



the presbyterian banner

August 2015

*In days to come Jacob will take root,
Israel will bud and blossom
and fill the world with fruit.
Isaiah 27:6*

CONTENTS

Editorial	2
Synod Moderator's Devotion <i>Haggai 2:10-19</i>	3
The Past For Today <i>Christianity in Scotland (7)</i>	6
Death under the Banner <i>To Burn or Not to Burn?</i>	9
The World in the Banner <i>News and Views</i>	10
Children in the Banner <i>Shipwreck!</i>	12
Prescribed Search Work	13
Books in the Banner <i>The Third Choice</i> <i>Army Carmichael</i>	14
Churches in the Banner <i>CRCA 2015 Synod</i>	15

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Editorial

We have been hearing talk from our politicians about having a dialogue, or a debate, or a conversation, about certain contentious issues. There has been talk of such discussion in connection with the Australian citizenship of known terrorists from Australia fighting overseas. But very few have raised the need for a vigorous consideration of the move towards same-sex marriage and all that comes with it. While many are raising the familiar excuse about 'love' not much has been raised about what come out of this 'love' – children. As sure as night follows day there will come about legal rights for same-sex marriage to have their own children and be allowed to adopt them.

But what is the overall impact for those boys and girls being brought up in this kind of environment? If we know that many present day relationships, whether de-facto, broken, or otherwise, have produced a troubled generation, how is this going change with yet another down-grading of the marriage relationship? In fact, without the balance of a man and a woman something very essential is missing. No matter how many men put the names of their 'husbands' as the mother on birth certificates, it cannot change the basic dysfunctionality.

To go against God's natural order has already sucked our society into a morally value-less vortex, and adding more into that mix will only draw this community down even further down. Then what shocks you now is nothing like what you will see then! The slippery slide will become a straight drop into insecurity, fear, and violence. If you ever wondered how Sodom and Gomorrah got so bad take a look around you!

In a debate you get the opportunity to hear different views on the same subject. How sad is this day when anyone daring to proffer the slightest shade of different to the accepted media 'narrative' is shouted down and severely persecuted. Oh, they will tell you there's lots of room under the umbrella. But don't point out the big holes in it!

*Whoever acknowledges me before men,
I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven.
But whoever disowns me before men,
I will disown him before my Father in heaven.
Matthew 19:32-33*

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Synod 2015, 7 May — Moderator's Devotion

Haggai 2:10 — 19

Brothers and sisters, during the first two days of synod we've considered the first two of Haggai's four messages, messages spoken to the community of Jews who had returned from the Babylonian exile. As we've seen, these messages were designed to motivate God's people of that time to get going on rebuilding the temple, the temple that had been destroyed 66 years earlier. The rebuilding work had started some years earlier, but they didn't get very far before giving up, so they needed to be encouraged to start it up again, even though at times the task seemed hopeless.

So, the first two of Haggai's messages were proclaimed a couple of months apart in the year 520 B.C. And it would seem that these messages had their desired effect. Work on the temple was proceeding.

But then, about a couple of months later, it was clear that there were still problems that needed to be confronted. So once again the word of the Lord came to the prophet Haggai, prompting him to proclaim his third and fourth messages to the people, both on the same day. This morning we consider the first of these two messages.

At first, we might be a bit confused about what Haggai is saying here. Truth to be told, this third message is the most difficult to understand of the four. Consecrated meat and contact with dead bodies, what's that all about?

Well brothers and sisters, when we dig into this passage, the message to the people back then becomes obvious; and the message to the church of all ages, with the message to us, becomes clear as well.

We could sum it up this way: External religion is not enough; religious behaviour must stem from pure motives, which can only come when God blesses His people. Doing the right thing is not enough; our

service for God must flow forth from a heart made pure by God.

The thing is, that sure, the people were rebuilding the temple. But it wasn't enough. It wasn't enough for them just to be going through the motions. There needed to be a turnaround in their hearts. And God would bring about that turnaround.

Haggai 2:10-19

10 On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in the second year of Darius, the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11 "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, 12 "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?"'"

Then the priests answered and said, "No."

13 And Haggai said, "If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

14 Then Haggai answered and said, "'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the Lord, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

15 'And now, carefully consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the Lord—

16 since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty. 17 I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labours of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me,' says

the Lord. 18 'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid— consider it: 19 Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.'"

Jim Klazinga

He would bless His people. He promised it.

To help us understand this point, let's take a closer look at this text. First, we read from our Scripture reading and text verses 11 through 13 – "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Now, ask the priests concerning the law, saying, If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?' Then the priests answered and said, 'No.' And Haggai said, 'If one who is unclean because of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?' So the priests answered and said, 'It shall be unclean.'"

So, the focus here is on cleanliness and uncleanness. And the contexts for this discussion are the ceremonial laws, those Old Testament laws that spelled out the rules for sacrifices and the like. These laws might seem strange to us, since we are no longer required to offer sacrifices, thanks to the once-for-all perfect sacrifice of Christ. But that doesn't change the fact that the truth behind these laws, the truth that these laws pointed to, still very much applies, because the truth is the same now as it was back then.

Anyway, the first part of this section deals with the whole matter of consecrated meat. Meat set aside as a sacrifice. For the sake of the argument, you can call it: holy meat.

Now, when this meat is carried in one's garment, it could be said that that piece of clothing becomes holy because of how it is carrying this holy meat. That's what the ceremonial law teaches. Leviticus 6:25, reading from the ESV version – "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, This is the law of the sin offering. In the place where the burnt offering is killed

shall the sin offering be killed before the Lord; it is most holy" And then in verse 27 – "Whatever touches its flesh shall be holy." Consecrated meat can make ceremonially holy whatever it touches.

But then the question becomes: can this 'holiness' be transferred any further? Is this holiness like some magic power that will seep through the garment and then transfer on to anything that the garment touches, for example a wire attached to an electric current making the electric current run through that wire, and the current then running through anything that touches the wire?

Well, no, holiness doesn't work that way. This holiness is not transferrable like that. That's the answer the priests gave when Haggai asked the question, and indeed, they gave the right answer.

But what about unholiness, uncleanness? Say you have a dead body. Extremely unclean according to the ceremonial law. We read in Numbers 9 verses 4 and 6 - "So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover...But some of them could not celebrate the Passover on that day because they were ceremonially unclean on account of a dead body." That was a sure way of becoming unclean: touch a dead body.

But here's the thing: when you become unclean as a result of touching a dead body, or for any other reason, whenever you become unclean in terms of the ceremonial law, then anything you touch also becomes unclean. Numbers 19:22 - "Whatever the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening."

And so, if you were unclean and you were to touch some food, say some bread or stew or wine or oil, or whatever, then that food would become unclean by virtue of the fact that you touched it while you were unclean. That's the answer the priests gave when Haggai asked his question, and again, it has to be said that they answered

correctly.

So comparing the two, it would seem that uncleanness, unholiness, is a lot more transferable than holiness or cleanness. It's a whole lot easier to make something defiled than it is to make something consecrated. Defilement or uncleanness is like an infectious disease that can be communicated very easily. It's very catching. Holiness, on the other hand, isn't quite as contagious.

