



*Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy,
and they will sing before the LORD,
for he comes, he comes to judge the earth.*

Psalm 96:12b-13

the presbyterian banner

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Editorial

How good hasn't God been to us? In spite of the trials and tribulations we go through in this life, when we consider where we are before the Lord we are supremely blessed. There are no other people who have the life, the hope, and the hope we have. Only we who have been made right with God through faith in His Son have that glorious future.

The Rev. Martin Rinkart in 1648, in the midst of a plague that had wiped out so many of his own congregation and even devastated his own family, wrote,

*Now thank we all our God with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done, in whom His world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms, has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.*

And how much don't we need to recall this? We must thank the Lord constantly for where we are now. It is this gratitude which puts everything we go through in the right perspective. And what better way is there to be reminded of this than by reading and hearing God's Word? There He tells us of the mighty acts He has done, especially the greatest act of all in the doing and dying and rising of His Son. This is why the Church gathers for worship on the Sunday, the Lord's Day. Through this public focus on the Triune God we, by offering up what pleases Him, are also ourselves blessed in Him.

The psalmist says it well:

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

And then he puts our position so well:

*Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD
or fully declare his praise?*

Yes, indeed, who can properly do that? But God is yet pleased to accept our weak and inadequate worship, because we do it from the heart. These are the hearts He has changed by faith in His dear Son.

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The Life Changing Spirit

Considering Romans 8:5—14

George Ball

This chapter is probably the greatest single dissertation on the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. The Holy Spirit has hardly been mentioned so far. Once in chapter five (5:5); not at all in chapter six; once in chapter seven (7: 6); but in this chapter He is mentioned 19 or 20 times! The theme of this chapter then is clear: the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. In this article (and the next) we will consider some aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.

1. The Change Brought by the Holy Spirit (vs.2, 5-8)

Paul here enlarges on the essential difference between the Christian and the non Christian. There are essentially only two classes of people (not three). There are those who live according to the flesh, and those who live according to the Spirit. Remember Thomas Goodwin's illustration? **'In God's sight there are two men – Adam and Jesus Christ – and these two men have all other men hanging at their girdle strings.'** All mankind are therefore represented by either Adam or Christ. The way we live is determined by who represents us. We live either as the fallen children of Adam or as the redeemed children of God.

'Those who live according to the sinful nature' (v.5) are those who think about the things of the flesh; they are in complete opposition to the mind of God; they are not subject to the law of God; and therefore cannot please God. They are antagonistic to His name, His kingdom, His Son, His Spirit, His will, His day, His people, His Word, and His glory.

By contrast, 'those who live in accordance with the Spirit' (v.5) think about the things of the Spirit and desire what He desires; they delight in the word of God; and they enjoy life and peace – here and now! 'There are (as Stott puts it) two categories of people (the unregenerate who are 'in the flesh' and the regenerate who are 'in the Spirit'), who have two perspectives or mindsets ('the mind of the flesh' and 'the mind of the Spirit') which lead to two patterns of conduct

(living according to the flesh or the Spirit), and the result is two spiritual states (death or life, enmity or peace).'

How do we account for the difference? The Spirit of God has wrought a change in the life of the believer. This is the change that Jesus announced to the baffled Nicodemus. **'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of**

completely new set of DNA... And that's what we need. Our hearts are fleshly. Flesh produces flesh. No matter how hard we try, the flesh cannot produce spiritual life or fruit which is pleasing to God. We need new DNA – we need the Spirit of God within every cell; so that we may have spiritual life bearing spiritual fruit that pleases God. Without the Spirit of God, the Christian life is impossible.

The person born again of the Spirit of God will have their 'mind set on what the Spirit desires.' What will this mean? Stott states, 'It's a question of what preoccupies us, of the ambitions which drive us and the concerns which engross us, of how we spend our time and our energies, of what we concentrate on and give ourselves up to.'

It's about the direction of our lives, what drives us, what dominates our lives. The mind dominated by the Spirit thinks spiritual things. It's been said that, 'you're not what you think you are – but what you think, you are.' What is it that you think about? What do you daydream of? What are your longings? Is it a big pay out? Is it a bigger/better property? Is it the big trip around Australia? Is it a new kitchen or bathroom? These things are not bad in themselves. Surely for the Christian, however, our overriding desire should be the glory of God. We want to see Him glorified in the church; we want to see the church grow numerically and spiritually. We want to see Him glorified in our families; we want our children to know the Lord and walk with Him. We want to see Him glorified in our lives as we seek to grow in godliness. We want ultimately, as Paul desired, to depart and be with Christ and be completely satisfied in Him.

The Construction Wrought by the Spirit (vs.9-11)

'You however are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit

Romans 8

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit' (John 3: 5 -6). (By water is meant – not baptism – but the inward purification and invigoration which is produced by the Holy Spirit as prophesied by Ezekiel in 36: 25-27). Think of it this way: Apple trees produce apples. Orange trees produce oranges. It's no use telling an apple tree to produce oranges. It's plain impossible – no matter how hard the tree may try. For that to happen, the apple tree needs a

of God does not belong to Him.' (Verse 9 ESV). That's pretty clear! That's not hard to understand! There are only two categories of people – those who have the Spirit and those who don't. The birthmark of every Christian is possession of the Holy Spirit, so that our bodies have become a **'temple of the Holy Spirit.'** This is important for every Christian to understand. There are not two categories of Christians – those who are 'in the spirit' and those who are 'carnal.' Paul knows nothing of that distinction. It's important that we understand also that when the Spirit comes into our lives we are not only justified by faith in Christ, but a work of sanctification also begins in our lives. In this work we are not passive – but we are to be actively engaged. Think of it this way:

Picture an old sagging and dilapidated house. A few roof tiles are missing, the paint is flaking, and the garden is overgrown, etc. Inside, the kitchen and bathroom are groaning for replacement. A new tenant moves in. There are some immediate repairs. The garden is tended. You can tell that it now looks lived in, and a change is under way. It'll take a long time for the renovation to be completed – but a start has been made. When the Holy Spirit 'moves into' our lives and takes up residence – there is an immediate difference – it can be seen that there is a new person living there. Things have changed. We have seen people who have been converted, who have been born again; without ever being told what to do, immediately stop doing drugs, swearing and getting drunk. They begin to pray, to read the Bible, and to meet with other Christians. They have new interests, and new desires. That's because God has given them new DNA; a new heart and a new spirit. He has begun a work in their lives. He is renewing, repairing and renovating the old house from the inside out. The old house is undergoing a complete renovation (which keeps us constantly busy) which will be finished ultimately when Jesus returns. 'He who has begun a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus' (Phil. 1: 6).

What Paul says in verses 10-11 is parallel to what he says in 2 Cor. 4:16, **'though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.'** As

believers, we have a dying body and a living spirit. Does this mean that our bodies are like a rocket that jettisons bits and pieces into oblivion as it hurtles into orbit? No! Even these dying bodies when we are done with them are not to be discarded after death like a piece of waste. One day they will be redeemed. The same Holy Spirit who raised Jesus physically from the dead will also at the last day raise up our physical bodies, and then we will be forever free from sin. Our reconstruction will only then be complete. Then we will have a brand new house. Meanwhile we still live on a building site where ongoing works of improvement should be seen.

3. The Claim Sought by the Spirit (vs.12-14)

'We are debtors – not to the flesh – but to the Spirit'. We owe the old flesh nothing. It only brought us sorrow and death. We have an obligation, however, to the Spirit. He has claims upon our lives. He is the One who has given us life; He is the One who has taken up residence in us. We owe a great debt of gratitude to Him. Perhaps some of you heard the interview with Emily Seebom after she won silver in the 100m backstroke at the London Olympics? She was distraught. She had been aiming for gold. Fighting back the tears, she said she had disappointed her parents and her coach who had done so much for her. In other words she felt a great sense of debt – and of obligation. (As it turned out, her parents were overjoyed at her success). Nevertheless that sense of obligation is a healthy one in the life of the Christian. The psalmist asks, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?' (Ps. 116: 12). The fact is we owe the Lord everything for all He has done for us. We have an obligation – not to live according to the sinful nature – but to live a righteous life. We must then put to death the deeds of the body so that we may live the (holy) life the (Holy) Spirit has given us.

We must put sin to death! The Lord Jesus tells us in Matt. 5: 29-30: **'If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is**

better for you to lose one part of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.' Jesus tells us, amputate your sin! Pluck it out! Throw it away! If you don't, you will find yourself in hell! Pretty drastic! We can't make peace with sin. We can't call a truce. We are in a constant battle.

John Owen writing about putting sin to death states: 'Do you mortify; do you make it your daily work; be always at it whilst you live; cease not a day from this work; be killing sin or it will be killing you...And our Saviour tells us how His Father deals with every branch in him that beareth fruit; He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit' (vol. 6, p. 9). Killing sin is the ongoing activity of the Christian. Remember when tempted, when sin seems so attractive and appealing and seductive, that we have a choice. If we choose sin, we are stating that we prefer hell instead of heaven! That's not the statement that we want to make, is it?

The evidence of being led by the Spirit is not being led by dreams or visions or prophecies or tongues! It is rather the daily earnest mundane battle against sin in our lives. There are some sins that we hate – but there are some that we cherish! But all must go!

C.S. Lewis said that he never told his mother when he had toothache – because he knew he would be marched off to the dentist. He knew that the dentist would not only treat the offending tooth – but would also look at all the others too – something he didn't want done! That contrasts with what our attitude to sin should be. Before we can put sin to death, we must have the desire and determination to put it to death! How serious are you in your battle with sin?

Sin must not be pampered or played with. 'Dillydallying is deadly.' Determine to turn away from it and to wrestle against temptation. The book, the pictures, the movie, the web-site, the social tie, the relationship, the baneful habit – must go. Pray with the psalmist, **'Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in your way'** (Ps. 119: 37). Feed your mind with the word of God; seek God in prayer; seek the fellowship of other Christians; put

on the full armour of God. This is the way it is for the children of God. If you live like this – it's a sure sign that you are a child of God. A sign He has wrought a change in your

life; a sign He is doing a work of renovation in your life; a sign that you are earnest in living a holy life. We have an obligation – not to the flesh – but to the life changing Spirit.

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The Past for Today

Jesus and the Nations (Genesis 10:11-11:19)

The Tower of Babel incident is well known. God's response to those who seek to make a name for themselves by defying God's word and in effect seeking to storm heaven and take over from God is not another flood, but the division of humanity. As noted in Genesis 9:20-29, Shem – the name means 'name' – will have his name made great by God, Japheth will be blessed in him, but Canaan represents those who repudiate God and whose descendants Israel was to dispossess of the land of promise. I have three points about Genesis 10, traditionally called 'The Table of the Nations'.

1. The unity of humanity

Wycliffe Bible Translators tell us that there are around 7,000 languages existing today, but amidst all the diversity of language and culture humanity is one. Genesis 10 gives us a highly stylized account of the spread of 70 groups over the ancient Near East. These 70 nations appear in the same order with trifling linguistic differences in 1 Chron. 1:5-23. The listing is not constructed on a purely ethnic basis: various geographical and linguistic factors seem to be involved. Some names are of places rather than persons, and brotherhood through political ties rather than father-son relationships can be involved. Theological interests also shape the narrative with prominence being given to the line of Shem. There were more than 70 nations but these 70 represent as it were the entire human family. God is the creator, God had blessed the human family in Noah (Gen. 9:1,7) and the blessing was

being fulfilled.

