

ISSUE
28/2

PRESBYTERIAN NETWORK

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN ENGLAND & WALES



» FAMILY WORSHIP WORSHIP IN 'THE LITTLE CHURCH'

»
**MARTIN LUTHER:
HIS NINETY-FIVE THESES**

»
**SUMMER
READING**

»
**A CHRISTIAN
IN BUSINESS**

» INSIDE this issue



13 »
Summer Reading

15 » **Keeping Going
as Christians**



17 »
**Martin Luther:
His Ninety-five Theses**

20 »
**A Christian in
Business**

03 » **Spotlight** on the Churches

13 » **Summer Reading**

14 » **Theodore Beza's final hours**

15 » **Keeping Going as Christians**

17 » **Martin Luther: His Ninety-five Theses**

20 » **A Christian in Business**

22 » **Family Worship**
Worship in 'The Little Church'

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“ EDITOR'S NOTE

The United Kingdom is passing through a period of change and turmoil. On 23 June last year, the British people voted to leave the European Union.

The General Election has resulted in a hung parliament. In recent weeks, there have been three 'terrorist attacks' by Muslims inspired by jihad: 22 March, Westminster Bridge, 6 dead, 49 injured; 22 May, Manchester Arena, 23 dead, 119 injured; 3 June, London Bridge, 8 dead, 48 injured.

These violent acts remind us how much our country needs the truth of the Bible. Government and media seem to believe the multi-faith lie; they need to know that Christianity alone is true and other religions are false. Muslims confuse western secular liberal immorality with Christianity; and they need to know that true Christianity is the polar opposite, calling sinners to repentance and salvation in Christ. And tragically, young Muslim men die in suicide attacks, thinking that they will enter paradise; they need to hear the Bible's warnings about hell. We must not cease to lift up the light of the gospel and pray for the nation as taught in 1 Timothy 2. ◊

📍 SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

📍 NEW - SALFORD, MANCHESTER

The month of May was very significant for Greater Manchester. First, Andy Burnham became the region's first directly elected mayor. Then, on 22 May, the same night we were meeting for our monthly study and prayer, there was the appalling Islamic terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena. It is too soon to fathom the effects. The IRA bomb of 1996 was a watershed, prompting the redevelopment of Manchester city centre, but people carried on as before. This latest attack cut more deeply.

These events have happened just as we prepare to plant a church. For two years, we have been running studies in Greater Manchester. Salford has been chosen as a strategic location, at the centre of major regeneration and with excellent transport links. There is a strong sense of community and local identity, a proud history and a pride about recent investment, but there is poverty, materially and spiritually. The existing churches want their witness to be strengthened, and are very glad for our arrival, especially into Broughton. There are many living in Salford about whom we should ask, 'How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?'

As many of you know, I have recently been ordained and commissioned to this work. Rosemary and I intend to move to

Salford in August. From September, we will switch to weekly studies and start monthly trial evening services. Beginning with a committed core, we will be gathering people with a view to establishing the work as a church.

✍️ Chris Statter

📍 BARRY

In recent months we have been encouraged by the number of new visitors to the church. Many of them are believers who have moved to Barry, and have sought a Reformed evangelical fellowship. It has been a pleasure also to welcome those to our Sunday services who have attended the Christianity Explored course that Rev. Andrew Goodman has been conducting.

On 14 May, we welcomed the Morea family into the church. Their children were also baptized. We give thanks for God's goodness in this matter.

Rev. Andrew Goodman and family have travelled to the US for 3 weeks. Our Associate Pastor will be preaching God's Word every Sunday, and he will give a report on the work that God is doing in Barry and further afield within the EPCEW.

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

We recently had the joy of welcoming Mr Alex Pettett to our Sunday services. Alex is the Executive Director of World Witness, the mission arm of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP).

Rev. John Cook continues a series in the Gospel of John on the Lord's Day, and has started a new Bible Study in Philippians. Andrew is continuing his series in the Gospel of Matthew.

 Brendan Hope

BERLIN

The work in Berlin continues and is growing. We constantly have new people coming to visit our services, of whom some then become regular visitors. Over the next months, God willing, we will receive a new family into membership. We keep praying that our congregation will be a spiritual home for those who worship with us and that the Lord will keep the peace and unity in the congregation.

We are look to the Lord expectantly for the work in Berlin. We are working for the recovery of reformed theology and life, all for the glory of God. We are finishing our sermon series through John's Gospel in the morning and we will continue with a 15 week-long series on 'What is a biblical worship service?' Our hope as elders is that this will help the congregation in knowing, loving and worshipping God better.

Berlin has around 4.8 million citizens; it is a big city! We are thinking of ways to reach

these people and to let the congregation be known in the city. We will start with handing out flyers in June and pray that God will bless our efforts. Finally, we have just been informed that from the beginning of 2018 that we need to find a new meeting place. Please join with us in prayer for a suitable facility for the work of the church to be provided in West Berlin.

 Johannes Müller

BLACKBURN

It is with joy that we received a visit from the Rev. Wim Hoorn along with eight members and two children of the Eemdijk congregation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated). For some months I and members of our congregation were wondering how we would cope with accommodation, and how the group of young people from the Netherlands would feel among us, who are by and large an ageing congregation. All such concerns proved unnecessary. From the moment we collected them at the railway station, we felt very much at ease, especially with the minister and his wife. Saturday proved a delightful and very edifying day, when we had a barbecue and time of fellowship one with another. We could truly say that our conversation was upon things touching the King. While there are cultural differences, we felt such a union of soul as we sat together in the garden and discussed such matters as the covenant of grace, justification and its relation to sanctification, assurance of salvation, and the need for ever deepening

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

communion with the Lord. On the following day, the Lord's Day, immediately after the morning service we had a communal meal. What a delight it was to see our people obviously enjoying fellowship with the Dutch folk and our assessor elder Kevin McGrane and his wife. It was with a sense of sadness that we left our visitors at the airport early on the Monday morning for their journey home. We do hope to reciprocate the visit in the not too distant future, Psalm 133:1.

On another note, while we are encouraged to be welcoming two new members into membership, we do covet your prayers for the seriously ill of our congregation.

 Norman Green

BURY ST EDMUNDS

Over the past few months, we have seen the Lord's faithfulness as he builds up his church and works through us to reach out. Benjamin Wontrop was ordained and installed as Associate Minister in March. Despite the short notice, we were blessed to receive many guests from around the Presbytery for the service and reception afterwards.

Some of our military families have been meeting with Benjamin once a month to discuss booklets on aspects of the Christian life. We are also grateful for God's gracious sustaining and protecting of our American servicemen who are deployed, and of their families. In addition, we have been



encouraged by a few new faces in worship, from the community and from the military!

We continue to meet bi-weekly with half a dozen non-Christian teens for Bible study. Please also pray for our Saturday morning 'kids club' and Friday evening 'youth club' and for the Thursday 'coffee mornings' - for precious souls in darkness to experience the light and life that is found through Christ alone!

 Benjamin Wontrop

CAMBRIDGE

We are still without a minister. We are grateful to other churches in the Presbytery for providing us with good ministry and to our elder, Donald John MacLean, for preaching regularly. Remember him and our other elder, Peter Leverton, as they continue to search for a new minister

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

and carry increased responsibility for our congregation. Pray also for patience for our congregation as we wait on the Lord. We are thankful for an increase in the number of children attending our children's club, 'Adventurers', with two local families joining us this term. Pray that we will become known among families in the school and area. We would also like to run a holiday Bible club at Queen Emma School during the summer. Pray for help with organizing this.

We are planning to have an intern, Jonathan Baxter, during August. Pray that this would be helpful to him and a blessing to our congregation.

Several of our young people are sitting exams and a number of members are suffering from ill health and the difficulties of older age.

 Annabel Haylett



at the baptism of their second child, Max Theo. Church worker John Woolley was responsible for a visit by 60 pupils from one junior school to learn about their local church. Not quite the cathedral they had previously visited, but just as enthusiastic and keen to learn why we did certain things.