All right, what's the point of all of this? Is Haggai really concerned with how food can become clean or unclean? No, not especially. Rather, Haggai is using these ceremonial laws to make a point. Verse 14 – "Then Haggai answered and said, 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the Lord, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.'"

Whatever they offer is defiled. Whatever they do is defiled. Why? Because their hearts still weren't in the right place. Sure, they were outwardly engaged in the good task of rebuilding the temple. But it wasn't really worth anything, because of their impure hearts.

Look at it this way: Defiled hearts will make what appear to be good acts into defiled. It can't go the other way around: good actions cannot make a defiled heart good. It's a lot easier for sin to be transferred than it is for righteousness to be transferred.

You could give all sorts of money to the church and to the poor, you could be a preacher or an elder or whatever, you could do all sorts of work in the church, you could make sure you attend all the right church meetings, but without your heart in the right place, it really is all meaningless. When you have an impure heart, then anything you do will be impure.

It was critical that the people of Haggai's time remembered this. Of course, they needed to be working on the temple. Of course, they had to shift their focus away from their own concerns and start focusing on

what God wanted them to do. But if they were simply to do this as a means of appeasing God, a way to get God off their backs, then they were missing the boat completely.

And the same goes for us: of course, it is critical for us to be concerned with the work of God's house, the work of the church. Of course it is important for us to do the business of synod. But if our hearts are not in the right place, then all of what we are doing here this week becomes defiled. Think about it: doing all the right committee work, voting the right way on all the deliverances, preaching all the right doctrines, will not do anything for you apart from a purified soul.

John Calvin writes about this in his commentary on Haggai - "Men not only lose all their labour, but also contract new pollution, when they seek to pacify God by their sacrifices, unaccompanied by inward purity...nothing can flow from an impure and polluted fountain but what is impure and polluted."

You know, Haggai further emphasised all of this when he reminded the people of how God had been punishing them in the past. Verses 16 and 17 – "since those days, when one came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were but ten; when one came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were but twenty. I struck you with blight and mildew and hail in all the labours of your hands; yet you did not turn to Me," says the Lord."

Look at what I have done in punishing you, declares the Lord. I did all these things as I promised I would do when I made my covenant with you, and yet still you failed to turn to me. I demonstrated my covenant wrath, and yet you still failed to turn your hearts around. I hindered the work of your hands, I brought upon you agricultural disaster, just like I said I would when I es-

established my covenant with your forefathers, and yet still, you continued on in your impurity with your unconverted hearts.

So then, good works are not enough, we must have hearts that are pure. Well, this being the case, what hope can there be for us? How can we have any chance of truly serving God? Because the fact of the matter is, we can't escape the reality that each and every one of us has an impure heart. 'Impure', that's an understatement. Each of us is sinful in the eyes of God. Each of us deserves to know of the wrath of God, because we are each totally depraved sinners. This is the condition of every single human being since the time of Adam, save one. Everyone here this morning has a defiled heart, an unclean heart. And this unclean heart defiles all our actions, here at synod, and every day of our lives. There is no one who does good, not even one. We are an unclean people, and what we offer is unclean.

Well, of course, if we were to rely on making ourselves holy in the eyes of God, there would be no hope. But thanks be to God, because of His mercy, we can be cleansed of our guilt and made righteous in His sight. Thanks be to God, He sent His Son to live as one of us, but not as a sinner like us. Jesus Christ lived the perfectly clean, perfectly holy, perfectly sinless life that none of us could live, and he lived it on our behalf. He was perfectly obedient, even unto death, the death on the cross, where he sacrificed himself for our sins, that we might be forgiven. Thanks be to God, there is redemption. Thanks be to God, there is purification.

Think about the awesomeness of this fact. We are unclean, but God, simply and only because of His mercy and grace, has seen fit to cleanse us through the blood of His Son. He has seen fit to credit us with the perfect righteousness of Christ. There can be no explanation for this other than pure, unadulterated grace. What else can it be that would bring about such blessing

upon us?

Haggai testified to this grace in his third message. You are a defiled people. Everything you do is defiled. Everything you offer is unclean, says the Lord God. I have shown you time and time again that you deserve nothing more than my covenant wrath. But you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to bless you. Verses 18 and 19 of Haggai 2 – 'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid—consider it: Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded fruit. But from this day I will bless you.'

Mark this day well. See what happens next. See what I do for you. Up until now, you have only known disappointment. But that's going to change. You will see, I will bring blessing, and you will know that it comes from my hand. You will know that it is only I who will bring about this change in your situation. Give careful thought to this day, remember it well, and be assured that from this day on I will bless you.

People of God, this is the gospel message to those who belong to Jesus Christ: our God, for no other reason than the fact that He is a gracious merciful God, our God will bless His people. He will turn their hearts around. He will spiritually nourish them. He will cause them to know of His grace.

Mark it well, remember it well, it is not because of anything we have done, here at synod or anywhere else. It is only because of His love for us. Remember who it is who has worked His grace in your life.

And you know something else, when God does work His grace in the lives of His people, when He does purify them, it is then, and only then, that their works can become pleasing in his sight. To quote John Calvin once again – "The heart is cleansed by faith, and purity is diffused over our works, so that they begin to be pleasing to God" It is

only after we have been cleansed by the blood of Christ that we can be purified, and only then can the actions we do become pleasing to God.

Oh, for sure, the sinful nature is still with us, and it will continue to be with us until we reach perfection in glory, and that sinful nature will continue to stain even the best that we do.

And also, to be sure, nothing that we do, even as purified people, will never be able to make us right with God. Our works will never contribute to our salvation, ever. But nevertheless, as purified people with converted hearts, hearts made new through the power of the Holy Spirit, as cleansed people we can begin to serve God as He would have us to do, out of gratitude for all that He has done for us.

Thus were the Jews back in Haggai's day encouraged to continue on in the work which they were called to do, continuing the task of rebuilding the temple. Thus can we be encouraged in the work we are called upon to do as we conclude this synod meeting, and as we go home to our respective churches. May we look to Him and know that only in Him can there be holiness. Think about how easy it is to be unholy, defiled. Think about how hard it is to be holy, consecrated. And know that God, simply because of grace, has done what was necessary for you to be His holy people.

Amazing Grace, amazing love, amazing mercy, that we who are so unworthy, should be so blessed. Thanks be to God, for his blessings. Amen.

The Past for Today

Christianity in Scotland (7): Crown and Conflict, 1567-1663

Rowland S. Ward

(continued)

3: A determined king

The Union of the Crowns, 1603

In 1603 Elizabeth I died and James VI of Scotland became also king of England. He based himself in England and only once (1617) in the balance of his reign did he visit Scotland. Despite what had occurred in 1592, the king was determined to assert his authority in the church and to introduce episcopal government generally along the lines of the Church of England.

