

PRESBYTERIAN NETWORK

Spring 2011

Total Depravity

Unconditional Election

Limited Atonement

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of Saints



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Editor: Rev. Dr Peter Naylor
Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Heol Trelai, Caerau,
Cardiff CF5 5LJ
Email: peter.naylor@immanuelcaerau.org.uk

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Cover Picture by Grant O'Brien, www.claviantica.com, and used with permission.
The 'Tulip' has become a symbol of the teaching of the Canons of Dordt (1618-19). TULIP is a mnemonic of the five points of Calvinism which are in opposition to the teachings of Arminius and his followers.
Picture on page 1 is in the public domain. See Wikimedia Commons.



Thomas Jones Barker's painting, 1863, shows Queen Victoria presenting the Bible to an African Chief. The painting's title is: *The Secret of England's Greatness*.

At the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland presented her with a Bible, with the following words:

Archbishop

'Our gracious Queen:

to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the law and the Gospel of God
as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes,

we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.'

Moderator

'Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.'

This year, 2011, is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the Authorized Version of the Bible. When God gives his holy Word to a people, he gives them access to his knowledge and wisdom, and he entrusts them with a priceless treasure.

What should they do with it? Read it, privately, in families, and in churches. Study it. Memorize it. Let it be written on the heart and live by it.

Last year, the Kimyal people of Papua New Guinea received the New Testament in their own language. Video of this momentous event can be seen on *YouTube* (search for 'Kimyal'). See their joy! Note their resolve to pass it on to their children.

We can learn afresh from the Kimyal people. Let us value our possession of the Bible—*the most valuable thing this world affords!*

Editor, 1 March 2011

1611: a bell that goes on sounding in the ear

Rev. Brian Norton

The Authorised Version of the Bible was published 400 years ago. In this second of three articles, Rev. Brian Norton celebrates this gift of God to the English-speaking world.

Why has the BBC suddenly been giving time to the Bible? Why has the Chief Rabbi recently written in *The Times* a glowing assessment of something: something a Roman Catholic writer of an earlier generation said had kept Britain Protestant because it sounded in the ear 'like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells'? Why has Oxford University Press produced a beautifully bound and entirely reset Bible designed to preserve every misprint and unfamiliar spelling? Why? This year is the 400th anniversary of the Authorised Version (known as the King James Version in America). The interest of some is historical, for others it is cultural and linguistic. All seem agreed that this is an anniversary of something special.

What of those who love God's Word? Do we recognize how this translation has been part of God's providential dealings with our nation? Do we give thanks for it? We are interested above all else in the truth of the original text, but we should not be blind to other matters.

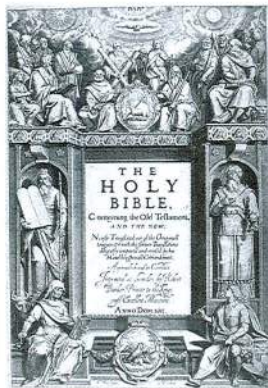
Published in 1611, the AV has remained a remarkably constant part of Christian life in the English-speaking world. Through times of persecution, revival, and missionary endeavour, it has

put God's Word into the hands of men and women, and into their minds and above all their hearts. It has been an instrument in God's hands. There is every good reason to trace its life and consider its influence.

Conception

The circumstances of its conception were unlikely enough. It has been said to be the product of politics and conflict. But God is sovereign. When James I (VI of Scotland) came to the throne of England in 1602, his accession, because it was peaceful, was generally welcomed. The Puritans were hopeful, since he came from Presbyterian Scotland. He received a petition of grievances from over a thousand Puritans. James was aware of the religious tensions in Elizabeth's reign, and wanted to neutralize them. So he called a conference at Hampton Court. In 1604 he met with bishops and other 'status quo' scholars, and a small group of Puritans. Richard Bancroft, the hard-line Bishop of London, led the establishment majority; the moderate John Rainolds, from Oxford University, the Puritan minority.

Despite his background, Puritanism did not suit James' understanding of the divine right of kings. He set out to overawe



the Puritans. They were referred to as 'petitioners' and were excluded and kept waiting during the first of the three days of the conference. The king dismissed most of their requests. At one point he famously said, 'No bishops—no king.' Yet when Rainolds proposed a new translation to replace the Bishops Bible, the translation then authorized for use in churches, he responded warmly.

Gestation

Six companies were set up to carry this concept through: two each at Westminster, Cambridge and Oxford. They continued working for the next seven years, some more diligently than others. But the Puritans were in some ways disappointed. They had hoped for freedom to use the Geneva Bible and to make that the basis of the new. Instead, the king specified that they work on a revision of the Bishops Bible 'to make a good version better,' and it was to include the Apocrypha.

Despite the use of the Geneva version in Scotland, the king took exception to it because of its marginal notes. These notes in places commended people who opposed their rulers, as when the midwives disobeyed Pharaoh. That sounded like sedition to him and he would have none of it. So there were to be no marginal notes. He wanted to displace the popular Geneva just as Elizabeth had in 1568 with her Bishops Bible.

Nonetheless Rainolds, as one of the leading Hebraists, was in charge of the Oxford company. Generally in all the companies there were better linguists than those who had worked on the Bishops Bible. And Hebrew scholarship in particular had advanced. Though they were to base their work on the Bishops

Bible, they went back to the Hebrew and Greek. They made full use of the earlier versions of Tyndale (1526) and Geneva (1560), as well as the Roman Catholic Douai (1578). Despite having to use the Bishops Bible, and the king's dislike of the Geneva, the bishops personally often quoted from the Geneva.

Birth

The revisionary committee finally met in London. The whole work was read through, and the men responded as they heard. They were concerned with how it sounded as well as with its accuracy. It was a Bible to be read aloud from in church, not one to be carried about or used in the home. It was therefore printed in large folio volumes. The first printing was in Gothic Black letter, a typeface that even then was becoming unfamiliar.

We have little contemporary comment as to how this new translation was received. In fact the Geneva long continued to be the version used in private but it was the AV that people heard read in church. It was never formally authorized because it didn't need to be. It was by the king's command a revision of an earlier authorized version and published under royal licence.

Later, during the Commonwealth period (1643-1660), the Geneva replaced the AV for many, as the *de facto* authorized Bible. But with the restoration in 1660, printing of the Geneva was soon banned and it was then that the AV fully came into its own.

Development

That however was not the end. Spelling had not been standardized at the time of the translation. Gradual standardiza-

tion culminated with the publication in 1755 of Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*. The 1611 and subsequent printings also contained many misprints. Consequently, further important development took place during the eighteenth century. Following the work of Parris at Cambridge, Benjamin Blayney at Oxford sought to put these things right, as well as updating the translation. Almost entirely, what we have today is his revision of 1769, with its many changes. So our '1611 AV' is actually the '1769 Blayney AV revision.'

Influence

Regularly heard in church by most of the population both here and in America, it informed the language and culture, as well as giving biblical understanding to countless souls, generation after generation. For many it would have been their only book and their chief reason for learning to read. It moulded the thought pattern of our nations. This is why so many non-Christian scholars recognize its importance more than some Christians do. Even Thomas Huxley of all people wanted this Bible to be taught in schools, though he despised its teaching.

What really matters is the spiritual power and grandeur of God's Word. It was the truth of the Bible rather than the AV translation that changed our land to make us 'a people of the Book.' But in God's providence a significant vehicle for that was this particular translation.

What is it about the version that has commanded men's attention?

It has transmitted to us Tyndale's genius for the English language, a combination of a fine turn of phrase, a lively flowing style, and a simple structure.

The AV is very largely Tyndale and Geneva (although more remains to be said about the influence of John Wycliffe, 1328-84). Many passages diverge only a little from them. Much of Tyndale still remains in the NKJV and ESV. Some of the vocabulary used was created by Tyndale, like 'mercyseat' and 'scapegoat'. Many idiomatic biblical phrases were taken over as they stood and have thus become accepted English speech: for example, 'suffer fools gladly' and 'filthy lucre'. Crystal maintains that these AV renderings of biblical phrases are the single biggest literary influence on the English language. Daniell claims that Tyndale, via Geneva/Authorised Version, did more to create modern English than even Luther did for German. So despite somewhat compromising his simplicity, the AV commands attention to a large extent because it relies extensively on Tyndale's genius.

