

# English Churchman

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## Rick Warren to Address Muslim Placating President

American President-elect Barack Obama says he will try to "reboot America's image" among the world's Muslims and will follow tradition by using his entire name — Barack Hussein Obama — in his swearing-in ceremony.

Obama has invited megachurch pastor Rick Warren to deliver the invocation at his inauguration on January 20th. This has sparked disgruntled complaints from sodomites angry at Warren for supporting the anti-sodomite marriage amendment, Proposition 8, in California. However Obama defended his choice saying, "That's part of the magic of this country is that we are diverse and noisy and opinionated."

Warren responded to critics who call him homophobic, arguing that it's a groundless accusation because he has many gay friends, has eaten dinner at gay homes, and Saddleback Church

has done more for people with AIDS than any church in the world. "Kay and I have given

I just don't believe in the redefinition of marriage."

Warren stated that divorce is an

response to why Christians talk about gay marriage more than divorce. "My sins are perfectly acceptable; your sins are hideous and evil," he joked.

Warren invited Obama to speak at his Saddleback Church for an

sexual-related issues, the two agree and can work together on advocating for the poor and fighting against the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Obama promised during his campaign that one of his top priorities would be to work to repair America's reputation worldwide, and that one element of that effort would be a speech delivered in a Muslim capital. He said his message would be twofold: that his administration will be unyielding in stamping out terrorist extremism but also "unrelenting in our desire to create a relationship of mutual respect and partnership with countries."

During the campaign, Obama repeatedly faced questions about whether he is a Muslim but he is said to be a practising Christian. Asked if he would drop his middle name during his inauguration he said, "The tradition is that they use all three names and I will follow the tradition, not trying to make a statement one way or another."



Barack Obama and Rick Warren during one of Saddleback Church's electoral debates

millions of dollars out of the Purpose Driven Life helping people who got AIDS through gay relationship," Warren said. "So they can't accuse me of homophobia.

even bigger threat to the American families than 'gay' marriage. "We always love to talk about other's sins more than ours," the megachurch pastor said in

HIV/AIDS conference in 2006. At that time, Warren had defended his decision by explaining that while the two may disagree on abortion and some homo-

## PUBLIC BENEFIT GUIDELINES REASSURING FOR CHURCHES, SAYS EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

Charity Commission guidelines issued recently should reassure churches and organisations that the new legal requirement to demonstrate the public benefit of religion should not be onerous, the Evangelical Alliance has said.

Initial concerns that the requirement would be overly demanding for churches have been allayed following consultation between the government, the Charity Commission and religious groups including the Evangelical Alliance.

The Alliance's Head of Public Affairs, Dr Don Horrocks said, "The Commission is to be commended for having consulted and listened and ultimately produced guidelines for churches and religious charities which are in the main clear, balanced and common-sense in nature.

"Churches and other religious charities should feel comfortable about satisfying the public benefit requirement which should not be onerous, and the guidelines will be a valuable aid to compliance.

"We have always believed churches would have little difficulty in demonstrating the benefits they provide to the public, and these guidelines have confirmed this."

Dr Horrocks added that the guidelines represent the final lap of what has been a long engagement with a complex process in which the Alliance has frequently expressed concerns, most of which appear to have been met.

The new guidelines, resulting from the 2006 Charities Act, apply to all religious charities.

While religious public benefit was previously always automatically presumed by the law, the new legislation means churches and religious organisations now have to show this in an annual report.

"We are grateful to the Commission for seeking to understand and work closely with organisations such as ours so that the end product is workable and appropriate," he said. "All religious charities now need

thoroughly to acquaint themselves with the guidelines and make the relatively modest adjustments necessary to fulfil the new requirements."

An analysis of the guidelines will be available in the next edition of the Evangelical Alliance's PQ, in the week beginning January 19. To download PQ, go to <http://www.eauk.org/public-affairs/pqprayerandcampaigns/index.cfm>.

The full Charity Commission guidelines, and further information, for charities whose aims include the advancement of religion can be found at:

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/publicbenefit/pdfs/pbreli-giontext.pdf>

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/publicbenefit/pdfs/law-rel1208.pdf>

<http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/publicbenefit/pdfs/res-rel1208.pdf>

(See Notes and Comment)

## Ulster MEP defends citizens' right toward expressing the Biblical view



by our Irish Correspondent

Traditional Unionist MEP, Jim Allister QC speaking recently in a debate on 'Gay Rights' in the European Parliament spoke out concerning the lack of parity of esteem for those who in conscience held a conviction-led view on homosexuality.

Referring to incidents in Sweden and Belfast, he deplored the infringement of freedom of expression to which peaceful protesters were subjected and stated further,

"People of faith believing the Bible on the subject of homosexuality, are vilified, nay persecuted, for

daring to express their opinions of conscience and conviction. In Sweden we have seen a pastor prosecuted for quoting the Bible and in Northern Ireland, a church advert reciting scripture has been banned from the Ulster Newsletter. Yet in the 2007 annual Gay Pride parade in Belfast, a placard highly offensive to the Lord Jesus was tolerated when it should have been dealt with as inflammatory hate crime'

With the deadline for the European election in June 2009 fast approaching, Christians need to focus on candidates who will honour God in such matters. Jim Allister is likely to be one of three Unionist standard bearers. Conservative MEP, Daniel Hannan recently writing in the Daily Telegraph [Dec 18th] said, 'It is to Jim Allister's credit that he, almost alone in Ulster politics resisted the lure of office to keep faith with his electorate. He is a tireless defender of UK national interests and Northern Ireland's best friend in the European parliament.'

# English Churchman Letters to the Editor

Letters for publication should be sent to:  
PO Box 60163, London, SW19 2TL  
or email: [ecletters@aol.com](mailto:ecletters@aol.com)

## 2009 - Two Anniversaries

As you reflect with faith upon the birth, life, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and return of our Lord Jesus Christ, you will be blessed with God's pardon, peace, providential care, comfort in suffering and a happy eternal prospect.

Any other consideration will only lead to darkness, despair and damnation. Such is the fruit of a world without Christ, a society that dismisses the best our Christian heritage gave us. Indeed, we are living at a time of spiritual, moral, economic and ecological meltdown. The West especially is threatened by all that denies the unique wonder of the authentic biblical revelation of God in Christ - atheistic secularism, self-indulgent & debt-driven hedonism, ethical relativism, Islamic jihadism, pseudo-Christian Roman Catholicism and anaemic, effeminate charismatic evangelicalism. The list could be extended in more detailed ways.

Next year (2009) brings us two highly-significant celebrations. One is the 150th anniversary of Darwin's Origin of Species (1859). The other is the Quincentenary of the birth of the great Protestant reformer John Calvin (1509-64). Darwin's contribution inspired the deception of evolutionism with its consequent darkness, despair and death. Calvin's contribution inspired a rediscovery of the wonder of God's revelation of Himself in Christ. It is our belief that Calvin's special contribution points to the only hope for us all, both in the West and in the rest of the world. His conception of the Gospel of Jesus Christ will bring light and hope to all who pursue it.

Yours warmly in Christ,  
Dr Alan C. Clifford

## Leslie Rawlinson

Dear Sir

At the risk of seeming over-pedantic, may I offer a small correction to Barry Shucksmith's excellent tribute to the late Rev. Leslie Rawlinson? Barry states that he served as pastor of Hinkley [sic] Baptist Church. In fact his pastorate was at Mount Road Baptist Church, Hinckley, a Grace Baptist Church; the church known as Hinckley Baptist Church is a "general" Baptist Church linked to the Baptist Union.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Leslie Rawlinson. My first curacy from 1963 to 1967 was served at Lenton Parish Church, Nottingham, while Leslie was Vicar of St Ann's, and I remember him kindly taking me down to Leicester for the day to attend one of the early Banner of Truth Ministers' Conferences. Like him I seceded from the Church of England's ministry, in 1974, but did not become a baptist, finding a spiritual home instead with the Evangelical Fellowship of Congregational Churches.  
Peter Beale

## How We Should Regard Cromwell and Charles I

Dear Sir,

In broad terms, there are five views on Oliver

Cromwell's republic.

View 1: The traditional Reformed Evangelical view. Charles I is regarded as a Solomonic type figure, making some mistakes e.g., marrying a Roman Catholic wife, but like King Solomon, King Charles is still remembered as a saint (Neh. 13:26). We should "Honour the king" (1 Peter 2:17), and oppose "seditions" and "murders" (Gal. 5:20,21) such as those of Cromwell and the Puritan republican revolutionaries of 1640-60; and also "liars" (Rev. 21:8) such as Rutherford, who falsely claimed that Anglican kneeling to receive Communion constituted intrinsic idolatry. E.g., when in 1637 Lord Craighall said he had no such intention to idolatrously adore the Communion bread, Rutherford said to His Lordship, "Your intention to honour Christ is nothing, seeing that religious kneeling ... doth necessarily import religious and divine adoration." (Rutherford's Letter 174 / 86). The Final Rubric of the Communion Service in the 1662 prayer book condemns Puritans like Rutherford as operating "out of malice and obstinacy."

In his death, as Supreme Governor of the C. of E. and C. of I., Charles I gave a Christian witness. He received Communion at St. James Palace on 30 Jan 1649, before going to the execution block to be beheaded; where he again gave a Christian testimony, in Christ-like manner forgiving his enemies, and dying with steadfast Christian faith at the hands of virulently anti-Anglican Puritan revolutionaries, who e.g., made the prayer book "illegal" from 1645 to 1660. He is thus known as "King Charles the Martyr." The 1662 Caroline prayer book is a Restoration prayer book, and its associated Preface in the 1662 Act of Uniformity (which was originally printed with the prayer book), refers to "the great and scandalous neglect of Ministers in using the said Order of Liturgy" as "great mischiefs" that had arisen "during the time of the late unhappy troubles" of the 1642-60 republic. And from 1662 to 1859, the prayer book included the red letter day Office of "King Charles the Martyr." Happily, Charles I's Day has been now revived on the Anglican Calendar in Australia since 1978, and in the C. of E. since 1980.

View 2: A Scottish Presbyterian view (not held by all Scottish Presbyterians). Scottish Presbyterian Puritans of this type consider we should "Honour the king" (1 Peter 2:17), and oppose "seditions" and "murders" (Gal. 5:20,21) such as those of Cromwell and the Puritan republican revolutionaries of 1640-60. They do not claim that Anglicans kneeling to take Communion thereby commit intrinsic idolatry. Thus Acts of the Scottish Parliament continued to be reckoned in the regnal years of Charles I after the 1642 republic had been formed in England (and Ireland). After the murder of Charles I on 30 Jan. 1649, the Scottish Parliament proclaimed his heir and son, Charles II, "King of Scotland." Charles II was later defeated by Cromwell's republican army at Dunbar (1650) and Worcester (1651); and went into interregnum on the Continent till 1660. This Puritan view considers Charles I was a king unjustly murdered; but it does not specifically recognize Charles I as a Christian martyr.

View 3: An English Puritan view (not held by all English Puritans). This view considers that if a ruler is a "tyrant," then Biblical injunctions against "seditions" and "murders" (Gal. 5:20; Rev. 21:8) may be set aside. This view claims Charles I was such a "tyrant," and usually falsely claims that he was trying to reconcile the Anglican Church with the Roman Church. The Puritan revolutionary republic

is usually further justified on the basis that men like Cromwell and Rutherford were "great" "Christian" men, whereas "Charles I was not." There is an overlap between Views 3 & 5; and such thinking has also been present among some North American Puritans, it being one factor present in the American War of Independence forming the USA.

On the one hand, by the King's order, Restoration Anglicans placed Cromwell's head on a public gazing pole at Westminster Hall next to Westminster Parliament from 1661 throughout Charles II's reign, and hung the rest of Cromwell's body in chains at Tyburn in London's Hyde Park. Rutherford was also wanted by the government on charges of high treason, but he died in 1661 before he could be prosecuted. Restoration Anglicans enacted the Clarendon Code and Tests Acts, which barred English Puritans from various positions; for "seditions" and "murders" (Gal. 5:20,21) evident in Cromwell's glorification as found in View 3 is a serious matter. But on the other hand, from 1689, Reformed Anglicans and Presbyterians in Scotland holding View 2, worked together in close alliance as fellow Protestant Christians.