In 1596 Melville had occasion to address James thus:

Sir, we will always humbly reverence your Majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your Majesty in private, and since you are brought in extreme danger both of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty, or else be traitors both to Christ and you. Therefore, Sir, as diverse times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is King James the head of this commonwealth, and there is Christ Jesus the King of the church, whose subject James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. Sir, those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over his church, have power and authority from him to govern his spiritual kingdom both jointly and severally; the which no Christian king or prince should control and discharge, but fortify and assist; otherwise they are not faithful subjects of Christ and members of his church. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say, you are not the head of the church: you cannot give us that eternal life which we

seek for even in this world, and you cannot deprive us of it.

Melville was committed to the Tower of London in 1606 but was released four years later, refused permission to return to Scotland and so spent the remaining 11 years of his life teaching in the Huguenot ministry training academy at Sedan.

Episcopal policy

The opportunity of interference came from the need to provide for the traditional church representation in parliament. Ministers were appointed to episcopal titles so that they could vote in parliament. These parliamentary bishops were appointed in 1600 on the basis of legislation passed in 1597. Then an aspect of the 1586 legislation was revived and in 1607 bishops were appointed as permanent moderators of presbyteries and synods, and steps taken to restore endowments to the bishoprics. Consecrations from English bishops in 1610 introduced the notion of apostolic succession.

More important in a practical sense were changes affecting worship. As early as 1614 the king ordered all to communicate in their parish church on Pasch (Easter Sunday).

In 1618 the Five Articles of Perth:

(1) required every minister to observe the festival days of the Birth, Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost as holy days;

(2) provided for baptism in private houses when necessary;

(3) provided for the equivalent of confirmation of young children by the bishop;

(4) provided for the Lord's Supper in private houses to sick and infirm persons; and (5) provided that the bread and wine be administered 'to the people humbly and reverently kneeling upon their knees'.

These articles were passed

only with difficulty. Easter Sunday achieved some observance but the other days little or none. Items 2, 3 and 4 had minimal impact. However, opposition to kneeling, which the king insisted for several years be enforced, was strong, as it affected the worship of every communicant at a particularly sacred moment. Eventually about a dozen ministers were deprived. The significance of the articles was their impact at the local level and their creation of a permanent party of non-conformists. The king abandoned the further liturgical innovations he had in view, but the General Assembly was permitted no meetings after 1618.

4: Covenants

Although solemn religious bonds had been entered into by the reforming party in 1557, public religious covenanting in Scotland begins with a covenant drawn up in April 1560 and subscribed by some 150 of the nobility and gentlemen of the kingdom. The next significant covenant was the *Negative Confession* of January 1581, sometimes called the King's Confession since it was encouraged by the authority of the king. Drawn up by John Craig, the author of a widely used catechism, it expressed abhorrence of the Roman Catholic distinctives and pledged faithfulness to the word of God and loyalty to the king. The context was the fear of French designs upon Scotland and the existence of papal infiltrators. Similarly, at the time the Spanish Armada threatened in 1588, a further bond was subscribed by the king and others.

When Charles I came to the throne in 1625 he was determined to bring the church in his northern kingdom into line with the Church of England. Charles believed in the Divine Right of

Kings and that he was answerable only to God. His marriage to a French Roman Catholic in 1625 and his endeavours to raise taxes without the approval of parliament added to disquiet. He also revoked earlier land grants. This put the nobility off-side, even though he was aiming to put the finances of the church on a better footing. Charles lacked his father's streak of pragmatism and in 1629 suspended the English parliament, ruling without it.

Charles favoured elaborate and uniform ritual in the church. In 1629 he raised the subject of a new liturgy with the Scottish bishops, who suggested a draft drawn up in his father's time. This the king rejected. In 1633 he visited Scotland for the first time for his Scottish coronation, in which he employed the English liturgy. The older Scottish Bishops were opposed to the English liturgy but some of the Bishops drew up a proposal which moved somewhat in this direction. Charles was not in favour of conceding anything that would give him difficulty with the Puritan party in England, which also had scruples over some matters in the English Prayer Book. In 1636 the king issued a Book of Canons essentially formally stating the episcopal government of the church, banning extempore prayer in worship services, and requiring the compulsory observance of a new liturgy on pain of excommunication, although the new liturgy was not released until the following year.

In its final form what has become known as 'Laud's Liturgy' (after the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, appointed by Charles in 1633), was not quite so Roman as popular opinion then and now has it. Nor was it Laud's production as such but the work of Scottish bishops, particularly Wedderburn of Dunblane, backed by the king and by Laud, who was no friend of the English puritans. A revision of the 1559 English book as revised in 1604, it reduced the number of references to the Apoc-

rypha and substituted 'presbyter' for 'priest', but lacked the measure of discretion found in Knox's liturgy. It was English in essence, it was imposed by the king, it contained elements foreign to the Scottish church and neither the church or parliament were consulted. Upon its introduction in St Giles' Church, Edinburgh, on 23 July 1637, which at the time was undergoing internal changes to fit it up as a cathedral church reflecting English models, oral tradition has it that one parishioner, a street-seller named Jenny Geddes, threw her stool at the Dean who was leading the service and cried, 'Dare you say the Mass in my ear?' Whatever was said, there was certainly a riot, and opposition to Charles' religious policy was found throughout most of the country leading to supplications to the Council about the bad advice the bishops had given the king.

National Covenant, 1638

In February the king replied by taking personal responsibility for the liturgy and insisting it be used. The supplicants found it convenient to continue to blame the bishops for misinforming the king, but also subscribed what is known as the National Covenant. This covenant consisted of the Negative Confession of 1581 to which Archibald Johnston of Warriston added a recital of legal enactments and Alexander Henderson added terms that applied it to the current situation. It was first signed on 28 February 1638, found wide acceptance, and served to unify the country. It did not explicitly condemn episcopacy, but in effect undermined it.

The Glasgow Assembly, 1638

Charles agreed to the calling of a General Assembly of the church and expressed willingness to recall the Liturgy, the Canons and the Five Articles of Perth, presuming perhaps that the Assembly would not approve. When the Assembly met in November with the capable Alexander Henderson as moderator, it was ordered to dissolve by the king's commissioner before

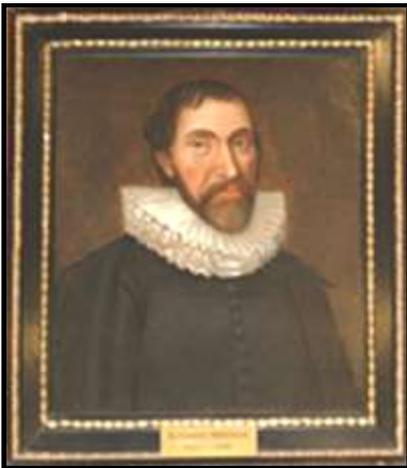
getting to the main business. However, the Assembly continued to sit. Johnston of Warriston, the Assembly Clerk, produced the four old minute books of the Assembly covering 1560 to 1590, so the Assembly was seen as a restoration rather than a revolution. Indeed, the work of the Assembly was to restore the church government to the position recognized in 1592. Accordingly the Acts of the 'unfree, unlawful' Assemblies of 1606, 1608, 1610, 1616, 1617 and 1618 were declared null and void, the 1637 liturgy and associated acts were rejected and condemned, the archbishops and bishops deposed (with several permitted to continue in pastoral ministry if they met conditions), episcopacy was renounced as also were the Five Articles of Perth. It was declared 'both inexpedient and unlawful in this Kirk' for ministers to hold civil offices or to sit in parliament, and the freedom of the church to hold General Assemblies 'as occasion and necessity shall require' was affirmed. Those besides ministers present as commissioners at the Assembly, if anything ensured that the decision had wide support among the people.