An Easter Egg hunt brought 77 excited children to a local playing field, happy to leave with plenty of chocolate as well as invitations to Explorers and the newly established *Bethel Youth Group (BYG)* for older children. The children's work is progressing well but we long for their parents to cross the threshold of the church and help build Bethel as a true community church.

 Patricia Stowell

CARDIFF - BETHEL

Bethel's newly refurbished building is now complete with prominent signage displaying its use. It has been well received in the district and we pray that it may be an encouragement to residents to enter and see that the Lord is good. *Tiny Tunes*, our parent and toddler group, has already benefited with a record 26 children at one session.

Steve Jones was elected as deacon in March and shortly afterwards we celebrated with him, his wife Miriam and daughter Bethany

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

CARDIFF - IMMANUEL

Recently we have rejoiced with thanks to God that we could welcome Rob and Ziska David into the membership of our congregation.

We have been touched by the 'calling home' of two brothers in Christ. Rev. Glen Thomas, a retired minister who worshipped with us, and Roy Humphries. Although Roy's death was unexpected, the Lord is upholding our sister Mavis in her loss.

The church is currently working hard to lay a foundation for the future: there is a new catechism class; and the group of men who feel a desire to serve the Lord continue to study, recently tackling the topics of the Sabbath Day and Infant Baptism.

In July, Richard Holst and Peter are due to represent the EPCEW at the International Conference of Reformed Churches in Canada.

 Peter Naylor

CHELMSFORD

On Palm Sunday we celebrated the 25th anniversary of our church with a service of thanksgiving. We welcomed back our former minister, Rev. Dr John Scott, who preached, and also Rev. Chris Kavanagh, who led the prayers. Rev. David Cross, who founded the church originally, sent a warm letter of congratulations. Rev. Darren Moore led the service and the church was

full of old friends, as well as our present congregation. Afterwards, there was an opportunity to catch up with each other over lunch.

Over the summer, one of our young people, Iris Heij, is going to work with Living Waters, a Christian mission reaching out to needy children in Borneo. Two others girls are attending summer camps, which we pray will be a time of real blessing to them.

Our Associate minister, Rev. Steffen Jenkins, leaves us in August to take up a position as Lecturer of Old Testament and Biblical Languages at Union School of Theology, in South Wales. His work here in Chelmsford has been much appreciated and we will miss him, Sally and the boys.

 Ruth Ferguson

CHELTENHAM - NAUNTON LANE

We rejoice with Megan and Paul Johnston on the birth of Clara Elizabeth on 22 April. Clara was baptized on 14 May. Anita Green, Priscilla Liau, and Claire and William Haggie were welcomed into membership in recent months. We rejoice to see their continuing commitment to church life.

With the approach of summer, the church has organized some events to do together - the traditional Wye canoe paddle for the fitter, the Mystery Bus Tour for the more mature, and a picnic for all at Crickley Hill.

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

They help us enjoy fellowship outside the usual church setting.

This year, Stephen and Audrey Johnston and Sarah Carron will be at the church in Mangalia, Romania for a week in June.

Having raised the needed funds, the Cochran family – Laura and Michael and Fox from Huntersville, NC – will be arriving in Cheltenham in early September to assist with the work here.

We say with some sadness that Rev. and Mrs Doug McCallum will be leaving us later this year. Please pray for wisdom as they wait on the Lord for their next move.

Finally, we welcomed back our minister, Rev. Andy Young, at the end of March after his sabbatical.

 Tai-Tuck Yu

CHELTENHAM - WHADDON ROAD

Since Christmas we have had a new family join the congregation which has been a real encouragement. We were able to do some outreach at Easter and one person has come for two weeks in a row as a result of a leaflet through the door.

We have a long-standing relationship with a local nursing home where we run services every couple of weeks. This is not only an encouragement to the residents but also an opportunity to get to know the staff.

The children's choir was able to sing there and we believe that the Lord is blessing this relationship.

In the summer we hope to celebrate our 140th anniversary as a church. Our intention is to use the last week of July as an opportunity for outreach. Several young people from Urk in the Netherlands are planning to join us to help in this endeavour. We would value your prayers as we make plans for this.

 David Pfeiffer

DURHAM

The Lord continues to bless the congregation here in Durham. After this year's AGM one member mentioned how encouraged he was hearing of all the things that have happened over the past year.

The last few months have seen two events where we have enjoyed fellowship with other churches. The North East church holiday was held over the Easter weekend and saw members from Durham, Gateshead and Hexham join together in North Yorkshire. The activities kept us active and the teaching fed our souls. The food for our bodies was also exceptionally good!

Durham also hosted a walk on the May Day bank holiday. The same three churches were represented along with members of Sheffield. We walked around our historic city, enjoying the spring colours. We spent some time at the cathedral not only

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

admiring the ancient architecture but also seeing the work of a Hollywood film crew.

As summer approaches the students that we have welcomed will begin to return home. These students have been an answer to the church's prayers and we continue to pray that the Lord would again send students in the new academic year.

The minister continues to preach through Numbers and 1 Peter on the Lord's Day and we have been encouraged by studying Galatians in our midweek meeting.

 Phil Baiden

GATESHEAD

'Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good! For His mercy endures forever.' We have continued to know the faithfulness

of God throughout this past season. The preaching ministry has been a blessing to the church as our minister worked through Exodus, and has just completed the Gospel of Luke. Our worship services have been well attended and our fellowship sweet. We have been blessed with the covenant baptisms of Grace Eva Kelly and Ruth Margaret Hilton.

The big news is that our minister will return to the States for a year with his family. This will allow Bill to fulfil his duty to his family, to satisfy immigration requirements and visit supporting churches in the USA after eight years in the UK. Bill will also serve as a military chaplain before returning to us in August 2018. The church looks forward to ministry from our ministerial assistants, Nathan Hilton and Florian Weicken, and friends of the congregation. We would value your prayers for our minister and church in the coming year.

 Nathan Hilton



SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

HEXHAM

Hexham Presbyterian Church has had an eventful opening to 2017. There have been several visitors and new attenders during the first part of this year, which has been an encouragement. At the same time it seems as if many in the congregation have faced difficulties of various kinds. God has used this, though, to draw the church together in prayer.

We continue to be involved in weekly outreach. In the last few months we have had one person begin attending regularly as a response to the leafleting. We have several members involved in this, which also draws us together.

We have just finished a study of Ruth on Sunday evenings and we have moved on to Exodus. In the mornings we continue to study the Psalms of Ascent.

During the recent half-term we saw visitors here in the area for holiday. This is the beginning of what we expect to be a busy summer. Each summer we see many from all around the UK and even those from the continent worship with us. We have had the privilege of worshipping with several from sister denominations in Scotland, England, Wales, and the Netherlands. Sometimes visitors nearly double the size of the congregation. This is a favourite time for us each summer and it is exciting to have this ministry.

 Joshua Rieger

HULL

We have had some encouragements during the past few months. The new people are still coming for both services on the Lord's Day and one was brought into membership.

We had a two day outreach at Easter to young people which was about creation, the fall of man, and the death and resurrection of Jesus. It was very interesting and also concerning when we chatted with some of the children to find that they were taught evolution at school at a very young age. There is also a one-week summer club planned for children in August.

Sadly the Rev. Barry Shucksmith who preached the very first sermon for EHPC in 1981 will be leaving the area in July. He has faithfully preached here twice per month in the absence of a minister. We will greatly miss him and this further highlights the need for a minister.

 Chris Lawson

SHEFFIELD

Feeding the flock of God is always the priority. We are about to commence a new series on 1 Samuel in the Lord's Day morning service and 1 Corinthians in the evening. Our catechism class continues to be an important component in strengthening the church spiritually and doctrinally, and we are completing teaching on the Heidelberg Catechism. Hopefully we will teach

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

the Westminster Larger Catechism from September. Church work in a large city like Sheffield always presents challenges and opportunities and there is much scope for more church planting in South Yorkshire in the coming years.

