

the presbyterian

September 2015



*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

Matthew 12:28-30

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ISSN 0729-3542

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Subscriptions for 2014
11 Issues per year
Within Australia: \$35 [Bulk \$30]
Overseas: AU \$50 Airmail.

Direct Credit :
Bendigo (BSB) 633000
A/C No. 140124082

Editorial

Once upon a time an Arab camel-driver was asleep in his tent in the desert on a bitterly cold night. In the middle of the night he woke up to find that his camel had pushed its nose beneath the flap of the tent. He was about to protest but he realised that only very little of the camel was inside, so it didn't matter much.

On waking up later, however, he found that the camel had put its whole head and long hairy neck into the tent. The Arab now aroused himself from his sleep to protest. But the camel prevented him by saying, "Oh, do you really mind? It is terribly cold outside, and I won't come in any further."

The man went off to sleep again. But on waking a third time he was really alarmed to see that the camel's front legs and hump were now in the tent. As he was about to leap to his feet and drive it out, the camel said, "Now I solemnly promise this time that I won't come in another single inch – and besides, it's warmer for you in the tent if there are two of us."

The Arab was so lazy that, in spite of the growing worry in his mind, he fell off to sleep again. Very soon, however, he awoke with a cry of terror, "Help!" The heavy weight of the camel was now on top of him. "If its room you want," said the beast in answer to his cry, "there's plenty of it outside – get out!"

I was reminded of this story with the current swirling pressure to legalise same-sex marriage. I remembered back to the 1980's when there was also a lot of political pressure from the homosexual lobby to decriminalise sodomite behaviour. Back then the assurances were much the same, 'This is all we want – nothing else. You don't have to worry.'

Within two decades of that being legalised, they started the push towards civil unions. And didn't they make a fuss about that when it was passed through! Lots of emotional scenes as various examples of long-term 'committed' same-sex couples were able to finally be officially united. But that's all they wanted, as we were assured by the New Zealand Prime Minister of that time – Helen Clark..

Of course that wasn't the end. Now there is pressure for Australia to do what has already been done in many other liberal western countries – destroy the uniquely heterosexual bond called marriage.

And if that happens, there will still be more to come. It would then be clear that this story has not yet run its full course. As is already happening in many other countries, to hold on to a traditional view of marriage is not on in the 'tent', despite all assurances given. So it's out you go!

The beast at that time would have well and truly moved in.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator – who is forever praised.

Amen.

Romans 1:24-25

The Presbyterian Banner is the official magazine of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The PCEA was established in 1846 and adheres to the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) as its doctrinal standard.

Literary contributions are welcome. Submission by email is preferred.

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The Signet Ring

Haggai 2:20—23

Zerubbabel. How's that for a name? Ever thought of giving one of your kids this name?

Zerubbabel was the name of the governor of Judah at the time of Haggai. He served over the Jewish people who had returned to the land of Judah, after their exile in Babylon.

In the last verse of the book of Haggai, the Lord declares to Zerubbabel that He would make him "like a signet ring." Strange term, to go with a strange name: 'signet ring'. What is a signet ring? And why is Zerubbabel being compared to one?

Before answering these questions, we need first to look back to a time long before he was even born. We need to look back to the time of his ancestor, King David.

Now, if I were to ask you: was David a good king or a bad king, the answer would be easy, wouldn't it? A good King. Far from perfect, of course. But still, in 1 Samuel 13:14 and Acts 13:22, we read that the Lord considered David to be a man after his own heart. On the whole, by the grace of God, a righteous and good King.

But David was more than just an interesting historical figure who happened to be a good king over a small nation, on the other side of the world, almost 3000 years ago. The thing is, God had significant plans for David. He was set apart by God, anointed by the Lord to play an important part in God's purpose for history, His plan for salvation.

Well, actually, this purpose dealt not so much with David himself, but with his son, and his son's son, and so on. In 2 Samuel 7:16, we read God saying to David: "Your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever."

God was making a huge promise to David. He was establishing a covenant with David. And in this covenant, God promised that David's descendants would continue to be kings, and this would go on

forever.

This promise did not mean, however, that those in the line of David would reign forever as Kings over the actual earthly nation of Israel. Historically, Israel as a nation did not even exist for a long time. And since it started up again last century, Israelis have not bothered to find a descendant of David to be

Haggai 2:20-23

20 And again the word of the Lord came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, 21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying:

'I will shake heaven and earth.

22 I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms; I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.

I will overthrow the chariots

And those who ride in them;

The horses and their riders shall come down,

Every one by the sword of his brother.

23 'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts."

king over them. In fact, it would be impossible for them to do so, since no Jewish person alive today would be able to accurately trace their lineage that far back.

But that doesn't mean that God's promise was cast aside. Not at all. Rather, this promise that the house of David would endure and reign forever, pointed to one specific descendant of David who would reign in glory over all creation forever. The promise given to David pointed to the ultimate king: our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is His throne that will endure forever. His kingdom will never fall.

In Luke 1:31-33, we read of an angel declaring to the virgin Mary before Jesus was born: "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will

Jim Klazinga

be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." An obvious reference to the promise given to David.

Yes, Jesus Christ was the culmination, the fulfilment of the line of David. Which makes God's plan for the line of David that much more important, because it led to Jesus Christ, and was fulfilled in Christ.

Now, if you think that the line of David was so special, so important, that if the Messiah was to come from the line of David, then it would make sense that the descendants of David, the ancestors of Jesus, would be very good and righteous people. Unfortunately, such was not the case. In fact, while David was said to be a man after God's own heart, many of his descendants were not. Just the opposite, in fact. The Bible tells us that many of them did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

For instance: take King Coniah (also known as Jehoiachin). He was the king of Judah around the time of the fall of Jerusalem and the exile into Babylon. He was wicked. And the Lord was not going to put up with it.

