

Free Church **Witness**



MARCH 2011 ISSUE



Why do Believers have to
Die?

Rev David Murray



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Page

Tour of Israel - Reflections 3

The Biblical Account of Creation 6

Example of Prayer 8

Why do Believers Have to Die? 9

News Desk 10

Obituary. 13

Books 14

Scottish Reformation 16

Remittances - January 2011 18

Mission Trip to Kenya 18

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Tour of Israel - Reflections

Last October I had the pleasure of touring Israel with a group of twenty-three friends almost all from the Free Church (Continuing). The leaders were Rev and Mrs Kenneth Macdonald (Scalpay) and the fascinating experience was enhanced by the shared fellowship at the various sites of interest and then in the hotels in the evenings. It was not only a holiday but also a spiritually beneficial time. There are many tour books on Israel where information can be gleaned but in this article I would like simply to reflect on the experience.

Capernaum

One of the first places we visited was Capernaum. Shortly after beginning His public ministry Jesus left Nazareth and moved there. In that town He performed many miracles and preached wonderful sermons. However He had to say: 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee' (Mt 11:23-24). Individuals are judged on the Judgment Day, but cities and nations are judged in this life. It was sad to see this once bustling town a heap of ruins. What a warning to you and me and to our beloved privileged land of Scotland!

As one drives through Galilee one is impressed with how stony the land is. The black basalt stones are everywhere apart from where they have been cleared for cultivation. Jesus spoke of the rocky-ground-hearers who receive the word with joy but when the sun of trials shines the plant withers. Are you like the rocky ground?

Sea of Galilee

Much in Israel has changed dramatically since Bible times but the basic geography must remain the same. We crossed the Sea of Galilee by boat and stopped in the middle to hold a little service. Reading the Word of Christ, singing the Psalms which He sang and praying to His and our Heavenly Father, it was possible to go back in our minds to the days when Jesus walked on these waters, stilled the storm on this lake, preached mighty sermons from a boat to those gathered on the shore and prayed for many hours on these very hills while His disciples slept. What a Saviour!

Golan Heights

We drove up to the top of Mt Bental in the Golan Heights. Here the Syrians were embedded prior to the Six Days War of 1967. From here sometimes they shelled the Jewish villages below. It was interesting to see the fortifications, trenches and tunnels. We could see Syria to the North East and Lebanon to the North West. Surely God in His providence amazingly protected Israel giving them victory over the surrounding nations which had armies far more powerful than they and which threatened to exterminate them – Egypt, Jordan with

Iraqi support and Syria. Is there not a purpose for Israel? From here too we saw Mt Hermon and longed for the Holy Spirit: 'As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore' (Ps. 133:3).

River Jordan

It was rather sad to see the crowds coming to the Jordan to be baptised. There was little appearance of repentance and sorrow for sin. Rather the atmosphere was that of a party. On being asked was this the first time they were baptised the few we asked responded with surprise, 'Oh no!' But there should only be one baptism as it symbolises the washing away of our sins and our engrafting into Christ. Turning away from the cheering and superstition we walked down the river to a quiet spot and held a little service. We remembered godly Moses coming to the Jordan but being refused permission to enter the Promised Land because, provoked by the rebellious Israelites, he had struck the rock instead of speaking to it as God had commanded. We thought of Jesus coming to be baptised and the heavens opening and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. People heard the voice of the Lord, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased' (Mt. 3:17). We rejoiced in our beloved Saviour who entered the Jordan not to be cleansed but to take our sin upon Himself. He took our guilt and gave to us His spotless righteousness.

Mount Carmel

Thousands of years ago Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal in the presence of King Ahab and Israel on the top of Mount Carmel: 'And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken' (1 Kgs. 18:24). As we gathered on the mountaintop we remembered how feeble the prophets of Baal were despite their zeal and also how when Elijah prayed the fire came down. Oh how we long for the fire of God to descend again! We thought of Elijah earnestly praying for rain with his head between his knees and saying to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea'. Only on the seventh occasion did the servant see a small cloud like a man's hand. Elijah cried, 'Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down that the rain stop thee not' (18:44). Oh for that same burden of prayer and for the refreshing showers from heaven!

Caesarea

Archaeological excavations at Caesarea have uncovered a Roman amphitheatre which would seat 3,500 and a much larger hippodrome where they would watch the chariot races. Here the Christian martyrs were tortured to death. Praise God for the freedom we have but we know that our brethren are suffering unto death in North Korea and in many Muslim lands. We thought of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert,



Tracey Holding outside the Garden Tomb.

sending for Peter to Joppa, several days' journey away by foot. Also, Paul was held a prisoner here for a prolonged period.

Jerusalem

One of the most moving parts of the whole trip was driving up to Jerusalem as evening was closing in, singing the Songs of Ascent. Tears fell from several eyes as the walls of the ancient city came in sight while we sang Psalm 122:

'I joy'd when to the house of God,
Go up they said to me.
Jerusalem, within thy gates
our feet shall standing be'.

Free Presbyterian Church

On the Lord's Day we worshipped with the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in the YMCA in Jerusalem. Their minister, Rev John Goldby, came to our hotel on the Saturday night and shared with us the work he is doing. The congregation is very small but it was a delight to worship with like-minded brethren. An old friend the Rev Wilfred Weale (Staffin FPC, Isle of Skye) and his wife were also there that day. Remember that difficult work in your prayers.

Mount of Olives

The Garden of Gethsemane with its ancient olive trees focused our thoughts on the night in which our Saviour was betrayed. From the Mount of Olives we looked across the Kedron Valley to the Golden Gate of Jerusalem. The city stretched before us. The beautiful Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque mark where the temple once stood. It remains in the hands of Muslims and is the third holiest site of Islam. Jesus looked at the city from the Mount of Olives and wept over it: 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' (Mt.23:37). He could see the Romans coming to destroy it. Today, this is a city of great

privileges, a city of much religion and many churches and yet a city of great darkness. If we had the Spirit of Christ we would weep over her.

Wailing Wall

On one occasion as Jesus went out of the temple, one of His disciples called Him to notice the beautiful stones and buildings. But Jesus replied: 'Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down' (Mk.13:2). Today all that is left is the retaining wall of the Temple Mount – not the actual temple but only part of its foundations. For the Jews this is their holiest shrine. It was terribly sad to see them in the most earnest prayer pleading for the Messiah to come and He has already come but they rejected Him. There were old men there in wheelchairs. There were children reciting their prayers. People were writing prayers on pieces of paper and sticking them in cracks in the walls. Professional holy-men are paid by the government to spend their days praying. Tears rolled down my cheeks as I pleaded, 'Lord open their eyes'.

The Garden Tomb

'Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand' (John 19:41-42). Outside the walls of Jerusalem, beside the Damascus Gate, is such a spot. It was becoming dark as we approached the sepulchre. The women were there very early before the sun had risen. Possibly in that very grave Jesus had lain for three days. We peered inside. 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' (Lk.24:5). The words on the door of the cave were powerful, 'He is not here: for he is risen' (Mt.28:6). We sang the last verses of Psalm 24, Psalm 68:18-20 and Psalm 116:1-2. We would have loved to linger but it was closing time and we had to go. But Jesus lives and Jesus saves. He reigns in heaven and is coming to judge at the last day which will not be long now.