The Bishops' Wars, 1639, 1640

The king refused to accept the decisions of the 1638 Assembly and played for time. A Covenanting army and a force raised by Charles faced off, but Charles gave in to the Scottish demands in June 1639 without engaging the Scots (the Pacification of Berwick). The General Assembly of August 1639 re-enacted the decisions of the previous Assembly, and Parliament revived the Act of 1592 in favour of Presbyterianism. Charles prepared for a second war and raised an army in Ireland, but was forced to recall the English Parliament in April 1640 to secure funding. Although the Lords and the Convocation of the Church of England approved, the House of Com-

mons refused to vote money until grievances between church and state were addressed. The King promptly dissolved Parliament on 5 May, and went to war anyway.

Hostilities began in July with a pre-emptive invasion of England by the Scots, who easily defeated the English. The Treaty of Ripon was signed on 26 October 1640. Alexander Henderson (c.1583-1646), the highly esteemed minister at Edinburgh, and a Scottish Commissioner to deal with peace negotiations, much impressed the King. Charles was forced to recall the



Alexander Henderson

English Parliament in November 1640 to secure funds to pay the Scots, and the English Parliament, which granted the king funds, on certain conditions (see below). In August 1641 Charles ratified the enactments of the Scottish parliaments of 1639 and 1640 in favour of presbyterianism, so the position of 1592 was restored in Scotland.

First English Civil War 1642-46

As well as providing finance to Charles, the English Parliament passed several reforms: Parliament had to meet at least every three years; the present Parliament could not be dissolved without its consent (hence it became known as the Long Parliament, 1640–48); Laud was impeached and imprisoned; the Star Chamber was abolished in July 1641; taxation without Parliamentary consent was declared ille-

gal, &c. A Grand Remonstrance listing some 200 points of grievance was narrowly passed by the House of Commons in November 1641 and presented to the King. Many of these points were concerned with the risk of Romanism, heightened because the King was married to a Roman Catholic. The King rejected it, although on 14 February 1642 he assented to an Act to exclude bishops from sitting in the House of Lords.

The Remonstrance included a call for an Assembly of Divines to deal with the 'peace and good government of the Church.' On 1 June 1642 a Bill for the Assembly was passed by Parliament, but the King, who was readying for war, refused his assent. The King raised his standard at Nottingham in August 1642 and the conflict between Parliament and the King was to run until June 1646. The major battle of Edgehill on Sunday 23 October 1642 was indecisive. An Assembly of Divines became imperative since, while the Act for the Abolition of Episcopacy was not passed until 9 October 1646, the effective government of the Church of England was already in disarray.

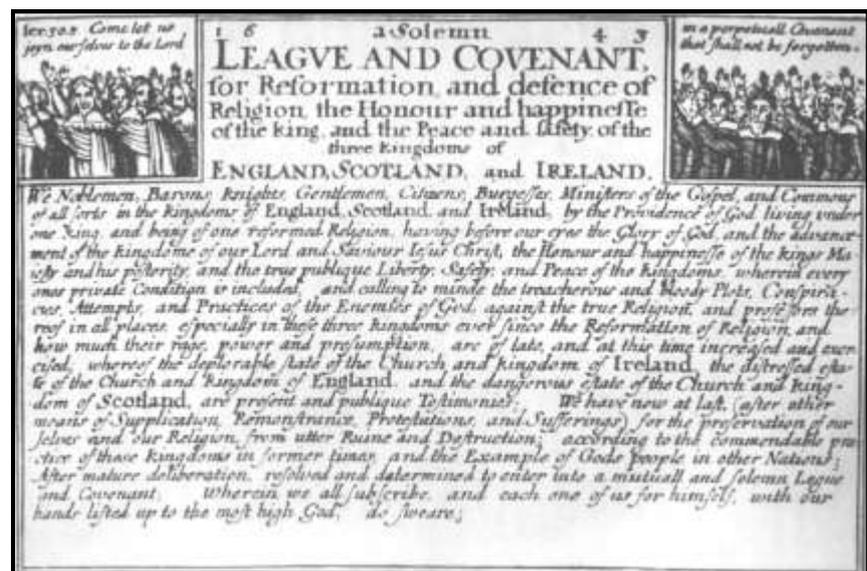
Solemn League and Covenant, 1643

Those of Presbyterian sympathy were prepared to negotiate a settlement with the King while the In-

dependents wished to achieve military victory. However, neither approach succeeded, so the English Parliament approached the Scots in November 1642. Knowing the religious concerns of the Scots, on 12 June 1643 the English Parliament ordered an Assembly of Divines to address religious questions. It commenced its sittings on 1 July 1643 at Westminster. By August the situation was dire and the English Parliament sent seven commissioners 300 miles north to Scotland to negotiate military assistance. These included two members of the Assembly of Divines: Stephen Marshall (Presbyterian) and Philip Nye (Independent) as well as Sir Henry Vane, the younger.

The English wished for a civil league but the Scots insisted on a religious covenant, and the English did not have much choice given the desperate military situation. The Solemn League and Covenant, as it was now known, was approved by the English Parliament on 21 September 1643. It was subscribed by the House of Commons and by the Assembly of Divines on 25 September 1643, and by the House of Lords four days later. It was widely signed in Scotland.

(to be continued)



The Solemn League and Covenant, 1643

Death under the Banner

To Burn or Not to Burn?

'To burn or not to burn?' that is the question (with apologies to Hamlet). Cremation or burial? That's the choice. How should we dispose of our bodies once they die? For millennia this was not even a question for believers. It was burial. It has only been in the last few generations, that here in the west, cremation has taken off – or taken over. The reasons seem credible. It appears more hygienic. It's a more efficient use of the limited land space we have. It's cheaper. Some don't like the thought of their body slowly rotting in the earth.

Does it really matter? Is it all that important? Is it not a matter of indifference? You choose cremation – I choose burial – you're happy – I'm happy – so we're all happy! Right? Should we not however ask if the Bible has anything to say on the matter? If we are Christians this is a very important consideration. We should want to honour the Lord in life and in death.

It would solve the matter once and for all if the Bible said, 'you shall not burn your deceased'. But it doesn't. Neither for that matter does the Bible say, 'you shall meet for worship on the first day of the week i.e. Sunday'. Nor does it say, 'women should be admitted to the Lord's table'. Nor does it say that the children of believers should be recognised as covenant children. Yet we do these things. Why? Let the Westminster Confession explain; ***'The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, and for man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly stated in Scripture, or by good and necessary reasoning may be deduced from Scripture'*** (chapter 1: 5).

