

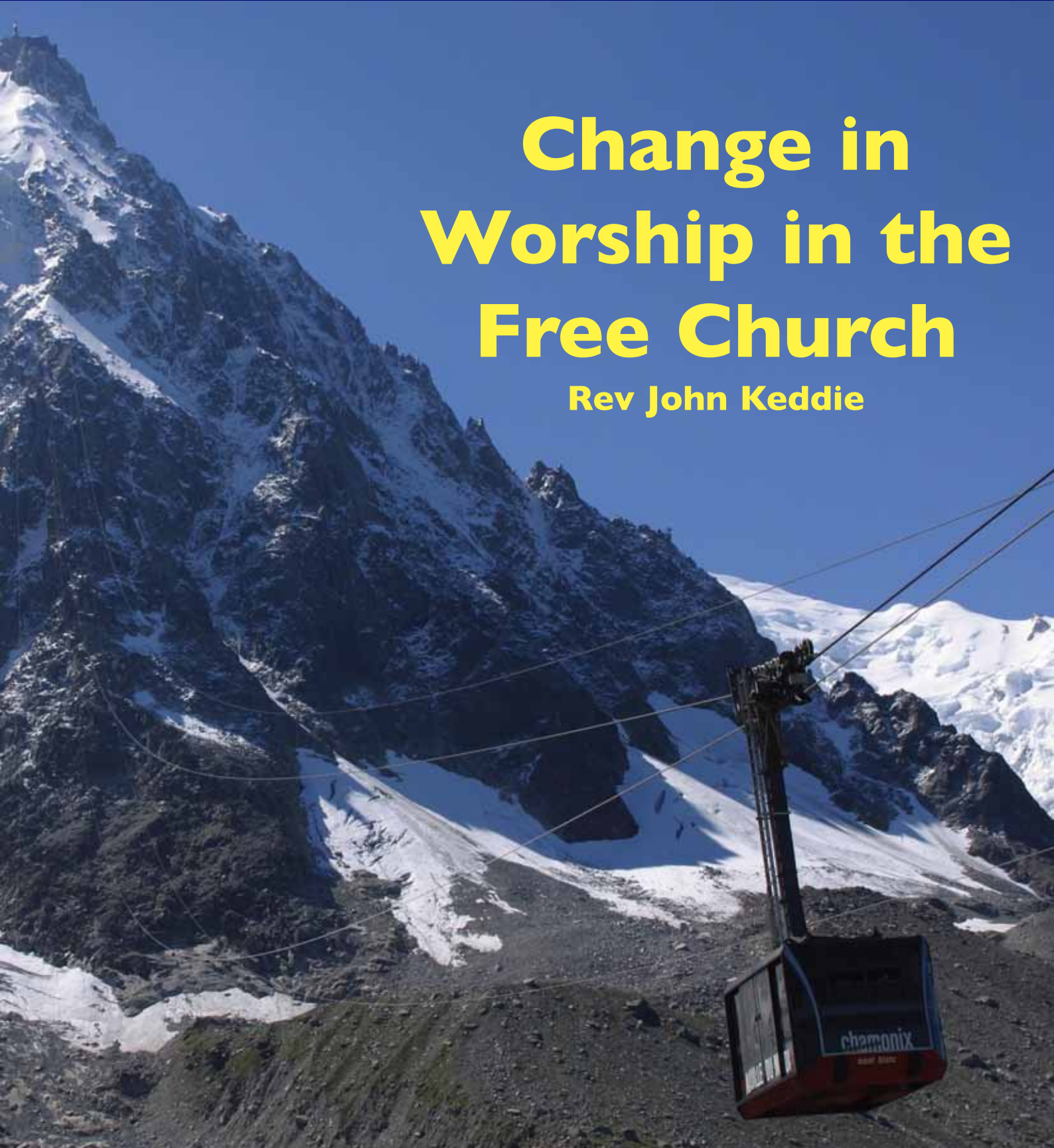
# Free Church **Witness**



**JANUARY 2011 ISSUE**

## **Change in Worship in the Free Church**

**Rev John Keddie**





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# Critical Review



We are now at the beginning of 2011. It is time to look back, to consider our present situation, but also to look ahead. Eleven years have passed since the Division of 2000. Last year, as far as I am aware, there were no celebrations to mark the tenth anniversary since that historic day – 20th January 2000. There seems to be little to celebrate. We do not doubt that we made a God-honouring stand for what was right. At the time a prominent leader from the other side said that within ten years we would fall out with one another and disintegrate. He was wrong. We are still here though we have had our struggles and our differences of opinion. One prominent minister amongst ourselves predicted that within ten years those we left would be joining the Church of Scotland. He too was wrong though the similarity between what is known as the Free Church and the Church of Scotland is increasing daily. The change in ethos since 2000 has been immense.

## Why the Division?

These past months have been our most difficult with a number of members leaving us and some even returning to the larger body. It is important to ask again the reason for the Division. It has to be remembered that for most of the ministers there was no option but to leave – providing they stuck by their beliefs. In January 2000 the decision was taken to suspend us from the ministry. Around 30 ministers would be forbidden to preach. For those of us who belonged to this group and had heard God's call to preach the gospel, the ruling of a church court, which forbade us preaching when we had neither been guilty of immorality nor heresy, was totally unacceptable. Thankfully many of our members sided with us and continue to do so.

## Divisions among ourselves

Recently there have been divisions of opinion among us. Some see the continuing legal action and appeals as an unwise use of the very limited funds which we have at our disposal. Some even see such a use of funds as immoral. Spurgeon, who was no fool, once wrote: 'Don't go to law unless you have nothing to lose; lawyers' houses are built on fools' heads', and again, 'A lean settlement is better than a fat law suit'. Such believe whatever money we have should be spent in building churches and manses.

Others look to the Lord to vindicate us for the stand we have made for what is right. They call for patience and, they say, the deliverance will come. Our fathers in 1904 saw an amazing House of Lords decision in their favour. Since the Free Church in 1900 went to law it must be right. Some are very passionate about it. Such appear to see it as a duty to go to law because God has appointed the civil magistrate as His minister (Rom. 13:4) and part of the duties assigned to the magistrate are the settling of disputes regarding property. Some believe that a decision in our favour would clear us of being schismatic and are very sensitive of being thought of as

such. Some feel that our occupancy of buildings since 2000 leaves us open to a charge of being thieves and squatters if we do not get a court ruling in our favour. Others would deny (for example on the basis of 1 Corinthians 6) that it is right on matters of dispute between Christians and churches to go to law at all. Rather one should suffer the wrong. Others see the ban on going to law in 1 Corinthians 6 as referring only to individual Christians and not churches.

## Time to unite again

However the time has come for us to draw together again, putting our divisions behind us. For better or for worse we have appealed to the Inner Court. Three judges, Lord Osborne, Lord Bonomy and Lord Drummond Young have heard the case and will report in due time. Hopefully it will be the end of this painful legal action. Whether the judges find for us or against us, let us pick up the pieces and move on from here. A vast amount of our energy, time and resources has been occupied in the civil action. It is time to remember that our calling is to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. The Covenanters were thankful to get a quiet corner in a forest or on a mountainside to worship God. The church can and has survived without buildings. If we lose the legal action we will have a huge struggle financially to survive but pulling together, with God's help, we will make it.

## The issues in 2000

It is important for us at this stage to remember the issues behind the Division. I believe that many of our folk, especially the young folk, have forgotten why the Division took place. Private (*in camera*) meetings of Assemblies and Commissions, a reluctance to speak about matters which are before the Courts and a case built on the somewhat abstract 'Continued Right of Protest' has contributed to this. As we all know problems emerged in 1995 when there was an attempt to deal with certain serious allegations of immorality against Professor Donald Macleod. A finding of the Assembly that year sought to end all investigations of Professor Macleod on these matters and forbade the raising of the matter again. Now that would have been fine and proper if he had been tried by a church court and found not guilty, but there was no trial. In 1996 Professor Macleod was found not guilty in a criminal trial on several charges of sexual assault. His defence was based largely on the allegation that several ministers and others had conspired against him by procuring several young women to make false allegations against him. If this had indeed occurred it would have been a terrible wickedness. The Church was duty-bound to discipline these ministers. However the Church was unwilling to do this because few if any believed that these ministers were actually conspirators. There was a failure of church discipline and this was compounded by the beginning of disciplinary action against ministers who protested at this failure of discipline. So here we have the first and most important cause of the Division

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– biblical church discipline was no longer practised, or rather was used to cover alleged evil and to persecute those who protested against this.

### **The Headship of Christ**

A second problem area was with regard to doctrine and specifically the doctrine of the headship of Christ. The view had emerged that providing one had a majority in an Assembly decision that decision was right irrespective of whether one followed the constitution of the Church or not. The majority party oppressed the minority and demanded acquiescence in, and acceptance of, decisions which violated the conscience of the minority. Freedom of conscience in submission to the headship of Christ was denied in practice. We must beware of this amongst ourselves. New majorities are tempted down the same road to trample upon the sensitive consciences of minorities in matters indifferent.

