

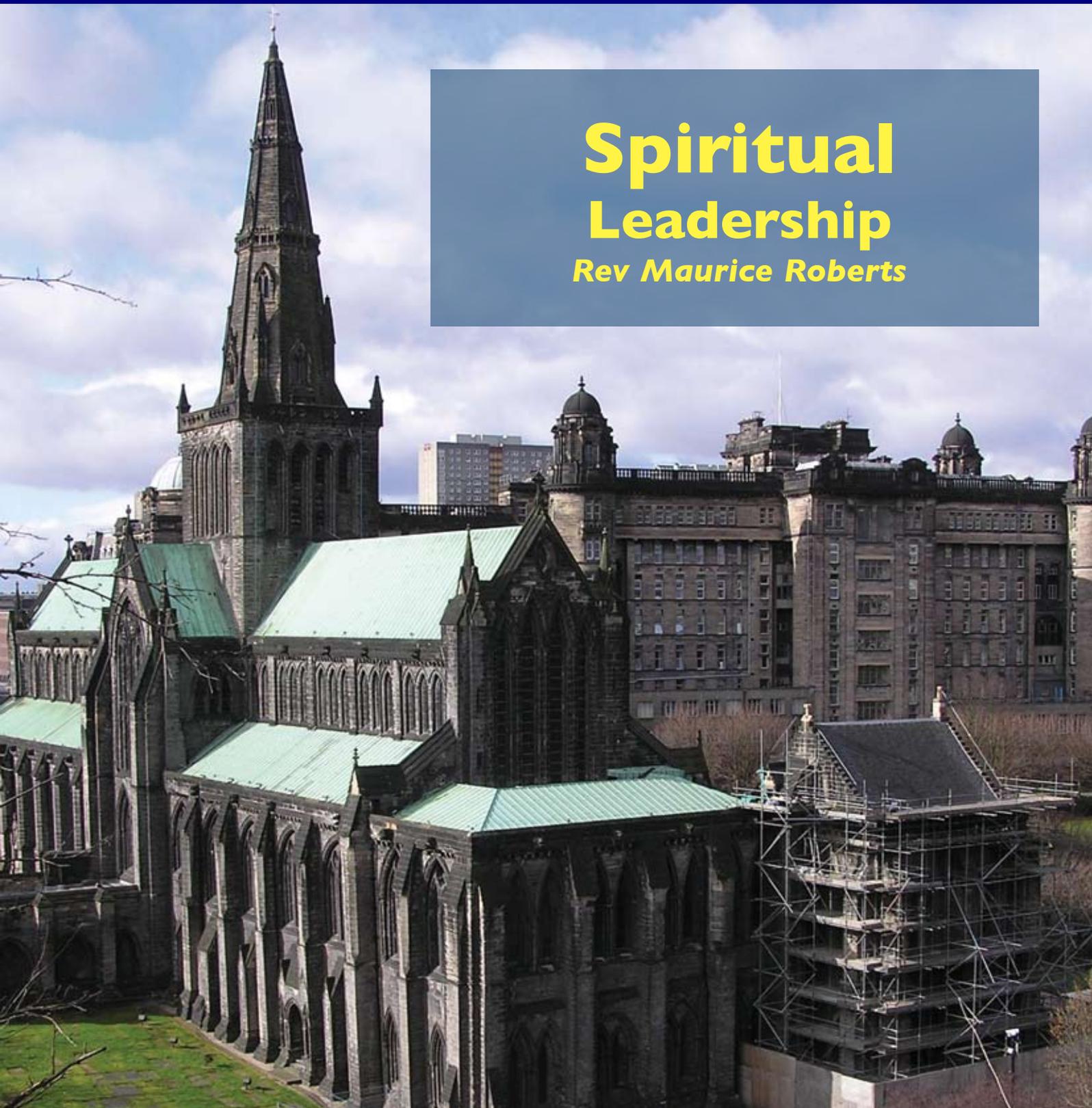
# Free Church **Witness**



**SEPTEMBER 2013 ISSUE**

## **Spiritual Leadership**

*Rev Maurice Roberts*





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## Resentment

Christians should be loving, tolerant, forgiving and longsuffering. They should never harbour resentment but, alas, they do. A dictionary definition is as follows: 'Resentment (also called ranklement or bitterness) is the experience of a negative emotion felt as a result of a real or imagined wrong done'. It is surprisingly common and affects us all to some extent, but it affects some much more than others. It is harmful in the church and destructive to our relationship to God. Some seem untroubled by it but this shows either their spiritual blindness or their low spiritual state. Resentment should have no place in a healthy Christian life. As children of God we should fight against it. We should be ashamed of it. As long as we are in the flesh, fleshly responses are to be expected but we must never justify them. We have no right to have any other attitude to fellow-Christians than love and a desire for the very best for them.

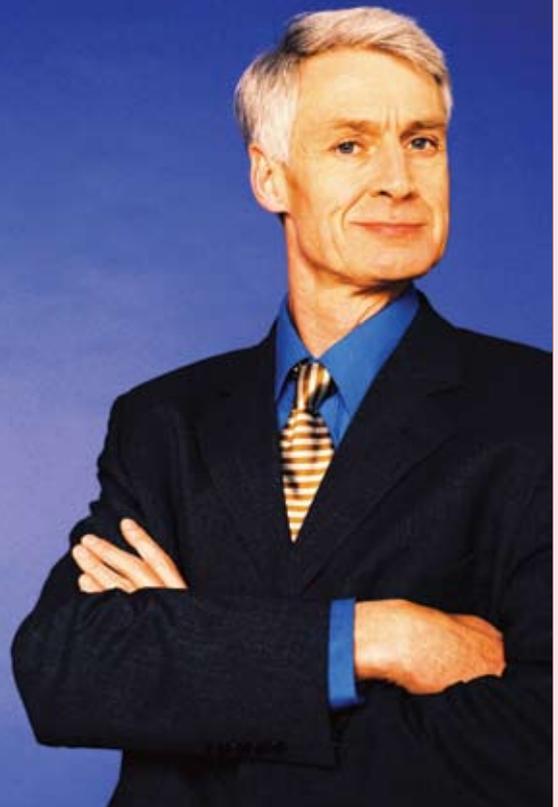
We all have a history. In our way through life we do thoughtless things and hurt people without realizing it. Other times, sadly, we hurt people and we meant to. If people were to deal with us as we deserve we would have lots of enemies and very few friends. If God were to deal with us as we deserve we would all be in hell. Praise God, He loves His enemies. Praise the Lord Jesus Christ that He died for those who sinned against Him,

mocked Him and crucified Him. Praise the Holy Spirit that He came to dwell in our hearts and will not leave us though we grieve Him by resisting His leading, rejecting His light on the Word and trampling on His voice through our conscience. Let us remember the exhortation of Christ to His disciples 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me' (Mt. 16:24). Where is our self denial, our patient cross bearing and our following of Christ?

### Expressions of Resentment

How does resentment express itself in our lives? There are many different ways but the following are some examples. There are people you will avoid if you can. You can't stand them. The very sight of them brings a knot into your stomach. If at all possible you would cross the road, or turn the other way, to avoid them. Maybe you feel so strongly that you won't speak to them and would refuse to shake their hand. Generally you struggle to be civil to them but you feel very uneasy. You smile on the outside but inside you are full of resentment. Behind their back you feel happy and justified in criticising them. You enjoy belittling them, mocking them to your friends and spreading uncomplimentary stories about them. Maybe you have been involved with them in Christian work but you have said that you will never work with them

'Perhaps we feel they are arrogant and full of themselves. Maybe we feel they have been less than truthful or even downright dishonest. How can we respect them? We can never trust them again.'



again. Perhaps you have helped them in the past but you have decided that you will never help them again.