Masada

Far to the south, along the shore of the Dead Sea, are the ruins of Masada. It was built by Herod the Great as a place of retreat if things turned nasty for him. Situated on a rocky mountain this fortress is truly impressive. It even had an amazing system for collecting water and huge reservoirs. In AD 70, following the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews made their last stand here against the Romans. They held out for several months and could have continued indefinitely but for the enormous ramp of stones and earth which the Romans built. The walls were then breached with a battering ram. The 960 Jews remaining seeing they were going to be defeated committed mass suicide. They cast lots for who should do the killing and the last man killed himself. Two women and five children hid in a cistern and so escaped and told the tale. The judgment of God was upon the Jews. No matter what they did or what forts they had they were beaten. In 132 AD a new revolt was led by Simon Bar Kokhba. The planning was careful to avoid the errors of the first revolt. The struggle lasted for three years before the revolt was brutally crushed in the summer of 135. After losing Jerusalem, Bar Kokhba and the remnants of his army withdrew to the fortress of Betar, which also subsequently came under siege. The Jerusalem Talmud relates that the numbers slain were enormous, that the Romans 'went on killing until their horses were submerged in blood to their nostrils'. 580,000 Jews were killed. In an attempt to erase any memory of Judea or Ancient Israel, the Emperor Hadrian wiped the name off the map and replaced it with Syria Palaestina, after the Philistines, the ancient enemies of the Jews. The name Palestine continued down through the centuries. Jerusalem was rebuilt as the Roman pagan city of Aelia Capitolina, and Jews were forbidden from entering it. At the former Temple sanctuary, Hadrian installed two statues, one of Jupiter, another of himself. God was against the Jews.

Holocaust Museum

Six million Jews died under the Nazis in the Holocaust. Who could refrain from tears going through the children's museum where the names of the one and a half million children who perished are read out slowly in the quiet darkness along with

their ages and country of origin? The Nazis tried to exterminate the Jews. From there we came out onto an elevated area from where we could see Jerusalem spreading out before us, growing and flourishing. The Nazis had failed. As I walked around other parts of the museum, saw the terrific suffering and heard the testimonies of survivors, I was reminded again of the cry of the Jews when Pilate washed his hands, 'His blood be on us, and on our children' (Mt.27:25). The Jews have suffered horribly over the past 2000 years and this came to a climax with the Nazis. Is it not darkest before the dawn? Now God's hand in judgment seems to be lifting from them and He is protecting them from their enemies and prospering them. In 1948 they were given their own sovereign state. They have survived several wars and many terrorists. They are passionately hated by the world's thousand million Muslims and many others, yet they flourish. In these days when other currencies are falling the Israeli Shekel is rising in value. They have everything but the one thing needful.

Paul argues, 'Now if the fall of them [the Jews] be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? ... For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead? ... For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob' (Rom. 11:12, 15, 24-26). It raised in my heart with even more urgency the need to pray for the conversion of the Jews.

Victory

Our last stop was in the Valley of Elah. Here little David conquered the mighty Goliath. We live in difficult days but let us be optimistic. God's cause shall prosper, His kingdom shall come and we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

***Kenny & Colleen
MacDonald at the River
Jordan.***



III. The Biblical Account of Creation

Rev Anthony R Dallison, Virginia, USA

It is worth recalling the magnificent language of the Westminster Confession of Faith (IV, 1&2) dealing with Creation: 'It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good. After God had made all other creatures, he created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, and yet under a possibility of transgressing'.

The first chapter of Genesis is one of the most God-centered chapters in the whole Bible. He is mentioned by name some 32 times in 31 verses and, adding personal pronouns, some 43 times! So that, in the Bible's opening chapter, the Holy Spirit brings us into the presence of GOD and keeps us there! No wonder, therefore, that Genesis 1 is a main focus of Satan's assault, because abandonment of the God-centered truths of this chapter inevitably leads to Satan's triumph. Moreover, if the Holy Spirit's inspiration of Scripture cannot be trusted in the matter of God's work of creation, how can He be trusted later in Scripture when He deals with the vital matters of man's need for salvation? If He cannot be trusted in the first chapter of the Bible, so also (for example) in the great salvation text of John 3:16! And if what he says about the earth in Genesis 1 can be questioned, what confidence can we have of His description of heaven in Revelation 22?

The magnificent opening verse of Genesis 1 is a sublime statement which sweeps away atheism (by asserting God's existence), polytheism (by declaring He is one) and pantheism (by separating Himself from matter). Similarly, since we have every reason to believe that Moses was the human author of the book of Genesis, it is striking and instructive that he did not write the account of creation according to the theories of his own day and age! That is to say, even though he was 'learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians' (Acts 7: 22), he did not reflect any of these erroneous and absurd views in Genesis chapter one, viz. that there was once a primeval ocean, out of which appeared an egg and from which emerged the sun god, who in turn had four children and their rivalry among themselves led to the creation as we know it! What a blessing that the account of Genesis is not at all like that, but instead like a snow-capped Himalayan peak rising majestically towards heaven. Moses wrote contrary to all the accepted learning of his day. He must therefore have written by divine revelation. Take just one instance as an example: the record states that on the third day of creation, all the waters were gathered into one place to form the world's oceans. How could Moses possibly have known that all the oceans of the world form one interconnected body of water, when all that he could possibly have been acquainted with was a limited access to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea? It must therefore have been shown to him by divine revelation!

I. Some Specific Observations

The Westminster Confession of Faith is undoubtedly correct when it states, so succinctly, the reason for God's performing the work of creation: 'It pleased God ... for the manifestation

of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning to create or make of nothing the world'. As John Calvin aptly put it, the world is designed to be 'the theatre of God's glory'. This is a constant theme throughout the Bible, often used as the motive for men to worship and honour the true God. For example, 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth' (Ps.33:6). Paul reminds us that 'the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that they (men) are without excuse' (Rom.1 : 20 f). The last book of the Bible recognises God's creation: 'Thou art worthy, O Lord to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created' (Rev.4:11). In other words, the creation account is woven into the texture of the whole Bible.

We surely need no reminder, either, that the Bible asserts that the work of creation involved each Person of the Trinity, the Father (Gen.1:1 & Ps.8): the Son (Heb.1:2, Jn.1:3, Col.1:15-16): and the Holy Spirit (Gen.1:2). It was creation *ex nihilo* (ie not from pre-existing materials, even though in the later stages of creation, the Creator did use pre-existing materials, eg in the creation of man). It was *fiat* creation (He spoke the universe into existence). There was nothing else outside of God Himself which He did not create. Surely, too, the repeated expression 'and the evening and the morning' at the close of each act of creation most naturally and logically implies six literal twenty-four days of creation, and not long ages of millions of years. And all was 'very good'.

We need no reminder, too, that the creation of man had a distinct place in God's purpose, as evidenced for instance by his being created after everything else (in a world prepared and amply furnished for him), and by deliberation ('Let us make man in our own image') as the image-bearer of God in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and therefore distinct from the other animal creation entirely, with God's law written upon his heart and with a rational and immortal soul. Moreover, the record clearly states that mankind's origin was from one human pair, confirmed again in Genesis 10 (the genealogy of the nations) and in the apostle Paul's address to the men of Athens in Acts 17:26. This is fundamental to the biblical doctrine of original sin and the doctrine of the resurrection, as stated clearly in Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:21f.

Dr Henry Morris, in his fine commentary *The Genesis Record* states the fundamental importance of the biblical creation account as follows:

I. Origin of the universe. The Book of Genesis stands alone in accounting for the actual creation of space, mass and time which constitutes our physical universe. Genesis 1:1 is unique in all literature, science, and philosophy. Every other system of cosmogony, whether in ancient religious myths or modern scientific models, starts with eternal matter or energy in some form, from which other entities were supposedly gradually derived by some process. Only the Book of Genesis even attempts to account for the ultimate origin of matter, space, and time; and it does so uniquely in terms of special creation.