### **Purity of worship**

The third area of dispute was with regard to purity of worship. All ministers and elders had vowed to assert, maintain and defend the purity of worship as presently practised in this church. One minister (and sadly since 2000 many more) was recommending in the public press the use of musical instruments in worship and the singing of uninspired hymns. This was a breach of ordination vows and also a rejection of Reformed worship. Prior to the recent momentous decision on introducing hymns and musical instruments into worship, I was asked if I could rejoin those I had left in 2000. My reply was unequivocal. Yes from one perspective I would love to rejoin them. I hate divisions as much as anyone. The unity of the body of Christ is very important. However, how could I join a Church in which nothing has been done to sort out the problems which were there in 2000 but rather the situation

has been allowed to deteriorate much further? The failure in discipline is still a problem. The belief that a church can bind men's consciences and can change its constitution by a majority vote is still there. As regards worship the great desire among many was to be like other churches and no longer to be bound by purity of worship. Now of course this situation is so much worse. Other matters have also emerged recently. The Protestant character of the body we left is disappearing rapidly. Several ministers are happy to hold joint services with Roman Catholic priests. One prominent minister recently proclaimed on the radio with regard to the Pope's visit to Scotland, 'I would like to welcome him as a fellow Christian'. Our Westminster Confession describes the Pope as 'that antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition'.

### **What direction are we to follow?**

Our brethren in the larger body have shifted radically from their roots. They hope they will attract more people, perhaps even some who are disillusioned in the Church of Scotland. Should we move with the times too? 'God forbid!' What Scotland needs is not some user-friendly church which forsakes its principles to be successful but rather a new reformation. We need to return to the Scriptures and the principles to be found there. We must be unashamed of the Reformation and the Reformed faith. We should appreciate again our Westminster Confession of Faith. We must assert afresh the purity of worship taught in the Scriptures, followed by the Reformers and characteristic of the best days of the Free Church. Instead of trusting in gimmicks or human methodology to get people into our churches we are to look to the mighty hand of God, rejoice in the intercession of Christ, depend upon the convicting and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit and cry to the Triune God to revive His cause in our land and across the whole world.

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## Christian Education: A Crisis of our Time, Part 4

# The Covenant

*Rev Gavin Beers*

### **Christian Education and the Covenant**

So far we have established that a Biblical concept of Christian Education requires the people of God to give their children an explicitly Christian Education in all things. In the last article we linked this to our Christian warfare. The Christian life is an all out war to be fought on every front of human experience. Moving on from viewing Christian Education in relation to this 'Conflict' we wish now to examine it in relation to Covenant Theology.

As Presbyterians we have a distinctive view of children in the Covenant of Grace. We believe the Bible reveals a covenant God who is the God of believers and their children (eg in Gen 17:7, Acts 2:39). By this we do not presume that the children of believers are automatically real Christians nor indeed that all will be, rather we treat them as God tells us to, ie as members

of His covenant people and we hold fast to His promises concerning them.

Any faithful examination of the issue of our children's education then, cannot proceed divorced from the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. Sadly however, this has been the approach for too long. Louis Berkhof lamented this when he treated the subject in the 1930s. Coming from a Dutch background with a long tradition of Christian Education he was still unable to find one piece of existing literature linking Christian Education and the Covenant. He writes in his article 'The Covenant of Grace and Christian Education': 'It is quite evident in most of the churches of our land, even in those who theoretically subscribe to the doctrine of the covenant, that this doctrine has no grasp on the life and conscience of the people in general, and fails utterly to have a determining influence on the education of

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'While the responsibility lies on children to believe, the responsibility lies on parents to train their children in the whole nurture we have described. Our failure to do this is therefore covenant failure on our part'.



their children'.

#### **So what do we Believe?**

- a. We do not hold that our children are automatically heirs of salvation, but that they are *heirs of the covenant promise* of salvation.
- b. We believe the Covenant not only comes with promises but *conditions*, and that to participate in true covenant life, the child must exercise personal faith in Christ the Mediator, and that this faith is a gift of God.
- c. We also believe that God has appointed *means* in the use of which He will give this faith to His elect seed. This of course includes the preaching of the Word, but those means extend far beyond the formal preaching of the Gospel to embrace the whole covenant nurture of the child commanded in Ephesians 6:4 that we 'Bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of Lord'.

'This [nurture] includes', writes Berkhof, 'the whole round of Christian truth with its broad sweep, touching every realm, every sphere and every relation of the Christian life'. This he says 'Is a very comprehensive requirement ... hence the need for Christian Education which is 'one of the means which God is pleased to use for working faith in the heart of the child, for calling an incipient faith to action, and for guiding the first steps of that faltering faith'.

Solomon had this in view in Proverbs 22:6 when he wrote, 'Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it'. We are not justified, indeed we err, if we apply these words to our children today separated from the covenant context in which they come to us. These are the words of Solomon, the son of David, a son of Abraham. He is now teaching his son in turn to train his son in the way of the Lord because God had promised to be the God of his children as he was his God and the God of his fathers.

#### **Education and the Covenant applied to our Children**

It follows from what we have said that the responsibility to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ lies upon every one of our children as individuals, and with it the duty to believe and obey the whole counsel of God. If they do not believe in Christ and walk in His ways then they not only turn their back on a great privilege but they *break covenant with God*. It must be understood that living in this covenant relationship is more than simply living under the Gospel and under the free offer of salvation. 'There is an agreement. The covenant is an established covenant, a covenant

agreed to, agreed to by parents also for their children'. It will be worse on the Day of Judgment for those who have simply heard the Gospel and rejected it than those who have never heard. It will be worse still for our children, covenanted to God in baptism, if they reject this covenant agreement and their covenant nurture to perish in their sins. Woe to them, for it will be better for Sodom and Gomorrah than for them!

#### **Education and the Covenant applied to Parents**

While the responsibility lies on children to believe, the responsibility lies on parents to train their children in the whole nurture we have described. Our failure to do this is therefore covenant failure on our part. In simple terms, to neglect to provide a Christian Education for our children is at variance with the vows we take at the baptism of our children. We might be zealous for their salvation, diligent in family worship and faithful in evangelising them and bringing them to the meetings of the Church, all of which is commendable. Beyond this we might have a desire to see the unconverted in the world won to the Lord Jesus Christ and engage heartily in the work of evangelism. Yet that zeal is surely confused if while we seek the salvation of the world we give our children, whom God calls His children (Ez.16:20-21) to be trained in hostility to His covenant.

In view of this J G Machen writing in 1934 on 'The Necessity of the Christian School' concluded: 'I can see little consistency in a type of Christian activity which preaches the gospel on the street corners and at the end of the earth but neglects the children of the covenant by abandoning them to a cold unbelieving secularism'.

The implications of the Covenant are stark and perhaps painful. Failure to provide our children with an education agreeable with the nurture and admonition of the Lord is a failure to meet the terms of our covenant responsibility. Yet even if we take steps to provide this education there are no guarantees. God's purpose of election will stand, there will be Jacobs and Esaus and so we readily admit that children who are given a Christian Education may grow up to turn their back on it and break the covenant in spite of their privilege. On the other hand, many others may not be given a Christian Education and grow up to keep the way of the Lord without it, indeed many have. God will retain His sovereignty in this area as in all others and ultimately the consequences belong to Him. However, what belongs to us and our children is what He reveals as our duty in His Word, and therefore not to provide this education for our children is a breach of His covenant on our part.

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# The Creation or Evolution Debate: A Vital Issue for Today's Church

Rev A R Dallison, Virginia, USA

Let me begin this series of articles by reminding you of the well-known words of Genesis 1:1, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. This opening verse of the Bible relates time, space and matter in a stunning economy of words, all the more remarkable for the fact that these three most basic entities are not mutually exclusive. (Indeed, not one of them can exist without the other two). Taken quite literally, the statement offers the reader a straightforward explanation for the origin of the universe and all that it contains, making no apology for the fact that the account involves supernatural creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).

We are probably all aware that until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the mainstream Christian Church had generally accepted the biblical account of creation as literal and historical fact, those who questioned the account being very much on the fringes. However, with the rapid development of the sciences and scientific enquiry in the nineteenth century, and particularly with the rise to notoriety of men like the geologist Charles Lyell (1797-1875), whose book *Principles of Geology* asserted the age of the earth as being, not thousands but millions of years in age, and Charles Darwin (1809-1882) who published his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859 and his *Descent of Man* in 1871, the climate quickly began to change. Previously, it had been generally accepted that the fossil record had been laid down rapidly in the sedimentary rock formations as a result of the great universal catastrophic Flood (recorded in Genesis 6-9), that the earth itself was of a relatively young age and that the creation of the universe, plant and animal life (including man) had taken place as recorded literally in Genesis chapter one. But now, in the light of Lyell's teaching based on his assertion of millions of years being required for the fossil record, and following Darwin's famous sea voyage to the Galapagos Islands (1831-1836) on board *HMS Beagle* (where he assumed that the *micro* evolution he observed there, ie changes within certain species of animal/plant life to adapt to their own unique environment, could be transferred to the principle of *macro* evolution, ie changes from one actual species into another and higher form of species), things began rapidly to change. Evolutionary theory became respectable and was embraced almost universally, sadly even in great sections of the professing Christian Church.

