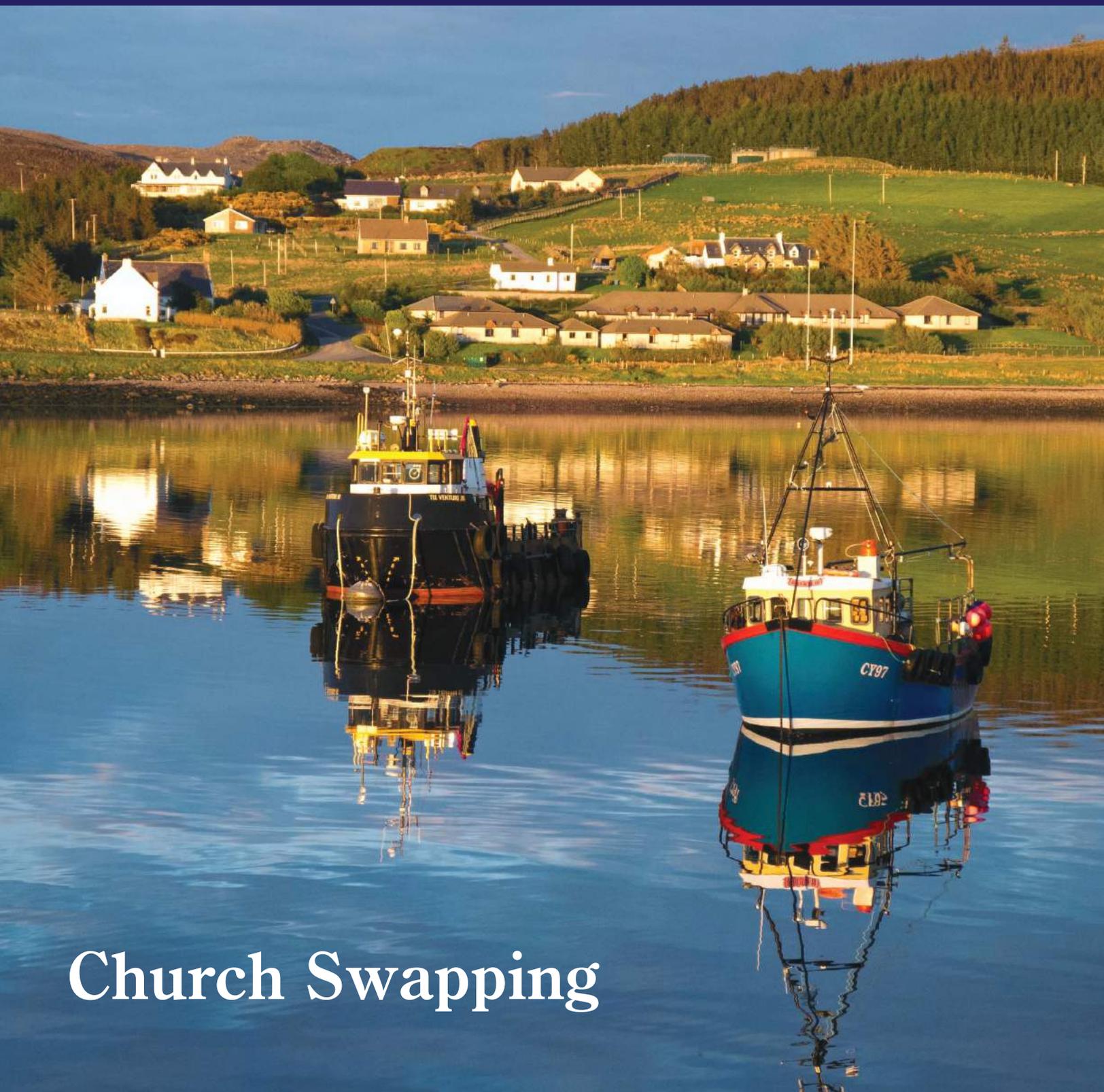


# Free Church **Witness**



**OCTOBER 2016 ISSUE**



## Church Swapping

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# Church Swapping



Church swapping is a bit like wife swapping. Sadly both are becoming increasingly common. Marriage is meant to be for life. A man and woman come together and enter into a covenant to be loving, faithful and dutiful to one another 'till death us do part'. God instituted marriage in the beginning, bringing Adam and Eve together. Jesus said with regard to marriage, 'What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder' (Mk.10:9). God, Himself, is involved in every marriage and it is rebellion against Him to put away husband or wife unless for the most serious reasons – adultery or wilful desertion. The bond between a Christian and a church should be even stronger. We are members of the one body and not even death will dissolve that union.

## **Church Membership**

Every Christian should become a member of a local church as soon as possible. We are all called upon to repent and believe the gospel, and, having done that, we are to join a church. Jesus said, 'I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Mt.16:18). He is the foundation and the cornerstone and individual Christians are the living stones of which it is composed. Together they form a beautiful temple and dwelling place for God. Paul, elsewhere, speaks of the church as being like the human body which is made up of many different parts united into a whole (1Cor.12). The eye needs the ear and the hand needs the foot. Upon the less honourable parts we bestow more abundant honour (1Cor.12:23). All are dependent on each other.

The church has a visible and invisible aspect. The invisible church is composed of all born-again Christians. The visible church is what can be seen in the world as congregations and as churches. In the visible church there are unconverted members as well as true believers. Also, sometimes, for different reasons, those who ought to be members do not join. Some lack assurance, but others, and increasingly today, do not wish to make the commitment. They are afraid of what might be required of them.

However, because Christ instituted the church, and because it exists for the benefit of the members, membership is not an option but a requirement. Baptism is the initiatory sacrament and the Lord's Supper the confirming and communion sacrament. Wherever the first missionaries went they established churches and appointed elders to pastor and care for the flock. They were to 'reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine' (2Tim.4:2). They were to take heed to themselves and 'to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God' (Acts 20:28).

When one member was involved in serious immorality they were 'to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' (1Cor.5:5). If individuals refuse to become members of the local church, discipline is impossible. There are no examples in the New Testament of Christians who are a law unto themselves, refuse to

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be members of churches and are not under the discipline of the eldership. Christ has appointed His church as a means of grace for His people and not as an optional extra. When you join a church you enter into a covenant with that church and it is similar to marriage. You commit yourself to a church of Christ for your soul's benefit and the church makes a commitment to you to care for your soul under Christ.

But why would Christians not join a church? In the past it seemed automatic and natural. However, many changes have come in modern life: the internet, modern communications and societal breakdown. Some people are converted through radio, television, or the internet. They may continue for years finding their spiritual food through the media. They may, perhaps, have no Christian friends. They are on their own and make no effort to find a church home. They do not realise their need of fellowship or the danger of 'forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is' (Heb.10:25). This is far from being a healthy situation. There are special promises connected with the gathering together of Christians, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst' (Mt.18:20).

### **Changing churches**

A related problem is lack of loyalty to a church once individuals have joined it. Perhaps, after a few years, they tire of the old minister's preaching or a new minister comes and they do not like his preaching. Sometimes a really fine preacher comes to the church down the road. Why not decide to leave? Sometimes there is something in the manner of the new minister which is off-putting. You do not like him as much as the old minister. Or someone in the church has offended you and you decide to leave. Or another church has more activities, appears to be thriving and everyone likes to be part of a success story. Or the children are complaining that there are few or no children in the church. You love your children and want them to be saved and so you move church for the benefit of your children. I have occasionally seen this happen over the years and seldom if ever does it lead to blessing for the children. I can think of several cases where the children who seemed to rule the roost now no longer attend any church. What is vital for the salvation of our children is enthusiastic loyalty to the church and to Christ. Criticism of the local church, in the children's mind, soon becomes criticism of the church in general and of the Christian faith.