2. Origin of order and complexity. Man's universal observation, both in his personal experience and in his formal study of physical and biological systems, is that orderly and complex things tend naturally to decay into disorder and simplicity. Order and complexity never arise spontaneously – they are always generated by a prior cause programmed to produce such order. The Primeval Programmer and His programmed purposes are found only in Genesis.

3. Origin of the solar system. The earth, as well as the sun and moon, and even the planets and all the stars of heaven, were likewise brought into existence by the Creator, as told in Genesis. It is small wonder that modern scientific cosmogonists have been so notably unsuccessful in attempting to devise naturalistic theories of the origin of the universe and the solar system.

4. Origin of the atmosphere and hydrosphere. The earth is uniquely equipped with a great body of liquid water and an extensive blanket of an oxygen-nitrogen gaseous mixture, both of which are necessary for life. These have never 'developed' on other planets, and are accounted for only by special creation.

5. Origin of life. How living systems could have come into being from non-living chemicals is, and will undoubtedly continue to be, a total mystery to materialistic philosophers. The marvels of the reproductive process, and the almost-infinite complexity programmed into the genetic systems of plants and animals, are inexplicable except by special creation,

at least if the laws of thermodynamics and probability mean anything at all. The account of the creation of 'living creatures' in Genesis is the only rational explanation.

6. Origin of man. Man is the most highly organised and complex entity in the universe, so far as we know, possessing not only innumerable intricate physico-chemical structures, and the marvellous capacities of life and reproduction, but also a nature which contemplates the abstract entities of beauty and love and worship, and which is capable of philosophising about its own meaning. Man's imaginary evolutionary descent from animal ancestors is altogether illusory. The true record of his origin is given only in Genesis.

7. Origin of marriage. The remarkably universal and stable institution of marriage and the home, in a monogamous, patriarchal social culture, is likewise described in Genesis as having been ordained by the Creator. Polygamy, infanticide, matriarchy, promiscuity, divorce, abortion, homosexuality, and other corruptions all developed later.

8. Origin of evil. Cause-and-effect reasoning accounts for the origin of the concepts of goodness, truth, beauty, love, and such things as fundamental attributes of the Creator Himself. The origin of physical and moral evils in the universe is explained in Genesis as a temporary intrusion into God's perfect world, allowed by Him as a temporary concession to the principle of human freedom and responsibility, and also to manifest Himself as Redeemer as well as Creator.



"Origin of marriage. The remarkably universal and stable institution of marriage and the home, in a monogamous, patriarchal social culture, is described in Genesis as having been ordained by the Creator. "

Example of Prayer

Rev Richard Ross

Go up now, look toward the sea (1 Kings 18:43)

Elijah the prophet and faithful servant of the Lord has just been used mightily to defeat the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. This record in 1 Kings 18 sets before us a graphic illustration of the triumph of the Christian faith over idolatry. Elijah was active for the Lord, and the same God of heaven would have His people be busy today in the work of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

How Elijah fearlessly prayed in public (vv36-37) although surrounded by the false prophets! How he prayed in private with the same earnestness (42-46)! Let us look for a few moments at this biblical example of prayer.

1. Why Pray?

a. Favourable circumstances? What was the great impetus for Elijah to pray so earnestly? He had been busy on Mount Carmel; should he not now expect a rest? Was it because things were going so well for him personally and within the nation of Israel? Was it because he was seeing signs of the Lord's blessing on the horizon? No! No! No! Elijah felt very alone in the Lord's work (v22); the nation was still halting between commitment to the Lord and idols (v21); his servant told him there was still nothing on the horizon (v43). Friend, are you waiting for a more encouraging time before becoming serious about prayer?

b. The Lord's Word: He prayed because he knew his God. The Lord had promised that the drought would end, 'I will send rain' (v1), so Elijah knew that it would surely come to pass. The judgment of drought would end and blessing would flow down from above. The Bible is full of promises of blessing that the Lord's people must plead before the Lord in prayer. Has the Lord changed? Is He no longer the God of Elijah? Be encouraged, Christian friend, you have much reason to pray, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen (2Cor.1:20).

2. How to Pray?

a. Away from distraction: (v42) There he was on the top of Carmel. He left the bustle of life behind, went up the mount and prayed. He was happy to turn aside and seek the Lord in prayer. This is what the Lord Jesus has taught us by example (Lk.5:16) and precept (Mt.6:6). If you are to be serious about prayer, you must find somewhere without distraction to spend time with the Lord in prayer.

b. Humbly: (v42) 'He cast himself down upon the earth'. Elijah, aware of the God unto whom he was praying, took a low position before the Lord. By casting himself down he exalted the Lord. How right and proper it is for you to adopt such a position before the Lord in prayer! However it is not only the physical position that is important, but the attitude of heart and mind. We may well be unable physically to take a low position in prayer, but must do so in our hearts. If the Lord Jesus Christ humbled himself to save us, then how low we should humble ourselves to his glory in prayer.

c. Earnestly: (v43) 'Go again seven times'. He didn't give up when there seemed to be no immediate answer. He would not look up himself, lest he was distracted, but sent his servant to see. He persevered in prayer. Elijah was a great prophet, although a man of like passions to ourselves (Jas.5:17). He prayed earnestly because the Lord had promised and he gained a blessing.

3. What seen by Faith

a. Faith's eye: What was there to see as they looked towards the sea? Three and a half years of blue sky and no rain clouds. When would it rain? His servant looked and saw 'nothing' (v43). But what did Elijah see? Nothing yet! 'Go again seven times' (v43). Elijah saw by faith that God's promise just would not and could not fail. Although nothing appeared to be coming it certainly would. God is faithful to his Word.

b. Little Cloud: (v44) Elijah's servant finally saw 'a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand'. But Elijah saw more than a man's hand; he saw the hand of the Lord at work – 'that the rain stop thee not' (v44). This is seeing with the eye of faith. Be sure you are not looking only on appearances. Look through the eyes of faith to the Lord and His promises. Unbelief will tell you there is nothing. But faith will tell you that God is, and that He is the hearer of prayer (Ps.65:2).

There is great encouragement here to stir us to pray. We, like the apostle, are not to look on that which is seen, but that which is unseen (2Cor.4:18). What about you? Will you rise to the challenge and pray earnestly for the blessing of God to be poured out once again on this dry and barren land? Let us pray until this United Kingdom of Britain will become one of 'the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ' (Rev 11:15).

"A little cloud out of the sea,
like a man's hand"





Why do Believers Have to Die?

Rev David Murray

Recently, I stood at the graveside of my dear Christian friend Ellen Bazen. Before addressing the gathered family and friends, I once again pondered the question, 'Why do believers have to die?' Why do believers have to die? The wages of sin is death, and believers have sinned. However Christ has paid the full penalty for our sins. So why do believers have to die?

The simple answer is, 'They don't'.

Believers do not have to die, because Christ has died in their place. There is not an atom of penalty left to pay. Therefore, God could translate believers to heaven without them having to pass through death; just as he did with Enoch and Elijah, and as He will do with the believers who are living upon Christ's return.

So, believers do not have to die, as Christ has purchased deliverance from physical death and the redemption of our bodies. But, in most cases, the Lord has chosen to delay or postpone the application of these benefits until the general resurrection of all. The question remains, though, 'Why?' If believers do not have to die, why do they die?

The answer is that God wisely allows the vast majority of believers to pass through death because of the immense spiritual benefits of the experience.

1. Dying brings us into communion with Christ's sufferings

Christ's death is different to the believer's 'penalty-free' death, because Christ's death was a penalty for sin (our sin). However, dying reminds us of what Christ did for us. It brings us into a new communion with Him and increases our love for Him (Phil.3:10).