2009 was the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. And, somewhat ironically, that year happened also to be the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the great Genevan Reformer, John Calvin (in 1509). John Calvin would have been aghast to see how great sections of the Protestant church have radically abandoned the biblical teaching on creation and adopted either wholesale, or with supposed modifications, the evolutionary hypothesis with all of its unscientific bases and its undermining of the authority, inspiration and perspicuity of the Scriptures of God's Word.

I want to do four things in these articles: (1) To briefly outline the teaching and assumptions of the evolutionary hypothesis, pointing out as I do so its inadequacies, (2) To outline the attempts of Bible-believing Christians to compromise the biblical account of creation with the evolutionary hypothesis, (3) To focus attention on the biblical account of creation in Genesis 1, and (4) finally to summarise the effects of evolution upon certain vital biblical doctrines.

## Teaching and Assumptions of Evolution

We are all aware, I'm sure, that the teaching of evolution has become the major hypothesis for explaining the origin of all animate life, if not of the origin of the universe itself as we know it today. (I refuse to call it the evolutionary theory, because the definition of a 'theory' is that it is an explanation of a phenomenon which has been tested and proved to be a workable explanation, whereas evolution is not a theory at all but merely an unproved (and unprovable!) hypothesis). Its basic teaching is that all forms of life have evolved from a single cell organism, over a period of millions of years, to become animate life as we know it today – plants, fish, birds, animals and finally man himself. This is 'macro' evolution, as opposed to 'micro' evolution, ie a vertical change of one lower species into a much higher species of life, and not a horizontal variation within a certain species itself. (We see the latter evidenced continually in our world today, eg there are over 200 different breeds of domestic dogs, but they are all still dogs!).

We must say that this whole hypothesis is a highly speculative one, without any foundation in actual fact through empirical evidence, and that it is not even a 'science' but rather a philosophy or even a religion in its own right. This is doubtless why an increasing number of modern biologists, paleontologists, geneticists and scientists of various disciplines are being forced to criticise and even deny the validity of evolution's claims as to the real origins of life.

1. The **fossil record** does not vindicate evolution's claims. Darwin recognised that this should be able to provide indubitable confirmation, by way of empirical records showing the transitional forms of one species changing into another and higher species of life. He recognised that the records available back in his day were inadequate but he was confident that further developments and research would bring this empirical evidence to light in years to come. For instance, if monkeys gradually changed into men, there should be abundant evidence left in the fossil record. Whereas, there is a complete absence of any transitional forms whatever in the fossil record. This confirms creation, rather than evolution. Moreover, whole massive rock strata are often without any fossils at all. It is claimed that 150 million years are needed for invertebrates to become vertebrates, but no record has been left throughout this

'assumed' time-frame! Moreover, all the fossil records show clearly defined species – fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds – many of which are recognisable species today.

2. Modern research into **DNA** reveals that while there may be horizontal variations produced, there are never any vertical variations (ie producing a higher form of life or change of species).

3. Supposed **extinct species** are still being discovered today (eg Japanese fishermen off the coast of New Zealand in April 1977 caught a 4,000lb dead creature in their nets identified as a plesiosaur (a sea-dwelling dinosaur), previously only found in fossils and thought to be extinct).

4. It is well known that **human footprints** have been found in the same rock sediments that hold the footprints of extinct dinosaurs, yet evolutionists claim that a vast period of seventy million years separates the age of dinosaurs from the first appearance of mankind.

5. Darwin's hypothesis requires that **mutations** are to be beneficial, whereas modern medical research has shown that they are almost always harmful and even dangerous to life, not beneficial, and that they normally revert back to their original forms.

6. In order to account for the absence of fossil evidence in the rocks, a **punctuated equilibrium** theory has been propounded (ie evolution happened in short spurts, followed by long periods of inactivity, hence the absence of fossils). This cannot be observed or proved and there is no evidence for this process empirically. It is subjective and arbitrary, merely yet another attempt by modern secular man to 'salvage' Darwin's increasingly challenged hypothesis.

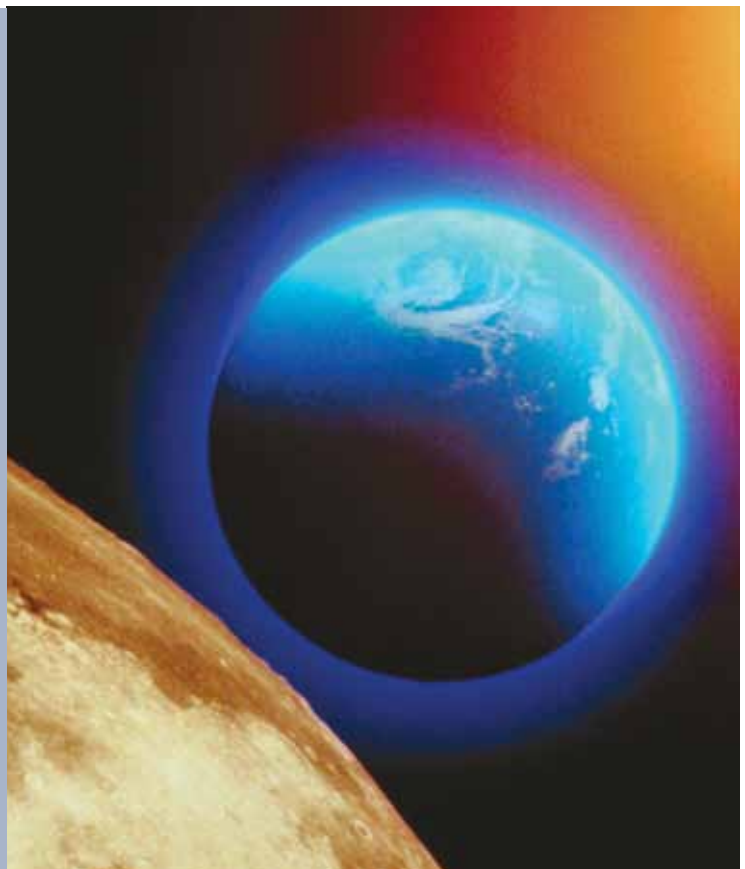
**7. Complexity of the cell structure** is another challenge to Darwin's hypothesis. Modern research has shown the almost unbelievable complexity of the structure of even the simplest cell with one hundred proteins, tiny machines, memory banks, blueprints etc! Yet macro evolution depends on a single cell being formed by accident, some scientists saying this would require a '10 to the power 20' chance for it to happen! Surely this points to a supernatural creation being necessary! The more so when you consider the sheer complexity of but a single organ in the human body, eg the human eye.

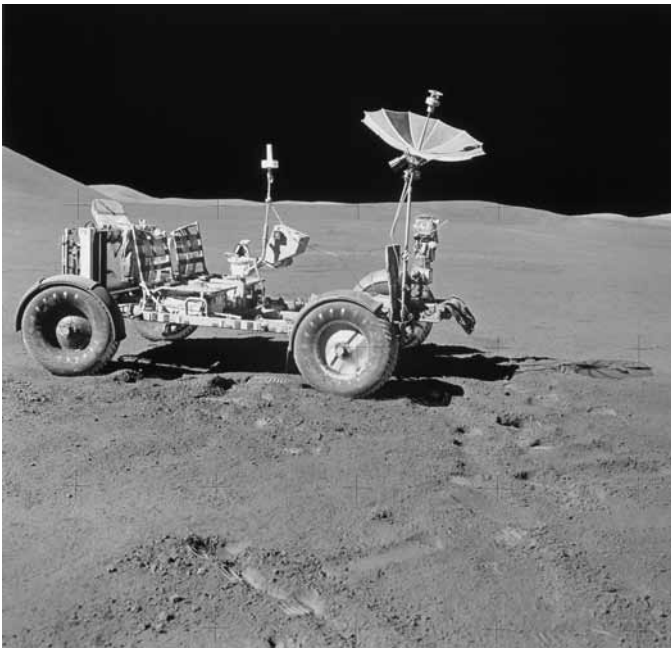
8. Evolution contradicts the **Second Law of thermodynamics** (that everything is gradually running down).