#### **Reasons for resentment**

Why do we feel such resentment against any individual? Often it is because we feel someone slighted us. They have made us look foolish. We feel they have undermined us and shown us up. They have hurt us and treated us badly. Revenge is a natural reaction. We want to get our own back. We want them to apologise or really feel hurt in some way for what they did. We feel, perhaps, that they did not show sufficient respect to us. Feeling offended by them we tried to speak to them about it but were brushed aside. We tried to make peace but they made no effort so we feel justified in retaining our resentment. Before we will treat them as brothers again they must apologise to us.

Perhaps we feel they are arrogant and full of themselves. Maybe we feel they have been less than truthful or even downright dishonest. How can we respect them? We can never trust them again. Maybe your good name has been undermined. Does not the Larger Catechism say that we are to defend our own good name and that of others? I am a mature Christian and shouldn't be treated in that way. Actually I am an elder or even a minister in the church. I deserve some respect.

#### **Causes of Resentment**

What is the basic cause of resentment? Essentially it is hurt pride. We can dress it up as zeal for God's cause, concern for the truth, upholding our own and other's good name, and seeking the spiritual good of those who have offended us but basically it is our own hurt pride. And what is pride but self-worship? We want ourselves to stand out as wonderful and others to think that we are good, kind, clever, wise, knowledgeable and essentially great Christians. We readily

confess that we are sinners, but make it particular and call us liars, hypocrites and adulterers and see our hackles go up and our anger seethe. We confess that we are saved by grace alone but at the same time we think ourselves just as good as others and better than most. Self-righteousness arises and we are going to clear our name. Underlying this problem is a lack of love for others. We have little of the character of Christ who made Himself of no reputation for our salvation. If we were more mature as Christians we would show far less concern for ourselves, our family and our party and far more concern for the glory of Christ and the good of His cause and kingdom.

#### **Scriptural teaching regarding Resentment**

The Biblical teaching with regard to resentment couldn't be clearer or simpler. It is devastating to hurt pride, self-importance, self-righteousness and party spirit. A few passages of Scripture will suffice. Let us all try to take them to heart and feel the full force of them.

#### **Matthew 5:43-48**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus states: 'Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect' (Mt.5:43-48). No room is left here for doubt. We are to love

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even our enemies. Some will do horrible things to us yet that gives us no right to demand an apology before we love and forgive them. We are to be children of our Father in heaven who forgives us many sins that we do not even recognize as sins and therefore never confess.

**Matthew 18:21-22**

Peter felt frustrated with his brother. He had forgiven him many times, yet over and over again this brother offended him. Christ makes plain that there is to be no limit to the times he forgives his brother. 'Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven'.

**Romans 12:17-21**

Paul recommends never seeking revenge but winning those who hurt us through our kindness to them. 'Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good'.

**I Corinthians 12:25-27**

It is important to remember the essential unity of the church. Christ has one body on earth and it even includes those Christians in heaven. Every Christian has a place in the body and is a part of it. We all belong together and need one another. This unity should be expressed as much as is possible, but, of course, without denying purity of doctrine, worship and discipline: 'That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular'. Let us remember that we belong to each other. If one suffers,

all suffer, and let the bonds of family affection overcome all obstacles to unity and warm fellowship.

**I Corinthians 13:4-7**

I Corinthians 13 extols love. It is the 'more excellent way' and should be sought above all else. 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things'. Is our love longsuffering, bearing all things, enduring all things? Does our love envy not, is not puffed up, thinks no evil? Does our love seek not her own? Are we completely unselfish and believing the best of everyone? We should be.

**John**

In chapter 13 of John we have the great mark which Jesus gave of a true Christian: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (Jn.13:34-35). The church should be characterized by love to such an extent that the whole world can see it. Real love for one another will cover a multitude of sins (1Pet.4:8), that is, excuse their sins against us. Such love will allow no resentment to arise among believers. In His High Priestly prayer our Lord pleads for His people, 'that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me' (Jn.17:23). Christ in heaven is interceding that we on earth would be truly united in love for one another. This would be the great evidence to the world that God had sent the Saviour.

Do you bear resentment towards any fellow-Christian? Is there any brother or sister in Christ to whom you will not talk or to whom you find it difficult to be civil? Do you sincerely wish every child of God the very best? Have you forgiven every fellow-believer for every nasty thing they have done to you?

'We are to love even our enemies. Some will do horrible things to us yet that gives us no right to demand an apology before we love and forgive them. We are to be children of our Father in heaven who forgives us many sins that we do not even recognize as sins and therefore never confess.'



# Sri Lanka Mission



Dear friends,

We greet you all from Sri Lanka! It is always good to tell about God's providence in the Sri Lankan ministry. I am very happy that God's kingdom is being established in Sri Lanka. It is a great blessing for us, even though we face some difficulties.

## Family

What comfort we have in Christ's death and His resurrection. It is very meaningful to our family, when we are facing troubles. God is always comforting us through the work of Christ on the cross. God has provided us with some good Christian friends who invited us to Pilgrim Covenant Church camp in Malaysia for two weeks. Rev. Kenneth Stewart was the camp speaker. We were really blessed from the message and being in the company of God's people. It was a very nice break after two years ministry.

## Ministry

God is continually blessing us during our worship services to Him every Lord's day, morning and evening. We are having twelve people regularly in attendance in the morning and fifteen to seventeen in the evening. I am preaching on "God's will for you in Christ Jesus" in the morning service and on the life of Elijah in the evening service. We are really enjoying hearing God's Word. We also continue to have a weekly prayer meeting every Thursday. Around six of us attend and I am now teaching The Heidelberg Catechism. This also is proving to be a great blessing to our souls. We are visiting people and doing some personal evangelism - distributing some Christian magazines and books. We are praying that the Lord will speak to His people. As you know we have started bible classes for the children. We are having eighteen children attending regularly. On one occasion we took them out of the village and went to a children's park with them. This was a very happy occasion for both them and us. I am struggling in the work of writing metrical psalms in Tamil. Please pray for us for this important work.

We have also printed 1,000 copies of a Tamil translation of a collection of sermons by A N Martin and we are distributing them to some of the churches we know. I am certain that the Lord's people will receive a blessing from these books. I am very thankful to Ceylon Christian Care (CCC) who have supported this ministry.

## Charitable work

CCC continue to faithfully support our pre-school ministry and we hope and pray that the Lord will bring more fruit from

that village. We have already seen some of the children start to attend the bible classes as a result of this ministry.

This month we have seen further need arise in that village; there are many pregnant women, babies and elderly people all suffering from malnutrition. When we have been given financial support for needy people, we try and provide to those who are most in need. Mr. Maran is now engaged in this ministry full time.

We are very thankful to CCC. They are very open to, and supportive of, our mission in Vavuniya.

## Prayer requests

- Pray for our family.
- Pray for our ministry.
- Pray for the pulpit ministry; at times I am finding this very hard.
- Pray for a good place to worship: some people are not willing to come to my house. If we have our own building we would be able to do more work.
- We are planning to start module bible classes for training for the ministry. CCC is willing to support this financially. Pray that we will be able to discern God's will in this matter.
- Pray for the conversion of lost and needy souls.
- We are planning to have vacation bible classes for children in the next few months. Pray for this ministry.
- We are hoping to do a youth outreach get together, at the end of August. Please pray that new young folks would start attending.

## Thanksgiving

- We are very thankful to all who are holding us up in their prayers and supporting us.
- We are very thankful to the Home and Foreign Missions Committee for their support and the encouragements we have received from them.
- We are very thankful to the Scalpay congregation, for remembering us and helping to meet our needs.
- We are very thankful to the individuals in Scotland and Singapore who are personally helping our ministry.
- I am very thankful to those who stay in contact and talk with me. They help carry some of my burdens with me.

*"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."* Ephesians 3 v 20 - 21.