One of the differences compared with Geneva is that the translators sometimes preferred Latinate words where the Genevan men used plainer Anglo-Saxon. The six companies were mostly establishment figures, trained in the classics, retaining familiar establishment ecclesiastical terms such as 'bishop' rather than 'overseer.' The AV rendering of '1 Corinthians 13, which speaks of 'charity,' is another example. Geneva used 'love,' which is clearer, and better. Meaning is paramount. Nonetheless the use of 'charity' illustrates a point of wider significance. Here we see the influence of that final oral revision. The three-syllable word enhances the rhythmic flow. Although in this case, regrettably, it does not help the meaning, in general the 'feel' that the translators had for the cadences and sound added to the effectiveness of the translation. This charac-

teristic of the AV helped to fix its truth in the mind and make it easier to memorise, whether read aloud or silently.

Despite the Latinisms in its vocabulary, there is structural simplicity in the language used and that is another of its strengths. So much so that it was often used to teach reading.

Reactions

Why does the AV arouse such passions? Some love its familiarity; for others that is reason to reject it. Some think newer versions make the Bible more accessible; others associate them with liberalism. Certainly, familiar passages sound pedestrian in many modern versions, yet AV renderings of parts of the prophets are very awkward. Some favour a dynamic equivalence model of translation, some a more literal. There is a spectrum. The AV is closer to word equivalence than cultural equivalence, though no translation can ever be totally literal.

There have also, of course, been linguistic changes in grammar, vocabulary and word order since the seventeenth century. They still do not make the AV unintelligible, though they make initial difficulty for younger generations not brought up on Scripture at all. In passing, we can note that 'thee' and 'thou' are not yet lost from the vernacular in northern Britain. Perhaps the language has changed less than it might over four centuries because of the influence of the AV on national life.

For some, a particular bone of contention is the Greek and Hebrew texts used in translating. The AV uses a composite version that was available in the 16th century, known as the 'Textus Receptus.' Other older manuscripts have been discovered. Few of us have expertise in

this field. Sadly, opinion has hardened some American fundamentalist attitudes into a 'KJV-only' movement.

Two things should be said. First, differences over which version we use is not a ground for forming church groupings or dividing from brethren. Second, whatever our preferences, and I say this as one who reads from the AV, we have no grounds for declaring that the AV is the only version that puts God's Word into people's hands. But neither should reaction lead any to say that use of the AV deprives men of God's Word.

Conclusion

We can learn from AV history the importance of the public reading of Scripture, and of the sounds and rhythms of the English language.

We can thank God that familiarity with this version is an important point of contact with the great bulk of past Christian literature. Even at a cultural level, a great deal of our appreciation of English literature and heritage is impoverished without it.

Especially we must discern God's providential hand in giving to our nations such a faithful, beautiful common version, which brought God's Word to millions, and ensured a continuing biblical influence in our culture. It is that bell that goes on sounding in the ears. Not to versions, not to king, but to God alone be the glory.

Reading. Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version 1611-2011* (OUP, 2010). David Crystal, *Begat: The King James Version and the English Language* (OUP, 2010). *King James Bible: 400th Anniversary Edition*, ed., Gordon Campbell (OUP, 2010). David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (Yale University Press, 2003).



A Taste of Heaven on Earth

Rev. Matthew Jolley

No doubt you will have heard the phrase, 'Too heavenly minded to be much earthly good', and we all know what it means. But I believe that the problem with too many Christians today would be the exact opposite: they are too earthly-minded to be much good.

In recent weeks in Bury St Edmunds we have been considering the great theme that the Christian life is supposed to be a little foretaste of heaven on earth in the hope of deepening our Christian joy. Describing the Christian life in his first letter, the Apostle Peter says it is one of 'joy inexpressible and full of glory'. This joy comes from the firm hope we have through Jesus Christ that we have received 'an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven' for us.

This certainty of heaven is meant to give us joy in the here and now even in the midst of strife and difficulty. As Peter says, 'in this you rejoice, though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials.' At various times and in various ways the Lord has even granted small glimpses of heaven to his people on earth, and recorded it for us today in the Scriptures, in order to give us just such joy, comfort and assurance.

Each week in our morning services we have been looking at some of these little glimpses of heaven in the Scriptures and asking how it can deepen our joy as Christians. The famed Puritan preacher Richard Baxter was once asked what

was the secret of his long and fruitful ministry. He replied that his strength came from meditating upon heaven for at least half an hour a day. He said 'For want of this recourse to heaven thy soul is as a lamp not lighted.' Is your soul going dim and do you feel a lack of joy makes you to be like a 'lamp not lighted'? Then seek the things that are above, where Christ is.

One of these glimpses of heaven that God gives us in the Scriptures comes from Exodus 24. Beginning in verse nine, we are told: 'Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.' Upon the mountain the Lord reveals himself to Moses and the elders in a most remarkable way. They are given a glimpse of his glory and majesty, and then even more strangely and wonderfully, they sit down to eat a meal in the presence of God. There on the mountain top for a brief moment of time, heaven and earth meet and they receive a glimpse of the heavenly realms.

We can gather two heart-warming thoughts from this scene.

1. The Lord desires fellowship with his people.

At one time or another we will all have

enjoyed the warmth and intimacy of fellowship around a meal. Is there anything more uplifting than sharing a long meal with those closest to you, gathered around a dining table, sharing laughter, tears, food, and our lives with one another? To share a meal with someone should and can be something far more than simply eating together. It can be a time of real meaningful fellowship, of giving and receiving. How wonderful then that we find in Scripture that it is exactly this kind of fellowship God desires to have with his people. The picture of fellowship through a shared meal gives us an understanding of the closeness and fellowship God wants to have with us.

Indeed, many times in Scripture heaven is described as being like a great feast or banquet. In Matthew 8: 11 we are told 'Many will come from east and west and recline at table in the kingdom of heaven'. In Luke 14 Jesus depicted the gospel call as an invitation to a great banquet. In Revelation 19: 9 the Lord says 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'. What Moses and the elders experienced upon the mountain was a small foretaste of the heavenly fellowship they (and we) will one day enjoy.

We do not serve a God who is distant, unknowable and aloof. We worship a wonderful Saviour who delights in our company. He created us and redeemed us for this very purpose, that we might know him and enjoy him forever. We have a Master who ate with sinners. We follow a gracious Redeemer who has bridged the vast gap between us and him so that we may enjoy fellowship with him. He has taken away our sins through Christ so that his hand of judgment will not be laid upon us, just as it was held

back from Moses and the elders. Through the gospel of Christ we can enjoy this wonderful open relationship with God.

One of the greatest causes of sadness for many Christians is that they often lack a sense of fellowship with God, as if God were remote from them or far off. Just as when the warmth of the sun's rays can be hidden behind the clouds, many Christians often feel as if God's smile is hidden from them and they feel a spiritual coldness. The good news is that in heaven we will have the privilege of never ending, perfect fellowship with God. We shall see him face to face in a way that shall never be interrupted or disturbed. What Moses and the elders were able to enjoy for a few hours we will know for eternity. May that thought give you joy and inspire you through your temptations and troubles.

2. The Lord reveals himself to us through a covenant meal.

As Moses and the elders eat, they receive a glorious vision of God. The Lord reveals himself to his people through this unique meal of fellowship. To understand why Moses and the elders should eat, we need to understand the covenantal significance of the meal. Exodus 24 tells us how the people of Israel entered into covenant with the Lord. After graciously rescuing his people from slavery in Egypt, the Lord reaffirms his covenant relationship with the Israelites, as they are the descendants of Abraham, and he invites them to confirm their commitment to this relationship as his covenant people. They in turn give whole-hearted commitment to be the Lord's people and they ratify their covenant relationship with him. They do this

in three ways: first by making a solemn vow (v.7); second, by the shedding of blood to both signify and represent the penalty of covenant breaking (v.6); and third by sharing a meal together. Although we must not rely too much on extra-biblical sources, it can be helpful to learn from some of them that these three elements were very often the three formal means of ratifying a covenant in the ancient world. A shared meal was the sign of the peaceful fellowship the two parties would now enjoy because of their covenant relationship. So we may say that the meal Moses and the elders enjoyed was a covenant meal that was a means of fellowship with the Lord.