We cannot let the diversity of culture and language remove this understanding of the unity of humanity as God's image. There are seriously wrong things about some cultural differences because we forget our inherent dignity as humans. If it is not the indigenous inhabitants of Australia being regarded as sub-human, it is Hutu and Tutsi at each other's throats because it is not the mere water of baptism in the East Africa Revival that washes away our prejudices but living faith in the God who blesses. On the other hand the very diversity, with any evils removed, can be positive if it is used for the sake of unity and for the glory of God. That is God's gracious purpose.



A Depiction of The Tower of Babel

2. The significance of individuals

Particular attention is given to a mighty hunter named Nimrod. Nimrod was a mighty man (*gibbor*) like the mighty men before the Flood (Gen. 6:4). His name means 'we shall rebel'. He was the builder of

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cities in Shinar and Babylon, and also behind Ninevah is northern Mesopotamia. The Flood indeed had not changed the human heart. God knew what the Babel builders were up to (Gen. 11:5) and the deeds of Nimrod were also 'before the Lord'. For Israel the mention of these nations is important, for it would certainly be a comfort to the godly Israelites in later times to know that the Lord was in sovereign control when they were suffering at the hands of Assyria or Babylon.

For us also it is important to recognize that God rules the nations, and they will serve His saving purposes. Our gifts and abilities can be used for a variety of purposes, good or ill, and the results in future generations can be like Ham's sin and Nimrod's city building if we are not people who rely on the Lord's blessing and train the coming generation by word and example. Indeed, of Shem's five sons only two are mentioned, and only the line leading to Eber is developed. It looks as if Eber's two sons joined the Babel builders and only Peleg remains to be the father of Abraham. Abraham only escapes from the Babel-like city of Ur by the gracious call of God.

3. God's people and the nations

We have already noted the selective approach that produces the number of 70 nations as a symbolic representation of all humanity. Genesis 10 is unique in ancient literature. It attests the universal dimension of the Biblical message. It implies that God is concerned with the whole of mankind even though the writer does not have comprehensive ethnographic knowledge. Since in Abraham all nations will be blessed

(Gen. 12:3), so in due time the circle of the God's saving purpose will embrace the nations. Japheth will dwell in Shem's tent. The Gentiles will be grafted in to share the root and fatness of God's olive tree.

Noah becomes 70 nations in a new beginning, but Abraham becomes 70 sons who go down to Egypt (Gen. 46:27). He was the progenitor of a new humanity, a miniature of the whole human family (Deut. 32:8), through which all nations of the earth would be blessed. There is already a hint of it when we read that 'all the nations' came to buy grain from Joseph in Egypt. Israel had 70 elders (Ex. 24:9; Num. 11:24), perhaps pointing to the way the blessing of Israel points to the blessing of the nations to come through her. In the glory of peaceful Solomon's kingdom, with its wide connections with other nations, we see a shadow of what comes with David's greater son who makes peace through the blood of His Cross and makes known the glory of

God's grace to us. And of course Jesus sends out 70 disciples (Luke 10:1) to carry the blessing of the Kingdom to Israel and thus 'every nation under heaven' is representatively present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:5-11) to receive it.

Passages about the ultimate restoration of Israel are not to be taken in some wooden fashion as if to imply the ancient political boundaries will be restored. Rather, they have their fulfillment in the calling of the Gentiles and their incorporation into the spiritual Israel, the people of the promise. (cf. Isaiah 19:23-25 or Psalm 87 as striking examples). True unity is found in the body of Christ and true diversity in the exercise of gifts for the building up of the body in love. For 'if you are Christ's then are you Abraham's children and heirs according to the promise' (Gal. 3:29).

We do not know God's timetable but we do know the Lord's direction to us: Go into all the world, preach, baptize,

teach. But the promise is to the church that obeys: 'Go, and I am with you always'. And be assured: the choir on the resurrection morning will have people from every tribe and nation united in praising the great name of the Lord.

Footnote:

The textual evidence in Luke 10:1 is divided between 70 and 72, with more evidence for 72 perhaps due to the impact of the Greek translation of Gen 11 where the nations total 72 and not 70 as in the Hebrew.

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Presently he is supplying the All Nations (Mulgrave) PCEA congregation in the south-east of Melbourne.

The Church under the Banner

No Country for Old Men?

Last month I had the privilege of giving a short series of lectures to a group of orthodox ministers who are members of a mixed denomination. By 'mixed' I mean a denomination which tolerates a broad range of teaching in her pulpits and in her name, from the orthodox through to the heretical. My lectures were on Paul's answer to deviant teaching and behaviour, the rise of creeds within the early church, and Luther's seven marks of a healthy church. He had two less than Mark Dever, but he did remember to include prayer.

The sociology of the gathering was interesting. It was clear from early on that I was there to lay a foundation which could be used for discerning how to fight and when to separate. I was fascinated to see that the reactions to what I had to say varied depending on the age of the one reacting: those below the age of forty had clearly had enough and are very open to the idea of separating. Those over fifty seemed generally committed to staying. Those in my decade could perhaps go either way. Two things in particular stand out in my memory. The first were the questions and com-

ments I received after each of my talks. The second was a speech made by one minister at the very end of the gathering.

First, the questions. After my second talk, one very senior minister made a passionate argument to the effect that, as long as the confessional standards remained in place, there was hope for the church and nobody should leave. To do so, he said, would be to doubt God.