Thank you,  
Parthee

# Children in the Church (Part I)

**Dr Joel R Beeke**  
**(Grand Rapids, USA)**



**F**ew subjects are as important as children in the church, for they represent her future. Matthew Henry said God has 'appointed that parents should train up their children in the knowledge of his law... that, as one generation of God's servants and worshippers passes away, another generation may come, and the church, as the earth, may abide forever, and thus God's name among men may be as the days of heaven'. Very soon everyone who is here today will be gone. Who then will praise God on the earth? Who will be His salt and light in our cities, towns, and nations? Christ has guaranteed the church will continue by His divine power and faithfulness; yet He accomplishes this by human means, often through our ministry to children.

Our topic is also of critical significance for the future of our children. Henry wrote to Christian parents, 'Consider especially what they [the children] are designed for in another world: they are made for eternity. Every child hath a precious and immortal soul, that must be for ever either in heaven or hell, according as it is prepared in this present state, —and perhaps it must remove to that world of spirits very shortly'. This is true not only of our own dear children, but also of the children in our neighbourhood and non-Christian friends whom we invite to church with us. They too have souls; they too need the Saviour. Do our churches care for these tender and impressionable souls whom God has entrusted to us?

At the same time, we must acknowledge that caring for children in the church involves both laughter and tears. Simonetta Carr shared one woman's impression of working with children: 'With small children, we find, more often than not, that we're happy when we barely slide through the sanctuary door before the elders file in, all the while firmly telling four bustling, noisy little ones, "Shhh, we are in worship!" Then, we squeeze into the last three remaining seats in the sanctuary for our family of six, with all four children complaining much too audibly that they are squashed, or one of them yelling out to me that I promised that this week he or she could sit next to Mammy. Then the service begins, and before we can even sing the last note of the first hymn, one, two, three, or possibly four suddenly have an urgent need to go to the bathroom'.

The sublime and the ridiculous often meet in ministry to children. How can we deal with this responsibility in a Christ-honouring way? Let's begin first with how we view children in the church. After that, I will offer some practical guidelines on how to minister to them.

## **How to view Children in the Church**

The children and young people who grow up in the fellowship of the church enjoy tremendous privileges through God's

covenant of grace. We may say of them, as Paul said of ancient Israel in Romans 3:2, 'Unto them were committed the oracles of God'. They grow up reading the Word of the covenant, singing the Word of the covenant, absorbing the preaching of the Word of the covenant, praying the Word of the covenant back to God, and seeing the Word of the covenant made visible in the sacraments, the signs and seals of the covenant.

We might say that children growing up in a Biblical church are embraced by the arms of the covenant Word of promise, nursed on the milk of the covenant Word of instruction, and buckled in by the covenant Word of command for safety as they begin their journey in life. What an amazing privilege it is for children to grow up in the church! While we grieve over her failings, let us never forget the unspeakable blessings that belong to children in a true church of Christ, as opposed to the lot of those who grow up 'having no hope and without God in the world' (Eph. 2:12). Paul wrote in I Corinthians 7:14, 'For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy'. Never begrudge a child his place in the meetings of the church. God calls your children holy because when God saves a parent, He puts His hand of blessing and consecration on the entire family.

But covenant privileges do not negate or diminish the need each child has for God's particular grace to make him a living, spiritual member of the church. We have every reason to believe that David was circumcised on the eighth day and raised in a pious home. Boaz and Ruth were his godly great-grandparents (Ruth 4:21–22). His father, Jesse, participated in daily sacrifices, honoured God's prophet, and sent his sons to fight for God's anointed king (1 Sam. 16:5; 17:13). Nevertheless David confessed in Psalm 51:5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me'. Since the fall of man, sin and its doleful effects have been a plague upon every child born into the world (Rom. 5:12). As the Belgic Confession of Faith (art. 15) says: 'Through the disobedience of Adam original sin is extended to all mankind, which is a corruption of the whole nature and a hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin, being in him as a root thereof; and therefore is so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn all mankind. Nor is it by any means abolished or done away with in baptism, since sin always issues forth from this woeful source as water from a fountain'.

Covenant children must be born again. Our Lord Jesus Christ said in John 3:3, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'. He said this

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to a man who had participated in all the external forms of the covenant in force at the time. He was a renowned teacher of Israel (John 3:10). But in order to 'enter into the kingdom of God', (3:5) this teacher still needed to be 'born of the Spirit' (3:8). In faithfulness to Scripture, we must view our children as 'heirs of the kingdom of God and of His covenant', who nonetheless were born in sin and need a supernatural rebirth from God in order to come into full personal possession of their inheritance.

We must therefore view our children as sinners who need to hear the gospel and respond to it with faith. God's usual way of saving the seed of His church is through the call of the gospel. Certainly God may regenerate a soul in the womb, as He did with John the Baptist (Lk.1:15, 41-44), but God's ordinary manner of working faith in our hearts is through the preaching of the Word, as well as by the faith, example, nurture, and prayers of believing parents.

Peter described true Christians in 1Peter 1:23 and 25 as 'being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.... And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you'. So Paul writes in Romans 10:17, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God'.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (7.3) says that in the covenant of grace, God 'freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in Him, that they may be saved'. Reformed Christianity is evangelistic Christianity, and Reformed evangelism begins with our own children.

Reformed Christians sometimes fall into the trap of thinking that we may presume that covenant children, being members of the church by baptism, are regenerated by the Holy Spirit unless they openly reject the covenant. In this way, the promise and the sign of the covenant become poor substitutes for its requirement of saving faith in Jesus Christ as the only ground of justification and salvation. When the covenant is abused in such a way, parents and children alike are lulled into a false sense of security, and any serious effort to lead little ones to Christ is given up.

On the contrary, the covenant demands the conversion of all

to whom its promises are made, parents and children alike. 'Therefore are we by God through baptism admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience', the Reformed Liturgy says, 'namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk a new and holy life'. How then can we assume that a child is born again without these evidences of that life?

So it is necessary to affirm the blessings and privileges of covenant children, while insisting on the need to respond to the covenant with faith in Christ and repentance from sin. On the one hand, we must not treat our children as if they were so many 'little heathens' who have no rightful place in our well-ordered church services. They belong there. On the other hand, we must not assume they are saved, simply because they have been born into Christian homes, have been received into the church by baptism, and are being instructed in the doctrine of salvation. With faith in God's promises, we must use all the means of grace, seeking the regeneration, justification, and sanctification of our covenant children. In particular, we must pray for the conversion of our children.

Listen to how Alexander Whyte (1836-1921) prayed for children: 'O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, give us a seed right with Thee! Smite us and our house with everlasting barrenness rather than that our seed should not be right with Thee. O God, give us our children. Give us our children. A second time, and by a far better birth, give us our children to be beside us in Thy holy covenant. For it had been better we had never been betrothed; it had been better we had sat all our days solitary unless our children are to be right with Thee.... But Thou, O God, art Thyself a Father, and thus hast in Thyself a Father's heart. Hear us, then, for our children, O our Father.... In season and out of season, we shall not go up into our bed, we shall not give sleep to our eyes nor slumber to our eyelids till we and all our seed are right with Thee'.

*(Puritan Reformed Journal, Vol.4, No.2, July 2012)*

*To be continued*



**'So it is necessary to affirm the blessings and privileges of covenant children, while insisting on the need to respond to the covenant with faith in Christ and repentance from sin.'**

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## 25 Marks of the Backslidden Christian

**R**ichard Owen Roberts in his book *Revival* gives 25 marks of a backslidden condition. He explains each. Here I simply give the headings. Could you be backslidden? Consider these points seriously.