Perhaps, one of the most important items for practical prayer is for the extension of Hill Top Chapel. We have extended the car park and made improvements to the grounds, and we have planning permission to enlarge the chapel. We value prayer for wisdom as we proceed and in reality the extension will provide much needed space and facilities for the work of the gospel.

 Kevin Bidwell

SOLIHULL



Joyfully, Solihull hosted Chris Statter's ordination service on 20 May. Chris has been commissioned to plant a church in Salford, and he and Rosemary plan to move there in August. The congregation in Solihull are gladly sending them to this new field.

In our regular services, we have been feasting on the Word as Stephen preaches from Mark (a.m.) and Hebrews (p.m.), as well as teaching from Ephesians at prayer meetings. We are also warmly appreciating the teaching from the catechism during the evening service, usually from Falko Drijfhout. At Easter, in response to invitations around the district, we were pleased to have several locals attend again. We pray these visitors would keep coming out of a desire to hear more. In the coming months, we intend to focus on the neighbouring Acocks Green area of Birmingham with our outreach. We have a series of apologetics talks planned for June and July, which will be accessible to non-Christians but will also be a means of equipping our members to answer difficult questions.

 Rosemary Statter

TRANÅS, SWEDEN

We are trying to strengthen ties with other churches in Tranås, partly by inviting them to events in our church. In May we had a small conference on the Bible and the future, with Stephen Dancer and David Bergmark as speakers. In September we have a conference on the fruits of conversion, demonstrated in a number of different life relationships. Speakers will be Doug McCallum from the EPCEW and Daniel Ringdahl from Rosenius Church in Stockholm. We are very grateful for this possibility.

Some of our members plan to be active in an evangelism drive during Tranås

SPOTLIGHT on the Churches

Cruising on August 12, when the town will be invaded by a large crowd of people interested in cars and motor sport, bringing at least 1000 special cars of different brands.

Later in August we are planning to have a church camp over a weekend, similar to the one which we had last year and which was much appreciated by the participants.

✍ Sune Jäderberg

OXFORD UPDATE



Like many major urban centres in the West the whole spectrum of religions are on offer in Oxford. In regard to Christianity there is everything from liberal Anglican to charismatic, from Arminian to conservative evangelicals. Remarkably there is nothing distinctly Reformed and Presbyterian. The need for a distinctly Reformed, ordinary means of grace, and warm-hearted Presbyterian church is clear.



In the summer of 2016 the eldership at Naunton Lane Evangelical Presbyterian church in Cheltenham decided something needed to be done to push the door open for a possible church plant in Oxford. Without a core group or any funding, we decided to simply start a Reformed Confessions study group in an attempt to gather interest and further network with contacts in Oxford. 'Re:Con' has now met six times with varying attendances of 5-12. Whilst this group has proved useful, it is increasingly clear that if a church plant were to take place in the future, more would need to be done. The intention is to hold two more Re:Con meetings on 12 June and 3 July and then to review where we are.

The challenge of planting an EPCEW Church in Oxford should not be underestimated. Yet our God is good, his resources infinite, his gospel wonderful, and the UK desperately in need of solid Reformed churches.

Please pray for the Lord's clear guiding, providing and blessing. One way you can help practically is by 'liking' the Re:Con Facebook page and 'sharing' any posts so that news of what we are doing is spread far and wide.

✍ Andy Young
www.facebook.com/reconstudygroup

SUMMER READING

'I am going on holiday. What can I read?' Does this sound familiar? Here are some suggestions with comments from those who recommend them.

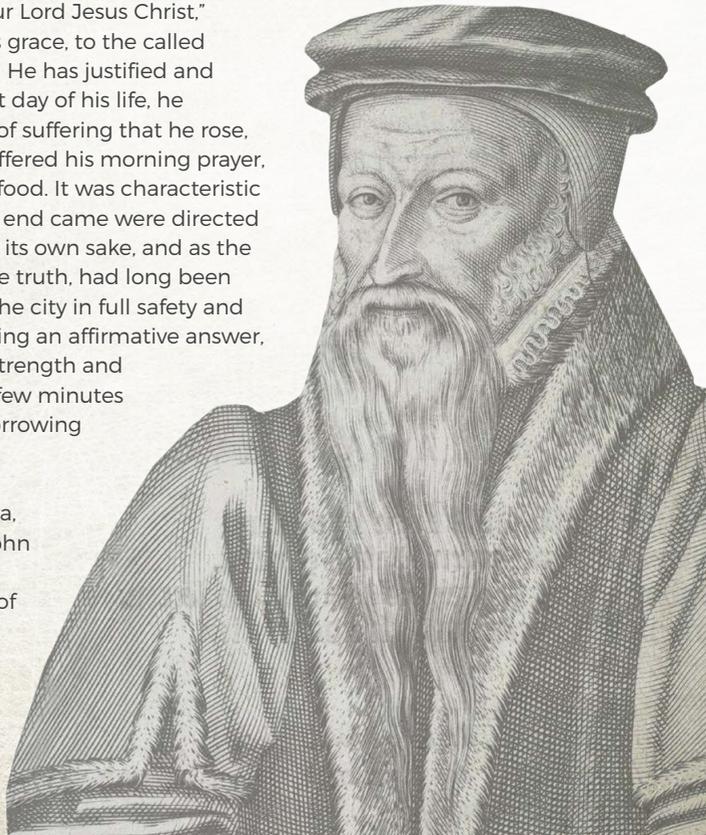
- **Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Devoted to God. Blueprints for Sanctification*** (Banner of Truth, 2016)
 - ✍ 'The most challenging, encouraging, and I pray, beneficial book I have read since *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*.'
- **Edward Donnelly, *Peter: Eyewitness of His Majesty*** (Banner of Truth, 1998)
 - ✍ 'A brilliant study of the life of Simon Peter, as a disciple, a preacher, and a pastor.'
- **John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*** (Banner of Truth, 1955)
 - ✍ 'This book will richly reward slow, careful, and repeated study. 'It's the paperback I often put in my pocket when I am taking a long flight.'
 - ▶ Available in pdf format file free at: www.wtsbooks.com/common/pdf_links/9780802873095.pdf
- **Henry M. Baird, *Theodore Beza*** (The Fig Classic Series on Reformation Theology, May 2013)
 - ✍ 'Theodore Beza worked in Geneva with John Calvin, and succeeded him as the leader of the Reformation there.'
- **Nabeel Qureshi, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*** (Zondervan, 2014)
 - ✍ 'This is Nabeel Qureshi's account of how he became a Christian. He offers valuable insights for Christians who desire to reach Muslims with the Gospel. Nabeel Qureshi has written a second book, *Answering Jihad* (Zondervan, 2016)'
- **Iain H. Murray, *J C Ryle. Prepared to Stand Alone*** (Banner of Truth, 2016)
 - ✍ 'Insight into the life of this servant of God, and into the Anglican Church.'
- **Faith Cook, *Surprised by God. Lives Turned Upside Down*** (EP Books, 2014)
 - ✍ '11 short biographies: William Mackay, William Clowes, Grace Bennett and others.'
- **Voice from the Past. Puritan Devotional Readings, edited by Richard Rushing** (Banner of Truth, volume 1, 2009; volume 2, 2016)
 - ✍ 'Each volume offers 365 one page extracts from Puritan writings. Not holiday reading, then, but two years' worth of meditation.'
- **Howard Griffith, *Spreading the Feast*** (Presbyterian and Reformed, 2015)
 - ✍ 'An excellent book on the Lord's Supper.'
- **Garry Williams, *Silent Witnesses*** (Banner of Truth, 2013)
 - ✍ 'The subtitle is: Lessons on theology, life, and the church, from Christians of the past. Lucidly written biographical sketches.'