2. Dying gives us a unique experience of Christ's all-sufficient grace

Bodily death is still a painful evil to the believer. He will fear it and feel it. As the last moments approach, there is often great physical pain and sometimes spiritual fear. There is also the emotional distress of seeing loved ones weeping. At such times the dying believer can experience tremendous help from Christ. His grace is found to be more than sufficient at this time of greatest need.

3. Dying transforms us into Christ's image

One of the blessings of dying is the rapid ripening of the believer's character and the acceleration of his sanctification. The outer person is growing weaker, but the inner is growing stronger and stronger. Though death can take an ugly toll on the body of a believer, yet his soul is being swiftly beautified. I'm sure many pastors have seen how even the approach of death can result in a believer 'shining' in a way they never have before.

4. Dying is our last and perhaps greatest opportunity to witness for Christ's glory

Death, in many ways, is the supreme test of faith. What an opportunity to speak of how faith in Christ helps us to die and gives victory over the greatest enemy. How many unbelievers have been converted by the dying words of godly fathers or mothers.

5. Dying brings us into Christ's presence

Death hastens us into the presence of Christ and our coronation as His precious people. Death temporarily separates us from our bodies, but it unites our souls to Christ in a new and wonderful way.

In summary, believers do not have to die, but they do die: to have communion with Christ's sufferings, to experience Christ's grace, to be made like Christ's image, to witness for Christ's glory, and to bring them into Christ's presence.



News



Ordination of Rev David Lachman

Maurice Grant

A goodly number of friends gathered in Partick Free Church on the evening of Friday 28th January for the ordination of Rev David Lachman, Probationer, and his induction to missionary service in Zambia. The Presbytery were pleased to welcome three ministers from the Skye and Lochcarron Presbytery who were associated with them for the occasion. The Moderator of Presbytery, Rev James Gracie, presided, and preached an appropriate sermon from Romans 1:1-5, emphasising the solemn responsibilities of a Gospel minister and yet the assurance of promised grace 'for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name'. Following public worship the prescribed questions were put to Mr Lachman and he was then solemnly ordained by the imposition of the hands of the brethren and inducted to his new sphere of

service. Rev David Fraser addressed words of counsel to the newly-ordained minister and also suitably addressed the congregation. The Moderator in the name of the Presbytery committed Mr Lachman to the care of the Home & Foreign Missions Committee who will be responsible for supervision of his work in Zambia.

The company then met informally to convey parting greetings to Mr and Mrs Lachman and their infant son Elijah. Rev Gavin Beers, Convener of the Home & Foreign Missions Committee, read messages of good wishes from friends throughout the Church and presented Mr Lachman with a monetary gift from the congregations of the Presbytery. He then called on two speakers – Mr Colin Wilson, representing the Shettleston congregation where Mr Lachman had served as an elder, and Mr Shanmugam Partheepann, who spoke as a fellow-student and flatmate of Mr Lachman

during his time of divinity training. Mr Lachman suitably replied, referring to his sense of the leading of God's Providence and thanking the local congregations for their unfailing kindness to himself and his wife. An excellent tea provided by the ladies offered an opportunity for fellowship and brought a very pleasant evening to a close.

The prayers and good wishes of the Church will follow Mr Lachman as he begins his work in Covenant College where he will be responsible for the training of pastors as well as a range of administrative duties. We wish him and his wife every blessing from the Lord as they adapt to the challenges of their new situation and seek to serve him in a land of great need but also of great opportunity.

Edinburgh Appeal

James MacInnes

Over the past 11 years the Edinburgh congregation have worshipped in various rented premises in the city. The present building is the fifth the congregation has occupied since January 2000. It has been a long-standing objective for the congregation to have a place of worship of their own, not only for the benefit of the congregation themselves, and to provide a base for local outreach, but also to enhance the profile of the denomination in Scotland's capital city. Finding a suitable building in Edinburgh has not been easy, and property costs are among the highest in Scotland. However, in the Lord's providence an opportunity has now arisen of acquiring a suitable building at a reasonable cost and if all goes well the congregation hope to begin worshipping there early in March. Some 40 per cent of the purchase price will be met from the congregational building fund, supplemented by a generous loan from

Desk



Above: External and Internal photos of the Hall in Arthur Street. Office bearers Peter Thurlow and Sam Semmens present.

the Finance & Sustentation Committee. This will leave an outstanding balance of around £150,000. The congregation are negotiating a bank loan for this amount but will also need funds for internal refurbishment, alterations to basic services, and provision of furnishings and equipment. They will do all they can to raise the necessary funds themselves but feel that the many friends of the congregation, whether within the denomination or beyond, would wish to be associated with this effort. Contributions will be gratefully received and should be sent to the Congregational Treasurer, Mr Alasdair Cameron, 2 Cammo Hill, Edinburgh EH4 8EY. Cheques should be made payable to 'Edinburgh Free Church (Continuing)'. All contributions will be individually acknowledged.



New Moderator-designate

Rev John MacLeod, Tarbat

Rev Graeme Craig of Stornoway is the Moderator-designate for the 2011 Assembly. Mr Craig was born in Paisley in 1964 and was educated at Dundee University and the Free Church College, Edinburgh. Prior to being called in 2009 to the key congregation of Stornoway he was minister on the Ardnamurchan peninsula and later in Lochalsh & Glenshiel where he also took responsibility for Glenelg and Arnisdale. In the struggles which engulfed the Free

Church in the years prior to 2000 Mr Craig, although at that time a relatively junior minister, played a pivotal support rôle for those loyal to the constitutional position of the historic Free Church of Scotland, ensuring that those of them who were members of Assembly had ready access to accurate and relevant information. In recognition of the abilities shown during that critical period, when the Free Church divided in January 2000, Mr Craig was appointed Assistant Clerk

of the General Assembly of the Free Church (Continuing). He is married (1989) to Roberta, a languages graduate from Rathfriland, Co. Down, Northern Ireland, and they have eight children aged from four to twenty. Perhaps unusually for a minister, Mr Craig has an honours degree in Geology and, contrary to some public perceptions of geologists, has a special interest in 'young earth creationism' and the creation-evolution debate. Very much opposed to the secular, scientific materialism agenda being promoted through the education system and the media, he occasionally writes exposing the folly of such things. He sees many of society's problems due to the rejection of biblical truth and the acceptance of pseudo-science, pseudo-psychology and false relativistic morality. He believes that the Church needs to recover confidence and point this out in the world. With a wry sense of humour he admits to enjoying arguing and being pedantic, characteristics allegedly common among Assembly Clerks. Mr Craig comes to the Moderatorial Chair much younger than most, but with a vast range of experience and very wide respect.



Sherman & Lucy Isbell

Sherman Isbell

The Rev Sherman Isbell had to resign in January due to ill-health. He writes: 'I have had thyroid deficiency for a number of years, which fatigues me, and it has got worse in the last year. I have been getting blood tests, and adjustment of thyroid supplements, and hope that, with the Lord's kind blessing, I will be restored in a large measure. But I think it is best for me to get a rest for the moment. The Presbytery kindly accepted my resignation as minister in Washington earlier this month, on the ground of my health. I will seek to do some writing for the time being, and get my strength back. We are grateful for the Lord's many mercies to us'.

Let us remember the Isbells in our prayers and also the Washington congregation. The Rev Rob McCurley has been appointed interim-moderator.

Guesthouse Owners Appeal

The Christian Institute

The Christian owners of a guesthouse who were fined £3,600 for restricting double rooms to married couples are set to appeal the decision. A date has not yet been set for a hearing but the Court of Appeal is expected to examine the case later this year. The Christian Institute has agreed to fund the case.