1. When prayer ceases to be a vital part of a professing Christian's life, backsliding is present.
2. When the quest for Biblical truth ceases and one grows content with the knowledge of eternal things already acquired, there can be no mistaking the presence of backsliding.
3. When the biblical knowledge possessed or acquired is treated as external fact and not applied inwardly, backsliding is present.
4. When earnest thoughts about eternal things cease to be regular and gripping, it should be like a warning light to the backslider.
5. When the services of the church lose their delights, a backslidden condition exists.
6. When pointed spiritual discussions are an embarrassment, that is certain evidence of backsliding.
7. When sports, recreation and entertainment are a large and necessary part of your lifestyle, you may assume backsliding is in force.
8. When sins of the body and of the mind can be indulged in without an uproar in your conscience your backslidden condition is certain.
9. When aspirations for Christ-like holiness cease to be dominant in your life and thinking, backsliding is there.
10. When the acquisition of money and goods becomes a dominant part of your thinking, you have clear confirmation of backsliding.
11. When you can mouth religious songs and words without heart, be sure backsliding is present.

12. When you can hear the Lord's name taken in vain, spiritual concerns mocked and eternal issues flippantly treated, and not be moved to indignation and action, you are backslidden.

13. When you can watch degrading movies and television and read morally debilitating literature, you can be sure you are backslidden.

14. When breaches of peace in the brotherhood are of no concern to you, that is proof of backsliding.

15. When the slightest excuse seems sufficient to keep you from spiritual duty and opportunity, you are backslidden.

16. When you become content with your lack of spiritual power and no longer seek repeated endowments of power from on high, you are backslidden.

17. When you pardon your own sin and sloth by saying the Lord understands and remembers that we are dust, you have revealed your backslidden condition.

18. When there is no music in your soul and no song in your heart, the silence testifies to your backsliding.

19. When you adjust happily to the world's lifestyle, your own mirror will tell the truth of your backsliding.

20. When injustice and human misery exist around you and you do little or nothing to relieve the suffering, be sure you are backslidden.

21. When your church has fallen into spiritual declension and the Word of God is no longer preached there with power and you are still content, you are in a backslidden condition.

22. When the spiritual condition of the world declines around you and you cannot perceive it, that is testimony of your backslidden stance.

23. When you are willing to cheat your employer, backsliding is apparent.

24. When you find yourself rich in grace and mercy and marvel at your own godliness, then you have fallen far in your backsliding.

25. When your tears are dried up and the hard, cold, spiritual facts of your low spiritual existence cannot unleash them, see this as an awful testimony both of the hardness of your heart and the depth of your backsliding.

**'When aspirations for Christ-like holiness cease to be dominant in your life and thinking, backsliding is there.'**



# News



## Inverness - Induction of Rev James Clark

*Rev Timothy McGlynn*

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2012, a large number of friends gathered with the congregation for the induction of the Rev James Clark to the pastoral charge of Inverness Free Greyfriars (Continuing). The congregation had been vacant for almost two years following the retirement of the previous minister, Rev Maurice Roberts. The venue was Kingsview Christian Centre, Inverness,

which proved to be a most excellent choice.

The proceedings were overseen by Rev Henry Woods who also preached from Ephesians 6:19-21. Rev John Macleod (Duthil-Dores, rtd) and Rev Timothy McGlynn brought exhortations to the minister and congregation respectively. It was heartening to see a good number of ministers from other Presbyteries

of the denomination present for the proceedings: Rev John Morrison (rtd), Rev William B Scott (rtd), Rev John MacLeod (Tarbat), Rev James I Gracie (Edinburgh), Rev Murdo MacLeod (Snizort), Rev David Blunt (North Uist), Rev Andrew Allan (Poolewe & Aultbea) and Rev Richard Ross (Portree). Many other friends were also present.

After Mr Clark had answered the

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# Desk

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questions to be put to ministers on their induction to a pastoral charge, he then proceeded to sign the Formula in the presence of the congregation. These things are of course, not simply a matter of form but the continuing expression of our determination as a body of God's people to uphold the doctrine and practice found in the Word of God and inherited from the faithful of previous generations. The name of Mr Clark was then added to the Roll of the Inverness Presbytery.

The Presbytery and people then moved from the sanctuary to the large hall that had been prepared for the remainder of the evening's proceedings. An excellent meal was provided and served by the ladies of the congregation. Various presentations were made to Mr and Mrs Clark, and Peggy Smith presented a gift to Miriam and Lydia Clark. Also thanked were Ken and Kathleen Macdonald from the Kingsview Centre, in appreciation of the invaluable help they had given, above and beyond the call of duty. It was also lovely to see a few ministers from other denominations present for the occasion.

Mr Anderson (a friend of Mr Clark's from Northern Ireland) told the gathering of his affection and respect for their new minister as did Mr Gracie (Edinburgh). Many who had hoped to be there but could not attend sent their greetings which were read out to the gathering. The evening was closed by the newly inducted minister and the people returned to their homes, looking forward to a new chapter in the life and witness of the Inverness congregation. We pray that God would continue to follow the ministry of Mr Clark with encouragement and blessing throughout the years ahead in Inverness DV.

## Three Parent Babies

*Christian Institute*

The creation of genetically modified three-parent babies has been backed by the Government, amid warnings from genetics experts. The controversial technique, which uses IVF to take genetic material from three or four adults and create an embryo, is currently illegal. If the technique is legalised, leading scientists and ethicists have warned that it could cause medical risks for future generations, and have raised concerns about the potential for it to dehumanise relationships between children and parents.

*Human life is sacred, being created by God, and an embryo is the beginning of a human life and must be treated with great respect.*

## Move to Legalise Forced Conversions – Malaysia

*E Kendal*

On 26 June a bill that would further Islamise Malaysian law went to the parliament. It provides that a minor may be converted to Islam by 'his parent' (singular) without the consent of the other parent. Thus a parent who (for whatever reason of self-interest) has converted to Islam could get their children registered as Muslims. (Christian parents and children suffer this mischief throughout the Islamic world.) The government was wrong in thinking it could get the bill through by stealth as it has caused an outcry, particularly amongst non-Muslims. May the Malaysian Church, amidst all this, look to the Lord of Hosts to be her strength. Please pray against this bill, for the sake of Malaysia, its children, the church and all others vulnerable in this situation.

## Scouts to appease Atheists

*Christian Institute*

The Scout Association is to offer the option of a new 'atheist' promise for the first time in its 105-year history, according to a national newspaper. *The Sunday Telegraph* has learned that the movement will introduce an optional oath which has no reference to God, after mounting pressure from atheists. The Scouting movement was founded by Lord Baden-Powell on Christian principles in 1908. Currently, Scouts must promise to 'do my duty to God' and those of other faiths use alternative wording. The original promise will remain for believers.

The introduction of a separate oath follows a consultation of 15,000 people. This comes as the Girl Guides recently dropped any reference to God in their oath, in a move criticised for pandering to individualism and secular humanist ideas. Now the Guides' promise will see girls pledging to be 'true to myself and develop my beliefs'.

New wording for the Scouts' promise will be devised by trustees of the association and approved by the entire movement before it is expected to be announced later this year. Simon Carter, Assistant Director of Marketing and Communications for the Association, said 'the direction of travel is clear', despite there being some way to go before the wording is finalised.

The new promise comes in stark contrast to the views of the movement's founder, Lord Baden-Powell. He ranked atheism alongside gambling, swearing and drunkenness in a handbook for boys. More than 100 years ago, Lord Baden-Powell wrote 'Rovering for Success', in which he said: 'If you are really to make your way to success – ie happiness – you must not only avoid being sucked in by

irreligious humbugs, but you must have a religious basis to your life'.

*It is sad to see the Christian ethos of this movement disappear in the face of militant atheism.*

## Men can be called Wives

*Christian Institute*

The bizarre redefinition is found in the small print to the official explanation of the Marriage (Same-Sex Couples) Bill. According to the official explanation published alongside the Bill, the terms husbands and wives will mean people of either gender. 'This means that "husband" here will include a man or a woman in a same-sex marriage, as well as a man married to a woman', it says. 'In a similar way, "wife" will include a woman married to another woman or a man married to a man'.