View 4: The Puseyite View. Unlike View 1 which is pro-Charles, anti-Laud, and anti-Cromwell, View 4 is pro-Charles, pro-Laud, and anti-Cromwell. It shares in common with View 3, the idea that not just Laud, but also Charles I, sought to Romanize the Anglican Church. This view fails to do justice to the fact that Charles I who appointed Laud Primate of the C. of E., also appointed Ussher Primate of the C. of I. i.e., the evidence is that Charles largely acted in a traditional patron-type way to his two Primates, giving them a good deal of autonomy. While Charles may be fairly criticized for not restraining Laud more, it is clear from his conduct with Ussher that he was not the instigator of Laud's innovations. View 4 seeks to misuse Charles I's Day to promote Puseyism.

View 5: The secular "democratic" view. This 19th century view sees Cromwell's republic as "a milestone" in "the growth of parliamentary democracy." Like Cromwell, it seeks e.g., to place all power in the House of Commons, but whereas the Puritan republican revolutionaries sought to abolish the House of Lords and monarchy, this view, at least in the UK, seeks to retain both as rubber stamps.

Some conflict may occur e.g., between View 3 and 5, or within Views 3 & 5, as to what is "tyrannical." E.g., such thinking has been developed with notions of "human rights," and while those following View 3 would generally be anti-homosexual, those of View 5 may claim it would be "tyrannical" to discriminate against homosexuals. Those following View 5 have, to the applause of those following View 3, erected a disgraceful statue of Oliver Cromwell at Westminster Parliament.

As one who supports View 1, I look with Anglican Protestant sadness on e.g., the adoption of View 3 by the Free C. of E. Bishop Shucksmith (EC 7724 & 7750). 30 Jan 2009 will be the 360th anniversary of the martyrdom of Blessed Charles. On the day, I will be draping black cloth in my London lodgings, and wearing a black arm band. I remind my fellow Anglicans who, like myself, will be in London on the day, that by tradition, this martyr is annually remembered on Charles I's Day at the place of his execution, the Banqueting House, Whitehall, where flowers are placed. God willing, I shall be there.

Yours sincerely,  
Gavin McGrath.  
Sydney & London.

*Opinions expressed in the correspondence columns are not necessarily those of The English Churchman. We welcome letters of less than 400 words and reserve the right to abbreviate letters. Please state clearly whether letters addressed to the editor are for publication or not.*

## Halal, Supralapsarianism, and the Authorised Version

Dear Sir,

Christians may eat pork, but shouldn't really be imbibing porkies, and someone seems to have fed Mark Skoulding (EC7754) three of these. Please let me set the record straight:

1) Halal does not mean "holy". It means "permitted". A muslim may only eat meat that is halal. We signify our rejection of Islamic claims quite effectively by making it quite clear that we also eat meat that is not halal.

2) Halal meat is not offered to Allah. The name of Allah is merely pronounced over it.

3) In Arabic the name, Allah is a contraction of Al Ilah, which translates literally to "The God" or, semantically, to "God". As such it can only be properly applied to a member or members of the Trinity. Halal meat has the name of the true God pronounced over it by promulgators of gross lies about Him, in the same way that Roman Catholic Baptizees are christened in the name of the true God by promulgators of gross lies about Him (God The Son turning into a wafer and a bit of wine, etc.). Do you paedobaptists admit to the Lord's Supper those whose only encounter with a water sacrament has been in the Roman Catholic Church and at the same time forbid Christians to eat halal meat? Whether is more important, the meat we eat, or the baptism with which our church members are baptized?

As regards the cruelty aspect (Jim North, EC7755), do we really understand animals better than the Spirit that inspired the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15? On the other hand, as Christian citizens, shouldn't we really conform to RSPCA standards? As I understand it, Kosher (in which, to be fair, sincere efforts are made to minimise animal suffering) and Halal slaughter are only permitted to the religious minorities for religious reasons, not to us for economic ones.

It seems, not only from David Driver's articles (EC7753-7755) that Perkins, some of his contemporaries, and according to the late infidel Noel Annan, the late RC Malcolm Muggeridge were indeed supralapsarians. To this I would add that they were subinfernal supralapsarians, since, according to them, the purpose of reprobation is to people the Hell already decreed (it is this brand of supralapsarianism that was rejected by the Synod of Dort). Some EC issues ago Dr Ella and I disagreed about whether Bunyan was supralapsarian or not, neither of us having read "Reprobation asserted" at all recently, it being quite a rare book. It is now available online (e.g., <http://acacia.pair.com/Acacia.John.Bunyan/Sermons.Allegories/Reprobation.Asserted/index.html>) and I quote: "Lastly. The act of reprobation doth harm to no man, neither means him any; nay, it rather decrees him upright, lets him be made upright, and so be turned into the world" (Ch 2). This, like the longer "Fourthly" paragraph in Ch 5, is clearly supralapsarian, in that God sees man as unfallen when reprobating him; but it is more importantly, suprainfernal, as consignment to Hell is not the purpose of reprobation, but a by-product. Bunyan's schema (also independently featuring in Wurmbrand's writings) seems to be the only one in which reprobation is suprainfernal. The prelapsarian and premortarian classification of land animals into domestic and wild animals ("cattle" and "beasts of the earth") could be seen to be a type of this.

As regards Colin Tyler's comments on the AV (EC7755), wouldn't it be a good idea to examine what the translators claimed in "From the Translator to the Reader", before putting on them a burden of infallibility that they didn't claim? I would question whether the AV was always more inspired than some other Reformation versions. And just occasionally, there are questionable bits

in it – though nothing like as many as in the modern versions!

Yours sincerely,  
JOHN ROKOS,  
Wood Green.

## A PLEA AGAINST EXTREMISM

Dear Editor,

Why is it, that very often, evangelicals find it necessary to take an "extreme" position on an issue, with the end result of vacillating from the sublime to the ridiculous?

Over the years, I have come across this problem many times. A particular doctrine or tradition comes to the forefront, and some Christians find it nigh on impossible to take a reasonable, sensible viewpoint, and feel they must move over to an extreme position, - be it hymn singing, exclusive psalmody, festal days, the position of women in the church, female attire &c. to name but a few.

The Bible exhorts us to be of a sound mind, in other words to be balanced, reasonable people with a good deal of common sense.

Going to extremes often brings unnecessary ridicule on the people of God. When there is no revival, deadly legalism creeps in, bringing its harsh rules and the light and liberty of the Gospel is sidelined.

Many years ago I had a letter from someone to specifically ask me which food I would have in my larder over the Christmas Season, no doubt trying to ascertain my views on festal days. A guest to my house was quite happy to eat a mince-pie because it was the end of November, but said had it been a week later- being December - he would certainly not have eaten it!

May the Lord preserve us from such immature behaviour and concentrate on the real essentials of our faith, based squarely on the Word of God.

Sincerely  
Janet P North (Mrs)

# Christian Appointed to Pakistan Cabinet



Shahbaz Bhatti

A prominent and long-time Christian human rights activist was recently appointed as Pakistan's federal minister for minorities affairs and recruited as a member of the cabinet – the first time a minorities affairs minister has a cabinet-level post.

Shahbaz Bhatti, founder and president of All Pakistan Minorities Alliance (APMA), is the minister for minorities affairs and will be defending minorities' rights, especially religious, in a country that is overwhelmingly Muslim – 95 percent of the Pakistani population is Muslim, according to the CIA World Factbook.

Christians and rights groups are hopeful that his cabinet position will give them a more powerful voice in government affairs. In the past, the protection of minorities was relegated to a lower ranking official who worked under one of the government ministers. "We warmly welcome his appointment and congratulate the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan on this decision," said U.K. based Christian

Solidarity Worldwide chief executive Mervyn Thomas, in a statement. He noted that the organization has known and worked with Bhatti for many years. "We hope that the whole Government of Pakistan will support Shahbaz in his new position,

and that significant progress will be made towards the protection of equal rights for all the people of Pakistan, and the repeal of the widely-abused blasphemy laws which cause so much misery for so many," he added.

For many years, Bhatti has been the foremost activist for the repeal of the country's blasphemy laws and for equal rights for all religious minorities. The country's blasphemy laws have been widely abused to persecute Christian minorities, who are often falsely accused of insulting Islam's so-called Prophet Muhammed or desecrating the Quran.

Pakistani Muslims often are motivated by personal reasons, such as land dispute or other small arguments, when they accuse Christians of blasphemy. Last summer, Younis Masih, 29, was sentenced to death for allegedly insulting Muhammed. According to APMA, the day before the young Christian man was arrested he had reportedly asked a neighbour to turn down the volume of some loud religious music.

He was subsequently beaten unconscious by a mob and his wife was also beaten when she attempted to intervene.

In addition to the unfair blasphemy laws, the Pakistan National Assembly has also considered passing a new apostasy bill that would sentence to death all Muslim men converting from Islam and impose life imprisonment for women apostates.

David Drew MP (Member of Parliament), who travelled to Pakistan with CSW in 2005 and met with Bhatti, praised the Pakistani government's decision for appointing a prominent activist to the cabinet and voiced hope for improvement for the country's minorities. "I was deeply impressed by Shahbaz Bhatti's courage, commitment and personal sacrifice in pursuit of the cause of human rights and justice for all the people of Pakistan, and by his extraordinary dedication to championing the rights of religious minorities who face severe discrimination and persecution," Drew said. "His appointment by the President of Pakistan to this ministerial position, and the decision to promote the post to Cabinet-rank, is to be warmly welcomed."

Bhatti founded the Christian-inspired APMA movement in 1985, and one of his first campaigns was against the blasphemy law that was introduced in 1986. The Christian community is the hardest hit by the blasphemy laws. As the new minister for minorities affairs, Bhatti has promised to propose legislative reform to protect minorities' rights and promote unity and understanding between different groups.

"Jesus is the nucleus of my life," Bhatti said when he took the oath for office in November, according to Asia News, "and I want to be His true follower through my actions by sharing the love of God with poor, oppressed, victimized, needy and suffering people of Pakistan." CSW

# Constitutional Group call For "Lawful Rebellion"

On Saturday January 24th the British Constitutional Group are holding a day conference under the title "Lawful Rebellion - Actions Not Words". The following is from their website [www.thebcgroup.org.uk](http://www.thebcgroup.org.uk)

## Background

The collective political establishment, consisting of the three main political parties, have agreed amongst themselves, without our consent, to transfer our national sovereignty to Brussels. This process commenced in 1972 with the signing of the Treaty of Rome and concludes when the Lisbon Treaty comes into force. As the process is now in its final phase, the loss of our national sovereignty is now certain, unless their plans are stopped.

The EU is about centralizing power and the subservience of elected governments. The notion that the EU is somehow subservient to member states is both misguided and dangerous.

The situation is now grave – but we have a strategy that will regain our independence – we need help for its implementation.

## Problems

- The three main political parties are unreservedly committed to continued membership of the EU

- Although most voters now want to leave the EU; they continue to vote for the 3 main parties, because extraordinarily the EU is not seen as a general election issue

- The majority of voters do not fully understand that national sovereignty is being surrendered and the subsequent consequences

- Most eurosceptic MPs and MEPs play lip service to euro-scepticism but rarely act in favour of maintaining British independence

- Institutions, such as the BBC and other news media are generally heavily biased towards the EU ideology and are opposed to nation states

- Opposition to the EU is fractured, inconsistent in its approach and poorly funded

## Solutions

- The most fundamental action to be taken by those who want to withdraw from the EU, is to stop voting for any of the three main political parties

- Make the loss of national sovereignty of prime importance to people

- Expose the EU for what is really is; it is not a co-operative enterprise but a destruction of democracy

- We must convince voters... not just inform, but convince them that the EU is anathema to democracy

- We must be properly funded

The conference on 24th January 2009 is due to be held at Kings Hall, Stoke-On-Trent

11:00am – 5:30pm (Doors open at 10:00am)

Speakers: John Bingley: What is the British Constitution?; David Bourne, Sqd Leader: Mediatisation – has the Queen betrayed her people?; Albert Burgess: Treason Has Been Committed; John Harris: Freeman On The Land; Brian Gerrish: The State of the Nation; Roger Hayes: What we are going to do about it.

