

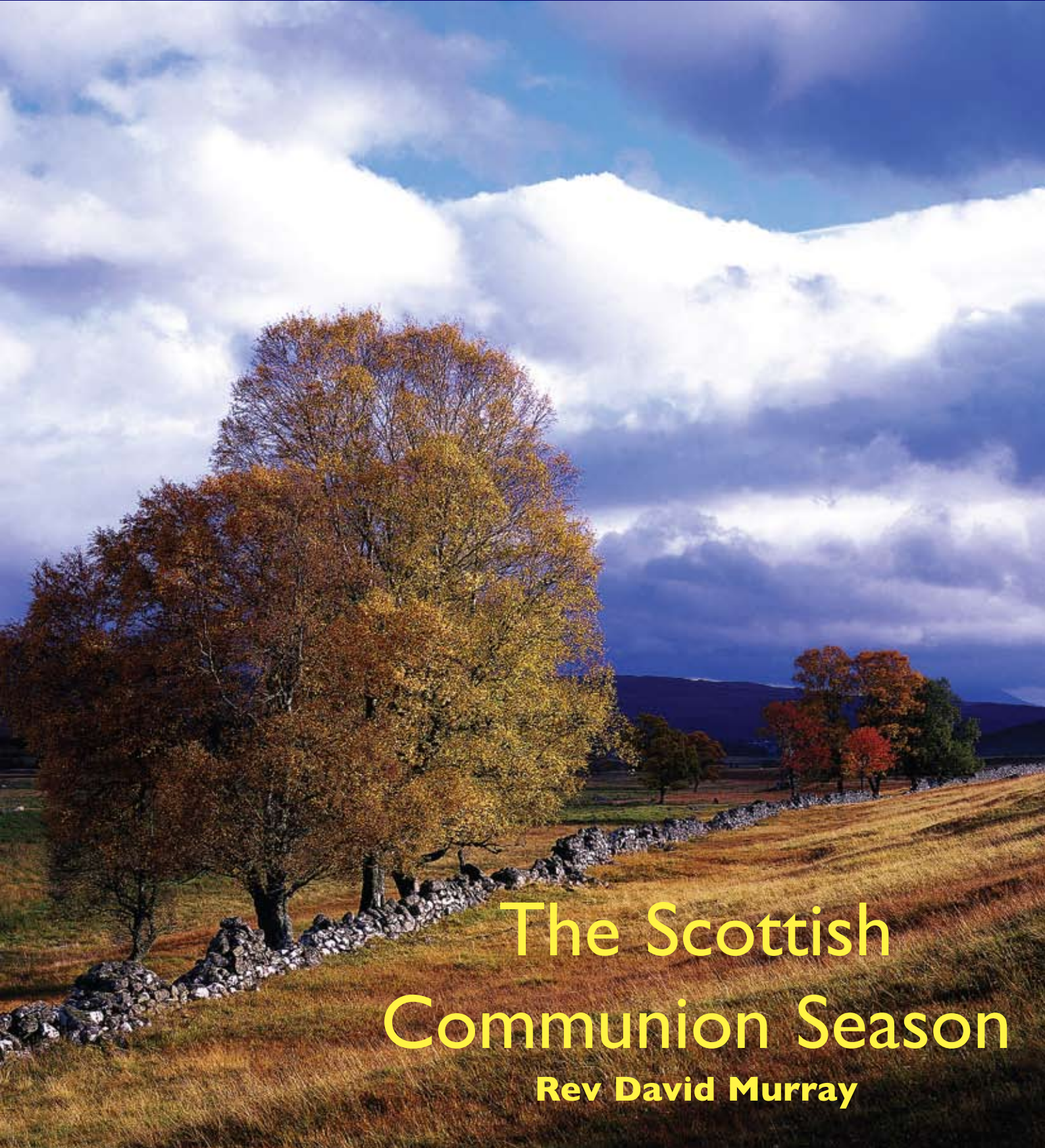
“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.
Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

John 15:12-13

Free Church **Witness**



SEPTEMBER 2010 ISSUE



The Scottish Communion Season

Rev David Murray



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Church Website at www.fccontinuing.org

COMMUNIONS

September:-

- 5 Portree, Washington
- 12 North Uist
- 19 Scalpay, Knightswood
- 26 Inverness, Ardelve

October:-

- 3 Ayr, Snizort,
- 10 Cross, Washington



before there was enough help to get them out. I was really thankful for this warning! It was good to visit the schools again and encouraging to see teachers doing a Bible

lesson. But there are also schools with problems. Two schools were still closed this term because their communities didn't take on their responsibility for supporting the teachers. In one village we had a meeting with the parents and headmen. In the other village we had several talks with teachers. Both schools plan to open next term. At the moment we are busy with a three-day conference for teachers. Four people from the Excellence Christian Academy in Kabwe came to help me with the teaching. It was encouraging to work together. It is also really good and really nice to meet our teachers again and to learn more together about Christian Education!

Farm Ministry

Phil Bailey

On Friday 19th March we held our Farm Open Day. Over 150 people came, mostly farmers, from throughout the district. Encouragingly, two District Agricultural Co-ordinators (DACO's) came along as well, one from Petauke and the other from the next District, Katete. These men are the Heads of the Districts' Agriculture and both were enthusiastic about Farming God's Way (FGW). Bilison was extolling the virtues of manure and compost pits – not the most pleasant subject but a very important part of conservation farming and for overcoming the escalating price of fertilizer. Then we moved onto the maize trial fields where the benefits of FGW were shown and explained.

We also had a FGW demonstration plot at the local Farm Training Centre and at their Open Day we were able to explain the biblical application to FGW.

Building of the new workshop is well on the way. It will comprise two large rooms, one for carpentry and one for



welding/metal work. We aim to rent these out to local craftsmen to provide services to the local community and to the College. In time, we hope that this facility will also provide training in these trades for the students of Covenant College. The tools to equip the workshops are being sent out from the UK by the charity 'Tools with a Mission' (www.twam.co.uk).

Prayer and Thanksgiving

1. Thank God for keeping us all in good health and for giving us the energy and desire to serve Him. Please pray for this to continue, not only among the missionaries but also among the Zambian staff and their families.
2. Please pray that the Lord will send out people to serve in the various ministries: an agricultural missionary, part-time theological lecturers, and a full-time lecturer.
3. Join us in thanksgiving for a good growing season. This harvest forms the main income and provision of food for most of the people around us.
4. Please pray that communities will be committed to support the schools of their children.
5. Pray for more teachers who will see the importance of daily Bible lessons; pray that the teachers' conference will have a lasting influence on the Christian character of education in the community schools.
6. Pray for our graduate, Mwale, who studies at Mukhanyo (South Africa) far away from his family, and for the accreditation process to be completed soon.
7. We covet your prayers for all our graduates and students, and for other pastors we come in contact with, that the Lord will follow with much fruit the ministry of His Word and that the churches may live the truth and show mercy to those in need.



Praying that this update indeed binds us together,
In Christ's service,
Cees Molenaar

Letter from Covenant College, Zambia

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

We are grateful that over the years so many have joined in supporting the mission work! From that perspective, the mission is the centre of the world, uniting many different believers and churches from all over the world with God's people in Zambia. Please receive this newsletter as a means to foster that relationship.

News from the Trust

On March 26-27, the Board of Trustees held its Annual General Meeting here at the mission. From various churches and countries, the brothers arrived to discuss the progress and prospects of the three ministries: College, Farm, and Education. The Board also approved budgets for the next year and checked the accounts, assisted by a professional accountant from Lusaka. The Board encouraged the Management to compose a list of various projects, large and small, to publish the ministries' needs to the churches and enable individuals and congregations to take responsibility for them.

It also considered the feasibility of adding a Health Ministry, which would concentrate on the Christian training of community health-workers. The Trust decided to explore this option. The Trust spent considerable time reviewing the Vision plans that were drafted in the previous months for each ministry. The Trust also met again with representatives from the students' churches; this strengthens the ties between the College and the denominations in our area. The Management team is being assisted by Rev Greg MacDonald to create a new website, covering all the work of Covenant College Zambia Trust.

College

In this College update, I would like to highlight some blessings and challenges we are experiencing. In February, the College commenced its 10th year of training pastors in the Eastern Province of Zambia. Nine new students joined the fourteen who remained after eight graduated last October. Sixteen students are enrolled in the Diploma stream, and seven pursue a Certificate. We are thankful for a stable number of local church leaders who find their way to Covenant College, and for the dedication among students to work hard.

We are thankful for the steady support which enables the College to operate without disruption, in the form of funds, or of materials such as books, or in the form of enabling lecturers to teach at no expense to the College. It was good to visit supporting churches during the College break: Heinrich presented the work again in South Africa, and visited the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) in November. Cees visited the Heritage Reformed Congregations in North America and presented the College to friends in the Netherlands. It is encouraging to see churches commit to stand together in the work of the Lord. We thank Mr Pompe and Mr Van der Merwe for the new uniforms!

