



**the presbyterian**

*In that day the Lord will whistle for flies  
from the distant streams of Egypt  
and for bees from the land of Assyria.*

**Isaiah 7:18**

May 2013

**banner**

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## Editorial

In an age where so much is “instant this” and “instant that” we can easily be distracted away from the long hard haul that is much of life. It seems that if something isn't exciting or interesting enough, it somehow has less value in the overall scheme of things. There isn't much encouragement given to a steady and long-term approach to life.

Aren't you reminded of this when you meet someone after a while and they ask, “Well, what's been happening in your life?” Haven't you felt a bit tongue-tied as you desperately racked your brain to think of something to add to the conversation? You honestly couldn't really say much had happened at all apart from the usual things. But, boy, don't they have some stories to tell you!

Thinking further about it, though, simply in those regular, everyday things, you should be quite thrilled. What a privilege you have to be able to do what you do, but how hard it is to keep at it every day! Being disciplined in your physical lifestyle is a lot of grind. You have to get up and do what you do, with all the travel and everything else that is involved in it. And at the end of the day, you may wonder what you have done. Did you do your best, though? Did you give it all your intellect and physical strength? Then take comfort that you did it in the way that pleases your Father in heaven. The apostle Paul encourages us in this with his words in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9. There he shows how the constant physical training of the athlete needs to be replicated in the believer's life. And how else can you beat your body and make it your slave unless you are at it every day! In the same way, every day we must be spiritually training – praying, reading God's Word, meditating on it, having fellowship with others around it, and worshipping God every Lord's Day.

*“...I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others,  
I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”*

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 9:27

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*Cover Photo: Bee reversing away from flower*

**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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## 'A Disobedient and Obstinate People'

### Considering Romans 10

Paul in these chapters 9-11 is addressing a puzzling and painful paradox. The people most expected to respond to the message of the gospel – the Jews – did not. Whereas the people least expected to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ – the Gentiles – were coming to faith in great numbers. This anomaly was a matter of great grief and concern to the apostle. He writes, **'I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart... Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved'** (9:2 and 10:1). **'What shall we say, then?'** (9: 30). How do we explain this phenomenon? Paul spent the greater part of chapter 9 emphasising the fact that we can't blame God. If anyone is saved at all, it is due to the sovereign election and mercy of God. Now in chapter 10, the apostle is going to explain that Israel's unbelief is due entirely to her own disobedience. Their failure to enter into the kingdom of grace was their own fault. They had no one to blame but themselves. They can't blame God.

This is not a matter of mere history and theology. It concerns you and me. How? Israel was a religious and privileged people (9: 4-5) – but lost from God. Many thought they were going to heaven – when in fact they were going to hell. There are many in churches today that are religious and privileged who think they are going to heaven, when in fact they are not. This is a tragedy that should be avoided. Our subject therefore is vitally important. The late Bill Shankley (Manager of Liverpool F.C.) once famously said, 'Football is not a matter of life and death – it's more important than that!' We can say in all sincerity that the subject in this chapter is not a matter of life and death – it's far more important than that!

How then can we learn from the past mistakes of Israel? Where did they go wrong?

#### 1. 'They Got the Wrong End of the Stick' (9: 30 – 10: 4)

Paul explains the great anomaly, 'the upside down religion of his day'. **'Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have attained it, that is, a righteousness that is by faith; but**

**that Israel who pursued a law that would lead to righteousness did not succeed in reaching that law'** (9: 30-31). The irony was that the Gentiles were not looking for the Messiah. They were like the man in the parable who found treasure hidden in a field, and **'when he found it, he hid it, and in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field'** (Matt. 13: 44). He hadn't been looking for treasure – but happily stumbled upon it and realised its worth. 'Whereas Israel's pursuit of righteousness was almost proverbial. They were imbued with a religious and moral zeal which some would call fanaticism' (Stott). Yet they didn't succeed in attaining righteousness. Why not? Not for lack of effort or zeal or interest or sincerity or earnestness – they had it in buckets (**see 9: 31a and 10: 2a**). Remember the great zeal that Paul had – see Phil. 3: 4-6. What then was their problem? Their aim was good but they went about it the wrong way. They got the wrong end of the stick. **'They did not pursue it by faith, but as if it was based on works.'** (9: 32). **'They had zeal for God but not according to knowledge'** (10: 2). **'They did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own'** (10: 3). **'They did not know that, 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes'** (10: 4). The 'law way'; the 'work's way' of righteousness, has been terminated by Christ. The way of righteousness is by faith in Jesus Christ.