I believe that when we add up all the Biblical material on death, the examples and the analogies – we can deduce that burial is the method that the Lord approves. Consider:-

1. Burial was the practice of both Jews and Christians in the Old and New Testaments. We read of the burials of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Joseph, and many more. They were buried because of the hope they had. The exceptions are noteworthy. Consider some examples. Nadab and Abihu who were consumed by fire because they disobeyed the Lord's instructions regarding worship (Lev. 10: 1-2). If a man married both a woman and her mother they should be burned (Lev. 20: 14). If a priest's daughter defiled herself by becoming a prostitute she must be burned (Lev. 21: 9). The grumblers who sinned by complaining at Taberah were burned and consumed (Num. 11: 1-3). In Joshua's day, Achan and his family were stoned and their bodies were burned because of his sin (Jos. 7: 25-26). In the days of Israel's apostasy children were sacrificed and burned (2 Kings 21: 6, 23: 10). In the days of Amos cremation was considered a form of desecration (Amos 2: 1). The fact that Saul and the remains of his three sons were burned was in exceptional circumstances (1 Sam. 31: 11-13). Perhaps you think these are obscure examples? The apostle Paul tells us however that, ***'these things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age'*** (1 Cor. 10: 11).

2. Jesus was buried. You might say he had no choice. True. His funeral was prearranged. It was prophesied of him that he would be buried (Isaiah 53: 9). It's an essential part of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15: 3-4). Peter reminds us that Christ suffered for us. ***'He is your example, and you must follow in his steps'*** (1 Peter 2: 21). It seems appropriate therefore that we who follow Him should follow him into

George Ball

the grave. I find it immensely satisfying to know that Jesus never calls us to go where he has not gone before. Even when our bodies are laid in the earth – Jesus has gone before us. Jesus body was raised from the dead on the third day. This is also our ultimate hope. We don't merely believe that our souls go to be with Christ when we die (Luke 23: 43, Phil. 1: 23). But we also believe in the resurrection of the body (John 6: 39-40, 44, 54, 1 Cor. 15: 42-44, 51-57). The Shorter Catechism summarises the Bible's teaching. ***'The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, though still united to Christ, rest in their graves until the resurrection'*** (Q 37). At the return of Christ we will be raised bodily and the resurrection body will be reunited with the spirit. ***'We are looking forward to the new heavens and new earth he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness'*** (2 Peter 3: 13). Because this is our Christian hope we ought therefore to treat the dead body with the greatest dignity and respect.

Thankfully God is able to raise the remains of those who have been burned. They will not be disadvantaged on the day of resurrection. Many of the martyrs after all were burned. But that's not the point. The issue is; how do we honour the Lord; and how do we respectfully treat the body that is 'still united to Christ'; and how do we testify to the physical resurrection?

I'm suggesting that burial does all that. It honours the Lord; it treats the body with appropriate respect; and it bears clear, effective and silent witness to our hope of the physical resurrection in a way that cremation doesn't. When we burn a thing we are fin-

ished with it. It's done. We have no future for it. That's the message, I believe, that cremation conveys. But it's not the message we as New Testament Christians should want to give. I recently noticed a head stone with the inscription 'awaiting the resurrection'. That's the message we want to convey – not only to those attending our funeral – but also to those like myself wandering through the cemetery. The body (not the soul) is 'sleeping,' awaiting the resurrection morning when Christ returns.



3. The apostle Paul assumes burial in 1 Corinthians 15. He repeatedly emphasises that the body is 'sown'. His analogy is drawn from agriculture. When a seed is sown in the earth something amazing transpires. Those small, totally unattractive and dead looking seeds are transformed into a beautiful plant. The apostle writes, **'It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual**

bodies' (1 Cor. 15: 42-44). You can see from the analogy that cremation doesn't fit. The farmer doesn't burn the seed. If he did, that would be the end of it. He buries it. He anticipates a harvest. So we bury the body as a seed in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. The whole emphasis of the New Testament therefore favours the burial of the body of the believer, not its burning. The only mention of burning the body in the New Testament is in 1 Corinthians 13: 3, **'If I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing'**. The apostle here however is not referring to cremation but to self sacrifice.

4. As noted at the beginning cremation is only a very recent development in the Christian community. Although cremation was practiced by the Greeks and Romans, the early Christians insisted instead on burying their dead, and by the 5th century cremation had been abandoned throughout the Roman Empire due to the Christian influence. It's an indictment on the church today that the trumpet fails to give a clear sound. When the church appears to be indifferent; ambivalent and even assimilates the ways of the world alarm bells should ring.

The World in the Banner

Evangelism Explosion Dedicates New International Headquarters

Evangelism Explosion International hosted celebratory dedication of its international headquarters building near Asheville, North Carolina on Friday, 29 May 2015. The dedication ceremony took place at the new headquarters facility, located at 10 Misty Valley Parkway, in Arden, North Carolina.

"We're eager to celebrate God's provision of this new headquarters building and to dedicate it to Christ's service," said Dr. John B. Sorensen, president of Evangelism

Explosion International. The ministry trains people in more than 200 nations to share their faith in Jesus Christ.

"This building will be a vital hub in the work of Evangelism Explosion in the U.S. and overseas," said Sorensen. "Because of it, we're able to centralize staff and more effectively serve our worldwide ministry."

The new, two-story, 27,000 square foot building provides EE with ample and efficiently configured office space. It features

-- State of the art video and audio production facilities

-- The Kennedy Vision Center, with historic archives from EE founder, D. James Kennedy, Ph.D., as well as a visual display of EE's global ministry.

-- An auditorium seating 150 people

Among those attending the dedication was Mrs. Anne Kennedy. She said her late husband, D. James Kennedy, "would be so thrilled to see this beautiful building the Lord has provided to sup-

port the work of Evangelism Explosion International."

An active EE trainer for more than fifty years, Mrs. Kennedy is "excited to see all the ways that God will use this facility to further His kingdom. Jim's motto was, 'Excellence in all things and all things to God's glory,' and this building exceeds all of our expectations. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes."

EE has relied, since its 1962 founding in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on rented space for its headquarters. "We own wonderful facilities overseas, but we've always waited for a place here in the U.S.," said Sorensen. "We're so grateful to have one now."

Evangelism Explosion trained more than one million people worldwide to effectively share the gospel in 2014. In addition, more than 8.4 million people professed faith in Christ through the witness of EE-trained believers last year. + *Evangelism Explosion, 10 Misty Valley Parkway, Arden, North Carolina 28704, 888-567-3543, Fax: 828-687-7494*

Parents & Schools Warned About Harms of Gender Ideology

A new ground-breaking report on gender identity is warning parents and school leaders to be wary of the guidelines and policies being pushed in schools and communities, and that gender identity ideology is founded more on political ideology than it is in careful science and experience. This report explains how the issue is not as simple as many are making it out to be, and that there are many facts parents and community leaders must know about.

The report "*BOYS GIRLS OTHER – Making Sense of the Confusing New World of Gender Identity*" draws from decades of mainstream academic and international research, and seeks to bring clarity to this topic and practical advice for schools, parents and community leaders, for the wellbeing of children.