*What pathetic mangling of the English language takes place when politicians meddle with marriage.*



*Tony Miano*

## Street Preacher Arrested

*Christian Concern*

Police arrested a man in South West London on Monday (1<sup>st</sup> July) for using alleged 'homophobic' speech whilst street preaching. Tony Miano, a US citizen, was questioned by the police after a member of the public called them to the scene. He had been speaking on the subject of sexual immorality and the need to abstain from it based on a passage from the Bible (1Thes.4:1-12). Mr Miano was then arrested

at 4:40pm and taken to the local police station where he was photographed, fingerprinted and had a DNA sample taken. He was taken to a cell with a toilet but no toilet paper. The investigating officer offered him a £90 fine which he said would ensure Mr Miano's immediate release and an assurance that he would be able to return to the UK. Mr Miano opted to wait for the arrival of his solicitor before making a decision.

He was then later interviewed by the investigating officer with his solicitor, Michael Phillips, instructed by Christian Legal Centre, present. One of the questions the officer asked was whether Mr Miano would help a homosexual who asks him for a 'favour'. Mr Miano indicated that he would by saying 'the word of God tells me to love your neighbour as myself. So if a homosexual walked up to me and said, I'm hungry and I need something to eat. I would walk them to the nearest restaurant, give them something to eat, and share the Gospel with them because I love them', he said.

The two final questions that the officer asked him were: 'Do you feel that what you did... is 100 per cent acceptable in a public place?' and 'Will you do this again tomorrow?' Mr Miano replied affirmatively to both questions. The investigating officer told Mr Miano's solicitor that his answers to these last two questions left him no choice but to seek prosecution. He was then escorted back to his cell and was given, upon request, a Bible to read – the very book whose teachings had led to his arrest. About an hour later, the investigating officer entered Mr Miano's cell and told him that the inspector had decided to release him with no further action. At midnight Mr Miano was released after just over seven hours in custody.

Mr Miano said: 'The language I used was not homophobic, as I was not promoting fear or hatred of homosexuals. I began my message by assuring the people that mine was not a message of hate but of love. I was simply explaining a passage in the Bible which speaks of sexual immorality and that people should abstain from it (1Thes.4:1-12). I did not speak solely about homosexuality as a form of sexual immorality but also about any kind of sex outside of marriage between one man and one woman, as well as lustful thoughts. All of these are considered mainstream Christian positions and have been taught and believed by Christians for thousands of years. It was very distressing to be arrested and interrogated for openly expressing my deeply held Christian beliefs'.

*Sadly we can expect more of this in an increasingly ungodly society which will not tolerate the condemnation of its sins. The police and the government are seeking to intimidate and wear down Christians in their efforts to promote homosexuality.*

## Persecution in Vietnam

*E Kendal*

Hoang Van Ngai (38) was an ethnic Hmong elder of Bui Tre Church in the legally recognised Evangelical Church of Vietnam (South). Ngai was arrested on 15 March in Dak Glong district, Dak Nong Province, South

Vietnam, along with his older brother, Hoang Van Pa, his wife and sister-in-law, without an arrest warrant. Hoang Van Pa says he could hear his brother screaming in pain as he was beaten and tortured through the night

in the cell next door. By 17 March Hoang Van Ngai was dead. According to Hoang Van Pa, his brother was targeted because he had protested against corruption and abuses of power. Ngai refused to pay bribes, strenuously defending his church when

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the authorities demanded that he close it. As *Morning Star News* reported, the killing terrorised the Hmong community. When the Chairman of the People's Committee claimed that Ngai had killed himself, Ngai's family refused to accept it because Ngai's body was covered with evidence of torture and severe beatings. So the family submitted an urgent petition to the Dak Nong Chief of Police, contesting the claim. According to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (11 June), the authorities have now notified the family that their investigation shows Ngai did die from 'suicide by self-electrocution'. Religious liberty has declined markedly in Vietnam since its Communist Party realised it can persecute with impunity. Pray for the Church in Vietnam.

## Central African Republic

*E Kendal*

On 13 June a band of Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) fighters attacked two villages in Bria, a mining region in central Central African Republic (CAR). Six local people were killed and ten wounded as the LRA went on a desperate looting spree. The villagers fought back, killing four LRA. The LRA responded by launching a fresh attack in which they killed six more villagers, putting their decapitated heads on display as a warning. Meanwhile, the Muslim rebel coalition (known as Seleka), which seized control of CAR in March, is barely holding together. The fighters - many of them foreigners - are protesting about their living conditions. Consequently, fighting could erupt within the rebel ranks. The security situation for CAR's mostly Christian population remains dire. Multitudes have been displaced. Food and medical supplies are in short supply. More than a million people are in need of aid, including some 595,000 children under the age of five years old.

*Pray for the Church in CAR. Muslim rebels overran this professedly Christian country (76% Christian) at the end of March and embarked on a campaign of raping, killing, looting and pillaging. They appear to be still in control.*

## Visit to China

*Rev Murdo A N Macleod*

It was my privilege and joy to visit China in March/April of 2013. At the kind invitation of the Hudson Taylor Ministries an opportunity was extended to me to visit Kunming and spend some time there teaching some of the students who had gathered.

I arrived in Kunming on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March, having flown via London and Hong Kong. The journey was uneventful although a delay in Hong Kong meant that we were a little late in arriving in Kunming. During that weekend I was based in a hotel which was very comfortable. I would like to record my thanks to Stephen (Hudson Taylor Ministries manager) who went out of his way to make my stay as comfortable as possible. Both he and Barnabas, the principal of Cornerstone Bible School, were extremely kind and no visitor need fear their visit if these fine men are involved in looking after them.

Classes commenced on Monday but whilst the location was very convenient for the hotel, its facilities were inadequate: there were no desks and the attendance of some other friends made it difficult to identify the students. The presence of these additional friends also meant that I was trying to address both groups and this was not helpful. In the event we were soon interrupted and forced to relocate. However

in the Lord's providence this was to prove a blessing as the alternative arrangements which were made proved much more satisfactory.



*Rev Murdo A N Macleod*

Late on Monday evening I was taken to the Bible School and remained there for the duration of my visit. I was looked after very well and found the facilities to be very comfortable. I have no doubt that this was a more satisfactory arrangement. For security reasons I was unable to leave the building until I left to catch my plane on Friday but that did not trouble me in the slightest, nor do I think it would trouble future Scottish visitors. The school was much more suitable for teaching and in the evenings I was able to mingle with the students and get to know them in a way which would not have been possible had I remained in the hotel.

In the classes I tried to cover three areas of teaching: Nehemiah as a model of Christian Leadership; Christian Experience in the Book of Psalms and 1st Peter. I realised as the days progressed that the material I had prepared was too basic and each evening I tried to alter the material for the next day in order to better reach the level the students were at. I suspect that I was only partially successful in achieving this and I am indebted to Stephen for his help and constructive criticism. Despite my many inadequacies the students were very patient and tolerant. On the Friday I altered my approach completely and tried to develop more of a preaching class style and the students seemed to find this approach helpful. Once more I record my thanks to the many friends who gave me the opportunity of visiting China and made my stay there so pleasant. Above all we thank the Lord Himself who reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and is building His cause in China, calling out a people who will love and serve Him there.



# Books

## My God is True!

### Lessons Learned Along Cancer's Dark Road

Paul D Wolfe

Banner of Truth Trust,  
pbk, 150pp, £6.25

If, like me, you've been left open-mouthed when brothers or sisters in Christ have said things like 'God wouldn't do that to me', or 'Not all that gets past the Father is good', or 'Satan won there', then you will appreciate this book.

