals there who showed much enthusiasm in buying the books which arrived late on the first day of the conference; having been held up in customs; entirely because of the perseverance of Pastor Murungi through many phone calls, they were available to us in God’s perfect timing. We thank God for all our Reformed Baptist brethren in Kenya and their desire for the Reformed faith to flourish as other pastors come to a knowledge of the great truths of Scripture. Pray that APC will help towards that end.’

*Irving Steggles (Irving is one of the directors of APC)*

‘The APC at Eldoret was the first ever Reformed Conference to be hosted by the Grace Baptist Church of Eldoret. Just over 30 pastors were registered; about half were boarders and the other half came daily. Our rented house provided very useful accommodation as mattresses were spread in every available space. Ladies of the church worked tirelessly and fed the pastors so well. But of course, the spiritual food was not only fresh, it was unique. A good number of the participants came from Pentecostal churches within and around Eldoret. They expressed great appreciation and then said that they would have liked their colleagues to come and hear. Other participants came from as far as Kisumu, Oyugis, Pokot and Uganda.

If any had despised the theme *Preaching Christ Crucified* before coming to the conference, they certainly went back convinced and convicted. Surely *Christ Crucified* must be and remain the centre of our preaching. The Lord used both Pastor Irving and Pastor Raphael mightily and though they each spoke many times each day, they had a freshness throughout as they faithfully handled God's Word. At the end of each session, there was a sense of 'more please!'

The sale of books wasn't as large as was expected but even so a good number were bought. Many pastors wished that they could be given another chance to buy books even after the conference! If Eldoret is allowed to host APC next year and the following years, we believe that the attendance will certainly rise and that many pastors, having known about the book ministry, would come better prepared with cash.

The certificate of attendance and the free books were the icing on the cake and all were truly happy! The extended time of fellowship with our key-speakers proved very rich and we thank the Lord for keeping Pastor Irving, Pastor Raphael and Sister Gayle Staegemann. May the Lord bless their labours.' *Naphthally Ogallo (Naphthally is Pastor of Eldoret Grace Baptist Church and RT agent in Kenya)*

## **Tanzania**

From 19<sup>th</sup> March to 16<sup>th</sup> April Stephen Nowak visited this country for the fifth year to engage in book distribution, preaching and teaching at the three Bible colleges of Utungule, Lutengano and Sumbawanga (73, 81 and 16 students respectively). His preaching concentrated upon justification, sanctification and grace along with key problems for Tanzania such as liberalism, persecution from Islam and the effects of the charismatic movement. The books, written in Swahili, were printed and shipped to Tanzania by Christian Books Worldwide.

He also spoke at two large conferences for pastors, each of which was held for over two days. There were 180 pastors at Mbeya and 140 pastors at the Iziwa conference. He was the only speaker at the two conferences and found himself teaching and answering questions from early morning to late evening. Even during the breaks he was bombarded by eager questioners, having a hunger for God's Word, rarely seen in twenty-first-century Europe.

Although three Sundays were spent in preaching in three large churches in the city of Mbeya, each consisting of about 800 people who attended the two services, he also travelled widely over nine days in rural areas. During these travels he was met by pastors, assistant pastors, elders, evangelists, deacons,

youth and children's workers. They travelled into the centres chosen for him to teach and answer questions. They were all given full or half sets of books. Each afternoon and evening members of the local congregations joined their leaders. Stephen's own punishing travelling schedule involved getting up and leaving one base at 5 am in order to reach the next base by 10 am.

He spoke on four radio programmes in Mbeya and visited an orphanage and a hospital and distributed Bibles wherever he went. These were bought in bulk for about £3.50 and sold for £2.00. Not everyone could afford the sought-after Bibles even at that price, so he swapped Bibles for things like eggs, a chicken and a bucket of beans. These items of food were then given to church widows.



*Stephen and Pastor Willey Mwasille  
(one of Stephen's principal contacts in South-West Tanzania)*

Missionary work in Tanzania over the last 100 years has not generally been of a Reformed character and even the Swahili Bible is limited in usefulness to some extent in that many theological words do not exist in that language. Although plans are presently being made for his next visit, Stephen urges that prayer be made for men to be raised up in Tanzania who will exercise Reformed and expository ministry and that the Lord will send missionaries who understand, believe and love the 1689 Baptist Confession.

*Stephen Nowak, Pastor of Stowmarket Baptist Church*

Those who wish to support Stephen's work financially should send cheques made out to 'Stowmarket Baptist Church' and send them to Stephen at 25 Finborough Road, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1PN.

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