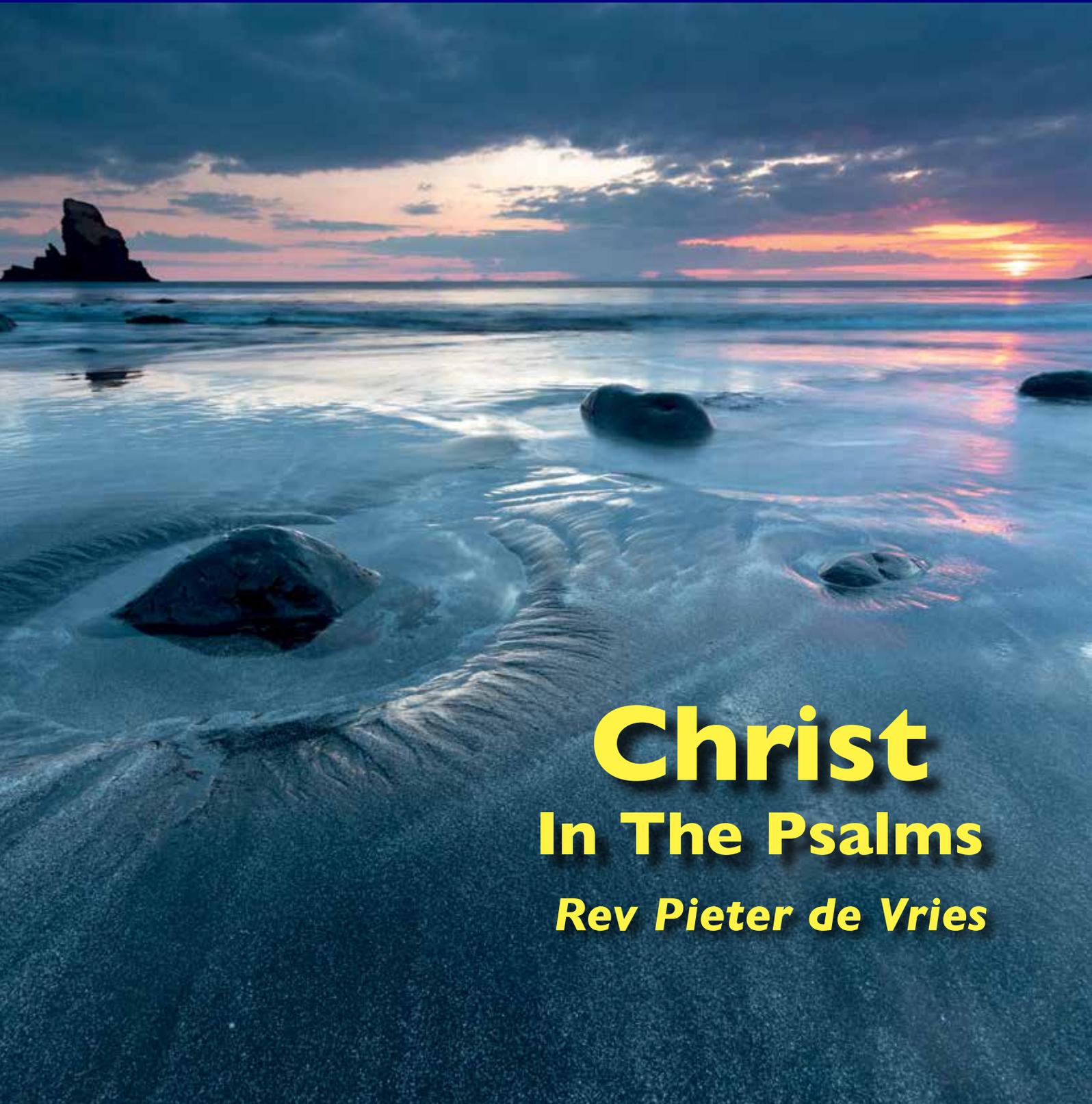


Free Church **Witness**



OCTOBER 2014 ISSUE



Christ **In The Psalms** *Rev Pieter de Vries*



Editor

Rev William Macleod
B.Sc Th.M

25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow
G13 1GJ

Tel 0141 959 0292

williammacleod@fccontinuing.org

Design and Layout: Alasdair Macleod

Cover: Shore, Isle of Skye (Dollar Photo Club)

Subscription Details

Subscription rates (including postage) for a year's issues of the two magazines mailed to one address are:

U.K. £27.50
Europe (Airmail) £30.00
Overseas (Airmail) £35.00

The congregational rate is £24.00.

We would like to encourage churches to make bulk orders. The *Explorer* may be ordered separately for Sabbath Schools.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to: "Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)"

Subscriptions and orders should be sent to:

Mrs Isobel McQueer
The Manse, Tordarroch, Farr,
Inverness IV2 6XF
Email: isobel@mcqueer.com
Tel: 01808 521474

Witness on Tape

The Free Church Witness magazine is available on two tapes which can be ordered at no cost.

Please order your tapes from:

Mr Murdo Campbell
19 Loganswell Road,
Glasgow G46 8AY

FCC Audio Ministry

Sermons by ministers of the Free Church (Continuing) are available on CD and a catalogue listing the sermons may be obtained. The cost of each CD (including postage) is £1.00.

Cheques/Postal Orders should be made payable to: "Free Church (Continuing) Tape Ministry"

Please order your catalogue and CDs from:

Mr Bill McQueer
The Manse, Tordarroch, Farr,
Inverness IV2 6XF
Email: bill@mcqueer.com

Psalmody CDs

Available from Mrs Isobel Scott
Tel: 01506 652168
www.sing-the-psalms.webs.com.

	Page
Wilt Thou not Revive us?	3
Obituary - D. W. Munro	6
Assembly Address - D. J. Morrison	7
News Desk	10
Books	14
Christ in the Psalms	15
Brief Visit to Mexico	17
Remittances - July 2014	18
Sri Lanka Update	19

Church Website at www.freechurchcontinuing.org

Gifts and Donations

All donations and gifts for the Church should be sent to the Financial Administrator:

Mrs Muriel Smith
1a Stewartfield
Stornoway
Isle of Lewis
HS1 2UW

from whom further information may be obtained. Cheques should be made payable to "Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)".

The Church is a recognised Scottish Charity (No. 030976).

General Treasurer

The General Treasurer is:
Angus Macmillan, 46a Newmarket, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0DU
Tel: 01851 703965 (Home)
Mobile: 07786 296931
Email: fcc.finance@btinternet.com

Published by

Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)
25 Branklyn Crescent
Academy Park
Glasgow G13 1GJ

COMMUNIONS

October:-

5 Ayr, Snizort,
12 Cross
19 Smith Falls
26 Atlanta, Point, Partick

November:-

2 Arran, Edinburgh, Beauly, Aultbea
9 Aberdeen, Tarbat

Printed by

DM Design & Print
25 Loch Lann Road
Inverness IV2 2HB

Wilt thou not Revive us? (Part II)

Last month we looked at revival, what it is, why we need it and the fact that it is only God who can give it. 'Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?' (Psalm 85:6)

4. We need to pray

Surely if it is God's work there is nothing we can do? In a sense that is true and yet we have human responsibility. We can pray and we can ask for revival. Yet even in this we need God's help to pray earnestly, persistently, humbly and with faith. It is the prayer which comes down from above which will ascend to God and bring down the blessing. When God grants the Spirit of grace and supplications (Zech.12:10) effectual, fervent prayers will ascend to heaven (Jas.5:16). In one sense there is nothing harder to do than to pray – to pray in faith and repentance with the Holy Spirit - and yet we must pray. Satan attacks us more when we pray than at any other time. He tries his hardest to distract us and often succeeds. He floods our minds with worldly thoughts and things we have to do. Yet we must pray for revival. It is our duty and as it has been said we should pray till we pray.

The following points should be noticed with regard to prayer for revival:

1) Identify sin

Isaiah tells us why we are not seeing revival: 'Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear' (Isa.59:1-2). There is a barrier between us and our God and it is one that we have raised. Let us search our hearts, see our sins, confess, repent, wash in the blood and be clean for God. Let us turn from our sins and be holy and then He will stretch out His mighty arm in revival. Are we asking why His hand in judgment is resting upon us?

2) Mourn and weep over sin

Let us fast and mourn and weep over our sins. Let us have that 'godly sorrow [which] worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of' (2Cor.7:10). Let us remember how Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel and others fasted before the Lord. Our Saviour expected us to fast, 'But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face' (Matt.6:17). It's when you fast, not if you fast.

3) Claim the Blood of Christ

Though we are great sinners, Christ is a great Saviour. 'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive

us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1Jn.1:9). And we are assured, 'the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin' (v7). We must pray for Christ's sake.