The author makes clear that he too grappled with similar kinds of questions when shattered by a totally unexpected diagnosis of a cancerous mass next to his spinal cord and which had rendered his legs next to useless. 'A torrent of thoughts, fears and questions runs through your mind. And objections too ... "Wait a minute, I'm only twenty eight ... I'm supposed to become a minister ... Cancer isn't part of the plan ... Cancer isn't what I would have appointed for my life had I been the one in charge ... Who *did* appoint this for my life?" ... And then the Bible answers'. Powerfully he shows through the book how very clearly the Bible does answer.

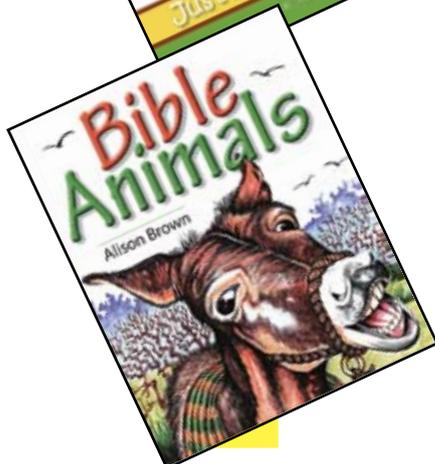
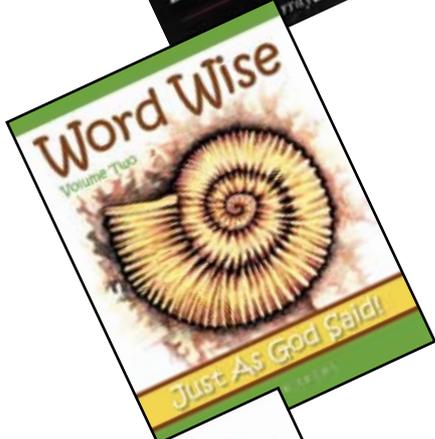
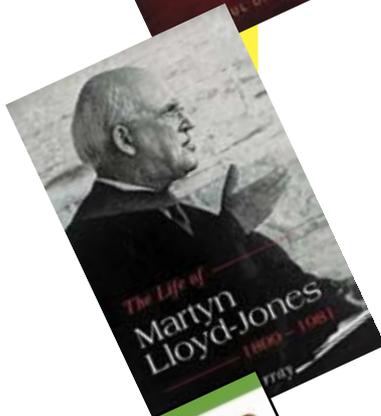
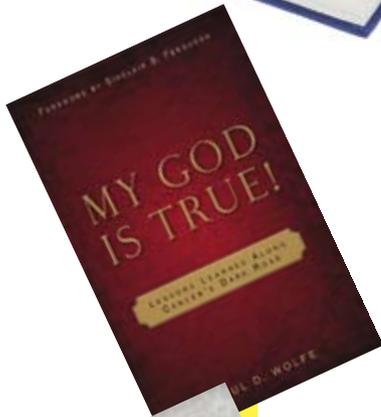
First he talks of the 'Spectrum Texts'. (Ex.4:11, Deut.32:39, 1Sam.2:6-7, Eccl.7:13-14, Is.45:5-7, Lam.3:37-38, Amos 3:6). Good, bad, light, darkness, life, death, power, weakness, wounding, healing, prosperity, adversity, lowliness, exaltation, well-being, calamity, disaster - 'I am the Lord, who does all these things'. All things come not by chance but by His Fatherly hand. God reigns! In answer to those who argue that while the 'good' things come from God, the 'bad' things don't, he says, 'What sort of "reign" is the Lord left with when we whittle away at His sovereignty like that? Can we really imagine the Psalmist exclaiming "The Lord reigns!" if He thought that sorrowful circumstances and human decision-making were beyond the scope of that reign? If my cancer was out of His control then how can I know how many other things are out of His control ...

that is cold comfort indeed. Freezing cold ... Would I really want to say that the ultimate explanation for my illness is what some rogue cells just happened to do one day? Or what the human race now justly deserves since the Fall? Or what Satan was able to bring about? Or ... what mere 'chance' brought my way?"

Then he has a most true-to-life chapter on 'Spiritual Punctuation'. 'Some Christians', he says, 'end up living like this: 'Our picnic will *certainly* be a smashing success! I will *definitely* get that job! I will *certainly* be a mother of children one day! But, will God *really* abide with me in everything I go through, including death? Is heaven a *real* place, and am I *truly* destined to arrive there in the end? Does God *really* love me as one that He looks upon in His beloved Son?'

We put exclamation marks where question marks belong and vice versa. Instead of declaring, 'I will definitely be healed of my cancer!' the sufferer (should) rightly ask, 'Will I be healed of my cancer? ... God only knows'. This is a place where some are prone to use the wrong punctuation ... a recipe for spiritual trouble.

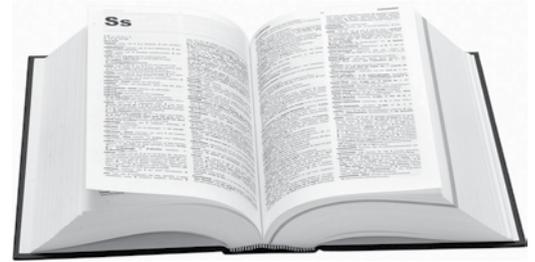
Having himself undergone so many medical tests all known by their acronyms, MRI, CAT, PET, etc, he suggests one more heart test: the DJI scan, 'Deepest Joy Imaging'. What is the source of your deepest joy? He speaks of Habakkuk, faced with famine, yet able to say, 'yet I will rejoice in the Lord'. Others, like David, Asaph and Paul cry out the same. He quotes Rutherford's letter to a woman whose husband had just died, 'let God and men and angels now see what is in you... Let your faith and patience be seen that it may be known your only beloved, first and last, hath been Christ'. Of himself and his young wife he writes, 'We had to learn that we could not find our deepest joy in our health, since good health had proved to be so fleeting. Neither could I find it in the ability to play the sports I loved, since I could no longer be sure that I would ever walk unaided, let alone run...'



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# Books



It is a hard book to put down. Wolfe gives his own story in three 'acts', in each of which he shows Biblically how 'My God is True!' While based on his own experience of cancer, the book is relevant to every one of us, and his chapter 'Confronting the Curse' focuses on the plan of salvation. His great confidence in the Lord shines through each page, and it is lightened by touches of humour – right to the end when Bunyan-like he introduces three rogues who now follow him: Presumption, Paralysis and Pouting. I would recommend the book wholeheartedly.

*Mrs Mary Gillies*

## **The Life of Martyn Lloyd-Jones 1899-1981**

*Iain H Murray*

Banner of Truth Trust,  
pbk, 476pp, £11.00

It is always a delight to read Iain Murray's books, especially his biographies. This book is a re-cast, condensed and, in parts, re-written version of the author's two volumes *D Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years* (1982) and *The Fight of Faith* (1990). Since those dates, the life of Dr Lloyd-Jones has been the subject of comment and assessment in many publications and these have been taken into account. The main purpose of this further biography, according to Mr Murray, is however to put Dr Lloyd-Jones' life before another generation in more accessible form. The big story is all here.

Dr Lloyd-Jones was undoubtedly the most outstanding leader in Reformed and Evangelical circles in twentieth-century Britain. His powerful preaching reached to every corner of the land and now his books which are based on his preaching are widely and appreciatively read across the whole world.

In 1927 Dr Lloyd-Jones left a highly-promising career in medicine to become a missionary in a rundown church in South Wales, in a place called Sandfields. He had decided against going to divinity college because of the liberalism present in the Welsh Methodist colleges. Over the next eleven years he experienced a mighty revival in the town with hundreds being converted and some of them the very worst of individuals. The church had to be extended. In 1938 he came to Westminster Chapel as an assistant to Dr Campbell Morgan who resigned in 1943 and the Doctor continued as pastor till 1968 when he resigned following treatment for cancer. Having retired from that pulpit he began the useful work of editing his series of sermons on Romans and Ephesians into a form suitable for publication. His preaching continued. I myself remember hearing with great appreciation his last sermon preached in Scotland in St Vincent Street Free Church on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1980.