The report was commissioned by

family group Family First NZ in response to an increasing number of 'born in the wrong body' stories involving children in the media, and 'gender identity' guidelines and policies being pushed at schools by governmental groups and advocacy organisations.

"Our children are being indoctrinated with the message 'Gender refers to how you identify, someone can identify as male, female, in between, both, or neither.' And the PPTA has told secondary schools that 'Gender identity refers to what a person thinks of as their own gender, whether they think of themselves as a man or as a woman, irrespective of their biological sex.' Schools are being bullied by government and advocacy groups in to adopting policies around uniforms, toilets, changing rooms, and sports teams rather than heeding the warnings and research of leading scholars and clinicians," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ.

The report says: *Even while realising these issues are very personal and deeply felt and how they must develop empathy within us, it is unwise to allow emotions - regardless of how deeply felt - to drive the decision and policy-making process related to such issues. We must take a sober understanding and appreciation of what the leading scholars and clinicians have to tell us on these issues. Their voices should be heard more clearly and strongly than the various advocacy groups of any stripe*" particularly as they impact our children.

The report also includes an essay from a former transsexual who warns that parents who play around with a gender change for their child are engaged in a dangerous, high-stakes game, and that a child with gender identity issues needs psychiatric or psychological help, not a change of wardrobe or hairstyle.

The report is being sent to every school in New Zealand, and to politicians.

+ *Family First NZ*

PCNSW Threatens to Stop Performing Government-Sanctioned Marriages if Homosexual Marriage is Legalized

A 6 July 2015 commentary by Dr. John McClean, convenor of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales (PCNSW)'s Gospel, Society, and Culture Committee and vice-principal of Christ College, in the Sydney Morning Herald, stated that if homosexual marriage is made legal in Australia, PCANSW ministers may stop performing state-sanctioned marriages.

Dr. McClean stated: "Jesus' view was that sex is for marriage, marriage is for life and marriage is for a man and a woman. When he was asked about marriage, he quoted from the beginning of the Bible which says that God made marriage for a man and a woman to share a life and sexual union. From that he came to his famous conclusion: "what God has joined together, let no one separate". Jesus' account of marriage is reinforced by many parts of the Bible...."

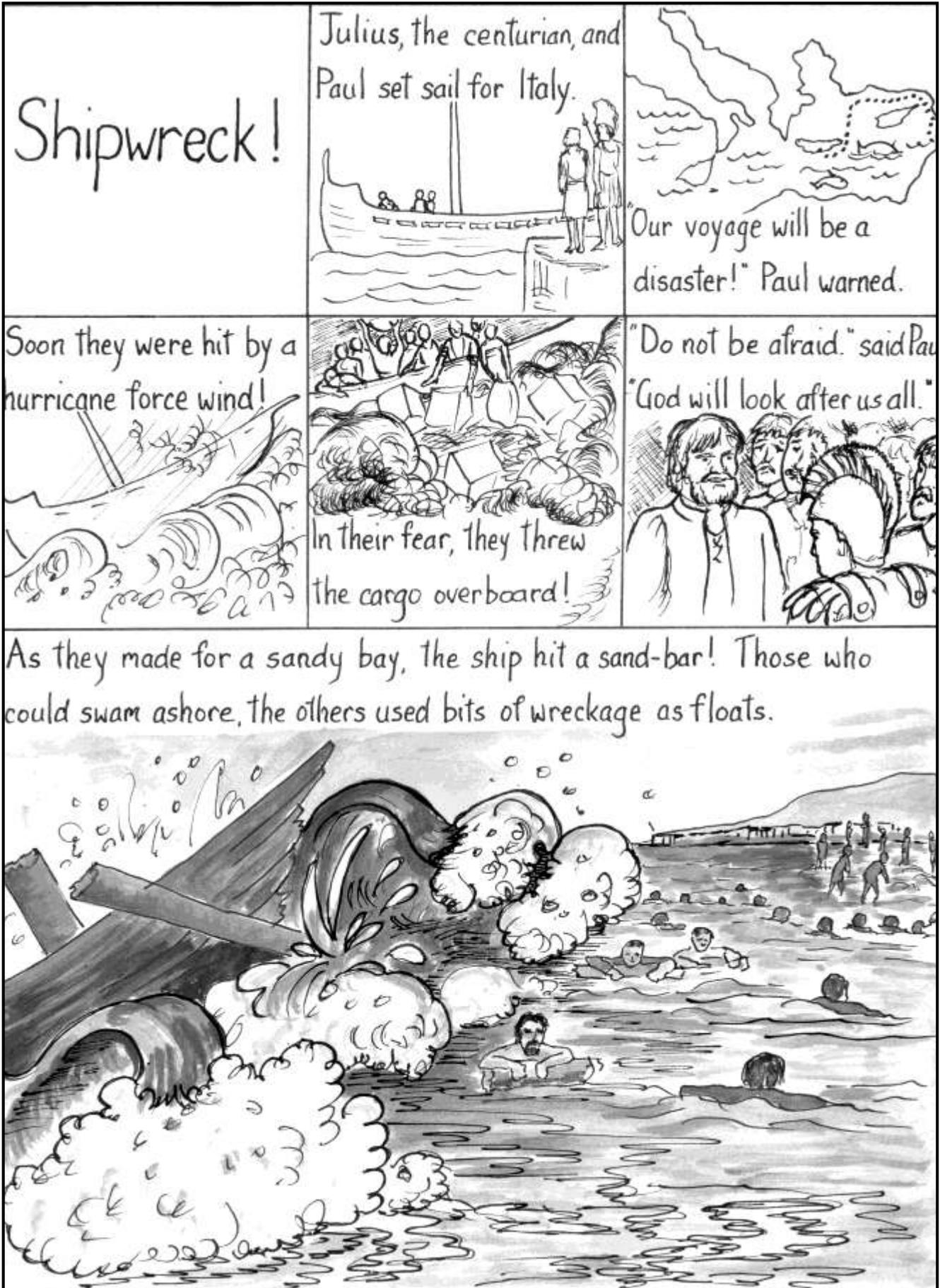
"Many people don't share any of the three key elements in Jesus' definition. Most people do not think that sex is only for marriage and the vast majority of couples in Australia who marry live together first. Many Australians are not convinced that marriage should be for life. Often wedding vows don't have the "till we are parted by death" kind of words. Now a significant section of the Australian population also want marriage redefined to include same-sex couples...."

"If we decide to separate from the Marriage Act, we hope there will be a way in which we can continue to celebrate marriages, though our services won't be recognised by Australian law. We don't want to divorce marriage, just the Marriage Act. We're still looking at how this could be possible."