When you become a member of a church you enter into a relationship. When you leave, it is a very serious matter. Unless there are very solid reasons, what you are doing is schismatic. You are causing a cut and breach in the body of Christ. Choosing a church is not like deciding which supermarket to go to or which brand of coffee to buy. There is nothing immoral in moving from Tesco to Asda or to Sainsbury's. However when you leave one church and break fellowship with that church it is a serious matter before God.

### **Good reasons**

There are, of course, good and proper reasons for moving church. Sometimes work will take us to another part of the country and sadly we leave one church for another. Too seldom do folk investigate the church situation when accepting promotion or applying for a new job. In one sense nothing should be more important to us than the church we will attend: 'For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' (Mk.8:36). We may earn for ourselves a lot more earthly money but at the same time lay up for ourselves far less treasure in heaven. A good, sound church that cares for your soul is worth sacrificing much to retain or obtain.

A very proper reason for leaving a church is when a church tolerates serious error – heresy. Then, in that situation, the heretics are the schismatics and it is one's duty to leave and come out from among them. Similarly if immorality is tolerated in a church, and there is a failure to exercise church discipline, one has to separate oneself from such a corrupt body. One of the marks of the true church is missing – discipline. Purge out the old leaven, said the Apostle, and if the church refuses to do so, separate yourself from that immoral body (1Cor.5:7-8).

### **Wrong reasons**

But what if I am getting nothing from the preaching? As one gets older, reads more and becomes more knowledgeable, there is less and less that will be fresh and new. However, if the Word of God is read, sung, preached from and prayed over, the child of God who has a healthy spiritual appetite will always be able to get something. As time passes, there should be less looking to the minister and more looking to God. The Scriptures are new every morning and provide a constant diet of heavenly bread. I can think of several who left my own ministry over the years saying they were getting little from the preaching, but after a short time attending a more popular church they stopped

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attending church altogether. The problem was not so much with the preacher as with the listener. I think of another young man in my congregation who said to his father that the minister was preaching much better now. Actually the change was in him, as he was now converted.

Paul warns about looking too much to men or making too much of one pastor: 'For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase' (1 Cor. 3:4-7).

### **Church-swapping**

In a helpful 'Letter from America' (*Evangelical Times*, June 2016), Ben Wilkerson writes: 'It goes without saying that today's culture is marked by an unhealthy consumerism, that permeates all levels of society,

including the church. The American church is infamous for treating the body of Christ in this manner, as though looking for the perfect match on Match.com. Church is now synonymous to a social club that you can leave at will with little apparent stress'. He later adds, 'When people leave, it's like a divorce. It hurts!' Spurgeon made a famous statement: 'If I had never joined a church till I found one that was perfect, I should never have joined one at all. And the moment I did join it, if I found one, I should have spoiled it, for it would not have been a perfect church after I had become a member of it. Still, imperfect as it is, it is the dearest place on earth to us'.

### **Conclusion**

Let us be committed to one church and stick with it through thick and thin. Let us see our role as involving giving rather than just receiving. Think of our Saviour and His sacrifice for us. A healthy church is where all the members use their gifts for the benefit of the whole.

## **Turton's Pillar II**

### *Incidents from the life of James Turton (1839 - 1916)*

#### **Cupboard Bare**

I might here, as we are telling of the wonders of our God, for He is surely our God, relate a wonderful thing that happened in this old house. Our cupboard was bare, and had been so three days; and we had no coal neither. My wife says, 'We are getting to the end now'. 'The end of what?' I said. She looked at me, but said nothing. I said, 'Just have a bit of patience'. 'Patience! Patience!' she emphasised it. Now there was not a more patient woman than she, though she repeated the word in the manner she did. 'Yes', I said, 'that is one of the things that God teaches us in Romans 5. If we had not patience, the chain would be a link short'. 'Ah', she said, 'we are short altogether; we shall never see good any more'. 'Well now', I said, 'just sit down while I tell you a thing or two. Now where shall I begin? If I start 6,000 years back and come down to Jesus Christ, we shall find that our condition is genteel compared with anyone of them'. (I had mentioned a score of suffering men and women, all followers of God.) 'Look at your blessed Master', I said; 'He had nowhere to put His dear head; we have a nice warm bed'. I could see

the tears coming, and mine began to creep down my cheek, when she said, 'Let us never say another word, but suffer till we die'. 'Agreed!' I said, 'we will never grumble again'. While we were making this bargain, the postman left a letter, and when I opened it, there was a ten-shilling order in it. I put it on her knee. I was knocked all to pieces, and she was the same. But it put us right for a time, and we ate our meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God (Acts 2:46-7). Who had need more than we?

#### **Hard Week**

One time we had a very hard week. We scraped together everything we had on the Saturday to pay the rent and get a bit of coal, and had nothing left. In the morning I got ready to take the Sunday School. My wife said, 'You will not be much good with an empty belly'. 'Well', I said, 'I must go'. Then we read of the prophet and the ravens, and I had a real good spiritual meal, and did not feel natural hunger at all. By the time I got home a woman had been in with two cakes and a bit of bacon. As soon as I saw my



dear wife's face I knew there was some dinner. She drew the bacon out of the oven with tears, and could not tell me for a time. We had a silent meal. These are the times we thank God, though nothing is said. 'The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit'. Broken and contrite hearts - we had them, and I felt persuaded God accepted them. I felt I had a little oil in my lamp as well as food in my stomach. After the prayer meeting and preaching were over, a friend gave me two shillings. Then I longed for an opportunity to get on our knees to praise Him who has all hearts in His hand. If I went on relating these displays of God's wonderful providence, I should never stop. He has kept following me with goodness and mercy all along till now. There are three times our Sunday School friends have helped me, and one brother specially has been good to me, so that whichever way I look, I am hemmed in with marvels of providence and wonders of grace.

### **Girl Sick**

We had a girl we had brought up from the cradle, who was the picture of health up to fifteen years. Some great change came over her and she became a physical wreck. There seemed no hope, the doctor was lost over it; nothing seemed to have any good effect. What with sickness, fainting and sometimes

spitting of blood, we knew not what to do. Our school friends gave her some money to try a change of air at Blackpool. She went, and the following week I was taken with inflammation of the bowels. I thought all was over; my poor wife will be left alone. For a day and a night I thought I should die, but late the second day I thought otherwise. I used some remedies and felt myself in the hands of God, whether for life or death. Then I was overflowing with gratitude to find that the severity of the pains had left me, and in three weeks I was able to do a little. All this time we were in great straits. We had hard work to keep rent and other things paid. My dear wife was broken in health and spirit, and I had no sooner got going at half speed than she jammed her leg against a soap box and brought on inflammation. She had to sit four weeks with her leg in one position, and the girl was ill too; she would faint for over an hour at a time, and lie as if dead. Satan comes creeping at night when all is still and says, 'Where is your God now?' I trembled, I sweated, I know not how I was. But in a moment God gave me mighty faith, and I said, 'Devil, I will go to heaven as Lazarus did, but I will never obey your voice. Get thee behind me, thou vile monster'. A miracle! He left me, and I fell asleep.