Theodore Beza's final hours

Henry Baird describes the end of Theodore Beza's life:

'On Saturday, October 12, 1605, he listened with folded hands and evident joy, as his colleague La Faye, recited the words of Paul, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and discoursed respecting God's grace, to the called according to His purpose, whom He has justified and glorified. On the morrow, the last day of his life, he awoke feeling so much relieved of suffering that he rose, allowed himself to be dressed, offered his morning prayer, took a few steps, and ate a little food. It was characteristic that his last thoughts before the end came were directed to his beloved Geneva, which for its own sake, and as the representative of the cause of the truth, had long been dearer to him than life itself. "Is the city in full safety and quiet?" he asked. Then, on receiving an affirmative answer, he suddenly sank down, losing strength and consciousness at once, and in a few minutes passed peacefully away, while sorrowing friends prayed by his bedside.'

How kind the Lord was to Geneva, giving the city pastors such as John Calvin and Theodore Beza, men devoted to the care of the souls of the people. No wonder Geneva at that time was called 'the most perfect school of Christ upon earth.' May the Lord give us such men in our time. ◦



KEEPING GOING AS CHRISTIANS

REV. DOUGLAS
McCALLUM

We thank God for the promise that he will not lose any of his people (John 10:28-30). We are, by his grace, secure in our salvation and in the love of Christ (Rom. 8:35-39). At the same time, the Bible often warns us against the danger of falling away. We are exhorted to keep going, looking always to Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2). But enduring as a Christian is hard. We are faced with many temptations to give up. Tribulation or persecution is difficult to withstand. So too are the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things. How, then, can we keep going as Christians?

I hope what follows will provide some practical suggestions on how to keep going, perhaps especially for younger Christians. What I write here draws largely on advice I myself received when I was in my teens and early 20s.

1. COME TO CHURCH

The first thing to emphasize to a young Christian is the importance of the church. The Bible knows nothing of lone ranger Christians and all who attempt to go it alone will sooner or later drift from the path. We need one another if we are to keep going.

One of the best things someone ever said to me was that there should be three non-negotiables in the Christian's week: morning and evening worship on the Lord's Day, and

the midweek prayer meeting/Bible study. It is as we sit under the authority of God's Word, particularly as it is preached, and as we gather for prayer, that our faith will grow and we will become stronger Christians.

We lead busy lives and it may not always be possible to attend every meeting. However, I sometimes wonder whether being busy is used as a convenient excuse for a lack of commitment. How do you think Cristiano Ronaldo became one of the world's greatest footballers? By being thoroughly committed to training with his team mates, day in, day out. And all for the glory of a fifteen year career at the top.

What excuse, then, do we have for failing to prioritize going to church? Are three meetings in a week really too much for God to ask, especially when we are set to inherit an everlasting crown of glory?

2. LISTEN WELL

Listening to a sermon is not always easy. Believe me, preachers are very aware of this. You get tired and your mind starts to wander. This is where a second piece of advice has helped me over the years. Take notes. Not necessarily extensive notes; maybe just jot down one or two truths from the sermon, truths that you can then think about and go over in your mind during the week.

In other words, be an active listener. Do not passively sit back in those ever so comfortable pews. Sit up and pay attention. Remember that God is speaking to you. Pray for his help to stay alert and to listen well.

Pray too for the minister, that he might preach the Bible clearly. If you do not understand something, ask questions afterwards. It may not always feel like it, but a treasure trove is being opened up to you when God's Word is preached. So let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Be a participant, not a passenger, in the worship service.

3. READ THE BIBLE WITH OTHERS

We need to be sitting under the preaching of God's Word Sunday by Sunday if we want to keep going as Christians, but we also need to be reading the Bible ourselves during the week. Clearly, we ought to do this on our own. But a third piece of advice I would give to younger Christians is to read and study the Bible with someone else, preferably an older, more mature Christian.

This is something I benefited from when I was a student. At the time I was an ignorant Christian and embarrassed about it. Thankfully, one or two more knowledgeable (and godly) brothers were willing to meet up with me, usually once a week. The meetings would last for about an hour and were very simple. After a brief time chatting, we would read the Bible together (usually a Gospel or an Epistle), we would talk about the passage, I would ask lots of questions, my mentor would answer those questions, and then we would close in prayer. Very simple, but very effective.

So, if you are a young Christian, if you feel ignorant, if you want to know the Scriptures

better, then ask an older, more mature Christian (of the same sex) to meet up with you once a week so that you can read the Bible with them and pray together.

And, if you are an older, more mature Christian, think about those younger Christians in the church whom you could disciple. Seek to teach, train and encourage those among the flock who need your help.

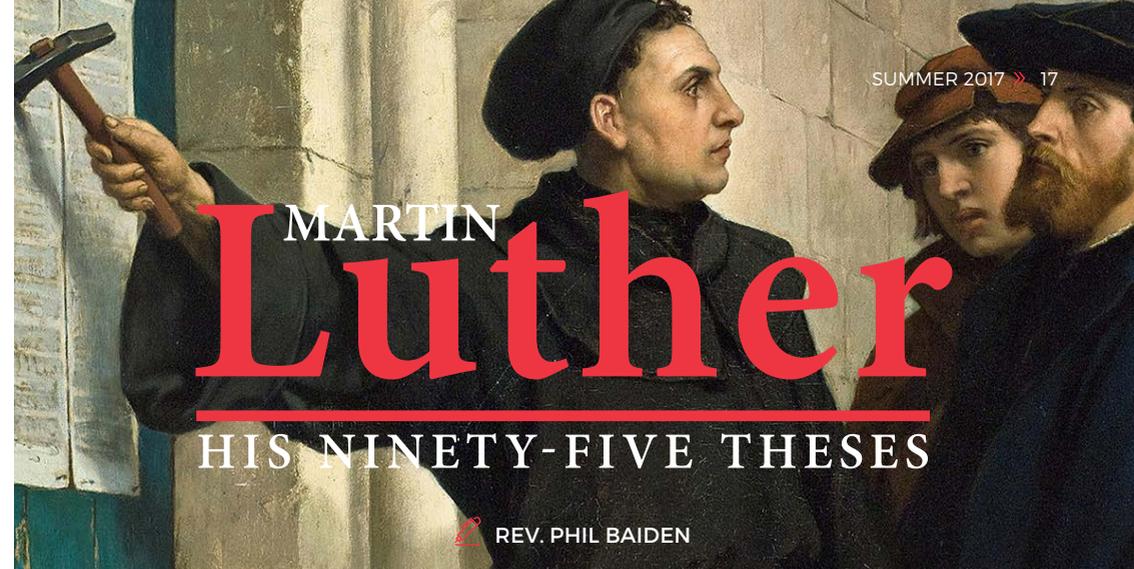
4. SERVE AND HELP

It should be clear by now that one of the key things we need to keep going is one another. Which brings me to my fourth and final piece of advice. We must make it our aim to serve one another and, in so doing, serve our Lord. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve, and we must follow his example. And this applies to new and young Christians just as much as to old and mature saints.

So I ask you: are you serving in the church? Have you thought about how you might best serve your fellow brothers and sisters? Give yourself in love to others. Serve the tea and coffee after the service. Clean the church. Stack away the chairs. Help out with the youth group. Visit the elderly and sick. There are hundreds of ways to serve in the church and it is as you give of yourself to others that God will keep you close to himself.

CONCLUSION

So, be assured that God will not lose you. And, because he promises to keep you, be encouraged to keep going. Do not slacken in your efforts. Prioritize going to church. Listen well to the preached Word. Read the Bible and pray with someone else. Serve in the church. These are just some things that will help you to keep going as a Christian. o



'WHEN A COIN IN THE COFFER RINGS,
A SOUL FROM PURGATORY SPRINGS!'

AN IMPOVERISHED POPE

In the days of Constantine the Great, a church had been built in Rome over the alleged burial place of the Apostle Peter. This church became known as St Peter's basilica and was a vast wooden structure built in the typical style of the fourth century. By the 15th century, however, this building had fallen far from its original splendour. This was an affront to Pope Julius II. The pope was not only the head of the Roman Catholic Church but he was a statesman of wealth and status in medieval Europe. The ancient wooden basilica was a poor reflection of the glory of Rome as the centre of Christendom.