+ *Sydney Morning Herald*

Children under the Banner

Acts 27:1—44



Prescribed Search Work

AUGUST 2015

Senior Section 12 years and over; Intermediate 10—11 years; Junior 9 years and under

SENIOR AND INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 2 and 6)

ACTS chapter 14

1. Why did Paul and Barnabas have to flee from Iconium? (2 verses)
- 2(x). When they had cured the cripple in Lystra, what did Paul and Barnabas say to prevent the people sacrificing to them? (3 verses)
3. What did the Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuade the people at Lystra to do to Paul?
4. When Paul returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, what did he exhort the disciples to do?

chapter 15

5. About what question did the brethren determine to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem? (2 verses)
- 6(x). Write out the 2 verses in Amos chapter 9 that James quotes.
7. What did the church decide were the necessary things from which the Gentile Christians should abstain?
8. What was the result of the contention between Paul and Barnabas? (2 verses)

JUNIOR

JOHN chapter 9:1--7

1. For what reason did Jesus say the man was born blind?
2. How did Jesus cure the man's blindness? (2 verses)

verses 35--41

3. What did the man do when Jesus told him that he was the Son of God?
4. What was Jesus' reply when the Pharisees asked him, "Are we blind also?"

Please send the answers to:
Mrs I Steel
PO Box 942
Epping NSW 1710
The questions for the whole year
are available from the above postal
address or by email at:
iesteel@gmail.com

Books in the Banner

The Third Choice by Mark Durie

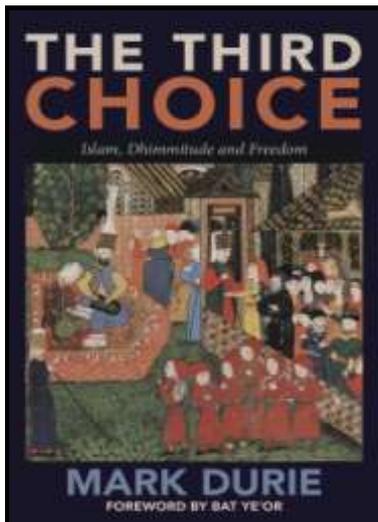
Reviewed by Dr Herm Zandman

Author Mark Durie is an Anglican theologian and is known as a passionate human rights activist. He has worked as a Christian among Muslims in the Aceh province of Indonesia. He has produced numerous articles on the Muslim faith and how Muslims believe as per their two main belief documents, the Sunna (depicting episodes in the life of Muhammad) and the Koran. In his writings he stresses the importance of reading and understanding both documents, as the Koran's content is intricately interwoven and connected with the content of the Sunna.

His book *The Third Choice* centres on one particular Islamic concept called dhimmitude. Dhimmitude is a concept denoting the enslavement of non-Muslim people conquered by jihad (an Islamic term referring to the religious duty of Muslims to maintain the religion; the word means 'struggle' or 'resisting' in Arabic). The third choice for non-Muslims living in a Muslim-ruled society is the payment of the jizya, a head tax, a cost paid for the right to live, albeit in humiliation. The other two choices are either accepting the Muslim faith or death. The jizya ritual (the occasion for paying the head tax) forces the dhimmi subject to forfeit his very head, should he violate any of the terms of the dhimma covenant which has spared his life.

Durie notes that too few Westerners grasp that the concept of dhimmitude is

crucial to understanding the relationship between Islam and non-Islam. The author argues that, through a conspiracy of silence, heads of state, church community leaders, universities, and media smother its reality under a blanket of ignorance. Durie denounces this concealment (of which he provides numerous illustrations) as undermining Judeo-Christian civilization and as contrary to



human freedom and dignity.

The Third Choice has been written to meet three main goals, i.e. to explain the nature of the dhimma pact, to enable non-Muslims to withstand this form of religion

-based slavery, and to help people understand the nature and impact of Islamic politics in the world today.

A number of Muslims are seeking to impose an Islamic worldview today on Muslims and non-Muslims alike, all around the world. The evidence of the success of this effort can be observed in newspapers, school text books, scholarly writings, and political pronouncements. There has been, so claims and demonstrates Durie, a widespread reshaping of worldviews to embrace Islamic perspectives.

The book leads the reader systematically through an explanation how Islam works, how Muhammad used to deal with unbelievers, and how the aforesaid lays the groundwork for dhimmitude and its effects.

This excellent book unveils in easy-to-read language the history of an influential set of ideas and goes on to demonstrate its application and influence for both the past and the present. It is a must read for anyone who wishes to attain to a good level of understanding Islam and its outworking in societies all over the world. As one endorsement states, "This book will disturb, inform, educate, and challenge." Once picked up, the hardest part is to put it down again. Highly recommended.

Published by Deror Books, 2010.

Amy Carmichael: 'Beauty For Ashes' by Iain H. Murray

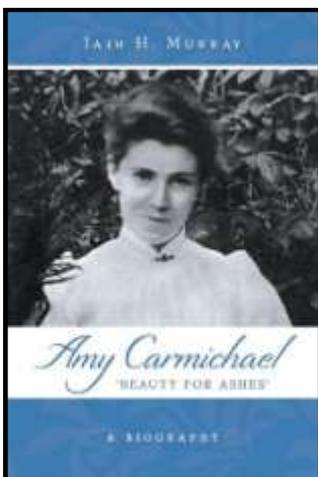
Reviewed by Sjirk Bajema

This book was a quick read. Having to wait some hours in the Melbourne Tiger terminal before my flight to the CRCA Synod in Perth I was able to read it in one go (and I'm not a fast reader).

As someone who has read little about Amy Carmichael (aside from a book of poems by her) but heard often of her, it was a good introduction to a specific era and place in Christian missions.

Amy Carmichael is someone who is known largely for her particular kind of writing – especially in her poems and songs which have a particularly early twenty-century pietistic flow. This book, though, places her in a larger vista and so makes her character and her ministry come alive and relevant in our time.

Hers was a ministry which had a great growth and impact locally. It also had support



from many people around the world.

This is brought out in chapters 2, 3 and 4, with an outreach work also developing into an orphanage and hospital. But also it was a life which went through serious set-backs and challenges. There were differences with fellow workers over the way to administer and promote the work. And especially with the devastating accident she experienced on October 24, 1931, at the age of sixty-three, we meet a critical time in her life and ministry. That fall almost made her bed-ridden and certainly restricted her movement. Yet Amy met it looking to the Lord, turning this into an opportunity to become more involved in a ministry that impacted far wider than the work be-

ing done in Dohnavur, in the very southern part of India.

In the light of an increased involvement of western churches in gospel-related welfare work in India – one can think here of Mukti – this book helps bring out some of the origins and historical struggles. They are difficulties that still remain today with the vast majority of the billion or so in India being of other religions. Christians are apparently still less than 1%. The challenges Amy faced are still very much before the Church in India and elsewhere today.

The book is well illustrated, with a concluding chapter on 'The Dohnavur Fellowship' as it is in the present time. I found it to be a good introduction to someone we have all heard about – such as in the hymns she wrote – but don't really know that much about.