4) Plead the promises

Many promises have been given which can be pleaded in prayer. Think of the words in Isaiah: 'For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring' (Isa.44:3). We are dry and thirsty ground here in Britain. We need the water of life, the Holy Spirit, to be poured out upon us. Yes the Spirit was given in a once-for-all way at Pentecost, but we long for a fresh experience of His power to salvation. He is grieved and hiding Himself. Jesus encourages us, 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?' (Lk.11:13). We who are sinners love to give gifts to our children; how much more will our loving Father in heaven give us the Holy Spirit when we plead with Him? The Holy Spirit is the one who produces revival.

5) Persevere in prayer

We must persevere in prayer even when it seems we are getting no answer. All Christians should persist in prayer; but especially ministers who are called to be watchmen: 'I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth' (Isa.62:6-7). Jerusalem is the church and instead of it being a tiny down-trodden minority we long to see it grow and multiply till it becomes a mighty city set upon a hill for all to see and admire. Persevere in secret prayer, family prayer and congregational prayer. Remember how Jacob wrestled with God and said 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me' (Gen.32:26).

6) Unite in prayer

Jonathan Edwards wrote his famous book entitled An humble attempt to promote explicit agreement and visible union of God's people, in extraordinary prayer for the revival of religion and the advancement of Christ's kingdom on earth. He wished to see all the churches across America and Britain united in prayer for revival on a set day. He joined with others praying for God's blessing during part of every Saturday night and Sunday morning and kept the first Tuesday in each

quarter as a day of special prayer and intercession.

7) Expectant prayer

Along with prayer should be expectation. We are to look for answers. Trusting in the power of God who can do anything and in the mercy of God who will do what is best, we are to look for a glorious answer. Ask and you shall receive for Jesus said: 'Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened' (Matt.7:8). He 'is rich unto all that call upon him' (Rom.10:12).

5. What Revival achieves

Many people think of revival as lots of sinners being converted and so its main impact as they see it is upon the world. However the Psalmist starts with the church, the people of God: 'revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee'. The church has fallen asleep and needs to be wakened; it has become weak and needs a new injection of energy. Edwards speaks of God bestowing a sense of need upon the church and causing God's people to start praying in earnest before a revival as the first step in a revival. When the great revival came to North Korea in 1907 the first impact was upon the church. There was a tremendous conviction of sin causing men and women to fall down weeping and confessing their sins before the church.

Revival brings a new hunger for God. Sadly in the church today we spend money for that which is not bread and our labour for that which does not satisfy (Is.55:2). Christians have their lives taken up with pleasures, parties, sport, entertainment, TV, internet, Facebook, YouTube, etc. It is called culture and relaxation but it swallows up all spare time so that there is little reading of solid Christian books, meditating on the Scriptures, serious reflection and self-examination, and prayer. The Psalmist said, 'O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary' (Psa.63:1-2). He had a passion for God. Do we? When revival comes, the Lord's people will turn from trivia and devote themselves to Him. Holiness of life will become the priority. Witnessing and evangelising will become natural and constant.

Having first impacted the church, revival will with them affect the whole of society. The fear of God will come down upon the land. Christianity is shown to be real in the life of believers whom the world typically dismisses as hypocrites. This will shake sinners. Eternity will draw near and the Judgment Day will be seen as inevitable. Evangelism will be easy as people come in droves to church and sit earnestly under the preaching which now has new power. The unbelievers are convicted of sin and of God's wrath upon them and cry for mercy. Real tears are shed in repentance. Sinners are born again, delivered

from a state of condemnation and brought to peace with God and assurance of His love, peace of conscience and rejoicing in adoption.

6. We need Joy

This is a world full of sorrows. Everywhere we look there is pain. Sickness, disability, disappointment, grief, tears and death are universal. Scripture states: 'We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now' (Rom.8:22). But the Psalmist prays, 'Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?' Revival brings joy to a sad and miserable world. Christians ought to be happy, because joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit who indwells them. But we find it difficult. We have foolishly looked in the wrong place for joy. But a revival will give great joy to the Christian. It brings heaven close. The Spirit works mightily giving joy unspeakable and full of glory (1Pet.1:8). There is joy in seeing one sinner repent and so when many repent there is overwhelming joy (Lk.15:7). Remember the joy you had when you were first converted and knew that your sins were forgiven and that God loved you and Christ died for you and that the Holy Spirit now lived in your heart and that you were indeed a child of God. The love of God filled your heart. In our lives since then there have been times when God has specially drawn near. Perhaps we were praying, or reading a good book or listening to a sermon and we felt God near and we were stirred to the heart. Revival is a time of overflowing joy in God.

7. We need to have confidence in God

The Psalmist began the Psalm by asserting that God had been good to Israel in the past. He had delivered His people from their captivity (v1). He had forgiven their sins (v2) and turned from His anger with them (v3). The fact of that past deliverance encouraged the Psalmist to hope that God would answer his prayer again. Another encouragement was that God is the God of salvation, the God who loves to save (v4). Surely this God will not always be angry with His people (v5). He is a merciful God; let Him reveal His salvation (v7). I will listen to God for He will speak words of peace to His people. Do not let us return to the foolish ways which brought His anger upon us (v8). Salvation is near to us and the God of glory will reveal Himself (v9). Through the work of Christ at Calvary, mercy and truth and righteousness and peace have met together. Heaven and earth are joined in Christ who is God and man (v11). There is a blessed and prosperous future (v12). Many will be justified by faith in Christ (v13).

'Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?' Surely we can pray this prayer with confidence because of who God is and what He has done in the past. We live in dark days but there is no



"Trust in the power of God who can do anything and in the mercy of God who will do what is best"

reason to despair. God has not lost His ancient power. The sophisticated sinners of today and the proud atheists who love to dismiss God are not beyond His power to save. It is as easy for Him in 2014 to save a persecutor and blasphemer as it was for Him 2000 years ago to save Paul. It takes a mighty miracle for God to regenerate anyone. The sinner who is dead in trespasses and sins has to be resurrected. Only God can do it and it takes the same mighty power as created the world and raised Jesus from the dead.

The kingdom of heaven is like the mustard seed which is the smallest of the seeds yet it grows into a great plant in which birds can roost (Matt. 13:31-32). It is like yeast which a woman took and hid in three measures of dough till the whole was leavened. The kingdom, it is promised, will permeate and transform the whole world.

King Nebuchadnezzar was given a dream in which the great empires of the world were portrayed as a huge image, the head of gold representing the Babylonian empire, the silver chest and arms representing the Medo-Persian empire, etc. But then God set up a new kingdom different from these, a stone cut out of the mountain not by human hands. This little stone rolls along and smashes the image. 'And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not

be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever' (Dan.2:44). We are told that, 'the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth' (v35).

Edwards was a postmillennialist. He looked forward to great days of Gospel blessing on earth. The Psalmist speaks of Messiah's kingdom: 'He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him' (Ps.72:8-11). It is not just a remnant that will be saved. Nothing like this kind of extension of the church has been seen till now.

Let us be optimistic and excited as we view the future of the church. We look forward to seeing the Jews converted as a nation and this being 'life from the dead' for the Gentile church (Rom.11:15). We want to see God glorified on earth as well as in heaven. Pray for revival and look with expectation to the Lord to do it. Labour on for the Lord spreading the kingdom and waiting with excitement to see the great things that the Lord will yet do for His church, even on earth. To Abraham it was said, 'in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed' (Gen.12:3). Blessing is promised for the families, not just for a little minority. Moses declared that the earth is going to be full of the glory of God (Num.14:21). John related in Revelation how 'the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever' (Rev.11:15). The best is yet to be and all nations shall bow to King Jesus.

This sermon was preached at a conference on Jonathan Edwards held in Durham University (February 2014) and is due to appear in the appendix of the forthcoming book Jonathan Edwards for the Church (Evangelical Press) which is composed of the lectures given at the conference.

Obituary

Duncan William Munro (Elder, Brora)



On 9 June 2014 Duncan William Munro passed peacefully to his eternal rest. He was at home in Lairg with his family, where he wanted to be. His passing was a milestone in the church and community. Known as 'Willie Munro', he was one of the best-known people in Sutherland. He was a man with considerable gifts, energy and drive; a resourceful man with a big heart and loveliness of character. His life story with a full account of his service in the army and his success as a businessman would take far more space than we have here. He was born in Rogart, and brought up there with his sisters Ella and Cathie, and brother Johnny. In 1940 he married Lizzie Mackenzie, and they had four of a family: Barbara, Angus, Betty and William, who held their father in the highest esteem. He also had several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, with whom he engaged with great enjoyment all round.