To book a place: Phone: 01752 312 743 (9am-2pm), 07813 529 383 (all other times) or send a cheque for £12.50 per attendee to: The British Constitution Group, 7 Holland Road, Wallasey, Wirral CH45 7QZ or book online.

*Ed: While we have no reason to think this is a Christian conference, it is a subject that is of concern to Christians. John Bingley is a constitutional and legal researcher and a leading contributor to the work of the Magna Carta Society in 1999/2000. Brian Gerrish is an expert on the meddling organisation "Common Purpose". John Harris has served an affidavit on the Queen in relation to the traitorous activity of the Government in giving away our sovereignty to the EU. Albert Burgess is an ex-policeman who tried to charge those who took us into the EU with treason.*

# 2009 DARWIN YEAR – Let's Seize the Day

By Philip Bell

In 2009 there will be a lot about Charles Darwin appearing in the media as society celebrates 200 years since his birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of the 'Origin of the Species'. Many will use this opportunity to shout: 'Evolution is a fact—it's the truth! So if Genesis is a myth then the Bible cannot be trusted and Christian morality and the message of Jesus Christ collapses like a house of cards.'

Have Darwin's theories been misused by these atheists, or was he aware that his ideas were dangerous to the Church? While Darwin can be credited with having made many keen observations of the natural world, it's undeniable that his jettisoning of biblical history—in favour of a long ages alternative—led to his rejection of the rest of Scripture. Late in life, he wrote: "... I do not believe in the Bible as a divine revelation, & therefore not in Jesus Christ as the son of God."

Today, many wonder at all the social ills, rampant drug abuse and sexual promiscuity, abortion on demand, and the high level of youth suicide, for example. On a 2008 front cover, Time magazine asked: "Unhappy, unloved and out of control: An epidemic of violence, crime and drunkenness has made Britain scared of its young. What's causing the crisis?" Could it not be linked to decades of teaching people that they are just evolved animals, that Intelligent Design is anti-science and that there is no purpose to human existence—"nothing but blind, pitiless indifference", as Richard Dawkins puts it? So how should Christians respond? What can we do in the face of so much pro-Darwin activity in 2009?

Let us seize the day—or rather the year! 2009 is a year of great opportunity for Christians to 'scratch where people are itching!' Let the atheists put their slogans on the London buses saying "There's probably no God"—what a fantastic opportunity to engage people in meaningful conversation!

Philip Bell is CEO of Creation Ministries International

For a resources catalogue and an information pack call 0845 6800 264 or email [uk@creation.info](mailto:uk@creation.info) or visit [www.CreationOnTheWeb.com](http://www.CreationOnTheWeb.com) for 6000 fully searchable articles.

# Reformation Faith Under Attack

By Spirit of '88

"... precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." [Ps 116:15]

"Male Priests Marry in Anglican Church's First Gay Wedding" was a headline in the June 15th Daily Telegraph. This blasphemous and deeply offensive travesty of a 'wedding service', which was conducted in the Anglo-Catholic church of St Bartholomew the Great, at Smithfield, was closely modelled on the Church of England marriage service. It clearly and deliberately flouts the Church's guidelines, apparently seeking to exacerbate differences within the Anglican Communion. It was surely an abomination in the eyes of our God.

It has been estimated that 45 faithful servants of Christ, including John Rogers (translator of the Matthew Bible), John Bradford and John Philpot were burnt for heresy in Smithfield between 1555 and 1558, during the Marian persecution. They chose to burn in denying 'the real presence' as well as the re-sacrificing of Christ in Holy Communion; and also in refusing to acknowledge the Pope as the "Holy Father" and 'Vicar of Christ on earth'. In March 1849, during the excavation of a drain at a depth of 3 ft. immediately opposite to the entrance of the church of St Bartholomew the Great, workmen laid open a mass of unhewn stones, blackened as if by fire and covered with ashes and human bones charred and partially consumed. [Will We Remember Them booklet p.4-5]

With God there are no coincidences. He cares deeply about his martyrs, who gave their lives to uphold His truth; and He cares about their legacy to us. As the Church of England struggles for unity it needs to be reminded of these its own martyrs and just why they were led to die for Christ. They all believed that sound doctrine was worth dying for; being convinced that the Scriptures are, unlike Catholic dogma and tradition, inerrant and infallible.

The crisis in the worldwide Anglican

Communion continues to widen. The Church is increasingly divided by the rebellion against the Word of God and the 39 Articles of Religion which began in North America with practising homosexual bishops. Division is intensifying with the internal disputes and debates over the consecration of women bishops.

Much needed leadership was not provided by the July Lambeth Conference which accomplished very little to restore communion on either of the two fractious issues. Rowan Williams, the Primate to whom all would have liked to look for a lead, ended the Conference by calling for "space to study". Unfortunately the Archbishop has forfeited his authority by equivocating and vacillating right from the beginning of the homosexual revolt in North America in 2003. He and others have failed to exercise discipline in the face of this blatant heterodoxy. Prominent in the press after Lambeth was a reminder that the Archbishop, when he was Archbishop of Wales, had expressed his belief that, "same sex marriages might reflect the love of God in a way comparable to marriage."

Given that this is the Archbishop of Canterbury's now publicised view, it seems very unlikely that any disciplinary action will be taken against Rev. Martin Dudley, the defiant rector of St Bartholomew the Great, by the Bishop of London or by anyone else.

In response to the alarming downgrade within the Anglican Communion, GAFCON, the Global Anglican Future Conference, which met in Jerusalem at the end of June, majored on sound doctrine. The Jerusalem Declaration, the GAFCON statement, testified to the determination of GAFCON to underline the doctrinal basis of Anglicanism. (The Holy Scriptures, The 39 Articles of Religion and Canon A5); and to combat the 'different gospel' that is accepted and promoted within the provinces of the Anglican Communion. The different gospel, contrary to the apostolic Gospel, seems to have referred to the unscriptural beliefs and practices of the liberals in the Church. However the GAFCON gathering included Anglo-Catholics and the final communion service was reported to include "the elevation of the host and some distinctly unreformed liturgy." Surely the different gospel ("another gospel" - Galatians 1:6 KJV) applies to Anglo-Catholics just as it applies to liberals.

Anglo-Catholicism's founder, and Roman Catholic Saint-in-the-making, Cardinal Newman, is to be re-interred in a much grander grave, in Birmingham Oratory. The Vatican's 'Causes of Saints' wants his remains to be moved "to where he can be better venerated" (i.e. to establish another shrine) and our Ministry of Justice has agreed. The exhumation will take place before his beatification; expected in December - which according to The Times, "could coincide with an announcement of a new deal for English traditionalists who want to 'go over' to Rome with their congregations in protest at moves to consecrate women bishops in the Church of England." Newman's corpse, wearing the vestments of a Catholic priest will be photographed and "major relics" from the body - such as fingers- will be sent to the Vatican so that pilgrims can pray before them (!)

Another thrust in the now rapid, re-Romanizing of Britain process ('the return to mediaeval Catholicism') is revealed by the announcement of plans for a statue of the 'Blessed Virgin Mary' which is to be unveiled in London on October 13th 2009. The Statue, called "Mary Most Holy"\* will stand, alongside the river Thames at Chelsea embankment, on the land which was once owned by Lord Chancellor 'Saint' Thomas More, who may also be in line for a shrine. In fact on this very land in his garden at his 'tree of truth' this "man for all seasons" personally flogged and tortured 'heretics' - those guilty of studying the Scriptures and holding to purely Protestant doctrines. Those who, like Thomas Bilney and James Bainham were steadfast in the truth, Thomas More sentenced to be burnt. The Protestant Reformation and its 'iconoclasm' is coming under increasing attack and condemnation. For example in The Times: The Destructiveness of the Protestant Revolt: "From 1536 (the coming to power of Thomas Cromwell) to the death of Oliver Cromwell (1658) iconoclasts went on a frenzy of destruction." "Reparations" taking the form of idolatrous statues and shrines, in Chelsea and Birmingham, and probably elsewhere, are what are required by the emboldened Church of Rome.

History has revealed that wherever Popery has been most prevalent or dominant the light of the Gospel has been most successfully suppressed and spiritual darkness manifested in superstition and idolatry has resulted. It is evident that we are heading that way. We need with urgency to redouble our efforts to share the gospel, confront error, and contend earnestly for the faith once given to the saints.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" [Galatians 5:1]

\*This description of the Catholic goddess, the Virgin Mary, was upgraded by the Pope in Australia in his address to the 'young people of the world'. To them he described her as the "All Holy One" [see new booklet 'World Youth Day - Pope Teaches Counterfeit of The Trinity' - see Literature List.

Spirit of '88 was launched at the beginning of 1988 with the aim of reminding both church and nation of the importance of our Christian heritage, and to commemorate the great events of 1538, 1588, 1688 and many other anniversaries, in order to:

- Spread the true message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Declare the evangelical faith, enshrined in our constitution.
- Bring back the Bible as the focus of family life and as the source of spiritual and moral values.
- Remind both church and nation of the courage and sacrifice of those who were martyred because of their refusal to compromise the gospel.

Spirit of 88's website is [www.reformationfaith.com](http://www.reformationfaith.com) and a literature list may be obtained from Dorchester House Publications, P.O.Box 67, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 5SJ.

Ed: A correspondent tells us that Westminster Council have not received an application for the idol in Chelsea but we are by no means sure that the project has been dropped.

## AN ABSOLUTE GEM

'Buy the truth, and sell it not'—says Proverbs 23:23. That's strange. Can truth be traded for money?

Let's answer that with a well-known expression. When someone agrees with something, he may say 'I'll buy that', meaning, 'I'll go along with it'. Yet 'buy' here is far more: it means 'to commit oneself completely'.

'And sell it not...' means: 'don't part with it—or be parted from it'. Moreover, don't let anyone deceive you, by telling you that it is faulty, and needs improving, or correcting, or is not as valuable as you thought.

'The truth' - there's only one. You won't find another. 'Truth' may also be understood as salva-

tion.<sup>1</sup> The Bible speaks of it as unique like a pearl of great price<sup>2</sup> - Christ Jesus being the very embodiment of truth. When you commit yourself to Him — the Way, the Truth and the Life, Proverbs 23:23 says you take hold of something else: wisdom, instruction and understanding.

*'Go thou in life's fair morning,  
Go in the bloom of youth;  
And buy for thy adorning  
The precious pearl of truth,  
Secure this heavenly treasure,  
And bind it on thy heart,  
And let not earthly pleasure  
E'er cause it to depart.'*

Anonymous

1: John 8:31 & 32  
2: Matthew 13:45 & 4.

## Cause for Thought

by Peter Murcott



THE  
**CHRISTIAN  
INSTITUTE**

# News in Brief

FROM THE  
**CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE**

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**Lillian Ladele ruling is overturned on appeal**  
Threatening to fire a Christian registrar who asked to be exempt from registering homosexual civil partnerships was not an act of discrimination by Islington Council, a court has decided. (See Notes & Comment)

**Mum told Christmas lights are offensive**  
A mother of three children was left shocked when a housing officer suggested she should remove her Christmas lights because it might offend her non-Christian neighbours.

**'Rom-coms' ruin love lives, warns scientist**  
Hollywood romantic comedies give "unrealistic expectations" of relationships and could ruin people's lives, scientists have warned today.

**European ministers meet about discrimination law**  
Government ministers from around Europe have been meeting to discuss the progress of a draft EU Directive which may infringe the religious liberty of Christians.

**Liberalising doesn't work admit Dutch**  
Holland is suffering from the consequences of liberal policies on sex and drugs and there is a need for moral restraint, says a Dutch academic.

**Children most want to ban divorce**  
If children ruled the world the first thing they would do is ban divorce, a new survey of under-10s shows.

**Unborns equal in human family, says Archbishop**  
The Archbishop of Canterbury has used his Christmas address to speak out against abortion and emphasise the human value of the unborn child.

**Church to debate reaching Muslims**  
Leaders of the Church of England will debate whether enough is being done to preach the Gospel to Muslims.