Meanwhile, homosexual couples have besieged the guesthouse with demands for double rooms, seemingly in a bid to destroy the business.

Hazelmury Bull, 66, has also received abusive and menacing phone calls, but she could not ignore the phone because her 71-year-old husband was in hospital recovering from serious heart surgery.

Please pray:

For Peter Bull, that he will make a full recovery from his surgery.

For Hazelmury as she cares for Peter and deals with the aftermath of the ruling.

That Peter and Hazelmury's faith will be strengthened through this difficult time.

For the legal team that will be involved in the appeal.

That the Court of Appeal will come to a just and fair decision, protecting religious liberty.

For the staff of The Christian Institute as they support Peter and Hazelmury with advice, care, fellowship and funding for the appeal.

For the Communications team at the Institute, handling a huge level of media interest in the case.

Comment on the Bulls' Case

The Christian Institute

Ann Widdecombe and others have spoken out in support of the Christian guesthouse owners penalised for their beliefs about marriage. Miss Widdecombe, a former MP, wrote in the *Daily Express*: 'There is a difference between discriminating against somebody because of what he is and refusing to promote or facilitate what he does. If the Bulls ran a grocery shop which refused to serve homosexuals then that would be discrimination but to refuse to facilitate their activity or that of an unmarried heterosexual couple by providing a double bed is not. It is the once lawful exercise of conscience against particular deeds'. She went on to warn that unless this distinction was reinstated, Christians and other people of faith could find themselves barred from running certain kinds of business.

Miss Widdecombe's concern over the case was echoed by Robert Leitch, an openly homosexual Tory activist. Writing on the widely-respected ConservativeHome blog, Mr Leitch said: 'The reaction to this somewhat traditional yet harmless policy has been remarkable. Mr and Mrs Bull have been tagged as homophobes, taken to court, forced to justify their literal interpretation of the Bible, told by the Judge involved that their views are out of date and, finally, given a punishment which will place significant strain upon their business' finances. In the end, the penalty for holding a diverse viewpoint has been extreme'. He added: 'I am not a Christian. I do not hold any such stringent views about married or unmarried couples. Yet, as an openly gay man in a happy, long-term relationship, it infuriates me when equality groups tell me that cases such as the above should be celebrated as victories for the "homosexual community". Sorry, but I refuse to be confined to any such sub-section of society'. Mr and Mrs Bull's plight has also attracted the support of some of the nation's most prominent newspaper commentators. Peter Hitchens said: 'The law believes that such people have no right to follow their own morals, except in private. The law also now states that homosexual partnerships are equal to heterosexual marriage, which New Labour tried to pretend was not the case'. Mr Hitchens also questioned the use of taxpayers' money to fund the case against the Bulls, saying: 'Britain's embryonic Thought Police, the Equality and Human Rights Commission,

provided the money on your behalf and mine, whether we like it or not'.

Melanie Phillips warned that 'the obsession with equality has now reached ludicrous, as well as oppressive, proportions'.

And Amanda Platell, reflecting on the devastating legacy the trial has inflicted on the Bulls, said: 'I know who I consider to be the real victims in this sorry farce'.

Afghanistan Persecution

Barnabas Fund

Barnabas Fund has received worrying updates on the plight of two men, Said Musa (45) and Shoaib Assadullah (25), who are being held in prisons in Afghanistan because they have left Islam to follow Christ.

Said, a father of six, was arrested in May 2010 as part of a crackdown against Afghan converts to Christianity. He has been tortured and abused in Kabul prison, and his case has been repeatedly delayed. Said's lawyer was blocked from representing him in court, and another lawyer declined to defend him when Said refused to return to Islam. The lawyer said it was impossible to fight such a case in Afghanistan and that if Said faced a judge he would be given three days 'and after that he will execute you'.

Shoaib was arrested in October 2010 for giving a New Testament in the national Dari language to another Afghan. He was due to appear in court on 3 January, but the hearing was postponed while the attorney general looked into the case. He was offered his freedom if he would deny Christ, but he refused. He was then taken barefoot and in chains by

police to hospital, where a doctor said that Shoaib was talking nonsense and needed treatment. Fellow believers fear that the doctors may be giving him mind-altering drugs. At one court appearance, the judge gave him one week to renounce Christianity, otherwise he would be killed for his faith. Shoaib has stated that he has given his life completely into the hands of Jesus, saying, 'Without my faith I would not be able to live'.

Support for the Family

Christian Institute

The Prime Minister has affirmed his support for families, declaring in a speech that they are 'immeasurably important' to ensuring a strong society. David Cameron warned: 'When parents have bad relationships, their child is more likely to live in poverty, fail at school, end up in prison, be unemployed later in life', in an address to a relationship counselling charity. The Prime Minister gave his personal support for marriage, but said families should not be defined by their 'shape', but by the 'love and support' they give. Traditionalists are cautious about Mr Cameron's promotion of marriage because he wants to extend the same benefits to same-sex civil partnerships. The Prime Minister told the audience at Relate that he stands by the pledge in the coalition agreement to recognise marriage in the tax system.

It is high time that recognition was given to the family in its crucial role of nurturing children. The health of society depends on the health of the family. Those who grow up in disciplined, loving households seldom turn to crime and violence.

Obituary



John A MacPherson

Rev John J Murray

We note with sorrow the passing of John A MacPherson, Killin. In the difficult days facing the Free Church in the 1990s John stood out in contending for truth and righteousness. He suffered for the stand he made. He was a leader in the Concern for Justice movement. Even then he was suffering from a heart condition which led to extensive periods of hospitalization and to early retirement from his business as a haulage contractor.

John was a native of Inverness-shire and began life in farming. He moved to Edinburgh and served in the police for 15 years. During that time he became an elder in St Columba's Free Church and was later associated with the congregations in Aberfeldy, Dunblane and Oban. Although not able to exercise the office of elder in recent years he retained a pastoral heart in counselling and visitation. His retirement was spent in serving the local community. He was Chairman of the Community Council for six years. He helped save the Falls of Dochart Retirement Home from being sold as an hotel, and became chairman of the Killin Care Trust which now runs the Home.

His funeral service in Killin was taken on Free Church lines, as John had wished, by his former minister in Oban, Rev J J Murray. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his wife Margaret, and daughter Mairi, with her husband Jonathan, and to his brother and sister and their families.



Books

The Puritan Hope

A Study in Revival and the Interpretation of
Prophecy

Iain H Murray

Banner of Truth Trust,
pbk, 328pp, £6.00

I first read this book when I was a student in university 40 years ago. I remember being gripped by it and really enjoying it. Since then it has sat on my bookshelves unopened, but a week ago I picked it up and read it again with tears. What a joy it is to read of the great revivals and the mighty works God has done in the past! Can God not do these things again?

Recently in the Scottish churches there has been much to depress us. Denominations are divided and declining. There is little evidence of the Spirit at work. Conversions are few. Professing Christians appear very worldly, giving their lives to the pursuit of money and entertainment. Will things simply get worse and worse? Amillennialism, with its pessimistic view of the prospects of the church, has become the common view in Reformed circles. It appears to offer us little hope.