We acknowledge pastors Smit, Van der Walt (Reformed Churches of South Africa), and Kamanga (Reformed Baptist Zambia), as well as Mr Thomas (Mukhanyo Theological College)

for jobs well done – teaching courses in 2009. Two graduates are now involved in teaching, Pastor Banda (Certificate classes) and Mr Chellah (English). One graduate, Mr Mwale, is now enrolled in Mukhanyo's B.Th. program with the support of Centurion Reformed Church; we expect him to become a teacher in due time. Several people responded positively to the Adopt-a-Student program; one family took responsibility for four students!

The accreditation-acquiring process through Mukhanyo has progressed slowly but steadily. Now that they have received their independent status, our position can be finalised soon as well.

In terms of College staff, our two Zambian employees perform commendable jobs and we could not run the College without Mr Phiri and Mr Banda. The Zwemstra family are expecting their third child very soon, and are in South Africa to await the birth. The Molenaar family was glad that a teacher volunteer from the Netherlands, Jaap van de Kamp, joined them in November to take responsibility of Joas' and Rhoda's education this year.

Challenges

In the midst of these blessings, what are some of the challenges we face? By far, the greatest challenge remains to offer theological education which is both true to the whole Bible and relevant to all of life, and to train men for a God-glorifying ministry in the local churches. On a smaller scale, we are concentrating on the College's relationship with the local churches, and on maintaining the relationship with our graduates.

We will work more closely together with the churches to create more ownership of the College locally, and to evaluate the College training in light of what happens at ground level. We will also invite all our graduates to a special Graduates' Conference this year – and pay their transport if at all possible since most are not financially supported by their churches. At the same time, we hope to hold our general pastors' conference to aid the many untrained church leaders in our area, and to encourage their enrolment at the College. It is our desire to organize such conferences in more than one location, to cast the net wider.

In order for the College to seriously undertake all this, we need the right resources. Therefore, the College is looking for another full-time lecturer to safeguard the continuation of the ministry. The Trust also authorised us to appoint two part-time Zambian lecturers. We hope to find men who are experienced as pastors, committed to reformed theology, and have a heart for teaching in a rural set-up. The part-time teachers will not be required to live at the mission station. This also emphasises the importance of continued financial support.

Christian Education Ministry (CEM)

Marjanne Hendriksen

During the first term this year we were able to visit most of the schools CEM supports. Once we had to abandon a trip because there was a lot of mud on the road. People from the villages around came to warn us. The day before a 4x4 got stuck over there and the people had to stay in their car the whole night

Love One Another

We live in a world full of hatred and strife. Husbands and wives fall out. Parents and children fall out. Brothers and sisters fall out. Friends fall out. The League of Nations and then the United Nations were set up to end conflict between nations but there are still wars and rumours of wars. But what about the church? Surely there things will be different. Did not Jesus say to His disciples the night before He died: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another' (Jn.13:34-35)? Yet there are quarrels in local congregations and rifts in denominations. Party spirit abounds. Brethren, these things ought not to be so! Why is there so little blessing? Could it not be that Christ looks at His church in all its strife and is grieved and withdraws His Spirit? With our divisions we seem to have grown like the church at Corinth where people said, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ' (1 Cor.1:12).

The story is told of the learned and godly Archbishop Ussher from Ireland passing through Galloway and anxious to meet Samuel Rutherford. Disguising himself as a beggar he came to Rutherford's house and begged accommodation. He was received, given a meal and afterwards catechised by Mrs Rutherford along with the servants. He was asked how many commandments there are. He replied, 'Eleven', which drew the sharp reply from the devout lady, 'What a shame it is for you, a man of grey hairs, in a Christian country, not to know how many commandments there are! There is not a child of six years old in this parish but could answer this question properly'. Next morning, however, Rutherford heard the 'beggar' at his private devotions and realized he was no ordinary beggar. Discovering who he was, he asked him to preach. Mrs Rutherford was rebuked when she heard his text: 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another'.

The New Commandment

This commandment to love one another is a new commandment in the sense that it is newly relevant, always new, and also in the sense that the standard of love has been raised – 'as I have loved you'. It was in essence present in the last six of the Ten Commandments. Even the unconverted scribes knew that the Commandments could be summarised as, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself' (Lk.10:27) Some of the commands of Scripture we emphasise strongly, eg 'Remember the Sabbath day' or 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' but when it comes to the command to love one another, do we not quietly ignore it? We love those who love us, but not our enemies. And Christ asks, 'What reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?' (Mt.5:46).

Jesus gives great priority to love. In ancient times people said, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy'

(Mt.5:43). The Bible never said this but tradition did. However the authoritative response of our Lord, rejecting this wrong tradition, is: 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' (vv44-45). His new commandment is a development from the command to love our neighbour but is particularly addressed to the church.

The New Commandment in Practice

In practical terms this love involves several things:

1. Honour your fellow-Christians. Think the very best of them and be slow to listen to any defaming gossip. 'Let each esteem other better than themselves' (Phil.2:3), and in this way be the opposite of Diotrophes who loved to have the pre-eminence (3Jn.9) and so caused much strife.
2. Listen to one another, give time to each other and care one for another. Time is precious but precious things will be given to those you love.
3. Bear each other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ (Gal.6:2). 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep' (Rom.12:15).
4. 'Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification' (Rom.15:2). The aim must always be to build up our fellow-Christians in the faith. Advise, rebuke, encourage, teach, and persuade.
5. Pray for one another. They say with regard to marriage that those who pray together stay together, and it is also true in churches. Genuine, hearty prayer is an expression of love and leads to further love.
6. Be longsuffering and forgive one another. 'Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (1 Cor.13:4-7). There should be a giving in to one another on all but fundamental principles. Care should be taken not to cause our brother to stumble. We should be sensitive to the consciences of others. We should aim to provoke not to wrath but to love and good works (Heb.10:24). There should be no carrying of grudges in the family of God.

The Standard

The standard that is set by Christ in his new commandment is a very high one. Amongst society in general we are to love our neighbour as ourselves but in the church our standard is the love that Christ has for us. It could not be higher. 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (Jn.15:13).

1. Christ's love is eternal love, having no beginning. Our love for our brothers and sisters will always have a beginning but it should have no end.



‘See how they love one another’. I wonder is that being said about us? Is our General Assembly a place overflowing with love and Christian warmth?

2. Christ’s love is immeasurable. It is infinitely great as is God Himself. Our love will never be infinite and yet how great it should be!

3. Christ’s love is sacrificial. He gave His all for us. He sacrificed Himself for us: ‘loved me, and gave himself for me’ (Gal.2:20). We too should be willing to die for the brethren.

4. Christ’s love is unchanging, the same yesterday, today and forever, and so our love also should be undiminishing. It is our sin that makes it fluctuate.

5. Christ’s love is undeserved. There is nothing in us to earn or draw out His love to us. It is a gracious love for those who are filthy and ugly because of sin. Our love to the brethren should go far beyond what they deserve. 6. Christ’s love is a forgiving love. He loved those who crucified Him and said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do’ (Lk.23:34), so we too must love those who hurt us.

7. Christ’s love is a pure love. Despite the rash of modern blasphemous plays and novels the Word of God makes plain that nothing impure or immoral ever entered His relationship with His people. All talk of ‘spiritual love’ as a cover for lust is abomination to the Lord.

8. Christ’s love is a practical love. He does so much for us, shepherding us, caring for our every need, feeding, leading and healing. He even washed the disciples’ feet, and our love should lead us into similar acts of service.

9. Christ’s love will eventually take us home to be with Himself in heaven and so our love also should be characterised by the hope of being united together in the one family of God together forever.

The Mark

What marks us out as Christians?

1. Is it the fact that we go to church? But many a person goes to church who is a mere hypocrite. Sadly there are churches with no gospel. There are many assemblies where there is ritual or man-pleasing entertainment but no spiritual worship.

2. Is it the clothes we wear or the hairstyle we have? Is there some virtue in dressing in an old fashioned way? The Amish and the Mormons can be recognized by their dress but not the disciples of Christ. There are many wolves in sheep’s clothing.

3. Is it Sabbath observance which distinguishes the Christian? This is certainly a better mark though in the days of Christ the strict sabbatarians were often opposers of Christ. It is possible to respect the Fourth Commandment simply out of tradition.

4. Does a man’s speech not betray on what side he is? Peter was recognized as a Galilean by his accent. Certainly the absence of swearing and blasphemy is rare these days and yet talkative in Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress had plenty of good talk but no heart for God.

Jesus declares that the great distinguishing mark of the Christian is love: ‘By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another’ (Jn.13:35). Tertullian, one of the church fathers, in defending Christians against their enemies pointed to this, ‘See how they love one another’. I wonder is that being said about us? Is our General Assembly a place overflowing with love and Christian warmth? Does the world outside see us as people who strive to accommodate one another and fear to trample upon the sensitive consciences of our brothers? When the outsider comes into a church does he immediately notice the difference between this fellowship of love and every other gathering that he knows? Does our love overflow in generosity and welcome to the outsider? Are we noted in our communities as loving people? If we fall out with other Christians are we marked for our endeavours to make peace? Do we let the sun go down upon our wrath? Do we come to the altar with our gift and, knowing that our brother has something against us, yet proceed to offer our worship without reconciling our brother? Will our offering be accepted (Mt.5:23-24)?