**Teen pregnancy numbers are up**  
Teenage pregnancy rates in England and Wales have gone up, suggesting that a decade of Government initiatives like free condoms and more sex education have not helped.

**Two Scots plan to die at Swiss suicide clinic**  
Two elderly cancer patients in Scotland plan to end their lives in a Swiss suicide clinic within weeks of each other.

**Advantages to church and state split says Archbishop**  
The Archbishop of Canterbury has sparked controversy after speaking out about the potential benefits of disestablishment.

**Polish women favour Britain for abortions**  
A report has revealed 10,000 Polish women had abortions in Britain last year in procedures costing the NHS between £5 million and £10 million.

For more details of these and other news items see the Christian Institute website [www.christian.org.uk](http://www.christian.org.uk)

## Indictment of Evangelicalism and Evangelical Preaching in USA

Most American Christians believe many religions can lead to eternal life and among them, the vast majority says you don't even have to be Christian to go to heaven, a new survey conducted July 31-Aug. 10, 2008 shows.

Sixty-five percent of all Christians say there are multiple paths to eternal life, ultimately rejecting the exclusivity of Christ teaching, according to the survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.



Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, called the survey results "a theological crisis for American evangelicals," according to USA Today. "They represent at best a misunderstanding of the Gospel and at worst a repudiation of the Gospel."

Majorities among white evangelicals, white mainline Christians, and black Protestants who do not believe in the exclusivity of salvation say Catholicism and Judaism can lead to eternal life. Smaller but still sizeable percentages (more than half) of white mainline Christians, black Protestants and white Catholics who say there are multiple ways to eternal life also say Islam can lead to salvation; among white evangelicals, 35 percent agree. And more than half of white mainline Christians and white Roman Catholics who view heaven's gates as wide say Hinduism can lead to eternal life compared to 33 percent of white evangelicals and 44 percent of black Protestants.

Surprisingly, Christians also believe atheism can provide a ticket to heaven. Forty-six percent of white mainline Christians, 49 percent of white Roman Catholics and 26 percent of white evangelicals who believe many religions lead to salvation say atheism can lead to eternal life.

Mohler called the findings "an indictment of evangelicalism and evangelical preaching." "The clear Biblical teaching is that Jesus Christ proclaimed himself to be the only way to salvation," he told USA Today. Explaining the challenge many believers face in today's culture, Mohler noted, "We are in an age when we want to tell everyone they are doing just fine. It's extremely uncomfortable to turn to someone and say, 'You will go to hell unless you come to a saving knowledge of Jesus.'"

Alarming, 52 percent of all American Christians think that at least some non-Christian faiths can lead to eternal life. Additionally, only 30 percent of those affiliated with a religion say one's belief determines eternal life; 29 percent say eternal life depends on one's actions and 10 percent believe it's a combination of belief and actions. White evangelicals were less likely to say actions determine who obtains eternal life compared to white mainline believers, black Protestants and white Catholics; and they were more likely to agree that salvation is dependent on belief (64 percent) compared to only 25 percent of white mainline Christians.

Despite the alarming findings, the Pew Forum provided one trend that may be good news for evangelical Christians. The percentage of evangelical Christians who say theirs is the one, true faith has gone up from 39 percent in 2002 to 49 percent in 2008. The religious exclusivity view has also grown among black Protestants, all Catholics, and slightly among white mainline Protestants.

## Barnabas Fund launches campaign for the abolition of the Islamic apostasy law

Islam is a one-way street. You can convert to Islam but you are not allowed to convert from Islam. All schools of Islamic law, shari'a, agree on this rule and specify the death sentence for an adult male Muslim who chooses to leave his Islamic faith. Most also impose the death penalty on women apostates. The rule was established many centuries ago by Islamic scholars, but even today most Islamic religious leaders and many ordinary Muslim people agree with it.

The death penalty is rarely put into practice, but the existence of this "apostasy law" is so well known amongst Muslims that it generates strong hostility towards apostates, whether from family or community, from religious or secular leaders, from police or judiciary. So it is normal for converts from Islam to face persecution and violence. They may be arrested, either for apostasy or on a pretext. They may be attacked, beaten or even murdered by their own relatives. And those who commit the violence will probably not be punished for it.

A further range of penalties for apostasy is laid down in shari'a, including losing one's spouse and children and forfeiting one's property and inheritance. These are imposed in many Muslim contexts today.

It is not surprising that many converts from Islam to Christianity keep their new faith secret, but why should they have to do so? Islam actively encourages non-Muslims to convert to Islam, but it is the only world faith with a death sentence for those who leave it.

The Islamic apostasy law also stands in stark contrast to Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, published sixty years ago this month, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief..."

### Things can change

There are brave Muslim voices calling for the apostasy law to be abolished. Some scholars point out that the Qu'ran has no clear statement about the need to punish apostasy in this life. Others doubt that the traditions about Muhammad's response to apostates are genuine. Still others say that apostates who were killed in the early days of Islam were condemned not for changing their faith, but for rebelling against the Islamic state.

In support of these voices, Barnabas Fund is launching a new campaign that seeks to bring an end to the Islamic apostasy law. Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director, says, "Although only Muslim leaders can make this happen, we as Christians can help the process, by speaking up for freedom of religion and belief and by encouraging others to do the same. We ask you to join us in our efforts and prayers to bring about change for those who choose to leave their Islamic faith, so that they are no longer subject to any penalty but are free to follow their new convictions without fear."

### What to do now

If you would like to sign our petition, please go to [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org). The sign-up sheet can be downloaded and printed out so that you can both encourage your friends to sign and take the petition to your church. Otherwise contact Barnabas Fund, 9 Priory Row, Coventry, CV1 5EX. Tel: 024 7623 1923, email: [info@barnabasfund.org](mailto:info@barnabasfund.org)

Above all, please pray: that the apostasy law will lose its hold on Muslim people worldwide; that it will be rejected as a wrong interpretation of the Islamic sources; and that Muslims may be free to convert without any danger of reprisals.

# Canterbury Tales

Highlights and Lowlights from the Anglican Communion

## Christmas madness

You might like to know [or not] what has been going on this Christmas in various Cathedrals and churches across the land. It is depressing stuff so perhaps it is well you will be reading this when it is all over. The information comes from the Church of England Communications Office.

The rationale for such activities was given by Revd (sic.) Lynda Barley, Head of Research and Statistics for the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England. She said, "Church isn't just for Christmas, but clearly the festival is one of our main opportunities to present a life changing message to a huge number of people. Churches have always looked for ways of bringing alive the Christmas story in ways that relate to modern life - that's why we have had carol services in community centres and supermarkets for many years - and there's no better time of the year for experimenting with ideas for reaching out to the local community. It's great to see so many fresh ways of celebrating the lasting good news and hope of Christmas, particularly in times of uncertainty."

Churches are using increasingly inventive ways of communicating the 'world's greatest ever story' in fresh ways, including:

- All Saints Thorpe Acre, Loughborough are planning a family carol service on Christmas Eve dubbed 'Bethlehem's Got Talent', where 'contestants' from the Christmas story will include singing angels, kings doing a magic act and the inn keepers performing stand-up comedy. The judges include King Herod, who takes on the 'nasty judge' mantle. The stories that the contestants tell will take the congregation through the Christmas story - and the real star of the show is of course the baby Jesus.

- A "Carols and Nativity in the Barn" service took place on 21 December at a farm in Preston Wynne, just north east of Hereford, where the congregation crammed into a Victorian stable complete with large manger. Local children read poems and Bible stories, and dressed up for the Nativity, while the farm's animals proved unwitting extras - including horses putting their heads through the stable door. Parish priest, the Revd (sic.) Heather Short, comments: "This is the third year that we have held this service, which is growing in popularity each year. It is absolutely freezing in the barn, but everyone seems to like that - we have hot punch and mince pies after the singing!"

- Many Cathedrals are laying on extra carol services to cater for demand. In St Albans, the cathedral held a series of 'drop in' thirty-minute carol services every hour on the hour from 11am to 4pm on 20 December, aimed at tourists and shoppers visiting the city. 2,500 people attended in total.

- A city church in Nottingham offered shoppers laden with presents a free gift wrapping session on 20 December. Priest-in-Charge at St Saviour's in the Meadows, the Revd David Hammond explained: "It's

about offering something in the tradition of Christmas free gifts, just like Jesus was a gift to us. Personally I'm a terrible wrapper, I always forget to buy paper and ribbons and I'm often doing it late on Christmas Eve. So this is exactly what I'd appreciate for myself - as we try and do for others like we'd want them to do for us."

- Clergy led an evening carol service at a Manchester donkey sanctuary on 10 December, when children rode donkeys round candlelit paddocks and listened to a specially written Christmas story, accompanied by a brass band.

- St Saviour's Brookwood, Surrey has been running two crib services to cater for demand on Christmas Eve for the last few years, featuring puppets operated by local teenagers. The special services broadly follow the format of a regular monthly service called 20:20 where young children and their parents can attend a brief service where they can see puppets, sing songs, do some craft and pray.

- The management of Brimsmore Garden Centre in Yeovil invited St James and St Peter's Yeovil to offer a Christingle service to last-minute shoppers at one of the centre's late opening nights on 16 December. Music was supplied by Yeovil Town Band, who led a congregation of approximately 70 people among the gardening equipment and spring bulbs.

- St Mary's, Far Cotton, is situated on one of the main roads leading into Northampton and has taken advantage of this position to create a special event on the Friday afternoon before Advent Sunday. This year is the second Advent that the church has invited passers-by into the candlelit garden to light a small candle and say their own prayer for peace - and then join church members for a warming cup of hot chocolate.

- Every day during December on Brighton and Hove's seafront, a beach hut opens its doors at 5.30pm for an hour to reveal a festive display highlighting one of the themes of the Christmas story. The lifesize variation on the traditional Advent calendar is believed to be the first event of this kind in the world and is organised by BEYOND, a new initiative funded by the Diocese of Chichester which uses creativity and the arts to stimulate people to think about spirituality.

- Finally, St Leonard's Streatham, South West London, will join a growing number of churches offering 'Blue Christmas' services for the first time this year, on 22 December. This type of service pays careful attention to the music and prayers selected, so that those who find Christmas a painful time of year for whatever reason can mark the season without the need to wear a 'fixed grin' during the service.

All this makes Wesley's words rather strange sounding, "Our God contracted to a span..." and as for the Scriptures and the Gospel... say no more.

# English Churchman & St. James's Chronicle

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**Editorial:**

PO Box 60163, London, SW19 2TL

**Telephone:** 0208 417 0875 **Mobile:** 07946 465156

**e-mail:** englishchurchman@aol.com

**Administration** (*Subscriptions and advertisements only*):

64 Ripley Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 5NH

**Tel:** 01903 505555

**e-mail:** englishchurchman.admin@ntlworld.com

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## Hold fast that which is good

We make no apology for returning to the subject of the Act of Settlement so soon. From time to time the matter receives renewed attention in the press, and we notice the signs of this at the present time. There is generally some Roman Catholic orchestration behind it. A month ago, however, the Prince of Wales himself raised the question of the role of the monarchy in relation to the established church, and entered a plea for his being recognised as Defender of Faith, rather than Defender of the Faith and thus distinguishing between the Christian Faith and other faiths. But there is more to it than that. Every so often the Roman Catholic Church exploits the opportunity to exert pressure for change, which would give it greater influence and power in this country. We have noted that following the Prince's plea for change, the Scottish Secretary, Jim Murphy, has criticised the Act of Settlement, and added to the view inside government that the law should be changed.

The Act of Settlement has been under review by Jack Straw, the Justice Secretary, and the Lord Chancellor. They have been looking at abolishing the Act because it is discriminatory against non-Protestants. The Act has been called anachronistic in an article by the Home Affairs editor of the Daily Telegraph, and Mr Salmond, the First Minister of Scotland, expressed the view that it should be "consigned to the dustbin of history".