Published by Banner of Truth

Churches in the Banner

The 2015 Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia

Sjirk Bajema

I was privileged to be the representative of our denomination to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) held from May 17 – 22 at the Christian Reformed Church of Gosnells, Western Australia. I was there on the other side of our continent and for the whole time of their Synod specifically because of their request to enter into a formal fraternal church relationship with our denomination. While from their side they have recognised us as a sister-denomination, we have never entered into any formal arrangement. This is certainly not to say we do not have a close connection – our churches in Sydney and Melbourne provided assistance for their fledgling churches when they began in Australia following the extensive Dutch migration of the early 1950's; the first Synod of their churches was held in our church building in St. Kilda, Melbourne; and since then there has been interaction and co-operation in a number of spheres, such as the hosting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in Sydney in the early 1970's, one of our ministers serving on the faculty of the Reformed Theological College, some of our students attending there, and extensive pulpit supply and swaps and fellowship over the years. One of their present ministers came from our denomination and I previously served in their denomination, before serving in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, from where I came to the PCEA. Indeed, the congregation whose church building was used for this Synod was the congregation I served for twelve years from 1987 to 1999.

The Local Ambience

The hospitality was warm and sincere. While I knew many of the local people, it was good to get to renew acquaintances with old colleagues and also meet the younger ministers and elders. The organisation behind the Synod was excellent, with the calling church – the Christian Reformed Church of Perth - very busy behind the scenes. In terms of the cooking and serving many folk from

the metropolitan churches played a part.

It would be a good point here to mention how their Synods operate. We have a minister and a commissioner elder from each congregation (if they can attend). They have delegates chosen by each Classis (Presbytery) – two ministers and two elders, with alternate delegates also chosen (quite a number of them were there). There are some six Classes. So not all churches will be represented by their minister or elder at Synod – indeed, there were a number of ministers who were not there (although most were). We meet once every year for some two days – they meet once every three years and for five days, with Monday – Thursday going from 9.00am – 9.00pm and finishing on the Friday afternoon. This is, incidentally, half the time they used to take when they would go for ten working days during the time I was serving there.

The issues before their Synod mirrored a number that we have been dealing with also. The subject of same sex marriage and how that might affect our ministers as official celebrants, Bible translations – especially with the discontinuing of the publication of the 1984 NIV, theological education, ecumenical relations and mission work were also on our agenda. In this latter aspect it was noted that they are supporting a church planting work in a part of India which is very close to the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India. There has been some contact between Rev. Samit Mishra and Pradeep Kumar with Rev Bert Kuipers who works for the CRCA with the Christian Reformed Fellowship of India and this could develop further, especially as they do not have closely located like-minded churches.

In terms of Bible Translations the recommendation of the Study Committee was approved that the English Standard Version (ESV) be accepted as a faithful version. It was also decided to set up a new Committee to review current thought-for-thought (dynamic equivalent) translations with

a view to recommending one or more to Synod 2018.

In regards to marriage, while those there wanted something in place regarding marriage, should there be a change in the legal definition of marriage by federal parliament, there was no agreement on the details, so it will go to a Committee to bring something back to the next Synod.

On the ecumenical level the Synod confirmed its 2012 decision to seek membership of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). It also approved of the interaction with our Inter-Church Relations Committee in terms of clearing up some miscommunication, and affirmed the desire to enter into a formal fraternal relationship (ecclesiastical fellowship) with our denomination. They also downgraded the nature of their relationship with the Christian Reformed Church of North America (CRCNA), a denomination that has over the last few decades approved of women in all church offices and which now is moving towards uniting with the Reformed Church of America, a clearly liberal denomination.

An Area of Difference

The most contentious issue before this Synod – and overall it was a fairly harmonious Synod – was the report of the Denominational Workers Review Committee. This was a group specifically assigned to consider the effectiveness of each of the denominationally paid positions through surveying the churches and meeting with the workers, their respective committees, and so on. It was not a positive report into the first three positions it considered – that of the Ministry Development Coach (known commonly as the MDC – he helps to train those in church leadership and facilitate church planting), the Youth Worker and the Children's Worker. In receiving feedback from some 80% of the denomination it was found that while approximately 50% support

was found for the MDC, it was somewhat less for the Youth Worker and Children's Worker positions. Synod subsequently decided to let the latter two positions go, causing some angst on FaceBook. It was clear, however, that there was a lack of support particularly for these two positions and many churches had not used them at all. There were even two churches which principally refused to pay the equivalent amount of quota (ministry share) for any of the three positions.

Already you may be picking up that this is a denomination with some diversity. That was something openly acknowledged. You could see it with the songs and musical instruments used to accompany the singing at Synod. While at CRCA Synods I have attended in the past an organ and the more traditional psalms and hymns were used now there were choruses and guitars. Invariably they had an old favourite hymn, sometimes to an upbeat tune, but only once did we sing a psalm – and that was a paraphrase. While there are still conservative-style churches in the CRCA, the overall direction is a very laid-back casual type of worship. I commented in my address to the Synod on our distinctions in worship and how taken aback many of them would be when worshipping with us. Singing the psalms literally and without any instruments is increasingly something quite different for them.

The Four-Fold Plan

What the CRCA has particularly focussed on of late is the so-called Four-Fold Plan, a methodology borrowed from the Sydney Anglicans. This places all the various structures of the denomination under either PRAY, GROW, TRAIN or ALIGN. On their website they state regarding this:

OUR FOURFOLD TASK

In submission to the Lord Jesus Christ and his command to make disciples of all nations:

1. *To call upon God for such an outpouring of his Spirit that his people will be assured of his love through his Word, seek to please the Saviour in all things, manifest the godly life and be filled with prayerful and sacrificial compassion for the lost in all the world.*

2. *To grow healthy churches*

which nurture and equip their members and, by God's grace, expand numerically, become the mother-churches of as many fellowships and congregations as possible, and take further initiatives to penetrate structures of society with the gospel.

3. *To equip our church members to be disciples of Christ and multiply the number of well-trained leaders (ordained, non-ordained, full time, part time, voluntary) who are actively involved in God's mission.*



Synod scene

4. *To reform continually the life of the denomination (including our church ethos, customs, church order, use of resources, denominational committees, support staff and agencies) to encourage and enable the fulfilment of the fundamental aim.*

The GROW aspect of this is particularly shown with the planting of a number of daughter congregations in the last nine years. This is especially seen in W.A. and Tasmania where the overall number of churches has doubled. Mind you, that has not always meant a substantial increase in the number of members or adherents (the total membership in the denomi-

nation remains much the same), but rather groups going out from an existing church into a new area identified as a potential growth area. So increasingly you will find CRCA congregations meeting in public halls or school facilities and having just the one worship service on the Lord's Day, while the larger congregations reduce in number. The new groups focus in on community 'hooks' such as young parents' clubs or 'Mainly Music' or the like that draw in folk from the new area.

In the TRAIN area there was a paper contained within the Candidacy Committee which proposed those training for the ministry should be exposed to a ministry paradigm involving a more heterogeneous model. In plain English, this means that as well as a traditional pastoral ministry approach there should also be training in a more directing role – as would be seen, for example, in the area of training others for leadership and visitation, thus taking various aspects of ministry away from the minister himself.

It was good to be at the Synod for the whole week. You get more of a feel for how things are this way than just popping in to pass on your greetings. Lord willing, it also gives our Inter-Church Relations Committee a bit more background to consider the CRCA's request for a formal relationship and the type of relationship that could be, and from that to come with a recommendation to our next Synod.



The CRCA and Fraternal Delegates