Listen to what the Lord says to Coniah in Jeremiah 22: "I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand of those whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the Chaldeans. So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return."

God had enough of the wickedness of the kings of Judah. He would send them into exile.

But wait, there's more. As if sending him into exile were not enough, the Lord has something else to say: "Thus says the Lord: 'Write this man down as childless, A man *who* shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.'"

Think about the implications of this curse. Coniah was of the line of David, he was David's direct descendent. But it is being said that none of his offspring would sit on the throne of David. It would seem that the promise to David is being threatened. The line of David is put in jeopardy.

But what does any of this have to do with Zerubbabel, and with our text? Well, listen to what the Lord says to Coniah in Jeremiah 22:24: "'As I live,' says the Lord, 'though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, were the signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off.'"

If you were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off.

And what is a signet ring? It was a ring worn by important people, particularly kings. On this signet ring would be a seal that would act as a guarantee.

You could think of it as being something like a signature. Think of how you use a signature on a cheque. In your congregation, you might have one or more people who write cheques on behalf of the church, and they sign the cheques. By writing their signature, they are giving their approval to the cheque. Their signature authorises payment. And it serves as their personal guarantee that there is enough money in the church's bank account to cover the cheque.

Well, a signet ring back in Old Testament times would also act as something of a guarantee. The signet ring would be worn by the king, and there would be a seal on the signet ring, a stamp that would be pressed onto official documents and the like. If the king were to put His seal on a document, then he would be guaranteeing that he had

authorized the document. And if he were to give the ring to one of his representatives, then he would be guaranteeing that the representative was working on his behalf.

Coniah, by the very fact that he was reigning on the throne of David, in the line of David, acted as a signet ring, and as a guarantee. He was God's guarantee that the promise made to David was continuing. It's like having a descendant of David on the throne as God's way of sealing the covenant He had made with David.

But now, with Coniah, God is pulling off this signet ring. God seemed to be removing His guarantee.

This had extremely serious implications. Could it be that the line of David was threatened? Could it be that the promise to David was threatened? And most serious of all, could it be that God would revoke His plans for history, His plan for salvation?

Thankfully, all hope was not lost. God brought about the renewal of His covenant. As we read in our text, Haggai 2:23: "'In that day,' says the Lord of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the Lord, 'and will make you like a signet ring; for I have chosen you,' says the Lord of hosts." Zerubbabel was the new signet ring, the new seal, the new guarantee of God's promises.

Zerubbabel also happened to be a descendant of David, in the line of David. So while the promise to David seemed to be threatened in the time of Coniah because of wickedness and covenant unfaithfulness, the Lord did not abandon his promise. The Lord re-established his promise.

God is gracious, and the line of David would continue. Zerubbabel would keep the line of David going. You might even say that in Zerubbabel, the curse against Coniah was being reversed. God, in a manner of speaking, re-elected the line of David. Zerubbabel was the guarantee of that.

Zerubbabel was the signature of

God, with God making a promise that the Messiah was still to come.

God was merciful. He would not let the evil nature of man get in the way of his plan for the line of David. Man's sinfulness can not stop God's plan for history. Man's total depravity cannot stop God's plans for salvation. The Messiah would come, the son of David would come into the world to save his people and complete God's plan. God would make sure of it.

You know, it's interesting that we do not know what ultimately happened to Zerubbabel. In fact, we really do not read all that much about him in the Bible. We read his name in Ezra, Nehemiah and Zechariah, and of course in the book of Haggai. But he seems to drop out of sight after these wonderful words of our text are spoken concerning him.

But the thing is, it's really not important what happened to Zerubbabel. Rather, what is important is what happened to one of his descendants, Jesus Christ.

Zerubbabel was not the great promised Messiah king himself. Rather, he foreshadows his descendant Jesus Christ, the one who was to come much later. He points to the Messiah who brought in the new kingdom.

Consider another important point regarding Zerubbabel, that further emphasises how he points to Jesus Christ. Notice what our text says about Zerubbabel, that he would be 'like a signet ring'. The first three words of Haggai 2:23 say: "On that day, I will take you Zerubbabel...and make you like a signet ring."

On which day? There can only be one answer: on the Day of the Lord. On the day when, as we read in verses 21 and 22, on the day when the Lord will shake the heavens and the earth. On that day, the Lord will overthrow the throne of kingdoms and destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms. The Lord will overthrow chariots and their drivers. Horses and riders will fall, each

by the sword of his fellow.

What we read in these verses from Haggai 2 is a typical description of the day of the Lord. That day is a time of holy war. It is a time when the powers of this world will be overthrown and God's holy reign will be established. It is the fulfillment of history when the powers and principalities will be replaced by God's holy kingdom.

Now of course, this is primarily a spiritual battle we are talking about here. And it was a spiritual battle that was fought and won by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ overcame the powers of darkness. He conquered them on the cross, and he rose as a victor. And it is in him that the day of the Lord came, when he came to earth to take on flesh and have his blood spilt and his body broken on the cross.

Mind you, while in one way, the day of the Lord has arrived in Christ, it also has to be said that in another way, the day of the Lord has not fully and totally arrived. The full and complete day of the Lord that Haggai 2 points to, awaits the second coming of Christ.

On that day the battle will be completely over, and sin, death, hell and the devil shall all be completely overcome. Judgment will come, the wicked will be overthrown, and God's reign will be complete.

And so, the promise of which Zerubbabel is a guarantee, awaits its full completion in the return of Christ. And we know that time will come, because of the promise of the God who guarantees his faithfulness.

So, we see how Zerubbabel was a guarantee that God would accomplish his purposes. Now, it may be easy to think, 'Well, that was good for the people back then. They needed that guarantee. They were struggling with rebuilding the temple. They needed to be reminded that God was continuing to keep His promises.'