Willie joined the Lovat Scouts in 1938, when he was twenty years of age, going to Canada for special training in snowy conditions, and saw active service in Italy and the Faeroe Islands. He still had his skis from that time. This period in his life resulted in a life-long attachment to his fellow-soldiers in the Lovat Scouts. They were a very close group who never forgot one another.

Willie built up his business with hard work, starting from very humble beginnings. He began with a van, selling groceries round Lairg and surrounding villages and even travelling to the west coast. He eventually built up a very successful grocery business centred on Lairg and serving a wide area round about. Although in due time he handed the business over to his family, he remained involved in the work till late in life.

He loved salmon-fishing and he also kept bees. He even had up to a hundred ducks coming up from the loch to the back of his house for their daily feed of bread and other things left over from the shop. In all, a very full life. But the most important thing in Willie's life began before he started his business. While working in Hosie's bar in Lairg he heard Billy Graham preaching on the radio and was converted to Christ. He worshipped in the Free Church in Lairg and in the Free Church (Continuing) in Brora, serving with faithfulness and zeal until his death. My memory of him will always be of a Christian whose zeal for the gospel and love for sinners never dampened. He loved gospel sermons and loved to give out gospel

tracts and recordings to the unsaved. Even during his time in Cambusavie Hospital towards the end of his life, one of the nurses told me that he took every opportunity to speak to them about Christ. His winsome personality was a great asset to him in this work and made it difficult for people to reject him.

One of the highlights of Willie's life, especially latterly, was attending General Assemblies. He continued this even after his sight had seriously failed. He was happy among God's people and much appreciated the fellowship. Many sought him out, telling him who they were and this was a source of great delight to him.

He had been an elder for sixty-four years and was a great person for a minister to have in his congregation. He was an encourager and an uplifter for any who were cast down. His determination to attend church towards the end of his life, when it involved great effort, was amazing. He loved the singing of psalms and was an excellent precentor. He had a wonderful sense of humour, which was not dampened by personal trials. He lost his wife twenty-four years before his own death, but he kept busy, leading a very full life, until he suffered a stroke, which hospitalised him for six months. The family took him home for the last four weeks of his life and their care of him was exemplary: an indication of the high esteem in which they held him. His funeral at Lairg Free Church was attended by a very large gathering. We mourn his passing, but are confident that he is enjoying the presence of Christ where there is 'fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore'.

Rev Allan Murray

Assembly Address

**Donald John Morrison
(Home Mission Worker)**

Great Commission – Great Gospel

Christ's timeless soul-winning command is summed up in the forgotten and neglected words of the Great Commission: 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature' and 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in'. Notice here how our Lord speaks without any limitation or restriction. I wonder how many of us appreciate in the highest sense that the 'every' and the 'them' spoken of in these verses include all of mankind, all of humanity - including the depraved, the foulest, the vilest and the very worst of sinners. The 'every' and the 'them' excludes no-one, but rather includes everyone! Whatever sin sinners are guilty of, God does not deceive or delude any of them with His gracious offer and invitation of salvation when He says: 'Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely ... whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'. God never plays mind-tricks over the truths of His Word, when a sinner is commanded to repent and believe the gospel. He means what He says and He says what He means. The unchanging truth about the Great Commission is written for us in His word, and we are to believe the promises. Encompassed in the Great Commission is a great gospel and a great Christ 'who is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him'. The words of another missionary should be a rebuke to us all: 'Any church that is not seriously involved in helping fulfill the Great Commission has forfeited its biblical right to exist'.

'Naked savages' lost in sin

History records five young Protestant missionaries who didn't question any of these promises, but wholeheartedly believed them, when they responded to God's call to

bring the gospel to the unreached Aucas or 'naked savages', a primitive tribe living in the jungles of Ecuador. They were also the most dangerous tribe known to man. The world had a lot to say about these heartless tribesmen. Time magazine called them 'the worst people on earth' and went on to say, 'They are a pure Stone Age people and hate all strangers. They live only to hunt, fight and kill. Their most notable products are needle-sharp 9-foot hardwood spears for use against human foes... Even their neighbours, the Jivaros, famous for shrinking human heads, live in constant fear of these fierce and naked savages... Sin, which Christians speak often of, they know nothing about. These people are notoriously lost'. Time magazine didn't disclose anything about the gospel that saves the lost or that the 'Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost' – yes, even those who are notoriously lost.

Mission outreach in Ecuador jungle

The five missionaries were Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian and Nate Saint. These five Christian men, and their devoted wives, had one thing only on their mission agenda: they were eager to share the gospel message of salvation and God's love in Christ with those who had never heard it. But, above all, they were dedicated to the Lord Himself and sought to be obedient to His command and calling amongst these hostile savages. Reflecting afterwards on belittling words said to Nate Saint, about wasting his life on mission work amongst these people, he said: 'People who do not know the Lord ask why in the world we waste our lives as missionaries. They forget that they too are expending their lives...and when the bubble has burst, they will have nothing of eternal significance to show for the years they have wasted'. Jim Elliot also went on to say: 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose... Those who want to know Christ must walk the same path with him. These are the "martyrs" in the scriptural sense of the word, which means simply "witnesses". In life, as well as in death, we are called to be "witnesses" – to "bear the stamp of Christ"'.

Life in the blood of the martyrs

In the strange providence of God, these missionaries



Roger Youderian Pete Fleming Jim Elliot Nate Saint Ed McCully

"They were all brutally speared to death, on the banks of the Curaray River, on 8th January 1956, ruthlessly killed by the very people they had gone to win for Christ"

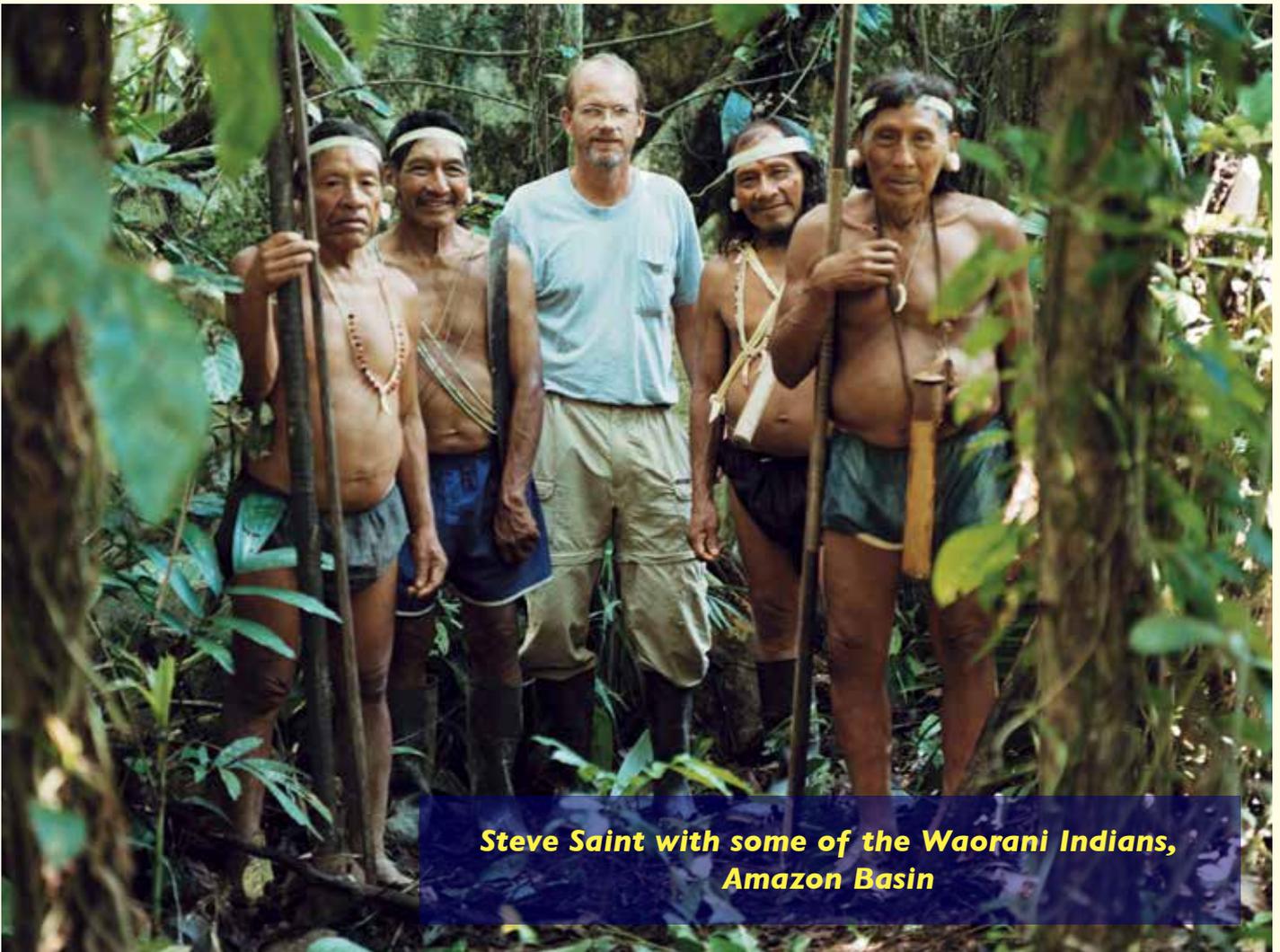
were to witness to the Aucalndians for only a few months, before they were all brutally speared to death, on the banks of the Curaray River, on 8th January 1956. They were ruthlessly killed by the very people they had gone to win for Christ. There was worldwide outcry: 'They wasted their lives... their work was in vain... they died for nothing'. Not so! Just as all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of a single candle, so the gospel light which these five faithful missionaries ignited would never be extinguished! Truly, as Tertullian said many centuries ago, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church. The effort to reach the Auca Indians was not abandoned. Spurred on by the death of their husband and brother, Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel Saint established a home among the Auca Indians in 1958, after they were invited to live with them.

