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TBS BUS POSTER CAMPAIGN TO CHALLENGE 'THE FOOL'

In a quite unprecedented move the Trinitarian Bible Society is, God willing, to launch a substantial poster campaign on London double-decker buses displaying the Bible text 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God' (Psalm 53:1). The £35,000 campaign, due to begin on 9th February, is planned to run initially for two weeks.

The posters serve as a reply to a current bus campaign by the British Humanist Society, in association with the prominent 'atheist' Professor Richard Dawkins of Oxford University, displaying posters with the slogan, 'There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.'

Apparently other unusual atheist adverts are appearing around the country. Apart from the adverts seeming bizarre and hard to understand, the display of one such advert in a shop window opposite Bond Street Station had ceased just before the BBC arrived to carry out an interview with a Christian and an atheist who were to be standing in front of it!

As the atheists' campaign has made the headlines it would be surprising if the TBS campaign did not likewise attract a large amount of media attention. We understand that David Larlham, the Assistant

General Secretary of TBS, has already been filmed at length by the BBC in debate with Ariane Sherine of the British Humanist Association on 21st January. The debate was videotaped by the BBC's Robert Pigott, Religious Affairs Correspondent. Part of the interview is due to appear on the BBC website but it is thought that the interest in the subject will be sufficient for the footage to be featured more widely by the BBC.

[new paragraph]Miss Sherine initiated the atheist campaign in response to Christian adverts she had seen last year on London buses. The Alpha Course as well as some London Pentecostal Churches have advertised on buses but it was most likely the Pentecostal ones that caught Ariane's attention -- their websites do not shy away from mentioning the fearful truth of Hell, which prompted her to act.

David Larlham told English Churchman that he understood that Miss Sherine had agreed to the debate for the BBC on the condition that she would be able to discuss the poster campaign with a real Christian and not some wishy-washy cleric -- in other words, with someone prepared to address the subject of Hell and other serious doctrinal issues. Her

request was answered well as Mr Larlham, aside from his work at TBS, is a member of Camberwell Evangelical Church: a vibrant yet serious church that keeps to the Authorised Version of the Bible. The church has grown over the last forty years from a mere handful to over one hundred attending regularly on the Lord's Day, largely as the result of vigorous evangelisation of the diverse South-East London neighbourhood. This increase has come about, under the grace of God, by the sincere preaching of the Gospel from the Bible from the pulpit, in the course of weekly open-air preaching, and through various evangelistic activities for children and young people. Evidently a most interesting time was had by all with Miss Sherine having to remind Mr Larlham that she was an atheist and Mr Pigott seeming keen to use the TBS for further interviews and comment in the future.

The TBS has for many years displayed Bible Text Posters on railway stations. The posters simply feature Bible verses from the Authorised Version in very large print with the TBS contact details just large enough to be read. Owing to some confusion over 'religious advertising', posters have been banned from some mainline stations but TBS's relationship with

most of the railway companies remains good.

The Advertising Standards Authority announced recently that it had rejected complaints against the atheist advert. It is thought unlikely that there will be any problem with the TBS advertising as one of the points that the humanists have made is that they want free speech. The poster TBS has planned has already been passed by the bus companies.

Most generously, the TBS is offering a Bible free of charge to any who respond to the posters and contact the Society by phone, by writing in or via a specially dedicated e-mail address which is given on the posters. One wonders if the atheists will respond by offering free copies of Prof Richard Dawkins' 'The God Delusion! In reality they have nothing to offer anyone who is worried except 'enjoyment', which is not very helpful if a person really is worried about the existence of God.

The Society is asking for members and supporters to pray for the campaign. In the January 2009 edition of its magazine Quarterly



British Humanist Society bus campaign as seen in London

Record it says, 'We would value the prayerful support of all our friends that the Lord's blessing may attend the public display of His Word in this way. May the many thousands who shall see these posters not only be provoked by His Word, but also (by the Lord's mighty power and grace) be brought under true conviction of their sin and cry unto the one true and living God for mercy! Prayer is also sought for the wise and gracious handling by the Society of the responses that may be received. Churches and individuals may wish to consider how they may be more personally involved in this project, possibly by sponsoring part of the cost of this campaign. Thought will be given at a later date to the possibility of extending the campaign and displaying other portions of the Scriptures in a similar way in London and possibly elsewhere.'

Dutch MP Faces Criminal Court For Disliking Islam

A Dutch MP who compares the Koran with *Mein Kampf* and says there is a direct link between Islam and violence will be tried for hate crimes, a Dutch court has ruled.



Geert Wilders

Last June, Holland's public prosecution department said there was not enough evidence to take action against Geert Wilders MP, leader of the Freedom Party. The department also said that a healthy legal system should allow plenty of leeway to people involved in political debate.

But that decision has been overturned on appeal. The Amsterdam appeal court said there are limits to freedom of speech.

Last year Mr Wilders made a controversial film, *Fitna*, which juxtaposed images of the September 11th attacks with quotations from the Koran. The film is banned in the UK.

He has also been criticised for writing anti-Islamic articles and letters which were published in a mainstream Dutch newspaper, *de Volkskrant*. In August 2007 Mr Wilders

called for the Koran to be banned. He also favours immigration restrictions to stop more Muslims entering the Netherlands.

Mr Wilders has had police protection since 2004 when Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh was murdered by a radical Muslim who left Koranic quotes stabbed into his chest. His co-producer, Somali-born former Dutch lawmaker Ayaan Hirsi Ali, lived under government protection, then she moved to the United States.

Commenting on the appeal court decision Mr Wilders warned that not only he, but all Dutch citizens opposed to the "Islamisation" of their country would be on trial.

The British 'religio-political' blog, 'Cranmer', commented: "Mr Wilders is simply of the view that in 1945, Nazism was defeated in Europe; in 1989, communism was defeated in Europe; and now Islamic ideology has to be defeated."

Source: Christian Institute

Ed: It is hoped that the international community will not be intimidated but will support Mr Wilders and that as 'Cranmer' intimates, Islam will soon be a thing of the past.

Dr Williams warns against secular rights culture

The Church of England says the Human Rights Act is being used as a tool by secularists to advance their agenda.

In a paper published ahead of the Church's 2009 General Synod, Dr Rowan Williams, The Archbishop of Canterbury said, "The uncomfortable truth is that a purely secular account of human rights is always going to be problematic if it attempts to establish the language of rights as a supreme and non-contestable governing concept in ethics".

However, the paper warns that Christians should think carefully before adopting the same kind of rights-based approach as secularists. "Some Christians might defend the wearing of crosses or crucifixes in terms of human rights. We need to be careful when adopting this line of argument. It is undoubtedly the case that much of the secular debate is couched in human rights

terms, particularly since the passage of the Human Rights Act."

It continues: "The language of human rights, interpreted as the basis for the State's relationship to faith, is not one with which all Christians can be comfortable. It is all too easy to adopt the tools of secular liberalism as if they straightforwardly reinforce our case against secularism's deficiencies."

The paper adds: "It is part of the calling of the Established Church never to be 'domesticated' by the administration of the day".

The Christian Institute's Mike Judge said: "I share the concern of many who are worried about a society that embraces individual rights



at the expense of social responsibility. And there is no doubt that some have tried to use the Human Rights Act to push Christians and Christian ethics to the margins of society. But where

the law affords Christians protection from persecution, and liberty to practice and share their faith, then a wise use of human rights laws is right and appropriate."

Ed: Perhaps the Archbishop has a point, but sadly, as is so often the case, it is nigh on impossible to comprehend. It appears that while he rightly expects Christians to rise above the secular selfishness of fighting for rights, he will not himself take up the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, for example to rebuke unrepentant sodomites in the church.

English Churchman Letters to the Editor

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

Extremism

Sir,

Re Mrs North's letter on "Extremism" (EC 2nd Jan). What is extremism? I ask this question simply because many regard a biblical stance as extremism or fundamentalism. If we are Bible-based Christians, we must be fundamentalists in the sense that we uphold the basic and fundamental doctrines and principles of the Reformed and Apostolic Faith. Some people, today, regard this, in itself, as extremism. The faith of the early apostles would certainly be regarded today as extremism.

If Mrs North is of sound mind and reasonable, as I'm sure she is, and takes some of today's current issues and measures them against scripture, she may well find herself in the "extremist category". She herself acknowledges that the examples she has given are indeed ludicrous and I should have thought we have more serious issues to contend with than one of her guests who won't eat mince pies in December!

REV ROBERT A PENNEY
Glasgow

Mince Pie and Chocolate Egg Extremists

Dear Sir,

I was very disappointed to see that you published a letter entitled "Mince Pie and Chocolate Egg Extremists" (EC 7758). Such name calling in a letter devoid of scriptural justification, is unwarranted and merely falls into the "if you don't like the message, shoot the messenger" category.

The writer expresses his opinion that "the extreme views" of those who object to the trappings of Christmas "are usually manifested as a hard, legalistic, extra-biblical system of belief and practice at the individual, family or church level". In fact it is the traditions of Christmas and Easter that are extra-biblical.

These very names should not be used by those holding to the Reformed Faith. Christmas originates from "Christ's mass", and as all Reformed believers should know, the mass is idolatrous. The festival itself was adopted by the Roman church from the pagan festival which celebrated the re-birth of the sun and is connected with sun worship. At this time, the festival was known as the Festival of the Sun of Righteousness, from Malachi 4:2.

The name of Easter is named after the goddess Eostre in Anglo-Saxon paganism, the goddess of spring and fertility - hence Easter eggs and Easter bunnies.

Reformed Christians should be aware that clothing paganism with a Christian disguise, as Romanism does, does not make the practice Christian. Although Mr McHaghten claims that his senses are exercised by reason of use, perhaps this is too strong meat for him - "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:14).

Both festivals are originally based on pagan festivals and have been kitted out with a Christian appearance. But both festivals lead to doctrinal error.

Christians are commanded not to deceive - "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exodus 20:16) - and yet woe betide the person who tells children that Father Christmas does not exist!

Are we not commanded "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." - 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22?

So what should we do then? Should we hold to Tradition - or uphold the Word of God?

I choose to uphold the Word of God, and if this labels me a member of the Mince Pie and Chocolate Egg Extremist Brigade, I wear the badge with pride.

One final point. Refusing mince pies and chocolate eggs can give us the opportunity to witness to our faith, as has been my own experience.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL MANSBACHER

Samuel Rutherford

Dear Sir,

May I through your letters' page reply to Gavin McGrath's epistle (EC7757)? There is so much in his correspondence that I take exception to. However I shall confine myself to his condemnation of Samuel Rutherford in calling him a liar and accompanying the accusation with Rev 21:8. There was so much more to Rutherford's urging of his people not to kneel "in the instant of receiving the Lord's supper". (to the parishioners of Anwoth, Aberdeen, 13th July 1637). He with so many another Covenanter and their Puritan brethren across the border, having a Christ-enlightened conscience, refused to give to any man or ritual the honour which was due to the Saviour alone. Whatever power Charles claimed in Church and State were, he believed, his as of divine right. Rutherford's warnings to his flock were always stark, so acutely aware of the Enemy's subtle beguiling to lead them away from the simplicity of Christ's Gospel. His warnings were accurate, and for the Covenanters, being faithful to Christ's Crown and Covenant was the beginning of a time of unparalleled persecution. The worst being "The Killing Times" from 1684 to 1685. Rutherford's letters are Christ exalting, they have an exquisiteness which draws one to the Saviour. Spurgeon said the letters were "the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men". Bishop Handley Moule in his prefatory note "Loveliness of Christ" (a compilation of short extracts from Rutherford's letters) said, "I hope that it will imprint, by the grace of God, upon all its readers' souls something of that supreme content and delight in the Lord Jesus which were the light of life to Samuel Rutherford". Archbishop Ussher preached in his church in Anwoth and he and Rutherford spent the evening together with, "mutual pleasure and profit".