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## God's Mercies

I awoke refreshed, kissed my dear Bible and clung it to my heart. Then I opened it and read: 'Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more. For now I will break his yoke from off thee, and will burst thy bonds asunder' (Nah. 1:12,13). From this time things began to mend. God put it into the heart of some of His people to help. When God spoke the promise to my soul, I could not see how it could be done, but faith ruled and I doubted it not. As time went on, my wife was better, the girl grew slowly better, and often my soul was filled with praise. We cried unto the Lord in our troubles and He brought us out of our distresses. Then we praised the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men. In times of trial Satan has asked me what I think of that promise now. One time in a great battle I showed him what God had done for me. I read it over to him like an eternal law. 'Now', I said, 'what have you got to say about that? God is true, thou art the liar. Get thee behind me'. He was gone; I was the victor. 'Ah', you will say, 'I can't get rid of the devil like that.' Neither can I always, but when the Spirit of God comes into my heart, bringing things to my remembrance, then I can face and conquer him.

## Dark Valley

Just here I will mention a trial that we never hoped to get through. It was such a terrible dark valley, with dangers in it and all around it, that we could not see a streak of light in it. This was the trial. The shop and house we did our business from and lived in, had to be sold. We had lived there between forty and fifty years, and the man that bought it wanted it for a friend of his. But my God, in answer to prayer, overturned this, and for a time we were quiet respecting it. But the trials, storms and bewildering things we met with in the way almost rent our souls to pieces, and but little more than twelve months passed away when we got notice to quit. The man was coming in to it himself to do business. 'Now then', my wife says, 'it is all up; there is nothing but the workhouse for us'. 'Well', I said, 'the Lord has done great things for us; we are not going to give Him up now'. 'Ah, no', she said with a look of sadness on her face almost like despair, 'He is giving us up; for I am sure He is tired of our misery and complaint. We no sooner get out of one hole than we are in another, and it is pray, pray, pray; our knees are worn with praying'. 'Well', I said, 'I will tell you

we will do, we will give it all up, and take 'pot luck' and let come what will'. 'Eh', she said, 'I never thought you would say that. I shall not give it up; I will trust Him till I die'. Eh, bless you, that did me more good than a pot of gold, because I knew the grace of faith was deep bedded in her soul.

## Evicted

The time approached that we must leave the old Bethel, the place where the gospel had been faithfully preached for over forty years, and good men and women had come and gone at pleasure. Now it must be a den of thieves, for the man coming in was a gambling bookmaker. The thought of this grieved me much; yet I could not pray to stop it, for I had an inward conviction we must go. Well, the time was up and past that we should be gone. They sent repeatedly to see if we had gone, till they grew impatient. I kept begging all the while for God to find us a house, but no answer came. At last we had strict notice to be out on a certain day: then the crying became more earnest.

And now God wrought a mighty thing. A man that had lived in the house opposite over twenty years left it without any known cause. I went to see after it and got it; and they did what they had not done for any before - they bought the gas fixtures, etc, and let me go in free. Then we sang as one awakened out of sleep; my cup was full for the time being. Willing hands were ready to help us, and so we got removed into a clean house. Our hearts were then ready to give praise unto God, for really we were like them that dream, and I tried to sing that nice song:

'For mercies countless as the sands,  
Which daily I receive  
From Jesus my Redeemer's hands,  
My soul, what canst thou give?'

## Hearts glad

Though we had not a penny in the world, our hearts were glad that we had a home so near and so unexpected. a mighty thing. Here in this humble abode we suffered much. We had little to sell, and some days did not take a penny. Then a little change, and then more prayer. One time, after near twelve months had gone over our head in the new home, we had a great trial. A debt we owed, and we fell into a lawyer's hands. He troubled us much. My poor wife was again in deep trouble, which made mine heavier. I prayed and groaned over this, but the man grew impatient and pressed me sore. The great wonder was that we took double money that week, and paid the debt; and the week

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following, the man that pressed me died suddenly. O I did wonder at the stroke! Though things seemed so hard in this new place, the touches of His hand and visits in the night watches made up for our scant fare. For over twelve months things were very trying. We have gone to bed without anything to eat and got up the same.

At the time our old deacon died in 1902, they put me in his place, and O how I trembled at the thought of being a deacon! I had been praying all the week that the lot would not fall on me. The day the meeting was held for the choice I was ill at home with influenza.

I was sure that they would not appoint me in my absence, but they did; and when I knew, I was in great fear, for I had much reason to fear. Our little bit of business was in a poor way; we were in debt, and could see no improvement, not the least sign of lessening the debt; and were always afraid of being sold up. But years went on, and we were not quite so crushed when we saw the debt kept lessening. We often paid up all we could muster off the debt, and left ourselves without a penny. I think I prayed as much to be out of debt as for anything else, yea, more; except our soul's salvation.

*The Gospel Standard April 2013*

# Friendships in The Ministry

*Rev Kenneth Macdonald*

*(The substance of a lecture given at the School in Theology 2015)*

Like all other topics our first place for guidance must be the Scriptures, and we note that in Scripture there are various levels of friendship found.

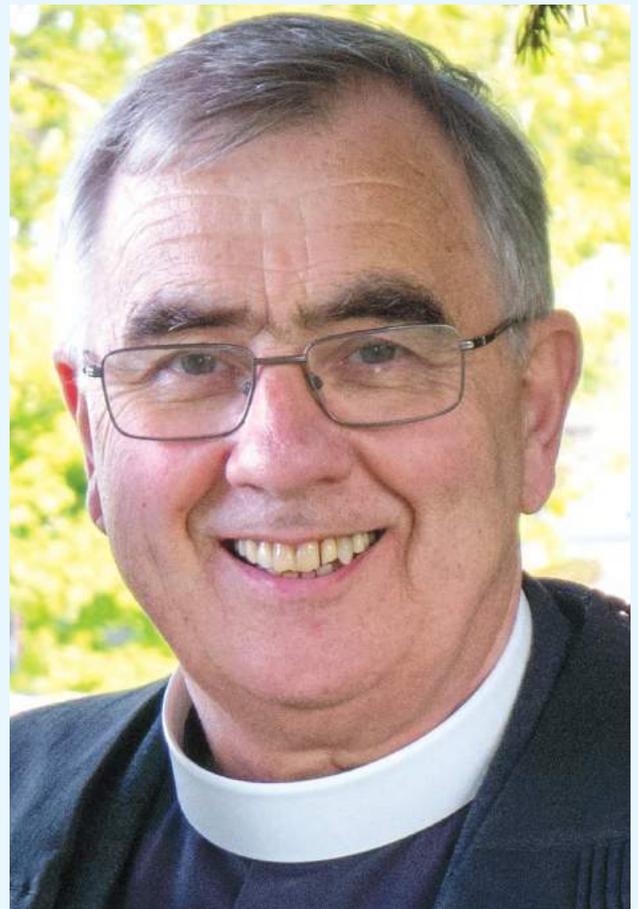
## **Some examples from Scripture**

### *David and Jonathan*

David and Jonathan's relationship was built on a common desire to serve the Lord. It was obvious that they were very free with each other and no doubt would have shared many confidences not recorded for us. The fact that Jonathan was willing at times to ignore his father the King, tells us something of his closeness to David. We read that 'the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David' (1 Sam. 18:1). Such unity and trust must be at the heart of any true deep friendship. It went deeper than an outward friendliness.

### *Ruth and Naomi*

There is a closeness between Ruth and Naomi that seems to grow and is more than a shared love for a son and husband. While David and Jonathan were more akin in age, here one is much older and yet it does not preclude them from having a close relationship. So an age difference need not be a barrier to close friendship.



**Rev Kenneth Macdonald**

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### *Paul and Barnabas*

In the relationship between Paul and Barnabas we see friendship developing but, while it was Barnabas who was instrumental in bringing the newly converted Saul to Antioch and in having him received by the Apostles in Jerusalem, it was nevertheless the newer convert, Paul, who eventually took the leading role. Friendships can be like this. Having one person in the relationship being more of a leader can often be the case, although that perceived position is never abused and there will always be a 'two way' respect. Now while they at times disagreed, their friendship survived and Paul speaks warmly of Barnabas. So true fellowship does not always have to mean agreeing one hundred per cent on everything.