They were both passionate about taking the gospel to this unreached tribe and translating the Scriptures into their language. They got to know the murderers and everything about them - Gikita, Kimo, Nimonga, Dyuwi, Minkayi, and Tona. As they continued to win their trust and confidence, they also taught them of the Saviour for whom the martyred men had died. Nine years later, the first copies of the Gospel of Mark in the Waodani

language were dedicated at 'God's Speaking House'. Kimo prayed, 'Father God, You are alive. This is Your day and all of us have come to worship You. They brought us copies of Your Carving, enough for everybody. We accept it, saying, "This is the truth". We want all of Your Carving'.

Baptized by father's killers

Something else quite extraordinary happened. In an unbelievable expression of reconciliation, Steve Saint, Nate's son, was baptised by two of the men who murdered his father, in the very river where his father died. At the request of the Waodani elders, he returned to the Amazon in 1995 along with his wife and children to live among the tribe for several months. While working with them to build an airstrip in the jungle, Steve Saint spoke with Gikita, the leader of the attack. The eighty year old man, with tears in his eyes, said to him: 'I wish to go to heaven and live peacefully with the five men who came to tell me about Wangongi (creator God) and the way of salvation in Jesus Christ'. One Christian biographer writes: 'The seed that died on Ecuador's beach on 8th January 1956 sprouted, in due time, into the fruit of salvation of the very savages that threw their deadly spears. The killers became born-again Christians.



Steve Saint with some of the Waorani Indians, Amazon Basin

Eternal Life sprang forth out of death'. The legacy left behind by the five slain missionaries and their families still lives on today. The Auca Indians quickly realized their mistake in killing the very men that loved them enough to bring Christ's message of reconciliation to them. The Auca Indians were able to accept the message which spoke of Christ's death because they were able to see the message lived out in these men's lives who responded to the call of the Great Commission. And as Hudson Taylor once said 'The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed'.

Lost in the jungles of Scotland

The primitive tribes living in the jungle of Ecuador are not the only ones notoriously lost; so are the vast unreached numbers living in the 'jungles' of Scotland. Like the Aucas they too have to be reached with the gospel and the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. To hear about the 'good news' they must be told. If we don't tell them, who will? 'How can they hear without a preacher?' How can they hear about...the lostness of hell, the glory of heaven, the grace of God, the forgiveness of sin, the power of the blood in cleansing the heart, the gift of salvation, the loveliness of Christ, the preciousness of a precious Saviour...unless we tell them! The extent of our burden for the lost and a compassion for souls will, I believe, determine how far we are prepared to go and to what level we are prepared to stoop... to tell them 'that God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved'.

Reaching out with the gospel

My home base in the Highland capital has, over the past eleven years, brought me into contact with multitudes of people from around the world. It is quite incredible to think that from a little corner of Scotland a global congregation, representing many countries, have had the good news message of salvation shared with them. It also continues to be shared with multitudes across the country through the various evangelistic and gospel outreach campaigns organised throughout the year, both in busy urban settings and isolated rural communities. One effective witnessing tool, for reaching people with the truth, has been gospel tracts and literature.

You will all be encouraged to know that in 2013 a mountain of good evangelistic and Reformed literature was distributed and circulated, in the various places I visited across Scotland. Some of these places included: Shettleston, Knightswood, (districts of Glasgow), Edinburgh, Stornoway, Ardelve/Broadford, Ayr, Dores & Farr and of course throughout Inverness. Mission outreach was also engaged in at the Hebridean Celtic Festival, Rockness and at the large Army Base in Fort George. Along with the large quantity of literature given out throughout the year in foreign languages, especially

Polish, a combined total of around 17,000 gospel tracts were also distributed, along with 9,507 booklets and magazines, 67 Bibles and 5,000 TBS Calendars. Our hope and prayer is that the eyes of many Jews and Gentiles will be opened through the materials distributed, near and far, and that God's Word will make many 'wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2 Timothy 3:15).

Valuable Cargo

Some time ago a large quantity of secondhand Bibles ended up in our mission house in Inverness. We seem to be everybody's drop off point for things old and seemingly unusable! Such a valuable cargo, however, is never discarded. Someone, somewhere always values the truth regardless of age. You can imagine my joy on hearing that the Sailors' Society in Invergordon was interested in the whole consignment! Shortly after delivering them, they were distributed amongst the Filipino crew of a luxury cruise ship, when it docked in the busy Easter Ross seaport. I was informed that members of the Society regularly meet up with these men and women, and have Bible study with them whenever their ship is in port. I was also assured that the Bibles were eagerly received and deeply appreciated. Truly, God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform, when we consider how and where these Bibles travelled from: Edinburgh via Inverness, to Invergordon, on to a cruise ship and then across oceans to the Philippines! Our hope is that every recipient will yet come to serve on the gospel ship rejoicing that Christ is the captain of their salvation.

'Give me Scotland for Christ'

A solemn word of rebuke comes from Chrysostom, which must be applied to us all if we are not labouring to reach out and win the lost for Christ. 'Nothing', he says, 'is more useless than a Christian who does not try to save others... I cannot believe in the salvation of anyone who does not work for his neighbour's salvation'. Oh that the Lord would waken us from our deep slumber so that we might reach out and win souls for Christ! 'He that winneth souls is wise'. Once the Samaritan woman drank the 'living water' at the 'well of salvation' this is exactly what she did. She couldn't be silenced. She became a soul-winner. Her earnest desire was to tell others about the Saviour who had transformed her sinful life, given her a new heart and saved her soul: 'Come', she said to the people of her town, 'and see a man that told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?' We are told in Daniel 12:3 that soul-winners will shine for eternity: 'And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever'. Oh that the Lord would give us all the soul-winning heart cry of John Knox when he said, 'Give me Scotland for Christ'.



News

Nigeria

E Kendal

Praise God no more young girls have been used as suicide bombers. However, Boko Haram appears to have adopted the strategy of taking captives for use as soldiers, in much the same way the Lord's Resistance Army has done. Please pray! On Sunday 24 August Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau released a video statement in which he declared Gwoza town in Borno State part of a new Islamic Caliphate. Boko Haram seized Gwoza earlier this month. The United Nations humanitarian office confirms that Gwoza is under rebel control. Vanguard reports: 'Boko Haram is also believed to be in control of other areas near Gwoza in southern Borno, as well as large swathes of territory in northern Borno and at least one town in neighbouring Yobe state. ... Experts have described Boko Haram's gains in recent weeks as unprecedented, saying the group was closer than ever to achieving its goal of carving out a strict Islamic state across northern Nigeria'.

Iraq

E Kendal

Christians have been almost entirely ethno-religiously cleansed from Nineveh Province. Only the most elderly and frail have remained in their homes, forced to either convert to Islam or pay jizya (protection money) to survive. Nineveh's Christians fled en masse into Iraqi Kurdistan where churches

are struggling to cope with this massive humanitarian crisis.

Ukraine

E Kendal

Conflict erupted after an opposition protest was hijacked by unsavoury elements seeking empowerment, and exploited by foreign powers prepared to risk Ukraine's unity in pursuit of their own interests. A massive propaganda war is underway. Beneath the belligerence is terrible human suffering and a rapidly escalating humanitarian crisis. There is a desperate need for a ceasefire, a political solution, long-term peace and reconciliation. Pray that the churches – which are under immense strain – might lead the way in peace and reconciliation, for the future of Ukraine and for the glory of God.