For Gavin McGrath to label this man a liar and consign him to the judgment of Rev 21:8 is indeed a damning accusation.

For my part I shall continue to be blessed as I read Rutherford's writings and by doing so be drawn closer to The Saviour whom he loved so much and commended so ardently to others. I look forward, by God's grace, to meeting him in "Emmanuel's Land".

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET JOHNSON

Philosophical Idea of Decrees

Sir,

John Rokos claims I have not read Bunyan's 'Reprobation Asserted' and am ignorant of such a 'rare' work. Nonsense! I have not only owned, studied and used this well-known and widely available essay for over forty years, but named it and quoted from it in my 2004 EC debate with Rokos to which he refers. He now, equally tenuously, suggests that Bunyan was Supralapsarian on the grounds of differences imagined between domesticated and wild animals! However, in 'Reprobation Asserted', Bunyan speaks of fallen, sinful men and sees election and the passing by (Bunyan's words) of reprobation as being dependent on the scope of Christ's saving work. This work was designed to apply grace where sin abounded. This is the classical Sublapsarian position. Section V is admittedly no easy reading (s.b.) but Rokos fanciful terminology makes it even less lucid.

Both the Supralapsarian and Sublapsarian theories are merely of academic interest as they are based on the philosophical idea of a past eternity when God fatalistically predestined some to death and some to salvation either irrespective or respective of the fall. These speculative theories make Christ's saving work in the fullness of time superfluous. Besides, there is no such thing as past-eternity as God always deals with us from His vantage point of eternity which has no pre, present or post connotations. This is why it is folly to interpret Romans 9 in isolated and absolute Supralapsarian terms as Rokos does. The two conflicting theories reflect the 17th cent. Aristotelian love of systematic analysis, separating the bone from the marrow of the gospel. Our Reformers, as far as I can judge after wide reading, preached masterfully without such artificial aids.

DR GEORGE M ELLA
Germany

Oliver Cromwell E.C. 7757 & 7758

Dear Sir,

As a further comment on Oliver Cromwell's undisputed rejection of the throne he was nevertheless clearly influenced by the contemporary European monarchical and premogenita principle in nominating his eldest surviving son, the hesitant and ineffectual Richard to succeed him rather than his more able and politically experienced son Henry.

Taking a more critical view, Cromwell was guilty at the very least of nepotism in not consulting parliament and more seriously, was acting contrary to his somewhat disingenuous letter of 22nd June 1655 to his son in law the ardent presbyterian Charles Fleetwood, who harboured similar aspirations, in which he explicitly gave him firm assurances denying that he had any such intention regarding the appointment of his successor.

Had he nominated either Henry Cromwell or Fleetwood, the Commonwealth might have continued as a bourgeois republic possibly to this day. In the event, whilst Richard Cromwell was more than content to enjoy the trappings of office, Fleetwood had his revenge in leading the generals in a coup d'etat to depose him thus facilitating the Restoration.

Yours faithfully,
J.E.MAURICE

Alarming Obama Adulation

Sir,

However one assesses the Bush years,

the adulation of President-elect Obama is deeply disturbing, the euphoria alarming. While his ethnic success poses no intrinsic problems, his seductive charm and undeniable eloquence are the vehicles of a decadent agenda. This has enormous negative implications for the USA and the world.

1. Even if the democratic and tolerant values of the Founding Fathers of 1776 did not entirely reflect the more overt Protestant Christian values of the 1620 Pilgrim Fathers and others, would the former have welcomed the multi-faith religion, relativistic ethics and bisexual liberalism about to be accelerated throughout America? This is very doubtful.

2. Is the new 'politically-correct' president about to promote the demise of the historic Christianity that made the USA great but which has been sadly squandered by decades of hedonistic materialism? This is very likely.

3. Is it not time for authentic Christian people to stand up for the Light of Christ against the darkness of all else, as never before? This is absolutely certain.

May God in Christ bless America and the world!

DR ALAN C. CLIFFORD

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.



India Supreme Court Orders Protection for Orissa Christians

India's Supreme Court has ordered the state government of Orissa to protect the tens of thousands of Christians being targeted by Hindu extremists in the worst sectarian violence since the country's independence from Britain.

The judges told authorities in the remote, eastern state to provide security for the displaced Christians in Orissa and barred it from withdrawing security troops from the area without the central government's permission.

Based on the ruling, it appears India's top court agreed, to some extent, with Christian leaders who accuse the Orissa government of failing to protect the state's persecuted Christians.

A ministry leader working in India reported that Orissa authorities seem to be taking the court order seriously.

Unofficial reports say the number of deaths, overwhelmingly Christian, is more than 500. Numbers provided by the government are much lower, ranging from dozens to about 100 deaths.

In addition to deaths, tens of thousands of Christians have been forced to take refuge in camps or hide in forest, where they are in danger of wild animal attacks. Hindu fanatics have declared that the Christians can return to their homes only if they convert to Hinduism. If they return without accepting Hinduism, they will be killed.

India's population consists mainly of Hindus, who make up over 80 percent; 13 percent are Muslim, about 2 percent are Sikh, and a little more than 2 percent are Christian.

Oxford Union to Debate Whether Islam is Incompatible with Western Liberalism

Walid Shoebat, an ex Islamic terrorist has been invited to speak at one of the oldest and most prestigious debating societies in the world, The Oxford Union at Oxford University. The Debate will be held on the evening of Feb 5th in Oxford in the UK. The title of the debate is "This House believes Islam is incompatible with Western Liberalism". Opposing the motion are; Baroness Warsi a Muslim woman who is the youngest member of the House of Lords, her bio is on www.sayedawarsi.com; Shaykh Faiz-Ul-Aqtab Siddiqi a leading Islamic scholar, General Secretary of the International Muslim Organization, principal of the Hijaz College and National convener of the Muslim Action Committee. He is also a Barrister at law (trial lawyer in USA). The third key note speaker will be an Oxford University undergraduate.

Supporting the motion will be; Homa Arjomand an Iranian political activist and co-ordinator of the international campaign against the Sharia courts. She won a major case to defeat Sharia law from being introduced to Ontario in the Canadian courts. She won an award for being "Humanist of the year" from the Humanist Association of Canada; Nonie Darwish who is leader of Arabs for Israel and author of best seller "Now they call me infidel" website is www.arabsforisrael.com; the final speaker is Walid Shoebat.

Friends who live near enough to Oxford are invited to support or attend.

Email news@shoebat.com for further information

Ed: We do not know if any of the speakers are Christians or if the meeting is open to those who are not members of the Oxford Union.

One MEP speaks against civil partnerships

In a debate in the European Parliament Traditional Unionist MEP Jim Allister spoke out against equality of recognition for heterosexual and homosexual relationships. In a report pressuring Europe-wide recognition of "civil partnerships" the Ulster MEP strongly dissented.

In the course of his remarks he said:-

"A society consumed by "rights" is a "give me, give me" society which has lost its balance. It is this which drives the report's demand for equality between regularly married couples and homosexual relationships. The natural order is man and woman. We pervert it when we demand equality for its very antithesis. Unfashionable as it may be, I unashamedly declare that the unnatural partnership between same sex couples is not something to which I as a legislator consent. Are my rights to espouse that position any less than those who demand the opposite - in the intolerant climate of this debate it seems so. I disagree with this aspect of the report. If that subjects me to ridicule, then, so be it. I'd rather stand for what is right than applaud that which is wrong."

Ed: At least we have one decent MEP who is not following the prevalent secular agenda. Are there any more? We praise God for you if you keep to not only 'moral' values but to Christian ones too.

Devolution & The Moral slide – UK wide

By our Scottish Correspondent



The advent of the Scottish Parliament, along with a revitalised Northern Ireland assembly and a new Welsh assembly is leading to a new political class. The United Kingdom is under threat from ill thought out constitutional reforms. These reforms introduced by New Labour will only lead to political upheaval. Largely the "new political class" are more liberal on social and moral issues.

In Scotland several officers from Strathclyde Fire Service who happened to be Christians were disciplined for refusing to take part in a Gay Pride parade. Some of the officers were demoted and faced disciplinary action. Encouragement has come just this week concerning this in that the firemen concerned have received damages as part of an out-of-court settlement from Strathclyde Fire & Rescue. It was noticeable that most of the politicians in the Scottish Parliament did not comment at the time.

Fast forward three years and look at the results of Christians who won't bow the knee to political correctness. The situation in Ulster is little better with the OFMDFM at Stormont funding the Annual Pride parade in Belfast. The point being that this political correctness would not be so blatant if we only had the United Kingdom Parliament at Westminster. Devolution therefore when closely examined has increased the momentum for the moral downgrade of our nation.

At the Westminster level a high number of Scots hold some of the most important offices of state. The Prime Minister Gordon Brown plays the British card now he is Prime Minister, despite years of arguing that Scotland had a democratic deficit when the Tories were in power due to the fact that Scotland voted Labour yet got a Tory government. What will happen if England overwhelmingly votes Tory, but gets a Labour Government due to boundary irregularities in England, along with Scotland and Wales returning Labour MPs. What will Mr Brown say then? Those in England will need to start voicing their concerns about such a democratic deficit.

It is without question that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was looked upon as the unofficial parliament of Scotland before the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament. Therefore can the Church of England General Synod be looked on as the same unofficial parliament of England? Scottish, Welsh and Ulster MPs are voting on issues that do not necessarily affect the lives of their constituents, but can have catastrophic consequences for millions of English people.

Under these conditions surely it is time that the Church of England started to speak up not just about our Christian heritage but about civil liberties and justice for Christians and about fairness as to how England is governed; because it is the national Church after all.

Gideons Celebrate 100 Years of Bible Distribution

Gideons International is celebrating its 100th anniversary dispensing Bibles and has begun efforts to hand out more Scriptures in the United States to boost a distribution rate that's remained relatively flat in recent years.

Nearly 76.9 million Gideon Scriptures were given out in nearly 85 languages in 187 countries last year. Close to 1.5 billion Scriptures have been distributed since 1908, when the Gideons first began to place Bibles in hotel rooms.

Since then, the nondenominational evangelical group run by businessmen has spread its tremendous reach, also giving out Scriptures at hospitals, schools, prisons, and in the military.

"This is not a church-sponsored, clergy-led effort," said Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, an umbrella group in the USA for evangelical churches and organizations. "It's individuals that go around and distribute Bibles. It's an astonishing

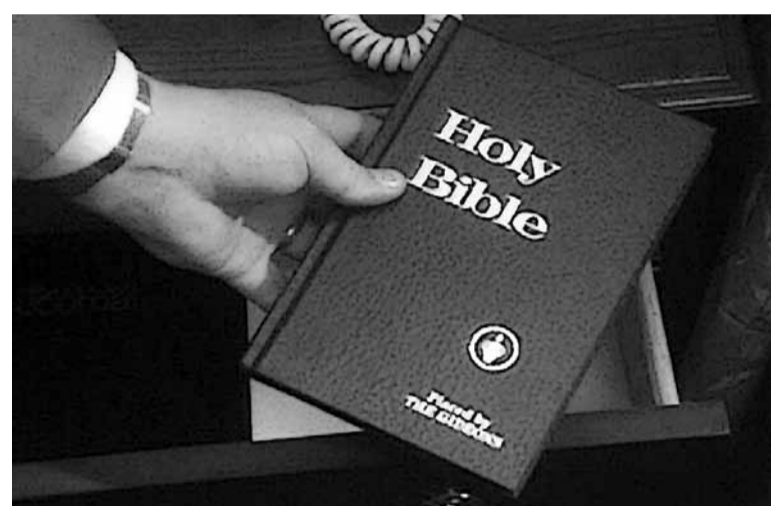
accomplishment. What it's done is actually changed our culture. People expect there to be a Bible in a hotel room. There's hardly anything that's parallel to it."