"But what do we have now? Zerubbabel is no longer around. Do we have something else in our day and age to assure us that the promises of God will be shown to be

true? Do we have a special signet ring guaranteeing to us the promises of God?"

Yes, we do. In Ephesians 1:11-14 we read: "In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."

We are marked with the Holy Spirit. He has been promised to us. And his presence in our lives assures us that, yes, everything is working out according to God's plan. He is active in history, and he will see history to its successful conclusion. All of God's elect will be redeemed, the powers of the world will be completely overthrown, God will reign supreme, and his kingdom will last forever.

This has not completely happened yet. But we have a guarantee that it will happen. The Spirit is like a signet ring, guaranteeing us the inheritance which we have because of the marvellous and overwhelming grace of our God.

The Spirit is the sign that the kingdom is among us even now. This sign assures us that the final completion of the kingdom will happen, and God's kingdom will be the only kingdom. God will accomplish this for his glory. All praise be to him.

Never forget that the promise of the Spirit, along with the assurance that he gives us, is rock solid. We could not have a better guarantee.

We serve a great God, and his promises are absolutely sure. He worked out his promise to David, in spite of David's sinfulness and the wickedness of so many of his descendants. And he will continue to work in history, fulfilling all his promises.

Consider how we are so unwor-

thy of God's promises. We simply do not deserve to have the Spirit given to us as a guarantee. And yet, God is faithful. Incredible.

And if all this weren't enough, we have even more. We have the Bible, and we have the sacraments. The Bible, which proclaims the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. The Bible, which tells us all about Jesus Christ and what he has done for each of us. The Bible, which tells us everything we need to believe to know that God will save us, because he has promised to.

And to supplement the Bible, we have Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have the sacraments that serve as a sign and a seal of the promise of God. They too serve as a guarantee from God, a guarantee that, as surely as water washes away dirt, as surely as bread and wine nourish the body, so surely are our sins washed away, and our souls nourished by Christ. A further guarantee, a signet ring from God, that he will fulfill his promises, and we will be saved.

And so, we have strength for the struggle. We have hope in the battle. We can do the work the Lord calls us to do. Think of how faithful God was to the people of Haggai's day, giving them just what they needed in the midst of their struggles, a signet ring, a guarantee in the person of Zerubbabel, governor of Judah. He does the same today, with the Holy Spirit, simply because he is a gracious God.

Do you appreciate this, brothers and sisters? Do you trust in the God whose promises are for ever sure? Do you thank God for giving you a wonderful guarantee that he will always be faithful? Thanks be to him, the great God above all gods, whose faithfulness is greater than the heavens, whose promises are unshakable.

The Past for Today

Christianity in Scotland (8): Crown & Conflict 1643-1663

Rowland S. Ward

The Solemn League and Covenant pledged to preserve the reformed religion in Scotland and to pursue the reformation of religion in England and Ireland in doctrine, worship, discipline and church government. This was to be according to the word of God and the example of the best reformed churches so that there would be the 'nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion' between the three kingdoms so that we 'may as Brethren, live in Faith and Love, and the Lord may delight to dwell in the midst of us'.

The agreement to preserve the reformed religion in Scotland and to pursue the reformation of religion in England and Ireland suggested conformity to the Scottish pattern, and the presbyterian pattern had many examples in Europe. It could also provide a helpful unity through its graded system of assemblies by which the part was subordinated to the whole. But the expression 'according to the Word of God' could extend to several possibilities depending on one's interpretation of Scripture. Thus Thomas Case strongly advised the London ministers that the Covenant was so mutual that 'we are no more bound to Scotland, than Scotland to us' and that it was a pledge to preserve Scottish practice rather than observe it.

It is worth noting that English Puritan thought at this point was such that the Scottish church was seen as a herald of a millennial outpouring of rich gospel blessing for the English church. However, the Solemn League and Covenant was not exactly an unambiguous Presbyterian standard of much popular presbyterian thought. If it was a sincere religious document, it was also one with a political context. A new government for the Church of

England was an urgent necessity given the close relationship between Church and State, and the importance of stability in society. Archbishop Laud had been imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1641 and would be executed in January 1645. His kind of divine right episcopacy was excluded.

At the other end of the spectrum, the many sects that were on the rise were of increasing concern, and fears of Roman Catholic intrusion real. The situation in the parishes was disordered, the need to examine and ordain ministers pressing, the Parliamentary military forces not fully effective. If English opinion in early 1643 was not quite sure about any radical change to the traditional pattern of ecclesiastical organisation other than rejecting Laudism, the options became more limited as the political and military position worsened. The Westminster Assembly was ultimately decisive for Presbyterian polity. Its principal formularies were readily accepted in Scotland – Directory for Public Worship (1645), Form of Presbyterian Church Government (1645), Confession of Faith (1647) and Larger and Shorter Catechisms (1648). The Scottish Church produced its own Psalter in 1650 to replace that used since 1564.

Scottish military intervention was also decisive in turning the balance against the king at the Battle of Marston Moor in July 1644. The king surrendered to the Scots rather than to the English Parliament in May 1646. Prior to this, the royalist supporters in Scotland were not strong. The king declined to take the Covenant and in January 1647 he was handed over to the English Parliament in which, however, Independents were increasingly influential. The Independ-

ents also controlled the army and in June 1647 Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army seized the king, but negotiations were fruitless. From the Scottish viewpoint there was concern that the Solemn League and Covenant would not result in presbyterianism in England after all, while the institution of monarchy also appeared threatened.