China

E Kendal

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is resurrecting an old, tried-and-failed strategy through which the administration of President Xi Jinping believes it can control the growing Christian Church. The strategy is known as 'theological reconstruction', and the CCP's plan is to construct a theology that makes Chinese Christianity compatible with Chinese socialism. To put it another way: the 'Sinicisation of Christianity' is aimed at constructing a state-approved theology which will serve CCP interests. According to the director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, Wang Zuonan,

this will facilitate the growth of Christianity. However, when this strategy was last implemented (in the 1990s) all it facilitated was escalating persecution which failed to eradicate traditional believers. It seems the Chinese Church is facing a new wave of persecution.

Internationally recognised Chinese human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, known for his courageous defence of persecuted Christians, has been released from detention. Gao was arrested in December 2006 and tortured severely while serving a three-year sentence. In April 2010 he was 'disappeared' to a secret 'black jail'. Eventually in December 2011 the authorities reported that Gao had been returned to prison for another three years. Released on 7 August 2014, it appears Gao had been kept in solitary confinement the whole time: no communication, no books or input of any kind. Each day he was fed one slice of bread and one piece of cabbage. Consequently he has lost 22kg and his teeth have rotted due to malnutrition. Furthermore, it seems Gao has been repeatedly tortured; reportedly he is able to speak only in short sentences and much of what he says is unintelligible. He has not been able to see a doctor. Gao's wife, Geng He (who now lives in the US) is appealing to the Chinese authorities to allow her husband to travel to the US for medical treatment. Pray for Gao Zhisheng and that he will be able to get to the US. Many are concerned that he might 'disappear'

Desk



FCC Youth Weekend, Scaladale, Harris, June 2014



yet again. Doubtless the CCP's plan is to make sure all Chinese human rights lawyers get the message: this is what happens to those who challenge the CCP! Please pray.

Scaladale Report

Miriam Clark

The summer month of June saw a swarm of young people descend upon the Scaladale Centre in the

Isle of Harris for the denomination's (now) annual 20s/30s weekend away. Despite the weekend being under the auspices of the denomination, it was lovely to see friends joining from other denominations - some travelling from as far as Northern Ireland and Germany to hear the Rev John Macleod (Rtd, Duthil-Dores) address the topic of the Lord's

atonement. Beginning his series on the Friday, Mr Macleod introduced the vicarious sufferings of the Lord in the room and stead of His people by reference to the different types of offerings in the Old Testament. Saturday morning built upon this theme by looking at reconciliation through the cross – particularly the necessity of reconciliation,

the initiative of reconciliation, the infinite wisdom of reconciliation and the ministry of reconciliation. Saturday evening lifted us to the apex of that reconciliation for the redeemed – their singing of the 'new song' (Revelation 5) where the Lord's believing people see Him as their all in all, their inheritance and cup (Psalm 16:5). We were reminded that it needed infinite merit to atone for our infinite demerit and that only the Lord could say 'It is finished' – the price has been paid.

Sabbath morning centred upon the particular progressive sufferings the Lord endured – particularly with regard to Him being a sin bearer from conception and being made sin on the cross. The temptability of Christ was discussed (a hot topic for the Sabbath afternoon conversations!) and we were gently reminded that His sufferings mean we should never be ashamed to call Him our closest Brother and Saviour. Sabbath evening saw us warmly welcomed by the Leverburgh FCC congregation where we all crowded in to listen to Mr Macleod's final talk on Isaiah 45:21 – 'A Just God and A Saviour'. Addressing various questions the unconverted may have, Mr Macleod denounced the idea of the cross as superstitious savagery and that God had in any way changed in Himself by forgiving sin. Speaking on forgiveness, he reminded the believer that offences against us may be regarded as gifts for our sanctification if only we would see them as such (Philippians 1:29).

We are most grateful to Mr Macleod for his thoughtful and considered preparation and delivery of his talks over the course of the weekend. We are also grateful for his constant patience and willingness to answer the bombardment of questions he daily received (watch out future speakers!) Votes of thanks must also go out to all those who worked behind the scenes to ensure the weekend was such a success – particularly the wonderful chef Sandra Mackay and her excellent sous chefs, Caroline Morrison and Jennifer Little, who kept both minister and wildebeests masquerading as young people going all weekend. We are also very thankful for the centre manager Sean Stephen and his team who efficiently organised kayaking and hill walking activities to counteract the effect of all the delicious cooking and baking... A special thanks in this area must also be given to the Stornoway congregation whose baking was very gratefully received and well utilised! We also thank the Stornoway Deacons' Court for their monetary donation which was similarly appreciatively received.

Continuing with the long list of 'thank yous' (!), we thank Stornoway elder Mr Donald Macdonald for giving his time to take a minibus down to Scaladale and personally chauffeur us on to Leverburgh. We also thank all day visitors for their support and for all those who generously contributed to the Sabbath's retiring collection for Partheepan's work in Sri Lanka – a wonderful total of £386.09 being raised. Finally, we thank all those who were not able to be with us but who remembered our time

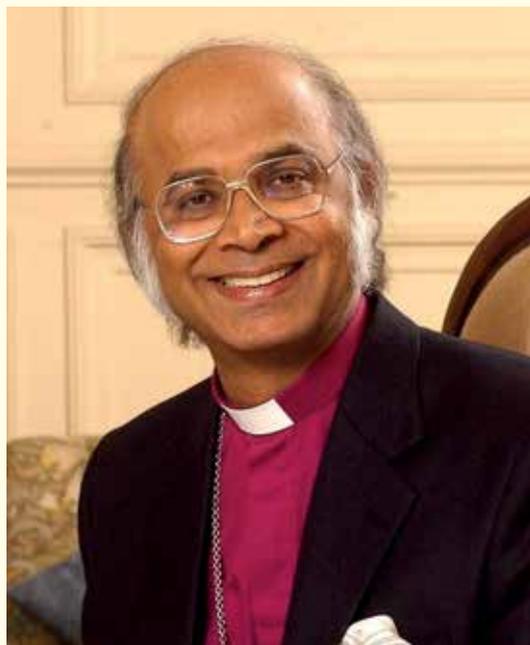
together at the throne of grace in prayer. We are most grateful to you all. Above all, we give thanks to God for all His good gifts over the weekend and especially for the perfect gift of Christ Jesus for 'every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning' (James 1:17).

[NB To follow the series of talks you can go to the Stornoway Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) site on Sermon Audio.]

A Tsunami Of Social Disintegration Waiting To Happen

Christian Concern

Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali has warned that the latest revelation of the scale of Britain's 'underclass' – half a million problem families – is 'only the tip of an iceberg which is lurking to shipwreck society'. He was commenting on an interview given to the Sunday Times by Louise Casey, the troubleshooter engaged by David Cameron in 2011 to turn round a problem then estimated at 120,000 failing families, following the urban summer



Rev Michael Nazir-Ali

riots. Casey, Director General of Troubled Families, now calculates that the problem is four times greater with dysfunctional families blighting neighbourhoods and costing the taxpayer more than £30bn a year.

Bishop Michael says, 'The impact of family failure is greater than Louise Casey estimates and it is increasing exponentially with the subliminal cost of associated social ills such as treating depression, anxiety, other related illnesses, disruption at school and in the workplace – all adding to the bill for dealing with the more conspicuous law and order costs. He refers to the 'Cost of Family Failure Index' produced by the Relationships Foundation which puts the cost of family breakdown at £46 billion

– a 25% increase over five years – and the equivalent of every taxpayer in the UK paying £1,541 each year to pick up the pieces. 'The financial cost is of itself staggering – equivalent to the entire UK defence budget – and yet it doesn't take into account the continuing emotional and spiritual cost to the millions of adults and children damaged by family disintegration', says the Bishop.

Bishop Nazir-Ali says the political, social and spiritual challenge facing the UK is 'a tsunami of social disintegration waiting to happen'. He traces the problem of family failure to decades of dilution and dismantling of the value of marriage as the ideal family structure. For the first time since records began there are now more unmarried than married people of marriageable age and the reality is that fewer and fewer couples have stable relationships, he points out. He quotes the humanist philosopher, Brenda Almond, who observes that while some relationships of cohabitation do last for many years, on the whole they are more unstable than marital relationships. 'This is partly because the intention of cohabitantes is to avoid the very commitment that marriage requires', explains the Bishop.