9. Various **physical phenomena** indicate that the earth is comparatively young, and not the millions of years old required by the evolutionary hypothesis. For instance, the salt levels in the oceans of the world would be very much higher than they are now; the earth's magnetic field is known to be decreasing slowly so that on this basis the estimated age of the earth is only about 10,000 years at most; 14 million tons of space dust are deposited on the earth's land masses and oceans annually, which would have left a deposit 220ft thick if the earth were many millions of years old; and earth's gravitation is slowing down, which would currently be impossible if the world were of an immense age; the moon is also slowly receding from the earth, but it would be much further away if the earth were millions of years old! It is well known that when the first American astronauts landed on the moon's surface, the legs of the landing craft had been fitted with special pods to prevent it from being completely swallowed up in the deep layer of space dust which scientists

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supposed covered the surface of the moon because of its immense age, whereas to the astronauts' surprise the dust was barely half an inch in depth, once more evidencing the young age of the universe.

10. The supposed 'missing links' in **human fossil remains** have proved to be notoriously unreliable. There have been outright 'hoaxes' (such as the famous 'Piltdown Man'), and other discoveries of supposed ancient human remains have often comprised so few fragments that it has been pure 'guesswork' to imagine what the original animal looked like!

11. The much-vaunted **carbon dating methods** cannot be relied upon, tests having showed that their accuracy is limited at most to a few thousand years, and even the dating methods based on the decay of uranium are based on certain questionable assumptions (eg has the rate of uranium decay remained constant?).

12. Finally, we observe that the supposed long age of the earth's existence is based on the **geologic column**, which was supposedly formed over millions of years and which has the most primitive forms of life, therefore, at its base. But we note that the geologic column does not even exist anywhere in the world! It is a pure assumption: that is, the column has been organised according to the preconceived notions of natural evolution, with the 'oldest' rock formations being those which have the most primitive life forms as fossils and the youngest rocks the most advanced ones! (If ever there were a case of circular reasoning, it's surely just here! The rocks are dated by the fossils, and fossils dated by the rocks!) So, if there are contradictions in the rock formations, eg older rock sediments overlaying younger ones, this is simply explained away as an aberration. Or, if fossils are found in rock layers where they should not be, this is explained away as 'stratigraphic leaks'!

### Summary

Macro evolution is indeed a 'religious' belief that is not only *not* based on empirical evidence, but it is contrary to the overwhelming evidence which bears testimony against it, some of which we have just cited. Whereas, the evidence points much more directly and convincingly to creation by an Intelligent Designer, with the explanation for a young age of the earth, the fossil record, etc, arising from

creation followed by catastrophism (ie the universal Flood in the days of Noah).

So, we need to take just a moment to reflect on why evolution is destructive of the biblical faith:

1. It is openly antagonistic towards biblical revelation, desiring to deny and undermine biblical authority. It claims to put the supposed findings of 'science' above Scripture, thus promoting atheism, secularism and theological liberalism, leading inevitably to the rise of such figures as Karl Marx and Julian Huxley in the secular realm and the promotion of modernism in the ecclesiastical realm.

2. There is no place for a personal Creator God nor any need for Him. Hence, for instance, the rise of the 'Big Bang' theory for the origin of the universe, where pure chance (not God) rules.

3. It denies the Person and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, who affirmed the doctrine of creation and who quoted or alluded to the Book of Genesis some twenty-five times in the course of His ministry.

4. Scripture affirms the reality of the first Adam and Jesus Christ as the last Adam. The denial of Adam's creation by divine fiat as the federal head of the human race undercuts the whole basis and plan of man's redemption through Christ, the last Adam.

5. Death is no longer the result of man's sin as a divine judgment upon him, but merely a natural phenomenon. (We need no reminder that these views resulted in the rise of Nazism and Communism and even in our own culture, the increasing loss of any sense of the sanctity of human life and the seriousness of man's sinful condition before God.)

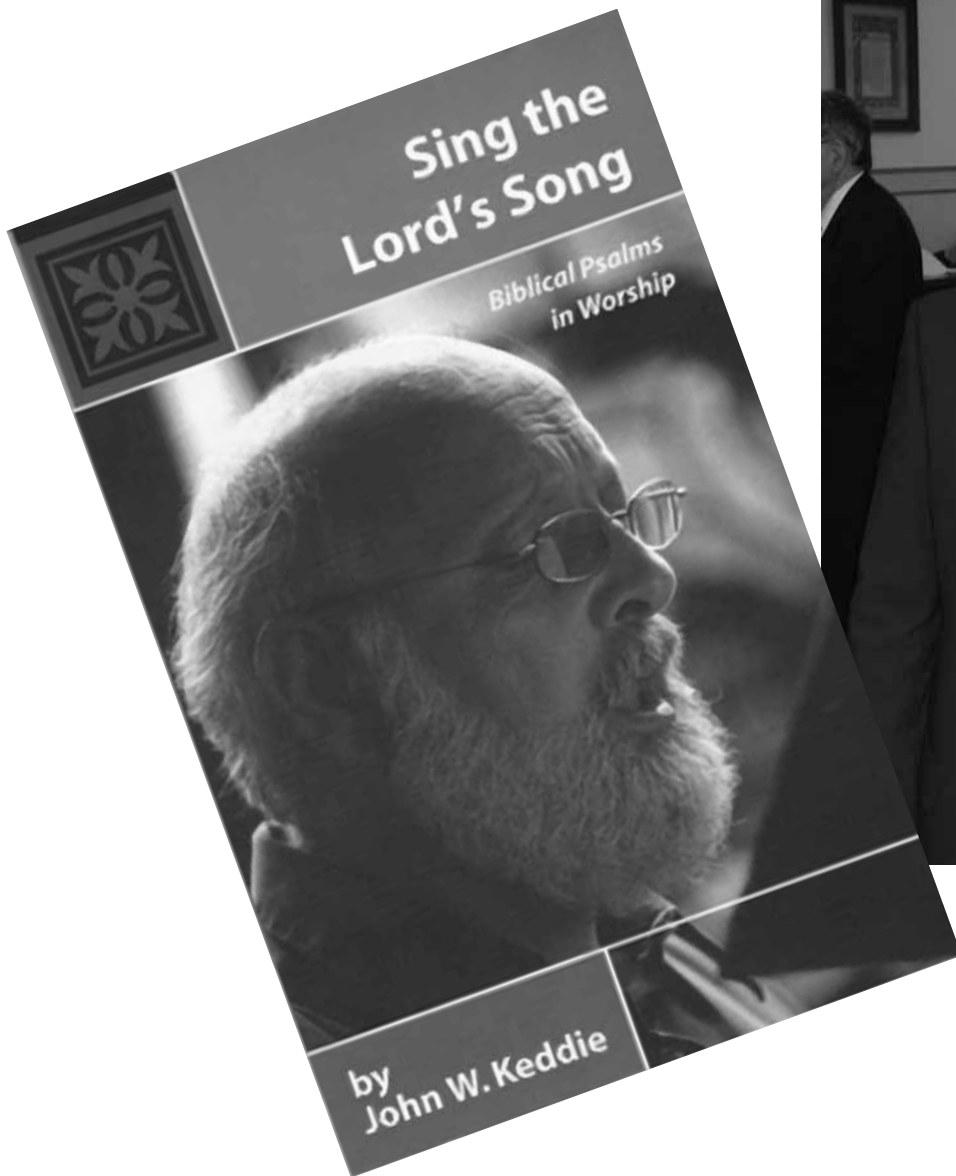
So, there can be no compromise between evolution and creation. Evolution, in its essence, implies the destruction of evangelical Christianity. There cannot be, and ought not to be, any compromise with it. But we should be thankful, nevertheless, that we are living in days when more and more honest and enquiring scientists are questioning the validity of Darwin's hypothesis because of many newly discovered factors and who are therefore no longer in agreement with Thomas Huxley's arrogant assertion that 'evolution is no longer theory but fact and cannot be questioned any more than that the earth goes around the sun'.

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## Sing the Lord's Song

**Rev John W. Keddie**



**T**he decision of the Free Church to allow the use of uninspired materials of praise and instrumental accompaniment has marked a radical departure from the principles and practice of the Free Church on these matters firmly established after 1900 and included in the ordination vows taken by office-bearers of the Church. The Free Church (Continuing) continues to assert, maintain and defend what it regards as the Biblical and Reformed principle of the exclusive use of inspired materials of praise in public worship, unaccompanied by instrumental music.

Copies of Rev John Keddie's excellent summary of the principles as it applies to the materials for praise, *Sing the Lord's Song* (Crown and Covenant Publications, 2003), are still available and may be obtained from the Clerk of the Publications Committee, Rev David Blunt, Free Church Manse, Knockintorran, North Uist, HS6 5ED. These will be obtainable at the special price of £1.50, post-free. This book not only informs about the principles involved in sung praise, but also is an ideal book to pass on to others.



# News

## Worship Statement from the Mound

The Free Church of Scotland, at a special Plenary Assembly which took place on 18th and 19th November, decided to give liberty to its congregations to sing hymns and use instruments if individual kirk sessions so choose. The special Assembly, which consisted of all its ministers with an equal number of elders, met in Edinburgh and debated over whether to overturn the 100 year old prohibition which has identified the Free Church as a psalm-singing church.

The debate over its form of worship has lasted for the last five years since the moderator at that time, Rev Donald Smith questioned the prohibition of musical instruments in its services.