The problem with such an argument is twofold. First, given the fact that God is sovereign and can even raise the lifeless body of his Son from the grave, there is surely a case to be made that He could take any denomination, no matter how apostate or wicked, and make it faithful once more. Even if the confessional standards were to be entirely removed from the statute books, that would not necessarily hinder God.

Practically, however, if a denomination has no institution for training ministers in a manner consistent with the historic confessions, the potential for developing a realistic strategy for turning things around is next to none.

Carl Trueman

Denominations which have become more orthodox – the American ARP's being the most obvious recent example – typically owe their transformation to good ministerial training institutions; in the ARP's case such came primarily from RTS-Charlotte. Confessionalists in a mixed denomination which requires all candidates to be funneled at some point through a less-than-solid denominational institution have a major strategic problem.

Second, I responded to the gentleman by asking what exactly it means for the standards to remain in place. We need, after all, to be wary of what we might call the 'ecclesiastical root' fallacy which sees the orthodox origins of the denomination as permanently sanctifying, or at least relativising, any subsequent developments regarding confessional documents and their function.

Thus, if a church never enforces its confessional standards, or so attenuates its ministerial vows that the substance of the standards has no practical significance, then those

standards have gone, whatever nostalgic function they might still fulfill on paper. To put the matter in blunt, judicial terms: you can tell a church's real confessional standards, theological and moral, by looking at the minutes of disciplinary proceedings and seeing what the church disciplines people for teaching or doing. When a church's procedures are uncoupled from orthodoxy, the game is more or less over. If I can hold office in a church and teach with impunity that the Virgin Birth is a fiction or that there is universal salvation, then these things are part of the functional creed of that church.

Another related question came from a younger minister: when does one cross the line in a mixed denomination from being a faithful fighter to an enabler of apostasy? This is a very difficult question indeed. It is clear that a denomination is not apostate the first time a minister stands up in a pulpit and teaches heresy. Further, all ministers typically take vows to maintain the peace and unity of the church. Separation is therefore something which should never be done in a light or casual manner. Nevertheless, the seemingly endless acceptance by the orthodox of increasingly bad theological and ecclesiastical decisions in many mixed denominations is exasperating to many of us who wonder where the line will finally be drawn. So many important hills; yet none apparently important enough to die on. In the past year I have seen all kinds of arguments used to justify staying in denominations which promote all manner of nonsense in the name of the gospel, from claims akin to the one above about the standards to the frankly laughable (e.g., 'There were many sinners in the church in Calvin's day' – as if that is relevant to anything). My suspicion is that many of these arguments are simply rationalizations for not doing the courageous thing.

So when is that line between fighting and enabling crossed? Two factors need to be taken into account here. First, the gospel is surely lost the moment it becomes impossible to maintain, protect and promote it through the assemblies of the church. This may not be the very first time that a

single judicial case is lost; but when the church speaks as a whole in a decisive manner on such a matter, the game is up. If the general assembly or general synod rules that gospel-denying position A is legitimate (either tolerable or to be enforced), the end is nigh.

To paraphrase Charles Hodge, ministers take vows to honour the rule of the church's assemblies; when those



Dr Carl Trueman

assemblies make a decision, one must actively support, passively submit or peaceably withdraw. One does not have the option of simply ignoring the ruling and carrying on regardless; nor does one have the option of mounting a kind of perpetual guerrilla warfare within the church. Further, once the gospel cannot be defended within the assemblies of the church, that church has lost the key marks of the word and of discipline. It is not a church; it is thus no sin to separate from such a body. The second argument, one deployed in an earlier era by Machen, is the financial one: if you give a dollar to an organization and half of it goes to promoting the gospel and half of it goes to denying the gospel, you might as well keep the dollar for yourself, for all the gospel good that it does. This is where it can become complicated for members and ministers in mixed denominations.

One might instinctively want simply to stop giving money to central funds, to avoid the dilemma. That, I would suggest, is not really a very ethical option: if one's vows bind one to honouring the church assemblies, then one does not have the right to pick and choose which bits one honours and which one ignores. Actively support, passively submit, or peaceably withdraw.

Those would seem to be the only honourable options. If it has come to the point where you cannot, with good conscience, hand your money over to your denomination because you believe it will be used to deny the gospel, it is time to reflect long and hard on the precise implications of that decision. Once again, you would seem to be conceding that those crucial marks of word and discipline have vanished. It is not a church; it is thus no sin to separate from such a body.

The second thing that I find so striking about the gathering was a speech made towards the end. One minister stood up and made a heartbreaking speech about how he loved the unity he found among his brethren at this pre-synod gathering of orthodox churchmen and how he longed to have that at a synodical level. As I listened, I could hear in his voice just how tired he was of fighting a rearguard action against massive odds and the seemingly inexorable advance of liberalism in his denomination. All this man wanted was to be able to focus his energies on the gospel. He had clearly given years of his life to the struggle and he was now exhausted and disillusioned.

My silent response was twofold. First, I gave thanks that I am in a congregation and a denomination where we currently enjoy a high degree of unity around the gospel. We are very far from perfect; but at least I do not have to waste my time at the moment fighting blasphemous nonsense. There is never any guarantee that such will continue; there is ever the need for vigilance; but I felt at that moment like Christian in the Delectable Mountains looking back at a tired brother struggling through the Slough of Despond. Not prone to emotion, I

was nonetheless deeply affected by this cry from the heart.

Second, I felt I could see the split in this denomination coming. The middle aged men are exhausted by years of synodical defeats; the younger men are unwilling to spend their time and energy -- indeed, their lives -- fighting the cuckoos who are defecating with impunity all over their ecclesiastical nest. Only the old men seem to think it worth staying; but they appear to have no strategic plan for turning things around. There is no question that they must be respected as senior men in the Lord. But appropriate respect and strategic agreement are

two different things.