Julius II hatched a plan. He would build a vast new basilica on the site. It would be built on the newest and finest Renaissance principles that were sweeping across Europe. The basilica would have a great dome that would dwarf the one found on the ancient Roman Pantheon. There would be no doubt that this church was worthy of the pope of Rome. The glory of the papal office would be plain for the whole world to see.

Julius II commissioned a design competition and knocked down the old basilica. But after this was done he died, leaving the completion of the project in the hands of the next pope, Leo X.

Leo had become a cardinal at the age of 13, but he came from a noble Italian family more concerned with politics than religion. As a result Leo was a profligate pope. He loved to hunt, wearing hunting boots rather than the papal slippers that allowed people to kiss his feet. He fancied himself a patron of the arts, supporting Raphael and Michelangelo. And he felt that continuing with the project to rebuild St Peter's was a worthy thing to support.

The problem was money, the lack of it!

A GREEDY BISHOP

An answer to the problem came from Germany. Albert of Brandenburg was a man of ambition. He was already bishop over two dioceses but he wanted a third. If he could secure the vacant see of Mainz, he would be

regarded as the most eminent bishop in all the German lands. But this desire was not strictly according to the law of the church. The only way of becoming bishop of Mainz was to pay the pope for the privilege. And with St Peter's needing to be rebuilt the pope was only too keen to accept Albert's money.

However, Albert did not have all the money he needed. He had to find the money from somewhere so he went to one of the largest banking families in Europe, the Fuggers. This family had risen to prominence through shrewd marriages and business interests across Europe. They were the forerunner of the modern banking system we have today. They provided the funds for Albert to pay to the pope but how was Albert to pay back the Fuggers?

The answer was found in the practice of indulgences. Indulgences were pieces of paper that were sold to ensure time off from purgatory, which Roman Catholic theologians taught as the intermediate state between death and heaven. In the deal struck between Albert, the pope and the Fuggers, Leo X issued indulgences which Albert would sell in his dioceses to pay back the loan from the Fuggers.

AN ACCOMPLISHED SALESMAN

The deal was done and the indulgences issued. All Albert needed to do now was sell them. The selling of indulgences was a community event. All the noblemen of a town would turn out and a priest would preach a sermon urging the people of the town to buy their free ticket out of purgatory. This priest was, in effect, a salesman. He had to show to the people how effective the indulgence would be – and these indulgences were 'effective'.

The man chosen was a priest by the name of Johann Tetzel and in his sermons he declared that even if you were to defile the virgin Mary your sins would be fully forgiven by buying this indulgence. Tetzel also played on the emotions of his hearers by proclaiming that the indulgence could help release loved ones from purgatory. He preached that people could immediately ease the suffering of their dead relatives by paying money for a piece of paper. The catchy phrase he used was: 'When a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs!'

Tetzel was an accomplished salesman. He was an expert in the rhetoric needed to separate people from their cash. Money flowed into Albert's coffers and people came from neighbouring dioceses to buy the indulgences. It was at this point that history turned. Seeing people in his own parish rushing off to Tetzel meant that Martin Luther began to take notice of the sale of indulgences.

AN ANGRY MONK

Luther had begun to question Roman doctrine in the months leading up to October 1517. He had taught through Paul's letter to the Romans in the University of Wittenberg and had now moved his attention to the letter to the Galatians. The wrestlings of his own soul had made him realize that forgiveness is available from God through faith in Jesus Christ. Luther was beginning to question the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church and in particular the role of indulgences. When he heard of the people of Wittenberg declaring that they no longer needed to repent for sin because they had bought indulgences, he was concerned. Tetzel was exploiting the fears of the common people for financial

gain. Surely this was contrary to the church's intention for indulgences? He took to studying the issue before he was ready to publicly show his hand.

A FORMAL CHALLENGE?

Luther went public but not with a direct challenge to the church. He wrote 95 theses for debate on the issue, which he posted on the cathedral door at Wittenberg. We might have a romantic idea of what Luther was doing when he did this but the reality was that he was simply asking for clarification of the doctrine of the church.

The theses themselves were not a polemical piece of theology. They were not a fully-formed Protestant declaration. They assume the office of the pope is necessary in the church and needs defending. Thesis 50 states that 'Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the indulgence preachers, he would rather that the basilica of St Peter were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep.' Here is a plea from Luther for the pope to clamp down on the abuses that were taking place rather than abolish indulgences altogether.

The theses also assume that purgatory is a real place in which the pope has authority 'correspond[ing] to the power which any bishop or curate has in a particular way in his own diocese and parish' (Thesis 25).

But within the theses we see the seed of a revolution in the church and the wider society. In the 95 Theses, Luther quotes ordinary people asking: 'Why does not the

pope, whose wealth is today greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build this one basilica of St Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?' (Thesis 86).

The atmosphere was charged. German feeling toward the pope was changing. The fact that these indulgences were being sold to pay for a vanity project in Rome was not lost on the ordinary people. Martin Luther's 95 Theses may not have been intended to challenge the church's status quo but his work became a match that sparked a conflagration.

THE FALLOUT

Almost immediately after Luther published the theses they were spread around German lands. Placards appeared in Leipzig and Nuremberg. A four-page pamphlet version was printed in Basel, Switzerland. The theses were translated from the original Latin into German and they spread rapidly. Thanks to the providential ordering of events, Luther's questioning of the practice of selling indulgences turned from being a request for

debate into a direct challenge to the pope. That was exactly how it was received by the Roman Catholic authorities and in a few, short years Martin Luther would have to break with them. Indulgences may have been the presenting issue but the real question was now coming to the fore. And the question was: What is the gospel?

Martin Luther's answer would be used by God to restore the light to his church in the 16th century, and that light has shone to our own day. ○

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A Christian in Business

This article is based on an interview by Patricia Stowell (Bethel's correspondent)



In Garry Williams' book, *Silent Witnesses*, alongside chapters on men such as Calvin, Tyndale, and Luther, we find a chapter on John Laing. Who was John Laing? He was a Christian and a businessman. And perhaps in our congregations we can think of some who have run their own businesses and used that as an opportunity to serve the Lord and his people.

For many years, Mervyn Dando, a member of the Bethel congregation in Cardiff, has run a business specializing in high quality

power tools. Recently he was asked about his experience as a Christian in business.

Mervyn became a Christian through a local youth club. He began working life as an apprentice repairing electrical tools. 'I earned a pittance and felt exploited.' He remembered this when he became an employer. While still living at home with his parents, and having no capital, he started in business. Trade grew, he began to employ others, and so he took a Diploma in Business Studies to equip himself for the task.

What opportunities did running a business offer to serve Christ?

'I was determined to conduct my business in a biblical way, being fair and honest in my transactions. I was determined to deal in quality products and to build a reputation for good customer service.'

'I was able to offer employment to other Christians. I always tried to treat my employees fairly and honestly.'

'Sometimes, I was able to absorb other businesses, when asked to do that, and so help others who were going through tough times.'

One very special moment came in 2007. Mervyn's business premises had originally been erected as a church building. When the church no longer needed it, Mervyn bought it. However, he always regarded himself as a caretaker, looking after the building for when it would be needed again for the Lord's work. And the day came when it was needed, for the Bethel congregation. 'The biggest opportunity was when the business grew to such an extent that we were able to sell the premises to Bethel church.'

What challenges did being in business present to you as a Christian?

'I did believe that, once I was my own boss, I would have more time to study Scripture and devote more time to Christ's work in the church. In fact, the opposite happened: I had to work long hours, conscious that I was responsible for the wages of a number of employees. There was a great deal of pressure to open on Sundays but I stood firm in my Christian faith, determined to keep the Sabbath day holy.'

There was one particularly difficult moment in Mervyn's business life. Does it surprise us to hear that it was immediately after he returned the building to the church? 'On the first weekend that we moved into our new premises, the country experienced the worst rain and flooding for decades. As we emptied the building of the deluge, it seemed almost as if the devil was sat on my shoulder mocking me for selling our solid premises to Bethel.' And not long afterwards, a recession hit the whole economy; the company was forced to put staff onto a three day working week and one branch of the business had to be closed. There was a real fear of bankruptcy and Mervyn had to take out a second mortgage on the family home to secure the business.