The great mark of the Christian, the mark of grace, according to our Lord Jesus Christ, is love for one another. John says, ‘We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren’ (1Jn.3:14).

Truth Found Guilty In A Scottish Court

Donald John Morrison

Glasgow’s once prized motto powerfully demonstrated the awe and reverence the city held for God and truth: ‘Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching

of God’s word and the praising of His name’. Recently an American evangelist, Shawn Holes, was found guilty in a Court of this very city for speaking the truth on its streets, and fined

The pre-Reformation miracle, morality and mystery plays followed on from liturgical drama and were presented before uneducated people. After the Reformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was the Jesuits in the southern half of Europe who made use of drama in their colleges.

Is it not true that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is more associated with tears than with laughter? The centre of the gospel is a stark cross on which the Lord Jesus died in agony for our sins. These things sober us and fill us with awe.

Are we wiser than our forefathers in the faith? The Reformed churches have always believed in education; teaching people to read the Bible for themselves. They have always believed in preaching. These methods surely must be priceless and approved of God in His word: 'From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus' (2Tim 3:15). There is no substitute for reading and preaching! There never has been. There never will be. God's methods do not change because we live in the twenty-first century.

But what glories and rewards there are for the serious Christian who follows Scriptural priorities and not the 'gospel of entertainment'. Solid Christian character and vital heart-warming Biblical religion will be the result of such conformity! 'God send us ministers who, instead of merely avoiding denial of the Cross, shall be on fire with the Cross, whose whole life shall be one burning sacrifice of gratitude to the blessed Saviour who loved them and gave Himself for them'

(J Gresham Machen).

'He led His people through the spacious country of the Bible, going down before them into its shadowy ravines and climbing its towering heights, shepherding the flock in the green pastures and by the waters of quietness' (Alexander Smellie, describing the covenanting preachers in the 17th century).

Let us earnestly cry to God that He will restore 'the missing jewel' to its rightful and long-neglected place again!

So, where has all the worship gone? We believe it has gone, as A W Tozer correctly predicted, into glib marketing techniques that tend only to water down the biblical Gospel. Such false substitutions may fill pews quickly and give the appearance of ecclesiastical success but, in reality, are sowing weakness into the foundations for generations to come. Perceptively, Dr Robert Godfrey noted at a recent conference of the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals (ACE), 'If we evaluate the pragmatism of the pragmatists on a pragmatic basis, we have to say that by their own standards they have failed. Why don't American medical statistics reflect the healings claimed by the charismatics? Why don't our crime statistics reflect the holy living of evangelicals? Why, after a generation of church-grown methodology and user-friendly worship, is church attendance down significantly?'

We have every reason to fear that whole sections of the modern evangelical and Reformed church have sown 'the wind' and will inevitably reap 'the whirlwind'! (Hos.8:7).

Remittances - July 2010

	2010 Jul	2010 Total	2009 To July
Presbytery of Inverness			
Aberdeen	900	7,379	7,132
Duthil-Dores	1,185	12,646	11,660
Inverness	4,000	18,000	16,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	1,400	11,344	9,956
Total Inverness	7,485	49,369	44,747

Northern Presbytery			
Assynt & Scourie	0	563	2,325
Brora	2,000	13,192	9,153
Kiltearn	1,800	12,600	12,600
Tarbat	700	5,323	6,422
Total Northern	4,500	31,677	30,500

Southern Presbytery			
Arran	618	4,670	4,373
Ayr	200	1,548	613
Dumfries	0	0	0
Edinburgh	0	16,571	15,279
Glasgow - Partick	1,750	18,500	17,000
Glasgow - Shettleston	1,000	11,443	6,000
Glasgow - Knightwood	1,600	15,924	14,309
Rothesay	0	147	73
Total Southern	5,168	68,803	57,647

Outer Hebrides Presbytery			
Cross	1,929	13,311	13,901
Harris - Leverburgh	1,000	8,658	7,774
Harris - Scalpay	1,700	14,100	11,536
Knock & Point	1,100	8,773	6,300
North Uist	1,000	8,278	6,641
Stornoway	4,000	47,303	37,162
Total Outer Hebrides	10,729	100,423	83,315

Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron			
Bracadale	2,000	8,607	7,688
Duirinish (Waternish)	1,000	3,000	2,800
Glenelg & Arnisdale	143	1,343	1,352
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	0	7,646	9,862
Lochalsh & Glenshiel	289	4,297	4,589
Poolewe & Aultbea	680	6,601	6,257
Ullapool	0	400	0
Portree	1,200	8,400	8,400
Snizort	1,200	10,843	8,633
Strath	1,700	2,037	3,074
Total Skye & Lochcarron	8,212	53,175	52,655

Total From Congregations	36,094	303,447	268,865
Other Donations	650	8,641	9,597
Legacy	0	0	0
TOTAL	36,744	312,088	278,463
Including Gift Aid Declarations		49,344	22,121

Where Has All the Worship Gone?

Rev Anthony R. Dallison, Virginia, USA

The late A W Tozer entitled one of his fine booklets, *Worship – The Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church*. Written over thirty years ago, Dr. Tozer rightly diagnosed the trends of his own day as alarming and ominous for the future of the church in North America. He could scarcely have envisioned, however, just how far the church of the late twentieth century would continue to depart from the 'jewel' of true biblical worship as mandated in God's Holy Word. Today, therapeutic techniques, marketing strategies and the beat of the entertainment world are often far more influential in church worship than the Word of God.

For instance, in recent years there has been a sudden and quite widespread introduction of dance, drama, mime and rock music into worship by charismatics and evangelicals. In many evangelical churches it is now quite common to find 'sketches' slotted into a service of worship, and in some churches stages are being erected alongside pulpits. The Gospel is being mixed with entertainment. And this is happening in 'Reformed' Churches to an alarming degree.

A member of one Christian rock band when interviewed by the press said, 'Our songs do have a message, but we don't want to ram it down people's throats. We just hope to give a good night's entertainment'. An evangelical church arranged a rock opera. It was presented in church after evening service on Sunday and there was said to be standing room only.

One minister invited a troop of liturgical dancers to dance at his worship service on Sunday and said afterwards that the congregation had been challenged by this more than by most sermons. Literally the stage is replacing the pulpit in many of our evangelical churches. Some churches which had a reputation for good Gospel preaching and witness are now known better for their 'presentations', humour and music. Many Christians seem to be thrilled by all the changes and innovations and some are even leaving the sounder biblical churches for easier and more 'contemporary' ministries.

Is There a Biblical Warrant for Such Activities?

Can one honestly find a real or concrete warrant in Scripture for dancing in worship or for drama in evangelism? Carefully look up all the references to dance in Scripture and you will find that many of them are associated with either sensuality, drunkenness, murder or idolatry. The exceptions, 2 Samuel 6:14 and Psalm 149:3, are connected with the outward ritual and ceremony of temple worship which passed away with the death of Christ (John 4:23-24). These cannot be used to justify the setting up of Christian theatre, drama or mime in worship. A careful reading of the Gospels and Acts will show that no dramatic arts were used by Christ or the Apostles. There we find preaching, teaching, disputation, and personal witness backed up by much prayer. God appointed THE way for spreading the Evangel. Romans 10 provides direction: 'How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher ... How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,

and bring glad tidings of good things!' (Rom 10:14, 15).

Are they a suitable framework for the Gospel?

When considering these things seriously, is there really any room for much humour or entertainment, and is there likely to be any depth of conviction of sin or unbelief in an atmosphere of light-heartedness? Archbishop Temple spoke well about the true nature and ends of biblical worship when he said, 'To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God'. Conscience, mind, imagination, heart, will – what could more clearly show the essential 'heart-beat' of true worship in the presence of the living God?

The use of the folk arts in worship and evangelism often involves a good deal of laughter and fun and there is an atmosphere of entertainment. But the Gospel deals with very serious issues; those of death and judgment, Heaven and Hell. The Bible speaks of the foolishness of preaching (1 Cor. 1:21) and of the offence of the cross (Gal. 5:11) and one wonders whether these two aspects of the gospel can ever be present when dance or drama is in use. Preaching is offensive and foolish to the natural man, and he tends to despise it, but what is his attitude toward dance, drama and rock? Why, he tends to focus on the talents and appearance of the performers and to applaud them for their performance rather than focusing on any biblical theme which is portrayed. In the Reformed church especially it is of paramount importance that we should not merely verbally affirm that God alone should receive the glory – *Soli Deo Gloria* – but see that this great Reformation and biblical principle is exercised in practice as well.

It is often said that Jesus had a sense of humour; we do not need to deny this, but in reading Scripture we find that he rarely used it and that He was a man of sorrows and grief (Is. 53:3), He wept over the sins and the apostasy of the people (Lk. 19:41-42). This is not for a moment to deny that there is joy and even exuberance in biblical worship, but the means by which this is instilled in the hearts of true worshippers is not by pantomimes or plays, still less by troupes of liturgical dancers and other unwarranted intrusions into biblical worship. We express, indeed, our life together in the Spirit and experience that joy which is the foretaste and earnest of the final victory of the redeemed in heaven, but it is by the biblically appointed means of worship – not man-made intrusions into worship – which produce such a heavenly frame. A W Tozer rightly said again, 'When the Holy Ghost shows us God as He is we admire Him to the point of wonder and delight'.