The next decade will bring numerous denominational splits. That is sad. Those who split for the sake of orthodoxy will in every case be joining those of us who are already regarded as the cultural fringe, even within broadly defined evangelical circles. But if conservatives want to maintain credible confessional witness to the wider world, they must have ecclesiastical discipline which reflects the same. And if liberals want to spread their own distinct message, they should at least have the decency to fund it themselves.

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Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

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(Youth & Fellowship Committee)

The World in the Banner

***Chariots of Fire's* Eric Liddell is Chinese 'hero'**

The story of Scottish athlete Eric Liddell - a devout Christian who refused to take part in an Olympic race because it took place on a Sunday - became famous after being told in the Oscar-winning film *Chariots of Fire*. But almost a century later, why is the athlete regarded as a hero in China?

In the corner of a quiet Chinese courtyard, 5,000 miles from Scotland, stands a memorial in Isle of Mull granite.

The stone commemorates Eric Liddell - one of Scotland's greatest Olympians - who is buried nearby.

The stone was gifted by Edinburgh University after a Scottish engineer, Charles Walker, rediscovered his grave in the Chinese city of Weifang.

Liddell, the son of Christian missionaries, had been born in China in 1902 and lived there until he was five when he returned to Britain to be educated. While he was at Edinburgh University, Liddell excelled at athletics and also played rugby for the Scottish national team - as well as being a noted evangelist preacher.

At the 1924 Olympics in Paris, he famously refused to run on a Sunday, ruling him out of the 100 metres race to which he was best suited. Instead, he took part in the 400 metres race and, against the odds, still won a gold medal.

Soon after his Olympic triumph, Liddell finished his studies and returned to China to become a missionary. As well as religious duties, he worked as a science and sports teacher at the Anglo/Chinese College in Tianjin.

After the Japanese invasion in 1937, Liddell carried on his missionary work even when it became dangerous to do so. Liddell's wife and children left China for Canada in 1941 but he stayed to help in any way he could.

In 1943 he was interned at Weifang and he died of a brain tumour just months before the end of World War II, at the age of 43.

The prisoner-of-war camp which held about 2,000 Westerners is now a place of learning for 2,000 Chinese

teenagers. Every new pupil at the school is taught about the camp and Eric Liddell's achievements on and off the track "This part of history is a great treasure for our school," said head teacher, Zhao Guixia. "We can see the great value of humanity, especially in Eric Liddell's stories." In the camp, Liddell was affectionately known as "Uncle Eric" because he spent most of his time teaching children, organising sports and helping others.

Because he was born in China, some people regard him as the first Chinese Olympic gold medallist. "It is not a joke," said Wang Hao, Weifang's director of foreign affairs. "We are very proud of Mr Eric Liddell. He is a hero".

A small internment camp museum features Liddell's story but the city has plans to pay a bigger tribute. The building where he died is to be converted into a new museum with a reconstruction of Liddell's prison room and a waxwork of him inside. It will be a remarkable honour for a Christian missionary in a Communist country.

Outside China, his greatest monument is the movie he inspired. *Chariots of Fire* has been digitally remastered and re-released to cinemas to coincide with London 2012.

+ *By Glenn Campbell Political correspondent, BBC Scotland*

Statutory Marriage: Object-Lovers Unite!

A satirical reflection on those advocating Same Sex Marriage

OK, so how much longer do we have to put up with all this bigotry, narrow-mindedness and intolerance? When will all this hatred and lack of acceptance end, and we start allowing real love to flourish? Marriage equality should be for everyone, not just the bigots.

We see in today's press another horrific example of how intolerant bigotry is alive and well. Once again true love is being denied and ignoramuses are making this poor woman feel like a second class citizen. Worse yet, she of course was born this way and cannot help it, so this ugly discrimination becomes even more unacceptable.

The story goes like this: "A woman who holds a flame for the Statue of Liberty has paid another visit to her long-distance 'lover' and confessed that just touching the monument gave her an orgasm. Amanda Whittaker, from Leeds, England, flew to New York last week to spend time with the statue, which she says she has fallen in love with. The 27-year-old shop assistant, who refers to the monument affectionately as Libby, described the reunion as 'sexually and emotionally fulfilling.'

"Amanda suffers from an unusual condition called objectum sexuality, whereby she falls in love with inanimate objects instead of people. Talking to British newspaper, *The Sun*, Amanda said it seemed there was lightning between her and 'Libby' on her latest visit. 'I was overwhelmed with emotional and sexual excitement. When I saw her I almost cried,' she said. 'Libby satisfies my lovemaking needs,' Amanda added.

"Amanda told the paper she felt the statue hugging her back and, as shocked tourists looked on, she cried out her love for 'Libby'. For her fifth visit to the statue, Amanda read out a poem she had penned, spent hours talking to her and vowed she would remain faithful to her. The 27-year-old also explained that she visited this time because the statue is currently being restored so 'needed' Amanda.

"Amanda, who recently changed her surname to Liberty by deed poll, became infatuated with the world-famous monument in 2007, after a friend posted a picture online of herself with the 151ft copper statue. She has also installed a shrine to the landmark in her Leeds home to show her love for it, an interview with *The Sun* revealed in March.

"The woman, who confesses to a passionate love affair with a drum kit in her teens, says that she is not 'weird' but 'unusual' and just sees another side to objects. She even says she has thought about tying the knot with 'Libby' but opted not to 'because so many others love her too'. Amanda has visited the statue in person five times, where she ad-

mits to caressing it and leaning out of a window to kiss its hair.