The Engagement

While all in Scotland were monarchists, the nobility generally were more concerned for a monarchy from which they could look for favours, while the church ministers were concerned for the establishment of presbyterianism. It would prove difficult to hold both in unity. In December 1647, some of the Scottish nobility visited Charles and made a secret agreement with him called 'the Engagement' in which he pledged that in return for their support he would establish presbyterianism in England for three years, after which there would be a free debate, and that he would enact the Solemn League and Covenant although not force any to subscribe to it. The Engagement was accepted by parliament but was not unanimously supported. The church Assembly and most ministers disapproved it as undermining the Covenant.

An army of 'Engagers' was raised to invade England but was cut to pieces by Cromwell at Preston in August 1648. Those strict presbyterians opposed to the Engagement, led by the Marquis of Argyll and known as the Kirk Party, came to an agreement with Cromwell, and in January 1649 passed the Act of Classes which re-

moved from the army and from important positions people who had been connected with the Engagement. This purging theoretically left a true and faithful Gideon band, but it was a bad strategy. A week later the English Parliament executed Charles I, an act that was generally disapproved of in Scotland. During 1649-50 a total of 80 ministers were deposed, most for not following the dominant party line.

The king's son was then in Hol-



Oliver Cromwell

land, but he was proclaimed King of Scotland as Charles II and, having agreed to subscribe the Covenant, he reached Scotland in June 1650. However, the defeat by the English of a purged and weakened Scottish army at Dunbar in September, provoked a Remonstrance among stricter Covenanters in the south-west. They held the purging of Engagers had been too lax and that the agreement with Charles II was hasty, compromising the Covenant. The Remonstrance was eloquently supported by Johnston of Wariston and by ministers such as James Guthrie and Patrick Gillespie but was a very much a minority position at this point, with perhaps 12-15% of the 900 ministers being supporters. There was no one of the stature of Alexander Henderson to give wise leadership and the General Assembly was

divided.

Resolutioners and Protestors

The majority of ministers were willing to co-operate with royalists and Engagers against the invading English and were termed Resolutioners because of their support for resolutions made to this effect, while their opponents were now termed Protestors. The division was deep and bitter. Twenty-two Protestors were excluded from the Assembly of 1651. Resolutioners included such able peace-loving men as David Dickson, George Hutcheson and Robert Baillie; Protestors included Samuel Rutherford and William Guthrie. The writings of all these men are still valued by lovers of the Reformed faith today. The Protestors had the better measure of Charles' true character and were more consistent, attracting new entrants to the ministry to their cause over the next few years. The defeat of the Western Association Remonstrant Army in December added to the trials.

Charles' coronation on 1 January 1651, in which he swore to keep the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant, had limited effect given that the Kirk Party was divided and Cromwell's army of occupation was by now dominant in southern Scotland. A Scottish force which fought Cromwell's army at Worcester in September 1651, was also defeated. The king fled to France, Scotland was annexed to the Commonwealth of England, and meetings of the General Assembly were prohibited. Cromwell favoured the Protestors and maintained civil order. Strikingly, spiritual conversions in the church were significant at this time, but her divisions would prove fatal.

Restoration of the Monarchy, 1660

Oliver's ineffective son Richard succeeded him as Lord Protector in 1658 but resigned in May 1659. With seemingly no other option,

restoration of the monarchy became a certainty. Shortly before Charles II returned to England on his 30th birthday on 29 May 1660, the English Parliament declared presbyterianism the polity of the Church of England with toleration for tender consciences; but almost immediately it became a dead letter, as the naïve presbyterians soon found to their cost. Charles II was to become known as the Merry Monarch, given his many mistresses and his love of sports, but it was not merry for a significant number of his subjects. At least 1,760 ministers (20% of the total), the larger number presbyterians, were ejected from the Church of England in 1660-63, under the harsh episcopal regime Charles somewhat stealthily re-introduced.

The Resolutioners in Scotland unrealistically hoped for the king's favour but were deceived by their negotiator, the duplicitous James Sharp (1618-79). He changed to the episcopal side and exploited division between the Resolutioners and Protestors to weaken opposition to the king's policies. In March 1661 the Recissory Act repealed



Charles II

all Scottish ecclesiastical legislation passed since 1633. A further Act stated that the king would meantime maintain

church government by sessions, presbyteries and synods pending the establishment of a form of government agreeable to the word of God, most suitable to monarchical government, and best complying with the public peace and quiet of the kingdom.

It was no surprise when episcopacy was declared as the form of church government in September. By the end of the year four bishops were consecrated in London, with Sharp as Archbishop of St Andrews and Primate of Scotland. Meetings of sessions, presbyteries and synods were prohibited although, particularly as regards sessions, this did not have much effect. Another six bishops were consecrated and given seats in parliament, and parliament formally enacted the restoration of episcopacy in February 1662. Importantly there was no introduction of a compulsory liturgy, and worship in parish churches continued with little change. However, those in public office had to acknowledge the king as 'supreme governor of this kingdom over all persons and in all causes'. This erastian measure excluded strict Presbyterians from such public responsibilities. In September 1662, the National Covenant and Solemn League and Covenant were declared unlawful and any oaths taken in reference to them not binding. Private meetings or conventicles in houses or preaching in public without the licence of the bishop were forbidden.