When the time came for him to die, as he said himself, he 'took time to die'. He prepared himself for it and his death was radiant as his life had been.

His preaching touched many. Hundreds of young men left Arminianism behind and rejoiced in the Reformed faith and the writings of the Puritans. He was a great encourager of the IVF, the Evangelical library and the Banner of Truth Trust publishing work. He was a great stalwart in fighting against the Ecumenical Movement and its confusion with regard to, What is a Christian? This book is not just a story. It is full of lessons for the church today.

*Rev William Macleod*

## **Word Wise**

### **Volume Two - Just As God Said!**

*Alison Brown*

large pbk, 32pp, £3.50

## **Bible Animals**

*Alison Brown,*

large pbk, 32pp, £3.50

The challenges of communicating Bible knowledge to children can only be understood by those who have undertaken the task. Having raised five children, as well as having been a primary-school teacher, Alison Brown is well-qualified to prepare resources for the busy parent.

The activity book *Just as God Said* brings out several aspects of creation as they are understood by scientists today and illustrates where God has already revealed in His Word these very facts. It is full of word-based puzzles to engage the young mind, and through these it encourages children to look up Biblical references, hopefully improving their knowledge of the layout of the Bible. No age guidance is provided with this activity book but it would perhaps suit children over the age of six, as it explores areas of science such as astronomy, the water cycle and the environment.

*Bible Animals* is a colouring activity book aimed at five years plus although this guidance is perhaps restrictive as a parent can assist a younger child in understanding the picture by reading the information for them. This book uses the examples of animals from Scripture to present important Biblical truths for daily life; for example, Jonah and the whale illustrates the importance of obeying God.

If your children enjoy learning from these books then Alison Brown has compiled a number of other ones which are published by the Banner of Truth Trust.

*Mrs Esther Macleod*

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# The Challenge of Spiritual Leadership

*Rev Maurice Roberts*

**W**ho is sufficient for the task of spiritual leadership? The man who leads Christ's flock needs at least two rare qualities: a compassionate heart, and also nerves of steel. No one is well equipped to guide the saints of God on earth unless he has two seemingly contradictory sides to his character. He needs to be full of love to all those who are Christ's people, and immovable in his adherence to the principles of God's Word.

It has been well said of Moses, one of God's choice leaders, that his earlier life was spent learning two opposite lessons. He spent his first forty years learning all the wisdom of Egypt; and the second forty years in the solitude of a desert. The first period of life was spent learning to be something; and the second period of life was spent learning to be nothing. When he had learnt both these lessons he was ready to lead God's people forward towards the Promised Land.

## **Compassion**

A leader of Christ's people must have a compassionate heart. He must love, and love to feed, those who love Jesus. At the same time he must firmly resist all attempts to put the souls of God's people at risk. The true leader has to have the wisdom to know when love for their souls requires him to smile, and when it requires him to growl. Good leadership does not smile when professing Christians want to go in ways not approved by God. It is the false shepherd who relaxes his voice when some of his flock want to rush off into forbidden or foolish paths.

Weak leaders give in to the harmful requests of their congregations. Wise leaders realise there are times when they must say 'No'. Aaron, for example, was a good man, but a weak leader. He had not the courage to say 'No' to a golden calf when the people asked him to make them new gods.

Good leadership requires the wisdom to know what is important and what is trifling. The Pharisees were firm to a fault in objecting to any alteration in their traditions. But their traditions were man-made and not God-given. They were more concerned to tithe mint and anise and other herbs than to do the greater matters required by God, such as justice, mercy and faith (Mt.23:23). They made molehills, and molehills into mountains. This is always a mark of bad leadership.

## **Godliness**

Good leadership begins when men have learnt to lead themselves. The good leader orders first his own personal life in the ways of God and godliness. The secret of a godly man is that he spends time with God in secret. The weak leader is taken up with lesser things. The good leader is first of all concerned to know, to understand and to do the will of God, rather than to conform to the opinions of the people. Like Moses, the good leader spends time on the mountain-top

holding communion with God.

The first duty of the spiritual leader is to see that those who follow him are properly taught in the Word of God. Theology is the queen of the sciences and the essence of all true knowledge. Hence the spiritual man's greatest concern is to ensure that his flock are well-grounded in the truth. Hard things must be explained in simple language. Deep truths must be made as clear as we can make them. Our people are sanctified through the truth (John 17:17). Therefore we must aim at opening up the truth as clearly as we can.

## **Stand alone**

Good leaders are lonely men in this life. They must learn to walk with God and to expect not to be popular with everyone. This is a painful discipline, which some cannot be trusted to keep to. Some leaders in church life must have a circle of admirers who will support them along the way. The comfort is that they can enjoy the smile of their inner circle. But there is a price to pay. They know that they must keep the smile on the faces of their followers, even if this must be done at the expense of the truth and at the expense of righteousness.

The wise Christian leader must have friends and counsellors, but he must never have favourites. A favourite is one who is respected more than the rest because he is given higher status in the congregation. But we are not to have 'respect of persons' (James 2:1). God's justice has set a standard for us all. We are to treat all with equal fairness.

To be a leader of God's people demands that a man be ready to suffer for righteousness. One of the differences between prophets and false prophets is that the former are prepared to suffer for the truth, and the latter are not. 'The hireling [or false prophet] fleeth because he is an hireling' (John 10:13). But truth is worth suffering for because it is God's truth. Truth is more precious than life. It was for truth that the prophets and apostles suffered. It was for truth that John the Baptist was beheaded. It was for truth that Christ our Lord died on the cross.

## **Whole hearted**

A real spiritual leader gives himself wholly to his work as a servant of God. The weak leader only works as far and as long as it suits his convenience. Every man must have a time of rest. But there is a difference here too. The weak leader rests to enjoy his own pleasures. The true leader rests only to be more efficient in his work. He rests so that he might renew his strength and mount up higher as on an eagle's wings (Is.40:31).

One of the gravest weaknesses of a bad leader is that he demands that his followers make a fuss of him. This was the weakness of King Saul. He so much loved the praise of man above the praise of God that he was ready to put to death young David, who excelled him in leadership. It was all-important to poor Saul to be something in the esteem of men. It would have been far more to his good if he had attended to his reputation with God. But he was spiritually blind and did not care how much sin he committed if only he could keep the crown of honour on his own head. But leaders who look to their own honour are on the slippery slope. Like Saul they run the risk of losing any praise from God at last. It was the pathetic confession of King Saul towards the end that he had 'played the fool and erred exceedingly' (1Sam.26:21).



## Visit To Grace Reformed Church, Columbia, Missouri

**Rev John Keddie**

It is perhaps not too well known within our Church at home that there are two preaching stations of our United States Presbytery in Missouri. One of these is located in St Louis, which is on the Missouri river and is on the east of Missouri bordering on Illinois. The other is in Columbia, rather more central in the state. This is what the Americans would call the Mid-west. In August of 2012 the Rev Jonathan Mattull was ordained by our United States Presbytery as a Church Planter with responsibility for these two preaching stations. The two cities are about 140 miles apart, though the Interstate (motorway) between the two is fairly flat, wide and straight. Jonathan is married to Jennifer and they have three young children. He serves as headmaster of Providence Classical Christian Academy in St Louis where he lives. He takes services in Columbia usually once a month.