Iain Murray takes us back to the Puritans and the view they had of the future. Generally they held to the Postmillennial view of prophecy – they looked for the church of Christ to grow and flourish till like the mustard seed or the leaven it fills the world. Murray deals with passages in the Old Testament and the New which contain prophecies which he believes are not yet fulfilled. What particularly convinced him was the study of Romans 11. Here the conversion of the Jews and the blessing that will be to the Gentiles is clearly set out. Up till now only a small remnant of the Jews have been saved. We look for the great majority of them to be brought into the kingdom. That will then be 'life from the dead' for the Gentile church. Many Old Testament passages have yet to be fulfilled. Think for example of the words: 'All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee' (Ps.86:9). Up till now only small minorities in each country have been saved. Reading this book I was renewed in my hope

that there will yet be a greater revival of the church of Christ on earth than we have ever seen before. Let us be optimistic and look for God to do wonderful things on earth to glorify Himself here. Let us keep praying for the conversion of the Jews, for the heathen to be the inheritance of Christ (not just a remnant of them) and let us keep working with new optimism for the coming of the kingdom!

Recommended to warm your soul!

William Macleod

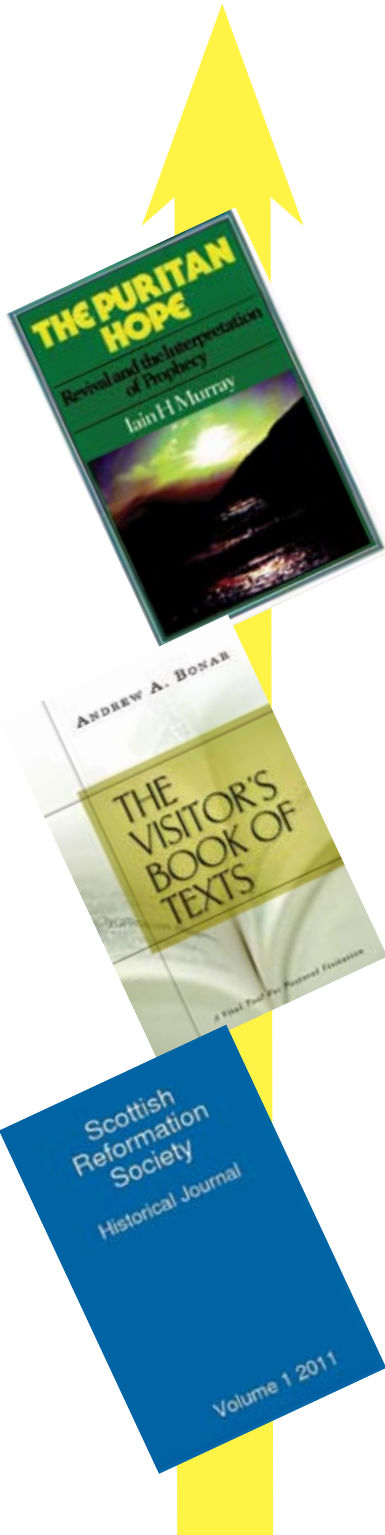
The Visitor's Book of Texts

Andrew Bonar

Banner of Truth Trust,
pbk, 280pp, £6.00

This is a paperback reprint of a handbook first published in 1856 by seasoned pastor Andrew Bonar, then minister of Finnieston Free Church, Glasgow, to assist in pastoral visitation. Bonar considers the sick persons themselves, in 10 different conditions towards the Gospel, ranging from unbelievers who are sceptical to the Gospel, or indifferent, to believers struggling with assurance, or struggling with the prospect of death. In each case a multitude of texts are quoted that are relevant and fitted to answer the problems raised by each case. He then considers the different classes of person found in the sick-room, including the old, the young, children and the relatives of the sick person, again listing texts suited to their specific needs, before in the latter section going on to deal with those struggling with sorrow. Each listing of texts is preceded by a short introduction offering advice regarding the best approach for the visitor in each case, showing the accumulated wisdom of an experienced pastor.

The texts given are quoted in full, and it is refreshing to note that the publishers have retained the Authorised Version for the quotations, especially given that the book will likely be more often used with older believers. In addition, Bonar frequently adds some words of exegesis or application after the quotations, showing the relevance to the pastoral case being addressed. These quotations are sometimes so useful and



insightful, that shortly after I began reading, I started to keep note of the more useful references on the computer for future use!

It is unlikely that many pastors would want to take out a volume of this nature too frequently during their pastoral visits, but I suspect rather that the value of the book will be as a work of reference, in suggesting different passages to be read, and different lines of pastoral encouragement and challenge that can be adopted during specific visits. It is particularly useful for a divinity student, giving thought to future pastoral work, in suggesting many helpful approaches to visitation. It would also be an encouragement to a troubled believer who wished to apply the medicine directly to themselves, as there is much here to encourage, uplift, and above all, to point to Christ.

The production of the book is of good quality, but it is surprising, given the usefulness of the volume, that it has been published as a light paperback. As a compressed, pocket-sized hardback, perhaps leather-bound, it would be much more robust, and much easier to carry in preparation for situations where it might come in useful. It is also surprising that the publishers have neglected to provide a textual index at the back, especially given the value of some of the exegetical comments included.

As an example, he quotes Isaiah 53:7 for the sick believer: 'He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth', adding simply '1. Christ our atonement. 2. Christ our example'.

This volume is warmly recommended to all who engage in the work of visitation, whether ministers, elders or others.

Alasdair J Macleod

The Anglosphere's Broken Covenant

Rediscovering the Validity and Importance of the Solemn League and Covenant

Michael Wagner

Gospel Covenant Publications,
pbk, 71pp, \$7.00

The argument of this little book is that the Reformed Presbyterian Churches (Covenanters) are right in asserting that the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 is still binding today. The leaders of church and state in Scotland, England (including Wales) and Ireland along with many of the common people pledged themselves to God to work for one Reformed church throughout the British Isles, to seek to preserve that church and to 'endeavour

the extirpation [or total destruction] of Popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness'.

Israel's covenant with the Gibeonites was binding upon following generations. Although King Charles II signed the Covenant and then broke it, and although the Revolution Settlement of 1690 ignored the Covenant, these things cannot disannul it. This book asserts that it is not just binding on the UK and Ireland but also upon the nations of the Anglosphere – the nations which were colonized by the British, namely Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. The colonists took their obligations to the Covenant with them wherever they went to settle.

When we study Scripture history it seems that the Covenants which God made with man were to be recalled by subsequent generations eg the covenant with Abraham, or with Moses and Israel or with David, yet the covenants man made with God do not appear to have been recalled and revived hundreds of years later. For example the covenant made with God in the days of King Asa or the one made in the days of King Josiah seem to have served only their own generation. They provided an example for subsequent generations but were not revived in their original form.

In 1661 just before James Guthrie died on the scaffold in Edinburgh, the first of the Covenanter ministers to be martyred, he cried: 'The Covenants, The Covenants, shall yet be Scotland's reviving'. God alone knows what part the seventeenth century covenants will play in a coming revival.

William Macleod

Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal

Volume 1, 2011

Edited by Douglas Somerset

Scottish Reformation Society,
pbk, 271pp, £8.01 inc p&p,
from www.lulu.com

This journal is a new venture for the Scottish Reformation Society, giving an outlet for the publication of academic research on Scottish church history from a Reformed perspective. The result is a polished and professional volume, covering a diverse range of periods and subjects. An introduction by Douglas Somerset emphasises the specific contribution that evangelicals can make to the study of church history, arising from their greater

personal and theological sympathy with Church leaders of the past, their greater understanding of the distinctions of Reformed theology, and especially their greater recognition of the historical fact of personal conversion as a factor in church history.

Central to the volume is a long and detailed study of the historian and former SRS President D Hay Fleming (1849-1931) by Roy Middleton, giving a valuable insight into his life and work. Typically of Middleton's work, it is exceedingly thorough, if perhaps a little lengthy, covering more than 100 pages. It is especially interesting to notice his involvement in younger days with James Begg in the anti-unionist cause in the Free Church, his opposition to innovations in worship, to the extent that he eventually felt obliged to leave his beloved home town of St Andrews and the Free Church behind, and moved to Edinburgh to join the Original Secession Church, and his involvement in the training of Free Church students after the division of 1900, prior to the establishment of the Free Church College. He also twice visited Princeton to deliver the Stone lectures, and befriended B B Warfield.