Treatment of leaders

So far as the Covenanting leaders were concerned, Archibald Campbell, 1st Marquis of Argyll, who had placed the crown on Charles II's head in 1651, was sentenced to death for high treason. When sentence was given he said; 'I had the honour to set the crown upon the king's head, and now he has-tens me to a better crown than his own.' He was beheaded on 27 May 1661. Several ministers were imprisoned and later ban-



Samuel Rutherford

ished to Holland, and Samuel Rutherford (1600-61) was cited to answer for high treason for his book *Lex, Rex, or The Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People*, but died before he could appear. *Lex, Rex*, an argument against royal absolutism and for the right of the people, was published in 1644 and was highly influential in its own time. Despite his books being publicly burned, Rutherford remained a monarchist, but insisted that a king was also subject to just laws and must be held to account for his oaths. A king had no right to pass immoral acts and under certain circumstances, opposition to the king was appropriate. Here was a rejection of royal absolutism and a basis for constitutional government, even though Rutherford held the general view of the time of not tolerating of dissenting positions. Another prominent leader of the time was Archibald Johnston of Warriston, a member of the Kirk Party violently opposed to the Stuart monarchy, who rose to prominence during Oliver Cromwell's time as leader of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland. He fled to France after the Restoration of the monarchy, but was extradited to England and executed in 1663.

Ejection 1662-63

In 1649 patronage had been abolished by the Scottish parliament and the General Assembly had

vested the election of ministers in the church eldership. As the 1649 Act had been rescinded in 1661, the rights of patrons needed attention. They were formally restored in June 1662. However, instead of simply applying the rights of patrons to future appointments, the law was made to apply to all ministers who had been admitted since 1649. It declared the parishes of such ministers vacant, but provided they sought presentation from the patron and approval to admit from the bishop was secured (which approval involved an oath of obedience to the bishop), their position would be confirmed. The cut-off date for compliance was 1 November 1662, subsequently extended to 1 February 1663.

The authorities greatly underestimated the conscientious convictions of many ministers, particularly in the south-west of Scotland, where the Protestant influence was strong. In obedience to the law numerous ministers vacated their churches when the time expired. About a third of the ministers – at least 230 Protestors (almost all, both erastian and anti-erastian wings) and 40 of the anti-erastian element of the 600 Resolutioners – also vacated their churches at that time. One notes that the percentage of non-conformist ministers was significantly higher than in England, despite there being no serious interference in public worship in Scotland. The shortage of ministers meant replacement with curates who as a group, were not of good ministerial character, according to the testimony of Bishop Gilbert Burnet.

The World in the Banner

New Zealand's Anti-Smacking Law Still Fails Children

Duncan Garner's and Ian Hassall's columns regarding the anti-smacking law have both got the wrong end of the stick – pun intended. The test of the effectiveness of a law is its ability to curtail the behaviour that society deems unacceptable, without penalising responsible citizens. On both counts, the law has failed.

When 6-year-old Coral Burrows was killed by her stepfather Steven Williams in 2003, then-Prime Minister Helen Clark said that we needed to amend Section 59 to address the "high level of child violence and neglect." Green MP Sue Bradford jumped on the ideological bandwagon and introduced what she called in her media release, an 'anti-smacking bill'.

The proposal to ban smacking was motivated by a commendable desire to reduce child abuse – a desire we all share. But Kiwi parents rejected the law because they knew it would have no effect on child abuse rates, and would criminalise good parents raising great kids. After being pushed through by politicians (including National MP's who had campaigned against the law), the anti-smacking ideology received a well-deserved spanking in the Referendum – a resounding 87% saying no to the law.

So has the law achieved the goal used to justify its introduction? The continued 'roll of shame' of child abuse deaths over the past three months in the media and significant increases in serious child assault offences reported by Police – 83% increase between 2008 and 2013 – demonstrates that the anti-smacking law has been a spectacular failure. (Recorded sexual offences against children rose 43% and child neglect rose by 42% during this same period, and notifications to CYF rose by a whopping 66%.)

The problem is not getting any better – in fact it's getting worse, much worse. The public were right. On the other hand, the ban has targeted good parents, and has wasted valuable time and resources of the

police and social agencies. The most recent review of police activity also shows disturbing trends, and reveals that almost 600 Kiwi families have had a police investigation for allegations of smacking or minor acts of physical discipline since the anti-smacking law was passed yet only 9% of them have been serious enough to warrant charges being laid. The report also referred to an increase in false allegations of assault. This may come from neighbours or even the children themselves. Forty-six prosecutions have been brought for 'minor acts of discipline' – another eight prosecutions were brought for 'smacking' on the buttocks or legs. None of the smacking charges involved 'smacking children around the head or face' as Garner incorrectly claims. Garner also fails to mention that the monitoring has stopped since the end of 2012.

Garner and Hassall – and the politicians – also conveniently ignore the real concerns raised last November by leading public lawyer Mai Chen in an analysis of the law, who said that "statements made by politicians to the effect that the new Section 59 does not criminalise 'good parents' for lightly smacking their children are inconsistent with the legal effect of Section 59" and "As a result, non-lawyers, including parents and the police, will have difficulty applying Section 59 in practice. Parents will struggle to know whether their actions constitute an offence under Section 59 or not, and in cases of doubt, police will prosecute and leave it up to the Court to determine."

Of course fewer parents may consider using smacking. They don't want to break the law. But they're not the type of parents we should be targeting.

The law is held in contempt by New Zealanders. A recent survey of 1,000 NZ'ers found that only 12% of respondents think the law change has had any effect on the rate of child abuse. The survey also found that two out of three respondents said they would flout the law and

smack their child to correct their behaviour if they thought it was reasonable to do so. Mothers and younger parents were more likely to have smacked.

Let's be quite clear. Child abuse is unacceptable. We must take pro-active action and tackle head-on the difficult issues of family breakdown, non-biological adults living in the home, drug and alcohol abuse, violence in our media, mental illness, and other key factors identified by the various UNICEF, child agencies, and Children's Commissioner reports. Banning smacking will not stop child abuse, as has been evidenced in NZ. Parents have been stripped of a parenting technique which, when used appropriately, has been proven to be effective and appropriate.

We definitely need to send a strong message that violence and child abuse is unacceptable. But in our attempts to send a clear message, we should not end up treating good parents as criminals under the law.