### *Jesus and His Disciples*

It is amazing indeed that it could be so, but the Lord himself declares concerning the disciples, 'ye are my friends' (Jn.15:14). We are told, 'Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus' (Jn.11:5). Even among the disciples we read, 'Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples whom Jesus loved' (Jn.13:23), so one was special. Now that was a different kind of friendship. It wasn't like for example David and Jonathan, based to some degree on equality. Some friendships can be true friendships even when there is not 'equality'.

### **What can we learn from such friendships?**

Jesus taught that we should always be mindful, 'as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise' (Lk.6:31).

Solomon reasons, 'Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up' (Eccl.4:9-10). We know as ministers our need to share certain difficulties and to have someone who can 'lift us up when we fall'. It doesn't mean that we just call and they come to our aid, although that often is what happens with good friends, but here in Ecclesiastes there is the idea also of the friend being so aware of what we need that they immediately recognise our situation and lend the necessary help. Scripture tells us, 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him' (Mt.6:8). And while none of us is omniscient, I would suggest this is a perfect pattern of how a good friend should seek to be.

### **Practical situations**

There are sometimes matters which you cannot and indeed must not tell even to your best friend. That is so even with your wife who may well be your best friend. Of course there will be matters you can and should discuss with her, but there has to be an understanding that certain matters are between you as a minister and the member of the congregation concerned. There should be matters that we have been privy to that should forever remain private.

You will find yourself burdened with matters in the congregation that you can hardly bear and may even feel it is too much to expect you to – but you cannot even in the strictest confidence share certain burdens with someone else. Sadly there are situations where a ministry has been hugely undermined by lack of confidentiality.

A true friend will know when he is not to be of an inquisitorial spirit. Too many questions are not appropriate. Let your friend share what they wish. A real friend will also be willing to challenge and correct your theology where necessary, and likewise if he discerns that your preaching is not as relevant as it should be he will indicate this. We may instruct our people well, but leave them cold spiritually.

This love and care for your brother works both ways of course. Hard as it may be at times, if you know for example that a congregation is unhappy under the preaching and pastoral care of your brother, you need to try and ascertain why it is so. It may be he is doing what he is doing quite deliberately and it may be he will not see the need to change, but I doubt if anyone would just ignore advice from a best friend. It is not always an act of love to keep silent. Of course we are to be sensitive to one another's feelings, but if we are of a 'biblical servant spirit' we will at least be willing to listen to a friend.

Don't be afraid to ask your friend to assess your preaching. No matter how long some have been preaching, none of us are perfect preachers. And sometimes as our preaching develops, it is not always into better preaching. Yes, we hear people say 'Oh he's come on in his preaching' but it is also sometimes said, 'What's happened to his preaching?'

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### **Where will your 'best friend' be found?**

Some ministers seem to be able to have their best friend within their congregation. Brethren, I would be wary of such relationships. It is not that we cannot and should not be good friends, especially with elders with whom we need to share much, but great care is necessary. As in all walks of life it is easier to understand and converse in detail with those engaged in similar work. No-one understands the work of the ministry like a minister.

We need friends who care about our becoming true pastors of God's flock and real students of the Word. Scripture speaks of those who preach 'smooth things' (Is.30:10) and those who love to hear such. The need for us is to have friends who will not flatter us.

Should just being in the ministry not be enough to form a friendship? That in reality is not how it works. There are brethren we are closer to than others. The Lord Jesus had his disciples, and within the twelve he had a closer relationship to three. On the Mount of Transfiguration the Lord commanded them not to mention what they had seen (Mt.17:9), not even to the other disciples. So there is a pattern for us. Some situations we can share and some we should not.

Some of us as colleagues will never be best friends. Is that a problem? It should not be. We recognise that we are part of the one body but with different functions. Taking the imagery of a body, the fingers relate best to the hand; the tongue to the mouth. Those we find that the Lord has brought us closest to, are those we relate best to.

We mentioned earlier Ruth and Naomi (we could have mentioned Paul and Timothy) as an older and younger pair. It is not always the friends of our youth that make the best confidants. It may be we are like David and Jonathan, but that is not always the case. Friendships formed in going through Seminary together can be our closest in the ministry. But remember Rehoboam, how he listened to the counsel of his young friends rather than the older men, and what a disaster that was (2Chron.10)! Also, while an older brother minister should have more wisdom to impart, it is not necessarily so.

Those of us who are older can make very good friends with younger colleagues and learn from such who maybe far more gifted than we. Common sense, holy wis and grace are certainly not the prerogative or privilege of the elderly, whether ministers or otherwise.

### **Friendship with Ministers outside our own denomination?**

We may find ourselves part of some para-church organisation with ministers of other denominations, eg, SRS or LDOS or Affinity or be part of some Ministers' Fraternal. Where there is an obvious united desire for the good of the cause of Christ then some matters can be put aside without compromising. We can and should be friendly. Sometimes we ask brethren from other similar denominations or of similar beliefs to preach for us. In that way we can build up a good rapport with such and we can sometimes speak with them when, because of familiarity, it would not be appropriate with a brother minister in the same denomination. They can be more objective and therefore more helpful.

Some have asked, 'What are the criteria for asking someone to preach for us?' Well, first of all, in asking anyone to preach you must be sure it is for the good of your people. Beware that pastorally it could do more damage than good. However that does not preclude our dealing with those we could never ask to preach, as brethren.

### **One 'good friend' only?**

Should we only have 'one good friend?' Of course not, but beware that while you may see a certain brother as a good friend, that brother may not see your other friend(s) as his good friend(s). Without doubt having a circle of friends can be helpful, but at the same time having a large circle can bring problems with confidentiality. But one of the advantages of having a few good friends is that while some may be useful at a spiritual level others may be better at helping with practical difficulties.



### **Conclusions.**

We should try and develop at least one close friendship, being aware that we cannot manufacture such, nor do so on false premises or a mistaken view that it doesn't really matter if we hold to a fundamentally different outlook. We need to be 'wise as serpents and harmless as doves' in all aspects of our Christian lives and especially as those called to the holy ministry. After all, 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?'

# Death Notice of Mrs Prayer Meeting

*We noticed in the Free Will Echo that Mrs Prayer Meeting has died. In the belief that friends of the deceased might be interested we re-print the death notice here:*

Mrs Prayer Meeting died recently at the First Neglected Church on Worldly Avenue. Born many years ago in the midst of great revivals, she was a strong healthy child, fed largely on fellowship and Bible study, and soon growing into world-wide prominence and was one of the most influential members of the famous Church family.

For the past several years Mrs Prayer Meeting has been failing in health, gradually wasting away until rendered helpless by stiffness of the knees, coldness of heart, inactivity and weakness of purpose and willpower. At the last she was but a shadow of her former, happy self. Her last whispered words were enquiries concerning the strange absence of her loved ones, now busy at work and at places of amusement.

Experts, including Mr Works, Dr Reform and Dr Joiner, disagreed as to the cause of her fatal illness, administering large doses of Organisations, Socials, Contests and Drives but to no avail. A postmortem showed that a deficiency of spiritual food, coupled with the lack of Faith and Heartfelt Religion were contributing causes. Only a few were present at her death, sobbing over memories of her past character, beauty, helpfulness and strength. In honour of her departing, the church doors will be closed on Wednesday nights, except the third Wednesday night of each month, when the Ladies Pink Lemonade Society serves refreshments for the Men's Football Team.