The main motion which came from the church's Board of Trustees sought to retain the 'status quo' which is the 'avoidance of uninspired materials of praise and musical instruments' but give more flexibility in understanding as to what is meant by that. But this motion was opposed by Rev Alex Macdonald who proposed that the Free Church give liberty to individual congregations to sing scriptural hymns as well as psalms if their elders so chose.

The debate which lasted Thursday evening and most of Friday, was harmonious throughout. Rev Macdonald's motion carried by a majority of 98 to 84.

I must say that I was very surprised that the motion of the Board of Trustees did not carry, especially in the light of the fact that 70% of the local kirk sessions desired the status quo. It was also surprising that the 'Barrier Act' was not implemented. This was, as our Blue Book says, 'devised for preventing any innovation and for securing due deliberation and harmony in the enactment of new laws and in the alteration of old ones'. When a



*Rev Iain D Campbell (Point), despite personally holding to a conservative viewpoint, disappointed many by supporting the motion for innovation in public worship.*

major change is desired the General Assembly 'is not permitted to pass the proposal at once into a law that shall have permanent effect'. It is required to pass the overture down to presbyteries and can only pass the Act if a majority of presbyteries report back to the next Assembly approving *simpliciter* of the alteration. Those in the majority at this Assembly were in no mood for delay. It was stated that the action was permissive, meaning that no minister or kirk session would be forced to change the form of worship. Similarly the legislation for the ordination of women in the Church of Scotland was at first permissive. Is anything allowable providing it does not affect our congregation at a local level? Surely the essence of Presbyterianism is that the body is one and what is done in one congregation is done by the whole?

Most shocking of all is the question as to the integrity of these ministers and elders. They had all vowed before being ordained 'I do own the purity of worship presently authorized and practised in the Free Church of Scotland ... which doctrine, worship, discipline ... I am persuaded are founded on the Word of God, and agreeable thereto ... I shall firmly and constantly adhere to the same, and to the utmost of my power, in my station, assert, maintain and defend the said doctrine, worship, discipline...'. Broken vows!

## Rev Calum Iain Macleod

These are difficult days. We were saddened to hear that the Rev Calum Iain Macleod has resigned from the Free Church (Continuing) ministry with the intention of seeking admission into the body from which we separated in January 2000. Mr Macleod is an excellent preacher whose ministry we will miss. Several of his brethren reasoned with him at length but his



*Rev Calum Iain Macleod*

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# Desk

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L to R: Revs David Silversides, Gavin Beers & John Morrison

mind was firmly made up. Two of the elders and a number of the Kiltarn congregation are similarly minded. Mr Macleod himself appears to have thought that the congregation was more or less united in the move, but it seems that a sizeable minority are committed to staying in the Free Church (Continuing). The sad effect of this is that a healthy little congregation is now divided so that neither section of the congregation is likely to be viable on its own and so able to support a minister. Rev Robert Josey has been appointed interim-moderator. Services are held in the Community Hall, Drummond Road, opposite the Kiltarn Primary School, Sabbath 12 noon and 6.30pm and the prayer meeting on Thursdays at 7.30pm.

## Conference on the Scottish Reformation

Rev John J Murray

To mark the 450<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Scottish Reformation the Southern Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) held a day conference in Knightswood Free Church (Continuing) on Saturday 23 October. The chairman was the Rev Gavin Beers, Ayr. Due to a clash of dates attendance was disappointing to start with but numbers increased during the day.

Rev John Morrison, lecturer in Systematic Theology at our Seminary,

spoke on 'The Scottish Reformation: A Work of God'. This was a *tour de force*, delivered without a note. He surveyed the changes that took place from the NT era to the times of the dominance of the Papacy by the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This was followed by an outline of the course of the Reformation. In the final section Mr Morrison demonstrated how it was all a work of God and how the teaching rediscovered at that time harmonized with the truth of Scripture. The challenge facing us today

is ignorance and apathy.

Rev David Silversides of Loughbrickland Reformed Presbyterian Church, Northern Ireland dealt with the relevance of the Reformation for today. There was a cry today to make the Gospel relevant but the relevance of the Gospel comes with the consciousness of guilt. Human pride has to be laid low and Christ exalted as the only Saviour and Lord. The whole of life must be brought under subjection to Christ and His Word. Mr Silversides worked this out in the realms of worship, church government and the state. He concluded with some evidences of the present apostasy and the crying need for us to 'display our banners', seek repentance and the revitalising of 'the things that remain'.

Both addresses can be heard on the Knightswood FCC website at [www.knightswoodchurch.org](http://www.knightswoodchurch.org).



*Donald & Betty Mackay, Partick*

### **Partick Centenary Thanksgiving**

*Rev John J Murray*

On Friday 22nd October 2010 the Partick congregation of the Free Church (Continuing) met for a Thanksgiving Service to mark the centenary of the opening of the present building. The meeting was chaired by the Rev J J Murray, who had two months earlier been appointed Interim-Moderator. He gave a short history of the congregation from its origins in the Disruption of 1843, through the 54-year ministry of the Rev Henry Anderson, the crisis of 1900 and the need for a new building. The present church in Crow Road had been opened for worship on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1910 by the Rev Principal J D McCulloch, with the preacher at both services that day being the Rev Dr Alexander Stewart of Edinburgh. The total cost for the site and building was £3,000.

Mr Murray then brought written greetings, with some recounted memories, from ministers who had been associated with the Partick congregation in the past but were unable to be present for the occasion – the Rev Hugh Ferrier, minister from 1963 to 1975; the Rev Allan Maciver, an elder during his student days in Glasgow; the Rev William Macleod, minister from 1976 to 1993 (presently on a visit to Israel) and Rev

Iain Smith, now in Tasmania, minister from 1994 to 2003. The preacher for the special occasion was the Rev Harry Woods, Beaulieu, a former member of the congregation. He gave a challenging exposition of Psalm 87 in which he spoke of the foundation, the favoured state and the filling of the church, together with God's final assessment of it.

After the service the congregation retired to the hall where tea was served by the ladies. The only former minister of the congregation able to be present, the Rev Murdo A N MacLeod, spoke of his time in the congregation, and the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rev David Fraser, recalled memories of past ministers. The Session Clerk, Mr Norman Smith, spoke briefly before making a presentation of a painting of Ballantrushal (on the west side of Lewis) to Mr & Mrs Donald Mackay. This was to mark their golden wedding anniversary and in recognition of their years of devoted service to Partick. Donald had spent the years of the Second World War in Ballantrushal. The presentation had come as a complete surprise but Mr Mackay, who was scheduled to speak anyway, held his audience spellbound as in his own inimitable manner he reminisced about people and incidents in his years of association with Partick. He was baptized by Rev Principal P W Miller (minister 1923-36) and has been the precentor in the congregation for 48 years, as well as in the eldership since 1969. A pleasant occasion was brought to a close with prayer by the Rev M A N MacLeod.

(The audio version of the Thanksgiving Service is on the Partick website and it is hoped to have DVDs of the service and the reception available shortly. Information will be given on the website.)

### **Arbroath Youth Conference**

*Neil Smith*

Between 15th and 18th October the biannual conference met in the superb Windmill Christian Centre. This time the Rev Geoff Thomas and his wife joined us. Mr Thomas addressed us from Romans chapter 12. Firstly, he spoke on how important our bodies are in serving God. Taking verse 1, he



*Rev Geoffrey Thomas, Aberystwyth*

asserted that for Christians serving in this way it is no easy task but since it is 'by the mercies of God' it is one which is possible by looking to God who sent His Son to die for us. In the second talk, we looked at the change to the body in verse 2, not conforming to the world, indeed transforming. What a difficult thing that is to accomplish, yet by the formula U+DH+Z=T (understanding + divine help + zeal = transformation) we were shown how this transformation is wrought. In the third talk, we were reminded of the third verse's command not to be proud but also not to be too inhibited by humility, because we are then not making use of the talents we receive. There were plenty of opportunities to meet and get to know acquaintances and new people. There were over 60 young folk attending. The sermons on the Sunday considered the members of the body of Christ in their individuality and their collectiveness and some of the gifts that each receive.

We are grateful to Mr Thomas for coming and giving us the talks, to Nathan Roberts for the organisation and to Mrs MacQueer, Mrs Ratti and Mrs Little for preparing the food, and we are thankful to God for His blessing. One important addition to the weekend is the amazingly good baking which anonymous people provided, so they must be thanked too!

#### **Halal Meat for MPs**

*Christian Institute*

**I**slamic halal meat has been served to politicians in the House of Commons' restaurants without their knowledge, prompting MPs to call for tougher laws on food labelling. Halal meat is prepared in accordance with Islamic law by cutting an animal's throat while a Muslim butcher recites a religious verse. Officials have admitted that the Commons catering service had 'unknowingly received' halal poultry from its supplier, and that this had been served to unwitting customers.