The Jews confused the law with the gospel, and thus denied the very heart and soul of the gospel of grace. They saw the Law as a ladder to get them into heaven. Whereas, it is a signpost – designed to show us our sin and point us to Christ - who kept the law perfectly, and paid the penalty of a broken law. **'For by grace are you saved through faith. And this not of yourselves it is the gift of God. Not a result of works, so that no one may boast'** (Eph. 2: 8). The way of righteousness is not by our works but by the work of Christ.

Horatius Bonar states it well: **'Upon a life I did not live, upon a death I did not die. Another's life, another's**

### George Ball

**death, I stake my whole eternity'**. I am often reminded (and teased) about my first attempt in our first manse at fixing a creaking floor board in an upstairs bedroom. A hammer and nail soon did the trick. That evening however, there was evidence of water dripping through the ceiling. A plumber had to be called to fix the punctured pipe. The moral of the story is that my D.I.Y. solution didn't work. Nor does D.I.Y. Righteousness! If it did, what was the point of Christ dying on the Cross?

Because they got the wrong end of the stick, **'Christ became a stumbling block and rock of offence'** (9: 32-33). Christ is either our foundation stone or a stumbling stone. If righteousness is by the law – then it is not by Christ; and if it is by Christ through faith – then it is not by law. Now that Christ has accomplished our salvation by His death and resurrection, He has terminated the law as a means of achieving righteousness. Many people tragically just don't get this. It's not only Jews who get the wrong end of the stick. It's Presbyterians too! Religious people and moral people are prone to trust in their own performance – and not in the provision that God has made for us in Christ. If you are one of those people I warn you now that you are on the wrong road.

In the news recently we heard of a man who entered the Hume Highway at Cabramatta – driving in the wrong direction. After only 500 metres he was involved in a head on collision. He (the driver) was killed, his passenger was seriously injured, and the driver of the oncoming car had serious leg injuries. **How could it happen? He had to ignore the traffic signs ('No Entry. Wrong Way Go Back'). He had to ignore a police officer who was doing points duty at the intersection in Cabramatta.** He went the wrong way. A foolish and tragic mistake with disastrous consequences. Who was to blame? No one, sadly, but the driver. There is a way that seems right to a man – but the end is death.

## 2. They Thought that the way of Salvation was Complicated and Demanding (5-13)

God's way of salvation is essentially very simple. It's not about doing or giving or trying harder. There is no secret code. It's not for the initiated. It's not complicated. It is simply, **'that if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved,'** and, **'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved'** (9 and 13).

**God does not ask us to do some impossible – monumental – Herculean task. You don't have to climb your way up into heaven! (6). Nor do you have to plumb the depths of hell (7)!** Jesus has already done it all. He has come down from heaven, He has died, He descended into hell and He is risen and ascended into heaven! He now makes salvation accessible and available to all (11-13). Salvation is near.

The gospel message that you hear and read is the very word of Christ offering you salvation. The apostolic gospel is the word of Christ. That's how near Christ comes to us (verse 14- see marginal reading ESV). No matter who you are or what you are; no matter your past or your present; 'everyone (or anyone) who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved' (13).

What does it mean to call on the name of the Lord? Paul summarises the gospel in these terms:

**'That if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved'** (9). There are essential things that we must believe and confess if we are to be saved. We must believe in the true Biblical Christ. We must believe that Jesus is fully God. We must believe that Jesus died as a sacrifice for our sins. We must believe in His resurrection – which was God's statement of approval of Jesus' sacrifice. As proof that we believe these things – we will not be ashamed to confess and acknowledge Him before others. The Bible links faith to expression. A silent Christian must

have something wrong with him.