## Congregational Remittances - August 2016

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2016	ORDINARY REMITTANCES		
	2016 August	2016 To August	2015 To August
£	£	£	£
<b>Presbytery of Inverness</b>			
Aberdeen	0	1300	13325
Duthil-Dores	12203	1637	18066
Inverness	0	1800	20153
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	1400	13483
Poolewe & Aultbea	340	913	8076
<b>Total Inverness</b>	<b>12543</b>	<b>7050</b>	<b>73103</b>
<b>Northern Presbytery</b>			
Assynt & Scourie	365	0	810
Brora	130	0	10427
Kiltearn	63	0	5974
Tarbat	0	0	12050
<b>Total Northern</b>	<b>558</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>29261</b>
<b>Southern Presbytery</b>			
Arran	328	303	6042
Ayr	0	900	8518
Dumfries	0	0	200
Edinburgh	13597	1000	16001
Glasgow-Partick	6795	1200	13600
Glasgow-Shettleston	5	2000	17288
Glasgow-Knightswood	28	2470	18516
Rothsay	0	0	130
<b>Total Southern</b>	<b>20753</b>	<b>7873</b>	<b>80295</b>

CENTRAL BUILDING FUND YTD 2016	ORDINARY REMITTANCES		
	2016 August	2016 To August	2015 To August
£	£	£	£
<b>Outer Hebrides Presbytery</b>			
Cross	0	1979	14760
Harris-Leverburgh	203	2625	12520
Harris-Scalpay	0	1800	18349
Knock & Point	0	1720	12880
North Uist	2728	1000	9011
Stornoway	2435	6185	59312
<b>Total Outer Hebrides</b>	<b>5366</b>	<b>15309</b>	<b>126832</b>
<b>Presbytery of Skye &amp; Lochcarron</b>			
Bracadale & Duirinish	120100	1450	13118
Killmuir & Stenscholl	0	0	8705
Lochalsh	230	950	10006
Strath	20	550	5702
Portree	0	1500	10808
Snizort	1104	1500	18351
<b>Total Skye/Lochcarron</b>	<b>121454</b>	<b>5950</b>	<b>66690</b>
Smiths Falls	0	0	1000
<b>Total Congregations</b>	<b>160671</b>	<b>36182</b>	<b>377180</b>
Other Donations	0	1223	14980
Legacy	0	0	1000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>160671</b>	<b>37405</b>	<b>393160</b>
Including Gift Aid	2721		67035
			58511



# News

## **All Age Holiday** (Andrew R Allan)

Around 30 persons attended the 2016 Free Church (Continuing) All-Age Holiday held in Windmill Christian Centre, Arbroath, recently.

The aim of the holiday is for young and old to gather together for a time of relaxation and fellowship in a safe Christian environment. Each day began with a prayer meeting for the 'early birds' and was then followed by a leisurely breakfast. Morning worship and the children's ministry followed. After the formalities, all were free either to stay around the Centre and enjoy the facilities or explore sights and places of interest further afield.

After the evening meal the company gathered to hear our speaker, Rev Iain Smith, Harris. His theme was 'Unusual prisons and prisoners'. He covered the prison of the Fall, Joseph in prison, the prison of Egypt, the prison of Babylon and the prison of love. All found the addresses thought provoking, stimulating, practical and well presented. Afterwards discussion continued during a time of informal fellowship.

The weather was better than forecasted, which meant that the holiday-makers were able to go out and about and explore the locality. However, in common with most of the country, we did



Arbroath Holiday  
2016

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# Desk



experience exceptionally heavy thunder and lightning. Despite not having teenagers present, Murdo MacDonald organised a full sports programme, keeping the interest of young and old. Thanks to the speaker for bringing God's word to those gathered. Thanks also to the cooks, Isobel McQueer, Farr, and Debbie Allan, Glasgow, for the delicious and varied cuisine. Thanks to Murdo MacDonald, Aultbea, for organising the sports competition, and to Claire Nicolson, Inverness, for keeping the children occupied in arts and crafts activities. Also, we are grateful to our precentors Bruce McKenzie, Glasgow, and Don MacLeod, Point, for their ministry. And thanks to all who came and helped to make the holiday a memorable and enjoyable occasion.

The holiday next year will be over an extended weekend from Friday 14th to Tuesday 18th July 2017 (DV) at Windmill Christian Centre, Arbroath. Rev E Trevor Kirkland, Ballyclare & Doagh, will be the speaker. More details will follow in due course.

## **Tongan bakeries fight Sunday trading ban** (Premier, M Jones)

Bakeries in Tonga are calling for an intervention from the King after the government moved to tighten laws on selling bread on Sundays. Church leaders had campaigned for the ban to be enforced using one of the country's oldest laws, which stops trading on the Sabbath. They claim Sunday should be a day of rest. Bakeries have been allowed to open on Sundays since 1982 following a cyclone which meant there were concerns about feeding the nations. That ruling is now being overturned.

The Minister of Police, Hon Pohiva Tu'i'onetoa, said: 'Only restaurants in hotel and in other accommodations are to operate on Sunday. According to the Constitution, Sunday should be

kept holy and no person shall practise his trade or profession or conduct any commercial undertaking'. Authorities in Tonga began enforcing the law at the beginning of July but local bakers are concerned about loss of sales. A number of them are putting together a petition to give to King Tupou VI. It is good to hear of places where Sabbath laws are being enforced.

## **ISIS Magazine targets Christianity**

(E Kendal)

Islamic State regularly publishes a glossy propaganda magazine called DABIQ, whose principal aim is to recruit jihadists from the West. It is sophisticated, beautifully produced and printed in several languages, including English. Previous issues have targeted Muslims and focused on politics, but the issue published on 31 July and entitled 'Break the Cross' targets Christians and focuses on Christianity. The Christian Scriptures are denounced as corrupted, the Christian church slandered as pagan and Christians identified as those to be hated and fought. This issue of DABIQ can be expected to trigger an escalation in attacks on churches and Christians everywhere. Please pray that God will redeem this situation and use it for his purposes. May evil be exposed and rejected and may the church be revived and sanctified.

## **Syria – Aleppo** (E Kendal)

An al-Qaeda-led jihadist coalition has launched a campaign to capture the government-held western Aleppo, home to over a million loyalists, including some 40,000 Christians. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating: electricity is limited, the main water supply line has been cut, so that water, food, fuel and medicines are all scarce. Despite this dire situation, churches within government-held western Aleppo

continue to serve, taking in thousands of newly displaced Muslim and Christian families and distributing thousands of meals daily across the city. Meanwhile, Russia is working to leverage co-operation from Turkey. If successful, this will be a game-changer, as the jihadists in northern Syria could not survive without Turkish support. Syrian Christians are praying that 'the will for peace' prevails over 'the will for war'. Please pray for Syria and its churches.

### China

We are thankful for the opportunities we have had to serve the church in China. This year already Rev Trevor Kirkland, Rev John Macleod (Shawbost), Rev Allan Murray and Rev Graeme Craig have spent over a week of intense lecturing and tutoring there. Others hope to go later. Thank God for this opportunity and pray for the church in China, that God would deepen it theologically and spiritually and that it would be a blessing to the whole world.



### Sri Lanka

The work in Sri Lanka has been developing from its initial centre in Vavuniya. A new centre has been opened in Mulatheevu on the north-eastern coast about 50 miles away. The evangelist Partheepan is now settled there with his family. Just recently, through the help of Ranjan, a Sri Lankan relative of Partheepan living in Singapore, it has been possible to purchase a suitable piece of land on which a temporary church can be built. Up till now the folk have been gathering in Partheepan's house but it has recently been terribly over-crowded. There are now some 30 - 40 folk gathering each Sabbath. In Vavuniya some 40 or so gather in the morning and 90 or so at night. We thank God for the progress of the work and ask for continued prayers for Partheepan in his labours for the Lord.