The current law runs counter to scientific evidence, previous experiences with similar bans, and the wisdom of previous generations.

+ *Dominion Post*, 24 July 2015
<http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominion-post/comment/70480975/Opinion-Anti-smacking-law-still-fails-children>

Here We Stand: An Evangelical Declaration on Marriage

A coalition of evangelical leaders assembled by the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (USA) has released the following:

As evangelical Christians, we dissent from the court's ruling that redefines marriage.

The state did not create the family, and should not try to recreate the family in its own image. We will not capitulate on marriage because biblical authority requires that we cannot. The outcome of the Supreme Court's ruling to redefine

marriage represents what seems like the result of a half-century of witnessing marriage's decline through divorce, cohabitation, and a worldview of almost limitless sexual freedom. The Supreme Court's actions pose incalculable risks to an already volatile social fabric by alienating those whose beliefs about marriage are motivated by deep biblical convictions and concern for the common good.

The Bible clearly teaches the enduring truth that marriage consists of one man and one woman.

From Genesis to Revelation, the authority of Scripture witnesses to the nature of biblical marriage as uniquely bound to the complementarity of man and woman. This truth is not negotiable. The Lord Jesus himself said that marriage is from the beginning (Matt. 19:4-6), so no human institution has the authority to redefine marriage any more than a human institution has the authority to redefine the gospel, which marriage mysteriously reflects (Eph. 5:32). The Supreme Court's ruling to redefine marriage demonstrates mistaken judgement by disregarding what history and countless civilizations have passed on to us, but it also represents an aftermath that evangelicals themselves, sadly, are not guiltless in contributing to. Too often, professing evangelicals have failed to model the ideals we so dearly cherish and believe are central to gospel proclamation.

Evangelical churches must be faithful to the biblical witness on marriage regardless of the cultural shift.

Evangelical churches in America now find themselves in a new moral landscape that calls us to minister in a context growing more hostile to a biblical sexual ethic. This is not new in the history of the church. From its earliest beginnings, whether on the margins of society or in a place of influence, the church is defined by the gospel. We insist that the gospel brings good news to all people, regardless of whether the culture considers the news good or not.

The gospel must inform our approach to public witness.

As evangelicals animated by the good news that God offers reconciliation through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus, we commit to:

Respect and pray for our governing authorities even as we work through the democratic process to rebuild a culture of marriage (Rom. 13:1-7);

– teach the truth about biblical marriage in a way that brings healing to a sexually broken culture;

– affirm the biblical mandate that all persons, including LGBT persons, are created in the image of God and deserve dignity and respect;

– love our neighbors regardless of whatever disagreements arise as a result of conflicting beliefs about marriage;

– live respectfully and civilly alongside those who may disagree with us for the sake of the common good;

– cultivate a common culture of religious liberty that allows the freedom to live and believe differently to prosper.

The redefinition of marriage should not entail the erosion of religious liberty.

In the coming years, evangelical institutions could be pressed to sacrifice their sacred beliefs about marriage and sexuality in order to accommodate whatever demands the culture and law require. We do not have the option to meet those demands without violating our consciences and surrendering the gospel. We will not allow the government to coerce or infringe upon the rights of institutions to live by the sacred belief that only men and women can enter into marriage.

The gospel of Jesus Christ determines the shape and tone of our ministry.

Christian theology considers its teachings about marriage both timeless and unchanging, and therefore we must stand firm in this belief. Outrage and panic are not the responses of those confident in the promises of a reigning Christ Jesus. While we believe the Supreme Court

has erred in its ruling, we pledge to stand steadfastly, faithfully witnessing to the biblical teaching that marriage is the chief cornerstone of society, designed to unite men, women, and children. We promise to proclaim and live this truth at all costs, with convictions that are communicated with kindness and love.

+ June 26, 2015

Which 'facts' about gay parenting did the ABC check?

"Some days ago the ABC published what it calls a 'Fact Check' on whether a father and a mother are better than same-sex parents," FamilyVoice Australia research officer Ros Phillips said today.

"It purports to be an independent review of international research, but its analysis is far from even-handed.

"For example, the Fact Check reports that a 2004 study (by Wainwright et al) found that children raised by same-sex parents were no different from those raised by opposite-sex parents in terms of depression, anxiety and self-esteem. But that grossly overstates Wainwright's conclusion. The study involved so few couples that it lacked the statistical power needed.

"In fact, a comprehensive review of 59 same-sex parenting studies by Dr Loren Marks in 2012 found serious methodological flaws in almost all studies that purport to show that parental genders do not matter. The flaws include small samples, 'convenience' samples of volunteers, inadequate, unmatched or missing controls, and self-reporting."

Marks chose the 59 studies for analysis after they were cited by the American Psychological Association (APA) to support its claim that no study has found any disadvantage suffered by children raised in same-sex couple families. The ABC Fact Check cites a similar (2007) review by the Australian Psychological Society, including many of the APA studies – but fails to mention Marks's critique.

The Fact Check also fails to mention the study by Dr Paul Sul-

lins, published in the peer-reviewed Journal of Education, Society and Behavioral Science in February this year. Sullins analysed reports on 512 children raised by same-sex parents, drawn from a pool of over 207,000 respondents who participated in the US National Health Interview Survey between 1997 and 2013.

He found that, on eight out of 12 measures, children raised by same-sex couples had nearly double the risk of emotional, mental health or developmental problems compared with children raised by their two natural parents.

Bullying and "homophobia" are often cited as the cause of such problems, but the analysis found no difference between the two groups in their self-reported experience of having been bullied.

But Fact Check did favourably mention an Australian study of same-sex parenting by Dr Simon Crouch et al, whose methodology is seriously flawed. The 315 mostly lesbian couples volunteered for the study after being recruited by friends and advertisements. They would have known in advance that their answers could be used to further a political agenda – unlike the control group, drawn from a general parenting study, who would not have known how their answers could be used.