The good news is that this is a privilege and blessing that we can enjoy in a way that is far greater than Moses did. When he instituted the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus was giving us our own covenant meal, saying 'This is the blood of the new covenant'. In the breaking of bread and pouring of wine according to his words, we are sharing in a heavenly meal. We are blessed with fellowship with God and enjoy his presence. What takes place is not merely an outward memorial, but rather by the power of the Holy Spirit we are lifted up into the heavenly realms to feast with Christ, the risen and ascended Lord and are able to draw near to God. In the Spirit, through the covenant meal he has appointed, we participate in the spiritual union we enjoy with Christ by faith. Just as the covenant meal with Moses was a means of God confirming his commitment to his relationship with his people, so it is for us. When we eat and drink the Lord is saying to us, just as to Moses, 'You are mine. You belong to me. I have purchased you and you are my beloved people.'

Moreover, the Lord will reveal himself

to us as we participate in his covenant meal. On the road to Emmaus when the Lord Jesus appears to two of the disciples but hides his true identity from them, he points them first to the Scriptures as the means of knowing him, but then 'when he was at table with them, he took bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him'. Here he is teaching his disciples that he will also come to them and make himself known to them through the breaking of bread, through his covenant meal. In the Lord's Supper the Lord is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. He reveals his love and grace towards us in being broken for us, and his triumph and victory over death by his eating with us.

The Lord's Supper is a small foretaste of the heavenly fellowship we will one day enjoy with the Lord. It is a little taste of heaven. Whenever my wife Kristen is cooking I like to sneak into the kitchen and taste test what she is making. Especially if it is cookie dough or a chocolate sauce I can dip my finger into! I cannot wait to have a small sample of the delicious meal I shall soon enjoy. In communion, the Lord is allowing us just such a foretaste of the heavenly joys we will one day experience. We experience fellowship with him and are able to draw near to him without him 'laying his hand upon us' because we are accepted in Christ. We may often foolishly search for joy in all the wrong places and come away dissatisfied, but if we come to the Lord's Table we will find there a rich source of joy. May you be able to think about these things when you next come to the Lord's Table and remember it is a little picture of heavenly fellowship. When you eat the bread and drink from the cup, remember what the Lord is say-

ing to you through it. In Christ Jesus you are accepted by him and enjoy fellowship with him. He is saying to you 'You are mine. You belong to me. I have purchased you and you are my beloved

child.' The Lord's Supper is a little taste of heaven on earth. May God give us the grace worthily to receive it and may he give you a deep joy through it.

Our God

according to The Westminster Confession of Faith

Rev. Dr Chad Van Dixhoorn

Chad is Associate Minister of Grace Presbyterian Church (OPC) just outside Washington DC and a senior research fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge.



The Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1 states:

There is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

One God

If God has revealed himself to us, as the first chapter of this confession teaches, it makes sense to ask who God is. We can ask a question about *who* God is, but Scripture often first gives the answer to the question, *how many* gods are there? The most basic creed of the Old

Testament is the cry, 'Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one' (Deut. 6: 4). We need to remind ourselves of this because there are many things that are wrongly valued as gods (1 Cor. 8: 4-6), while the truth is that there is only one God who is both 'living' and 'true', as Jeremiah told the Israelites and Paul told the Thessalonians (Jer. 10: 10; 1 Thess. 1: 9).

Without Limit

But while God is limited in number, he is unlimited in his being and in all his perfections. Job and his friends were wrong about many things, but at least all of them understood that the depths of the divine being cannot be sounded by any mere man; we can hardly even grasp 'the outer fringes of his works' (Job 26: 14; cf., Job 11: 7-9).

The God who is Spirit

One reason for this is that in his being, 'God is Spirit', as Jesus once told the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4: 24). Among other things, this entails that we understand God as one who is invisible – indeed, Paul praises him as

the one who is 'eternal, immortal', and 'invisible' (1 Tim. 1: 17). It is because God is not constrained by a human body with its different parts that God forbade building idols in his image (Deut. 4: 15f). After all, as Jesus reminded his disciples after his resurrection, 'a spirit does not have flesh and bones' (Luke 24: 39).

God in Himself

But even angels are spirits, and so we need to go on to say much more about God in order to properly distinguish him from his creatures. For there are many things that God is that his creatures are not. It is because the true God is so different from us that Paul and Barnabas were horrified when a crowd at Lystra attempted to worship them. The two urged the crowd to see that they were men of like passions, with a similar nature, to each person in the crowd (Acts 14: 11-15). This could not be true of God!

How right they were to draw distinctions between the Creator and his creatures. God is immutable, he 'does not change like shifting shadows' (James 1: 17) – indeed, the prophet Malachi once noted, God does not change at all (Mal. 3: 6). God is immense; he fills all things, and is everywhere present. We cannot hide from God and there is no place for God to hide – the universe testifies to him – he fills it from one end to the other (1 Kings 8: 27; Jer. 23: 23-24). He is the 'King of ages', which is only to say that he is eternal (1 Tim. 1: 17); and what is true of space is also true of time: 'God is 'from everlasting to everlasting' (Ps. 90: 2).

No wonder that the Psalmist asks how we can fathom this kind of greatness (Ps. 145: 3): Really, how can we search out what these categories really mean when

applied to God? In a profound sense, God is incomprehensible.

Even here, we are only making a beginning, for there is so much more to say. From Genesis to Revelation, God is adored as 'almighty' (e.g., Gen. 17: 1; Rev. 4: 8). Before the church the apostle praises the vastness of God's wisdom (Rom. 16: 27). Before the throne of heaven, beasts and angels praise the perfection of his holiness (Isa. 6: 3; Rev. 4: 8). God is truly the one who is almighty, most wise, most holy, and, as Psalm 115 reminds the nations, most free, doing all that he pleases (Ps. 115: 3). And that is because God is absolute; he is who he is, as he told a frightened Moses at the burning bush (Exod. 3: 14).

The Works of God

In all these characteristics we are seeking not only to describe something about God as he is, in and of himself, but also to praise him for how he expresses his character to the world he has made. He is the one who works all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will (Eph. 1: 11) and directs them to, through, and for his own glory (Rom. 11: 36; cf., Prov. 16: 4).

His own people know him as most loving – indeed, the Apostle John has taught us to say that 'God is love' (1 John 4: 8, 16). God himself announced to Moses that he is 'gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin' (Exod. 34: 6-7).

This is good news for sinners, which is what we all are. And yet while Scripture tells us that our God 'rewards those who seek Him' (Heb. 11 :6), it was right for Nehemiah to confess that God in his justice can also be awesome – in the sense

of terrifying—to those who disobey him (Neh. 9: 32-33). God hates sin, as Psalm 5 so bluntly puts it (Ps. 5: 5-6). It is because of his perfect justice and hatred of sin that God warns us once and again that he 'does not leave the guilty unpunished' (Exod. 34: 7; Nah. 1: 2-3).

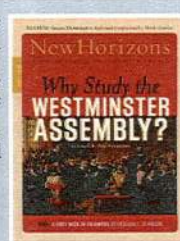
Conclusion

In speaking of God's justice and mercy, his power and his wisdom and all of his attributes, we do not for a moment think that we are able to 'define' God, in any limiting sense. If these paragraphs were pages, or if all the world were print, we could never hope to catalogue

the perfections of our triune God. What we do want to do is to rejoice in God's character with as much depth as we are able, so that we will better reflect his image, give him all glory, and enjoy him forever.



The October 2010 issue of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's magazine, *New Horizons*, is on the Westminster Assembly. This can be accessed online at <http://www.opc.org/>



Where have all the flowers gone? TULIP

Rev. Richard Holst



'Where have all the flowers gone?' has nothing whatever to do with the song of that name! It simply introduces this short series of articles explaining central teachings of the Reformed Faith.

TULIP is an acronym or short way of saying something and stands for the Five Points of Calvinism:

- Total Depravity
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints.

The Synod of Dort, a council of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, published the Five Points of Calvinism in 1619. These points or 'canons' answered the five points of the Arminian Remonstrance (Protest) of 1610. Arminius and his supporters presented a wa-

tered-down version of the Reformed teachings but the churches saw the danger and published the Five Points. Since then there have been two camps, the Calvinists and the Arminians.

Total Depravity

When somebody says 'I'm as good as the next person', without even realizing it, they are saying the exact opposite because the next man is not good at all. The Bible teaches that we are sinful from the inside out. In Romans 6: 16, Paul talks about us being 'slaves to sin'. In Romans 7: 18 he makes the remarkable assertion that 'in my flesh nothing good dwells: for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good, I do not find.'