Because the way of salvation is so clear and simple – many think there must be a catch. We are often warned, 'If a thing seems too good to be true – it probably is'. But there is no catch. The gospel is true. It is literally out of this world. It is this way because God has designed it so. It is simple, sublime and saving. Remember the story of Naaman? He was a great man, a highly decorated soldier, but he was a leper. Elisha's instructions to him – wash seven times in the Jordan – seemed too simple and humiliating to him. At first he refused. However, when his servants convinced him to do as instructed he was healed – see 2 Kings 5: 13-14. Likewise God is not asking you to perform some great achievement – but in simple, childlike fashion – to put your faith in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord. It's that simple.



*Moses holds out the bronze serpent for healing as yet again Israel rebels against the Lord*

## 3. They Were A Disobedient and Obstinate People (14-21)

There's no way to sugar-coat it. There's no way to say it nicely. We can't disguise the facts. The reason for Israel's unbelief is because they were disobedient and obstinate. The fact is that Israel had to try hard to reject the gospel. It's not that they never heard the message. They didn't like it. They could never say, 'we had no opportunity – no one ever told

us'. That excuse will not hold water. Paul says, **'Did they not hear? Of course they did'** (18a). God had taken steps to ensure that all the necessary prerequisites for hearing the gospel and calling on the name of the Lord were in place (14-15). The fact is that Israel was never scarce of prophets and preachers. No one who reads these words of Paul could ever say, 'But I never heard the gospel.'

Neither could Israel say, 'But we didn't understand the message!' (19). That would be a lie. If Gentiles with no Bible background or teaching understood the message – then Israel has no excuse! (20).

There is only one explanation for Israel's unbelief – she was disobedient and obstinate (21). Paul quotes from Isa. 65: 1-2. There God is pictured as a welcoming father with arms continually outstretched. He is like the father of the prodigal who patiently and lovingly waited and watched for the return of his son. He is like the Saviour who prayed over the city: **'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings – but you were not willing'** (Matt. 23: 37). Despite the Lord's overtures, they wilfully and deliberately refused His embrace. They had only themselves to blame.

What about you? Have you learned from Israel's mistakes? You really have to make an effort to go to hell. You have to bypass the cross of Christ. You have to tune out the gospel message which you know to be true. You have to avoid every preacher of the gospel. You have to suppress your own conscience. You have to be obstinate and disobedient. That would be a tragedy. That would be a great mistake. But you would only have yourself to blame. You can't blame God.

# The Past for Today

## The PCEA Synod (1) Origins

*The Editor has asked me to write on the history of our Synod. In this initial article I'll cover in brief the origin of the PCEA with a view to highlighting some important issues.*

The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia [PCEA] was founded in Sydney in 1846 in the aftermath of the 'Disruption' of the Established Church of Scotland in 1843, which involved the forming of the Free Church of Scotland. The PCEA today embraces people of many different backgrounds, but its Scottish origins explain its existence as well as provide the framework within which it has developed its organised life. An understanding of this is important lest misunderstandings occur. The PCEA is a small, widely scattered denomination and requires good co-operation across the church to avoid confusion and promote positive developments.

### A confessional church

The PCEA is a confessional church; that is, it holds that the Church must confess her faith before men. We do not accept the badge 'no creed but the Bible' because every professedly Christian group makes such a claim, although differing among themselves. It is the Bible correctly interpreted that we adhere to, and we set out a summary of what we believe the Bible teaches in a written form so all may know where we stand. When the Reformation came to Scotland in 1560 under John Knox and others, the Scots' Confession as a summary of Scripture teaching was adopted.

In 1647 it was superseded by a fuller document, commonly called the Westminster Confession, and our office-bearers subscribe to the teaching set out in it in the same terms as it was accepted by the Church of Scotland at that time. Several other basic documents related to worship and church government provide a framework for our practice in these areas although they are not directly subscribed by office-bearers.