When Mr Brown took over as Prime Minister it was thought that he would welcome change. A statement has been prepared committing the government to scrapping the Act. But, in fact, he stepped back from his planned statement, and may have discerned the danger, that if you meddle with an issue of this nature and magnitude, you endanger the whole constitutional position. However, those seeking change, and this means particularly the Roman Catholic Church, will not let things lie for long. With the Queen getting older we may expect fresh attempts to raise the issue with a view to abolishing the Act of Settlement. Far from being a time for change, however, this is a time when we should be seeking to strengthen ties that bind us together in one

kingdom under one monarch and with one constitution.

It is characteristic of the Church of Rome and the way she has always worked that she seeks relentlessly to exploit any possibility of change in this matter, and will never give up. The supposed weakness upon which the advocates of change play is in the words of the Act which state that the heir to the throne shall not marry a papist. They argue, and here they think that they have contemporary opinion on their side, that it is wrong to discriminate in this way. But the Act was carefully and wisely worded, for the heir to the throne will one day be sovereign, and to marry a papist would introduce permanent change into the nature and constitution of the monarch and the country. Thereafter the children must be brought up as Roman Catholics and the future of the monarchy would be inviolably determined. Once the Church of Rome gets a foot in the door you cannot shut it again. When we think of the history and character of our country, do we wish to see that happen here?

It would also mean that the monarch would in time be made subject to the will of another sovereign outside this kingdom, for the secret confessional is a powerful instrument for manipulating the will of the individual. The integrity of the kingdom would be fatally compromised. This was the very point that made our forefathers frame the Act of Settlement in the way they did. The sovereign in parliament is the authentic voice and source of all authority and jurisdiction in spiritual and temporal matters in this realm. That is a principle that is incompatible with the acknowledgement of any authority outside the kingdom. That is the way it has been for the past three hundred years in this nation and there is no valid reason for changing it now. What amazes us is that Reform, a so-called evangelical body in the Church of England, has added its voice to the clamour for change. Why? We have lived through half a century of ill-advised and reckless change for change's sake, the ill effects of which are present for all to see in the fragmentation and decline of our society and the moral and spiritual decay of a once great nation. This is a change too far, and one we can do without.

# NOTES COMMENT

## Charity Commission Requires Religions To Be Good

In these days of perverse legislation we suspect there is more to it than meets the eye. However, new guidelines from the Charity Commission requiring religious charities to prove they are of benefit to the public, seem to be pretty reasonable. The Evangelical Alliance have had their concerns taken into account. We have looked at the guidelines ourselves and they seem fair enough.

However the question does arise, who then are the guidelines aimed at? Why introduce them at all? While all genuine churches are a great benefit to society there are other religious organisations who can only be described as evil.

If the new guidelines carry any weight then some detrimental organisations would lose charitable status. One would hope that this would include 'churches' that are essentially businesses to enrich their pastors. Most of all it is hoped that the Charity Commission will remove any charitable status from Islamic organisations including mosques as the potential harm they may cause is incalculable. It is clearly very doubtful that such will be the case.

Public Benefit does not have to be quantified but it does have to be stated. This may seem like an odd thing to try to have to do when we believe that unless a man repents and believes the Gospel he shall perish everlastingly. There are many things that even a small church with very little resources can say to its credit. It is available to counsel all who will come. It offers public worship etc etc. The guidelines especially encourage those who seek to 'advance' their religion, this would include open air preaching or giving out literature, and advertising services.

Religious organisations that will have difficulty in continuing to have charitable status include: those that are 'closed' to outsiders, those who put pressure on adherents to pay contributions regardless of their ability to pay, those who give unrelated private benefits to employees such as private jets, and those that spew out hatred and violence. Interestingly while the report gives obvious examples throughout, it does not at this point mention Islam as an example of violence!

With so much Islamic oil money being poured into the propagation of Islam, never mind its hold on the world economy, surely such guidelines will have no clout. The Government has a policy of 'inclusion', not just because it is pro-sodomite liberal atheist, but because it is trying to prevent further development of Islamic ghettos which will otherwise become strong enough to take over the country (See Christian Watch Nov/Dec 2008 Newsletter). Could these new guidelines really be just an attempt to moderate Islam and encourage Muslims to blend into society rather than take it over? If we may be excused for turning a proverb upside down, we feel the Government is taking a nut to crack a sledgehammer.

## Not In Your Time Lord Bragg

The incredibly intellectual Thursday evening BBC Radio 4 programme, "In Our Time," hosted by Lord Melvyn Bragg, was not going to be broadcast on Christmas Day. Why not?

Well there is nothing extraordinary about broadcasting schedules being changed over Bank Holidays. However what made the announcement on 18th December to say the least, ironic, was that it came at the end of an 'In Our Time' that had been considering the question, What is Time?

As may be expected from the BBC we were told that the world was so many million years old and resulted from a big bang some 4000 million, or was it billions of years before all that? These matters were presented as fact which is shocking to hear from a publicly funded broadcaster in a country that is constitutionally Protestant and therefore Bible believing.

After some initial philosophical thoughts the programme followed a reasonably elaborate discussion about how Einstein contradicted Newton's straight lines with views that time could be bent in space as if someone pulled a sheet and things on the other end were immediately affected. It was not really so clever because obviously things look different depending where you are situated.

What was more illuminating was that a certain Swiss scientist had for over twenty years been telling the rest of the scientific community that they were wrong to blame the death of the dinosaurs on a meteor crashing to earth. Her views had been

mocked but at last she was being listened to.

While the lady in question was obviously no Christian Creationist this certainly illustrated the arrogance of the scientific community in general and its inept way of holding cherished theories that have no substance.

One was left wondering why at this point the whole evolutionary charade was not challenged on the basis of the many creationists who indeed have observed that oft quoted Law of Thermodynamics that predicts increasing levels of chaos rather than order!

But it was the announcement of having no programme on Christmas Day that really clinched the matter for us. We would just love to ask Lord Bragg what it was that happened once upon a time that now means that the world stops on Christmas Day. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world is the central fact of all time. Without the knowledge of this Creator then the cleverest scientist is in the dark. He is literally wasting his time. He needs to redeem the time. He needs to be saved in time before the end of time.

There is a time coming when all the theorising about time will be over and judgement will begin. Why is Jesus remembered at Christmas. Not because he was born and died, but because he was born, died and rose from the dead and ascended into heaven from where he has promised he will return to judge the world. In that time there will be more than a big bang.

It is time to do some real thinking Mr Bragg. Why don't you have a programme on Christmas Day?

## Thank God For Lillian Ladele

It is amazing to think that it needs a Christian to stand up to the bullying of local Councils. I guess we should add that it was a black female Christian at that! O what a despised individual that might be!

Wasn't there a big burly man who works as a Registrar who would have objected to having to preside over these sodomite mockings of marriage? Apparently not.

Surely the case of Lillian Ladele is only the tip of the iceberg. Who really wants to "marry" two men or two women? Who really thinks that such a ceremony is decent.

One unfortunate implication of the Lillian Ladele case is that it looks as if it is only Christians who object to this mocking of the natural order. Of course it is the God ordained natural order but even to pagans such "marriages" are revolting.

Lillian Ladele has gone to great lengths to state her respect for sodomites. This should not have been necessary. The whole sodomite movement is abominable and those who are encouraged to live such lives should at best be pitied.

It is further to be regretted that Christians are accused of being the cause of violence against sodomites. We would suggest that this is an unfair accusation. It may well be that the only articulate opposition to sodomites comes from Christians. However the natural unspiritual man in general has a natural hatred of sodomy just as he does against other sexual offenders as witnessed by the bullying of such in prisons.

So why did it take a Lillian Ladele to stand up to the sodomites? Could it just be that unbelievers are so apathetic that they will go along with anything for a quiet life, even things they find abominable. Thank God for Lillian. It is a lovely example of God making the weak strong. May this inspire others not to be afraid of honouring the Lord by doing what is right.

## KICC Make Local TV News

Local London TV news has included an item about Kingsway International Christian Centre, one of Britain's largest churches at least twice in recent weeks. Residents in Walthamstow have been complaining that the planned Christmas celebrations were going to be too noisy and disruptive. While we agree that noisy charismatic worship is not right we would have liked to have heard mentioned the difficulties that the church has had in obtaining any planning permission for a building whatsoever. This is in contrast to the way that mosques and even mega-mosques seem to get permission and even support but then ruin neighbourhoods with cars parked on pavements and Jihadic atmospheres.

# THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

## THE EPISTLES

### *The Epiphany 1&2*



*Some brief reflections: by Bishop Barry Shucksmith*

**E**piphanies is a Greek expression. The word is translated "appearing" in several passages in the Pastoral Epistles i.e. 1 Timothy 6:14, 2 Timothy 4:1, 8, and Titus 2:13. These references are all concerned with the 2nd Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. However, when we look at the use of the word in 2 Timothy 1:10, the reference is to the first coming of our Blessed Saviour, a reminder, if we need it, that we should keep these two great events of incarnation and consummation together. In the past, Anglo-Catholics have concentrated more upon the incarnation than the Second Coming, and some Evangelicals have apparently laboured the theme of the Second Advent to the detriment of the incarnation. Holding the two together in tension is not only more biblical, it is wise, and keeps the necessary balance for Christian faith and practice.

#### THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

The verses are taken from the Epistle of Paul to the Romans – Romans 12:1-5. The Apostle is moving from the theological to the practical. He gives valuable guidelines for living as the redeemed people of God in a wicked and fallen world. In the earlier chapters of the Epistle the Apostle has brought before us the great themes of sin and sacrifice. The sin is ours, the sacrifice is Christ's! And Paul makes it abundantly clear that the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ is a full and finished work. For a fuller treatment of this, we should read the Epistle to the Hebrews. But, nonetheless, Paul says that sin's power is broken and is broken completely because the Lord Jesus Christ's body was broken upon the Cross for us. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God" (Romans 6:10). Paul then follows his reference to the perfect sacrifice of the Lord by challenging us to a personal sacrifice – not for sin, but for service. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:11-12). Paul now takes this theme of "yielding" further in the verses for today's Epistle. There must be a living sacrifice, given willingly and presented to the Lord. What does this mean?

#### (i) It calls for a true PRESENTATION of ourselves v1

'I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.'

'The animal sacrifices of an earlier day have been rendered for ever obsolete by Christ's self-offering, but there is always room for worship rendered by obedient hearts,' is the helpful way one writer expresses it. There was a time in the evangelical world when personal sacrifice was taken for granted. Such spiritual giants as Dr J. Hudson Taylor, C. T. Studd, David Brainerd, William Carey, or Fred Charrington, who gave up "a beer empire for Christ", stick in our memory and conscience. In contrast to the dead animals sacrificed under the old system, do we come with a living sacrifice of all that we have and are? Someone has said that sacrifice is the ecstasy of giving the best we have to the one we love the most.

#### (ii) It requires a true

#### TRANSFORMATION of ourselves v2

True sacrifice and service also requires considerable transformation. "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God".

At the moment, I am reading the brilliant new biography of John Newton, written by the converted disgraced former M.P. Jonathan Aitken. A great transformation was required, by sovereign grace, before Almighty God could use John Newton. Few men have more needed a transformation of heart, mind, and will, as Newton required. But sovereign grace prevailed as it always does with God's elect. The vile-mouthed, fornicating, libertine, was delivered from the debauchery of slave-trading, into a best-selling Christian author, a church leader, a preacher and teacher of the Word of God, a counsellor of rare quality, an abolitionist campaigner, and the spiritual mentor of William Wilberforce and William Cowper, arguably two of the greatest Christians of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Of course, we must move freely in the world. We can hardly change the world by an "exclusive separatist principle". This present evil age is dominated by the god of this age – the Devil. He blinds the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4). We who claim to walk in the light and to be wise in discernment and understanding of the present condition of the world, also need to learn how to 'so pass through things temporal that we finally lose not the things eternal'. The words of Paul emphasize, not only the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God, but the requirement to be 'renewed in mind'. This is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit as we subject our hearts and minds to Holy Scripture. Just as car-drivers (hopefully) by years of experience, learning, and re-learning, act correctly by an unconscious habit, so mature Christians, in the spiritual realm, are schooled sufficiently to avoid the calamitous accident. They proceed carefully and safely to their appointed destiny. They are enabled to do this, despite 'the crazy world in which they live and move'. For such is the amazing grace of God. "Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come: 'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home".