The problem is that our entire constitution is so affected by sin that we cannot

please God. Calvin put it like this; 'According to the constitution of our nature, oil might be extracted from a stone sooner than we could perform a good work' (*Institutes* 3.14.5). How different from the utopian optimism of evolutionary thought! So deep-seated and so comprehensive is our depravity that Jeremiah said 'the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?' (Jer. 17: 9).

Don't get it wrong, we all have a moral consciousness but that's not the point. As Paul said, 'to will is present with me' but he concludes 'the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practise' (Rom. 7: 19). Total Depravity is the inability of the mind, will and affections to please God. Our Confession of Faith says 'By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body' (*Westminster Confession* 6.2).

It's pretty miserable isn't it? Total Depravity puts us in our place and the important thing is that it is only when we know that we are real sinners that we will come before God in reverence, godly fear and penitence of heart. It isn't bad to feel bad. How can we ever appreciate God's sovereign grace in our Lord, Jesus Christ, if we do not understand our abject poverty and absolute need?

But where has Total Depravity gone? Is it in the preaching, prayers and worship of the church? Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church, San Jose, California the eighth largest congregation in the USA, has a simple answer to the question 'What shall I preach this Sunday?' Preachers, he thinks, should be asking, 'To whom will I be preaching?' and adds 'simply thinking through the

needs of the audience will help determine God's will for the message . . . People's immediate needs are a key to where God would have you begin speaking on that particular occasion' (*Purpose Driven Church*, p. 227).

Total Depravity helps us approach God in the right way; remove it and something else happens. On worship Warren writes 'Figure out what mood you want your service to project, and then create it' (p. 264) and again he writes, 'start positive and end positive' (p. 271). Again he writes, 'we use humour in our services...it is not a sin to help people feel good' (p. 272) and '[we made] a strategic decision to stop singing hymns in [our] seeker services with the result that we have attracted thousands more because of our music... Saddleback now has a complete pop/rock orchestra' (p. 285). The aim, as Warren puts it, is to make 'members feel special...they need to feel special' (p. 320, 323).

Well we all want to feel special, don't we, but according to Calvin 'man's nature...is a perpetual factory of idols' (*Institutes*, 1.11.8). In the words of Ecclesiastes 7: 29 'Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.' That's the trouble, when depraved people start inventing worship, anything can happen! Let's get back to the Bible and the reality of what we know when we are most honest with ourselves. It is not that we all do the same number of bad things but that the same number of bad things is wrong with us. We are totally depraved or 'wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body.'



Spotlight on the Churches

News from around the Presbytery

Immanuel Church, Tranås Sweden

We are now going through the Gospel of John in our worship service, a good and rich teaching on the blessings we have in Christ.

The conflict which the church went through last year is in one way over, but we still have to deal with some negative effects from it. We have made progress, and we are very thankful for the support from elders in EPCEW, but we do need wisdom to move forward in a proper way. David Leander will take time out from his work in the Methodist church for a time, taking up an industry job. Meanwhile, David Bergmark will serve as pastor, 50% in Immanuelskyrkan and 50% in the Methodist church. The retired pastor in the Methodist church, Mr Fredrik Johnsen, has passed away.



On the other end of the life span, we are rejoicing over the arrival of another member in the David Leander family. Alison was born without complications on 12 February.

♦Sune Jäderberg

Chelmsford

January was an encouraging month. We witnessed the baptism of Emily White, daughter of Paul and Janice, and welcomed

into membership Peter and Moira Brown.

We also shared in the joy of welcoming a first grandchild into the families of Graham and Lin Nicolle (baby Stanley), and John and Elizabeth Scott (baby Elspeth). Baby Elspeth even managed to arrive on the 21st birthday of her Aunt, Natalie Scott.

Natalie is amongst a number of our young people who recently turned 21. Congratulations to all of them, including Christopher Dethridge, Matthew Ferguson, Anna Marie Burchett and Owen Clark.

Regular activities have resumed, among them the Sunday School and youth activities. The football team has commenced its fixtures, and has fond hopes (dreams?) of reaching the Fellowship Football finals in June.

Rev. Chris Kavanagh continues his series in John's Gospel in the midweek Bible Study. The monthly Ladies Fellowship group are following the John Piper DVD series on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, and the Men's Breakfast Fellowship are studying Mark's Gospel.

We have benefited much from the ministry of Alastair Steven (Friends International, Chelmsford), Charles De Lacy, (Chelmsford) Rev. John Richardson (alias the Ugley, Essex, Vicar!), Rev. Neil Stewart (Beverley, Yorkshire), and from Rev. David Cross and his son-in-law, Rev. Mark Vivian.

♦Julie Kavanagh

London: Stamford Hill Group

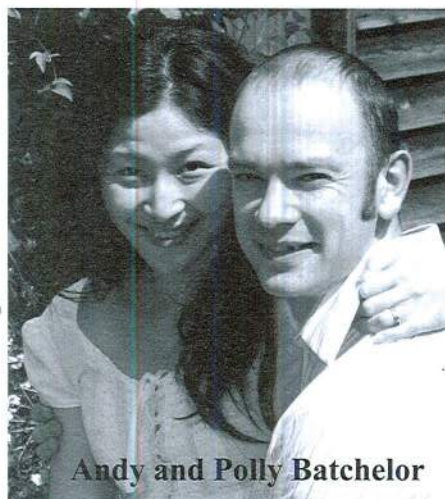
The group meets every Saturday evening at St Bartholomew's Church. It is currently led by Timothy Mulla and Rev. Chris Kavanagh visits once a month to help and encourage.

Members of the group were able to share in a Christmas dinner at the premises of London Theological Seminary, with Timothy and Marilene Mulla and some of the students. Timothy and Marilene organized the meal.

♦ Julie Kavanagh

Cambridge

Last September, we were delighted at the ordination of Andy Batchelor to the eldership. Andy and his wife Polly have been members for several years, and Andy previously served as treasurer and deacon. Andy would appreciate your prayers as he takes on new responsibilities as an elder. The elders are endeavouring to visit every member of the congregation over the first half of the year. The purpose of these visits is to encourage members in their faith, and listen to suggestions for improvements.



Andy and Polly Batchelor

Audrey Jadden, a member for several years, fell and broke her arm while visiting her daughter in France over Christmas. Following this, she had to have major surgery. Ian Hamilton has visited her and hopes to go again in March. Please pray for her recuperation and adjustment to living in France.

In recent months we have rejoiced with Micah and Jennie Vanderveen on the birth of their daughter, Reese Avery, with Jonny and Ali Umpleby on the birth of Joel Matthew, and with Johann and Therese Viljoen on the birth of Therese Mathilde. We look forward to the baptisms of Joel Umpleby and Emilia Biddlecombe on 6 March.

Once a month, twelve or so men meet for 'Breakfast with John Murray'. They are studying *The Collected Writings of John Murray: Volume 1, The Claims of Truth* (Banner of Truth). Ian Hamilton writes, 'I cannot commend this volume more highly...Murray's writings are rich in biblical truth and provide a wonderful insight into the great doctrines of the Christian faith...Read this book and have your Christian life enriched.'

♦ Annabel Haylett

Bury St Edmunds

Our biggest news, of course, has been Matthew's ordination. We would like to thank everyone who contributed in any way to making that a very special day for us as a church.

We continue to see new faces in the congregation, mostly (but not exclusively) American families from the nearby US air bases. We are due to lose three American families over the next few months as they are moved to new areas of service, so we are especially hopeful that some new

families will settle with us.

Matthew has started two new preaching series: 'Glory' in the mornings, from the letter to the Ephesians, and the book of 1 Samuel in the evenings, focusing on questions of life and faith relevant to our world today. Matthew is also starting a six week course on personal evangelism which we hope will be inspiring and encouraging as we seek to share our faith with friends, neighbours and colleagues.

♦ Clare Pape

Immanuel, Cardiff

In the past two months we have been very glad to see visitors coming in. We continue to pray that the Lord would gather his own and build up his church.

There has been an encouraging increase in numbers at the Mums and Tots group. Attendance at our services in the two homes for the elderly have gradually crept up to 18 or 19. Two of our elders are engaged in providing some ministry at nearby local churches in need of help.

A young people's group meets each week after the evening service.

We are looking forward to the birth of two more covenant children in the next few months.

We are praying for Mrs Annis Bees, who is undergoing treatment for a recently diagnosed cancer.

Ministry continues to be from Luke's Gospel and it is also addressing such matters as Perseverance and Apostasy. In the midweek, we continue to study Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

♦ Peter Naylor

Sheffield

The work of church planting is demanding but it is a real delight to see

people growing in the Lord.