*It is shocking how Islam is taking over everywhere and imposing its beliefs on British society.*



*Chief Fire Officer Nigel Williams*

#### **Fire Chief bans Christian prayers**

*Christian Institute*

**A** decision by a Norfolk fire chief to ditch Christian prayers during his brigade's annual Remembrance Day service has been met with astonishment. Staff at Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service used to hear prayers said by a local chaplain before and after the traditional two-minute silence at 11am. But new chief fire officer Nigel Williams replaced prayers with poetry readings after he was told that some staff were

"uncomfortable" with the religious aspects of the service. The move was supported by the National Secular Society (NSS) which is currently suing Bideford Town Council in a bid to ban the tradition of saying prayers at the start of meetings. Around 40 staff at the Norfolk fire brigade's headquarters in Hethersett near Norwich gathered to hear a senior fire officer read war poet Laurence Binyon's famous poem *For the Fallen* before the silence.

Neil Harvey, a committee member of Norfolk Retained Firefighters' Union, said: 'I'm astounded. The people we're remembering here don't want to be anonymous and don't want their faith to be anonymous. That seems to be the way the world is going – making everything vanilla in order to avoid offending anybody'.

*The secularists are a tiny minority, so why should our Christian society be giving in to them?*

#### **U S State Dept. Report on Freedom**

*Christian Institute*

**C**hristians in the UK feel they are getting a rough ride, the US Department of State has said in a report on international religious freedom. For non-Christian believers there was no change in respect for religious freedom in the UK but for Christians it may be a different story, the State Department suggested. The report highlighted many cases involving religious freedom in the UK, including Dale McAlpine, a Christian street preacher arrested by police in Cumbria earlier this year for saying homosexual conduct is a sin. And, under the heading: 'Restrictions on Religious Freedom', the report highlighted the case of a foster carer with 10 years' experience who was struck off when a Muslim girl in her care converted to Christianity. She later won her legal battle. The US report is issued annually from the State Department, which is responsible for carrying out US foreign policy. This year's International Religious Freedom Report looked at nearly 200 countries and territories, and said that in the UK, laws and policies 'contributed to the generally free practice of religion'.

*It is interesting to note how even the secular Government in the United States can see a growing problem in Britain.*



© Paul Lewis

*Dale McAlpine, the Workington street preacher arrested by police for saying homosexuality is a sin.*



# Books

## **Sampler from A Way to Pray**

Matthew Henry

Edited by Palmer Robertson

Banner of Truth Trust

pbk, Pocket Puritan, 80pp, £3.25

This small book is packed with inspiration which is essential to a proper and healthy spiritual relationship with God. It is presented in up-to-date language without compromising the real purpose of the message. Prayer, real prayer, is the sign of spiritual life. This little book, which is pocket-sized for easy access, can be read at any time.

Matthew Henry was working on his commentary of the whole Bible, having completed as far as the Acts of the Apostles, when he was led to start on *A Method of Prayer with Scripture Expressions Proper to be used under each Head*. The year 2010 marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its publication. He never actually completed the commentary (this was undertaken by his brethren). He died only two years after he left this part of his work to begin *A Method of Prayer*. This very fact brings his work on prayer into a very important place in the providence of God.

This little booklet contains much biblical teaching concerning prayer and how to conduct ourselves in prayer. The booklet may be small but it contains a depth of understanding of the subject that is quite amazing – the way we should pray, why we should pray and when we should pray. Because we are recipients of divine grace we should respond to God with thanksgiving and gratitude, praise and adoration.

This booklet is a sampler. This little gem, with its high pedigree of spiritual insight and wisdom, comes very highly recommended and we wait with anticipation for the forthcoming full

publication entitled *A Method for Prayer and the Directions for Daily Communion with God*, to be published shortly by the Banner of Truth.

Glenn Fraser

## **To be a Soulwinner**

Bob Harrison

PDF on DVD, obtainable from the author, 2 Ecclaw Cottages,

Cockburnspath, Berwickshire, TD13 5YJ,

48pp

This little book is quickly read but is helpful in giving examples of witnessing in buses, trains, cafés and on the street. The author, because of a mental breakdown, had to give up his work as a pastor but continues to evangelise, and has been used of God. He studied philosophy and gained a couple of degrees. His present position as a tutor at a university gives him further opportunities to speak to students about the Saviour. The book is somewhat Arminian but the burden of the book is one we should all have. It particularly stresses the importance of loving poor, needy sinners and being concerned for their salvation. If we spoke to our fellows of their need of Christ we might well have the joy of being used by God to point them to Christ.

Rev William Macleod

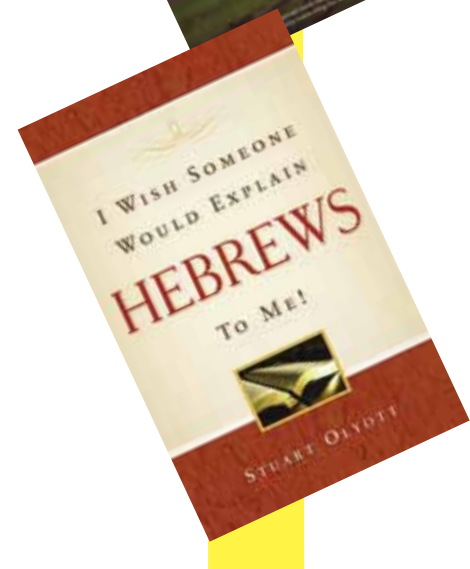
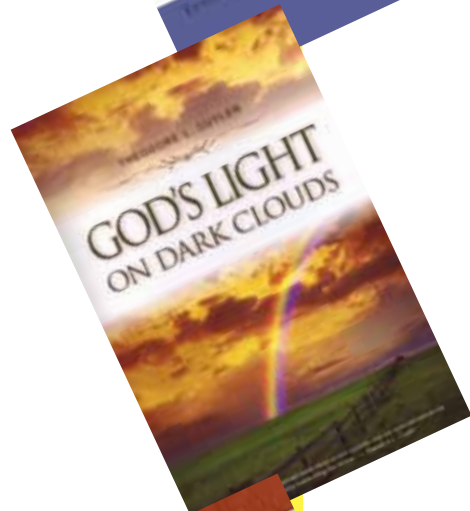
## **God's Light on Dark Clouds**

Theodore L. Cuyler

Banner of Truth Trust

pbk, 144pp, £ 5.00

This book was first published in 1882, written by a man who lost a 22-year-old beloved daughter fourteen years after losing two of his children in infancy and out of that pain comes this helpful and profitable book. It consists of 23 brief but poignant and heart-rending chapters where the pain of the author is often



sensed, but yet his hope, faith and trust in the Lord is always to the fore.

In the chapter, 'Word for the Weary' he says that 'the most common cause of weariness is the attempt to carry an overload of care' (but) he goes on to say 'My big load is not a feather to him'.

In 'A Constant Salvation' addressing the need for perseverance and the need to 'work out your own salvation with fear and trembling' he emphasises that 'we may be in the lifeboat but the lifeboat is not heaven' and in 'Our Two Homes' there is the lovely thought that 'Heaven will have no moving day. No longer shall we dread to be pulled away from associations which we love ... There is a delightful permanence in that word, "Forever with the Lord"' and 'Dr Guthrie is not the only parent who has felt assured that his little Johnnie would meet him inside the gate'.

On the front cover of the book there are these words which sum up well this good man's God-honouring perspective; 'If we wait patiently, the cloud will break away or part asunder, and our eyes will behold the rainbow of mercy overarching the throne'.

Highly recommended.

*Rev Kenneth Macdonald*

### **Selections from 'Wise Counsel'**

#### **John Newton's letters to John Ryland, Jr.**

*Edited by Grant Gordon*

Banner of Truth Trust

small pbk, 110pp, £3.25

**W**ise Counsel (Banner of Truth, 432pp. £16.50) consists of 83 letters from John Newton (1725-1807) who was the great letter-writer of the Evangelical Revival, to John Ryland, Particular Baptist minister at Northampton. Newton ministered at Olney, not far from Northampton, and his letters show an evident love for his brother in the ministry as he writes on a wide range of spiritual and practical matters.

These selections contain three of the longer letters, preceded by 51 pages of introductory and biographical matter. Grant Gordon's insightful editorial comments explain the circumstances of each letter. Newton frequently counsels his younger friend to strive to avoid unnecessary controversy. Surely he is drawing on his own experiences at sea when he writes, 'A young sailor is often impatient of a short calm, but the experienced mariner, who has been often tossed with tempests and upon the point of perishing, will seldom wish for a storm. In a word, let us patiently wait upon the Lord, and be content to follow as He leads, and He will surely do us good'.

This is a little book of great value, not only in itself, but, perhaps, even more so as an introduction to the larger *Wise Counsel*. God-honouring and covering such a wide range of issues, it would make a useful gift to a young minister (or not so young resident lay agent!).