#### (iii) It involves a true ESTIMATION of ourselves v3

All this means that we must keep the facts of the Christian life continually before our minds. Even Paul is careful not to boast of his "achievements." 'I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith' v3.

The problem of growing old and mature in the Christian life is the danger of thinking that we have arrived where we are by our own efforts, energy, strengths, and achievements! Nothing could be further from the truth. "Through the grace given unto me" must always be the Christian's response. I am what I am by the grace of God. And this means not only from day one of my conversion but the last day of my earthly life. Like Newton, as the end draws near, our testimony should be, 'I am a great sinner, Jesus Christ is a great Saviour'.

Nowhere is this gracious humility to be more readily expressed than in the context of the Christian church. So, Paul deals in v4-5 with

# THE CALENDAR

January 11th to January 24th  
PRAYER BOOK WORSHIP

#### JANUARY 11TH

*First Sunday after Epiphany*

M. Isaiah 51; Matthew 6:1-18

E. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 or Isaiah 54; Acts 7:1-34

#### THE COLLECT

O LORD, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon thee; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*The Epistle. Romans 12:1-5*

*The Gospel. St. Luke 2:41-52*

#### JANUARY 18TH

*Second Sunday after Epiphany*

M. Isaiah 55; Matthew 10:1-23

E. Isaiah 57 or Isaiah 61; Acts 10:1-23

#### THE COLLECT

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and earth; Mercifully hear the supplications of thy people, and grant us thy peace all the days of our life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Epistle. Romans 12:6-16a*

*The Gospel. St. John 2:1-11*

membership of the Church. We are all members of the One Body. But we do not all have the same office. Yet, we are interdependent. The Apostle continues in the following verses to show how this must express itself in the fellowship of the Church – the subject of the BCP Epistle for next Sunday. Incidentally, to quote John Newton a third time, He believed 'that humility' is the true mark of the Christian minister. Sadly, humility in the contemporary church often appears as hard to find as the proverbial Dodo. Surely, the Anglican puritan Thomas Watson (ejected 1662) is suggestive – 'the right manner of growth is to grow less in one's own eyes?'

#### THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Read first Romans 12:6-16 and then spend a little time reflecting upon these remarkable verses. In 1 Corinthians, chapters 12-14, we have considerable instruction on the function of gifts within the Christian Church. Romans 12:6-16 is refreshingly different and it ends on the same note of the previous epistle – humility. There is little worse in a Christian minister than arrogance and pride. Yet, these verses are not limited to the "ordained minister". They are for all members of the church.

The main theme is this – we all have a contribution to make. We have all been given one gift – maybe several. Have we discovered them? Are we seeking to use them? Are we improving them by training, as well as public use? Do we seek the help of older and wiser Christians, so that our gifts are used in ways which glorify the Lord and advance – rather than hinder – His kingdom? And it is worth noting immediately that so many of the gifts are not spectacular or demonstrative. Some are hardly "public gifts" at all. They are practical and "off-stage" and, therefore, demand even more grace.

Without being too simplistic – they do deserve fuller treatment in another context – we can reduce the activity of these gifts to three main areas.

#### 1. They should be exercised with ZEAL

The whole drive of these verses is to enthusiasm, energy, life, activity, and zeal, "waiting on our ministry". The positive aspect here is getting on with the job, doing what we have to do, and doing it with eagerness, rather than complaint. A sense of high privilege, rather than morbid drudgery, will help us achieve the end in view. God gives us gifts which differ in nature, power, and effectiveness according to His wisdom and graciousness. (v6). There is a proportion of faith given – some for ministry or service, some for teaching, another for exhorting, others for giving, ruling or administering, and for works of mercy. But whatever we do, let it be done with

zeal – 'not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord'. This latter phrase is vitally important. If we do what we do as unto men it will receive the Pharisee's reward, as Jesus said. We truly serve others by truly serving the Lord!

#### 2. They should be exercised with DILIGENCE

vs 12-15 introduces us to the concept of diligence in our service. The temptation with gifts is to covet the gift that another has. To express this another way, we can be dissatisfied with the gift that God has given us. But not everyone can be teachers. Not all are called to understand and express, in public oratory, the great truths of the Christian faith. Someone has to distribute to the necessity of the saints, to give hospitality, to rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep. And who says such gifts are small and insignificant? Not the Lord. These are included in the same list as prophecy, ministry, teaching, and ruling! 'Ministries bring God more glory and men more benefit when they are fulfilled both with diligence and cheerfulness' (Alan Stibbs).

#### 3. They should be exercised with LOVE.

Romans 12:10 'Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.'

One of the greatest commentators on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans is Martin Luther. Martin says here, with such great feeling and emotion... "Oh, it is a great obligation to prefer one another in love! It is much easier to give (to another) or to serve (others) with the body than to despise oneself and to esteem all others more highly (than oneself)". Preference for others, love, humility; these are the marks of true evangelicalism, not division, pride, self-importance. Those who speak most of the doctrines of grace should be those who most reveal grace, not only in the doctrines, but in loving humble service, especially to those in the Church with whom they most disagree.

When prayerfully considered and applied, Paul's words in v16 destroy the personal divisive arguments and the singular proud attitude – 'Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits'. It may be a daring question to ask, but is it possible that some contemporary evangelicals are too confident in their own wisdom and methodology?

One who belonged to a previous generation wrote, 'I sometimes think that the very essence of the whole Christian position and the secret of a successful spiritual life is just to realize two things... I must have complete confidence in God and no confidence in myself' (D Martyn Lloyd-Jones).

# English Churchman Book Review

## Memories of Sandfields

Bethan Lloyd-Jones

Banner of Truth Trust; 2008; pbk; 104pp; illus; £5.50; ISBN 978-085-151-9982

This was first published in 1993. Readers of Ian Murray's biography of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones will have been made aware of the humble beginnings of the Doctor's ministry. Those who have been privileged to meet some of those who came to the Lord through Lloyd-Jones' ministry of those days will have been impressed by the stories they could tell. This little book fleshes out some of those stories and gives a brief glimpse into the life and times of those days and the somewhat unique power of Lloyd-Jones' ministry. They are wonderful to read and quite gripping. When the book was first published it was gladly welcomed and readers were eager for more. This republication is most welcome, but again, one wishes that the stories in the volume had been multiplied. It is delightfully written, absorbing in its interest, at times deeply touching, at others tragic, and so glorious to see many humble folk coming to the Lord. A great pleasure to read.



REV JOHN DUNN

## THE MORTIFICATION OF SIN

John Owen, *A Study Guide*, by Rob Edwards

Banner of Truth Trust; 2008; bklt; 40pp; £2.50; ISBN 978-085-151-9999

There are some books which every Christian ought to read and re-read. Owen's masterpiece on Mortification of Sin is one such book. This is a valuable and helpful study guide to Owen's work as published in paperback form by Banner. The guide is intended to take the reader through Owen's work to gain the heart of an important element in our sanctification. Owen's emphasis in this work is upon the remaining presence of sin in the believer and mortification is one aspect on how to deal with it. Owen was a master of the heart and the application of scripture to the human condition. His work on Mortification, the negative side of our growth in holiness, is to be seen as part of his larger work on the Christian life. A brief introduction to the Guide outlines what Owen had written and the value of reading what he wrote, on being a Christian. It is a great tragedy that Owen is so little read, or even known. Banner are to be thanked for this guide which, if worked through will bring new readers into a great treasure store they will not want to leave. Hopefully, they will want to get into the full works. Un-edited Owen is not always easy to read, but this study guide opens up and removes any difficulties new readers may find. For those acquainted with Owen, this will help them to re-read Owen's great work and hopefully, see fresh new depths in an old, grand and heart-searching work. The original work, published by Banner, is in Volume 6 in Owen's Collected Works and is some 80 pages in length. One hopes that when Banner reprint their paperback edition of Owen they include this Study Guide in the print run.

REV JOHN DUNN

## The 'Jesus' Film To Be Distributed in China

The China Christian Council has teamed up with Campus Crusade for Christ Asia and the United Bible Societies to produce its first ever "Jesus Film" DVD. The DVD comes with the Luke Gospel booklet and is available in eight Chinese languages.

UBS has helped the CCC distribute 290,000 sets of the Video CD with a Luke gospel portion in the last few years, according to UBS's China Partnership Coordinator Kua Wee Seng. The Luke Gospel booklet is in the Revised Chinese Union Version. This is the first time this new version has been published and distributed on the Chinese Mainland. The move to revise the Chinese Union Version has been led and completed by the Hong Kong Bible Society,

The executive director of the Jesus Film project, Jim Green, said, "Storytelling is the fundamental way that people communicate around the world. Through the 'Jesus Film', we can tell the incredible story of God's love in a simple way that people can relate to-and we can do it in their heart language."

Campus Crusade for Christ International showed

its original Jesus Film in US theatres in 1979. Over five billion people the world over have seen the Jesus Film and in 2007 the film was shown in its 1,000th translation. Plans have been made by the Jesus Film Project, which is part of Campus Crusade for Christ International, to translate the film into 500 other languages.

Ed: It is much to be hoped that the Trinitarian Bible Society will be able to produce a greatly needed Chinese Bible based on the Received Text rather than the UBS version of the Westcott-Hort text which is based so largely on the two most obviously corrupted and, until recently, totally rejected manuscripts namely, Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. As for the depiction of 'Jesus' in films, we believe it to be a blatant breach of the 2nd Commandment. Practically speaking the Chinese Church is flourishing by means of the grace of God working in the sincerity of believers who have been refined in the fires of persecution. Reminiscent of the neo-evangelicals' love for the Hollywood papist Mel Gibson's "The Passion of The Christ" film, it is no surprise to find neo-evangelical Campus Crusade colluding with the Chinese State Church to undermine the Gospel with blasphemous gimmicks that will only hinder the cause of Christ.

## NEWS REPORT EXPOSES ISLAM IN AUSTRALIA

By Peter Stokes

Pastor Daniel Scott and Pastor Danny Naliah and their families went through 5 years of intense trials because they told Christians that Islam allowed polygamy (up to 4 wives) and that it was happening in Victoria, that the Quran allowed some physical beating of wives by husbands, that women were of lesser value than men, and more.

These teachings were denied and called vilification by three Western converts (who clearly had a limited understanding of Islam generally and more specifically the Quran), and also by the Islamic Council of Victoria.

Yet a Howard government commissioned report, conducted by the Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria and released exclusively by Barney Zwartz in The Age newspaper on November 21st, reveals that what Daniel Scott said was in fact the truth and that it is certainly happening in Victoria.

Zwartz wrote:

"SOME Muslim religious leaders in Victoria are condoning rape within marriage, domestic violence, polygamy, welfare fraud and exploitation of women, according to an explosive report on the training of imams.

"The report says some imams apply Sharia (Islamic law) when it benefits men but not when it benefits women, and that they hinder police from pursuing domestic violence charges.

Women seeking divorces have also been told by imams that they must leave "with only the clothes on their back" and not seek support or a share of property because they can get welfare payments.

"The report also says some women who were legally separated but not religiously divorced had their husbands enter their houses, demand sexual intercourse and take it by force."

Ironically, Sheikh Fehmi, who is also Mufti of Australia, told Zwartz that he could not understand how the council could write such a report and denied the complaints "absolutely". "They must have heard stories here and there and are writing about them as though they are fact," he said. No authorised Imam would conduct a polygamous marriage, and it was absolutely wrong that women's rights were ignored in marriage or divorce, or that imams ignored domestic violence.

YET, On ABC Compass (<http://www.abc.net.au/compass/s287380.htm>) in May 2001 the same Sheikh Fehmi, was interviewed...

Narrator: ... Islam recognises polygamy so prior to 1968 Imams like Sheikh Fehmi were not permitted to celebrate marriages.

Sheikh Fehmi: It used to be at the time the late Mr Snedden he was the Attorney General. So I had a good meeting with him one day and tried to convince him that it is important for the Muslim to marry their own people. But he used to say to me. Well you know Sheikh Fehmi that you Muslims may marry more than one and when we are not allowed to let anybody here for have only one wife. I said to him, listen to me please you may register the first one and don't worry about the second one. He laughed and said all right we won't have anything to

do with the second one. I stopped at the idea and at the time we had gained recognition from the Attorney General for all our Imams around Australia from that year onward.