One aspect of our church planting work in Sheffield that is particularly beneficial, is our Sunday School. This takes place at 10:00 a.m. on the Lord's Day (for 45 minutes before the morning service at 11:00 a.m.). We have two groups: one is for adults, who are systematically taught the Westminster Larger Catechism, and the other is for children, based on the Child's Catechism. Around fifteen people are involved so far.

Recently the adult class discussed Question 95, *Of what use is the Moral Law to all Men?*. It was extremely encouraging to see people grasping the significance of the Decalogue and the disastrous consequences that follow when churches abandon the Law of God. One man commented that this was 'the most concise statement on the Law' that he had come across. It is early days, but we are thankful that the catechisms are being valued by families and individuals, as a basis for discipleship and family worship. Please pray for our Sunday School.

♦ Kevin Bidwell

Hull

What a comfort it is to know that our God is sovereign in our lives and that of the church. As many will know by now, the hopes of the congregation as we looked forward to the arrival of Sam and Elizabeth Goodwin have been dashed as their own situation altered radically when their youngest daughter, Georgia, was diagnosed with a rare and serious form of Leukaemia. We have grown to know and love this family (albeit from a distance) and now share in their pain at this time, a pain that is eased greatly by the knowledge that the Lord has this whole situation in His

gracious, loving hands and is, indeed, in full control.

As a congregation we have been numbed on two fronts, the first is that of Georgia and the second is that of our own hopes for the future, the coming of Sam to work with us in Hull. We are still coming to terms with the fact that he and his family will not be coming. And somewhat at a loss of where to go next, we are looking with expectation to see what the Lord has planned for us.

We are encouraged that two folk, Robert and Gillian, will have become members of the church by the time you read this article. Another encouragement is the current series that we are doing in our midweek Bible studies, an in depth look at *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan, which is proving challenging and helpful and which we recommend to all.

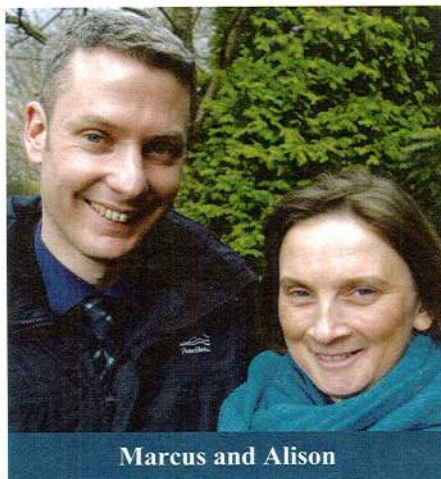
We do not know what the future holds for our church, but we do know that we have a mighty God who holds us safely in His love and care. 'How good is the God we adore...We'll praise Him for all that is past, And trust Him for all that's to come!'

♦Margaret Penticost

Durham

A funny couple of months: snow, ice, illnesses, the boiler failing one Sunday, the toilet flooding. Most of that is behind us now.

The announcement of two engagements at Christmas certainly lightened the gloom! God's providences in the lives of both couples is noteworthy. Marcus Hobson, a deacon in Bethel, came on a short winter placement and then for a long summer 'stand-in' at Gateshead while Bill was in the USA, and met Alison McClean. They plan to marry on 1 August, in Northern



Marcus and Alison

Ireland. Humphrey Dobson was delayed in the US by volcanic ash (remember last April?) for a week during which he met Amanda Krystaposis, and they'll marry in July. The Lord at times moves the world for his people.

Baby Joseph Towers was baptized on Boxing Day. Then Paul Austin, our missionary deacon, visited briefly before his wedding in Florida. He is now back in Kampala, with Kilby.

Early in January we had an enjoyable evening which sadly was a goodbye to a member moving to another job. Work for a few others still hangs in the balance.

Ministry from Hebrews 12 and 13 has continued to arrest us on Sunday mornings.

Our website has been completely rebuilt and is now up and running again: www.depc.org.uk. Our monthly newsletter has a new look and is available electronically, reducing mailing costs.

♦Brenda Norton

Cheltenham

We give thanks to God that we came through a period of prolonged snow and cold weather with our church services and

attendances largely unaffected.

We have had the encouragement in the early weeks of 2011 of having four brethren come into membership. Attendance at the mid week Bible study and prayer meeting has been encouraging and has doubled in the last year—Andy is doing studies from John 17.

At Easter, we are sending a team of 12 to work for one week with the Presbyterian Christian Association of Mangalia, Romania. We have a list of 11 activities ranging from minor building projects to leading programmes for Men's, Women's, Youth, Children's and Family groups. Please remember us in prayer as we travel and seek to do outreach and encourage God's people in Romania.

We are now well into our church building renovation project to fit a new heating system and toilets for the disabled. Please give thanks for the way the necessary funding has been raised in a short time and pray that the Lord would bless the new facilities to the advancement of his kingdom.

♦Stephen Johnston

Bethel, Cardiff

The recent period of much snow and ice led to loss of some services/meetings around the end of December but the Lord's blessing continues. Ministry of the Word by pastor Todd Matocha and other invited men across a range of Scriptures has been especially stirring for the church to progress together in trust of the Lord and the good works of faith.

Attendances have continued on an upward path, leading now to a time of significant testing. An increased number of members are suffering problems, so that they need to draw help from their brothers

and sisters. One family has transferred membership to another congregation. The blessing of welcoming the Lord's people from other lands may soon result in our saying farewell to a number of them. These past months several people have come to see what Bethel is and taste the Word with us but are not seen again in services. Two ladies, connected with a Ready Writers group using our building, continue to show interest in the faith but have been unable to come regularly.

More men of gift and spiritual quality are needed urgently to strengthen what promises to be a diaconate much reduced in number due to health reasons and two men on the way to changing office to elder. A burden for unbelieving adult family members grows.

We rejoice that Todd makes progress in studying part-time for a Master's degree at WEST for the benefit of his ministry to the church. He is also developing a writing ministry and answering a repeated call from BBC Radio Wales to an early morning programme.

A catechism class for children is soon to be started, to run additionally to the Sunday School for which three new teachers have come forward, so releasing two to other areas of service.

In the schedule of pastoral visitation by elders it has been judged very useful to all involved to talk through a number of practical and searching questions given beforehand and basic to the development of Christ's body at Bethel.

We are delighted that Tom and Melody Hartman have accepted an invitation to return in the summer to help with the work at a busy holiday time.

♦Ian Hepburn

Gateshead

The beginning of February marked our second year as a church. We give thanks to God for his blessing upon us. Two *Christianity Explored* Bible studies have begun, one on Tuesdays and one on Fridays. We hope that those who have made commitments to come will continue and that they might receive the truth of the gospel in faith. We also pray for our relationships with those who came to past courses but have not yet professed faith in Christ.

We are thankful that more people have been able to attend the mid-week prayer meetings, including several of the young people.

One on-going prayer request is for a more suitable and permanent building for our church. We are currently meeting at Marley Hill community centre, until building work is completed at Lobley Hill.

The young people are encouraged in their fortnightly meetings. They are currently reading *A Heart for God*, by Sinclair Ferguson, and discussing it during their time together. They look forward to camp this summer.

Several in the church have experienced terrible illnesses of late and we are thankful for their recovery and for God's humbling upon us in such times.

♦ Bill Schweitzer

Blackburn

A new year brings new hopes, challenges and desires; or maybe it brings fresh troubles, temptations and struggles. Whatever the case, we continue to cling to the one who has caused us to look upwards, beyond our immediate situation, to himself, the Creator of the stars, even the whole universe—such a God is our God, who 'upholds all things by the word

of his power' and to Jesus Christ, by whom all things consist and are held together. So, whatever comes our way this coming year (and we are told everything has its time) we can be assured that our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is sovereign, and that by his power all things work together for our eternal good and well being.

With these things in mind, Norman has begun a series of sermons on the book of Job, which deals with all the issues of life. Norman says, 'This book is not just about Job or his friends, or sickness etc. It is about God.'

As a church we need God in our lives, we need God in our work places, our homes. We need our God and Saviour, our great Redeemer. For this let us pray: we for you and you for us.

'Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens! That thou wouldst come down.'

♦ Dean Stevenson

Solihull

It was a joy to see Austin Wells, second son of Jonathan and Valin, baptized in September. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to the Wells family at Christmas, due to the requirements of Jonathan's work.