Because the Gideons were founded by Christian travelling salesmen who spent a lot of time away from home, the group sought to put Bibles in hotel bedrooms to spiritually nurture themselves and others.

Around 1916, the group started distributing Bibles in hospitals, followed by the military, public schools, prisons, and colleges and universities.

The Gideons have about 176,000 members, plus their wives, who distribute Scripture around the world, and their numbers have remained steady over the years. The group allows only for evangelical business and professional men to hand out Scripture to its targeted groups, although Gideons allow their wives to also hand out Scripture in healthcare settings and in prisons for women.

Ed: While the Gideons have done a great work over the years, it is much to be regretted that the Gideons in the UK no longer use the Authorised Version of the Bible. Nevertheless it is to be commended that they have specially brought back the verses and passages omitted or doubted by the followers of the liberal unbelieving 'schol-



arship' of the Nestle/Aland/United Bible Societies text. Contrary to the evidence of the 5000 faithful manuscripts, NAUB trusts rather in the two famous but discredited corrupt manuscripts that were rejected by the Protestant Reformers. It is much to be hoped that individual Gideons, many of whom are lovers of the Authorised Version, will at least be allowed to distribute the AV. For the time being we feel confident only to recommend the Trinitarian Bible Society who give grants for Bibles to be given freely to prisons, schools and through missionaries, to name but a few distribution channels.

Churches and pro-lifers must act following pro-abortion European Parliament vote

Church leaders and pro-life groups in individual European Union countries must work to make the right to life the top political issue, says the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC). SPUC's call was made following a recent vote in the European Parliament to approve a resolution calling on the European Union (EU) to promote abortion and same-sex unions throughout the EU. The resolution, authored by Giusto Catania of the Italian Communist party, is based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, part of the Lisbon treaty, despite the fact that neither the charter nor the Lisbon treaty have been passed into law. Anthony Ozimic, SPUC political secretary, commented: "The resolution passed today is soft-law pressure for abortion to be made a right in every EU member-state. The resolution violates national laws on conscientious objection to abortion and on public funding for abortion. The resolution calls for the recognition of a so-called right to abortion - yet not one international treaty or human rights court has recognised any

such right. Abortion is the most contentious issue at United Nations conferences and any attempt even to imply a right to abortion creates heated controversy between national delegations. Religious leaders and pro-life groups throughout Europe must



shake off their complacency about the EU and mobilise religious believers for pro-life action. The message everyone must hear is that the right to life is the most important political issue, because the right to life is the indispensable foundation of all other rights. Failure to act will mean that countless millions of unborn children will die because of the EU's promotion of abortion both inside and outside Europe."

Government to Investigate Home Schooling

A parents' group says it is "infuriated" that the Government wants local authorities to monitor families who educate their children at home. Home educators' charity, Education Otherwise (EO), termed it "offensive".



The Government review follows a public consultation on the issue of children missing education. Some children's organisations and local authorities said they were concerned that the current situation prevented them from monitoring children's welfare. There are concerns that home-schooled children might not be receiving a "suitable education", although many parents argue they chose to home educate because of failures in the state system.

In a letter to *The Daily Telegraph*, Dr Ian Walkington says: "It would seem that the Government just wants to regulate home education in its typically heavy-handed manner. The studies into home education tend to point to the fact that, on average, these children do better academically than state-schooled children."

A recent study described education at home as an "astonishingly efficient way to learn". It is thought that around 55,000 children are currently taught at home, with significant rises over the last few years. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, local councils have to make arrangements to identify children not receiving a proper education but they do not have the power to inspect the quality of lessons for children taught at home.

Children's minister Baroness Delyth Morgan said: "Parents are able, quite rightly, to choose whether they want to educate children at home, and a very small number do. I'm sure, the vast majority do a good job. However, there are concerns that some children are not receiving the education they need. And in some extreme cases, home education could be used as a cover for abuse." *Christian Institute*

Think tank calls for voters to be able to sack MPs and convene grand juries to indict public figures

A new report from independent Westminster think-tank Civitas is calling for measures that could lead to the recall of political leaders who fail to keep their promises.

In Total Recall: how direct democracy can improve Britain Nick Cowen argues for a range of measures, including referendums, initiatives, recalls, term limits, local charters and grand juries to restore elements of ultimate control to the people themselves, instead of full-time members of the political class. There is currently a widespread disillusion with politics that manifests itself in low turnouts at elections, especially amongst younger voters. This is mainly due to a feeling that voting changes nothing. The extent to which private citizens can have any impact on the system is minimal. This negative view of politics is compounded by the way in which politicians inevitably escape prosecution for breaches of their own rules and codes of conduct. As these decisions about the prosecution of politicians are taken by other politicians, with no input from members of the electorate, an easy ride is almost guaranteed. Cowen cites examples of better democracy in Switzerland and the USA.

'Total Recall: How direct democracy can improve Britain', by Nick Cowen is published by Civitas, 77 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2EZ (tel. 020 7799 6677) and can be downloaded at http://www.civitas.org.uk/pdf/total_recall.pdf or ordered in hard copy for £10.25 inc. pp.



News in Brief

FROM THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

Obama's Agenda

Barack Obama has become the 44th President of the United States, but some Christians have expressed concerns about his policies on 'gay rights', abortion and embryo experiments. A new White House website, which went live minutes after the President was sworn in, lists his agenda on Religious debate, Homosexual adoption, Employment rights, Hate crimes covering sexuality, Same-sex marriage, Abortion in the US and abroad, Embryonic stem cells and 'Safer sex' education.

Ed: Obama has a wicked agenda for the USA that is virtually identical to the raft of immoral legislation that has been passed in recent years in the UK. (See Notes and Comment)

BBC portrays pro-lifers as murderous terrorists

The 'Hunter' BBC drama lauded for its 'realism' depicted a group of pro-life campaigners as violent extremists.

Ed: While it appears that the only thing about the programme to be taken seriously is its absurd and malicious degree of misrepresentation and breach of broadcasting standards, it is hoped that it will backfire against those who hold malicious views regarding those who oppose the standards of our liberal society. Recently BBC Radio 2 presenter Jeremy Vine told URC's Reform magazine that he thought he could get away with saying on the radio that he believed that Jesus was real.

Third of Britons stuck in binge drink culture

Over a third of UK adults will drink more than the recommended daily alcohol allowance at least once a week despite having awareness of the dangers, new figures reveal.

Monastery case set to test Turkey on religious liberty

A land dispute involving a Christian monastery near the Turkish-Syrian border is being watched across the EU as a test of Turkey's commitment to religious freedom. A local prosecutor in August 2008 initiated a separate court case against the monastery after mayors of three villages complained the monks were engaged in "anti-Turkish activities" and alleged they were illegally converting children to the Christian faith.

Scouts adopt Islamic pledge

Boy Scouts in Dundee will be able to pledge allegiance to 'Allah' and drop the traditional oath to God and Queen, says the Scout Association in Scotland. In the oath Muslim recruits will be able to replace the name 'God' with "Allah, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful", and pledge to honour "the country in which I am now living" instead of the Queen.

RC Fireman wins landmark case

A Roman Catholic fireman from Glasgow has won his legal battle

against his bosses after he was punished for refusing to take part in a 'gay pride' march.

Christian care home boycotted by council

Havering Council has blacklisted a Christian care home after accusations that a homosexual man was turned away because of his sexuality. According to local press reports, a source close to Parkside Home for the Elderly denied the allegations, and explained that the man was turned away because the home did not have the resources to provide the level of care he needed.

Cross hidden from TV soap church wedding

A large cross in a church where a recent Coronation Street wedding scene was filmed had to be disguised with candles because producers were worried about offending viewers. They later admitted it was a mistake.

Christian's radio show axed over Muslim row

A Christian radio show host on a local Asian channel in Glasgow has been dumped following a debate between a Muslim and a Christian on whether Jesus is "the way, the truth and the life".

Abortion to be offered at local GP practices

It has emerged that a number of NHS trusts are planning to allow early abortions to take place at GP surgeries. Early Medical Abortion (EMA) can be carried out within the first nine weeks of pregnancy. Women are given two pills to take, one to kill the developing foetus, and the other to induce a miscarriage and expel it from the womb.

Government bid to kill free speech protection

The Government is planning to overturn a crucial free speech protection added last year to a controversial 'gay hate' law.

MSPs criticise age of consent plans

Scottish Government plans to water down the age of consent law need rethinking, an influential committee of MSPs says in a report published today.

Islington announces gold-plated 'gay rights' charter

Islington Council has launched a new 'gay rights' charter in response to a case involving a Christian registrar who had a religious objection to performing homosexual civil partnerships.

Secularist MP questions contracts for faith groups

A Labour MP has implied that faith groups should not be given public money to carry out work for the Government if they only employ staff who share their beliefs.

Fire in the Face of Fear

One of the greatest problems of the age is fear. It takes many forms, but it always amounts to fearing man rather than loving God. Some are afraid of being out of step with others. You might call it the fear of fashion, whereby many go wrong through peer pressure, which may equally be called 'fear pressure'.

Others are afraid of their prospects. They pay lip service to the spirit of the age, no matter what their private opinions might be; and their principles

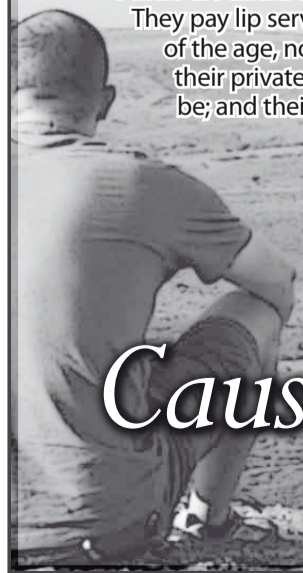
follow their interests.

Some are simply afraid. As someone once said: 'Fear has many eyes, and yet it trembles at what it does not see.'

The mind is not free that is fearful. But Christians have living promises: 'God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.'¹ And yet again: 'There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out all fear.'² Therefore it cannot be glorifying to God for any believer to be afraid to follow Christ rather than the world.

Pray for that sound mind that longs to sound the praise of Jesus' name, full of Holy Spirit fire in the face of fear.

1: 2 Timothy 1:7 2: 1 John 4:19



Cause for Thought
by Peter Murcott

PLEASE REMEMBER THE

English Churchman
IN YOUR WILL

FINALISTS POISED FOR 20TH CRANMER FINALS

EVERYTHING is set for the 2009 finals of the annual Cranmer Awards, the unique contest staged by the Prayer Book Society which sees teenagers learning parts of Cranmer's famous liturgy and reciting them from memory.

Thirty young people are busy rehearsing their chosen passages from the Book of Common Prayer ready for the finals at Charterhouse in London on 25th February. There are 17 youngsters competing in the Junior section which is for 11-to-14 year-olds, and 13 in the Seniors (for 15-to-18 years).

The awards were introduced to encourage young people to become familiar with the magnificent language of the Prayer Book. "The national press has recently commented on the re-introduction in schools of the practice of learning poetry by heart and this event is held in line with that recommendation", says the Prayer Book Society's Stephen Evans.