“And so she can have regular contact with her copper companion she has created a shrine to Libby in her home, with hundreds of miniature statues, and a 6ft replica in her bedroom. In recent years a number of people suffering with objectum sexuality have hit the headlines with their own unusual relationships. Erika Eiffel, an object-sexual, married Paris’s Eiffel Tower in 2007 while Eklöf Berliner-Mauer is believed to be the first person to go public with the condition, when she announced her love for a Swedish red fence.”

There you have it folks. It is clearly time to end all this unjust and bigoted discrimination against poor Amanda and others like her. This is the 21st century after all, so it is high time that we allow this poor woman to marry just like everyone else. It certainly is time to end unfair statuephobia. Marriage rights for all! End the discrimination now!

Objectphiliacs of the world unite – you have nothing to lose but your rather kinky chains!

+ *Bill Muehlenberg, Culturewatch, www.billmuehlenberg.com*

Why do People Leave the Catholic Church?

Journeys of Faith is the title of a recent book which contains a number of biographical narratives about people in the US context who have changed their Christian allegiance from one church or tradition to another. (1) It is a fascinating account on the complex reality of religious changes in peoples' lives.

Journeys of faith are happening all over the world at all times. Religious migrations are ordinary events whereby people change the direction of their spiritual pilgrimages. In some areas, like Latin America, it is a given that the Roman Catholic community has been declining in its numbers at the expense of various Evangelical and Pentecostal churches for some decades now. Why did it happen? Sociologists and historians are giving some answers. This important issue was recently addressed by Benedict XVI and his comments now deserve some consideration.

No Theological Reasons

In receiving the bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Colombia (June 22nd), Pope Ratzinger spoke about Latin America as a region where the Roman Catholic Church has to deal with a growing religious pluralism. Latin America in general, and Colombia in particular, used to be a more "unified" society from the religious point of view, but recent changes have transformed it into an extremely multifaceted area. Benedict XVI explicitly refers to "pentecostal and evangelical communities" as very active realities and primary agents for this change.

At this point he asks the "why" question before asking the "what to do" question. Instead of providing his own attempt to explain the situation, Ratzinger quotes the document drafted by the 2007 Conference of the Latin American Bishops which provides an interesting insight. The relevant section of the document (n. 22), quoted verbatim by the Pope, can be summarized in this way: most people in Latin America leave the Roman Catholic Church not because of what the "non catholic" groups believe, but because of how they live. The fundamental reason is not doctrinal but related to lifestyle instead. The problems they see are not dogmatic, but pastoral. Simply put, they do not distance themselves from the Catholic Church for theological reasons, but instead out of practical concerns. In other words, the challenge that Pentecostals and Evangelicals represent for the Roman Catholic Church has little to do with their different doctrines of the Bible, authority, sacraments, the Church, salvation, etc., but with the quality of life they seem to live and to offer to outsiders.

The Answer is Even More Catholicism

The "what to do" answer is simple and is a consequence of the "why" question. There is nothing to change as far as the doctrine of the RC Church is concerned. The challenge is to become "better" Catholics: more hospitable, more inclusive, more compassionate. Actually, the Pope encourages the Colombian bishops to achieve this better quality of Catholic life by promoting the "catholic" distinctive features which are near to the Latin American soul: adherence to the

traditions of the Church, the deepening of Marian spirituality, and the practice of a richer devotional life. The cure is not less Roman Catholicism and more Evangelicalism, but instead more Roman Catholicism in need of becoming richer and more profound than practical Evangelicalism.

Between Hardware and Software

To put it simply, in the Pope's eyes Evangelicalism does not seem to have a theological "hardware" that is solid enough to be a real alternative to Roman Catholicism. This Pope has repeatedly argued that Evangelicalism is too doctrinally liquid and ecclesiastically unstable to be taken as a serious theological counterpart. However, what Evangelicalism has is a good "software" of the Christian life, a better approach to the spiritual quest than present-day Latin American Catholicism can offer to the people. Catholics should therefore improve their "software" without changing their well established "hardware". They should work on the output by reinforcing their DNA. Finally, they should better their performances by closely abiding to what their Catechism teaches.

The Pope's speech to the Columbian bishops is yet another instance of how Evangelicalism is perceived by Benedict XVI: a curious experiment that attracts people with its ability to grapple with their experiential expectations, but with little theological substance to be a real concern for the Roman Catholic Church. It also reminds us of the way forward that the Pope foresees for the future of his Church: an inner renewal without any doctrinal reform by way of grasping better its past and living tradition.

+ *Leonardo De Chirico, www.Reformation21.org*

Notes:

1. Robert L. Plummer (ed.), *Journeys of Faith. Evangelicalism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Anglicanism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012).

FCC Condemns Scottish Government's Decision on Same-Sex Marriage

The Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) have authorised the release of a statement condemning the Scottish Government's decision to legalise same-sex marriage and warning of the consequences. They point out that the decision goes against the finding of the Government's own consultation and against God's revealed will. They urge those who made the decision to honour God and to abandon the legislation, saying that they will continue to fight against the proposal.

In particular:

1. It is a great evil to rewrite a divine institution. The Scottish Government is acting against Scripture and against nature. God made us male and female expressly for marriage.
2. Same-sex marriage can never be true marriage. The two sexes are designed to complement each other in the marriage union and procreation is one of the ends of marriage.
3. Same-sex marriage has no place in a civilised society. Scotland is a Christian nation and the Scottish Government should uphold the Christian view of marriage and not subvert it.
4. Same-sex marriage will place Christians and others in a difficult position. The Government plans to proceed with its legislation before protections for those who disagree with the new relationship are in place.
5. Same-sex marriage is by no means the end of the road we are travelling as a nation. If this demand is conceded then others of a similar or even worse kind are likely to follow.