Sheikh Fehmi also stated "Islam is the clear clean page which doesn't change. It didn't change in the past, is not changing now, it will not change in the future."

He certainly appears to be denying today something he has previously stated was true despite clear evidence that what he said in 2001 has indeed been happening today here in Australia.

There is now plenty of evidence that Islam, perhaps like no other religion apart from Christianity that has come to Australia, does not change but instead tries to change the prevailing culture it infiltrates to suit its own statutes.

Unlike Christianity, Islam does not promote monogamy, does not promote full personal equality between men and women (thus allowing the beating of wives) and it does not believe in freedom of choice, including freedom to change your religion.

According to this Islamic report and according to Sheikh Fehmi, these are tenants of Islam that do not, and cannot change and will not fit within modern western society.

We should be thankful that the Howard government commissioned this report which I am fairly confident would not have been commissioned under the current Rudd government.

Will the people of Australia NOW wake up before we have the same situation here that now exists in many western countries where Islam is threatening the very fabric of society and seeking to dominate both the religious AND political landscape?

Will those like Mark Zirnzak and the hierarchy of the Uniting Church, and other denominational leaders who sided with the Muslims or stayed conspicuously quiet during the Two Danny's case, NOW issue an apology to both of them for not supporting their case? That would certainly be the Christian thing to do.

Challenging the flaws of other religions is the responsibility, not only of all Christians, but of all governments where those religions seek to gain a foothold. Appeasement is not a solution, nor is sitting down in the name of interfaith dialogue over a nice cup of tea.

We need to understand what other religions truly believe and the standards they have and compare them to Christianity. We need to vigorously and publicly expose the darkness that bad laws like the Victorian Racial & Religious Tolerance laws try to suppress.

These Australian Muslim women have spoken out. Many of them probably came here to escape the very Islamic Sharia Law that now continues to deny them freedom here in Australia. This is a cry for help. Will the rest of Australia now listen?

Peter Stokes, Executive Officer, Salt Shakers

[www.saltshakers.org.au](http://www.saltshakers.org.au)

Salt Shakers is a 'Christian Ethics - Research, Education and Action Group'.

Permission is given to forward this message UNCHANGED.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE  
English  
Churchman  
IN YOUR WILL

# CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

## New Bishop Of Kensington

Revd Canon Paul Williams, Rector, Gerrards Cross and Fulmer (Oxford): to be Bishop of Kensington (London).

Revd Terence Buckingham, NSM (Assistant Curate) Harrogate, St Wilfrid (Ripon and Leeds): to be NSM (Priest-in-Charge), Nidd (same diocese).

Revd Robert Coles, Priest-in-Charge, St Nicholas at Wade with Sarre and Chislet with Hoarth; and Priest-in-Charge, Minster with Monkton (Canterbury): to be Hon Canon, Canterbury Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Richard Collins, Priest-in-Charge, Greatham; and Diocesan Local Ministry Officer; and Chaplain, Greatham Hospital Hartlepool (Durham): to be Diocesan Director of Ordinands; and Priest-in-Charge, Lumley (same diocese).

Revd Alan Comfort, Vicar, Loughton St Mary (Chelmsford): to be Rector, Great Baddow (same diocese).

Revd Canon Charles Dobbin, Rector, Moor Allerton (Ripon and Leeds): to be also Diocesan Interfaith Relations Officer (same diocese).

Revd Olaf Eriksson, Assistant Curate, Cockerton (Durham): to be Priest-in-Charge, Millfield St Mark and Pallion St Luke (same diocese).

Revd Martin Hammond, Assistant Curate, Walmley (Birmingham): to be Assistant Curate, The Erdington Team Ministry (same diocese).

Revd Dr Michael John Hare (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich): to be NSM (Assistant Priest), Woodbridge (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich).

Revd David Daniel Harrison, Assistant Curate, Beckenham St George (Rochester): to be Priest-in-Charge, Woodnesborough with Worth and Staple; and Minister for Schools, Sandwich Deanery (Canterbury).

Revd Malcolm Hunter, Assistant Curate, Old St Pancras (London): to be Prison Chaplain, HM Prison Bronzefield (same diocese).

Revd Brian Hurst, Team Vicar, The Glendale Group; and Area Dean, Bamburgh and Glendale (Newcastle): to be Vicar, Bamburgh; and Vicar, Ellingham (same

diocese).

Revd John Kemp, Rector, South Shoebury (Chelmsford): to retire with effect from 28 February 2009.

Revd John Leach, Diocesan Parish Development Adviser (Monmouth, Church of Wales): to be Vicar, Foord St John (Canterbury).

Revd Michael Lodge, Rector, Rayleigh (Chelmsford): is now also Rural Dean, Rochford (same diocese).

Revd Robin Mackintosh, Director, Board of Ministry and Training (Canterbury): to be Hon Canon, Canterbury Cathedral

Revd Roger Martin, Rector, Saltwood (Canterbury): to be Hon Canon, Canterbury Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Paul Morris, European Director, Christian Associates International (Brussels): to be Priest-in-Charge, Derby St Peter and Christ Church with Holy Trinity (Derby).

Revd Stephen Smith, Vicar, Leeds St Margaret and All Hallows (Ripon and Leeds): to be also Assistant Area Dean, Headingley Deanery (same diocese).

Revd Canon Eric Stephenson, Chaplain to the Queen: to be Canon Emeritus, Durham Cathedral.

Revd David Swales, Vicar, Bolton St James with St Chrysostom (Bradford): to be Rector, Haughley with Wetherden and Stowupland (St Edmundsbury and Ipswich).

Revd David Thomas, Rector, Wivenhoe (Chelmsford): to be Rector, Shenfield (same diocese).

Revd David Tomlinson, Rector, Saffron Walden with Wendens Ambo, Littlebury, Ashdon and Hadstock (Chelmsford): to be also Rural Dean, Saffron Walden Deanery (same diocese).

Revd John Valentine, Priest-in-Charge, Holborn St George with Holy Trinity and St Bartholomew (London): to be Rector.

**Women have been appointed to the following posts:**

Christine Brown, to be Chaplain, St Oswald's Hospice Newcastle (Newcastle).

Margaret Devine, NSM (Assistant Curate), East Boldon (Durham): is now NSM (House for Duty Assistant Curate).

Carolyn Henson to be Chaplain, Saint Michaels Hospice (Ripon and Leeds).

Gillian Henwood, to be Priest-in-Charge, Riding Mill; and Chaplain, Shepherd's Dene Retreat House; and Diocesan Spirituality Adviser (Newcastle).

Ruth Lampard, is Assistant Curate (Associate Vicar), West Brompton St Mary with St Peter and St Jude (London).

Catherine Pickford, Team Vicar, The Benwell Team (Newcastle): to be Rector.

Geraldine Pond, to be also Priest-in-Charge, Clifton; and Priest-in-Charge, Norbury with Snelston (Derby).

Canon Catherine to be the first Principle of "Lindisfarne", the Regional Training Partnership for the North East (Durham). Elizabeth Wilkinson, to be Priest-in-Charge, Burnmoor (Durham).

## Retirements and Resignations

Revd Canon Christopher Frith, Vicar, Alvaston (Derby): to retire with effect from 30 April 2009. Upon retirement, he will become Canon Emeritus.

The Ven Peter Taylor, Archdeacon of Harlow (Chelmsford): to retire with effect from 31 March 2009.

Revd Paul Williams, Assistant Curate (Associate Minister), Harlow St Mary and St Hugh with St John the Baptist (Chelmsford): to resign with effect from 31 December 2008

## Lay and Other Appointments/Resignations/Retirements

Mr Nicholas Clements, Headmaster, Kings School (Canterbury): to be Hon Lay Canon, Canterbury Cathedral.

Mr Raymond Harris, Chair Diocesan Board of Finance (Canterbury): to be Hon Lay Canon, Canterbury Cathedral.

Mrs Val Wallis, Lay Chair Weald Deanery (Canterbury): to be Hon Lay Canon, Canterbury Cathedral.

## Dictionary For Children Drops Christian Words

A leading children's dictionary has dropped many words relating to Christianity, the monarchy, British history and the countryside to make space for words like MP3 player, Euro, biodegradable and citizenship.

Oxford University Press defended the changes to its 10,000 word Junior Dictionary as necessary to reflect modern, multicultural Britain.

One mother, Lisa Saunders, said: "Children can be so easily manipulated when they're learning things - if they don't come across these words at a young age they're never going to use them."

Professor Alan Smithers, director of the centre for education and employment at Buckingham University, said the word selections reflect "the way childhood is going, moving away from our spiritual background. We have a certain Christian narrative which has given meaning to us over the last 2,000 years. To say it is all relative and replaceable is questionable."

Vineeta Gupta, the head of children's dictionaries at Oxford University Press, defended the move, saying: "People don't go to Church as often as before. Our understanding of religion is within multiculturalism, which is why some words such as 'Pentecost' or 'Whitsun' would have been in 20 years ago but not now."

But Anthony Seldon, master of Wellington College, a leading private school, said the dictionary "has a duty to keep these words within usage, not merely pander to an audience."

"We are looking at the loss of words of great beauty."

Words taken out:

Carol, cracker, holly, ivy, mistletoe

Dwarf, elf, goblin

Abbey, aisle, altar, bishop, chapel, christen, disciple, minister, monastery, monk, nun, nunnery, parish, pew, psalm, pulpit, saint, sin, devil, vicar

Coronation, duchess, duke, emperor, empire, monarch, decade

adder, ass, beaver, boar, budgerigar, bullock, cheetah, colt, corgi, cygnet, doe, drake, ferret, gerbil, goldfish, guinea pig, hamster, heron, herring, kingfisher, lark, leopard, lobster, magpie, minnow, mussel, newt, otter, ox, oyster, panther, pelican, piglet, plaice, poodle, porcupine, porpoise, raven, spaniel, starling, stoat, stork, terrapin, thrush, weasel, wren.

Acorn, allotment, almond, apricot, ash, bacon, beech, beetroot, blackberry, blacksmith, bloom, bluebell, bramble, bran, bray, bridle, brook, buttercup, canary, canter, carnation, catkin, cauliflower, chestnut, clover, conker, county, cowslip, crocus, dandelion, diesel, fern, fungus, gooseberry, gorse, hazel, hazelnut, heather, holly, horse chestnut, ivy, lavender, leek, liquorice, manger, marzipan, melon, minnow, mint, nectar, nectarine, oats, pansy, parsnip, pasture, poppy, porridge, poultry, primrose, prune, radish, rhubarb, sheaf, spinach, sycamore, tulip, turnip, vine, violet, walnut, willow

Words put in:

Blog, broadband, MP3 player, voicemail, attachment, database, export, chatroom, bullet point, cut and paste, analogue

Celebrity, tolerant, vandalism, negotiate, interdependent, creep, citizenship, childhood, conflict, common sense, debate, EU, drought, brainy, boisterous, cautionary tale, bilingual, bungee jumping, committee, compulsory, cope, democratic, allergic, biodegradable, emotion, dyslexic, donate, endangered, Euro

Apparatus, food chain, incisor, square number, trapezium, alliteration, colloquial, idiom, curriculum, classify, chronological, block graph

Source: Christian Institute

*Ed: While it will take far more than a good dictionary to save our nation from spiritual decline, it is regrettable that multiculturalists are using such things to push their agenda. With all due respect to employment equality rights, one must question the wisdom of employing someone as head of children's dictionaries at OUP who does not appear to appreciate the vital importance of Britain's Christian worldview. While we do not know if Vineeta Gupta is a Hindu, it seems that Hinduism's heathen idea of 'many gods' is having a more detrimental influence on Britain than many would have thought.*



## CHURCHES & MINISTRY

**ABERDEEN. Free Church of Scotland [Continuing].** Pittodrie Community Centre, Golf Road. Sabbath 11.00am & 6.00pm. Prayer Meeting Wednesday 7.30pm. AV & Metrical Psalms. Rev T. McGlynn, tel no 01224 865714 **Website:** www.fccontinuing.org/aberdeen

**BALLYMENA, NI; Covenant Protestant Reformed Church,** Protestant Hall (Opposite Police Station). Sabbath: 11am, 6pm. Expository preaching, Metrical Psalms, AV. Rev Angus Stewart: (028) 25891851 **www.cprc.co.uk**

**BROADSTAIRS, Kent. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland.** Sabbath services: 11.00am and 6.00pm at Portland Centre, Hopeville Avenue, St Peter's. Tuesdays: 7.00pm, Quaker Meeting House, Fordington Road. Rev. John MacLeod. Tel. 020 8309 1623. **www.fpchurch.org.uk**

**CHELMSFORD. Presbyterian Church.** Sunday: 11.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. Worship services (A Sunday School is held for children during the Morning service and a creche provided during the evening service). **Location:** Hall Street Methodist Church, Hall Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0HG. Minister. Rev. Dr. John Scott. **Telephone:** 01245 399570.