In all, we lost three families through 2010. We have been glad to see a couple of new people attending in January as a result of a leaflet drop in October. Never give up on leafletting!

It seems that I will be able to link up with Geoff Cox, a missionary with *Open Air Missions*, to do some direct outreach. We hope to be able to work together once or twice a month. Please pray for this.

Please pray generally that we are able to keep the Main Thing the main thing. We need to have the gospel central in our worship, fellowship, families and outreach. We ask for prayer that secondary matters can remain secondary.

♦ Stephen Dancer



Stephen Dancer baptizes Austin, a covenant child

ICRC 2013 planning update

The **interim committee** of the International Conference of Reformed Churches is responsible for planning the form and content of each conference. God willing, on 15-16 June these men will meet in Lynden WA to consider the topics, speakers, agenda, and other matters for the 2013 conference. The EPCEW has agreed to host the 2013 conference in Cardiff.

Rev. Richard Holst and Rev. Dr Peter Naylor are part of the committee.

Prayer is needed that the Lord would guide the committee so that it might draw up plans that will result in a conference that is profitable for the Reformed Churches.



Ordination of Matthew Jolley

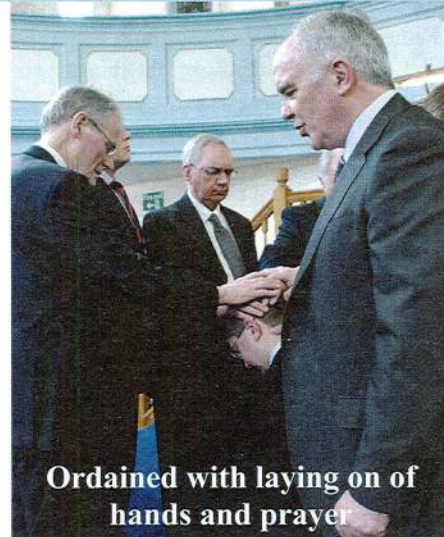
Extract from the narrative of the call by Kevin McGrane

Dear brothers and sisters, in tracing the Lord's hand with us in the matter of the call, we begin with the retirement of our previous minister, Rev. Dr Paul Davies, in October 2007. Rev. Davies was a faithful minister of Jesus Christ for eleven and a half years here, and we are deeply thankful to God for his time with us. With his retirement we embarked upon this three and a half years' vacancy up to this present day.

We would like to express publicly our deep appreciation for all the help that has been afforded us over that time, especially for visiting preachers, who have maintained the ministry of the Word and sacraments.

Matthew was raised in Methodism and first started preaching when he was 15 on the Wigan circuit, and then in Tower Hamlets when he was at university in London. After completing his degree in mathematics he worked with the United Methodists at three congregations in Indiana, where he married his wife Kristen. But during his time in the USA Matthew came to Reformed convictions, and, leaving the United Methodists, he returned to England and took a two year course at London Theological Seminary, not sponsored by any church or denomination, and not knowing what the future would hold, or where the Lord would have him serve.

Matthew first preached here in November 2009, and when we wished to have him back he was so fully booked that we had little hope of hearing him for some time. However, he and his wife came to visit the elders here with Rich-



Ordained with laying on of hands and prayer

ard Holst at the end of December 2009, and following that meeting Matthew agreed to free up some dates, and he preached again in the February and two Lord's days consecutively at Easter last year.

It was always our prayer that when the Lord sent the right man there would be a growing sense of love and conviction in each party that serving together was the will of God; and he bountifully answered such prayers.

The church issued a unanimous call in May subject to satisfying the requirements of the Presbytery, which Matthew accepted, and he and his wife came into membership the same month, and having successfully completed his theological training, Matthew commenced from the beginning of July in the capacity of 'stated pulpit supply', and applied himself to studying to satisfy the require-

ments of Presbytery. Matthew applied himself very well to the Presbytery examinations, and at our last Presbytery meeting in November, Matthew was licensed, the call from the church here could be made effective, and it remained only to make arrangements for this day.

Since his coming here, we have been impressed with Matthew's desire for the lost, the upbuilding of the church, and the important matters of the faith. He is a serious-minded man, desirous to serve the Lord. Everything since has confirmed the call here, and among us there has been nothing but an earnest desire and expectation for this day finally to come around.

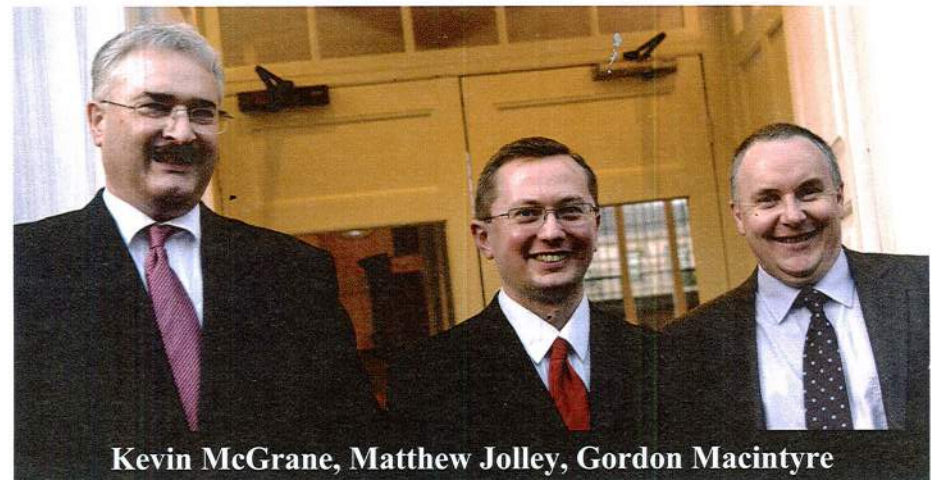
Indeed, we do not exalt ourselves, but the grace and leading of God. 18 months ago Matthew would not have had the faintest idea that he would be installed as minister in Bury St Edmunds; and neither had we any knowledge of Matthew. Matthew made a bold decision, trusting the Lord, when he returned to England, not knowing where the Lord would lead him. There is a lesson, and encouragement for us all: that in following Christ, the Lord has his perfect way, though we

do not always perceive the outcomes in the present.

It is our prayer that the Lord will truly uphold and bless his servant to declare the Word with all boldness and divine power, and that the affairs of today and of the weeks and months ahead, if he spare us, would redound to his praise and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And from Matthew and Kristen

Kristen and I thank everyone for their love and support as I have begun my ministry in Bury St Edmunds. We have been greatly touched by the prayers and encouragement of so many and especially by those who were able to join us for the ordination service. Many of the church's members commented on how encouraged they were to worship with members of the wider body in one spirit. We look forward to getting to know folks from our churches and are very excited to take on the challenge and the charge of ministry here. May the Lord Jesus, Saviour of sinners, be proclaimed and magnified here and his church built up in love.



Kevin McGrane, Matthew Jolley, Gordon Macintyre

Remembering John Titcombe

3 August 1915 - 5 January 2011

When the foundations of the EPCEW were being laid, John Titcombe was closely involved. He is fondly remembered.

From his daughter Sarah's account of her father's life

Born in Finchley, north London, 3 August 1915, John was the youngest of seven. His mother, Julia, was the daughter of a German Jewish immigrant, and his father, Henry, a staunch Protestant, who sent the children to the local Congregational Church because it was 'low church'.

After a secondary education at Christ's College, Finchley, in 1932 John joined Barclays Bank at Highgate. However, World War II interrupted his career and, in July 1940, four days after his marriage to Gwendoline Godfrey, he was called up into the RAF.

One night in 1942, while on guard with a fellow serviceman, he was holding forth against the evils of Rome, which didn't teach clearly the message of John 3: 16, when his friend challenged him: 'But what about you, John, do you know that your sins are forgiven and that Jesus is *your* Saviour?' John was cut to the heart. Those words were used to convict him of his sin and bring him to a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

His eldest brother, Rev. Eric Titcombe, introduced him to good biblical teaching and helpful Christian literature. John swiftly threw himself into the growing movement to restore deep teaching to the watered-down evangelicalism then prevailing.



After the War he settled with his family in Clapham, south London. Because of scruples about using public transport on Sunday, he decided to worship at the local Church of England, St Stephens, Clapham Park, which had a solidly evangelical minister. There John served faithfully for over 40 years, teaching a boys' Bible class for many of these, serving as Church Warden from 1961 to 1981, and as treasurer for much of that time.