In March I had the privilege of travelling to Columbia to provide some resident supply in the congregation. I was accompanied by my wife, Jean. We were there between 14 March and 18 April, although we did take five days 'leave' to visit my brother Gordon, who is pastor of the Southside Reformed Presbyterian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana. Indianapolis is on the same Interstate as Columbia/St Louis about 350 miles to the east. Our visit there coincided with his Church's annual conference 'Reformation Indy' at which the speaker was Joel Beeke of the Heritage Reformed Church, Grand Rapids. These men are good friends of our Church.

Though not yet numerically strong, it was good to find a gathering in Columbia in which the preaching and principles of the Reformed faith and practice are valued. A few years ago an approach was made to the United States Presbytery for services to be supported there. The small group was encouraged by the positive response of the members of our United States Presbytery. Initially preaching was largely undertaken by a Reformed Presbyterian brother, but after he moved west to Kansas City (Missouri) much of the regular ministry has fallen on Noah Manring. Noah is a respected Professor in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Among other things Noah holds a degree from Reformed Seminary, Charlotte, South Carolina. He and his wife Polly with their lovely family of eight children, ranging in age from 4 to 20, are the mainstays of the fledgling congregation. They receive good support from the McLanes, the Wamsleys, the Freemans and the Jeffersons. At present the congregation numbers twenty or so souls.

Sabbath ministry begins with a service in the William Wood University building at 9.30am. After a brief break there is then an 'Education Hour' (all age Bible study) for about an hour, after which attendees enjoy fellowship and friendship over a meal they prepare themselves. In addition to this there

is a mid-week Bible study meeting held at the home of the Manrings on Tuesday evenings.

Our own visit was encouraging for ourselves. Hopefully it was also encouraging for the group in Columbia. Included in the four weeks of ministry was a communion season on the last Sabbath of the visit, preceded by a preparatory service on the Saturday. Both services were well attended with about 27 at each service, including on the Saturday some friends (including the minister Ryan Speck) from the Redeemer Presbyterian Church of America congregation in Columbia. It was good on that Lord's day evening to travel through to St Louis and take an evening service for Jonathan Mattull in the Southminster Presbyterian Church where the congregation hold services on the Lord's day evenings. In an area (Missouri) in which there is little adherence to the distinctly Reformed faith, and more particularly our unaccompanied Psalm-singing position, it is good to see such congregations being established. May the Lord prosper them!

The warmth of hospitality and friendship of those in the congregation left a lasting impression upon us so that it was hard to leave at the end of our stay! We were very moved and encouraged in our time among these fine people.

Here are some topics for prayer:

- Please remember the preaching stations in Columbia and St Louis, that the Lord might be pleased to enlarge them and encourage them in strengthening their testimony to the doctrines of grace and purity of worship.
- Pray for Jonathan Mattull in his task as Church Planter for the congregations in St Louis and Columbia.
- Pray for Noah Manring as he undertakes the bulk of the ministry in the Columbia preaching station.
- Pray that the United States Presbytery may have wisdom in their oversight of these preaching stations.
- Pray the Lord of the harvest that He may prosper the congregations by the raising up and appointing of office bearers within the congregations.
- Pray for the children and young people associated with the congregations that they may grow up to love the Lord and the great truths of His Word.

As has been evident on previous visits 'across the water' there is much more evidence of Christian faith and life in the United States than there is in our homeland. There are still many very large congregations as well as distinctly Christian Colleges, Schools and home-schooling which have tended to preserve Christianity in United States' society rather better, humanly speaking - or spiritually speaking - than has been the case in this country. However, under a general liberal and atheistic spirit there are signs of church decline in the States and prayer is needed for the churches there just as much as for our own desperate situation here.

*Our heart's desire for the brethren in Columbia (and St Louis) is that they may enjoy the blessing of the Holy Spirit and the grace of steadfastness in coming days (1 Corinthians 15:58).*



## Zambia Mission Trip

**Rev Andrew Allan**

**S**ome time before I left for Zambia I discussed with the Rev Harry Woods his recent trip there and asked him for help and advice. One thing he mentioned was that every morning before he put his shoes on, he would give each of his shoes a sharp tap on the floor to dislodge any bugs that might be in his shoes! I'm not sure if he was joking or not, but I did frequently check my shoes just in case. My wife would comment, 'If any bugs went into your shoes they certainly would not come out alive!'

I left Aultbea on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March when the temperature was minus 3 and after I arrived in Lusaka over twenty-four hours later the temperature was in the high 20s. What a contrast! It was nice to feel some heat and not to need to worry about having a jersey or a coat with me in case of cold or wet weather.

I arrived at the Lachmans' house at Covenant College in the evening and was warmly welcomed by David and Katie who quickly showed me my room. Katie pointed out a lizard she had spotted earlier on the bedroom wall and said, 'I didn't bother getting rid of it because now that you have arrived it will quickly leave the room'. I wasn't too chuffed at the thought of sharing my room with a lizard, but I was tired and hungry so I kept my thoughts to myself. After eating with the Lachmans I returned to my room and the lizard was gone. Katie was right!

### **The Trust**

I was appointed by the Home & Foreign Missions Committee as our denomination's trustee on the Covenant College Zambia Trust. My principal duty was to attend the AGM of the Trust and represent the interests of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing). While I was there it was agreed that I would undertake some lecturing to the students. I did not prepare any fresh lectures of my own, instead I used Dr David

P Murray's 'Preaching Christ from the Old Testament' lectures. These were lectures that I received during my time in the Free Church Seminary. I found the lecturing both stimulating and challenging.

At the moment Covenant College has 22 students which is about 10 less than the previous year. The students were very grateful to Rev John Macleod (Shawbost) and Rev Harry Woods for the lecturing they undertook during 2012. It is expected that another lecturer will be in place around the end of this year and this should alleviate some of the pressure experienced by the College's current teaching staff.

At the AGM the Trustees agreed that the College needs a Principal. However they are not sure what type of Principal would best suit the needs of Covenant College. Does the College need a full-time teaching Principal or a teaching/administrative Principal who would be used to raise the profile of the College? A sub-committee has been formed to report to the Trustees with their recommendation before the Autumn.

Plans are underway to renovate a building that is currently used by those organising the Children's Saturday Mission. The building is in good condition and has a roof, but the sides are exposed to the elements. The College would like to use the building for lecturing, but in order to comply with new Zambian building regulations any building used for teaching must be enclosed.

Marjanne Hendriksen gave an audiovisual report of her work to the Trustees and indicated that the Schools Ministry based on the Bible is progressing well. Phil Bailey gave the Farming God's Way report. Jackson Kasola has been appointed as the new Farm Ministry Leader and Phil Bailey has been appointed to a new post of Farm Ministry Tutor. During my time Farming God's Way held an open day when many from the surrounding communities were invited along to see how the farm ministry works. Over 500 persons attended and each had lunch.

The Lachmans are enjoying their home and environment. Mr Lachman is heavily involved in lecturing and undertaking administrative duties in his role as vice-principal of the College. He is highly regarded by pupils, colleagues, trustees and the community. He is getting out and preaching among the local congregations to help boost the awareness of the College and to acquaint himself with the local church scene. Both Mr & Mrs Lachman are taking active steps to learn the local language, although it has to be admitted that Katie is making better progress than David.

It is good to remind ourselves of what we are about as Gospel ministers, office-bearers and Christians. All our preaching, teaching, lecturing, witnessing and missionary endeavours should in some way, however small, have the glory of the Lord in mind. Habakkuk 2:14 says, 'For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea'.

I would like to thank the Committee for sending me, the Poolewe & Aultbea congregation for allowing me to go, the Lachmans for their hospitality and God for looking after me. I have produced a non-professional DVD of my first trip to Zambia and I am willing to give a copy to any church or individual. Please make contact with me at [revara@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:revara@tiscali.co.uk) and I'll supply the same. The DVD may also be viewed on our denomination's website [www.freechurchcontinuing.org](http://www.freechurchcontinuing.org).

“Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.”

**I Thessalonians 5:14-15**