Are they supported by History?

A newspaper columnist recently described dance as a time-honoured way of worshipping God and said there was no reason why the devil should have all the dancers. But from the Reformation to the present day how many biblical churches or societies have ever used dance or drama as a means of communication? How many have ever used either in worship?

£1,000. It is nothing less than incredible that someone in the UK can be arrested, placed in a police van, spend a night in a police cell, appear in a Scottish Court and there be severely fined within 24 hours for defending the truth! A shop thief or house burglar would have been fined substantially less. In fact 'defending the truth' was found to be a 'most serious crime' in this Glasgow Court on Friday 19 March 2010.

What Happened?

Let me share with you some extraordinary things that happened in the dock and out of the dock that day. Being in Glasgow, I was encouraged to make an appearance in the public gallery in support of this street preacher and the cause of truth. I needed very little persuasion. I appeared at around 1.00pm. On entering this very expensive looking building, I was stopped and searched by one of the security officers. After thoroughly checking my pockets and rucksack, the only item that appeared to arrest his attention was my Bible, which he lifted out. His curiosity was warmly aroused. 'There seems', he said, 'to be many people here today with Bibles. This is most unusual. Is there anything wrong?' Apparently many other concerned Christians had turned up earlier with Bibles as well. He knew nothing of the wrong that was in Court that day or that truth was about to stand trial.

Rather wary of what response he was looking for, I said, 'My friend, the Bible will defend itself very well in any Court of Law. It doesn't need anyone to defend it, neither you nor me. It will effectively defend itself, whatever trial it has to stand. Truth fears no trial, judge or jury'. Then I added, 'I am here to support a Christian brother who was arrested in Glasgow yesterday for preaching Bible truths'. The security officer (who was not from Scotland) was of a kindred Christian spirit as he sympathetically and quietly responded: 'They don't know what truth is in here and neither do the people of your country!' I was startled although not surprised. I had always thought that every 'court of law' defended truth and honesty. I was soon to find out that it didn't, at least not in Scotland.

After entering the gallery, I witnessed some astonishing scenes. I could clearly hear and see a police officer rebuking some Christians who were silently reading their Bibles. 'This is not a public library', he shouted to them, 'this is a Court of Law. Please shut your Bibles immediately and put them away'. The few who read on were sternly threatened with removal from the gallery. Various criminals then appeared briefly in the dock, before being released on bail or their cases deferred for various reports. Their dishonesty and criminality didn't seem to be very important. Sheriff Rita Rae, QC, didn't seem to deem any of their mischievous deeds worthy of a sentence or a fine.

Shawn Holes, of course, was an exception. He was ruthlessly escorted into the dock between two police officers. The charges against him were as follows: Firstly, claiming that homosexuality was a sin, when asked by members of the public what he thought of it the day before on a street in Glasgow; Secondly, when asked for his views on Islam, saying there was only one true Christian God and that the Prophet Mohammed was a 'sinner like the rest of us'. Before God and before men the evangelist was honest and told the truth as it is written in the Bible. Mr Holes had been advised to plead guilty as otherwise he would have to wait for months in Britain awaiting trial. Sheriff Rae made her views clearly known: 'This

is a most serious crime and must be dealt with according to the severity of it!' I was then to hear her give her shameless verdict and ruthless judgment.

Mr Holes was severely reprimanded and warned never to repeat such 'offensive' things again on the streets of Britain. Before long truth was found guilty and the evangelist was fined a staggering £1,000 for telling it! As I left Court certain words were ringing in my ears: 'They don't know what truth is in here and neither do the people of your country!'



Shawn Holes

Other Gross Events

A number of other gross events that have been insulting to the truth have continued to shame the city of Glasgow. At a despicable Art Exhibition, called 'Made in His Image', the Bible was torn up and defaced. At another Exhibition in the Tron Theatre explicit homosexual pornography, which local school children were invited to come and view, was shamelessly displayed. At the same Theatre the Lord Jesus Christ was provocatively portrayed as a transsexual in a deeply offensive play 'Jesus Queen of Heaven'. 'Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall' (Jer.8:12). These outrageous events in Glasgow and Scotland in 2010 would make the people of Sodom and Gomorrah blush and weep.

These are perilous times. The spiritual and moral foundations of our once great nation are being severely undermined by secular humanism and a dizzy form of political correctness. This has disgraced our unique Christian heritage. This is one of the greatest crimes of all. Any nation that ignores God and truth is a nation without order. Great Britain is a nation of disorder because it has resented, ignored, derided, distorted and maliciously turned the claims of truth into a lie! Truth and justice have fallen in church, state and court: 'judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter' (Is.59:14).

The great question has to be asked: 'Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?' (Ps.94:16). Truth always has the answer: 'Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people'. In waiting upon God, through prayer and the power of His Spirit may we as true Christians by grace seek to obey God by standing for and defending the truth, whatever the cost. 'We ought to obey God rather than men'.

Our sincere hope and prayer is that the motto of Biblical truth will be rediscovered in Glasgow and every other city of Britain. What is impossible with men is possible with God. Wise are the words of a man who embraced truth – 'Right is right, even if everyone is against it; and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it'.

*Though the cause of evil prosper, the truth alone is strong
Though her portion be the scaffold, and upon the throne be wrong
Yet the scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.*

'I am Not Ashamed of the Gospel of Christ'

Rev Kenneth Smith

The Apostle Paul loved and valued the Gospel. He could truthfully say, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord'. There was nothing in this life, nothing in this world, nothing in creation, to be compared to the Gospel of Christ. Paul knew this and he preached the Gospel of Christ, not a gospel of man, nor a half gospel, but the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

The result was that he was never ashamed of his faith in Christ. He was not ashamed of it when he was among his own countrymen and their religious leaders who were furiously opposed to the crucified Saviour: 'And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God' (Acts 9:20). He was not ashamed at Athens where the Greek intellectuals and philosophers mocked the teaching of the Gospel concerning the resurrection. He was not ashamed of the Gospel at Rome where he met the wealthy and the powerful of this world. There were many things in these places which could have made him ashamed of the Gospel. There was the prejudice of the Jews, the pride of the Gentiles, and the contempt of the Greeks. Paul held fast his faith in Christ, before them all. We read in the Scriptures of the Lord saying to His people: 'Ye are my witnesses'. Every believer is a witness to the work of the Holy Spirit and to the power of the Gospel in their lives.

Some are Ashamed

We may have many reasons to be ashamed of ourselves, but none with the Gospel. When there is division and spiritual declension in the church, many are apt to be ashamed of the Gospel as it looks weak and foolish. The world regards the Gospel as a childish and feeble thing that has perhaps done its work in the past but must give place to something higher as man has progressed in knowledge. Some regard it as anti-intellectual, almost childish, and now become obsolete. Multitudes look and listen to the media and science for knowledge of what to believe, but not to the Bible. They are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ!

Also in the visible church there is a tendency for ministers to be ashamed of the Gospel. It is, they think, too simple so they would overlay it with explanation, argument and eloquence to make it more respectable and more attractive. Some of these ministers will preach on morality, on love to our neighbour, on current topics, on politics, on charity, on philosophy, but they are ashamed of the Gospel. It is sad when a minister who knows the truth of the Gospel, if in the company of other clergymen, no matter how refined they be, is ashamed to own the simple Gospel.

If any might have been tempted to be ashamed of it, Paul much more. His education, his life, his teachers, his companions were all such as to make him turn aside from a thing so plain. But, rising above all, Paul declares he is not ashamed of the Gospel that so many of his former friends and teachers despised and scorned.

Elisha not Ashamed

Elisha the prophet gave a simple message to Naaman, 'Go wash in the river Jordan seven times'. It was a simple message but what power was in it, for it came from God! Naaman's pride rose up against it. He expected a show of some kind, a ceremony, or a flash of lightning with thunder. He felt that he had been insulted – just wash in the river Jordan? The prophet had kept out of sight. There was no great show, no ceremony. He thought, 'If Jehovah is speaking through this man I didn't even see him. Have I just to take Him at His word?' He felt insulted – just wash in the river Jordan? No showy rites? Nothing to pay? (He had brought a fortune with him.) 'It is an insult to my intelligence, to my high position'. But it was the message God had sent! Elisha was not ashamed of the kind of good news he had for Naaman. Naaman however was ashamed of the gospel until the Holy Spirit humbled him and made him willing and obedient to the good news. After his cleansing he took back to his land some earth from Israel on which to worship and we believe he was a true follower of the Lord.

The power and attraction of the world is so great today that even the visible church keeps silent when she should boldly proclaim the Gospel. Most of us know that when we are in a backslidden frame we tend to lose sight of the glory of Christ, even as Peter, following Christ afar off, became so weak that he was ashamed before a young girl and then he denied Christ openly. But when Christ turned and looked at him, Peter was ashamed of being ashamed.