+ *Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)*, principal-clerk@fccontinuing.org

Threats by Islamic Extremists Cause CRC-Sponsored Radio Ministry to Close

A radio ministry in the Kashmir region

of the Himalayas that was supported by the Christian Reformed Church through Back to God Ministries International has been shut down after workers at the station and their families were threatened by Islamic extremists.

The shutdown leaves Christians in Kashmir without access to a local Christian radio broadcast.

"With a heavy heart, we had to discontinue our Kashmiri program," reports the Back to God Ministries outreach leader in India, whose name is being withheld out of concern for safety.

"The situation in Kashmir became very dangerous for Christians and for our staff in particular. Islamic fundamentalists keep threatening them with dire consequences if they do not pay obeisance to their beliefs and ideologies."

The broadcasts had been part of a partnership of Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) with local ministries, delivering the message of the Gospel to people in the region through media outlets.

The Kashmir region borders India, Pakistan and China and has been the scene of civil unrest for more than 20 years, making life difficult and dangerous for Christians.

The outreach ministry leader characterized this as being a "critical phase" and said the state government is working to guarantee that the rights of Christians are respected and that their welfare can be ensured.

But the outreach leader said that the radio station's producer and his family have been threatened, forcing them to seek safety elsewhere.

Workers are attempting to reclaim studio equipment and relocate to a new facility outside of Kashmir.

"Our hearts go out to the people of Kashmir and especially to our Christian brothers and sisters who are go-

ing through a very difficult time," the Back to God ministry leader said.

"Please pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in Kashmir," the leader said. "Pray for safety and that our ministry in that region may resume."

+ *Christian Reformed Church in North America*, crcna@crcna.org

Index of Online Bible Commentaries Available at the Deeper Study Website

Among several useful resources available at the DeeperStudy website is an index of online Bible commentaries in canonical order. Other available resources include the Bible in original languages, writings of the church fathers, and church history writings.

+ *DeeperStudy*, deeperstudy@verizon.net

Who's At Your Centre?

Same-sex marriage makes sense if you assume that the individual is the centre of the universe, that God—if he exists—is there to make us happy, and that our choices are not grounded in a nature created by God but in arbitrary self-construction. To the extent that this sort of "moralistic-therapeutic-deism" prevails in our churches, can we expect the world to think any differently? If we treat God as a product we sell to consumers for their self-improvement programs and make personal choice the trigger of salvation itself, then it may come as a big surprise (even contradiction) to the world when we tell them that truth (the way things are) trumps feelings and personal choice (what we want to make things to be).

+ *Michael Horton*, whitehorseinn.org

Was this space for your church news and photographs?

Ask your minister or elder how your congregation can be part of this positive promotion of the denomination, as well as keeping the rest of us up with what's happening!

Camps, special events, youth news, seniors, engagements, marriages,
births, anniversaries, obituaries... the list goes on and on!

Perhaps you could volunteer to send in some news and photos?

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

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

SEPTEMBER 2012

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 2 and 5)

HEBREWS chapter 7

1. Write out the three verses in Genesis 14 that describe Melchisedec and his meeting with Abraham.
2. Because Abraham gave Melchisedec tithes, which of the two men was the greater?
3. Which tribe of Israel were the priests taken from? Which tribe did our Lord spring from? (one word answers only)
4. Instead of being made after [according to] the law of a carnal [fleshly] commandment, how was Christ made a priest?
5. Why were there many priests under the Levitical priesthood? Why has Christ an unchangeable priesthood? (2 verses)
6. Why does Christ not need to offer sacrifice daily as those priests did?

chapter 8

7. Where is our high priest seated now? (2 verses)
8. What verses in Jeremiah 31 prove that God found fault with the first covenant? (Write out the first verse only.)

JUNIOR

LUKE chapter 10

1. For what did Jesus tell his disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest?
2. In what fact did the Lord say that the seventy should rather rejoice?
3. In the parable, what did the Samaritan do for the wounded man? (2 verses)
4. What was Jesus' answer when Martha wished Mary to help her? (2 verses)

Please send the answers to:
 Mrs I Steel
 PO Box 942
 Epping NSW 1710
 Or email to: iesteel@gmail.com

Life under the Banner

The Fourth Commandment — Keeping the Sabbath Day

Jim Klazinga

If you had to pick one of the Ten Commandments as being the most difficult to adhere to, which would it be? Personally, I would pick the fourth. Not because the other commandments are so easy to live by. When it comes right down to their essence, we are consistently breaking each and every one of them all the time. When it comes to actually fulfilling what they require of us, each of the commands is equally tough. No, what makes the fourth commandment harder to adhere to is that it is perhaps the most difficult to understand and apply to our contemporary situation.

Don't Desecrate the Sabbath

The fourth commandment as expressed in Exodus 20 states:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

On the surface, this is not too hard to understand. Don't work on the seventh day of the week. You and everyone in your household are to keep the Sabbath day holy by resting. When you work on the Sabbath, you desecrate it.

And desecrating it is no small matter. Over and over again, the Old Testament shows that God took this issue very seriously. To quote just one relevant passage, we read in Exodus 31:13-15 – "You are to speak to the people of Israel and say, 'Above all you shall keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of

solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death.'" Twice in a row it's made clear: desecrate the Sabbath, and you must die. Obviously, desecrating the Sabbath is not something to be taken lightly.

A Change to the Sabbath

But what are we to make of this in our day and age? How do we go about keeping the Sabbath day holy in our time?

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Exodus 20:8-11

Well, we first have to recognize that the Sabbath is not the same for us as it was for the Old Testament people of God. There have been changes.

Of course, the most obvious change has to do with the fact that we no longer view the last day of the week as the day to rest from work. Instead, it's the first day of the week, Sunday. And why is this? Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Right from the beginning of the church, the first day of the week became known as the Lord's Day, in memory of the resurrection of Christ. So, the last day of the week is no longer the day of rest, but rather the first day is.