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As a Christian, you can't allow work to absorb the whole of your life.”

Reflection

'As a Christian, you can't allow work to absorb the whole of your life. I had responsibilities as a husband and father. I was a member of the church, and these things took priority over business.'

God blessed Mervyn with a loving Christian wife, Linda. 'Linda and I have known hardship, tragedy and serious illnesses in our lives and without her support I would not have succeeded.'

'God is faithful' (1 Cor. 1:9). 'I would have been crushed on a number of occasions by the sheer responsibility and workload of being a businessman. But I can testify that God has been kind and merciful to us and kept us through good and bad times.' ◊

Mervyn Dando is the retired Managing Director of Data Powertools Ltd, Cardiff.

Family WORSHIP

WORSHIP IN 'THE LITTLE CHURCH'



JONATHAN WINCH

Less than an hour's drive from Syria, Gaziantep is now a destination for spies, refugees, foreign-aid workers and Islamic State sleeper cells, but when I lived there with my missionary parents in the early 1970s it was a peaceful place – famous for its history, and home to the world's finest *baklava* (honey-soaked pastry).

Among my earliest memories is an image of my father coming growling through the front door swathed in a massive bear skin he had just bagged in a local shop to terrify me and my little brother. I also remember the weekly Sunday services – held in our living room – and my father emerging from the cupboard that served as his prayer closet to lead us in worship.

During the week he would conduct family worship each day, and the congregation was the same: our family. (It was to be years before a viable Turkish church would emerge.) Dad would read the Scriptures reverently and make one or two points of explanation and application, and then we would kneel to pray. A simple enough custom, but one which would shape my life: my attitudes, my understanding, my beliefs, my values. It taught me that the family was a little church – a place where God was to be honoured and worshipped.

It was Jonathan Edwards who popularized this description of the family, saying in his farewell sermon: 'Every Christian family ought to be as it were a little church, consecrated to Christ, and wholly influenced and governed by his rules. And family education and order are some of the chief means of grace. If these fail, all other means are likely to prove ineffectual. If these are duly maintained, all the means of grace will be likely to prosper and be successful.'

Every Christian family is a little church; not just those who live far from fellow-believers. Every day is a day of worship; not just Sunday. That is not to say that the family could ever displace the local congregation of saints meeting in God's house week by week. But the worship of God should be maintained, and God's rules should prevail, in every Christian family.

Our family was not wealthy. Sometimes we would not know where our next meal was coming from; in winter snow would fill our shoes, seeping in where growing toes had pushed through the leather. But I look back on a rich childhood; we had all that mattered, because God was at the heart of our home. And others recognized the privilege; when I introduced the girl who was to become my wife to my parents, it was our family worship that most impressed and delighted her, and family worship became my parents' legacy to us as we established our own family traditions.

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

A Google search provides this definition:

... each individual should look to define a family by his own standards... You can have several families in your lifetime, even several families at once if you choose. Regardless of how you choose to define your family unit, whether it is traditional or unique, your definition is of the family unit that works for you. As the saying goes, 'Family is what you make it.' Whether made of blood relatives, friends, or pets, or a combination of these, your family can offer you the support you need to thrive.

Appealing enough to those who worship at the shrine of Choice, this self-indulgence nonetheless comes at a high cost: insecurity. Contrast what Dutch thinker and theologian Hermann Bavinck writes in his book *The Christian Family*:

The history of the human race begins with a wedding. ... From the very beginning, marriage was and is... an essential bond between one man and one woman, and therefore also a lifelong covenant, indissoluble by human authority; therefore what God has joined together let not man put asunder (Matt. 19:6,8). A man separates from his parents, forsakes father and mother, and cleaves to his wife, but he never abandons his wife! Love for parents is



The worship of God should be maintained, and God's rules should prevail, in every Christian family.



A family begins not with the birth of a couple's first child but with the union of man and woman who covenant themselves to each other and their future offspring.

surpassed in both intensity and extent by love for one's wife. Such love is stronger than death, no other love resembles God's love so closely, or reaches such height.

At the heart of the true family is a covenant between a man and a woman. Marriage is not a contract in which two people agree to exchange goods and services so long as their mutual self-interest is served; it is a covenant, the essence of which is two persons freely exchanging themselves, with God as witness.

Marriage is about lifelong self-giving, not mutual getting for as long as it suits. The Bible tells us that it involves two people becoming one. When a husband and wife are joined in matrimony they cease to be two individuals and become one. A family begins not with the birth of a couple's first child but with the union of man and woman who covenant themselves to each other and their future offspring.

What, then, is the purpose of the family? Two of the foremost are:

» To reflect the image of God

God created the family in his own triune image. Hermann Bavinck writes: 'The two-oneness of husband and wife expands with a child into a three-in-oneness. Father, mother, and child are one soul and one flesh, expanding and unfolding the one image of

God, united within threefold diversity and diverse within harmonic unity.' This is why the family is God's antidote to loneliness. As Psalm 68 reminds us, 'God sets the solitary in families.'

» To raise godly offspring

The Lord said of Abraham, 'I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him' (Gen. 18:19). Someone has put it like this: 'the ultimate purpose of marriage is spiritual—not physical, emotional, or social. Each new marriage forms a new spiritual entity or partnership—a family—that has spiritual responsibilities to God and to society. This is true with or without children in the family. God has designed the family as the first source of spiritual training and preparation for life, spiritual inspiration and motivation, and spiritual productivity for the cause of God. The family is to serve as the first channel of God's blessings and revelations, a place where He can establish a direct contact and relationship with each of the members, including the children' ('The Christian Family from a Holiness Perspective', www.christianchallengeministries.org).

In a fallen world families are often incomplete; there may only be one parent, for example – often for reasons beyond that parent's control – and some couples are unable to have children. An incomplete family is still a family; family worship is for couples with children, couples without children and for a single parent with one child or more.

WHY SHOULD FAMILIES WORSHIP?

1. Worship is the purpose of our life

Worship comes from the word 'worth-ship'. It is about responding to something or someone in a way that properly recognizes their worth. Psalm 96 gives us a definition of worship:

Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength.
Give to the Lord the glory due His name.

The worship of the true God involves giving to the Lord the glory due his name: bowing down to him in reverent fear and love, recognizing who he is and what he is like. There is a sense in which we could never give to the Lord the glory due his name, because eternity will not be long enough; but that does not mean we do not try.

Our Catechism tells us that the worship of God is the reason we were created: Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. Isaiah reminds us: 'Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him' (Isa. 43:7).

Iain Murray observes this emphasis in the writings of J. C. Ryle: 'the human race was created in the image of God for the glory of God. Worship, praise and adoration therefore belong to the essential meaning of life: the first commandment addresses the purpose of our being: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt 4:10). The obligation rests upon all, for all owe their existence to him' (J. C. Ryle Prepared to Stand Alone, 2016, page 224).

When we lead our family in worship we are helping them fulfil the purpose of their existence.

2. Family worship is commanded

Not everyone agrees that family worship is commanded in Scripture. Some argue that we need simply teach our children about God's ways as we eat, work and play together. But consider these words: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up (Deut. 6:4-7).

Certainly we are urged to make conversation about the things of God part of the heartbeat of our home. But it is not enough that these truths should inform our minds; they are to be in our heart. When we worship with our families we do not just think about ideas; we bow the knee before God and express our love to him. Our homes should be full of Christ, because our homes should be full of the Scriptures, and the Scriptures are full of Christ. And where Christ is, there must we worship.

In the best days of the church, family worship was regarded as a non-negotiable. The Westminster Standards' Directory for Family Worship requires that: 'ministers and ruling elders [should] make diligent search and enquiry, in the congregations committed to their charge respectively, whether there be among them any family

or families which use to neglect this necessary duty; and if any such family be found, the head of the family is to be first admonished privately to amend his fault; and, in case of his continuing therein, he is to be gravely and sadly reproved by the session; after which reproof, if he be found still to neglect Family-worship, let him be, for his obstinacy in such an offence, suspended and debarred from the Lord's supper, as being justly esteemed unworthy to communicate therein, till he amend.'