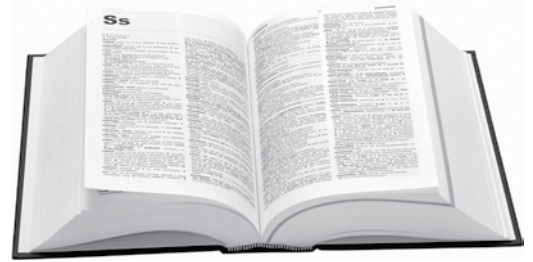
Why Paul was Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Had it been the feeble, childish thing which men said it was, he would have been ashamed of it. But it was not so! It was mighty – mightier than philosophy, or argument, or science. It was power – 'the power of God unto salvation'. The Gospel is not feeble, though it consists of a few common human words. It does not look mighty, but it is so. Let us trust it as such, treat it as such, use it as such, both for ourselves and for others. It is a divine thing. It contains the most potent truths, it leads to the vastest results. Through it God puts forth His power – exhibiting more of His power in it and through it than through any other thing. Creation embodies the power of God, much more the Gospel. It may not seem mighty, but it is so. Here the Holy Spirit tells us it is so, 'It is the power of God!' Let us reverence it as such. Of no mere human truth can it be said, as of this, 'It is the power of God'. Let us then make a wide difference between it and all other truth. Let us feel that we are in possession of the mightiest power on earth, that it has lost none of its power in the lapse of ages. It is as powerful now as ever.

It is the power of God unto salvation

There is nothing else in our world that can save but this. In the hand of the Spirit it reaches to, and reverses the condition of the lost. Nothing else can do this. It saves, heals and brings out of darkness into light. Salvation is its goal, nothing less than this – not merely to reform, nor refine, but to save. It is salvation

Books



Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The introduction by the Rev Douglas Somerset shows the relevance of the book. Matthew Vogan presents interesting biographical notes on the Pope, touching for example on his membership in Hitler Youth and later military service in an anti-aircraft unit. Others chose to resist the evil of the Nazi regime but he did not. His role in covering up sexual abuse by priests is dealt with in some detail. Rev Hugh Cartwright looks at the constitution of the United Kingdom and demonstrates its Protestant character. Roy Middleton touches on many of the heresies of Rome. Alexander Ross considers the claim to papal infallibility. Rev John Macleod highlights references to the Pope in Scripture. The final chapter on 'The attractions of popery' is taken from the writings of Robert L Dabney. This is a useful and relevant book.

William Macleod

Rest in God

A Calamity in Contemporary Christianity

Iain H Murray

Banner of Truth Trust, bklt, 35pp, £2.00

This booklet sets out a well-reasoned argument for the unchanging importance of a Sabbath day set apart from creation. This very experienced author confronts the idea prevalent in some Christian circles that the fourth commandment belonged to the Jewish dispensation and that as a result it can be regarded as being less important than the other commandments.

He gives a detailed exposition of Genesis 2:3 – God sanctifying the seventh day and resting from all His work on that day. He argues against the suggestion that because this speaks only of God resting there is no obligation upon man to keep one day in seven separate from the other six days of the week. He acknowledges the additional teaching given regarding the Sabbath at the time of Moses but that this cannot be taken to mean that the Sabbath only has relevance for the Jewish people. He argues that Mark 2:27 places upon all mankind an obligation to keep the fourth commandment as they must keep all the others. The fact that we cannot by nature keep any of the commandments in no way lessens our responsibility.

In an interesting chapter entitled 'Calvin's correction' he acknowledges that some look to Calvin in support of the argument that the fourth commandment is so tied up with the ceremonial law that it has no authority for Christians. He acknowledges that this was the view of Calvin in his Institutes of the Christian Religion but goes on to quote later works of Calvin. For example in his Commentary on Genesis Calvin

states: 'God dedicated every seventh day to rest that his own example might be a perpetual rule'. These and other quotes support the argument that Calvin's view of the Sabbath did change over time.

Other chapters deal with New Testament references to the Sabbath and the examples in history of the recovery of the fourth commandment during times of revival. He concludes by detailing the many benefits that flow from the careful observance of the Sabbath Day and surely we are in need of such encouragement and teaching in a day when we know the Sabbath is under such serious attack.

I would recommend the reading of this booklet to further appreciate the well-argued case put forward by Iain Murray.

Dr Andrew Naylor

My Beloved

Cathie MacRae

Messrs Andrew & William Murray, bklt, 60pp, £2.00,
(post free from Andrew Murray, 35 Crathes Gardens,
Livingston, EH54 9EN)

Cathie MacRae was born in 1907 and died in 1948. She was diagnosed with TB in 1932 and struggled with the illness for the rest of her life. Apart from some months in 1933-34 she spent the rest of her life, 16 years, in hospital. It is a truly moving and edifying account which she gives of finding the Lord and then the trials and tribulations of her life. Her first memory was her baptism when she was three years old. At eleven her father died. Her older sister Mary was godly from a young age and a good influence upon her in childhood but Mary died aged fourteen. In her late teens Cathie was enticed for a time by worldly pleasures. It was when she went to the sanatorium in Invergordon that she began earnestly to seek the Lord. She had a great struggle to obtain assurance but eventually in 1938 found peace. The account tells of the many blessed experiences as well as the sore trials she endured. In the hospital she met many lovely Christians and saw others converted, but one by one they were taken from her to a better land. A short quotation will give some idea of what this edifying booklet is like:

'My waking portion a few days after Cathie's death [her bosom friend] was Song of Solomon 2:4: "He brought me to the banquetting house and his banner over me was love". I felt that was Cathie's portion and at the same time hoped I could take it for myself as a message that He would soon bring me into His Banqueting House too. I felt very, very sad at Cathie's death, although everyone was so kind to me'.

William Macleod



Books

The Happiness of Heaven

Maurice Roberts

RHB & Evangelical Press, pbk, 129pp, £7.50

Similar in style to other books written by the Rev Maurice Roberts, this one is easy to read, edifying and to be highly commended. The print is large and there are eleven short chapters. Subjects covered range from death and the intermediate state, to the resurrection, heaven and hell. Such questions as: 'What happens to children who die in infancy?' 'Do people in heaven know what is happening on earth?' and 'Will heaven be heaven without our loved ones there?' are examined and answered sensibly and biblically. A couple of short quotations will give the flavour of the book:

'Christians in heaven may find people there whom they did not like on earth. But in heaven all the imperfections which made us unlovable and unlovely here on earth will be removed. In heaven all the redeemed will be ideal companions and thus will be fully compatible each with the other. Everyone will forget the differences of the past'.

'There will be no limit to our joy [in heaven] because God and Christ, who are the chief objects of delight, are unlimited in perfection and glory. To gaze upon their divine persons for a thousand ages will not exhaust our pleasure. We will have as much, and more, to see in God after a thousand ages as we did to start with'.

William Macleod

Dealing with Dawkins

John Blanchard

Evangelical Press, pbk, 95pp, £2.50

We are indebted to Blanchard for the many excellent books which he writes defending the Christian faith. In this small paperback he deals with Dawkins' arguments against the existence of God, especially in the book *The God Delusion* and answers them in a popular yet convincing way. This is an excellent book to give any of your atheistic friends who read and quote Dawkins.

Blanchard presents the case positively as well as negatively. For example, he writes: 'The evidence mounts. Each one of us is composed of 100 trillion living cells, each resembling a sophisticated molecular factory; we have a sense of moral values which neither science nor evolution can explain; we have minds that enable us to make sense of things. We also have a mysterious spiritual dimension. Even the entrenched atheist Bertrand Russell conceded, "The centre of me is always and eternally ... searching for something beyond what the world contains"'.

I like the place where he argues against Dawkins' claim that any civilised person would find the system of morals in the Ten Commandments 'obnoxious'. In contrast Blanchard asks us to imagine a society which kept even the last six of these commandments: 'There would be no broken families, no harsh parenting, no teenage rebellion, no sidelining of grandparents, no murder, no violence, no hatred, no aggression, no unrighteous anger, no degradation of human life, no child abuse, no character assassination, no abortion on demand, no suicide, no adultery, no children conceived outside marriage, no sexual impurity in thought, word or action, no sodomy, no prostitution, no incest, no obscenity, no stealing, no dishonesty, no sharp practice in business dealings, no self-indulgence at the expense of others, no lying, no slander, no rumour-mongering, no covetousness, no envy, no greed, no materialism. Would Dawkins have a problem with this kind of society?'