### The Scottish patronage problem

Scottish lands had early been held by the Crown under a feudal system common in Europe. Lands were given out (feud) with various obligations, and in turn land could be feud to others. (When I was studying in Scotland 1972-75 I had to pay feu-duty of £1 or so on our little flat to, of all bodies, the Church of Scotland Trustees, until feu-duty was abolished in 1974.) Before the Reformation in Scotland, the Church held vast estates and in many cases had given the right to the donor and his heirs to nominate the clergy to enjoy the endowment. This was the right of patronage and in many cases the right was actually held by the Crown, in others by Universities, Town Councils or landowners. While the newly reformed church held that ministers should be chosen by congregations,



The Rev. William McIntyre about to constitute the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia on the 10th day of October, 1846, in the home of Mr. William Byers, 4 Hunter Street, Sydney.  
Centre: Rev. William McIntyre, A.M. Left: Rev. Colin Stewart; Mr. Samuel Martin  
Right: Rev. John Tait, Mr. Peter Stewart, Mr. William Byers.

the legal situation was that lay patronage still existed – despite the Scottish Parliament voting to abolish it in 1649 in favour of vesting the right of nomination in the male heads of families. With the Revolution of 1690 some reforms were made to the system by Parliament and the right of patronage was vested in the heritors (generally local landowners) and the elders of the congregation. However, in 1711, An Act to restore the Patrons to their ancient Rights of presenting Ministers to the Churches vacant in

Rowland Ward

that Part of Great Britain called Scotland was passed in seeming violation of the religious clause in the Treaty of Union of 1707 by which Scotland, together with England and Wales, had become Great Britain. Patronage still exists in the Church of England, although it was abolished in Scotland in 1874. While patronage rights were not at first exercised to the detriment of the church, the Church of Scotland Assembly regularly protested against it. The increasing abuse of patronage contributed to three splits in the church – the Secession of 1733, the Relief in 1752 (the bulk of these two formed the United Presbyterian Church in 1847) and the greatest of them all, the Disruption of 1843, when about 40% of the ministers withdrew to form the

Church of Scotland free of the encroachments on the spiritual rule Christ had established in his church. These encroachments related particularly to the imposition of ministers on congregations against their will.

### Australia

In Eastern Australia the Presbyterian Church was organised as an independent church in 1840 with the legal name 'The Synod of Australia in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland'. It was a pity this name was adopted rather than one which made the Synod's independence more clear. But in 1840 even those of other Scottish Presbyterian Churches seemed

content to utilise the name of the national Church of their homeland in this way.

In lengthy and divisive debate between 1843 and 1846 the majority of the Synod refused to change its legal and moral connection with the Established Church, causing division here by tying its testimony to that of the Established Church even while professing to believe in the principles held by the Free Church. This led three of the 22 ministers to Protest and, led by Rev William



Rev William McIntyre (1806-70)

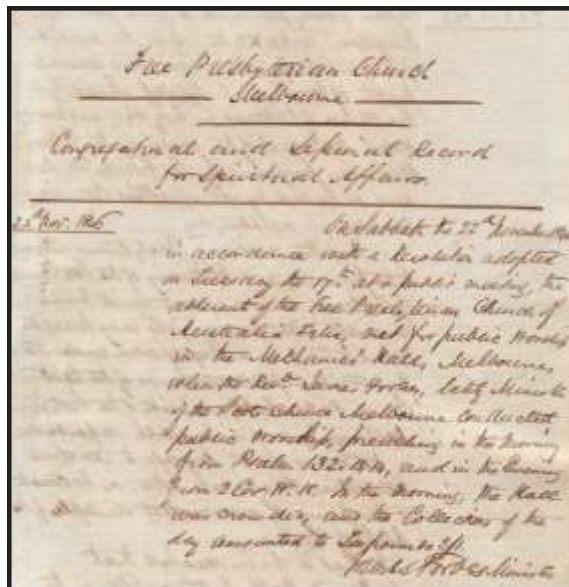
McIntyre of Maitland, they with two elders formed the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia as an independent church adhering to the standards of the original Church of Scotland and holding friendly relations with the Free Church of Scotland. Incidentally, this was the first use of the term 'Presbyterian' in a denominational name in this country. The PCEA did not claim jurisdiction south of the Murray River because another minister of the Synod of Australia – James Forbes of the Scots' Church, Melbourne – withdrew for the same reason as the PCEA men and formed the Free Presbyterian Church of Australia Felix (afterwards Victoria) for which he wrote a detailed constitutional document called the Fundamental Act. There was mutual fellowship between the PCEA and the FPCV. In 1855 a Free Presbyterian Church of South Australia was formed using the same constitutional document as the one Forbes had drawn for the Victorian church. Was division justified? It is frequently said that there was no reason for the split in Australia in 1846. It is true that the State did not interfere in the Church but gave financial assistance without compromising conditions to a variety of religious bodies. However there was a very real fear that the stipends of any who separated from the Synod of Australia would be cut off, given that the British Colonial Office acted on the advice of the Church of Scotland. This seems to have led several men to change their minds when it came to the crunch. McIntyre and Forbes insisted that it was the refusal of the Synod to break its compromising link with the Established Church that was the issue, and not a desire to