There are also profiles of two 19th century Free Church ministers, A D Davidson by John Smith, which gives a good insight into the congregational life of the Church, and James MacGregor, a rather forgotten theological professor, by Rev John Keddie, highlighting his contributions to opposing innovation in theology and worship. Douglas Somerset has a very fine piece of research attempting to bring together the different traditions and stories of the Highland worthy 'Angus of the Hills', which is especially interesting on the subject of the rather mysterious photograph of him, which must be one of the earliest extant photographs from the Highlands. Matthew Vogan contributes an excellent essay on the preaching of Samuel Rutherford, showing that this precise and polemical dogmatician preached nonetheless in a plain and warmly-affective manner, recognizing the importance of moving the heart as well as the intellect of his hearers.

The Journal is recommended to all with an interest in Scottish church history.

Alasdair J Macleod

The Scottish Reformation

A Movement of Grace, Part I

Rev John W Keddie

*This is the substance of a paper given at the Free Church School in Theology,
Larbert, September 2010.*

I. Introduction

We think of this fair land of Scotland as 'Protestant'. But hold on, there has been such declension in the Protestant Churches over the last century and a half through liberal theology and nominality in church life. The spirit of the Reformation has all but departed the land. Besides this there have been significant demographic changes, so that there has been an influx of adherents to Roman Catholicism since Catholic 'emancipation' (1793; the hierarchy was formally restored in 1878).

What shocks us perhaps as much as anything is the pattern of church attendances in Scotland in recent times. By 2006 attendances in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland reportedly exceeded those in the Church of Scotland! According to Christopher Claire, 'Scotland has become more Roman Catholic than Protestant, with its congregations now outnumbering the Kirk for the first time since records began. Figures compiled by the independent group *Christian Research* reveal that in 2005 the number of Catholics who went to Mass surpassed those who attended Church of Scotland services. A total of 215,000 Catholics went to church, compared with only 208,400 attending the Church of Scotland'. As an indication of movements in religion and demographic movements affecting Scotland it may be noted that in 1851 Roman Catholics accounted for 4.3% of total church attendances in Scotland, whereas by 2002 the total was 35%. This raises huge question marks about our 'Protestant' nation. Scotland a Reformed nation? Sadly, no longer is this the case.

The situation is rather dire for Protestantism in our day. The pass, in short, has been sold long since in this fair country, a country once so profoundly influenced by the principles and truths of the Reformation movement in the 16th Century. A tragedy has happened and we still await and should ardently seek a new movement of the Lord that there may be recovery of biblical truth and life in church and nation.

2. What was the historical context of the Scottish Reformation?

I have been given the task of considering the Reformation movement in Scotland as a movement of grace. I don't intend to go over much historical detail. In the nature of the case this paper is a 'taster' doing little more than outlining the indicators that the Reformation movement in Scotland was indeed a 'movement of grace'.

What were the influences which encouraged a work of Reformation in Scotland and beyond? We simply touch on four important factors here:

(1) There were distinct theological influences from outwith Scotland. This included the influences in the 14th Century of John Wyclif (1324-1384) and the Lollards from

south of the border, and into the 15th Century through the life and work of John Hus (1369-1415), the Czech Reformer. Then in the early years of the 16th Century naturally there were the writings and influence of Martin Luther (1483-1546) in the earlier Reformation movement on the Continent. This was significant in the lives of Patrick Hamilton (1504-1528) and George Wishart (1513-1546), both of whom were so influential in the movement towards reform of the Church in Scotland, and both of whom were martyred for their faith. James Beaton, Archbishop of St Andrews at the time of Hamilton's martyrdom, thought that Hamilton's death would extinguish the emergent Lutheran 'heresy' in Scotland. Actually, according to one well-known saying, 'the reek [smell] of Patrick Hamilton infected all on whom it did blow'. It blew, among others, on George Wishart, and then on John Knox himself. It is said that Knox (1515-1572) got from Wishart 'the first rudiments of Greek, and who – having rendered his first service to the cause of the Reformation by bearing the two-handed sword for his protection – was dismissed on the night of his [Wishart's] betrayal with the significant words, "One is sufficient for one sacrifice", showing what fate he now anticipated for himself". Knox himself in the providence and ordering of the Lord was also greatly influenced by John Calvin (1509-1564) and Geneva.

(2) There was the corruption of the pre-Reformation Church which was a stimulus to the work of Reformation. In his *Life of John Knox* Thomas M'Crie paints a vivid picture of the period leading up to the Reformation in the Church situation in Scotland: 'The corruptions by which the Christian religion was universally depraved before the Reformation, had grown to a greater height in Scotland than in any other nation within the pale of the Western church. Superstition and religious imposture, in their grossest forms, gained an easy admission among a rude and ignorant people. By means of these, the clergy attained to an exorbitant degree of opulence and power; which were accompanied, as they always have been, with the corruption of their order, and of the whole system of religion... The ignorance of the clergy respecting religion was as gross as the dissoluteness of their morals... Of the doctrine of Christianity, scarce any thing remained but the name... Divine service was neglected; the churches were deserted (especially after the light of the Reformation had discovered abuses and pointed out a more excellent way)'. Little wonder M'Crie could exclaim: 'How grateful we should be to divine Providence for this happy revolution!... How much are we indebted to those men, who, under God, were the instruments in effecting it'.

(3) There were movements in social life that providentially gave impetus to the work of Reformation.

There were political, economic, cultural and intellectual forces at work which gave impetus to a Reformation movement within Church and society. These effectively challenged the Romanist hegemony in Church and State. Increasingly, no doubt, it became impossible to resist new ideas infiltrating through Scottish students exposed to Reformation movements stirring in centres of learning in England and the Continent. Around the same time that Glasgow University was founded (1451) printing was invented. By 1474 there was a printing press in England. This provided scope for the printing and distribution of the 'heretical' Reformed ideas. In relation to Scotland, Norman Walker wrote that 'although it was not until 1508 that the first book was printed in Scotland, yet here, as elsewhere, the influence of the revival of letters was by and by experienced, and the nation rendered less and less disposed to tolerate the extravagances at which, in its ignorance, it had winked'.

(4) *There was evidence of a genuine movement of God's Spirit in the Reformation in Scotland.* The most important factor in the Scottish Reformation movement must be that *it was a genuine movement of grace.* This was Reformation historian, T M Lindsay's, judgment: 'The great Reformation of the sixteenth century had for its soul a genuine revival of religion; but this soul was incased in a body of fleshly elements. The Scottish Reformation had the same mixed character. Within, it was a fulfilment of the promise of the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon his waiting people. As it appeared in history, the spiritual movement took bodily shape in political and social changes.

The Reformers were men who, under the impulse of a great religious afflatus, desired freedom to worship God in their own way, as conscience, moved by Scripture and the influence of the Holy Spirit, demanded'. More recently Professor Heiko Oberman, of Harvard University, wrote that 'The genius of the Reformation is best described as the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit ... The Reformation returned to an understanding of the Holy Spirit as the dynamic presence of God in Jesus Christ ... under the veil of the preached word'. This was as true of the Reformation in Scotland as anywhere else in Europe.