He emphasises that the greatest victims of family breakdown are children with 2.5 million separated families in Great Britain and the rate of separations running at 300,000 per year. There is extensive evidence showing that stability in the family contributes positively to the development of children and that is an argument in favour of marriage. Family breakdown means children grow up in poorer housing conditions, they perform less well in school, they exhibit behavioural problems and require more medical treatment than their peers who live in homes where a mother and father remain together. Bishop Nazir-Ali points to the startling facts that a child born today will by the age of 16 only have a 50-50 chance of living with both birth parents, and that children deprived of their fathers, which is the most likely outcome of family breakdown, achieve much poorer life outcomes. Hard evidence from serious research shows that when children live with their fathers they have better physical and emotional health, they are more likely to avoid drugs and delinquency, and they do better academically. He says: 'Brenda Almond references such research which demonstrates that divorce is harmful for children, except in extreme cases such as domestic violence between husband and wife. Even where there is significant conflict in the marriage, family life in a married household is better for the welfare and development of children – but of course this reality contradicts the misguided but popular 'wisdom' that divorce in such situations is good for children. The Bishop says the Prime Minister himself has fallen for this myth in his latest speech on the family, given recently in London, when Mr. Cameron said, 'divorce can sometimes be the best outcome for children'. The Bishop says, 'Such a doctrine

is a convenient excuse for parents to get what they want and it absolves them from any guilt'.

Reaction to 'Trojan Horse' scandal

Christian Institute

The Christian Institute has threatened the Government with legal action over plans that 'sideline' parents, and compel independent schools to 'actively promote' homosexual and transsexual rights.

The Institute said that the new standards, to be implemented in more than 6,000 independent schools, free schools and academies, are 'badly written' and could result in removing gender specific terms such as 'husband' and 'wife' from the curriculum.

The Institute said the proposals are a 'rushed' response to the 'Trojan Horse' scandal in Birmingham, where certain state schools were taken over by governors seeking to impose harsh Islamic practices.

Head teachers have also raised concerns about the plans. Malcolm Trobe, deputy general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), warned there is a danger of 'over-regulation'. He said there is an 'inherent risk' of a 'knee-jerk response' to the high profile cases in Birmingham.

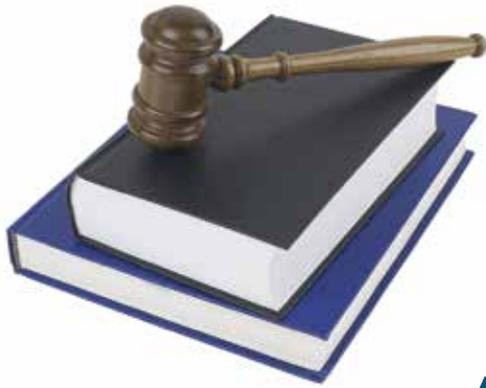


Colin Hart, Christian Institute

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Colin Hart, Director of The Christian Institute, said the new standards threaten to 'undermine the ethos of independent schools. Under the regulations parents are explicitly sidelined in their views' and can be 'challenged if they disagree with the new Government rules on equality', Mr

Hart said. 'The problem is the way these things can be used, and it can be completely over the top. Promoting transgender rights is not going to combat Muslim extremism'. He said these plans will enable people to sue an independent school, a free school or an academy over the content of the curriculum. 'The danger is we're taking specific things that arose in Birmingham and applying a blanket solution of political correctness, which is going to be very damaging to British education', he added.

The Christian Institute has warned that under the new standards, a Christian mother who tells her child that other religions are wrong could be challenged by her child's school.



Books

A Kirk Disrupted

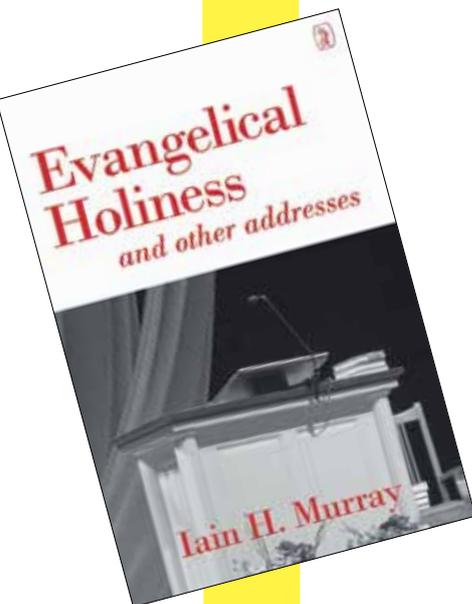
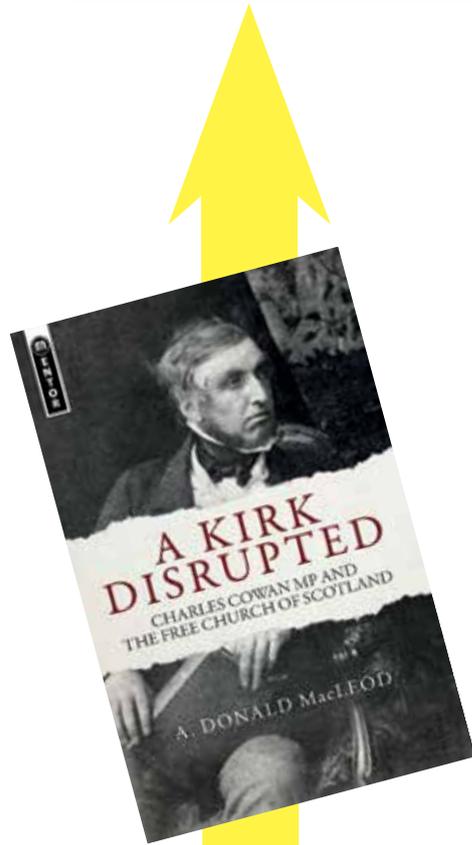
A. Donald MacLeod

Christian Focus, pbk, 363pp, £12.99

The sub-title of this book clarifies the subject: 'Charles Cowan MP and the Free Church of Scotland'. This volume comprises a biography of one of the leading Free Church laymen and Scottish businessmen of the 19th century. Charles Cowan's interests were varied to say the least. As one who lived through much of the century (1801-1889) Cowan's story is of special interest and significance as it touches so many areas of public and church life of that period. Charles Cowan was part of a family which was a major producer of paper throughout the century. The story of the development of the business is well told here and provides insight into the entrepreneurial spirit in the period following the industrial revolution. In some ways this is a family history though the focus is on a grandson of the founder of the paper-making business. There are interwoven through the story his involvement throughout his life with the family business, his work as an MP between 1847 and 1859, his concerns with social and philanthropic enterprises, and not least his involvement in church affairs and spiritual life, first in the Church of Scotland and then, after 1843, with the Free Church. He was, we learn, one of the leading laymen in the Free Church. His father, Alexander Cowan, was a first cousin of Thomas Chalmers, leader of the evangelicals and first moderator of the Free Church General Assembly. It seems that Charles Cowan, a member and elder initially in the Free Church congregation in Penicuik near Edinburgh, attended Free Church Assemblies as a commissioner

most years between 1843 and 1877. Already he had been a commissioner at Established Church Assemblies between 1838 and 1842. He was closely involved in Free Church affairs for the first thirty years of its history.

The story is well researched and interestingly told. At many levels it is a fascinating read. It goes some way to provide 'background' not only of social life in the lowlands of Scotland in the period, but also the impact of the Disruption of 1843 and the unfolding story of the Free Church. One of the under-researched areas is that of the laymen who were so influential in the Church. Donald MacLeod is to be warmly commended for such an excellent historical insight into the period. Though not much is said of Charles Cowan's spiritual experience, enough is said to indicate that he was a man of integrity and evangelical piety. Having said this, there is a sad side to the story for it covers a period of Scottish social and church history which saw social life becoming increasingly secularised and the Church becoming increasingly weakened as a spiritual force. This is evident in the story of Charles Cowan. From a high point of conservative evangelical faith and life in the early days of the Free Church we discern a weakening in commitment to the confessional position and evangelical certainties so evident at the time of the Disruption. It is sad to read of Cowan's support for those who advocated union with the more theologically diffuse United Presbyterian Church in the first union controversy of 1863-1873. Then there is disappointment at his advocacy of disestablishment after 1873 and of his subsequent support for the campaigns



of Dwight L Moody and Ira D Sankey from 1873. We learn that he was also supportive of Robertson Smith on the question of the place of 'Higher Criticism' that beset the Free Church between 1877 and 1881 (though his brother John voted against Smith in the final 1881 Assembly decision to remove him from the Hebrew chair in the Aberdeen College). The decline from the strict orthodoxy of the early days of the Free Church is traceable in this account of the period so faithfully represented by Donald Macleod, Research Professor of Church History at Tyndale Theological Seminary, Toronto, Canada.