involve the Australian Synod in some mere imitation of the Scottish conflict, and they were prepared to pay the price of giving up state aid. Of course the Scottish churches were not willing to take a neutral stance to 'the Synod of Australia in connexion with the Established Church of Scotland' if she adopted a change of name, nor could one expect them to do so given the doctrinal issue. So, on the practical grounds of securing a supply of ministers, a decision had to be made one way or the other. The stance of neutrality advocated by two other ministers, who also withdrew from the Synod of Australia in 1846, could not work. One of these ministers was ultimately an elder in the PCEA congregation in Brisbane, while the other (William Hamilton) took an independent position for some years in rural Victoria, although he affirmed that if in Scotland he would have joined the Free Church. Forbes thought that following an appropriate change of the Synod's name, ministerial communion could be held with the Free Church, but good men in the Established Church, after satisfactory examination, should not be refused. This was a sensible approach but of course would have brought discipline from the Established Church.

words the PCEA has a basic position of adherence to the teaching of the Bible, as summarised in the Confession of Faith and certain other documents, which provides a framework for the development of legislation and practice. Particular Acts of Synod are made within the confines of this position relying upon Scripture and common practice through the ages. Precedents can be derived from these to apply to new situations as they arise. So there is both fixity and flexibility as befits what is a common law constitution, and which suits a situation of spiritual care where all possible contingencies cannot be anticipated in advance.

A weakness in the Australian context in the early colonial period was a necessary reliance on Scottish practice, not all of which could apply satisfactorily in the Australian context of congregations scattered over vast distances. After all, Scotland had over 900 parishes in an area the size of Tasmania and plenty of experienced men, but there were relatively few men of ability to guide the affairs of the Australian church. All denominations suffered from some bad eggs, rejects from Scotland or men who could not cope in the quite different social conditions.

At Port Phillip, Forbes' mode of procedure was to produce a clearly written document which is probably best described as a statement explanatory of the constitution of the true Church of Scotland, as he continued to use the same formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith for office-bearers. Forbes was certainly among the most able of any of the early Presbyterian ministers, and produced much important legislation for the FP Synod. However, his death occurred in 1851 at age 38, and his legacy was overwhelmed by the impact of the Gold Rush. Procedural difficulties would become very evident soon enough.



First minute of Forbes' Free Presbyterian Church 22 Nov 1846

**Constitution**

As already stated, the PCEA founders simply reaffirmed their vows in their true meaning – i.e. as vindicated by the Free Church of Scotland. In other

# Missions in the Banner

*An Interesting Piece of History*

*Submitted by Heather Beaton*

Leaves from old files contain interesting pieces of history. One such report was in the children's portion of Our Banner, our denominational magazine dated March 15, 1937, under the heading 'Adopting An Orphan'.

vice in Lakhnadon in the summer of 1959 during holidays from Bible school.

In 1959 Prakash married Premlata, who had grown up in Regions Beyond Mission in Bihar. Their four children were Prabha, Michael (now

and secured his B.A. degree.

Prakash visited the churches in Australia in 1970 and Scotland in 1974, and through his visits people were made more aware of the orphanage work.