3. Family worship teaches our children to set their hope in God

Tedd Tripp, author of the much-loved *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, says: 'Your heart's desire in every phase of childrearing is to see your children internalize the gospel. The desire in all training, in all your entreaty, in all your correction and discipline, is to see your children come to the place where they have embraced the claims of Christian faith.'

Do you share this desire that what we teach our children should not stay in their heads but inform their hearts? If we want our children not just to know about God but to know God then we worship with them and do not simply instruct them, 'That the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments' (Psalm 78:6-8).

It is not just children who are to set their hope in God. Husbands, one of the purposes of your marriage is to conform

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yourself – and your wife – to the character of Christ. What better way is there of doing this than to worship God together every day?

4. Family worship arms us for the battle

Writing in another context, the crime-writer and friend of C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayer, makes this powerful point:

...we let our young men and women go out unarmed, in a day when armour was never so necessary. By teaching them all to read, we have left them at the mercy of the printed word. By the invention of the film and the radio, we have made certain that no aversion to reading shall secure them from the incessant battery of words, words, words. They do not know what the words mean; they do not know how to ward them off or blunt their edge or fling them back; they are a prey to words in their emotions instead of being the masters of them in their intellects. We who were scandalized in 1940 when men were sent to fight armoured tanks with rifles, are not scandalized when young men and women are sent into the world to fight massed propaganda with a smattering of 'subjects'; and when whole classes and whole nations become hypnotized by the arts of the spell binder, we have the impudence to be astonished (*The Lost Tools of Learning*, 1947).

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We do not have long with our children, and this should give us a sense of urgency during the years we do have together. Solomon recalls his father, David, pleading with him: 'When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, he also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live. Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding"' (Prov. 4:3-7).

The author is arguing for children to be taught logic! How much more should we argue from her starting point - the dangerous world we live in - to the need our children, and we as parents, have for armour against the flesh, the world and the Devil?

5. Family worship bequeaths wisdom to our children

My wife and I are now at the point where our children are leaving home; only our youngest remains – and only for a few more months! How grateful we are that we read the Scriptures and prayed together almost every day for the last quarter century. Now that they are far from home we can plead this promise in prayer: 'Train a child up in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it' (Prov. 22:6).

We do not have long with our children, and this should give us a sense of urgency during the years we do have together. Solomon recalls his father, David, pleading with him: 'When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, he also taught me, and said to me: "Let your heart retain my words; keep my commands, and live. Get wisdom! Get understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you; love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding"' (Prov. 4:3-7).

6. Family worship strengthens family unity

You have heard it said, *'The family that prays together stays together.'* It is not hard to understand why; family worship reinforces the values that distinguish your family from the world, and establishes a unity based on shared beliefs and a lifetime of bearing one another's burdens in prayer. Ultimately, however, the closeness and mutual love that a worshipping family knows is a gift from God: to those who delight themselves in the Lord he gives the desires of their heart.

You may have heard the illustration of a bicycle wheel: the spokes of the wheel do not touch one another, but as the spokes get closer to the hub they come closer to each other. That is what happens to a family where each person is moving closer to Christ.

WHAT SHOULD WORSHIP CONSIST IN?

The directory for public worship, found in the Westminster Standards, has this direction:

The ordinary duties comprehended under the exercise of piety which should be in families, when they are convened to that effect, are these: First, prayer and praises performed with a special reference, as well to the public condition of the kirk of God and this kingdom, as to the present case of the family, and every member thereof. Next, reading of the Scriptures, with catechizing in a plain way, that the understandings of the simpler may be the better enabled to profit under the public ordinances, and they made more capable to understand the Scriptures

when they are read; together with godly conferences tending to the edification of all the members in the most holy faith: as also, admonition and rebuke, upon just reasons, from those who have authority in the family.

In summary, 'those who have authority in the family' – the husband, or in his occasional absence the wife or adult son – are to pray and praise, read the Bible, and talk and ask questions about the passage, explaining and driving home the word of God.

Reading a chapter a day for six days a week, you will cover the whole Bible in four and a half years. Sometimes it is good to slow down. From time to time we have used a catechism – Westminster or Heidelberg – to guide our reading and locate Scripture within a framework of doctrine.

If you do not know the Heidelberg Catechism, let me recommend it as warmly devotional. It begins:

- Q.** What is your only comfort in life and in death?
A. That I am not my own, but belong— body and soul, in life and in death— to my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ

HOW SHOULD FAMILIES WORSHIP?

1. Make it a priority

Children need routine. Tedd Tripp recalls his own father rousing the whole family from their beds before first light of dawn in order that they should worship together before he left for the factory. After he left they would return to sleep. It did them no harm! Both Tedd and his brother went on to become pastors and seminary professors, and both have written books on Christian

parenting. In our own family we have found the best time to be after the evening meal. Whichever time works best for your family, aim for the same time and the same place each day, and keep going with it even when you are tempted to give up.

2. Make it joyful

The worship of God should not be a burden. Start slowly, make it brief to start with, be flexible, and model the right attitude. The aim is that our children should look forward to this time – and that in later life they should look back on it with thankfulness.

3. Make it reverent

Avoid the temptation to entertain. The family needs to see that you are in dead earnest. You are entering the presence of God; you are speaking about life and death matters. This has always been a challenge to me. I empathize with Spurgeon who reportedly said, when challenged himself about his occasional hilarity, 'If you only knew how much humour I suppress...!' However, I have found our family worship to improve when I rely on the Holy Spirit and the word of God to thrill the hearts, and not on my own sense of merriment.

Give everyone a Bible. This signals that we are all coming under the authority of God, and helps develop a *Berean* mindset; we want our children to 'search the Scriptures to see if these things are so'. Choose a shared version, and consider reading a few verses each as soon as the children are able.

4. Involve everyone ('catechize' and hold 'godly conferences')

This is an act of worship, not a lecture; everyone is involved! In fact, that is one good reason to sing together. It is not essential that everyone speaks, but there are good reasons why they should: it keeps people alert, checks understanding, gets people thinking – and we *remember* what we think about – and shines a light into your family's spiritual condition.

There are many ways to involve the whole family. Our friend John Marshall would ask each family member to read a verse that had struck them from the passage, and explain why they found it significant. Some families memorize key verses together. Little children enjoy questions that test comprehension or recall: How many men came to visit Abraham? How many times did God call Samuel in his bed? As the children grow older, questions can become more thought-provoking: Where do we see Christ in this passage? Which is easier, to say 'your sins are forgiven you', or to say, 'take up your bed and walk'? What is the difference between perseverance and stubbornness? When Christ said, 'It is finished!', what was finished? Why was Peter forgiven but not Judas? There is a responsibility upon the head of the family to provide a clear scriptural answer, but often my family would take my understanding to a new level.

In coming to prayer, you might ask each family member for a prayer request – or, with older children,

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The worship of God should not be a burden. Start slowly, make it brief to start with, be flexible, and model the right attitude.

each pray briefly for the person on their left. Remember the acronym ACTS: adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication. God is to be adored and thanked as well as petitioned.

5. Aim for the heart

We have already seen that the things of God are not to remain in the mind only. Jonathan Edwards spoke for us all when he said, 'Our people do not so much need to have their heads stored as their hearts touched.'

6. Apply the truth

Head, heart... and hands. Our teaching should make a difference to the way we live. You know your family, and you can speak very directly to them as the Word of God provides opportunity. This is one reason to read systematically through the Bible: you will encounter the whole counsel of God over time. 'The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture,' as the Confession reminds us, and the family that studies the whole of Scripture will learn together about money, sex, friendship, clothes, power, work, parents, conflict, brotherly love, sharing, lying – and much more practical wisdom for living. Take time to drive the teaching of the Scriptures home to the conscience as well as the memory – and when the conscience is stung by the law apply the balm of the gospel.