Among the finalists this year are young Jonathan Wilde from Norwich, Chloe Buries from Somerset, James Yan from Abingdon and Amelia Stewart from St Andrew's School in Reading. Judges include Anne Robinson, the High Sheriff of Somerset and Anne Atkins. The crime novelist P.D. James, now Baroness James of Holland Park, will present the prizes at the finals in London next month.

Background

The Cranmer Awards were the brain-child of veteran journalist Charles Moore, then editor of *The Spectator* magazine who went on to edit *The Daily Telegraph*.

"Charles and I wanted to launch a compe-

tion that would capture the interest of children in the Prayer Book", recalls Tony Kilmister who was chairman of the Prayer Book Society at the time, and now a vice president. "It was perhaps odd that a magazine and a charity should combine forces in this way", he adds. "but it worked."

Having launched the first English book of Common Prayer in 1549 Cranmer was later burnt at the stake in Oxford in 1556.

"It's no wonder that the Cranmer Awards are welcomed by teachers of not only English and RE, but also of drama and history", according to national organiser Merriel Halsall-Williams. "Today several of the Cranmer Awards' regional heats are part of speech and drama festivals", adds Merriel. "This has made the Awards even more popular and opened them up to an even wider audience."

As drama has grown in popularity at school, we must not underestimate the ability of young people to commit to memory substantial quantities of prose. Given the easy rhythm of Cranmer's Prayer Book language, competitors find that his Collects are more easily committed to memory than the plays from which they often have to learn parts. Above all, however, the judges like to see evidence that the competitor truly understands what he or she is saying.

Sometimes there is a tendency to dramatise words which are intended to be spoken in a place of worship. Therefore, a skilful blend of sincerity, dignity and authority is what's required whether the chosen passage is an epistle or Gospel reading, one of Cranmer's great Collects, a psalm or part of the service of morning or evening prayer.

14-year-old Christian Boy Beheaded in Iraq

The Assyrian International News Agency is confirming that a 14-year-old Iraqi Christian boy who was working maintaining an electric generator in an Electric Power Station, has been murdered by Muslims.

The youth was identified as Ayad Tariq, who lived in Baqouba, Iraq, and was at work on Oct. 21 when a group of "disguised Muslim insurgents" went into the power station shortly after his shift began at 6 a.m.

The Agency reported the insurgents asked him for his identification and, according to other witnesses who hid and stayed alive to report on the attack, questioned his identification card's reference to him as a "Christian."

Are you truly a "Christian sinner," they asked.

"Yes, I am Christian but I am not a sinner," he replied.

The insurgents then called him a "dirty Christian sinner," grabbed his limbs and held them while beheading him, the witnesses reported. They were shouting, "Allahu akbar! Allahu Akbar!" during the murder, witnesses said.

An organization called AssyrianChristians.com said they are the indigenous people of Iraq, with a population that has been in the Middle East from the time of Christ.

However, they have faced a number of purges by the region's rulers over time, including the present attacks by powerful Islamic factions across Iran, Iraq and neighbouring nations. Only two generations back, Assyrian Christians made up 20 percent of the population of the Middle East, but during the Assyrian Genocide of 1915, an estimated three million Christians were slaughtered there. Current estimates are that there are about 2.5 million Assyrian Christians in Iraq.

Kenneth Scott Latourette wrote in "A History of Christianity" that the Assyrian Christians became the first nation to accept Christianity, and one of the largest missionary-sending peoples in Christian history. They are one of the last remaining Christian communities in the Middle East.

It is known that tens of thousands of Assyrian Christians have fled their homes in Iraq in recent months.

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Canterbury Tales

Highlights and Lowlights from the Anglican Communion

Whither Synod?

The General Synod meets in London in February and here are some of the areas for debate:-

Evangelism – on what foundation?

Should Christians be doing more to convert Muslims? This has been put forward by Paul Eddy, a lay member of the Synod, amid fears that some clergy are ignoring their traditional missionary role. He put the motion as a Private Members' Motion and accused the Church of censorship earlier this year when it was taken off the agenda of the July meeting at the last minute. He believed it was shelved because it would have shown up deep divisions in the Church over its attitude to converting believers from other faiths. He said, "I'm looking forward to what I think will be a very positive debate. I'm hoping that the Church will affirm the historic tenets of our faith."

One applauds Mr. Eddy's optimism but what are we to make of this? A Mr. Lee Gatiss reports that on Sunday 11th January the Bishop of Leicester, Tim Stephens, appeared on the BBC's debate show, "The Big Question". The issue was the consecration of women as bishops. In the discussion the Bishop was clear that what Scripture says cannot be taken as the word of God. During the debate, Sarah Finch, a member of St. Helen's Bishopsgate and a Lay representative on General Synod had quoted 1Timothy 2:12 "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man", yet the Bishop refused to accept this, saying, "For Christians 'the word of God' is the life of Jesus. The Bible is the product of those who sought to understand the life of Jesus."

This is not, of course, the official teaching of the Church of England, which everywhere acknowledges that the Bible is the word of God and is to be treated and obeyed as such.

Further to the already muddy waters is the debate on Inter-Faith dialogue. The Synod will be considering also the inter-faith and engagement programme which it launched in July 2005 when it set up a task group, chaired by the Bishop of Bradford. This second debate provides the Synod with an opportunity to take note of what has been achieved so far and the work that is proposed for the next phase of the Presence and Engagement programme.

Women Bishops – no debate.

Last July, the Synod agreed that draft legislation be prepared, including special arrangements for those who would not be able to receive the ministry of women as bishops (or priests) in a statutory national code of practice. The Women Bishops Legislative Drafting Group (chaired by the Bishop of Manchester) has completed its work on this basis and the Synod will be giving First Consideration to the draft legislation required to admit women to the episcopate. It will not be possible to move amendments to the draft legislation at this Group of Sessions; the issue before the Synod will be whether to agree that the draft Measure and draft Amending Canon be referred for consideration by a Revision Committee.

The issue of what to do with those who cannot in good conscience accept a woman Bishop is running into the sand. The proposals so far cannot bring in binding legislation because of the Government's clearly stated and expressed stance on human rights. The proposals are weak and liable to serious abuse, as reported in the last issue of Canterbury Tales.

Rome Again.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster, will address the Synod. His address, introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury, will provide an opportunity for the Synod to reflect on relations between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church. This will lead to a debate, requested by the Synod, on the report by the Second Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission on Church as Communion.

Absorbed into Society?

One Diocesan Synod Motion is particularly concerned with the Church's engagement in wider society. It is wide ranging in its concern about the role of the Church in civic society and asks the divisions of the Archbishops' Council to report to the Synod on their work to foster a clearer understanding of the Christian faith among the institutions and organizations of society, and to reinforce the claims of the Church to take its place in public life.

Covenant or Coercion?

Discussions are currently under way about the adoption of an Anglican Covenant and the development of a body of "common law" for all provinces that would strengthen the cohesiveness of the Communion. It remains to be seen how successful such measures may be. Some say that this will never amount to anything for Anglicanism is but a loose federation of autonomous churches with a common English heritage. It is suggested that the fatal flaw in Anglicanism is that there is no teaching authority in the church to define true doctrine, to resolve controversies in matters of faith and practice, or to exercise discipline. There is some truth in this.

Binding our Conscience?

A Private Member's Motion from Ms Vasantha Gnanadoss asks the House of Bishops to formulate and implement a policy for the Church of England under which clergy, ordinands and such employed lay persons as have duties that require them to speak on behalf of the Church should not be a member of an organization whose constitution, aims, objectives or pronouncements contradict the duty to promote race equality.

This, of course, is over the controversy raised when it was discovered there were Clergy who were members of the BNP. Whether or not one agrees with BNP policies, it raises the larger and more important matter of how far the Church can legislate for one's conscience and freedom of speech. Where might such wide ranging and comprehensive prohibitions, such as these suggested, stop? We have enough dictat already in the CofE. Recommendations are one thing, legislation is quite another. One could wish that Church leaders would be as equally clear and definite over issues such as homosexuality, which are clearly Biblical matters. Bibles at Synod? Oxymoron?

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Gluttony and Drunkenness

When did you last hear a sermon on gluttony and drunkenness? You probably cannot recall. Yet these are besetting sins of our society today and evident in our streets. The consumption of food and alcohol to excess is now commonplace, and is doing great harm and damage to people, physically, mentally, and morally. Yet the church seems to be altogether silent on the subject. Why is this? If we go back to the Book of Homilies, published by the Reformers, and authorised to be read in churches, we find the subject fully treated. The homily declares, "Ye have heard in the former, well beloved, the description of the virtue of fasting... Now ye shall hear how foul a thing gluttony and drunkenness is before God."

It is no good the church today saying, this is a matter for the health service or for politicians. It is now sadly a consequence of the ubiquity of the welfare state that it has assumed responsibility for the whole of people's lives, and it would appear that many are only too ready to acquiesce in this view of things. In that respect welfarism has done great harm morally and spiritually, and has emasculated, in particular, the responsibility of the church to speak on matters that affect people's health and wellbeing. Looking back at the Homilies we see that it was clearly understood to be the responsibility of the preacher to warn people of these dangers, of the over-indulgence of the bodily appetites, and to declare the will of God on these important matters in their lives.

We can certainly see that there was sufficient warrant for this in Holy Scripture. In Galatians Paul warns that gluttony and drunkenness are among the sins that exclude people from the kingdom of heaven. He reckons them amongst idolatry, fornication, and murder, for they rob God of his honour

and defile the body, the temple of God. Warnings against excess in food and drink range throughout the whole of Scripture, and are present in virtually every book of the Bible. Yet it is hardly mentioned, it would appear, by the clergy in the churches. And all the time the society in which we live indulges ever more in excess in eating and drinking.

In Victorian times many reformers sought to deliver people from drunkenness. General Booth of the Salvation Army blazed a trail, but there were many others, individuals and societies, which made it their mission to help to save people from addictions and excesses.

There can be no doubt that the great need of the times is to address this question, and the church should be in the van of any movement to reform society and rescue individuals from these twin vices of drunkenness and gluttony. There can be little doubt that one of the consequences of total welfare provided by the state, from the cradle to the grave, has demoralised people and made them less responsible for their own general wellbeing. "The state will provide" has created a culture of dependency, and also of excess and irresponsibility.

It is the duty of the church, every bit as much as that of the state, to address this moral and spiritual problem by confronting people with the claim that they are made in the image of God. The message of the Bible is directed as much to life in this world as in the world to come; as the apostle puts it, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" 1 Timothy 4:8. It has as much to do with blessedness now as blessedness to come. There is no other real efficacious answer to the problems of gluttony and drunkenness.

NOTES



COMMENT

Will God Bless America?

America has a new President and he ended his inaugural speech with the fine words, "God bless the United States of America". Some say he is a Communist and others that he is just the next President of the effectively single Democrat/Republican party chosen by a controlling elite. Others say he is black but in fact he is, like many people, a shade of brown. His father is blacker and his mother rather whiter so the President should have a natural affection for people regardless of the colour of their skin. For Christians that natural affection has nothing to do with skin colour but comes from our understanding that all people are made by God and in the image of God. The colour of skin is pretty irrelevant to most of us.

What should concern true Bible Christians in America, and hopefully in the UK too, is that President Obama does not seem to believe the Bible to be the sole sufficient Word of God. His main concern seems to be his own political success. He seems to be popular because he says what people want to hear. He has a way with words but is there any substance or biblical principle behind them. He wrongly equates his left-wing sodomy abortion toleration with liberty.