The children were not independently assessed – those raising them answered questions about their children's health and well-being. An analysis of the study showed that its finding (that children raised by same-sex couples did slightly better than others on some measures) was based on two highly subjective questions: Is your child healthy? And Is your family happy?

"The ABC Fact Checkers should be more careful with their 'facts!'" Ros Phillips said.
+ *FamilyVoice Australia*, 31 July 2015

Labor decides to expel supporters of man-woman only marriage

The same-sex marriage debate entered a new phase of intolerance with Labor voting to expel parliamentarians who advocate man-woman only marriage. In two Parliaments' time, Labor MPs and Senators who vote against redefining marriage will be expelled from the party.

"Sadly this is a cynical ploy to force the Coalition to drop its policy on marriage when Labor's real agenda is one of intolerance to its own who dissent.

"If this is the principle Labor forces its people to comply with, what will be the out-working of this principle on dissenters when it is next in power?

"Will there be freedom of conscience to choose not to provide services to same-sex weddings?

"Will Christian, Muslim and Jewish schools be allowed to teach children a definition of marriage that the party of Government expels parliamentarians for supporting?
"Will they be reported to human rights commissions in the same way the Archbishop of Hobart was for distributing Christian teaching on marriage?

"Labor's decision today confirms all the fears dissenters to same sex-marriage have about the political ideology behind same-sex marriage and where it is taking our nation."

Mr Shelton said it was now more important than ever that the Liberal Party retained marriage as its party position.

"Millions of Australians expect the Liberal Party to have a policy position supporting man-woman marriage.

"A conscience vote would be a capitulation to intolerant same-sex marriage ideology," Mr Shelton said.

"The big difference between Labor and Liberal is that Liberal members are not expelled if they vote against party policy.

"Labor has now made itself unattractive to future political candidates who believe in

marriage between one man and one woman," Mr Shelton said.

"A future Labor caucus will be less representative of the general population."

+ *Australian Christian Lobby*, 26 July, 2015



Reply to a letter sent by our Church & Nation Committee

Australian Christian Lobby Managing Director Lyle Shelton said this was devastating for the millions of ethnic, indigenous and religious Australians who will never support a state-imposed redefinition of marriage.

Children under the Banner

Acts 28:1—31

And
so to
Rome!

The islanders on Malta
were friendly.



They built a fire to
warm themselves.

While gathering wood, Paul was bitten by
a snake!



The islanders thought
Paul was a criminal.



Paul shook the snake
off. He came to no harm.



After 3 months
they left for Rome.

The Christians in Italy
came to meet Paul.



Under guard in Rome,
Paul wrote epistles.

Prescribed Search Work

SEPTEMBER 2015

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

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 5 and 7)

ACTS chapter 16

1. Why did Paul and Silas endeavour to go into Macedonia? (2 verses)
2. In Philippi, whose heart did the Lord open?
3. What did Paul and Silas do at midnight in the prison, and what immediately followed? (2 verses)
4. What was Paul's answer to the jailer's question, "What must I do to be saved?"

chapter 17

- 5(x). What did Paul reason out of the Scriptures in the synagogue at Thessalonica? (2 verses)
6. Why were the Bereans more noble [fair-minded] than the Thessalonians?
- 7(x). Why did Paul consider the men of Athens too superstitious [very religious]? (2 verses)
8. How did the Athenians respond when Paul spoke of the resurrection?

JUNIOR

JOHN chapter 10:7--30

1. What will happen to those who enter [in] by the door, Christ?
2. Write out the two separate verses where Jesus calls himself the good shepherd.
3. What did Jesus say about laying down his life? (2 verses)
4. Why will Christ's sheep never perish? Out of whose hands can they never be plucked [snatched]? (2 verses)

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

Films in the Banner

Welcome To The Reel World

Andrew Wibe Bajema

One of the questions regarding these new film articles may be, 'why should we review it in *The Banner* of all places?' A very good question, if *The Banner* wouldn't review the novel *Fifty Shades of Gray*, why should it include information on secular films?

The nature of cinema means that it overwhelming dictates to a general audience. So even if you are not interested in the newest drama, undoubtedly others are, from your own children to other Christians. Yet there isn't a culture to look at film from an overly analytical perspective, especially not among Christians. Film, and by extension other visual media impact our lives on a daily basis, their forms are contagious and demand our attention by what they show, and it is important to understand why this is. Some see Cinema as an extension of theatre, the fancy sets and over the top actors; while others see its narrative form and point of that it like the novel in its structure; neither is completely wrong, but neither explore the uniqueness of cinema. So through this series I hope to simply explain the very basics of cinema, and the best place to start are the origins of modern cinema.

At the very beginning cinema was just a fair ground attraction, even inventors of cinema the Lumière brothers were ardent that cinema had no future. The creation of the cinema known today came out of one little trick: the cut, or editing. In *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) audiences'

probably experienced filmic narrative and a moving plot with all its tensions for the first time, yet the continuity editing had to be believed as it was never experienced before. Essentially viewers are asked to accept the deception being played on them; using smooth transitions, this is made easier; as such cinema does not move far from its standard deviation of camera angles and types of cuts. If these were not smooth the viewer would feel jilted for a second -- this is our minds not believing, breaking our faith in what we perceive on a primal sub-conscious level. There is even a specific film technique called the 'jump cut' that mimics this bewilderment for stylistic purposes. A proponent of the jump cut, J.L. Godard, has pointed out that 'every edit is a lie' and the jump cut is used specifically so you



Close-up scene from 'Intolerance'

would know you were watching a lie. Even Hitchcock tried and failed to make a film without a cut (see *Rope*, 1948).