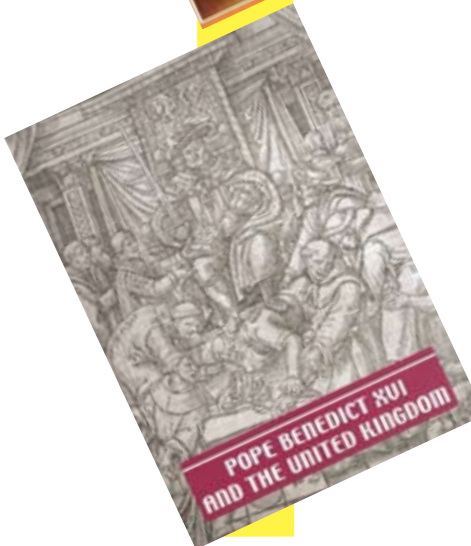
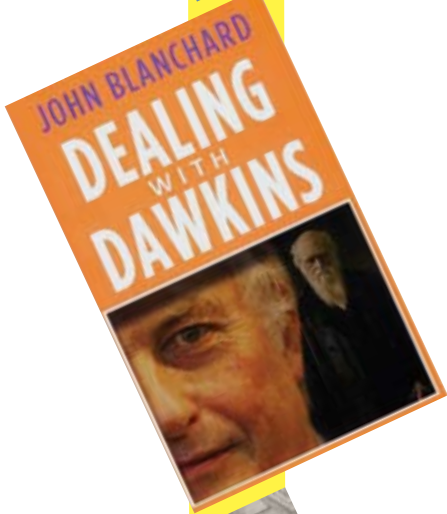
William Macleod

Pope Benedict XVI and the United Kingdom

Douglas Somerset, Matthew Vogan, Hugh Cartwright and others,

Free Presbyterian Publications, pbk, 108pp

The occasion for the writing of this book is the proposed visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom in September 2010. The chapters of the book are written by ministers and elders of the



that we preach, eternal salvation. Let us ask ourselves, 'What has the Gospel done for me? Has the Holy Spirit used it to humble me and bring me to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? Just as the few simple words that God spoke to Naaman humbled him and made him embrace God's way of salvation, a way that he at one time

despised, so Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote: 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth'. We pray that the power of the Gospel of Christ will be seen, known, and felt in our homes, our streets, our towns and our land again.

The Traditional Scottish Communion Season

Rev David Murray



One of the major results of the Scottish Reformation was an intense carefulness in the administration of the Lord's Supper. I will take you through the Scottish Communion Season day by day, from Thursday to Monday. And, to simplify matters, I will give you one word by which to remember the significance of each day.

Thursday: Humiliation

Thursday is the day of humiliation. In parts of the Scottish Highlands, almost everything, including schools and shops, closes down on Communion Thursday. This is made possible by the various denominations in an area having their Communion Seasons at the same time. Farms and crofts lie silent, and fishing boats are tied up, sometimes for the whole five days of a Communion Season.

This time of quiet and rest from regular work gives people time to search their lives and souls with a view to confession of sin. There are two church services on Thursday – morning and evening – which focus on Psalms and Scriptures related to conviction of sin, contrition and repentance. Sermons usually aim to induce a spiritual sensitivity in the hearers, to bring God's people to see their spiritual need, and to start the Communion Season low, in the dust – the necessary place to be before any spiritual blessing comes to us. God brings us low before He raises us up again.

Thursday is also known as the 'Fast Day'. Now of course, some people do fast from food in order to give themselves more time to examine their souls and search out their sins. There is certainly a fairly widespread 'fasting' from exposure to the news media. Being from the more 'pagan' south of Scotland, I made a real blunder at my first Scottish Communion season in the Scottish Highlands when I asked on the Thursday where the nearest shop was so that I could buy a newspaper. Shock and horror spread all around the room – this 'heathen' southerner wanting to read a newspaper on the Communion Thursday! I was soon educated about the need to come apart from the world for one whole day to examine my soul for sin rather than get distracted by the sins of the world. So, the whole of Thursday, in private and in public worship, is focused on humiliation.

Friday: Examination

Friday is the day of examination. In a way, Thursday involves self-examination as well. However, on the Thursday we look for sin to confess, whereas on Friday we look for marks of grace to encourage us. We might say that the Christians are 'killed' on a Thursday, and then raised again on the Friday. 'For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole' (Job 5:18). The painful experience of humiliation is followed, hopefully, by a skilful spiritual physician pouring balm into the soul to encourage the humble soul that despite all the sins that are present in the heart, 'There, look, there's a little mark of grace. And look, you have this mark as well, don't despair'.

As on the Thursday, there are also two services on the Friday. The evening service is a normal worship service at which the minister preaches on one of the marks of grace – love to the brethren, hope, patience in tribulation, prayer, etc. The aim is to encourage God's trembling people to profess faith by sitting at His table, as well as to discourage the unconverted from taking such an unwarranted privilege to themselves.

The Friday morning service is usually one of the high points of the Communion Season. It is called 'The Ceisd' (pronounced *Kaysch*), and is Gaelic for 'The Question'. Why is it called 'The Question'? Well, let me begin by explaining that there are usually three ministers in the pulpit – the local minister and two visiting ministers who have been invited to assist with the numerous services of the season. At the Question meeting, after singing and prayer the senior visiting minister stands up and asks one of the local men for a 'text'. Usually one of the elders then stands up and reads out a verse of Scripture. The text may be from any part of the Bible but is always related to Christian experience. Some examples might be, 'And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins' (Ephesians 2:1), or 'Unto you therefore which believe he is precious' (1 Peter 2:7). The elder then asks a question along these lines: 'Would the brethren explain how they have experienced this verse either in their conversion or in their Christian life?' More specifically, he might say, 'Would the brethren give an account as to how they were brought alive spiritually?' or, 'Would the brethren explain how Christ is

precious to them?' The Question is really targeted at bringing out the marks of true Christian experience.

When the elder sits down, the senior minister, without any prior notice or preparation, 'opens the Question', that is, he gives an explanation of the text in its context. This is a real test for a minister, and a time of much silent prayer! Stories are told of 'mischievous' elders picking texts from obscure passages in order to 'test' the minister! Usually the minister speaks about the text for about twenty minutes to half an hour and then sits down – usually greatly relieved. At that point, the local minister asks one of the older Christian men visiting from other congregations to stand up and 'speak to the Question'. He then speaks for about five minutes, and ideally no more than ten minutes, and tells of how the Lord brought him spiritually alive, or how the Lord was precious to him, etc. Then another person would be asked in the same way. Depending on how long each man spoke, you would normally hear maybe six to ten men speak, one after another.

I have been present at many emotion-charged Friday mornings when godly men wept openly as they described, again without any preparation, of how the Lord had dealt with them and brought them to a knowledge of themselves and of the Saviour. And the aim of it all is to help and encourage those who are present and wondering, 'Am I a Christian or not?' The men are usually incredibly honest. It is not a time to 'show-off'. It is a time to bare the soul and speak of the struggles and the difficulties of Christian experience as well as the blessings and privileges. And many, many Christians can point back to a Friday morning of a Communion Season as a time when they received assurance of faith through listening to these testimonies.

In the old days, in the nineteenth century, these meetings went on for three and four hours, with sometimes up to forty men being called. Our meetings usually last about two to two and a half hours, but the time usually flies by – as it does when you experience the foretaste of heaven that is present in true Christian fellowship. At the end, the junior visiting minister 'closes the Question' by summing up what had been said, and if necessary, gently and diplomatically correcting anything said amiss that might discourage or mislead.

Saturday: Preparation

Saturday is the day of Preparation. Of course, Thursday and Friday are preparatory as well. However, these two days look within, for sin to confess and grace to encourage. Saturday prepares Christians for the Lord's Supper by turning their attention outwards, usually to the person of Christ. The morning service might be on one of the Gospel accounts of Christ graciously dealing with sinners. There is a twofold purpose in this. Firstly, the devotional tone of the sermons seeks to excite the affections of those who are preparing to sit at the Lord's table. Secondly, tender words of encouragement are directed towards those who may be considering sitting at the Lord's table for the first time.

After the Saturday morning service, those intending to sit at the Lord's table are asked to remain behind. The minister of the congregation then comes to the front pew to lead the congregation in prayer. This is often a sweet time for the shepherd and his sheep as they reflect with thankfulness on the Great Shepherd's faithful keeping of them since they last sat together at the Lord's table. Thoughts often turn to dear friends whose place at the table below is now empty.

After this prayer, each member of the congregation comes forward to shake the minister's hand and receive from him a 'token' giving them a warrant to sit at the Lord's table the next day. These small tokens are of metal or perhaps now-a-days laminated card. Usually the name of the congregation is on the token, together with a phrase or verse of Scripture. The distribution of tokens to members of the congregation, and to visiting members of other congregations, seeks to protect the Lord's table from those who have no right to be there. On the Sabbath morning, elders stand beside the Communion table and collect these tokens from the communicants as they come forward to sit down.

The Session

At this point it would be helpful, perhaps, to explain how a person becomes entitled to receive a Communion token. No one can sit at the Lord's table in our Scottish Highland Presbyterian churches without first of all going before the Session and giving a credible profession of faith.

After each preparatory Communion Season service, the minister intimates that the Session is willing to meet with anyone wishing to profess faith in the Saviour for the first time. And so, after each service, the elders gather with the minister to see if anyone will come to profess faith and seek permission to sit at the Lord's table. This is always a time of great expectation and anxious anticipation, as the minister and elders wait to see if all their labours of past months have borne any visible fruit. Sometimes no one comes, and we have to submit to the Lord and patiently labour on. At other times – O! such blessed times – two, three, or even more might come trembling, one after another, to the Session room, to profess faith and seek admission to the Lord's table.