Nevertheless Obama has sworn to uphold the American Constitution which is a pretty good constitution. It does not give the President the unbridled power of a dictator. Unlike in the UK when there is a change of party, and the new Prime Minister blames everything on the last one, the new President's predecessor will be happy to answer the phone to give advice. He will probably pray for him too.

This however brings us to a serious problem. What god do these men pray to?

The US Constitution was framed by men who assumed that "God" meant the God of the Bible. So today when we keep on hearing "God bless America", and we are jealous because we never hear our politicians, even Gordon Brown with his Presbyterian manse background, say, "God bless the United Kingdom", we need to remember that Americans are not referring to the real God but to their own god.

The God of America is a bit like the real God but he is not the same. He holds to values of freedom and toleration but he is not religious. He has no serious doctrine regarding himself. He is just a name and while he must be revered he does not demand worship as Christians understand biblical worship. He does not even have a church let alone attend one. He does not call men sinners and does not demand repentance toward himself and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A terrible consequence of this is that he does not distinguish false religion from true. Back in the days when America was founded the battle for truth may have been between evangelical Congregationalists and evangelical Episcopalians, and so by today's standards, it was pretty unimportant. All Americans knew that God was the God of

the Bible rather than a God unique to their particular denomination. In contrast today, while some Americans do know and love the true God of the Bible, there is utter confusion among the majority. Recent surveys show that, like most British female and all liberal clergy, most do not have any way of knowing who will go to heaven and who will not. President Obama, and even Rick Warren, who prayed at the Inauguration, acknowledge the value of all religions and none, while claiming to be Christians.

Of course we only hear their words. We cannot see their hearts. It may be that they are very muddled or, more likely, that they are playing a very careful diplomatic game. It may even be that they are trying to bless Muslims in order to shame them. Nevertheless the

message they send is that Islam is OK but terrorism is not. That is a big mistake.

The case of Israel proves this. Why has there been the recent trouble in Israel and Gaza? The answer is simply that there is no peace from Islam. When Islam gains control it turns into something incapable of peace. It is characterised by violent power grabbing and the resultant evil. An article in a recent 'Christian Watch' newsletter demonstrated the detrimental changes that inevitably happen as Islam gains control. When

Islam abolishes opposition it divides itself and each family, clan and division hates and kills the other.

This is the problem that President Obama cannot admit because the American god doesn't have a Bible. This is why Christians can stand with America and Israel politically but we cannot stand with their gods. Both nations are in some ways righteously fighting for Christian values and against evil but neither have Christian faith so they make a mess of it all.

Meanwhile readers with internet access may sign the petition at www.aish.com/iran/ which reads 'We, the undersigned, call on the international community to indict Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for incitement to commit genocide, as per the UN Genocide Convention which classifies "incitement to commit genocide" as a crime against humanity.'

With such before us we might be tempted to give up but rather we should pray because ultimately it is neither the American President, Islam, nor a world elite who is in control. The Bible says in the first verse of Proverbs chapter twenty-one that, "The King's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will." To that end we should pray for our rulers and in God's mercy they may do much better than we'd otherwise expect.

Above all, let us be sure that we, whether American, Israeli, Palestinian or British do not trust in the Christ rejecting god of this world, but in the true God of the Bible. As the Word of God says, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father". 1 John 2:23.



THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

THE EPISTLES

Septuagesima & Sexagesima



Some brief reflections: by Bishop Barry Shucksmith

We are now preparing to enter upon the season of Lent.

1. THE SUNDAY CALLED SEPTUAGESIMA or the Third Sunday before Lent.

The portion of scripture appointed for the epistle is 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 which speaks about the very real need, in the Christian life, of exercising personal discipline. The passage reads: "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for mastery is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast-away".

These are familiar images, especially in the present climate of the anticipated Olympic games. The cities and countryside are already active with young people (and not so young) taking their daily exercise, shaping up their bodies, and getting ready for some real (or imaginary) contest. Perhaps, at some time, many of us thought we were capable of winning the race for gold or silver medals. Commendably, our own nation has recently produced some remarkable and worthy winners of athletic medals.

The two images used by the Apostle, no doubt, come from his own observation of the athletes and boxers of the day. Both have to make considerable personal sacrifices in order to achieve the prize they seek. And in all these cases, immense effort and regular application to physical detail is required. What are they specifically?

(i) First, there has to be desire for the Prize – 1 Corinthians 9:24-25.

Only one can receive the prize and such is the nature of the reward, it is worth striving for. So, in the Christian life, although we are saved by grace alone and the work of salvation is entirely the work of our Lord Jesus Christ, we need to focus upon the task in hand, to complete the race set before us. We are not fully saved until the race is completed. The Apostle Paul expresses it in this challenging way... a good motto at the beginning of the New Year... "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). You can almost see the athlete, running in the race and pressing forward his chest to touch that winning line! Are we as singular in Christian discipline and as focused upon Christ and the race which is set before us – Hebrews 12:1-3?

(ii) Second, there needs to be determination for the contest – 1 Corinthians 9:25

Not only do we need to have a greater desire than those who contest for a mere crown of laurels, or the gold medal; we must take the Christian life seriously enough to make the sacrifices involved. "and every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things". Just as the athlete changes his eating habits and life-style to achieve his aims, so the Christian should

be regimental in self-discipline. This may mean literally "keeping under our bodies, and bringing them into subjection" v.26-27a.

A puritan prayer from the writings of Canon Arthur Bennett concludes:

...fit me for singular usefulness in this world.

Fit me to exult in distresses of every kind if they but promote the advancement of Thy kingdom.

Fit me to quit all hopes of the world's friendships, and give me a deeper sense of my sinfulness...

Fit me to accept as just desert from Thee any trial that may befall me.

Fit me to be totally resigned to the denial of pleasures I desire, and to be content to spend my time with Thee...

(iii) Third, there needs to be fear of displeasing the Judge (1 Corinthians 9:27).

An athlete may bring upon himself the disapproval, or displeasure of his trainer, his family, his friends, maybe even self-disapproval of his own poor performance. He may exhort others how to run the race in order to win, the discipline and sacrifices involved, but not live by his own counsel. Paul calls this becoming a "castaway". Our Lord's stronger word was "hypocrite" - play-acting. Surely, fear of failing is one of the strongest motives available to the Christian race? So is love for, and prayer to our Lord Jesus Christ, for His grace and help in life's true test?

Long as my life shall last, teach me Thy way;
Where'er my lot be cast, teach me Thy way.
Until the race is run, until the journey's done,
Until the crown is won, teach me Thy way.

(Benjamin Mansell Ramsey, 1849-1923)

2. THE SUNDAY CALLED SEXAGESIMA or the Second Sunday before Lent.

2 Corinthians 11:19-31 is about true and false ministers. There is a tendency in some churches to think that such issues belong to an earlier period in Church history – pre-reformation, or even in the first few centuries following our Lord's resurrection and ascension. The fact is, there have always been false prophets, teachers, and "apostles," as Paul calls them, actively at work, deceiving the Lord's people. There were false apostles with whom Paul had to grapple, undermining the Corinthian church, and there will be false teachers until our Lord returns (Luke 21 & Mark 13). We shall need biblical knowledge, spiritual-discernment, and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, if we are to remain strong and victorious in life's race.

What are the distinguishing marks of the false apostle? According to the apostle to the Gentiles – Paul – they are marked by two things. First, they make others suffer for their own personal gain (2 Corinthians 11: 19-20) and, second, they are self-assertive people. They have brought the Corinthian Christians into bondage by their false teachings and treated them shamefully with aggressive self-assertion, particularly in extracting money from them.

On the other hand, the mark of a true Minister, an under-shepherd of Christ, is demonstrated in his willingness to undergo all forms of suffering for Christ and the sheep (v23-29). He is a person of immense humility who, like Paul himself, realises his own innate weakness and sinful-

THE CALENDAR

February 8th to February 21st
PRAYER BOOK WORSHIP

FEBRUARY 8TH Septuagesima

M. Genesis 1-2:3; Revelation 21:1-8;
Matthew 22:1-14

E. Genesis 2:4 or Job 38; Revelation 21:9-22;
Acts 23:1-10

THE COLLECT

O LORD, we beseech thee favourably to hear the prayers of thy people; that we, who are justly punished for our offences, may be mercifully delivered by thy goodness, for the glory of thy Name; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Epistle. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
The Gospel. Matthew 20:1-16

FEBRUARY 15TH Sexagesima

M. Genesis 3; Matthew 25:1-30

E. Genesis 6 or Genesis 8; Acts 28:17-31

THE COLLECT

O Lord God, who seest that we put not our trust in anything we do: Mercifully grant that by thy power we may be defended against all adversity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle. 2 Corinthians 11:19-31
The Gospel. St. Luke 8:4-15

ness. "If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities" v30.

John Owen once wrote: "Though Noah's servants built the ark, yet themselves were drowned, God will not accept the tongue where the devil has the soul. Jesus did "do and teach." If a man teach uprightly and walk crookedly, more will fall down in the night of his life than he built in the day of his doctrine".

In recent times, the godly Richard Baxter has come in for much harsh criticism, yet his REFORMED PASTOR is a book still worth reading. Those who are true ministers can emulate and practise its teachings. Those who sit under ministry can pray for their minister. Perhaps, these words of Richard Baxter will help shape our prayers for godly pastors. As we move towards the season of Lent, they make for a solemn self-examination and a good corrective between the true and the false.

(i) You have heaven to win or lose yourselves... a holy calling will not save an unholy man.

(ii) You have sinful inclinations as well as others

(iii) You have greater temptations than most men

(iv) The tempter will make his first and sharpest onset upon you. If you will be leaders against him, he will spare you no further than God restrains him.

(v) Many eyes are upon you, and therefore there will be many to observe your falls.

(vi) Your sins are more aggravated than those of other men. They have more of hypocrisy in them.

(vii) The honour of your Lord and Master, and of His holy truth, doth lie more on you than other men.

(viii) The souls of your hearers and the success of your labours, do very much depend upon your self-examination.

2 Corinthians 11:19-23 reads like Paul's own self-examination. Whether ministers, or not, let us use it to test ourselves.

Search me, O God, my actions try,
And let my life appear.

As seen by Thine all-searching eye –
To mine my ways make clear
Francis Bottome, 1823-94

Restoration planned for Southend churchyard

The historic St John's Churchyard, one of the few green spaces in the heart of Southend, is to undergo a major restoration programme with over £200,000 of funding.

The scheme to be funded by the Homes and Communities Agency, is an initiative by Renaissance Southend and the Parish of Southend, working with Groundwork Trust.

It will include a circular walk meandering between gravestones, a central walk, a new opening to the churchyard, a new forecourt, and a sensory garden.

The existing memorial to novelist Warwick Deeping will be improved. Further improvements are also planned to the monument of poet Robert Buchanan supported by lines from his poems that will be used at key points around the churchyard. The monument to the town's first mayor will also be significantly enhanced as will the existing graves.

Comments on the current design proposals can be made through an online questionnaire at www.renaissancesouthend.co.uk

EVENTS

February 7th Saturday N. Ireland

The Spirit of the Puritans

NORTHERN IRELAND'S REFORMED BIBLE CONFERENCE 2009

What can Christians learn from the Puritans?