He was minister in Lakhnadon/Chhapara till his death in December, 2005. It is estimated that 1500 people attended his funeral, the majority of whom were non-Christian. He was so widely respected that all shops and businesses were closed for the funeral.

On the wall outside the church verses from Galatians 5 verses 22 and 23 are printed: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." One non-Christian gentleman was heard to say, "These verses portray the life of Rev. Prakash Kumar."



**ADOPTING AN ORPHAN.** ✈

We understand that St. George's Ladies' Missionary Society is adopting a little orphan in India. This little child's name is Prakash Kumar. By adopting this little one, the Society makes itself responsible for the child's upkeep and welfare, which amount to £5 per year. This is good work, and should commend itself to our young people. Perhaps some of our Sabbath Schools would like to adopt an orphan, too. If so, write to Rev. M. Murray McLeod, Mission House, Chhapara, Seoni, C.P., India.

Dr Anne Urquhart's book *Near India's Heart* recording the arrival in Lakhnadon, India, of baby Prakash Kumar, states, "Miss Lena Gillies, a new missionary, remembers how early one morning in 1934, her Hindi lesson was interrupted by a man with his tiny weak child. Her teacher named him on the spot, Prakash Kumar, Prince of light." The baby was cared for by Mrs Sarah MacLeod, before her own first child was born. Anne also mentions that Prakash Kumar remembers his childhood as a happy time.

After his schooling in Chhapara, and high school years in Jabalpur, Prakash took training as an evangelist at the Oriental Missionary Society's Bible Seminary in Allahabad. He conducted his first church ser-

vice in Lakhnadon in the summer of 1959 during holidays from Bible school. In 1959 Prakash married Premlata, who had grown up in Regions Beyond Mission in Bihar. Their four children were Prabha, Michael (now headmaster of Chhapara school), Pradeep, whose article appeared in February's issue of *The Presbyterian Banner*, and Mampta, a daughter also active in Christian work.

Prakash moved from Lakhnadon to Chhapara in 1965 and, in addition to his position as minister, he also manned the "Reading Room," which was built in 1963. The Reading Room was visited by a large number of people including those receiving studies from Radio Broadcasts, such as Far East Broadcasting, "Back to the Bible," Trans World Radio, and so on. He was always available to discuss and give help in these studies. During this time Prakash studied



*Prakesh Kumar on a visit to Scotland*

## Emily Sarah Tracey

Emily Sarah Tracey was stillborn on June 6, 1987. She was our first child. Sharon went into labour at thirty-six weeks. We knew Emily would not survive the birth. We had known from the eighteenth week that Emily suffered from anencephaly (a defect in the development of the neural tube). For eighteen weeks, Sharon carried that little life within her, knowing we would not bring a baby home at the end. I am still overwhelmed with admiration for my wife's quiet courage and the dignity with which she carried our little Emily.

It is now a quarter of a century since Emily's birth, and I am still lonely for her. I am afraid even to write this, since my words often end as tears. I write this with the encouragement of Sharon, my wife. It may be that this will encourage a mother or father, a doctor or nurse.

The first thing we wrestled with was the shock when we went in for our first ultrasound. We were full of life and joy, skipping into parenthood. A cold blade cut through us. It was plain to see that there was an abnormality. We were sent home and told to return the next day to make arrangements to terminate the pregnancy. It was the British National Health Service. One did as one was told. We cried. We felt numb. We cried. Sharon spoke plainly. She said that since this was all the life God was giving our baby, we had no right to take it away. We cried. And she was right. So we made our decision not to abort. In the short term, it was the harder decision, for it meant extending the sorrow for several months. We cried.

Not everyone agreed with our decision. Some felt that since there would be no life outside the womb, there was no sin in "terminating the pregnancy." But it was never merely a pregnancy to us. It was always a child. Sharon's GP, who had cared for her all her life, clearly let us know he did not agree with our decision. He, thankfully, was not typical. God brought several wonderful nurses and doctors across our path. They treated us, and Sharon particularly, with great gentleness and dignity.