As far as preparation for Reformation was concerned, Lindsay well stated that, 'Scotland, far from the centre of European life in the sixteenth century, nevertheless received the Reformation almost as early as, and accepted it more thoroughly than, most other countries. The land had been well prepared for it by the education of the people, by the constant intercourse between Scotland and the continental nations, especially France and Germany, and by the sympathy of Scotch [sic.] students with the earlier religious movements in England and in Bohemia; while the condition of the Romish Church, the poverty of the nobility, and the political situation of the country aided to some extent the efforts of those who longed for a reformation of religion in Scotland'. As for John Knox, his stated conviction was that the reformers sought 'nothing but Christ Jesus; his glorious Evangel to be preached, his holy Sacraments to be truly ministered, superstition, tyranny, and idolatry to be suppressed in this realm; and, finally, the liberty of this our native country to remain free from the bondage and tyranny of strangers'.

All Age Holiday

Peggi Smith

(See the 2010 Group Photo on the Rear Cover)

Last year's 'All Age Holiday' was, once again, a huge success, with both new and familiar faces coming to enjoy a week of Christian fellowship and activities (July 10th to 17th). Taking place at the Boys' Brigade Headquarters in Larbert there was opportunity to visit many places. This year, we went on two group visits – Blair Drummond Safari Park and Go-karting at the Larbert course. For those who liked a more leisurely pace of life, there was plenty of opportunity to chat whilst enjoying readily available cups of tea and coffee. Daily activities took place at the sports' hall with badminton and table tennis tournaments. There was also a putting tournament on the front green and the keenly anticipated 'professional styled' outdoor football every afternoon.

Activities aside, there were some great talks led by Derick Gilles in the mornings on Ruth, Samson and Samuel, with

some interesting background and Biblical history on which the children were quizzed at the end of each day – quite competitive sometimes! Afterwards, there were the main talks by Rev Gavino Fioretti on the subject of 'What is the Church?' They were excellently presented, challenging us to take a step back and test ourselves to see if we are worshipping God as He demands in His Word. Both speakers spoke well to every age group – simple yet thought-provoking.

All in all, everyone had an amazing and blessed time and I'm sure are considering coming again! All are warmly invited to this summer's 'All Age Holiday' running from July 9th to 16th at Larbert. Come along and you will not be disappointed! This year the holiday can be paid for in stages with the final payment by the 22nd of June.

Congregational Remittances - January 2011

	2011 Jan	2011 Total	2010 Total to Jan		1865	1865	1,781
Presbytery of Inverness				Outer Hebrides Presbytery			
Aberdeen	900	900	800	Cross	1100	1100	1,000
Duthil-Dores	1430	1430	1,876	Harris - Leverburgh	1700	1700	1,700
Inverness	2000	2000	2,000	Harris - Scalpay	1125	1125	1,000
Kilmorack & Strathglass	1400	1400	1,400	Knock & Point	1000	1000	1,000
Total Inverness	5730	5730	6,076	North Uist	7928	7928	5,681
				Stornoway	14718	14718	12,162
				Total Hebrides			
Northern Presbytery				Presbytery of Skye & Lochcarron			
Assynt & Scourie	0	0	0	Bracadale	1000	1000	1,000
Brora	0	0	0	Duirinish (Waternish)	715	715	400
Kiltearn	0	0	1,800	Kilmuir & Stenscholl	1300	1300	1,300
Tarbat	0	0	0	Lochalsh	150	150	703
Total Northern	0	0	1,800	Poolewe & Aultbea	520	520	525
				Ullapool	0	0	0
Southern Presbytery				Portree	1200	1200	1,200
Arran	806	806	703	Snizort	1200	1200	1,200
Ayr	0	0	0	Strath	30	30	0
Dumfries	0	0	0	Total Skye	6115	6115	6,328
Edinburgh	0	0	0	Total Congregations	31,369	31,369	30,769
Glasgow - Partick	2000	2000	2,000	Other Donations	3,997	3,997	679
Glasgow - Shettleston	2000	2000	0	Legacy	0	0	0
Glasgow - Knightwood	0	0	1,700	TOTAL	35,366	35,366	31,447
Rothsay	0	0	0	Including Gift Aid	0	0	0
Total Southern	4806	4806	4,403				

Mission Trip to Kenya *David Keddie (Shettleston)*

My father and I left Glasgow airport at 6 am on Friday 29th October and arrived in Nairobi, Kenya, via Amsterdam, at 8 pm. What were we doing there? My father, Rev John Keddie, had been invited to give lectures to a number of pastors at the NCIST (Nairobi College of Intercultural Studies and Theology) and I was given the opportunity and privilege of accompanying him.

The NCIST is an interdenominational and evangelical ministry that comes under the umbrella of the ACGC (Africa Centre for the Great Commission). Started in 2002, it offers Diplomas in Theology and helps African churches take initiatives for world missions by mobilising and sending African nationals to less-reached people and groups in Africa and beyond. Dr James Jongdo Lee, the Principal of the College, and his wife Sue, met us at the airport and took us to the Karen campus, the headquarters of the NCIST. Dr and Mrs Lee are South Koreans who have devoted many years to this educational ministry in Nairobi. It is a wonderful opportunity for our Church to be invited to contribute to this ministry there. The College

was to be our residence for the next seven nights, and very comfortable it was too! Newly completed in March, it is a large building with excellent facilities.

The following morning we headed back to the airport to pick up our luggage which had not arrived with us the day before! Saturday was spent touring Nairobi and finished up with a trip to the Nairobi National Park, where we were treated to a display of wonderful animals in their local habitat.

On the Lord's Day Dr Lee took us to the Good Tidings of Christ Sanctuary, a church in Naivasha, a town north of Nairobi, where my father preached in the congregation. This took us past a spot 8,000 feet above sea level, overlooking part of the rift valley. It was a stunning situation. The service was an eye-opener and a wonderful experience. Over one hundred people, young and old, worshipped the Lord within a rough structure constructed of tin and wood – such a contrast to our heritage of old stone churches. Their worship style was very different to our own; the whole body moved as they sang

with such energy and enthusiasm it would put most of us to shame. After the service we received a meal and warm fellowship from Pastor James Gichuru and his family.

On Monday morning, and also on subsequent mornings, we were awakened before 6 am by the voluminous sound of conference attendees in earnest prayer. During the morning more pastors began to arrive from different parts of Kenya and indeed Africa, with representatives from Sudan, Ethiopia and Tanzania, to name a few. The lectures began in earnest, and over the course of the next four days my father lectured on Church History and Principles, covering topics ranging from influential characters involved in the Reformation to the headship of Christ over the Church. In all there were four lectures a day and over the four days ten lectures were given on Church History and six on Church Principles. The lectures were well received, many of the pastors having had little or no theological training. There were many laughs when my father gave an account of Martin Luther and the Diet of Worms!

It soon became apparent to us that Kenya is a nation where the gospel has spread, but there has been little interest in establishing creeds and confessions. As a result there are many independent congregations whose theological understanding of the Scriptures and church worship and discipline vary widely. It was indeed a privilege for my father to introduce the eager listeners to the Westminster Confession, a great summary of Reformed doctrine. We can only pray that the seeds sown will one day produce an eagerness for Reformation teaching



On the last day of lectures there were a few cultural exchanges; my father and I sang Psalm 23 in two-part harmony to the tune Crimond and the students performed a traditional Masai song led by Pastor Obadiah Obiki – quite an incredible performance! It was sad having to say goodbye to such wonderful Christian folk, but what marvellous memories we have brought back home with us. Please remember the needy country of Kenya, a land ripe for the gospel. Pray for the work of Dr Lee and his staff in the NCIST, that they would find English-speaking lecturers and that the pastors would be thoroughly equipped for a Reformed ministry. Praise the Lord or as they say in Kenya, Bwana asifiwe!





**All Age Holiday
2010 Group Photo**

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

Romans 1:16