Speakers:-

Pastor Geoffrey Thomas, Alfred Place Baptist Church, Wales
Pastor Edward Donnelly, Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church Newtownabbey

10-11 am The Puritans and the Human Condition Geoff Thomas
11-11.30am Tea and Coffee Break

11.30-12.30 pm Restore Us Again 1 (Psalm 85) Edward Donnelly
12.30-1.30 pm Lunch (bring your own) Tea and Coffee provided

1.30-2.30 pm Dr Martin Lloyd-Jones Geoff Thomas

2.30-3pm Tea and Coffee Break

3-4pm Restore Us Again 2 (Psalm 85) Edward Donnelly
Whiteabbey Congregational Church [Kindly Granted] 1-5 Glenville Road, Whiteabbey, Co Antrim

Bookstall provided. Freewill offering collected.

Contacts:-

Rev P Dowling 028 93 359081 Whiteabbey Congregational
Mr D Petrie 028 90 486931 Reformed Presb
Pastor D Patterson 028 91 889595 Donaghadee Baptist
Mr J Coates 028 90 342718 Reformed Presb

February 14th Saturday 11am & 2pm
Manchester

Biblical Library Study Day Conference,

Subjects: "God's Law in the Christian's Life" & "Charismaticism, Rome and a Completed Bible" Speaker: Rev. David Silversides, N. Ireland.

Droylsden Independent Church, Ashton Hill Lane, (off Market Street), Droylsden, (Please note change of venue from usual place).

Soup & rolls served between the meetings.
Details: Mr Roy Thornton 01253 854527 or Rev. Stephen Holland 01254 384154

English Churchman Book Review

Amazing Grace - The History and theology of Calvinism

Director: James Gelet

2 DVDs; over 4 hours 17 minutes;
Available from Free Presbyterian
Bookroom, 133 Woodlands
Road, Charing Cross, Glasgow
G3 6LE, Phone: 0141 332 1760,
£19.95+p&p or with a study
guide for US\$29 inc p&p from
USA from www.Nicenecouncil.com

At long last a DVD that has great material and professionally produced for Christians.

For those who seldom read, those who read a little and for all bookworms, here are the doctrines of grace presented in a modern format. They are scintillating and instructive. A browse on the internet will prove their value and importance to many. Here is a fantastic resource for those long evenings and social occasions when having Christian friends around and need good conversation.

All the slurs and slanders that have been repeatedly thrown up against us are put to flight in a Biblical, scholarly and Christian fashion.

The format is simple. The entire programme is four hours long but divided up into short segments for easy listening and watching so you will never be bored or fall asleep. The outline is history, Scripture and theology in sequence. Contributors include – Tom Ascol, Walter Bowie, Walter Chantry, George Grant, James Kennedy, Joe Morecraft III, Stephen Mansfield, Tom Nettles and R. C. Sproul,

Part One examines the history of the debate over Calvinism tracing the dispute between Augustine and Pelagius, Luther and Erasmus and the Synod of Dort's response to the five points of Arminianism. The last part sets out in a very clear way the issues involved demonstrating the tragic results for the gospel and the Church had Arminianism prevailed.

Part Two is a veritable gold mine as the Scriptures are opened up in relation to the doctrines of grace. By examining the five points of Arminianism in the light of the word of God they are found wanting and abysmally without substance. Here is material that, if mastered, will enable Christians to give a robust defence of the Calvinism from Scripture.

Part Three ask a series of provocative questions that are usually thrown up against Calvinism. A faithful and reasonable response from Scripture is presented showing again why the doctrines of grace have been vital to the progress of the gospel and why preach-

ers such as C H Spurgeon called Calvinism the gospel. Questions such as – why should we evangelise if God is sovereign are answered.

A must purchase either as a gift or for personal use. In fact buy two and give one away the result will more than pay for the initial outlay.

To enhance the DVD set there is now a workbook available.

REV TREVOR KIRKLAND

Men of Destiny - 40th Anniversary Edition

Peter Masters,

The Wakeman Trust; 2008; pbk;
166pp; Met Tab price £5.00
(others £7.50); ISBN 978-1-
870855-55-6

By the title we learn that it is forty years (1968) since this book was first published. Since 1968 there have been six subsequent editions which shows what a good read it is.

Dr Masters writes in 166 pages of twelve different men who have lived over the last twelve centuries. The range of characters and the circumstances, they lived in and then served their Saviour in are wide ranging of which I will not say too much now suffice to say that the author tells the gripping stories, amongst others of Alfred the Great being born in AD 849 but then born again to serve his Lord in heaven and Alves Reis "The World's Most Notorious Counterfeiter" who was later gloriously saved. What a wonder the gospel is. There are ten other sketches.

It is fascinating to read of how the Lord dealt with all these individuals in his own way leading them step by step to him. Their coming to Christ reveals the glorious grace of God in saving them. Also some of these individuals' waywardness once they were

Christians shows just how deceitful our hearts are even when we are converted! Their experiences in this regard are a sobering lesson. However to read of the powerful evidences of Christ in these men is a wonderful encouragement to us all for it reveals the glory and goodness of God in recreating his fallen creatures to his own likeness.

I warmly commend this book to the Christian public.

REV. I. BUDGEN

The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards

John Carrick

Banner of Truth; 2008; hbk;
465pp; £17.00; ISBN 978-085-
151-9838.

Surprising at it may seem there are few books that deal with Edwards' preaching.

This is a fine and valuable study of that great preacher and Christian philosopher living in a time of social and spiritual volatility. The author is keen to present Edwards through an homiletical approach to his subject but all the time one is confronted with the theological, philosophical, historical and biographical strands, that are inextricably interwoven. This is one of the really great values of the book, that Edwards is put so clearly and succinctly into the times in which he lived. As we read we begin to see a new, fuller and greater figure of Edwards as he begins to emerge more clearly in his times. Failure to see and consider the background to Edwards preaching is to come away with a very incomplete picture, even a caricature, of his preaching and his sermons. For most, perhaps, Edwards is known for the Great Awakening and his sermon, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Here, however, is a full and fleshed out presentation of Edwards' preaching which is essential to do justice to this great man of God. The added value of this work is the fair and critical evaluation of Edwards' preaching. What emerges from the study is the greatness of Edwards and his abiding relevance for us.

It is not possible to do justice to this superb book in a short review, but many areas of Edwards' preaching are covered, and certainly all the essential elements; his God and Christ centeredness, God's Sovereignty, heaven, doctrinal exposition, Edwards' use of imagery, illustrations, repetitions, scripture, etc. The different categories of hearers, the use of self-examination, exhortation, example, and so on. There are 28 chapters in all and Dr. Carrick has covered every major area of Edwards' preaching against the backdrop of his times. The author shines with clarity of style and explanation, he is well argued, always fair and objective. It has clearly been a labour of love. This study would make a fine complement to Iain Murray's excellent biography of Edwards, also published by Banner. Full footnotes are given and there is a Scripture index. In a work of this nature it is almost criminal not to have included a subject index for it is a work to which the reader will want to return.

REV JOHN DUNN

Pocket Puritans

The 'Pocket Puritans' range of booklets are a new and wonderful addition to the The Banner of Truth Trust publications. The two booklets below are the second two of the four which I had to review.

The Banner of Truth Trust, through these booklets, are providing a means for people to taste of the Puritans, and following on from that seek to learn more from the works of these men.

Even in his time Bishop Ryle was deeply concerned at the state of the Protestant church. In his 'Memoir of Samuel Ward' he wrote "It is vain to deny that we have fallen on trying times for Christianity. Heresies of the most appalling kind are broached in quarters where they might least have been expected." He goes on, "In a time like this, I believe that the study of some of the great Puritan divines is eminently calculated, under God, to do good and stay the plague." He ends a bit later, "The republication of our best Puritan divines I regard as a positive boon to the church and the world, and I heartily wish it God speed."

Living Faith. Samuel Ward.

The Banner of Truth Trust,
Pbk: 96 pages: £3.25.
ISBN 978-0-85151-980-7

This booklet is adapted and paraphrased from The Sermons of Samuel Ward by Richard Rushing. Sometimes one reads or hears a sermon and it seems as if the very bells of heaven are ringing, calling to man

– and this is one such sermon.

Ward divides his sermon into four parts. In the first he opens his sermon by explaining what was lost at the Fall. He says "Faith is the doorway to the power of God, first to save us, and then to strengthen us."

He makes simple something that is often made obscure. He mentions this himself, "In a word, you see schools disputing it, preachers preaching it, professors discussing it, profane men swearing by it, but few or none living by it."

He preaches in a manner that the common man easily understands, learns from and is inspired to live. The difference between "understanding the notion of sweetness, and actually tasting honey or sugar". Or, "Faith finds its lustre in action, and not just in notion."

This booklet will be a sweet inspiration for whoever reads it. Pages 63 to 96 is 'Memoir of Samuel Ward' by J.C Ryle. He sums up Ward's sermons beautifully. It is suffice for me to quote only the first sentence, "The style of Wards' sermons is always eminently simple." In this lies the answer – the simplicity of the gospel.

A world of Love: Heaven

Jonathan Edwards

The Banner of Truth Trust,
Pbk: 117 pages: £3.25.
ISBN 978-0-85151-978-4

Taken from Jonathan Edward's "Charity and Its Fruits" this booklet follows the format of the 'Pocket Puritans' in having the message first, then a short biography at the end. In this case the brief and very concise biography is by Iain H. Murray on pages 113-117 followed by a list of Jonathan Edwards titles carried by the Banner of Truth Trust.

In all my readings I have only read one other work of Jonathan Edwards, and when I finished that I was so moved by it that I thought it would be most profitable to procure more. This booklet confirms that so much. Edwards is a great encourager, a most gifted exhorter as well as a great expositor of the dangers that face the person who fails to heed the message to turn to the Lord.

One example is the comparison Edwards made between where we are now and what is to be found in heaven. In speaking of love, he wrote, 'That which was in

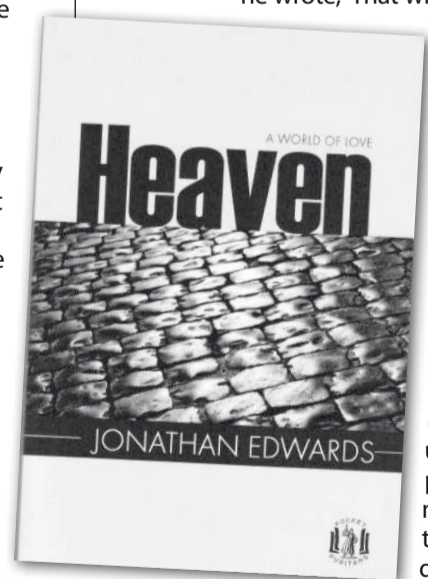
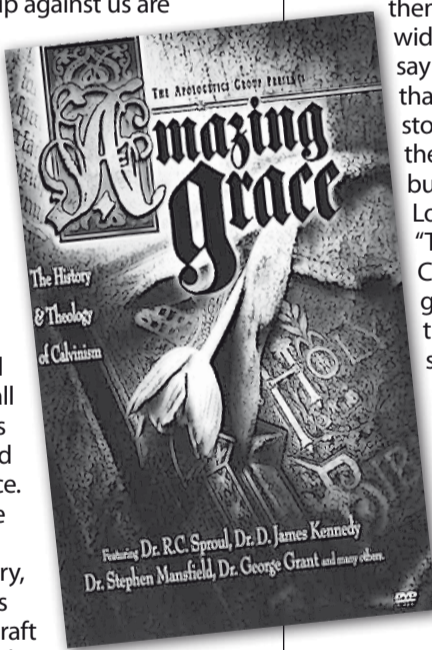
the heart on earth as but a grain of mustard-seed, shall be as a great tree in heaven.'