**Partheepan**

### Named Person Victory (Colin Hart. Christian Inst.)

I am delighted to tell you that this morning (28 July) five judges of the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the Scottish Government's Named Person scheme is unlawful. Judgment in the case of *The Christian Institute and others v The Lord Advocate (Scotland)* was written by two Scottish Justices and the Deputy President of the Supreme Court. Another two judges agreed. The Scottish Government has no opportunity to appeal.

This is a historic judgment. It is the first time the Supreme Court has prevented a major piece of legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament from coming into force. The Court has acted to stop a major conflict with our data protection laws. Under the proposals, every child in Scotland was to be assigned a state guardian to monitor their 'wellbeing'. This constituted a state-sponsored intrusion into family life – directly undermining the parent-child relationship. It was due to come into force on 31 August.

Vindicating what we have been saying for years, the Court stated that the data sharing provisions of the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act* breach the right to a private and family life under article 8 of the *European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)*. These provisions, which are central to the scheme, have today been struck down. It was a David and Goliath battle, but we give praise and thanks to our sovereign God who has given us this resounding victory on behalf of families in Scotland.

In a warning to UK legislators for years to come, the Supreme Court judgment even noted that: 'The first thing that a totalitarian regime tries to do is to get to the children, to distance them from the subversive, varied influences of their families, and indoctrinate them in their rulers' view of the world. Within limits, families must be left to bring up their children in their own way'. Christian parents would have faced severe difficulties from the scheme, but our gracious God has acted powerfully to preserve the freedom of Christians to bring up their children in the Christian faith.

We are profoundly grateful to our supporters, who have stood with us throughout this long campaign. Thank you for all your prayers, and for your encouragements. Your prayers have been answered! Our legal bills ran to £270,000. We expect to try and recover a substantial part of the legal costs, but this has yet to be resolved. We will not get back the

additional £130,000 we spent on the NO2NP campaign which helped gather crucial evidence from Scottish parents for the case.

If you are in a position to help with our financial needs, you can support our vital work by making a donation.

*This is indeed a great cause for thanksgiving to God.*

### **Christian Institute Celebrates 25 Years**

Director Colin Hart tells his story of how he met John Burn, and in 1988 they presented a paper to a small group of Christians about the need for believers to live out their faith in all areas of life. After an unexpected £20,000 donation, Colin left his job as a teacher and began campaigning on Christian teaching in schools out of a spare bedroom. The Christian Institute was founded in 1991.

He writes: 'Looking back, it is remarkable to see how God has provided for the Institute. As this Annual Review shows, there have certainly been many challenges. Yet, in every circumstance, all our needs have been met. I continue to give thanks to God for all that he has done'.

*We thank God for the Christian Institute and the fearless, faithful work it does.*

### **Aberdeen New Church** (Rev Tim McGlynn)

Aberdeen congregation recently agreed to purchase the Stuart Resource Centre, Invercauld Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5QQ, from the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Scotland for £291,500. We believe this is a token of God's continuing mercy towards both the congregation and the denomination. The Lord has provided for us in a most wonderful way. We initially thought we had been unsuccessful. However, a few weeks after our initial bid was rejected the sellers contacted the congregation's lawyers and asked if we were still keen to purchase at the price previously offered. When we indicated we were, agreement was soon reached between the parties. The congregation has been itinerant for the last sixteen years and it will be a great encouragement to us and our friends everywhere that this has come to pass.

The Stuart Resource Centre was built in 1955 as a Congregational Church and is very well suited to our needs. The sanctuary will comfortably hold just over 100 people. As well as the sanctuary there are; six offices/meeting rooms, 3 toilets (2 disabled), a glazed reception area which joins to the sanctuary and will make a first-class cry room/overflow, along with a kitchen and dining area all on the ground floor. There



is also a good-sized, first-floor office and a storeroom adding further to the flexibility of the property and suitable either as an office or prayer-meeting room.

Outside there are fenced parking areas to the front and rear of the building for 25-30 vehicles. The internal décor is in a very good state and while the outside needs some small repairs, it is generally of a good standard. The area of ground is approximately 0.4 acres and is at the heart of a residential area of the city, Mastrick, just off North Anderson Drive.

The congregation recently stepped out in faith and sold their manse in order to prepare for just such a possibility. We are grateful that along with money received from the sale of the manse and the money in the congregational building fund the congregation have already collected well over £200,000. We would appeal to fellow FCC congregations and our friends further afield to pray for us and where possible to help financially to enable us to pay off the building as soon as possible. We are most grateful to God for all His help and direction to bring us to this place and we continue to look to Him for all that is yet to be done.

### **Retirement Presentation** (Ewan Wilson)

On Monday, 15th August, a warm, sunny summer's evening, a goodly number of the congregation of Shettleston Free Church (Cont.) met in the Redstones Hotel, Uddingston to mark the retirement of the Rev David S. Fraser and his demission from the charge, having been called there some twelve years previously.

After a very pleasant meal, the Session Clerk, Mr Ewan Wilson, on behalf of the congregation, presented Mr Fraser with the recently republished set of the complete Works of John Knox, one of Mr Fraser's great heroes of the faith. The Clerk drew parallels between the two great men's callings as ministers:



**Presentation to Rev. D.S. Fraser**

sword bearer, galley slave, confronter of rulers! Elder, Mr Alan Wilson then presented Mrs Marion Fraser with some items of jewellery and bouquets of flowers from the congregation. Mr Wilson noted that Mrs Fraser was a great 'daughter of Barnabas', ever ready with a word of encouragement for preachers and precentor alike. Mrs Fraser had also been a useful 'administrator', helping to keep pulpit supply schedules and other dates and statistics accurate!

The couple were then presented with a cheque as a very small token of the affection and esteem in which they were held by the congregation. Rev David Fraser then suitably replied, reminiscing about

the various charges he had held since his ordination back in 1970 – Mull, the South African Mission field and latterly Covenant College, Zambia and his experiences in Shettleston. He was grateful for the welcoming friendliness of the Shettleston congregation and noted how he always enjoyed great liberty in preaching in the Shettleston pulpit. He ended on an encouraging note of exhortation for the future witness, now over a century old, prayer being an essential ingredient.

A very congenial valedictory gathering was then drawn to a close with prayer by Mr Fraser.

## **Jonathan Edwards and Psalmody**

*Rev E Trevor Kirkland*

It is commonly assumed that Jonathan Edwards had in some way lessened his attachment to Psalmody because of Whitefield, Watts and the revival. Indeed it has been asserted that while Edwards began as a 'Psalm' singer he ended as a 'hymn' singer. Those who advocate the singing of Psalms have been challenged with the argument that Edwards

abandoned the practice and so should we. It is now apparent that this is not entirely correct. In a recent publication by David Barshinger (*Edwards and the Psalms*) we get, for perhaps the first time, Edwards' true position.

Using Barshinger, therefore, the following points are noted:

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## 1. The Psalms and Spiritual Experience

When Edwards wrote his monumental work *Religious Affections*, he turned to the Psalmist as one of the most eminent saints in the Bible, who exhibited a life of holy affections and who gave us a lively portraiture of his religion in the Book of Psalms. He described the nature of the Psalter as a book for the Church of God at large: 'Those Psalms are not only the expressions of the religion of so eminent a saint, that God speaks of as so agreeable to his mind; but were also by the direction of the Holy Ghost, penned for the use of the Church of God in its public worship, not only in that age, but in after ages; as being best fitted to express the religion of all saints, in all ages, as well as the religion of the Psalmist. And it is moreover to be observed, that David, in the book of Psalms, speaks not as a private person, but as the psalmist of Israel, as the subordinate head of the Church of God, and leader in their worship and praises; and in many of the Psalms, speaks in the name of Christ, as personating Him in these, breathing forth a holy affection, and in many other Psalms, he speaks in the name of the Church'.