In 1989, because of 'issues of conscience', he parted sadly but amicably from St Stephens and joined Cole Abbey Presbyterian Church, the London congregation of the Free Church of Scotland, where his son-in-law, John Nicholls, was the minister. By that time he had changed his views on Sunday travel. It was a mark of his piety that he was willing to change his practices if he felt the need of the hour warranted it and his obedience to Scripture was not compromised. For example, he supported the use of the New International Version of

the Bible in public worship and changed from using 'Thou' to 'You' in public prayer for the sake of the many foreign visitors to the services, and, most importantly, to bring the gospel to society in its own language. From 1990 to 2004, he served as an elder of Cole Abbey—until because of failing health he moved into a Christian nursing home.

When the Presbyterian Association in England was formed, which prepared the ground for the EPCEW, John became actively involved. He faithfully attended meetings of the PAE council and later of the Presbytery.

Throughout the 1990s a monthly Presbyterian Prayer fellowship was held at Cole Abbey and John was regularly present. He considered prayer a priority and never missed the prayer meeting if he could help it.

He loved to discuss theological and ecclesiastical subjects with the young people and encouraged many to deepen their thinking and extend their reading lists! Always mindful that 'pure religion and undefiled' is to 'visit the fatherless and widows', John was faithful in visiting the sick and those in need. He was a keen debater who contended earnestly for his faith on many issues, but he did so without rancour and generally in a genial and kindly spirit.

The last seven years of his life were spent in bodily weakness. When his mind was clear he loved above all to speak of Christ and his favourite text was 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.

From John J. Murray's tribute

'I would like to pay a short tribute to Mr John A. Titcombe as a friend and as a co-worker in the support of the translation of Reformed literature into Chinese.

I first met John when I came to London

to join the Banner of Truth Trust in 1960. Although a younger generation were coming to appreciate the Reformed Faith, I discovered that Mr Titcombe had been in touch by correspondence with the leading figures in the Reformed world, such as Dr J. G. Vos, Dr Loraine Boettner, Professor John Murray and Rev W. J. Grier since the late 1940s. He had a passion, along with his friend Mr Norman Macmillan, to spread the writings of the Reformed theologians in the UK.

When the news came that the Reformed books were being translated into Chinese through the Reformation Translation Fellowship, which had been founded by Dr Charles Chao in Canton in 1949, Mr Macmillan and Mr Titcombe were instrumental in forming a British Board to support the work... It was in 1962 that these men persuaded me to join them and I became Secretary/Treasurer for the next 25 years. Mr Titcombe put his whole heart into the work, regular in his attendance at Board meetings, diligent in his correspondence, adept at handling finances and encouraging in his support.

He gave good support throughout many years to Dr Charles Chao, the co-founder of the RTF, and it is interesting to reflect that both men passed to their eternal reward within two weeks of one another, having each attained the age of 95. The influence of their labours is being experienced in the Chinese Church today. Many young people are now enthused for Calvinism and the doctrines of grace. Eternity alone will reveal what lasting benefits resulted from that labour of love.

I give thanks upon every remembrance of a friend and fellow-worker in the kingdom of God.'





News from Malawi

Rev. Derek Bound

Some months ago, Rev. Derek Bound contacted the editor to tell him about the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Malawi.

Derek was already well known to David and Barbara Cross. In 1979, he met them while they were ministering in Western Australia. He was also in Cambridge in 1999 at the induction service of Rev. Ian Hamilton.

A Presbyterian minister, Derek grew up in Central Africa and worked in Sudan for several years. Although he lives in Ipswich, Queensland, Australia, he returns to Africa regularly. In January 2010, he was asked to visit Malawi after working with the Presbyterian Church of Sudan.

This is what Derek writes.

Introducing the EPC in Malawi

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Malawi is a newly formed and rapidly growing church in Central Africa.

It has some 30 congregations and 25 prayer houses in five presbyteries, one of which is in neighbouring Mozambique. Seven ministers and a number of evangelists serve the church.



Why did it start?

The new EPC grew out of a desire in some young Bible college graduates from various churches to evangelize the remote rural communities in the far south of the country. They were not prepared for the response! Such spiritual hunger! They began to read Reformed literature, including the Westminster Confession of Faith, and this led to a decision to start a new church based on these teachings.

What about the CCAP?

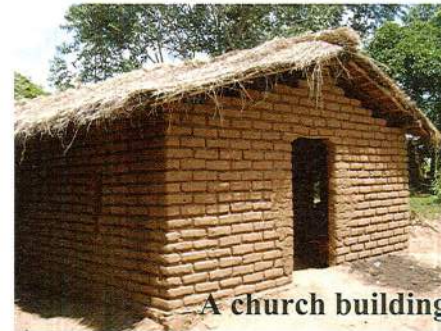
There was already a Presbyterian Church in Malawi. In the 1850s, as a result of Dr David Livingstone's pioneering work, Scottish missions established a Presbyterian Church in Malawi, known today as the CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian). But the CCAP has become a mixture of liberals, moderates and evangelicals. Some of its ministers and elders are living openly scandalous lives. This also contributed to the need for a new denomination.

The EPC's outreach

The EPC has two main outreaches: one is to nearby Mozambique in areas where there are the same tribes as in Malawi, and the other is among the Yao, a Muslim tribe in Malawi to the north of them. Their work among the Yao has been so successful that in 2008 Muslims burnt down one of their churches.

The EPC's needs

A number of congregations have purchased land and kiln bricks and built church buildings. Because they use mud instead of mortar (which they cannot afford) and grass for roofs, the buildings fall down in a heavy downpour. There is an obvious and pressing need for funds to buy mortar and corrugated iron, to build properly.



A church building

Ministers have the care of several scattered congregations which can be reached only along narrow tracks. Pastor Jack, at present the only minister working among the Yao, has 21 churches and prayer houses in his area alone. They need off-road motorbikes.

The church would benefit from teaching on the historic Christian Reformed faith and world-life view. As the church grows there will also be the



Off-road transport

need to fund evangelists to undertake full time theological studies.

Most Malawians are subsistence farmers, growing enough food, usually maize, to feed their families and sell a small surplus. Average monthly income is US\$10. Under a government scheme, citizens work for five days a year repairing the roads, earning 1000 Kwachas, enough for a bag of fertilizer.

A self-help scheme for rural poor is run by the Chalmers Center for Economic Development at Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. Another organization, ANAMED (Action for Natural Medicine), teaches them how to grow plants to cure sickness instead of spending money on expensive pharmaceuticals.

When he can get them, Derek buys Bibles and hymn books for them. He also provides pastors and evangelists with solar lights to replace the paraffin lamps which emit poor light, and are a fire hazard, unhealthy, and expensive to run (at around 3,600 Kwachas a year).





Servants of Christ

Terence D. Bees

Terry is an elder of Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Cardiff.

Paul, Peter, James and Jude refer to themselves as bondservants or slaves of Jesus Christ. But do Christians in our time regard themselves as slaves of Jesus Christ? This is not an academic question but one which goes to the heart of Christian life.

All Christians claim Jesus Christ as Saviour but are all willing to acknowledge him as Lord and Master in their daily walk? It is possible to think only of the benefits of salvation obtained from him but not too much about obligation to him as Master. And yet, that is what he is, and it follows that we are bondservants or slaves.

Someone might object, 'But we are sons of God aren't we? How then can we be slaves if we are sons?' Yes, certainly, but at the same time there is no contradiction in being slaves, friends, and sons of God all at the same time. After all, didn't Christ, the Son of God, come as a servant? He came to do his Father's will, and did so even though he was not just a son, but *the Son—the only-begotten, beloved Son*.

That all Christians are bondservants or slaves of Jesus Christ, their Master, is clear from many places in Scripture, but two references should suffice.

We read in 1 Corinthians 7: 21-23, 'Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it. For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise, he who is called while free is Christ's slave. You

were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.' In 1 Peter 2: 16 we read, 'as free, yet not using your liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.' Did not our Lord say of himself that he came not to be served but to serve? He demonstrated this most vividly when he washed his disciples' feet. He told his disciples to go and do likewise.

There is no stigma attached to being a slave of Christ. Neither is there any contradiction in being both son and servant. As he said additionally, a servant is not above his master. So there is no loss of dignity in being a slave of Christ, or in serving the brethren.