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The
consequence
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own childhood
have been a
rich blessing in
our own family.”

7. Adorn the teaching of Scripture with your life

This was my father's real secret. I came to Christ, humanly speaking, because I wanted to have what he had - a living, breathing relationship with the living God..

8. Pray for the Holy Spirit's help

Having family worship does not guarantee that your children will come to Christ – or even live wisely. For this we need the work of the Holy Spirit. Pray for your wife and for your children's salvation and spiritual blessing. The real work is done in private prayer before and after the family worship.

I am thankful that family worship was as much a routine in our home as meal times. The consequence of patterns laid down in my own childhood have been a rich blessing in our own family – and in the goodness of God our one-year-old granddaughter will never know a time when the worship of God was not a daily routine in her own home.

By his faithful leadership and labour of love my father was shaping the lives not just of his children but of his grandchildren and great grandchildren all those years ago in the East of Turkey. This was his legacy to us.

And this is how it can be in all our families, one generation declaring to another the mighty works of God in the little church day by day. How natural it will then be for our children to 'give God thanks in the great assembly' on the Lord's Day (Psalm 35:18). ○



A BARRY

Wilberforce Chapel
Barry Rd
Barry CF62 8HE
Sun. 11am & 6pm
Minister: Rev. W. John Cook
☎ 01446 408086
✉ wj.cook@hotmail.co.uk
🌐 baryepc.org.uk

A BERLIN

Droysenstrasse 15 10629 Berlin
Sun. 10am & 4.30pm
Treseburger Ufer 44b 12347
Berlin. Wed. 7pm
Minister: Rev. Johannes Müller
☎ +491763102904
✉ johannes.mueller@epkd.de
🌐 ekpd.de

A BLACKBURN

Fecitt Brow, Blackburn
Lancashire BB1 2AZ
Sun. 11am & 6.30pm
Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Norman Green
☎ 01254 260388

A BURY ST EDMUNDS

Newbury Community Centre
St. Olaves Rd, Bury St Edmunds
IP32 6RW, Sun. 11am & 6.30pm,
Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Matthew Jolley
☎ 01284 706123
✉ matthewjolley@mac.com
🌐 bse-pc.org

A CAMBRIDGE

Queen Emma Primary School (am)
Resurrection Lutheran Church,
Westfield Rd (pm)
Cockcroft Hall, Clarkson Rd (Thu)
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm, Thu. 7.45pm
☎ 01223 212370
✉ peterleverton1@gmail.com
🌐 cambridgepres.org.uk

A CARDIFF - BETHEL

Michaelston Rd, Culverhouse
Cross, Cardiff CF5 4SX
Sun. 11am & 6pm, Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Mark Johnston
☎ 029 2059 5000
✉ revmjohnston@gmail.com
🌐 bethelpcr.org.uk

A CARDIFF - IMMANUEL

Heol Trelai, Caerau,
Cardiff CF5 5LJ
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm,
Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Peter Naylor
☎ 029 2040 5750 / 07773 093738
✉ peter.naylor@immanuelcaerau.org.uk
🌐 immanuelcaerau.org.uk

A CHELMSFORD

Hall Street Methodist Church
Chelmsford CM2 0HG
Sun. 11.30am & 6pm, Thu. 8pm
Minister: Rev. Darren Moore
☎ 01245 690559
✉ darrenmoore@chelmsfordpres.co.uk
🌐 chelmsfordpres.org.uk

A CHELTENHAM

23 Naunton Lane, Leckhampton
Cheltenham GL53 7BJ
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm Wed. 7.45pm
Minister: Rev. Andrew Young
☎ 01242 231278 / 07963 139683
✉ revandrewyoung@yahoo.co.uk
🌐 cheltenhampres.org.uk

A CHELTENHAM - NORTH

Whaddon Road E.P. Church
Rear of Claremont, Whaddon Rd,
Cheltenham GL52 5LZ
Sun. 11am & 6.30pm
Minister: Rev. David Pfeiffer
☎ 07846 858766
✉ drpfeiffer85@hotmail.com
🌐 whaddonevangelicalchurch.org

A DURHAM

The Chapel, Laburnum Avenue
Durham, DH1 4HA
Sun. 10.30am & 3.30pm,
Thu. 7.45pm
Minister: Rev. Phil Baiden
☎ 01916 700972
✉ philbaiden@yahoo.co.uk
🌐 depc.org.uk

A GATESHEAD

Lobley Hill Community Centre
47 Scafell Gardens, Gateshead
NE11 9LS, Sun. 10.30am & 6pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Bill Schweitzer
☎ 07939 071404
✉ contact@gatesheadpres.org.uk
🌐 gatesheadpres.org.uk

A HEXHAM

The Torch Centre
Corbridge Rd (near hospital)
Hexham NE46 1QS
Sun. 10am & 5pm, Wed. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Joshua Rieger
☎ 07930 016785
✉ joshuamrieger@gmail.com
🌐 hexhampres.uk

A HULL

Rear of 336 Holderness Rd
Hull, HU9 3DQ
Sun. 10.30am & 6pm
Minister: Vacant
Contact: Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell
☎ 0114 2431720 / 07954 546487
✉ kevinjbidwell@me.com

A SHEFFIELD

Hill Top Chapel, Attercliffe
Common, Sheffield S9 2AD
Sun. 10am (SS), 11am & 5pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Kevin Bidwell
☎ 0114 2431720 / 07954 546487
✉ kevinjbidwell@me.com
🌐 sheffieldpres.org.uk

A SOLIHULL

37 Faulkner Road
Solihull, B92 8SB
Sun. 11am & 5pm,
Thu. 7.30pm
Minister: Rev. Dr Stephen Dancer
☎ 0121 707 1826
✉ info@solihullpres.org.uk
🌐 solihullpres.org.uk

A TRANÅS

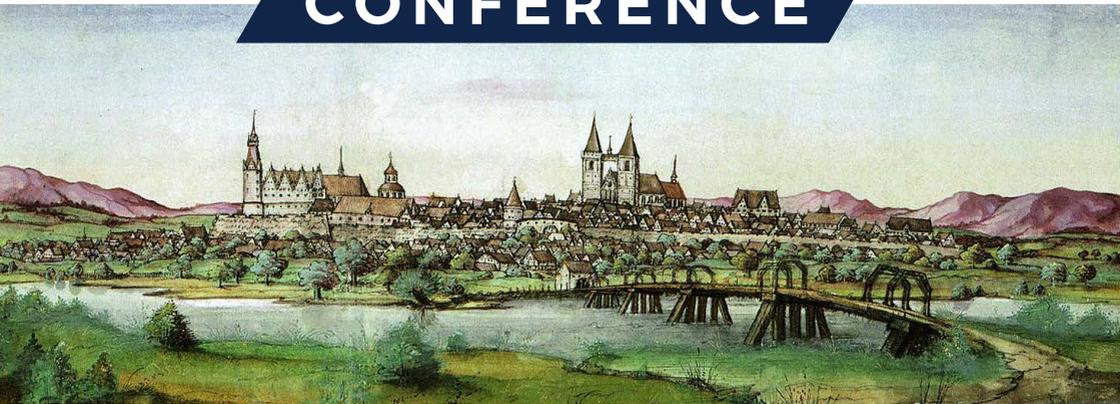
Höggatan 8,
57333, Tranås
Sweden
Sun. 10am & 4:30pm
Minister: Rev. David Bergmark
☎ +46 70 244 7241
✉ d.bergmark@erkis.se

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Dr Falko Drijfhout
63 Larchwood,
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☎ 01782 611280 / 07811 387438
✉ f.drijfhout12@gmail.com

R500 eformation

CONFERENCE



12TH - 14TH OCTOBER 2017
ST MARY'S HERITAGE CENTRE
GATESHEAD

SPEAKERS INCLUDE:



DR JOEL BEEKE



DR IAN HAMILTON



DR JON D. PAYNE



DR GEOFFREY THOMAS

"And the light shines in the darkness..." John 1:5

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