Although some are able to give eloquent testimony of their conversion, that is the exception. Usually, at this emotionally-charged time, people are very nervous and often tearful. It is obviously difficult for people to sit in front of the elders and describe their spiritual journey. A sensitive pastor and his elders will ask appropriate questions to help the person describe their experience of God's grace. Sometimes even that fails to produce many words. However, usually the person is well known to the elders. They know his or her life and have seen the evidence of God's sovereign grace in their life. Although it is sometimes a bit of an ordeal, many can testify to the blessing and freedom they experienced when witnessing to God's grace in this loving and supportive environment. This practice also has a sifting effect by deterring those who have no experience of God's saving grace in their lives. I count it one of the greatest privileges in the world to listen to trembling souls speak publicly for the first time of the Lord's goodness and mercy towards them.

After hearing the person's testimony, the Session briefly reviews what was said while the applicant waits in another room. When the Session is satisfied that the person has a credible profession of faith – that their walk matches their words – he or she is called in and the minister intimates the Session's acceptance. The minister or a senior elder is asked to pray, the person is given a token, and receives the right hand of fellowship from the elders, together with a few whispered words of encouragement.

Word soon spreads that someone has 'come forward' and this heightens the joy of the Communion Sabbath when the new communicant member will sit with God's people for the first

Noah Webster embraces both these aspects in his definition of Education: 'Education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties'.

The first thing then that we need to recognise about education is that it is much larger than we are apt to think. It is full-orbed and it is viewed correctly only when taken as a whole. We like to compartmentalise it by separating Religious Education for the Lord's Day and perhaps Family Worship, while the education that takes place during the rest of the week we view as secular, but this is a mistake.

Now we come to some who are writing from a more explicitly Christian view of Education. We ask the 19th century American Presbyterian R L Dabney, What is Education? He tells us 'Education is the nurture and development of the whole man for this proper end. That end must be conceived rightly in order to understand the process, and even man's earthly end is predominately moral'. This was understood by the Reformers. Their view was opposed to the Humanism of the Renaissance period which made man the measure of all things. Both saw the end of Education as predominantly moral, but whereas the Humanist philosophy of education could be stated as 'man's chief end is to glorify man and enjoy him forever', the Reformers believed that man's chief end in Education was to glorify God and enjoy Him forever and to them the function of education was to train him to do so. This was the philosophy that lay behind Calvin's erection of the College of Geneva in 1559 and Knox's aim to establish a school in every parish of Scotland. These parish schools were not to be secular, but, says Andrew Douglas, 'they were to be in every way Christian Schools... the subjects of the Curriculum were related to the teachings of the Scriptures, the Bible itself being the principal textbook. The whole aim of the educational enterprise was well summed up in the phrase: to train the young 'for the business of life and the purpose of eternity'.

The Puritans had the same view. Leyland Ryken in his book *Worldly Saints: The Puritans as they really were*, writes: 'The essential thrust of Puritan education was the mastery of the tools of culture for Christian ends'. This is nowhere better and more famously stated than by the Puritan Poet John Milton: 'The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining the knowledge of God aright, and out of

that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection'.

Puritan Colleges

This is what we contend for as the concept of Christian Education, and the schools and colleges that came out of the Puritan movement clearly adopted this as their philosophy of education. Take Harvard University as an example, which was the first college founded in Puritan New England. It was established in 1636 and among its rules and precepts as stated in September 1642 was this: 'Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the main end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, John 17:3, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, Let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of Him, Proverbs 2:3'.

In 1701 Yale University was founded 'to plant, and under the Divine blessing, to propagate in this wilderness, the blessed Reformed, Protestant Religion in the purity of its order and worship'. The primary goal, as outlined by the founders, stated: 'Every student shall consider the main end of his study, to wit, to know God in Jesus Christ and answerable to lead a godly, sober life'. In 1746, Princeton University had its beginning as 'The College of New Jersey'. It was founded by the Presbyterian Church, and the University's official motto was 'Under God's Power She Flourishes'. The Rev Jonathan Dickinson was its first President and he summed up Princeton's original philosophy of education quite succinctly, 'Cursed be all learning that is contrary to the cross of Christ'.

Coming into the 20th century Louis Berkhof, J. Gresham Machen, Cornelius Van Til and others began to highlight the need for a recovery of Christian Education and Schools upon this principle – not the principle of a narrow intellectualism or moralism. That would not do. Consistent with their Reformed heritage, they saw the demands of truth as being all encompassing, not piecemeal, and because of this they viewed education, if we were to summarise Van Til, as: 'The training of the whole man to think God's thoughts after Him and to do God's deeds after Him in his calling to dedicate the universe to its maker'.

This then is the concept of Christian Education that we will be arguing for and that we will see is in harmony with Scripture and with our forefathers in the faith, whose steps we claim to follow.

'The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining the knowledge of God aright, and out of that knowledge to love Him, to imitate Him, to be like Him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection' - John Milton



no regard for the dignity of human life and no commitment to social justice. To link economic aid with abortion is a betrayal of all that America stands for and once again shows the extreme and radical pro-abortion policies of this administration'.

Christian Foster Carer Wins Legal Case Against Council

Christian Institute

Colin Hart writes: 'I am delighted to tell you that a Christian foster carer who was struck off because she allowed a Muslim girl to convert to Christianity has won her legal action. She was supported in her case by The Christian Institute and she would like to thank all who assisted her during this difficult time. The lady, who cannot be named for legal reasons, had been banned from fostering by Gateshead Council in November 2008 for failing to prevent the teenager from getting baptised.

Gateshead's decision to de-register the foster carer has now been quashed by the High Court after the council admitted it had acted unlawfully'.

We are glad that the Christian Institute has been successful now in several cases of legal action where it has provided support for persecuted Christians. Let us thank God for this.

Jobs

Christian Institute

The Christian Institute is seeking to employ biblical Christians for the posts of Communications Officer, Multimedia Designer and PA to a Deputy Director. Each post will be based at the Institute's headquarters in Newcastle upon Tyne. The deadline for applications is 17 September 2010. For more information please telephone 0191 281 5664 or email tracey.holding@christian.org.uk.

Christian Education A Crisis of Our Time - Part I

Rev Gavin Beers



As a Church we ought to be deeply thankful that we stand in the heritage of the Reformed Faith frequently called Calvinism. That heritage, what it is and what it should look like in our lives, has been wonderfully described by B B Warfield who once wrote: 'He who believes in God without reserve, and is determined that God shall be God to him in all his thinking, feeling, willing; in the entire compass of his life activities, intellectual, moral, spiritual; throughout all his individual, social, religious relations is, by the force of that strictest of all logic which presides over the outworking of principles into thought and life, by the very necessity of the case, a Calvinist'.

This article is about one vital area of our heritage that we have surrendered. In it we are not the heirs of Calvin nor are we the heirs of Knox or Melville, Luther or Edwards, Dabney or Hodge. Nor do we follow in the footsteps of James Begg, Hugh Martin, J Gresham Machen, Cornelius Van Til nor Professor John Murray. It is of such an order as to be called a crisis of our time, one that must be addressed urgently to halt the decline of the church in the UK. That issue is Christian Education: by which is meant the Christian Education of the children of our families and congregations.

We will not deal with the relative merits of how this should be accomplished, whether by Christian Schools or Homeschooling. The goal is to *establish the principle of Christian Education and press the necessity of it* as it is due to the fact that this principle has not taken hold of us that we find ourselves

in the sad position today that the majority of our children are educated in schools that are the very opposite of Christian.

We do not intend to be reactionary either. We could list the moral problems in schools, the lack of respect, the teaching of evolution, alternative 'sexualities' etc, all the normal things we hear complained about regularly in our churches, but as one author writes, 'Our educational obligations do not come into existence through any reaction to the dismal state of government schools... We must define the basic biblical issues clearly then apply them to our contemporary situation. Reaction is not the basis for renewal'. The issues are really quite basic: Do we give our children a Christian Education or a non-Christian education? What does God require? What do we desire? What will we do to provide it for them?

Christian Education – The Concept

The word 'education' comes from two Latin words: *ex* meaning out of, and *ducere* meaning to lead or bring. Education then means to lead or bring out and the original thought behind it was the process of 'bringing out values that are inherent in human beings'. We tend to think of education today as being a merely intellectual activity and we limit our idea of education to what would be better called 'inducation' ie the process of putting knowledge and facts into the child; but from the beginning education has been thought of as being primarily a moral pursuit.

time. This is also a time of many tears and much love as the new member is embraced and welcomed into the family of God.

Prayer Meeting

But let us return to the Saturday of Preparation. We've noted that there is a morning service. Early Saturday evening there is usually a Prayer Meeting led by one of the elders. As is the common practice in Scotland, the names of several male communicant members are selected and called out to lead the congregation in prayer. The prayers look back with thankfulness for the Communion Season thus far, and seek blessing on the ministers and the coming Sabbath services. Prayer is also made for those who might be under particular attack of the devil and especially for those who may be sitting at the Lord's table for the first time.

After the Prayer Meeting, the minister and elders set out the Communion table and prepare the bread and wine. Then they gather around the table to pray for the flock and beseech Heaven for the Lord's presence on the morrow.