*Donald A Robertson*

### **I Wish Someone Would Explain Hebrews To Me!**

*Stuart Olyott*

Banner of Truth Trust, pbk, 198pp, £7.50

**H**ebrews is a book presenting many passages challenging and even mystifying for the modern Christian to understand. Written as it was to believers converted from Judaism, and struggling with the temptation to return to Old Testament worship, it takes for granted a knowledge of Jewish law and ceremony not generally found in the contemporary church. For example, we are likely to be thoroughly bewildered by the argument for Christ's superiority to the angels in Chapters 1 and 2, if we do not understand that some Jewish sects had begun to direct worship to angels. It is to counter this sort of difficulty that Stuart Olyott has written this short, easily-read commentary.

Olyott deliberately avoids the usual academic baggage of commentaries, with no footnotes, Greek and Hebrew quotations or name-dropping of other writers. With refreshing modesty, he states that the book 'does not aim to be "the last word" but perhaps, for some, it will be useful as "the first word"'. He avoids getting bogged down in complex debate, rather working steadily through the book with a fresh and concise approach. Frequently, he takes a passage verse-by-verse, paraphrasing and expanding the English text, to draw out more clearly the original meaning and purpose within the author's developing argument. Such sections show the teaching skill of a seasoned preacher. Where there is genuine difficulty, such as the passage on apostasy in 6:4-8, Olyott uses both scriptural examples and a ready gift of illustration to shed light. In this case, he refers readers to the 'thorny-ground' hearer from the Parable of the Sower. Both this hearer and the truly regenerate hearer enjoy the same outward blessings of teaching and fellowship from the Spirit; but the lack of true repentance and faith in the former hearer is exposed by time and temptation.

While the small size of this book makes it limited in scope, it still finds space to apply the message of the text to the reader, a quality often entirely lacking in works many times larger. On some passages, such as 6:19-20, and 12:1-4, one can practically hear the preacher expounding the text and challenging with the message. However, the real strength of this book is its ability to repay the time taken to read a brief and simple paperback, with a very helpful overview of the epistle and its message for today. One weakness is that Olyott does not include the passage text with each chapter, requiring the reader to continually juggle the book and a Bible.

I would not discourage preachers from owning this volume, as it would certainly help to set a text in its wider context, though it would require to be supplemented by more in-depth works. However, the real target audience for this book is the ordinary Christian.

*Alasdair J Macleod*

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# Changes in Worship in the Free Church - A Critique

**Rev John Keddie**

So, it has happened. The Free Church after a period of reflection and debate has agreed – albeit narrowly – to overturn its erstwhile distinctive stance on worship. Hitherto, apart from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Church has only used inspired materials of praise without instrumental accompaniment. That has now been abandoned. That Church no longer accepts ‘purity of worship’ as formerly understood and practised in the Church. Now congregations will have the option to have paraphrases, hymns and instruments. There is no principle in the Church to forbid that. It has clearly been a revolutionary moment for the Free Church.

For some this will be a joyous day. They will say, ‘Good, not before time’. There will be those who will happily say that now the Church has come into the ‘modern age’ and can now be a more attractive Church in the way it worships. For others, this writer included, it is a sad day. It is a sad day because it is part of the deformation in worship. It is a sad day because it causes a breach in the fellowship of those Churches who rejoice in the Apostolic and Reformation heritage of unaccompanied Psalm-singing. But why is this such a serious issue? For the following reasons:

(1) *It is discontinuous*

It is a repudiation of the worship principles upon which the Reformed Church in Scotland and the Free Church in particular were established. The admission of uninspired materials of praise and instrumental music into the Presbyterian churches in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was discontinuous with the Reformation heritage. The Free Church post-1900 restored that continuity. But now the ‘new’ Free Church has accepted a discontinuous position. It is not only a breach with the Reformation heritage of *sola scriptura* – the sufficiency of Scripture for doctrine, worship, government and practice – it also distances itself from the New Testament pattern which knows nothing of merely human compositions in praise nor instrumental accompaniment. The Churches which use other than Psalms use materials other than those used by the Lord, the Apostles, and the Reformed Church of John Calvin and John Knox. This change in the present day Free Church is also a breach in the fellowship of like-minded Psalm-singing Churches eschewing instrumental accompaniment. That is also a sad feature of this change of position.

(2) *It is divisive*

The very fact of such a relatively narrow vote (98-84) will itself indicate how divisive the issue is in the Free Church. There is nothing near unanimity. It is tailor-made for continuing strife as people of different camps struggle to establish a real unanimity and harmony. Think of the debates that will ensue as to which paraphrases or hymns will be ‘acceptable’. Think of the awkwardness of men convinced by the principles they vowed to uphold being involved in congregational worship or other gatherings where a style of worship has been adopted which is at odds with these principles. Think of the congregations in which many elders and people – a minority – do not wish to

have new things foisted on them. Think of the uncertainties about the nature of new songs adopted and the impact on the ethos and piety of the Church. What will be distinctive of the Church? No doubt people have lived with such things since the introduction of hymns and organs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Scottish Presbyterianism. Unhappily the period since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century has been one of steep decline. That cannot be put down simply to plumping for hymns and organs of course. But it does relate to a loss of confidence in the sole authority of the Scriptures as the inspired and inerrant Word of God. Is this really the way for recovery of a Biblical faith and worship?

(3) *It is destructive of uniformity in worship.*

One of the sad features or implications of the change in the practice and principles of worship is that it undermines the uniformity of worship within the Free Church. Uniformity of worship is clearly something writ large in the Scriptures. Here is the highest exercise of people on this earth in which they will be expected happily to gather and engage in the worship of God together in unity. But the decision made in the Free Church injects complete dis-uniformity or diversity into worship forms. Particularly the sung praise is that item in the worship of God in which all worshippers will be expected to engage without any reservations or troubles with conscience. But that has been undermined by this decision of this Free Plenary Assembly. Uniformity of worship was always a feature of the Scottish Reformed Church. But this decision is a recipe ecclesiastically for every congregation to do what is right in its own eyes. One of the features of the Biblical Psalms is not only the strong Christological element in them, but also the fact that they are a basis for complete harmony throughout the Church in worship. This has inevitably been seriously undermined by this decision of the Free Church. Presumably the reference to ‘uniformity of worship and of the administration of all public ordinances’ in the questions put to elders and deacons according to the present form will be dropped.

(4) *It is a repudiation of ‘purity of worship’*

The idea of purity of worship simply involved a claim that the elements of worship were in line with Biblical teaching and warrant. Many in the Free Church have come to dispute that there is only warrant for the use of Biblical materials as the exclusive content of sung praise in Christian worship. The Free Church must now be considered as detaching itself from the notion of ‘purity of worship’. It can no longer now testify to undisputed God-centred materials of praise; praise items which derive from the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, or what we might call ‘canonical praise’. It remains to be seen just what praise items are adopted in the Free Church and to what extent they will be ‘authorised’. That itself one suspects will be a highly contentious issue in the Free Church unless there is a docile acceptance of this radical change among those previously unsympathetic to it.

(5) *It has been a dishonourable process*

The question may be asked as to how this change came about.

Presumably there were on the one hand ministers and elders who were admitted to office in the Church who were not convinced by the principles or practices governing worship as previously authorized and practised in the Church. On the other hand there may have been many who did not appreciate the principles involved or the binding nature of vows taken on admission to office. However it may be, what is clear is that positions taken on worship in arriving at the decision to overturn previous practices are at variance with vows previously taken to uphold the present practice of the Church. At licensing the probationer vows to 'sincerely own the purity of worship presently authorized and practised in this Church' and promises that he 'shall follow no divisive courses from the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church' and to 'conform yourself to the said worship, and submit [himself] to the said discipline and government of this Church, and not endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same'. In the questions at Ordination the vow is taken to assert, maintain and defend the 'purity of worship as presently practised in this Church'. And the Formula which is signed by all office-bearers at admission declares that they 'conform [themselves] to the said worship' and promise to follow no divisive course from it. No-one can pretend that a change from unaccompanied use of inspired materials of praise to the use of human hymns and instrumental music is not at odds with these vows. This much is recognised in Reports presented to the Plenary Assembly. So what would you expect to happen when someone has a problem with the present practice? It cannot

be changed without changing in some degree the position and testimony of the Church. A person with a problem with their vows would need to approach their Presbytery to have his questions addressed. If they are not dealt with so as to satisfy the issues he has he must resign and join a church or form a church with whose position he has no such issues. Why should a church change for people who have actually dishonoured vows taken on admission to office? This is a serious issue in this present change in the Free Church. But the history of the post-1900 Free Church ought to have made these matters of creedal subscription clear.

It has been disappointing to read arguments trotted out by advocates of changes in worship which were presented and well answered in the past. It is sad that the Free Church has now changed a position which was so robustly defended and maintained by those who continued the Free Church testimony after 1900 at terrific cost. It does change the ecclesiastical map of Scotland in that it affects the largest of the smaller constitutional conservative Presbyterian denominations. The Free Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians and Associated Presbyterians still maintain the principle of unaccompanied psalmody. So does the Free Church (Continuing), as the smaller part of the division in the Free Church in 2000, is named. There is no doubt, however, that whatever its status in the eyes of the law, *de facto* it is maintaining the principles of the post 1900 Free Church more faithfully and robustly than the majority, which sadly, by its decision on 19<sup>th</sup> November has departed from its heritage in worship and its integrity in confessional subscription.