Although this is a niche book it is highly recommended as an insight into some aspects of 19th century social and religious history. There are some minor flaws. The title is a bit of a misnomer. One expects a study of the Disruption and the Free Church. These are touched on, though they are not so prominent as the title suggests. There are other slight blemishes: In the Genealogy on page 12 the dates for Charles Cowan are inaccurately stated. On page 21 Robert Anderson should be Robert Adamson. Some statements are hard to follow: Page 149 speaks of Charles Cowan passing the Tron Church on the way to Tanfield Hall. Since the Tron Church is down the High Street from St Giles, perhaps Cowan passed it going from St Giles to the Assembly at St Andrews in George Street? The statement on page 249 is also hard to follow: 'While his father's cousin, Thomas Chalmers, had been a late and reluctant convert to Voluntaryism...'

We think not! The footnote 45 on page 310 has Smith instead of Simpson. Such flaws do not, however, detract from an excellent and useful historical biography.

Rev John W Keddie

Evangelical Holiness and Other Addresses

Iain H Murray

Banner of Truth Trust, pbk, 184pp, £6.00

Iain Murray always writes well. Here are five lectures which he gave on different occasions. 'Evangelical Holiness' states positively what we should all be aiming at. The second chapter, 'The Attack on the Bible' traces the development of liberal views towards Scripture from 1860 onwards. Iain Murray shows his brilliance in handling history. 'Apostasy' deals with the danger of apostasy as outlined in Scripture and then as it exists today. The causes are examined and also our duties in times of apostasy such as we are living in. The next chapter deals with 'The Benefits and Dangers of Controversy'. I found this to be the most challenging. We ourselves as a Church have passed through a time of controversy and have, I believe, experienced the deadening effects. There are times when we must contend for the faith but it is rare to emerge from conflict unscathed. The final chapter is an excellent defence of the Lord's Day and our duty to keep it as a holy rest to the Lord.

Rev William Macleod



Christ and the Psalms (Part I)

Dr Pieter de Vries

Part-time lecturer in Biblical Theology and Hermeneutics at the Seminary of the Hersteld Hervormde Kerk of the Netherlands and a pastor of the church of Boven-Hardinxveld.

I Introduction

It goes without saying that the book of Psalms has a special place among the books of the Bible. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, it was the hymn-book for the Old Testament saints as well as for the New. Paul wrote to the Colossians: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord' (Col.3:16). Psalms, hymns and songs are titles given to the Psalms. They are not only songs but prayers.

Luther stated that in the Psalms we look into the heart of the children of God. Following Augustine, both Luther and Calvin argued that the Psalms are to be used as a touchstone with regard to Christian experience. When we are Christians our joys correspond to the joys of the Psalms and our sorrow to their sorrows.

In the book of Psalms not only the joys and sorrows of the children of God are expressed but also the joys and sorrows of the only begotten Son of God, who became man in the fulness of time. Christ in a very special way is portrayed in the book of Psalms. When Christ

explained to His disciples after His resurrection that He should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, He referred explicitly to the Psalms. In Luke 24:44 we read: 'And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me'.

The books of Psalms (55 times) and Isaiah (47 times) are the books of the Old Testament quoted most often in the New Testament. In both books we find many messianic prophecies. The Lord Jesus Himself when He was on earth prayed in the language of the Psalms and He quite often confirmed His messianic mission and person by quoting the Psalms.

In these articles I wish to clarify the relationship between Christ and the Psalms. In this article I show how Christ is foreshadowed in the Psalms and also how Christ Himself referred to the Psalms in his earthly ministry. There is an overlap between the two topics. Firstly, we go back to the Old Testament dispensation looking forward to the New Testament. When you preach on the Psalms, in what way must you do that? Then we go to the four gospels and examine the text in the gospels where either the Psalms are quoted or where we find an allusion to the Psalter.

2 The Peculiar Character of the Book of Psalms Among the Books of the Bible

The Bible is God's revelation to man. This revelation is not only the record of God's actions on behalf of men and the interpretation of these actions, but it is also the record of the reaction of men to God's actions and words. Man's response to God which we find in the Bible, is in itself divine revelation. In this way the Lord makes clear how we ought to react to His actions and words.

Athanasius said that the Psalms are not so much God's Word to us as God's Word for us. We can also say that the book of Lamentations has in this respect the same character as the Psalms, but Lamentations restricts itself to the reaction of the Lord's people to the fall of Jerusalem. It is an example of how to react not only personally, but also collectively, after a great disaster has taken place. The scope of the Psalms is broader. Here we find examples which give us words by which to express our sorrow and joy. The Psalms show us under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit what the reaction of God's children is to all kinds of circumstances.

3 The Royal Psalms

In the Book of Psalms we find different types of Psalms. The Royal Psalms point us to the King of kings. Psalm 72 can be read as a prayer for the reigning king in Israel. But we can use it as a prayer for the government of our country. 'Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son. He shall judge thy

people with righteousness and thy poor with judgment' (Ps.72:1-2).

It is the task of rulers to promote external righteousness and justice. But they cannot change hearts. The peace and justice promoted by rulers can never be more than an external peace and justice. But what is said about justice in Psalm 72 goes much further. Finally the peace and justice there foretold are all-compassing. That means that they can never be the result of the efforts of a purely human king.

So the king in Psalm 72 is not only a type of future earthly governments, but above all a type of the Messiah who was and remained God and became man. His rule will be a rule of complete righteousness. Those who cleave to Him have been clothed with His imputed righteousness and He renews them by His Holy Spirit so that their lives increasingly are characterised by internal righteousness.

The book of Psalms expresses a fervent desire for the coming of Christ and His kingdom. The first coming of Christ is the principal fulfilment of these expectations and His second coming will be the final fulfilment. When He came for the first time to earth Christ laid the foundation of salvation. Redemption was accomplished. When that redemption is fully applied by the Holy Spirit to all who were foreordained by the Father, Christ will come back in glory.

After the final judgment it can be sung: 'The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness!' (Ps.72:3). It is no coincidence that the book of Psalms ends with several Psalms beginning and ending with Hallelujah ie praise the Lord (Ps.146-150). 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever'. The chief end of man is realised in the new creation in a way that surpasses the first creation. Redeemed humanity will sing unto all eternity, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb!' (Rev.7:10).

4 Psalm 2 as an introduction to the whole book of Psalms

We can say that the book of Psalms is the book of the God of Israel and His King, the Messiah. Zion is a picture and symbol of all the redeemed sinners of the Old Testament and New Testament dispensations. We sing of our King and Saviour: 'For the Lord is our defence; and the holy One of Israel is our king. Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him' (Ps.89:18-20).

The first two Psalms are an introduction to the rest. The first Psalm speaks about both the righteous and the godless people. This distinction is fundamental. It must have a place in every sermon since we must not suppose that everybody who goes to church is righteous in the sight of God. The second Psalm is about the Messiah:

Christ and His rule. Of the King of kings it was said from all eternity by the Father: 'Thou art my Son; today I have begotten thee' (Ps.2:7).

When Christ started His public ministry after His baptism in the river Jordan, the Father alluded to the second Psalm: 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Mt.3:17). In a special way the kingship of Christ was inaugurated when He ascended into heaven. Sitting at the right hand of the Father He reigns from sea to sea, yea to the ends of the earth (Ps.72). Although the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain and the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, Christ draws sinners from darkness to light (See Ps.2:1-

2). He will continue to do that until He comes back, for it is said of Him: 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever' (Heb.13:8).

Every Christian, and especially every minister of the gospel, has the task to urge his fellow sinners: 'Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him' (Ps.2:12). Biblical preaching is preaching in which Christ is portrayed in an urgent and affectionate way as the complete Saviour in order to win sinners for Christ, build up His church and glorify God.

(To be continued)

Brief Report on a Recent Visit to Mexico

Rev Maurice Roberts

Mexico is one of those countries we tend not to hear about when it comes to getting news of the worldwide church. Happily we do hear that the gospel is making progress in some South American countries, notably in Brazil, where such movements as Os Puritanos are doing good work in promoting Reformed theology and Puritan principles of worship. Undoubtedly one reason for our scant knowledge of church life in Spanish-speaking Mexico is that, till the twentieth century, it was a land in which the Roman Catholic Church held great power, almost to the exclusion of Protestant church life.

Our Invitation

Invitations to preach abroad are unpredictable things and often surprising. However, 'out of the blue' such an invitation came in God's providence from an unknown Christian minister a few months ago. This dear brother in Christ, whom we have now come to know and to esteem, was a Dr Roberto Perales.

Earlier in his life this good man, a medical doctor by profession and also a Christian minister, had been a leader in a Charismatic church in his native country of Mexico. However, he had been influenced by books published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

Truth changes everything in our life. Dr Perales, now a convinced Calvinist, left the Charismatic scene and began to pastor a Reformed congregation in the Mexican city of Tampico, located in the northeast of that country. His very kind request, following his new love for the doctrines of grace, was that I should travel to Mexico to

preach for him.