In another part he did not hesitate to explain about the difficult upward path we must travel to reach the destination of heaven, but

goes on to encourage the Christian pilgrim in this life that, 'At every step it will be easier and easier to ascend; and the higher your ascent, the more you will be cheered by the glorious prospect before you, and by a nearer view of that heavenly city where in a little while you shall for ever be at rest.'

My verdict – well, this has convinced me to obtain the works of Jonathan Edwards. I pray that those of you who begin with these Pocket Puritan booklets be likewise moved.

ANDREW HOPE HALL



CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

15 January 2009

NEW BISHOP OF ST ALBANS

Rt Revd Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of Shrewsbury (Lichfield): to be Bishop of St Albans (St Albans).

Revd James Michael Adams, Vicar, Chislehurst Christ Church (Rochester): to be Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Kevin Ashby, Rector, Buckingham St Peter; and Area Dean, Buckingham Deanery (Oxford): to be Rector, Melton Mowbray St Mary (Leicester).

Revd David Beal, Rector, Itchingfield with Slinfold St Nicholas (Chichester): to be Rector, West Chiltington St Mary (same diocese).

Revd Robert Featherstone: to be Priest-in-Charge, Hasting St Clement and All Saints (Chichester).

Revd James Howson, Priest-in-Charge, Kiev Christ Church (Europe): to be Rector, Alfriston with Lullington, Litlington and West Dean (Chichester).

Revd Antony Lane, Rector, Crayford St Paulinus (Rochester): to be Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Richard Long, Assistant Curate, Beverley St Nicholas (York): to be Team Vicar, Marfleet (same diocese).

Revd Simon Newham, Priest-in-Charge, Wisborough Green St Peter (Chichester): to be Vicar.

Revd David Perkins, Vicar, Belper Christ Church with Turnditch; and Priest-in-Charge, for Ambergate and Heage; and Rural Dean, Duffield (Derby): to be Canon Precentor, Derby Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Michael Porter, Vicar, Anerley Christ Church; and Area Dean, Beckenham (Rochester): to be Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Barry Smart, Vicar, Small Heath All Saints, (Birmingham): to be Chaplain, Compton Hospice Wolverhampton (Lichfield).

Revd Paul Smith, Team Vicar, Stantonbury and Willen Christ Church (Oxford): to be Rector.

Revd Canon David Wilbourne, Vicar, Helmsley All Saints (York): to be Priest-in-Charge, Upper Ryedale (same diocese).

Revd Terence Williams, Assistant Curate, Bolsover St Mary (Derby): to be Priest-in-Charge, Codnor St James; and Discipleship Development Coordinator in Mission & Ministry Area 46 (same diocese).

Revd Anthony Willis, Rector, Ellesborough, The Kimbles and Stoke Manderville St Peter (Oxford): to be Assistant Curate (Part-time Aylesbury Deanery Mission Enabler), Aylesbury with Bierton and Hulcott St Mary (same diocese).

Women have been appointed to the following posts:

Emma Phillips, to be Chaplain, Severn Hospice Shrewsbury; and NSM (Associate Minister) Central Telford (Lichfield).

Karen Reeves, to be Ecumenical Team Chaplain, Milton Keynes General NHS Trust (Oxford).

Elizabeth Walker, to be Hon Canon, Rochester Cathedral (Rochester).

Diane Williams, is now also Rural Dean, Bosmere Deanery (St Eds and Ips).

Yvonne Yates, is now Chaplain, HM Prison Kirklevington Grange (York).

Retirements and Resignations

The Ven Geoffrey Arrand, Archdeacon of Suffolk (St Eds and Ips): to retire with effect from 30 August 2009. Upon retirement he will become Archdeacon Emeritus

Revd Derek Goddard, Priest-in-Charge, Palermo with Taormina (Italy, Europe): to resign with effect from 30 June 2009.

Dr Jocelyn Lewis, Priest-in-Charge, Whittington; Priest-in-Charge, New Whittington (Derby): to retire with effect from 30 April 2009.

Elizabeth Morris, Assistant Curate (Assistant Priest), The Yoxmere Benefice (St Eds and

Ips): to resign with effect from 1 September 2009.

Preb Pippa Thornycroft, Priest-in-Charge, Shareshill St Luke; and Priest-in-Charge, Essington St John (Lichfield): to retire with effect from 18 February 2009.

Revd Dr Paul Vrolijk, NSM (Assistant Curate) Stoke Gifford (Bristol): has resigned with effect from 31 December 2008.

Lay and Other Appointments/Resignations/Retirements

Revd Mark Stibbe, Vicar, Chorleywood, St Andrew (St Albans): is now Leader, Father's House Trust, Watford.

22 January 2009

Revd David Ager, NSM (Assistant Curate), The Deane Vale Benefice (Bath and Wells): to be NSM (Assistant Priest), Taunton St James (same diocese).

Revd George Patrick Benson, Vicar, Christ Church, Barnston (Chester): to be also Hon Canon Chester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Dr Andrew Bunch, Vicar, Oxford St Giles and St Philip and St James with St Margaret (Oxford): to be Hon Canon, Cathedral Church of Christ (same diocese).

Revd Andrew Colebrooke, Rector, Mistley with Manningtree and Bradfield St Mary; and Rural Dean, Harwich Deanery (Chelmsford): to be Rector, Heydon, Great Chishill and Little Chishill, Chrishall, Elmdon with Wenden Lofts, Strehall (same diocese).

Revd Keith Farrow, Assistant Curate, Hillsborough and Wadsley Bridge Christ Church (Sheffield): to be Priest-in-Charge.

Revd Andrew Fenby, Assistant Curate, Leigh-on-Sea St Margaret (Chelmsford): to be Vicar, Barkingside St Francis (same diocese).

Revd Simon Godfrey, Rector, Northampton All Saints with St Katherine and St Peter (Peterborough): to be Chancellor, Valletta Pro-Cathedral Church of St Paul with Gozo; and Senior Chaplain, Malta and Gozo (Europe).

Revd Mark Hart, Vicar, Plemstall with Guilden Sutton St Peter (Chester): is now also Rural Dean, Chester Deanery (same diocese)

Revd Andrew Hawken, Vicar, Benson St Helen (Oxford): to be Hon Canon, Cathedral Church of Christ (same diocese).

Revd John Hicks, NSM (Assistant Curate), The Grosvenor Chapel (London): to be NSM (Hon Assistant Priest), Westminster St Stephen with St John (same diocese).

Revd David Hodgson, Area Dean, Sonning Deanery; and Rector, Wokingham All Saints (Oxford): to be Hon Canon Cathedral Church of Christ (same diocese).

Revd Andrea Hofbauer, Chaplain, Exeter University; and Priest Vicar, Exeter Cathedral; and Tutor, South West Ministry Training Course (Exeter): is now Canon Precentor, Wakefield Cathedral (Wakefield).

Revd Mark James, Assistant Curate, Great Dunmow with Barnston St Mary (Chelmsford): to be Rector, Bentley Common with Kelvedon Hatch and Navestock St Paul (same diocese).

Revd Graham Knott, Priest-in-Charge, Croajingolong (Gippsland, Anglican Church of Australia): to be Priest-in-Charge, Watford St Mary (St Albans).

Revd Miles Maylor, NSM (Associate Clergy), Wheatley St Mary (Oxford): to be NSM (Assistant Curate), Oxford St Barnabas (same diocese).

Revd William Olhausen, Incumbent, Carrigrohane with Garrycloyne, Inniscarra and Magourney (Corke, Cloyne and Ross, The Church of Ireland): is now Chaplain, Monkton Combe School (Bath & Wells).

Revd Owen Benjamin Parry, Retired: to be Curate-in-Charge, Pradoc (Lichfield).

Revd Calvert Prentis, Vicar, Huddersfield Holy Trinity (Wakefield): is now also Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands (same diocese).

Revd David Taylor, Rector, Congleton St John; and Rural Dean, Congleton Deanery (Chester): to be also Hon Canon Chester Cathedral (same diocese).

Revd Andrew Watson, Assistant Curate,

Kennington, St John with St James (Southwark): to be Assistant Curate, Sanderstead All Saints (same diocese).

Women have been appointed to the following posts:

Rosemary Bowers, to be Priest-in-Charge, Kinnerley with Melverley and Knockin with Maesbrook St Mary (Lichfield).

Elizabeth Hazel Clarke, is now Priest-in-Charge, Dodleston St Mary (Chester).

Canon Ivy Crawford, to be Priest-in-Charge, Broxton with Chickney and Tilty and Great and Little Easton St Mary; and CME Adviser (Chelmsford).

June Lawson, to be Dean of Women's Ministry; and member of the Bishop's staff with immediate effect (Wakefield).

Trudy Payne, to be NSM (Assistant Curate), Mitcham St Barnabas (Southwark).

Susan Rose, to be also Priest-in-Charge, Cheddar St Andrew; and Priest-in-Charge, Rodney Stoke with Draycott St Leonard (Bath and Wells).

Helen Scarisbrick, is now Vicar, Broadheath St Alban (Chester).

Helene Stainer, to be Priest-in-Charge, Milverton with Halse and Fitzhead St Michael (Bath and Wells).

Christina Stirling, to be Hon Canon Cathedral Church of Christ (Oxford).

Elizabeth Jane Turner, to be Ecumenical Officer Wirral (Chester).

Sarah Walsh, to be NSM (Assistant Curate), Crookes St Timothy (Sheffield).

Kathleen Wood, to be NSM (Assistant Curate), Etwall and Egginton St Helen (Derby).

Retirements and Resignations

Revd Derek Akker, Vicar, Hattersley St Barnabas (Chester): has retired with effect from 14 January 2009.

Revd David Caveen, Vicar, Lord's Hill (Winchester): to retire with effect from 31 July 2009.

Revd David Christie, Vicar, Patrick Brompton with Hunton St Patrick; and Vicar, Hornby St Mary; and Vicar, Crakehall St Gregory (Ripon and Leeds): to resign with effect from 31 May 2009.

Revd Nicholas Dawson, Priest-in-Charge, Hillsborough and Wadsley Bridge Christ Church; and Vicar, Owlerton St John the Baptist (Sheffield): to resign as Priest-in-Charge, remaining Vicar with effect from 14 February 2009.

Petra Elsmore, Priest-in-Charge, Everton St George (Liverpool): to resign with effect from 31 July 2009.

Revd Canon Malcolm Grant, Vicar, Eaton Bray with Edlesborough St Mary (St Albans): to retire with effect from 8 March 2009.

Revd Derek Harding, NSM (Assistant Curate), Godstone and Blindley Heath St Nicholas (Southwark): to resign with effect from 1 February 2009.

Revd Canon John Parsons, Priest-in-Charge, Hornchurch Holy Cross (Chelmsford): to retire with effect from 1 February 2009. Becoming Canon Emeritus upon retirement.

Revd Canon Dr Paul Roberts, Vicar, Cotham St Saviour with St Mary and Clifton St Paul (Bristol): has resigned with effect from 31 December 2008.

Revd Robin Stevens, NSM (Assistant Curate), Wimbledon St Mary (Southwark): to retire with effect from January 2009.

Revd Robert Toan, Vicar, Plas Newton with Chester Christ Church (Chester): to resign with effect from 20 February 2009.

Lay and Other Appointments/Resignations/Retirements

Mr David Blackmore: is now Lay Canon Emeritus, Chester Cathedral (Chester).

Captain Clynton Dean French, CA: to be Fresh Expressions Evangelist, St John the Evangelist, Park (Sheffield).

Mr Aiden Hargreaves-Smith, Partner, Winckworth Sherwood: to be Legal Secretary, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe; and Registrar (Europe).



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, Fordoun 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.

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. 6pm Evening Prayer. BCP (1662) & AV. Mr Philip Lievesley 07972 159908.