## Remittances - November 2010

	2010 Nov	2010 Total	2009 Total to Nov
<b>Presbytery of Inverness</b>			
Aberdeen	900	12,640	10,434
Duthil-Dores	845	20,144	23,456
Inverness	5,000	33,000	33,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	1,600	18,846	16,422
<b>Total Inverness</b>	<b>8,345</b>	<b>84,630</b>	<b>83,312</b>
<b>Northern Presbytery</b>			
Assynt & Scourie	0	1,283	2,987
Brora	2,000	21,834	18,593
Kiltearn	0	18,000	19,800
Tarbat	1,500	10,186	13,739
<b>Total Northern</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>51,303</b>	<b>55,118</b>
<b>Southern Presbytery</b>			
Arran	319	7,584	7,016
Ayr	200	3,660	1,538
Dumfries	600	600	0
Edinburgh	0	37,713	38,454
Glasgow - Partick	2,018	35,000	29,500
Glasgow - Shettleston	1,200	18,385	14,123
Glasgow - Knightswood	3,410	25,728	26,390
Rothesay	0	293	220
<b>Total Southern</b>	<b>7,747</b>	<b>128,964</b>	<b>117,242</b>

<b>Outer Hebrides Presbytery</b>			
Cross	1,817	21,356	21,686
Harris - Leverburgh	1,100	14,646	12,399
Harris - Scalpay	1,700	22,988	20,459
Knock & Point	1,100	15,049	12,525
North Uist	1,000	13,646	12,053
Stornoway	7,222	79,801	63,898
<b>Total Outer Hebrides</b>	<b>13,939</b>	<b>167,486</b>	<b>143,019</b>
<b>Presbytery of Skye &amp; Lochcarron</b>			
Bracadale	1,000	12,785	12,078
Duirinish (Waternish)	500	4,500	4,400
Glenelg & Arnisdale	0	2,260	2,048
Kilmuir & Stenscholl	2,300	9,946	16,471
Lochalsh & Glenshiel	150	7,038	5,764
Poolewe & Aultbea	700	10,510	10,000
Ullapool	0	400	0
Portree	1,200	18,589	19,260
Snizort	1,200	18,290	15,775
Strath	0	2,257	5,529
<b>Total Skye</b>	<b>7,050</b>	<b>86,575</b>	<b>91,327</b>
<b>Total Congregations</b>	<b>40,581</b>	<b>518,957</b>	<b>490,019</b>
Other Donations	4,108	26,810	24,760
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44,689</b>	<b>545,767</b>	<b>514,778</b>
Including Gift Aid		91,090	75,098

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# Letter from Zambia (Part I)

**Rev Cees Molenaar**

*Dear Supporters,*

We greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is a great blessing for us that you continue your involvement in the ministries of Covenant College Zambia Trust. With this letter you receive an update on the various facets of the work.

## **Lecturer**

In the last Letter we advertised for a lecturer. We are very thankful to announce that the Lord has provided for this position the Rev David Lachman. David is a minister in the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and is being sent and supported by this Church. Ten years ago another of their ministers, Rev David Fraser, started the work of Covenant College (CC), and we are glad indeed that the Church will participate in the mission again by means of David and Katie. They, with baby Elijah, hope to make their way to Zambia in February 2011.

This appointment was even more encouraging as in the meantime Cees and Mirjam Molenaar decided to move on from CC in search of mission work where their oldest children can attend a school and have a social network. The Trust knew this was coming and is thankful that they have time to look for another missionary family.

## **Other Appointments**

The Farm received a serious application for the position of Agricultural Missionary. In the coming months the Farm hopes to see whether the applicant meets the expectations for the position.

The Trust also appointed Mr Andrew Macleod (Tarbat) from the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) to voluntarily help with the work of the Christian Education Ministry for the coming six months.

Jaap van de Kamp, the teacher volunteer for the Molenaar children, completed his year at CC. The Molenaars are thankful for his contribution to their family and the mission at large. For the period January to June 2011, the Molenaars are looking for an English speaking volunteer teacher to help with Joas and Rhoda's schooling.

## **Farm Ministry – Phil Bailey**

This year, I introduced a new Agricultural Course to the studies undertaken by the student pastors at Covenant College. It involves 16 hours of farm teaching per year, giving a total of 48 hours over the three-year course the students receive. The teaching is based upon 'Farming God's Way' which gives a Biblical application to conservation farming for the rain-fed field crops, particularly the main crop of maize. It includes various aspects of 'Organic Farming' methods and then expands into the integration between livestock and crop production under the heading of 'Integrated Small Scale Farming' (ISSF). This especially looks at ways of reducing the expensive chemical fertilizer inputs, by the use of manure

harvested from the animals and the making of compost. This applies to both field crops and the vegetable garden. The plant stova and waste vegetable matter from these is then added as supplement feed to the animals which include cattle, pigs, chickens, goats, rabbits and ducks.

ISSF also covers the benefits of local trees and plants such as Moringa (nutritional), Musangu (nitrogen fixing), Neem (medicinal) and Artemesia (malaria preventative). All the aspects of ISSF are practised on the Covenant College Farm and some of the teaching hours are spent as practical farm walks where we can actually see these methods being worked out in reality.

Under this new curriculum we have an additional subject 'Good Business Practice' in which we have lessons on Setting up a Small Business, Saving and Investing, Christian Work Ethics, Water Management and Planet Wise (caring for creation). We learn what the Bible has to say on these matters knowing that all Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching (2Tim.3:16).

All the teaching is geared towards becoming self reliant, getting away from relying on 'hand-outs' and becoming independent (1Thes.4:11-12) which is a key principle of FGW.

*Please pray for the students to have their minds and attitudes changed by God so that they may willingly endeavour to follow these principles. Also that they may be able to teach the same to their congregations so that their churches may become more self-reliant and they themselves may be better supported by the churches which they pastor.*

## **Visits to Students – Heinrich Zwemstra**

At Covenant College we are not only concerned about the academic training of the students but also the development of their Christian character. To facilitate this, we have divided the students between the two of us (Cees and myself) to mentor them. The mentoring of the students includes visits to the students and their families, and the churches where they serve. Sometimes it is easy to reach the students, but other times one has to leave early since it takes a long time to reach them (not necessarily because of distance but also because of the poor condition of the road). These visits normally take place on a Sunday. During the worship service we have the opportunity to preach (with an interpreter). The service also includes a lot of singing, Bible reading, the offering and announcements. After the service we have the opportunity to speak to the congregation about their pastor who is studying at the College and encourage them to pray for the pastor (student) and his family and to support them.

After the service most of the churches have the custom of greeting each other with a handshake. Then we go to the house of the pastor (student) where a meal is being prepared. Sometimes the preparation of the meal takes some time, but it is a good opportunity to talk to the student about his life and ministry. Before starting our journey back to the College

we pray with the family and commit them to God's care. On our way back we think of the many challenges that the students face, and we pray again that the Lord will strengthen and encourage them for the work He called them to do. On 8<sup>th</sup> October, we celebrated the 8<sup>th</sup> graduation and the 10<sup>th</sup> year of teaching at Covenant College, during which 51 men have completed their training.



**(To Be Concluded)**

Above: One Student with wife and family.  
Below: The 8th Graduation from Covenant College, October 2010.





## **Arbroath Weekend, October 2010**

L to R: (Rear): Alasdair Macleod, Caroline Morrison, Kathelle MacSween, Connor Quigley, Ruth Naylor, Mrs Deborah Ratti, Martin Fraser, S.N. Partheepan, Stephen Steele, Murray MacKay, Christina Macleod, Iain Bannerman, David Wylie, Giulia Ratti, Nathan Roberts, Michael Reeve, Steven Murray, Murdo Macleod, Neil Smith, Bruce MacKenzie, Ben Lowery, Andrew Pendleton, Domingo Perez, Tam Stewart, Rev Geoff Thomas, Mrs Thomas, Jonah MacLachlan, D.R. Morrison, Joel Harding, James Boyd, Elspeth MacLachlan, Donald Mackenzie, Iona MacDonald, Michelle Campbell, Jennifer Little, Jason de Courcy.

(Front): Esther Macleod, Mrs Isobel McQueer, Christina MacLeod, Carla Quigley, Sarah Lee, Lydia Budgen, Tom Budgen, Eileen Murray, Miriam Clark, Shaylah, Sandra MacAulay, Gordon Stewart, Rhian Spencer, Peigi Smith, Naomi-Jayne Lowery, Chrissie Morrison, Jayne Morrison, Joanne Macdonald, Rebecca Fraser, Fiona Taylor, Sandra MacKay, David Woods.

“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

**John 4:23-24**