In response to this call my wife and I flew out on June 2nd of this year and arrived at Tampico next day. Here we were warmly welcomed by the Perales family and very kindly entertained in his home there. Mexican temperatures tend to be about 90 degrees Fahrenheit but the air-conditioning in this home made life very comfortable for the few days we stayed, before travelling on to two other cities for preaching and theological lecturing.

Tampico

The church in Tampico, a city of perhaps 300,000 inhabitants, was attended by about a hundred persons. I gave both sermons and theological lectures. In total I spoke in public twelve times. Of course, all the public speaking was done by means of an interpreter. The people listened well and, after lectures, I was happy to take questions on matters of theological interpretation arising from my talks.

One of our joys there was to meet lovely Christians. These included the wife and family members of Dr Perales and various members of the congregation, together with a Mexican lady who attended as a visitor and who is the mother of a student who worships with the FCC congregation here in Edinburgh! She and others in her family came to meet us, being friends of her son who is studying his PhD here in Scotland.

Tampico was the most dangerous of the three cities we stayed in. The root problem is related to two things: gangs in the area who deal in drugs and who kidnap wealthy persons for gain; and corruption in some parts of the law-enforcing agencies there. Our faithful brother Dr Perales has himself experienced some threatening behaviour. But God is his strength in the good work. To our delight we heard recently, after returning home, that he has seen a thirty percent growth in his congregation over the past month. God is rewarding his courage and

Congregational Remittances - July 2014

CENTRAL ORDINARY REMITTANCES				
BUILDING FUND	2014			
YTD 2014	July	To July	To July	
Presbytery of Inverness				
Aberdeen	0	1,300	12,127	10,349
Duthil-Dores	105,814	1,325	14,700	13,570
Inverness	0	2,000	16,070	16,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	0	1,400	13,085	9,912
Total Inverness	105,814	6,025	55,982	49,831
Northern Presbytery				
Assynt & Scourie	276	0	3,045	2,673
Brora	20	2,500	11,457	12,208
Kiltearn	123	500	4,715	3,822
Tarbat	0	1,000	8,191	6,913
Total Northern	419	4,000	27,408	25,616
Southern Presbytery				
Arran	451	848	5,632	5,407
Ayr	0	0	5,360	5,898
Dumfries	0	0	0	0
Edinburgh	245,998	2,500	16,388	17,424
Glasgow - Partick	102,345	1,700	16,450	17,000
Glasgow - Shettleston	14	3,600	16,567	16,280
Glasgow - Knightswood	118	1,600	17,412	14,087
Rothsay	0	0	0	0
Total Southern	348,926	10,248	77,809	76,095
Outer Hebrides Presbytery				
Cross	0	1,582	15,509	13,473
Harris - Leverburgh	224	1,250	10,544	10,052
Harris - Scalpay	500	1,900	15,775	15,671
Knock & Point	0	1,300	8,614	8,179
North Uist	36,256	1,000	6,585	6,293
Stornoway	3,397	7,489	66,166	44,100
Total Outer Hebrides	40,377	14,521	123,193	97,769
Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron				
Bracadale	0	1,000	7,364	4,833
Duirinish (Waternish)	0	0	3,000	2,000
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	35	1,550	10,027	7,573
Lochalsh	330	1,450	10,759	8,360
Poolewe & Aultbea	275	762	7,343	7,454
Ullapool	0	0	0	0
Portree	0	1,200	8,400	9,886
Snizort	0	1,300	13,335	16,675
Strath	20	1,291	4,250	4,365
Total Skye/Lochcarron	660	8,553	64,478	61,147
Smiths Falls			2,000	
Total Congregations	496,196	43,347	350,870	310,456
Other Donations	830	3,611	19,558	18,891
Legacy		0	111	3,000
TOTAL	497,026	46,958	370,538	332,347
Including Gift Aid	761		60,236	49,209

Continued from previous page

faith.

Mérida

Our schedule of work done, we flew from Tampico to the second city of our visit, called Mérida, situated near the Gulf of Mexico. Here there was brilliant sunshine each day and a temperature of around 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Our accommodation was in a nice downtown hotel. My duty in Mérida was to give twelve theological lectures to the students and pastors at the Presbyterian San Pueblo Seminary in that very large city, consisting of about a million inhabitants.

The kind friends who looked after us at Mérida were Pastor Amos, who was Principal of the Seminary, and Samuel Hernandez. These good men met us at the airport and each day motored us from the hotel to the Seminary, a journey of roughly an hour. There were about forty men in the Seminary class, some of whom were pastors taking the class for theological refreshment. Two or three ladies sat in on the class to advance their own knowledge of Scripture. One lady was familiar with the church scene in the Island of Cuba and could inform me about church life there.

At the Seminary in Mérida I gave twelve lectures in the four days of our residence there. Again these were given in English and translated, sentence by sentence,

into Spanish, since only a small number of the men had sufficient English. One interesting discussion here centred on the interpretation of the clause in the Apostles' Creed: 'He descended into hell'. This is a much-misunderstood statement, which all believers would do well to be clear on.

Mexico City

On Saturday June 14th my wife and I flew to Mexico City for the last stage of our duties. Here at the airport we were met by a retired gentleman whom – remarkably enough – I had once taught over 50 years before when he had been a schoolboy living in County Durham! Howard Farrow had been a pupil in one of my classes in a Grammar School in the year 1960. Now, married to a Mexican lady and retired from work, he was living in Mexico. He had been converted to faith in Christ at Leeds University and was now attending church in this huge Mexico City where something like thirty million people are said to live.

Our first duty here was to attend a fine modern building in this metropolis in order to give two addresses to a group connected to the Reformed Presbyterians here, the leader of whom is Alejandro Morrison. Mr Morrison probably has a Scottish Highland ancestry and has visited this country with his dear mother, whom we met over

there with him. At the request of this kind brother I gave two lectures, on Public Worship and on the Observance of the Sabbath Day.

Young churches, like those in Mexico, very much need guidance on these two things: Systematic Theology and the Principles of Public Worship.

In total I spoke seven times here in Mexico City, mostly in the Presbyterian Church, whose elderly minister is Dr Gerald Nyenhuis, of Dutch American background. Over the years of his long ministry Dr Nyenhuis has built up a fine congregation of over a hundred people, who attended well at the services arranged for our visit. Again it was found profitable after lectures to take questions from the floor so that matters of doctrine and practice could be made clear.

Kind friends enriched our stay by taking us by car to see something of this amazingly large, old city with its huge Spanish buildings and broad roads, now filled up with modern traffic.

Our visit to a very large museum taught us how cruel had been the pagan practices of the ancient Mayan and Aztec peoples of Mexico prior to the coming of the Spanish in the early sixteenth century, when the land was conquered for Spain by Hernando Cortés in 1519. Our conversation with believers while there made it clear to us that, while the Spanish conquest largely crushed the paganism of earlier times, it did not bring biblical Christianity to the land.

The first Protestant missionaries came, probably from America, in the nineteenth century. Evangelicals sought

in the 1920s to advance the gospel throughout the land and they offered much prayer to God for the progress of the truth.

Today there is a National Presbyterian Church in Mexico, with twelve Seminaries and congregations in many towns and cities. Indeed, this is the oldest and the biggest denomination in Mexico. There is also the Associated Reformed Presbyterian denomination.

It was not possible for us to discover how Reformed these churches and denominations are. The Charismatic churches have an extensive influence in the country as a whole. This fact draws attention to the need for good Reformed books and preaching to be encouraged in all parts of this interesting and promising nation.

With a deep sense of gratitude to God for health and strength given to us for this visit overseas, we boarded the plane home on Wednesday, June 18th and landed at London Heathrow airport next afternoon.

To visit a nation so different in its history from our own leaves its mark on one. With feelings of having been given a rare privilege by God, we returned to Inverness with new friends to remember and with new causes for prayer stirring in our heart.

May God bless the Church of Christ in Mexico more and more in coming days. The dear Christians over there will be enriched as they read and study the doctrines of grace. It was our happy privilege while there to be able to give three good Christian books in Spanish to the group of believers in each city we visited, together with a list of the Banner books in Spanish.

Sri Lanka

Rev SNV Partheepan

A Bible camp for children was held on Wednesday 20th August. People from our church went from door to door around the area with invitations to the camp the previous week. We are thankful to report that God has shown His grace towards us and our camp went very well. We were expecting around 100 children but 148 actually attended. Our topic was 'God's Love'. The age group was 10 to 16 years. God was very gracious to us and all the people of our church were very encouraged.



“And I will bring the third part through the fire,
and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried:
they shall call on my name, and I will hear them:
I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.”

Zechariah 13:9