Sabbath: Commemoration

The Sabbath morning service is divided into three parts. First of all, there is the main sermon. As the Saturday sermon expounded Christ's person, this sermon expounds an aspect of Christ's atoning work. Secondly, there is the 'fencing' of the Lord's table. The minister will speak briefly, from a discriminating text, in order to encourage the poor in spirit to take their places at the Lord's table and to dissuade the hypocrites and the ungodly from sitting at the table and bringing judgment on themselves. The term 'fencing' is an old legal term for describing who should be in a court and who should not. The aim is to keep out those who shouldn't be there and encourage those who should. It is often concluded by reading from Galatians 5:16-26. Thirdly, there is the Lord's Supper itself. As the congregation sings Psalm 118:15-26, the table is prepared and the communicants come forward, give their tokens to the elders, and sit down. The minister reads the warrant in 1 Corinthians 11:23-28, gives thanks, and then gives a brief Christ-centred address based on, say, the Song of Solomon or the Psalms, which describe the communion between the Lord and His people. The elements are then distributed by the elders in total silence. What a sacred time this is! After everyone is served, the minister gives one last brief address to encourage the believer to go out and live for Christ, and to impress on those who stayed away from the

table their need and the Lord's provision for them. We then rise from the table singing Psalm 103:1-5.

The Sabbath evening service is characterized by unashamed evangelistic preaching to the unconverted – you must be born again, repent and believe the Gospel, death and judgment, hell, or other such themes. There is usually a great air of excitement and anticipation of God being present to save souls. God's people have been brought close to the Lord through the Communion Season, their spirits are revived, and they are anxious for their loved ones to enjoy what they've enjoyed. Many unconverted people come to these services and, throughout the years, many have been converted on such occasions.

After the evening service, the folk are invited to the manse or the church hall where they are physically fed with many goodies, and then gather to hear the visiting ministers give their testimonies or speak about a spiritual experience they have had. The young people love these evenings. My sons call them, 'The Children's Communion!' In fact the whole Communion Season is suffused with fellowship. After every service, morning and evening, God's people gather in various houses in small and large groups to discuss the sermons and share their Christian experiences.

Monday: Thanksgiving

On Monday, there is sometimes a service in the morning, but certainly one in the evening, when God's people gather to give thanks to God for all His mercies over the Communion Season. The minister will preach on themes of thanksgiving, or the second coming and the appropriate response to God's goodness.

Tuesday: Revival

The Communion Season officially ends on the Monday evening. However, the effects continue on to the Tuesday. And the effect is usually that of reviving the spirits of God's people. They have enjoyed a spiritual feast, and are ready to face the world again with renewed faith and rekindled longing for the everlasting, heavenly communion table and communion season. Also the minister is revived. He has enjoyed the fellowship and ministry of fellow ministers, and, hopefully, he has seen some of his beloved flock profess faith for the first time. Finally, such Communion seasons have, in the past, been associated with widespread outpourings of the Holy Spirit upon communities, leading to the revival of true Christianity. O, when will we see such days again?

'The effects continue on to the Tuesday. And the effect is usually that of reviving the spirits of God's people. They have enjoyed a spiritual feast, and are ready to face the world again with renewed faith and rekindled longing for the everlasting, heavenly communion table and communion season.'





News



Kenny Macaskill

New Scottish 'Abusive Speech' Law

Christian Institute

MSPs have voted 92-29 in favour of a new Scottish law that criminalises 'abusive speech' in public or in private. The new law is seen by all sides as an improvement on what the Scottish Government originally proposed, but some concerns remain about civil liberties. To breach the new law, a person must have spoken or behaved in a threatening or abusive manner, intentionally or recklessly causing (or likely to cause) a reasonable person to suffer fear or alarm. The offence can apply to a one-off incident and reaches into private situations as well as public. A person charged with such an offence will not be found guilty if they can show that their conduct was, in the particular circumstances, reasonable.

On the face of it, such a law holds little fear for Christians who express biblical truth in public or private. The Government Minister, Kenny MacAskill, told Parliament that the law ought not to limit reasonable expression of religious belief. 'We are aware of and have taken on board the concerns of some in the Christian community and we have changed what was proposed', he said. On previous occasions the Scottish Government said a new law was needed to deal with incidents of domestic abuse where Breach of the Peace offences could not be used. However, this law applies much more broadly than domestic situations. It applies to anyone, anywhere in Scotland. Conservative MSP, John Lamont, said he feared the new law 'could inadvertently interfere with civil liberties and free speech'. He said the new offence 'applies far beyond domestic relationships' and it 'can apply to one-off comments by anyone anywhere in Scotland, and carries a penalty of up to five years in prison'.

Ireland Passes Civil Partnership Legislation

Christian Institute

Irish politicians in the Dáil passed a controversial civil partnership bill which will leave registrars open to a fine and prison sentence for refusing to carry out same-sex civil partnerships.

Thousands Protest Over Scottish End-Of-Life Bill

Christian Institute

Over 14,000 people have signed a petition against a Bill which would legalise assisted suicide in Scotland. The End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill, proposed by independent MSP Margo MacDonald, would allow the terminally ill and people who are 'permanently physically incapacitated' to

seek assistance in ending their lives. The petition was organized by campaign group Care Not Killing, an alliance composed of churches, bioethicists, medical groups and disability groups.

Urgent Call to Prayer For Threatened Iraqi Church

Barnabas

Christians around the world are urged to join in a prayer vigil for Iraq, where the church is facing extinction as believers under intense persecution are being forced to flee. Senior Iraqi church leaders gathered in Washington DC on Sunday July 11, where a day of prayer took place for the beleaguered Christian minority in Iraq. The meeting was led by Dr Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of Barnabas Fund, which has been assisting Christians in Iraq since 1999. The Council of Christian Church Leaders in Baghdad is calling for Christians elsewhere to join in the prayers: 'The pastors of the Christian Churches in Iraq call upon the civilized world and the peoples of good will to pray for the entire population of Iraq and for its Christian communities who have witnessed for and suffered in the cause of their faith for so long'.

The call follows the second annual All-Iraqi Christian Leadership Conference on June 26, where 76 Iraqi Christian leaders issued an appeal to the government to help the country's dwindling minority community to survive. The Church is on the brink of extinction in Iraq as persecution forces Christians to flee to neighbouring countries. The Christian population of Iraq has declined rapidly from 1.5 million in 1990 to perhaps as low as 400,000 today with many who remain internally displaced and discriminated against. Over 95 per cent of Iraq's population is Muslim and

Desk



extremists want to 'cleanse' the country of any trace of Christianity – despite the fact that the Christians, as Assyrians, are the indigenous people of the land. Christians are being raped, kidnapped and murdered while church buildings are targeted.



Joni Eareckson Tada

Joni Eareckson Tada has Cancer Surgery

Christian Observer

Joni Eareckson Tada, founder of Joni and Friends International Disability Center in Agoura Hills, California, on 21 June 2010 underwent DV successful surgery for stage two breast cancer, which had affected some of her lymph nodes. Mrs Tada is now undergoing chemotherapy as follow up treatment to the surgery. Dr Geoffrey Drew, Mrs Tada's family doctor, said that the cancer is 'a highly survivable cancer and we anticipate a positive prognosis'. The thoughts and prayers of many go out to Mrs Tada,

her husband Ken Tada, and to their colleagues and countless friends all over the world.

Threat to Christian Converts in Afghanistan

Christian Observer

The Religious Liberty Commission (RLC) of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) issued a statement on 24 June 2010 expressing concern over recent developments in Afghanistan, where there have been calls for the death of converts from Islam to other religions. The anti-Christian reaction followed the airing of a controversial television documentary on 27 May 2010, on 'Afghan Christian Converts' by a local television station in Afghanistan, wherein they revealed the identities of some supposed Afghan Christian converts.

The WEA RLC additionally expressed concern about statements made by Afghanistan officials including the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan H E Hamid Karzai. It is reported that the President has instructed government officials and the Afghan intelligence agency to take immediate and serious action to prevent further conversions from Islam.

The WEA RLC calls on the worldwide church to pray for Afghanistan that there will be respect for the freedom of religion and that the government of Afghanistan will take all necessary action to safeguard the lives and the rights of all Afghans and expatriates working in Afghanistan.

Obama Pushes Abortion

Christian Observer

The Christian Defense Coalition has condemned the administration of U



Rev Pat Mahoney

S President Barack Hussein Obama for offering incentives, including foreign aid monies, to the nation of Kenya if a new constitution is approved that legalizes abortion in Kenya for the first time.

Reformed Presbyterian pastor and Director of the Christian Defense Coalition the Rev Patrick J Mahoney states: 'When then Senator Obama was campaigning for President, the Christian Defense Coalition launched a national campaign called "Barack Obama the Abortion President". In that campaign, we said if elected Mr Obama would be the most pro-abortion President in American history. Sadly, this has turned out to be the case. President Obama lifted the Mexico City Policy which had prevented federal dollars from being used to fund abortions in foreign countries. President Obama's national health care plan allows tax dollars to be used to provide and subsidise abortions. And now, his administration has linked aid and support to Kenya in return for them allowing abortion in their Constitution. This is a gross trampling of human rights by the President and it should now be clear to every person of faith and good will that Mr Obama has