## 2. The Psalms, Life, Writing and Culture

Edwards found in the Psalms both theological depth and spiritual enrichment; thus he used the Psalms extensively and substantively in his writings and ministry, citing the Psalms more than any other book of the Bible. In the 26 volume Yale Edition, Edwards cites the Psalms 4,204 times while Isaiah comes next with 3,852 citations. It is not because of the size of the Psalms that they are referenced most often, but because they resonated with Edwards. Not only did he study the Psalms specifically, but he used the Psalms to help explain other passages of Scripture. In the *Blank Bible* he cites the Psalms 388 times. In his *Notes on Scripture* while there are only 21 entries specific to the Psalms, yet there are 558 references throughout in relation to other passages – more than any other book in the Bible. His extant sermon corpus demonstrates that he preached more from the Psalms (108) than any other book of the Bible except Matthew (139). In fact Edwards held, based upon the NT, that the Psalms should be appropriated 'as the language of the Christian Church' for it 'was made use of in the public worship in Christian assemblies from the beginning of the Christian Church'.

The Psalms also featured in the conversion narratives of believers and in calls for public prayer.

Edwards also encouraged the personal appropriation of the Psalms in daily life, singling out the Psalter as a useful text in teaching children to read.

## 3. The Psalms and Christ

Many in Edwards' day were attempting to sever the link between David and Christ. This was particularly true of the Deists who derided the OT as immoral and un-Christian. While not ignoring the historical context of the Psalms, nonetheless Edwards was adamant that they are pointing to Christ. He laid down a general principle for interpreting the Psalms: 'in many passages in the Psalms, the Psalmist has a more immediate respect to himself in those things in which he speaks; but yet the Holy Ghost has a principal aim at Christ, the son of David'.

## 4. The Psalms, Christian Language and Thought

Edwards encouraged his people to make the Psalms their own language because that is a characteristic of the truly converted. In *Some Thoughts*, Edwards said that a joyful Christian in lively frame makes the Psalms the language of the heart. In one sermon he stated that Psalm 45:2 ('Thou art fairer than the sons of men') is 'the language of the believer's soul concerning Christ'. Edwards urged the converted to embrace the Psalter's language for themselves. As he stated on Psalm 116 ('I love the Lord because...'), 'let that be the language of your heart'. In another sermon Edwards explained that to test one's position before God, people should ask themselves if they made Psalm 115:1 ('Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake') their soul's language. It offered words that Christians should appropriate to describe their humility and gratitude for salvation in Christ. And they should also pray for Christ's return using the Psalms (e.g. 'O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the Lord bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad' Ps. 14:7). Praying the Psalms would help people orient their lives to eternal matters giving them the language they needed to attune their hearts to God's ultimate aims.

## 5. The Psalms and Worship

Throughout the history of the Church the Psalms formed the content of sung praise. Ambrose of Milan (337-397) championed psalmody. When some denigrated their use, Nicetas of Remesiana (d. c.414)

wrote a tract in their defence – *On the usefulness of Psalmody*. With the arrival of Watts, a revolution took place. Watts with arrogance and derision thought he could do better. The resulting 'worship wars' brought tension and division. However, throughout the singing controversies of the 1720s, 'everyone agreed on the texts to be sung: psalms and only psalms'. That position was gradually broken over time.

First this was done by men such as Mather, who appended Watts' hymns to the end of their published sermons. They were thus read but not sung! Second, to improve the singing of praise in worship, singing schools were set up. Unwittingly these became the vehicle for encouraging uninspired praise.

Next, they were introduced into family worship and fellowships as a means to improve spirituality. When Edwards was nineteen he laid down as one of his resolutions – 'To praise God by singing psalms in prose'. Watts was to bring the greatest challenge to that resolution. While he was away itinerating in 1742, Samuel Buell the visiting minister introduced Watts' hymns into public



### **China's Reforming Churches**

Bruce P. Baugus (Editor), Reformation Heritage Books, pbk, 336pp. £8.45

The sub-title of this book effectively summarises the content of this extremely helpful and enlightening book about the Church in China: *Mission, Policy and Ministry in the Next Christendom*. We are greatly indebted to Reformation Heritage Books for making such a volume available. The book is a collection of essays from various authors on various aspects of the growing Church in China. The particular concern is with the ministry and development of the distinctly Presbyterian and Reformed faith in that vast country of more than one billion souls. There are four parts to the book: (1) The History of Presbyterianism in China; (2) Presbyterianism in China Today; (3) Challenges and Opportunities for Presbyterianism in China; and (4) Appropriating a Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition. There are many books about Christianity in China, but this is a rare discussion of

worship. When Edwards returned he was faced with a stark choice, to continue with Watts or to fight for the return of Psalmody?

Edwards chose the latter. Meanwhile he allowed hymns to be used in summer afternoon gatherings. As for Psalmody, he was unwilling to depart from the use of Psalms altogether or even to marginalise them. Edwards pointed out that the Psalter 'should always be used in the Christian Church to the end of the world'. As Edwards noted in *The History of Redemption*, 'God inspired David to show forth Christ and his redemption in divine songs which should be for the use of the Church in private and public worship throughout all ages'.

Contrary then to what some of us have been bombarded with over the years, we now know what happened. Psalmody was practised in Church services while some hymns were permitted in summer afternoon gatherings. While we cannot accept Edwards' compromise, nonetheless it hardly amounts to a wholesale surrender to Watts and the jettisoning of Psalmody as others claim. His arguments for the use of the Psalter remain unshaken over time and ought to be rightly appropriated by all of us who love the praise of God.

# Books

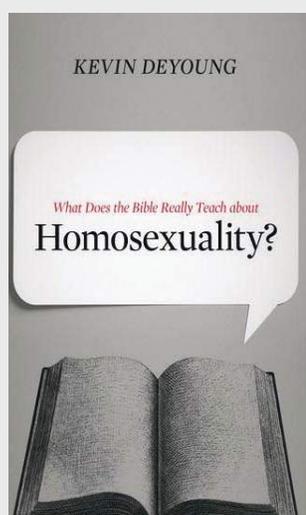
Presbyterianism in China. Expertly, the contributors take us through an enormously encouraging story for Reformed Christians in the West.

One thing that came across strongly in this book was the point that despite some serious persecution faced over the years by Christians in China, and a natural hesitancy to be too 'public' about church worship, there is clearly a robustness about Chinese Christianity. One of the Chinese contributors mentions how the presence of liberal theology and 'flabby' church life, which have been rampant in the West for more than a century, diminished after the expulsion of the Western missionaries following the Communist revolution after the Second World War. As we now know full well from our experience in Scotland over the past century, a theologically-liberal and morally-flabby Christian church is building on sand and will inevitably be Sardis-like in nature (Rev.3:1-6)! In addition to this church order biblical piety and

sound theological education seem to be serious concerns in many parts of the church in China today. It certainly appears that the Lord has been building His church there as a seed growing secretly. One cannot help but be impressed by the comment made in one place that there are more people engaged one way or another in Christian worship on the Lord's day in China today than the sum-total of worshippers in the 'Old Christendom' of Western Europe.

This is a must-read for those interested in Christianity in China, as, indeed, all Christians should be. It will prove both interesting and invigorating, encourage the heart and inform prayers for what the publishers boldly call 'the Next Christendom,' and for a work of grace in our own situation.