**CORNWALL (Looe/Polperro) Emmanuel Reformed Evangelical.** The Village Hall, PELYNT. 10:45 am Lords Day. Contact: Peter Isaac - 01503 272586.

**DUBLIN. Arann Reformed Baptist Fellowship.** Services: Sunday 11am; Wednesday 8pm, Loughlinstown Community Rooms. Contact: Mark Fitzpatrick. Phone (00353) 86 266 7070 **Website:** www.sermonaudio.com/arann, AV and Metrical Psalms

**EDINBURGH. Free Church of Scotland [Continuing].** Services held at Napier Morningside Campus, Morningside Road 11.00am and 6.30pm. Thursdays 7.30pm. AV and Metrical Psalms. Minister: Rev James Gracie. Tel: 0131 667 4730

**FRINTON & TENDRING DISTRICT. Holy Trinity, C of E [Continuing]** Lord's Day Morning Prayer 11am at Frinton Community Centre. 5pm Evening Prayer. BCP (1662) & AV. Mr Philip Lievesley (01255) 679572.

**GLASGOW. Thornwood Free Church of Scotland [Continuing]** Knightswood Church 361 Fulton Street, G13 2SP 11am & 6.30pm Tuesdays 7.30pm, Rev William Macleod 0141 959 0292

**LONDON N22. Pilgrim Tabernacle.** Reformed Evangelical, Stirling Road, Wood Green, N22. Lords Day 10.00am and 6pm service and Tuesday 7.30pm Bible Study. Friday 7.30pm Prayer in members homes. Contact Pastor John Sherwood 0208 368 8080 **www.pilgrimtabernacle.co.uk**

**LONDON E1. Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland,** Varden Street, Whitechapel. Sabbath services 11.00am and 6.30pm. Wednesdays: 7.00pm. Rev. John MacLeod. Tel. 020 8309 1623. **www.fpchurch.org.uk**

**LONDON. South Wimbledon, St Johns C of E [Continuing].** Sabbath Day Services 11am, 6.30pm. AV. Prayer Book (1662). **Phone:** Rev. Peter Ratcliff 0208 417 0875.

**READING. St. Mary's Chapel. Castle Street.** Sundays: 11 am Morning Prayer (1st Sunday, Lord's Supper); 6.30 pm Evening Prayer (3rd Sunday, Lord's Supper). Prayer Book Services, A.V. Bible Study and Prayer Meeting Tuesdays 8pm (2nd Tuesday Missionary Prayer Meeting). Rev. E. J. Malcolm 0118 959 5131

**SOUTH BUCKS. The Free Methodist Church, Penn (near High Wycombe).** Traditional worship, expository preaching. Lord's Day 11.00am, 6.30pm. Rev. Peter Simpson **Website:** www.real-christianity.org. **Telephone:** 01494 816202.

**WEST MIDLANDS. Tipton, St. Paul's,** Owen

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# SAMSON: The Backslider Restored

## Judges chapters 13 - 16

By J E North  
**PART TWO**

### 3. SAMSON WAS A MAN WHO WAS A SINNER AGAINST HIS GOD

What a sad tale it is of a man of God in a period of declension, in a period of backsliding. And who can say that he has never backslidden against the Lord his God? We can all enter into the words of the hymn-writer, William Cowper:

Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and his Word?

Or of Robert Robinson:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love.

We have in Judges chapter 14 the beginning of his backslidings:

And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said to his father, Get her for me: for she pleaseth me well. But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the LORD, that he sought occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel. Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath; and behold, a young lion roared against him. And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done. And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well" (verses 1-7).

So far so good! He is on his way to Timnath and the Spirit of the Lord is with him so that he is able to kill the lion with his bare hands (verse 6). I get the impression that there is a subtle difference here. He is quick and ready to speak to his parents about the Philistine woman in Timnath, but he seems loathe to speak of the good work of God upon him when he slew the lion with his bare hands. Here is the beginning of his sorrows.

Then notice how the writer speaks of Samson "going down." Verse 1: "And Samson went down;" verse 5: "Then went Samson down;" verse 7: "And he went down." Backsliding is a downward progression. Abraham went down to Egypt, Jonah went down to Joppa then he went down into the ship and down into the bottom of the sea and then into the fish's belly. Here Samson went down to the Philistine woman at Timnath.

Notice also the place to which he went. It was Timnath, the allotment or vineyard. Remember Samson's Nazirite vow. He was to have nothing to do with the fruit of the vine. He was neither to drink wine nor the vinegar made from the wine nor to eat grapes nor the dried fruit. In short he was to have nothing to do with vines and grapes. But here he is going to the place where they are grown, harvested and processed.

The blessing of God rests upon the one who "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Ps. 1:1). Notice the downward progression. Look at Lot. He first viewed the cities of the plain, then he pitched his tent towards the cities of the plain and finally he is in the gate of the city. Always a downward progression. Samson's pathway was downward. And so is the path of the backslider.

Not only do we notice his downward path, but we also notice Samson's companions. Here was a Judge. His companions should have been the Elders of Israel. He was probably a young middle-aged man. His companions should have been of the same generation of the Children of Israel. But where did he seek his friends and companions? Among the young men

of the Philistines. "And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him" (verse 11). As we read the remainder of this chapter, it becomes obvious that these companions were Philistines.

What a contrast this is to the Apostles. There in Acts chapter 4 we read that after Peter and John had been instructed not to speak and teach in the name of Jesus, they said to the Sanhedrin, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" and then it is recorded, "And being let go, they went to their own company" (verses 20, 23). There are legitimate reasons that bring us into the world, but when they no longer detain us are we like the apostles "being let go" we seek out our own company of the Lord's people? I fail to understand how professed Christian believers can absent themselves from the

spot which Satan went for with his temptations. And so he does with all the Lord's people. He attacks where they are weak and vulnerable. But says Paul, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). Likewise, James tells us, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (Jas. 4:7,8).

Where, then, did his backslidings bring him? What were the effects of that declension? A number of things followed.

Firstly, it brought COVENANT BREAKING. Samson is beguiled by Delilah. He tells her all his heart (Judg. 16:16,17). His hair is shaved off and his strength is gone. The Philistines capture him. But consider the manner of his hair being shaved. When the Nazirite came to the end of his vow, he went to the door of the tabernacle and shaved his head before the Lord. The hair was gathered up and placed under the peace offering on the altar (Num. 6:18). It was

being capsized. This blindness is a desire for more of the company of the world. Following the world's ambitions and standards. And the result is a deeper and deeper spiritual darkness that not only envelops the backslider in heart, but the church as a whole and the nation as a whole.

Fourthly, it brought MOCKERY. "And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport" (Judg. 16:25). The world brings its temptations to the child of God. The one who succumbs to that temptation and goes along with the world is not respected. Oh no! He is mocked. They made sport of Samson.

Then we read, "He did grind in the prison house." Was it corn that he ground, or was it rather that this is Scripture's way of telling us that Samson thought over his situation? Was there lamentation on his part? Was this the prelude to his restoration?

### 4. SAMSON WAS A MAN WHO BECAME STEADFAST IN HIS GOD

Now the house was full of men and women; and all the Lords of the Philistines were there; and there were upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport. And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O LORD GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once. O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Then his brethren and all the house of his father came down, and took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the burying place of Manoah his father. And he judged Israel twenty years. (Judg. 16:27-31).

What a mercy it is to be restored by the Spirit of God from a period of declension and backsliding. Here was Samson. He had fallen, and fallen very deeply into sin, but the Lord is ever gracious and always merciful to his own dear people. He was restored to that position of fellowship with God. Let us be quite clear and certain about this. He never lost his family connection and position as one of the Children of Israel. He was always a judge. The same applies to God's living family. They may fall into sin, they may backslide, they may experience periods of declension but they are always children of God. They may give the appearance of being graceless professors of Christ but if they are of the election of grace, they are still the Lord's. What evidence do we have of that restoration?

Firstly, HE PRAYS. "O LORD GOD, remember me..." (Verse 28). For three things he prays: Remember me! Strengthen me! Avenge me! Whilst the Philistines mock him he prays and the mercy is that our God is a prayer hearing and answering God.

Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice,

Returning from his ways;

While angels in their songs rejoice,

And cry, "Behold, he prays!"

Secondly, HE IS STRENGTHENED. He places his hands upon the pillars and with that strength which only God can give he pushes the pillars apart. The whole of the building resting upon the pillars, it collapses and the whole of the company is slain. Jehovah is vindicated and the Philistine god, Dagon, is shown to be no god at all.

Thirdly, HE RETURNS TO THE PLACE OF HIS BEGINNINGS. In death he is taken back to the place where he began. "Then his brethren... took him, and brought him up, and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol." That is where he first began, where the Spirit of God first moved him. When Abraham returned from going down to Egypt, he returned to Bethel, the house of God. Elijah on Mount Carmel must build again the altar before the sacrifice is laid upon it and before the fire falls. The backslider in heart has to return to the first place, to that place of fellowship with God in Christ.

Return, O Holy Dove! Return,  
Sweet messenger of rest!

I hate the sins that made thee mourn,  
And drove thee from my breast.  
So shall my walk be close with God,  
Calm and serene my frame;  
So pure a light shall mark the road  
That leads me to the Lamb.



Courts of the Lord and from seasons of public worship. The prevailing pattern of worship today is to attend but once rather than the times of "the morning sacrifice" and "the evening sacrifice." The habit of attendance on the means of grace but once comes not from the Scriptures, but from the Church of Rome. The same applies to the midweek Prayer and Bible Study.

Then notice the subject of their conversation. They spent their time speaking riddles. Samson's desire was not for speaking of the things of God. What a far cry from that of which Malachi speaks: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3:16). Where is our desire? Is it to be with the Lord and his people or watching the latest episode of the soap-operas or sports or anything else on the television? The second step, then, of backsliding is neglect of the ordinances of God's house and his people and seeking the companionship of the world.

When Satan tempts the Lord's people to backslide, he knows exactly what to do. He is a master soldier and a master strategist. He goes for the weakest spot. With Samson it was the ladies. "A woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines" (Judg. 14:1); "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and went into her" (Judg. 16:1); "And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman..." (Judg. 16:4). That was his weak

something to be regarded as sacred. Here in the case of Samson, his hair was shaved off by someone else. We are not told what happened to it, probably it was just cast under foot and trampled upon. It was not regarded as that which was "holiness unto the Lord." Sacred things were profaned. The Nazirite oath and covenant was broken.

Secondly, it brought the LORD'S DESERTION. "And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (Judg. 16:20). This is the fruit of backsliding - the withdrawal of the Lord's felt presence. The Lord does not finally depart from his people for,

Once in him, in him for ever;  
Thus the eternal covenant stands.

Those who are called by his grace are secure in the covenant of grace, but there is what is called the "hidings of God's face" - the sensible and felt presence of the Lord with us is withdrawn.

Thirdly, it brought BLINDNESS. "But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes" (Judg. 16:21). He was blinded and brought into the prison house. In Christian experience we would call it a lack of spiritual discernment; a walking with the world. No separation from the world. Today we accept things in the Christian life and Church which, in my younger days would never have been accepted. There is no longer that life of separation. Christians seem to sail as close to the wind as they can without their bark