The very idea of servitude was totally against the prevailing culture of the time. Slavery, to the Greek mind, was an abomination, as being contrary to human dignity and freedom. However, in Christian terms, as it was in the Old Testament, to be a slave of God denotes one who has a special status in God's eyes (1 Chron. 16: 13; Isa. 44: 21). It is a mark of God's infinite mercy and grace: Paul echoes this in his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 1: 12-17). Many men of God were called God's servants, with no question of the title being used in a derogatory sense.

So what are the implications of being bondservants or slaves of Jesus Christ in this dispensation of grace?

What being a servant means

First of all it means that a Christian

must recognize that his Master has complete authority over him. A slave was under his master's lordship unconditionally. This may not be so apparent to us in 21st century Britain because slavery is in the distant past, but early Christians knew what it meant to be a slave (some of them were slaves), so they knew what Christ demanded of them as his slaves. He demanded their complete and unconditional obedience.

Second, a slave cannot have two masters. That is, a Christian cannot serve Christ and yet live as an unbeliever. A Christian's allegiance is to Christ and not the world in any of its ungodly manifestations. A Christian cannot have his feet in both camps (Matt. 6: 24). The message for Christians, as professors of the faith, is clear. Another master is served to their cost, until such time as God either brings them back to himself in his great mercy, or cuts them off perhaps permanently. Sadly, many Christians know of such people. There are those who seemed to run well, even officers in the church, but who could not resist the attractions this world offers in so many areas of life. Demas was one of those (2 Tim. 4: 10). In Peter's second epistle, writing of those false teachers who had once known the way of righteousness, he says, 'For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.' Whatever it is that is drawing Christians away from Christ, it is sin and must be dealt with decisively, and dealt with today.

A third implication is that a slave is not an independent person free to live as he likes, as he did formerly. When a man becomes a Christian, he is not a free agent in what he chooses to do. His will

must be subjected to his Master's will. He must do away with everything which does not promote godly living, however dear that something or things might be to him. If it contradicts his Master's will for him, he must forsake it. Peter, in his first letter, instructs his readers that they should no longer live the rest of the time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God (1 Peter 4: 2). In similar vein, as we have seen, he writes to them not to use 'liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.' The man of God disowns all things which would make him disobey his Master. He is, rather, to engage in following the will of his master in living out his time of discipleship on this earth. He is one who will say, 'not my will, but your will be done.'

Fourth, a servant is bound by the terms of his slavery. God has bound himself to the believer by many great and precious promises, culminating in their being set free from this corrupt society, into the kingdom of Christ, and becoming partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1: 4). God has covenanted with them, and they are required to perform their part in that. They should not reject his claims and presume on his faithfulness. Israel presumed on God's covenantal promises to the point where he cut them off from his presence. The ten tribes vanished from history. Can believers take it for granted that God will treat covenant breakers any differently in this dispensation of His grace? To say the least, it is foolish to presume on his longsuffering.

Those are some of the implications which face professors of the faith and servants of God and of Jesus Christ. There are more, but the ones mentioned should suffice to cause Christians to rethink their relationship to the triune God, and to remind them what they should be

about as Christians in the 21st century, no less than those in the first. In that sense nothing changes.

This discussion cannot end without saying something about the Master, albeit briefly.

Our Master

First, God is not a hard taskmaster, but is the best Master a man can have. Some slaves had hard and cruel masters who would think nothing of working them to death. Some slaves were blessed with Christian masters who treated them as brothers. But even such as these cannot be compared with God, who deals with his servants with gentleness and love. In the words of 1 Kings 8: 23, 'Lord God of Israel, there is no God in heaven above or on earth below like you, who keep your covenant and mercy with your servants who walk before you with all their hearts.'

Second, God's service is the best service. As slaves, Christians are, in fact, set free from the kingdom of Satan and free to become the people God made them to be. God's service is perfect freedom. Here one is reminded of the opening words of one hymn: 'Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free'.

Third, he bestows honour on his servants. King David was pleased to be called God's servant. He writes in Psalm

143: 12, 'I am your servant'. When we come to the New Testament we see that the Apostle Paul is proud, not of being a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but of being a servant of Jesus Christ.

Fourth, he protects his servants. Satan would destroy them but for God's protection (Ps. 91: 4-6). Christians know that they are under God's care because they are precious to him. He knows the very number of the hairs on the head of a believer (Matt. 10: 29-31).

Fifth, there is great gain. The unbeliever would persuade Christians that it is useless to serve God—what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and have walked as mourners before the Lord of Hosts? (Mal. 3: 14). Believers know well the reply to such scepticism. We are going to inherit a kingdom (Heb. 12: 28). The apostle John tells us of our Lord's promise: 'If anyone serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there my servant will be also. If anyone serves me, him my Father will honour' (John 12: 26). There is infinite gain in being a servant of our God.

Much more could be said but this is sufficient to show that to be a servant of Christ is not shameful but glorious. Nothing in this world can be compared with the glory that awaits the servants of God.



Presbytery Conference 2011

The annual conference is scheduled for 2-3 September at Leicester University. Speakers include: Rev. Dr Jon D. Payne and Rev. Dr Stephen Dancer. Fuller information will be released shortly.

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Blackburn. Fecitt Brow, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 2AZ. Services: Sun. 11:00 am & 6:30 pm (and at Ribchester 3:00 pm); Wed. 7:30 pm. Minister: Rev. Norman Green. T.01254 260388.

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Cardiff, Immanuel. Heol Trelai, Caerau, Cardiff CF5 5LJ. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm; Wed. 7:15 pm. Minister: Rev. Dr Peter Naylor. T.029 2040 5750 or 07773 093738. Messages 029 20007554. Email: peter.naylor@immanuelcaerau.org.uk. Website: www.immanuelcaerau.org.uk.

Chelmsford. Hall Street Methodist Church, Chelmsford CM2 0HG. Services Sun. 11:30 am & 6:00 pm; Thu. 8:00 pm. Minister: *vacant*. Associate Minister: Rev. Chris Kavanagh. T.01245 475259. Email: cjkavanagh@btinternet.com.

Cheltenham. 23 Naunton Lane, Leckhampton, Cheltenham GL53 7BJ. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:30 pm; Wed. 7:45 pm. Minister: Rev. Andrew Young. T. 01242 231278 or 07963 139683. Email: revandrewyoung@yahoo.co.uk. Website: www.cheltenhampres.org.uk.

Durham. The Chapel, Laburnum Avenue, (off Hawthorn Terrace), Durham. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 3:30 pm; Thu. 7:45 pm. Minister: Rev. Brian Norton. T.0191 384 0504. Email: durham@epcew.org.uk. Website: www.depc.org.uk.

Gateshead. Lobley Hill Community Centre, 47-49 Scafell Gardens, Gateshead NE11 9LS. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm. Minister: Rev. Dr Bill Schweitzer. T.07939 071404. Email: bill.schweitzer@btinternet.com.

Hull. Rear of 336 Holderness Road, Hull. Services: Sun. 10:30 am & 6:00 pm. Minister: Rev. Bill McCully. T.01482 706413. Email: mccully@ehpc.co.uk.

London. St Bartholomew's Church, Craven Park Road, London. Bible Study Sat. 7:00 p.m. (Portuguese/English). Contact: Timothy Mulla. T.0208 343 0173 or 07970 762251. Email: 2timothy@londonpresb.org. Website: www.londonpresb.org.

Sheffield. The Source at Meadowhall, 300 Meadowhall Way, Sheffield, S9 1EA. Services: Sun. 11.00am and 4.00pm. Contact: Kevin Bidwell T.0114 2431720. Email: kevinbidwell@btinternet.com. Website: www.sheffieldpres.org.uk.

Solihull. *Three locations:* Cranmore Infants School, Northland Avenue, Solihull, B90 4SA (am); The Women's Institute Hall, 745 Warwick Road, Solihull B91 3DG (pm); 160 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull B92 8AB (Wed. pm) Services: Sun. 10:30 am; Wed. 7:30 pm at 160 Ulverley Green Road, Solihull B92 8AB. Minister: Rev. Dr Stephen Dancer. T.0121 707 1826. Email: info@solihullpres.org.uk. Website: www.solihullpres.org.uk.

Sweden: Tranås. Höggatan 8, 57333 Tranås, Sweden. Services: Sun. 10:00 am & 5:30 pm. Minister: Rev. David Bergmark. T.+46 70 244 7241. Email: dbergmark@erkis.se. Website: www.erkis.se.
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