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

Street. Sundays 10.30am; 6.00pm. Prayer

Meeting, Bible Study, Wednesday 7.30pm; BCP services. Rev. John Dunn. 01215571902

WOLVERHAMPTON. St. Silas. C of E

[Continuing], Bethany Chapel, Blackwood Ave., Wednesfield. Morning Prayer 12.15pm. (1st Sunday Holy Communion); Evening Prayer 6.00pm. (3rd Sunday Holy Communion); Authorised Version & Book of Common Prayer. Tel. 01902 656514.



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Pope Still Not Sincere About “Faith Alone”

By Richard Bennett & Miles McKee

In an address on November 19th 2008, Pope Benedict XVI made a statement on the topic that is at the very centre of the division between all gospel-based churches and the Church of Rome—the issue of justification, or how we are accepted as just (righteous) in the eyes of God.

In his teaching, the Pope said something very radical, in that he recognized the correctness of “faith alone” (faith alone—the heart of the grand doctrine of justification by grace and by faith). Here is what he says, “That is why Luther’s expression “sola fide” [“faith alone”] is true if faith is not opposed to charity, to love. Faith is to look at Christ, to entrust oneself to Christ, to be united to Christ, to be conformed to Christ, to his life.”

So let’s get this straight, if we are to take the Pope at his word and he really means what he says, then Luther was correct on “faith alone”! Of course there is one caveat, that “faith alone” is not opposed to charity. So was Luther indeed against charity? Far from being against charity (love), Luther and the reformers taught that “faith alone” was the very basis for good works. Indeed they reasoned that it is only “faith alone” that frees a man for a life of true charity. They reasoned that unless faith grasps that we are saved by the work that Christ has already finished, we would spend our time in the useless pursuit of good works to obtain right standing with God. They knew from Scripture and experience that this kind of labour is both exhausting and redundant because right standing (justification) with God can only be found in the work of another, the Lord Jesus.

We should note that when a man is engrossed in trying to save himself by his works, he could become so self-absorbed that he does not show appropriate charity to his neighbour. Because of his self-absorption, his neighbour and his neighbour’s needs rarely, if ever, hit his radar screen. If, on the other hand, the self-engrossed man does in fact take note of his neighbour’s needs and decides to help, his works of charity are then performed for his own benefit (to improve his standing before God) and not for the glory of God.

By contrast, “faith alone” majors on the perfect, finished work of Christ and receives His activities and His person as a sacrificial offering for sin as having been performed on the sinner’s behalf. “Faith alone” realizes that our good works can never supplement the perfect, finished work of Christ. Thus, believing in “faith alone,” we are released to a life of good works, performed, not for self-advancement, but for the glory of God alone. Believing in the finished work of Christ, we are free to enjoy doing good works because we know that our works play no part in our obtaining right standing before God. “Faith alone” embraces this!

Benedict XVI, being well educated, knows of Luther’s insistence that good works are the companion of the justified man. He knows that, in Luther’s mind, “faith alone” could not and would not oppose good works. Thus, the caveat is satisfied and, if the Pope were sincere, Luther’s correctness on “faith alone” would be established.

If the Pope, therefore, really meant that Luther was correct in saying we are saved by “faith alone,” then we would have expected wonderful things in days to come. Why? Because, once embraced, “faith alone” refuses to be peaceably locked away in some dimly lit and quiet corner. “Faith alone” becomes, as it were, an uncaged lion as it will call into question everything we believe. However, the real reason that the Pope accepted “faith alone” was just another ploy to bring unsuspecting Christians back to Papal Rome. In this, he was simply following the mandate that Papal Rome disclosed at Vatican Council II. The tactic is stated in their own official words, “. . . it [ecumenical dialogue] serves to transform modes of thought and behaviour and the daily life of those communities [non-Catholic churches]. In this way, it aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible: thus, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered in a common celebration of the Eucharist into the unity

of the one and only Church, which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose.”

Misleading Double-talk

The Pope is therefore involved in “double speak” because the Church of Rome has consistently condemned the biblical doctrine of justification by “faith alone.” This was done at the Council of Trent. Present-day dogma of the Roman Church not only upholds the teaching of the Council of Trent but also declares that such Councils are infallible. The Council of Trent proclaims the following curses:

If anyone shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ’s sake, or that it is this confidence alone by which we are justified: let him be anathema [cursed].

If anyone shall say that by the said sacraments of the New Law, grace is not conferred from the work which has been worked [ex opere operato] but that ‘faith alone’ in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace: let him be anathema.

Papal Rome’s reason for such a curse on those who hold to “justification by faith alone” is logical because of what she refuses to concede. For her, justification is not an immediate declaration of God and received by “faith alone”; rather, she teaches that grace is conferred through her sacraments. Thus, she is able to make a place for herself as a necessary means through which inner righteousness is given.

If the Pope, like the Reformers before him, had been sincere about his belief in “faith alone,” he would have applied this Gospel truth to all that he believes. That would have meant the abolishing of the Mass; for in the Mass a bloodless sacrifice for sin is made. “Faith alone” sees that Christ has been offered once and that there is, therefore, no more sacrifice for sin. “Faith alone” sees that divine justice has already been satisfied and that redemption has already been accomplished. “Faith alone” sees that the righteousness of God, with its demands of total obedience and righteousness on our part, has been fulfilled for us by our substitute, the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the Pope does NOT teach “faith alone” which would destroy his Papacy and his own position. Rather, he leaves precious Roman Catholics—in distress for their souls—wondering whether or not they have done enough to get into heaven.

The truth is “faith alone” in Jesus Christ—that God has provided for Himself the entire righteousness that He demands. “Faith alone” not only sees that Jesus Christ provided the righteousness that God demands, but it also sees that Christ’s perfect righteousness will not help us unless somehow it becomes ours. This is why the Pope just cannot recognize “faith alone”—because it is by “faith alone” that we grasp this righteousness and make it our own.

Scripture repeatedly states human works profit nothing towards justification. Christ Jesus the Lord has wonderfully redeemed His people. That redemption was utterly His work without any aid from any church or ritual. His completed work in salvation was in the words of Scripture, “by Himself”, “without the deeds of the law”, “not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast”, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us. . . .” In doctrine and practice Papal Rome attempts to substitute her sacraments for God’s grace through faith alone, thus nullifying and making void the very grace of God. The language and conduct of Rome are epitomized in one verse of Scripture, “for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Let the trumpet sound with Biblical truth. On the authority of Scripture let it be known that sinners are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Christ Jesus alone, and to God alone be the glory! The clear resounding cry is still the command of the Lord Himself, “this is the work of God that you believe on him whom He has sent.”

Reaching Catholics with the Lord’s Love

By Richard Bennett

On October 14th 08 in Stornoway, on the Isle of Lewis in Scotland, I had the privilege of addressing many believers on the above topic that I treasure greatly. The Isle of Lewis is known for the revivals that took place there in times past. A distinct characteristic of those revivals, and of all the revivals that took place in the 300 years of strong biblical faith in Scotland, was witnessing to Catholics. To be true to the Lord in His great commission, and in our desire for revival in the apostate days in which we live, it is necessary to understand what is involved in this outreach. For the most part, like other religious people, Catholics think they want to be right with God. This is the reason they take that Church’s sacraments and do good works, which are in accordance with their Catholic teaching. This is the basis on which we begin, as we reach out to them in the Lord’s love. The sin of the Jews—their contempt for the Gospel of grace—was of great anguish to the Lord Jesus. Nonetheless, with weeping eyes the Lord looked on the lost souls in Jerusalem. Likewise, the Apostle Paul explained the great zeal that he had for the salvation of his fellow Jews. His affection for his countrymen was such that he was willing to undergo the greatest hardships in order to give them the Gospel. So should be our love for the lost. If we do not have love and zeal to reach out to Catholics, all of whom labour under a false gospel, we should cry to the Lord for repentance and a love for all the lost, which has been the hallmark of true Christians throughout the centuries.

Some of the obstacles that hinder us from reaching them are the following. There is the tactical change that the Catholic Church made official at Vatican Council II. That particular council moved from a position of separation from all other religions to its new programme of false ecumenism. This new approach was devised to present Roman Catholicism as Christian, and thereby to prevail on Evangelicals to become Roman Catholic. As the Church of Rome defines it, her main tactic is by means of dialogue. In her official post-Vatican II documents she states,

“. . . it [ecumenical dialogue] serves to transform modes of thought and behaviour and the daily life of those communities [non-Catholic churches]. In this way, it aims at preparing the way for their unity of faith in the bosom of a Church one and visible: thus, little by little, as the obstacles to perfect ecclesial communion are overcome, all Christians will be gathered in a common celebration of the Eucharist into the unity of the one and only Church, which Christ bestowed on his Church from the beginning. This unity, we believe, dwells in the Catholic Church as something she can never lose.”

This tactic is meant to deceive Christians into believing that she has changed. This deceptive policy has been successful as there are now many ecumenical movements that accept Catholics as Christian. Such movements are “Evangelicals and Catholics Together”, “Christian Churches Together”, “The Coming Home Network”, and the “Emerging Church movement”, which all deny the Gospel and draw people into an acceptance of Catholicism and her false ecumenism. To answer this obstacle to evangelising, and its accompanying movements, it is imperative that we analyse Catholicism. First of all, the most dangerous aspect of the Church of Rome is the fact that she appears to be based on the great essential truths of God’s revelation.

However, when we understand what she adds to these essentials in her official teaching, we readily see that the system is not by any means Christian.

Reaching out with the Lord’s truth

We begin reaching out to a Catholic with a question such as, “Can you say, without a



doubt, that you are right with God at this very moment?” We explain that it is not only possible to be right with God, but God wants us to be secure in that position. Then we begin the contrast between biblical teaching and the official Catholic teaching. The Catholic Church, while purporting to be Christian, declares its own absolute teachings to be infallible. However, all true believers trust in God and His Written Word alone, “. . . the scripture cannot be broken,” “Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth.” Papal Rome professes to impart Christ by Masses, and the Holy Spirit by sacraments. It claims to fortify the faithful with crucifixes, rosaries, statues, holy water, and saints. It alleges that they can shorten the sufferings of souls in purgatory by indulgences. It professes to mediate between God and man; to hold the keys of heaven and hell; to forbid the marriage of her priests by her rule of celibacy. Papal Rome commands abstinence from meats and has clothed its cardinals in purple and scarlet and with fine linen, gold, and precious stones. In a word, she has set up a system of unrighteousness and taken to herself the imaginary status of “our holy mother, the Church.” The Papacy’s presupposition is that the Lord set up a totalitarian hierarchy with the Pope at the top followed by cardinals, patriarchs, major archbishops, archbishops, metropolitans, coadjutor archbishops, diocesan bishops, coadjutor bishops and priests. The biblical organizational structure of the bride of Christ is utterly different. In the true body of Christ, those ordained as elders and deacons are still only brothers within the same body and the one Master is Christ Jesus the Lord, “for one is your master even Christ and all ye are brethren.”

As Catholics live their lives under the Church’s jurisdiction, they have a long journey through the Sacrifice of the Mass, sacraments, good works, merit, veneration of Mary and the Saints. Each one is required to partake of the sacraments in order to be good enough to die in the state of “sanctifying grace” and then to be saved or at least, it is hoped, to land for a time in purgatory. Even on a natural level one wonders how a Catholic can have any hope. The sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments are such that the most they can promise is a pseudo-hell called purgatory. It is truly time for those who really love the Lord to reach out in that same love to Catholics.

Ed: This article is to be concluded in our next edition, God willing