*John W Keddie*

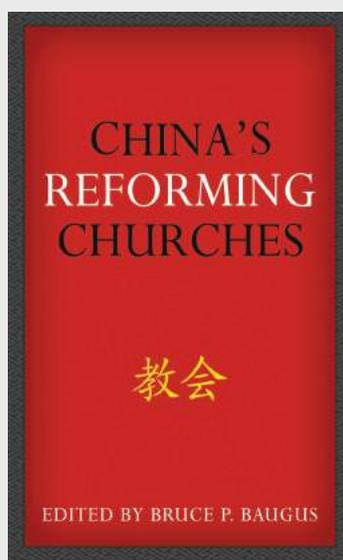


### **What does the Bible really teach about Homosexuality?**

Kevin DeYoung, IVP, pbk, 158pp, £7.99

Kevin de Young provides us with an excellent study of what the Bible teaches on the subject of homosexuality. The first half of the book expounds the five key biblical passages: Creation (Genesis 1-2), Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), the Moral Law (Leviticus 18, 20), the Roman road (Romans 1) and 'A new word from an old place' (1 Corinthians 6 and 1 Timothy 1). The second half deals with objections from the pro-homosexual lobby, eg, 'It's not that kind of homosexuality', 'It's not fair', 'You're on the wrong side of history' and 'The God I worship is love'. Appendices deal with 'Same-sex marriage' and 'Same-sex attraction'. This is a useful book which clearly, yet sensitively, presents the biblical case in these matters.

*Rev William Macleod*



### **Christ Set Forth: As the Cause of Justification and as the Source of Justifying Faith**

Thomas Goodwin, Banner of Truth Trust, Puritan Paperback, 242pp, £5.75

This treatise is one of the finest experiential writings of the Puritan period, and is among the most practical works of the erudite Thomas Goodwin (1600-1680). It is found in Goodwin's Works, volume 4, Nichol Series, pp.1-91.

Goodwin himself gives the reason for the work. It is for those who 'are searching into the gracious dispositions of their own heart' to get a sight of Christ, but 'Christ himself "is nigh" them ... if they would nakedly look upon himself through thoughts of pure and single faith'. The marks of grace are secondary or 'subordinate' to faith.

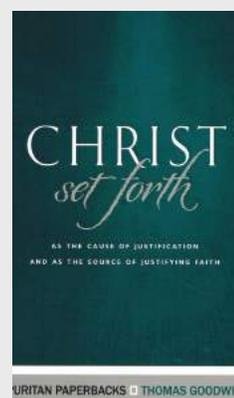
*Christ Set Forth* is an exposition of Romans 8:34, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died...'. With immense clarity and sound exegesis not only does Goodwin demonstrate the danger of the sinner's self-absorption and fixation on self-interrogation, but he also presents the utter inadequacy of the Christian not dwelling on the person of Christ, His death, resurrection, ascension, session, and intercession for us as the basis of our justification and our only comfort to deal with weak faith.

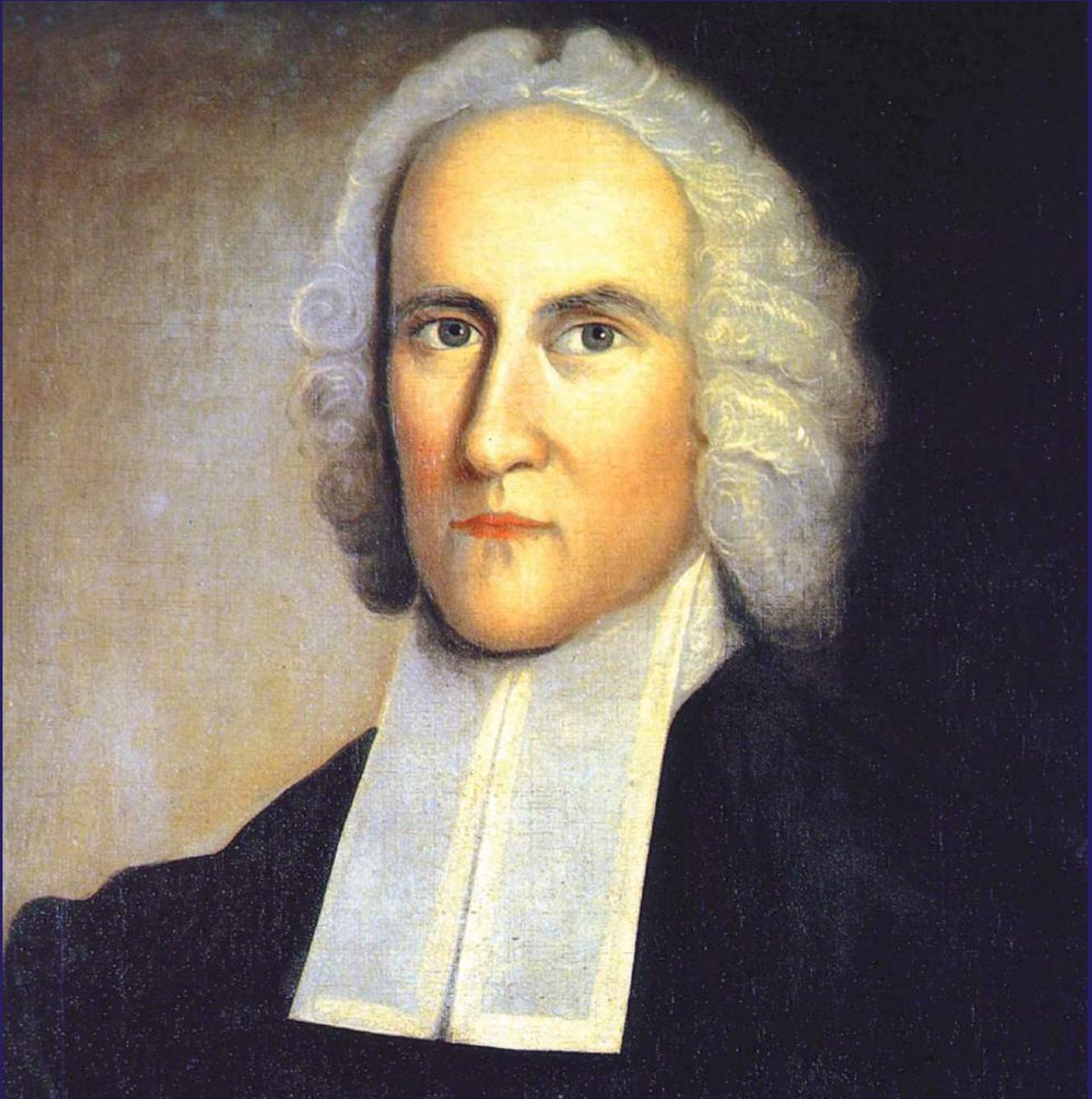
Romans 8:34 is thoroughly expounded as supporting the sinner's sense of faith. The efficacy and acceptability of the death of Christ for His people is proven by the resurrection, and as the representative head they who are in Him rise also, for 'all the elect are justified in His justifying of Christ'.

In an almost one hundred page section on Intercession Goodwin sees, in regard to Christ's sacrifice on earth, not only the fulfilment of Aaronic typology in regard to Christ's sacrifice on the earth, but significantly also that of Melchizedec which prefigures Christ's work in heaven. Oh, to be numbered in the prayers of our Great High Priest!

All will benefit from this book. Those who doubt their salvation will see that their assurance is not to be based on feelings, but on the work of Christ. Those with stronger faith will delight in being reminded of Christ's work for them, and the reason why they believe. Elders and ministers will see expository and experiential pastoral care at its best. Highly recommended!

*Rev Raymond Kemp*





**Jonathan Edwards 1703-1758**

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**(1 Peter 1:5-8)**