The Sabbath and Salvation

But now, wait a second. Why should Christ's resurrection have anything to

do with a day of rest? Or to put it another way: why does the Lord's Day have to do with the Sabbath? In order to understand this, we need first of all to understand what Sabbath is all about.

That's easy, right? Sabbath is about not working. Well, yes and no. The thing is, that's not really the heart of the matter. We have to realize that there is a more basic underlying principle behind the Sabbath.

Ultimately, the Sabbath is really about salvation. When Jesus Christ returns, His chosen people are going to experience the perfect Sabbath rest forever. That is what eternal life really is: an everlasting Sabbath rest. God's people will be able to rest from fighting against sin, they will finally experience perfect peace, perfect salvation.

In the Old Testament, Jesus Christ had not yet come and won salvation on the cross. So the Old Testament Sabbath looked forward; it was an anticipation of the time when salvation would be accomplished in Jesus Christ.

This was especially made clear in Deuteronomy's version of the Ten Commandments. There, in laying out the fourth commandment, the people were instructed: "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day."

The salvation from slavery in Egypt foreshadowed the salvation from slavery to sin that Christ has won for us. So Christ was the fulfilment of the Sabbath. With his perfect righteousness, He made it possible for His followers to experience the ultimate Sabbath rest. He accomplished salvation. That is why the Sabbath as the seventh day of the week no longer needed to be observed.

Mind you, while Christ did fulfil the Old Testament Sabbath, that was not the end of the matter. Because there's more that needs to be done. Christ still has to come back. Salvation will be completely accom-

plished when He returns again and His people will all join with Him in eternal life. That is when God's people will perfectly experience the ultimate Sabbath.

And so, just as the Old Testament people of Israel were called to rest on the Sabbath day in anticipation of the Sabbath rest which was to come in the person of Jesus Christ, so too the New Testament people of God are called upon to rest in anticipation of the Sabbath rest which yet awaits them at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Celebrate Sabbath Rest by Going to Church

So how do we go about celebrating this Sabbath rest? One of the most crucial ways is by worshipping the Lord on the Lord's Day. In other

words: by going to church on Sunday. The first day of the week has been set aside for us as a festive day of rest, so we gather together to worship God for the redemption he has accomplished in Jesus Christ.

This tells us a whole lot about why Christians go to church. They do it to celebrate salvation. Going to church is not first of all about getting a weekly spiritual booster. It's not about being bombarded with spiritual entertainment. It's about celebrating the

fact that Jesus Christ has won salvation for His people. It's about experiencing a taste of the Sabbath rest that awaits God's people.

What will that eternal Sabbath rest be like? Pure focussing on God and worshipping Him, praising Him. And so, church worship in this life too must focus first of all on God.

It can be easy to forget what the Sabbath is really all about. Historically, many Christians have looked at it simply as a matter of not working. They were inclined to concentrate simply on what sort of activities they were or were not allowed to do on Sunday. You can do this on Sunday, but you can't do that. This can so easily lead to cold legalism.

Mind you, today we have the opposite

problem. Many treat Sunday as just another day, even Christians. But the Lord's Day is to be set aside as a festive day of rest on which to celebrate the ultimate Sabbath rest. And so, this day should be different.

It must be set aside for worship. It must be set aside to rest, in anticipation of the perfect rest that awaits God's people. And so, we should avoid unnecessary work, and we shouldn't engage in activities that will take us or others away from worship. We shouldn't do things like go to restaurants or shopping in stores if we can help it, because we know that by doing so we are encouraging these places to stay open on Sunday, and thus we are partly responsible for making it more difficult for the people working in the restaurant or store to go to church.



And of course, we will certainly make every effort ourselves to be there in church on Sunday. We will ensure that our activities on Sunday help us go to worship rather than keep us away. For instance, playing on an organized sports team on Sunday, when there is plenty of time for that sort of thing during the rest of the week, should be avoided. It will only distract you from putting your focus where it should be.

But at the same time, we should avoid a hard and fast legalism that fails to recognize that the most important thing about observing the Sabbath is to worship the Lord God for the Sabbath rest He has accomplished in and through the Lord of the Sabbath, Jesus Christ. Remember, this same

Jesus Christ adamantly fought against Sabbath legalism in His day, because so many folks in His day failed to understand the true meaning behind the Sabbath.

Celebrate Salvation with God's People

Let me conclude by emphasizing again how important it is to celebrate the Sabbath by going to church. Some people like to say that they get more out of listening to the radio or out of TV preachers than they get out of going to church. Is that your first concern: what you get out of it? If it is, then you don't really understand what worship is all about.

The church is a body, a body that is called to worship God together.

True, the church's worship together in this life will be imperfect. It will be led by imperfect men, and engaged in by imperfect people. But nevertheless, it is in church that Christians primarily show that they are the body of Christ. To reject church worship is to reject the means that God has given His people for celebrating their salvation. To not go to church when you can is to desecrate the Sabbath. And remember this: God does not take desecrating the Sabbath lightly.

Is it your desire to celebrate your salvation by going to church? If you think you can be a Christian without going to church, then you really don't understand what it means to be a Christian.

Celebrating together the Sabbath rest we have in Christ is our joy and privilege. Let's take advantage of this whenever we can.

The Rev James Klazinga is the minister of the PCEA congregation in Brisbane, Queensland.

Churches in the Banner

Scenes from Carl & Catriona Trueman's visit to Melbourne



Clockwise from upper left:
Catriona & Carl Trueman; next two are scenes from the Supper following the evening worship service in Narre Warren; and below is the audience at the Donvale Presbyterian Church at the address given on the Wednesday night.