At the movies viewers are conditioned to these cues and they become natural to our senses, by

manipulating captured moments into a different order a world of seemingly limitless possibilities was opened up. Film maker D.W. Griffith created the first now-infamous epic *Birth of a Nation* (1915) but also the more heartfelt *Intolerance* (1916). *The Cheat* (1915) by Cecil B. DeMille was one of the first controversial feature length dramas. Films such as these could now cut and focus in on the smallest emotions on a person's face and their drama felt, is the star obsessed culture any wonder? The new nature of cinema allowed viewers to interact with topics only known in private, or not known at all. Instilled in this new medium was just as much the possibility of great evil as good. By the end of the 1920s Presbyterian elder Will H. Hays

stepped in and promoted the Motion Picture Production Code, putting a stop to many scandalous elements in mainstream cinema. In doing so Hays was likely instrumental in stopping moral decline, with the code only being put to rest by 1968, unsurprising coinciding with the next moral decline.

As a tool it is human sin that perverts the function of cinema, but how it works is critical to understanding how as Christians we need to respond to it; not with obsession, believing it wholeheartedly, but a mix of discernment with simple childish wonder at the tricks that it likes to play on us.

Churches in the Banner

Ulverstone Ladies Craft

Some photos from our July Ladies Craft. Being school holidays we made some lovely muffins for everyone to enjoy, while others continued with their card making with Denise. We also put tags 'Made with Love by Ladies craft Group, P.C.E.A. Ulverstone' onto three large knee rugs and ten beanies, which will go to the Burnie Reha-

Coles family join us for the afternoon session. The winners this

year were Steve and Julie Kingston of Launceston.

We give thanks that the Lord has blessed this fellowship event over so many consecutive years.



Clockwise from top: Crafty girls; baptism of Chester O'Neill (5 July 2015); ladies at Sandra's birthday; group photo of car rally participants; winners of car rally; the torrential rain on the rally; example of craft work



ilitation clinic and the Cancer clinic.

Next month we intend to sharpen up our crocheting skills under the guidance of those with the know how.

Ulverstone Car Rally

The 20th annual Winter Car Rally took place on the 11th July with 6 cars competing over a course that covered Ulverstone to Leven Canyon to Gunns Plains and finished at Riana. Pat Ryan was on hand to set up the lunch stop fire place for us, which was specially appreciated when a vigorous hail fall occurred. It was great to have the



Missions in the Banner

Australian Indigenous Ministries

Trevor Leggott

The year 2014 saw some major developments in the ministry of AIM. The Queensland based AIM Church Council celebrated its 30th anniversary during the year. At the regular three day meeting in February the Council gave serious consideration to a number of issues for the future of the mission under such headings as: Defining and Confirming our Core Values and Goals; Taking our Place in the Christian Space - Marketing and Mobilisation. These topics were occasioned by the retirement and imminent retirement of senior personnel and the need for recruiting personnel and adequately preparing them for ministry.

Stephen Bignall has been a great help, developing his role as Field Director and taking a more active part in the oversight of field personnel, providing good guidance and direction with his pastoral experience and cross-cultural ministry. Rob Alley has been really helpful providing member care and counsel to those in the north of the NT, as well as developing the Mission Awareness Tour program, including the purchase and modification of a 4wd bus to enable access to outlying communities.

Bob Quinn, our Director of Train-



New workers—Peter & Karen Dixon

ing, has been building networks amongst Qld and NSW indigenous churches as he surveys the needs and develops an appropriate training curriculum, especially seeking to prepare younger Christians for church and community leadership roles.

AIM ministry in NSW continues to develop with some soundly committed indigenous pastors. The work in Dubbo, Gilgandra, Walgett, Moree and Gulargambone continues with

other ministries developing in response to local requests in Warren, Goodooga and Wellington. The “Day in the Word” regular Bible teaching seminars in Dubbo are being really well received with many folk from non-AIM centres travelling long dis-



AIM Darwin Ministry Centre

tances for the weekends and sharing in good teaching and fellowship.

With a number of our senior personnel retiring it has been very encouraging to have new applications from other suitably gifted and qualified mature personnel with good training and pastoral experience come on board to fill these vacancies. However, the needs are still great and we need more of such people to help with this ministry. One of the more difficult issues that we need to bring before the Lord is to find someone to take on the role of General Director when Trevor retires at the end of 2016. It has been a tremendous blessing to have had the support of the PCEA to undertake this role, but it is no easy task to find a suitable replacement with sufficient support to enable him to do the job.

In September Trevor was called to speak on behalf of AIM at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, set to meet in Darwin to hear those who claimed to be abused whilst children at the AIM Retta Dixon Home in Darwin in the 1970s. There had been a number of complaints against one man who had been a house parent at the home during that time. Neither Trevor, nor anyone else on the AIM

Council had been aware of these claims of abuse. It was very harrowing sitting through the sessions and hearing the stories from a number of people.

Trevor, with the help of a barrister, sought to provide a response, but it became obvious that the Commission, given the stories that they had already heard concerning other churches and institutions, doubted that AIM did not know of the alleged offences. Trevor had, in fact, put all of the AIM archives in the NSW State Library for safe-keeping and reference, and counsel assisting acknowledged that there was no record in these papers.

We have sought to act with integrity and have responded with a national newspaper apology and an offer of compensation, neither of which have been accepted by the claimants. At time of writing we await the findings of the commission. Meantime we have been given notice that the claimants



With Harold's family at Elliot, NT

have instituted a civil class action for compensation against AIM, the NT government and the man concerned. Please pray that there might be a just outcome to this sad business.

As at early August 2015, there is still no findings released by the Royal Commission at this stage and despite threatenings on a couple of occasions there has been no further progress with the threat of civil action.

We press on.