I clearly remember the day Emily was born. A midwife and nurse delivered her. The nurse cried, but said nothing. But I have not forgotten that she cried

with us. Before we had a chance to see anything, the midwife placed a little hat on Emily's head. She handed me my little girl, but with that little hat she had done her best to make it easier for us. It was a small thing, but it was gentle and thoughtful. I have not forgotten.

Not long after Emily's birth, we received a letter inviting us to the genetics clinic. We were not sure we should go. We felt labelled, and perhaps we were afraid of genetics. But we went and found ourselves under the care of Professor Norman Nevin and his team. It was folic acid. His work showed that higher doses of folic acid reduced the risk of neural tube defects.

I began to learn the nature of grief. I wanted to know if people felt what I felt. I picked up a copy of *A Grief Observed*, by C. S. Lewis, and found him saying, "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear." And, "No one ever told me about the laziness of grief." I grasped hold of the words no one ever told me. I too felt that shock. I found my way, over the years, to poems on grief, especially on the loss of children. I grasped hold of Words-



worth's poem, "She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways":

*She lived unknown, and few could know*

*When Lucy ceased to be;*

*But she is in her grave, and, oh,*

*The difference to me!*

It was not difficult for me to change "Lucy" to "Emily."

Robert Frost's painful poem, "Home Burial," captured the agony of burying a child. I have felt no pain like that day. I carried a little coffin, myself. My father turned to me as we approached the grave, and, hardly able to speak through tears, he asked, "May I carry

Stephen J. Tracey

her?" Years later we buried my father-in-law in the same grave. I was unprepared for the pain of that open grave. I have begun to learn, not simply what it means to mourn, but what it means to be poor in spirit. I am frail, of the earth, easily crushed. I have begun to learn the nature of faith. God says, "It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Lam 3:26). It may not seem clear to others, but from that point onward, each time my wife was pregnant, I was full of fear. I was afraid of grief. I was afraid to carry that pain again. I was afraid to place that grief on the children God had given us. It was in the crucible of that pain that I began to learn to trust God, day by day. I would say things like, "Did you take your folic acid today?" The answer was always the same: "Yes, dear." Sharon was always well ahead of me in faith, and that faith was never reckless. Hope and quiet waiting are not easy. God graciously granted us four children, a daughter and three sons. I was like the man crying, "I believe; help my unbelief."

I have begun to learn the nature of providence. Not only is it "good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." In the very next breath, Jeremiah also says, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lam. 3:27).

I could not see how it was good for me. But now that I am older, I might say that it was good for me. I could say it prepared me for pastoral ministry. I could say it helped our marriage. I could say it pierced my pride. It probably did

all those things. I do know it made me cling to the truth "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). It made me cling to this truth: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him" (Lam. 3:22-25). It also made me cling to this truth: "But though he cause grief, yet will



he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies" (Lam. 3:32). God is good. We are always more loved than we love.

Above all else, I have learned there is grace to help in time of need. In childlessness, miscarriage, stillbirth, living

with disability, or anything else in life or death, God's grace is sufficient.

*The author, a native of Northern Ireland and a graduate of Queens University, Belfast, is now pastor of Lakeview OPC in Rockport, Maine. He*

*quotes the KJV. Norman C. Nevin taught medical genetics at Queens University; now retired, he is a proponent of intelligent design and the editor of Should Christians Embrace Evolution? This was taken from New Horizons, March 2013.*

## The World in the Banner

### Joni and Friends 'Beyond Suffering' Curriculum Now Available in iBook Format

"Beyond Suffering: A Christian View on Disability Ministry" by Joni Eareckson Tada and Steve Bundy, with Pat Verbal and Dr. Kathy McReynolds, is now available as a multi-touch book for the iPad. "Beyond Suffering" is a groundbreaking course of study created to transform the way Christians view God's plan for disability and suffering and was originally introduced as a curriculum in courses offered at the Joni and Friends Christian Institute on Disability in August, 2010. Since then, it has been released as a textbook for use at other educational institutions around the country, as well as in Spanish and Braille editions.

"At Joni and Friends we recognize that today's students need textbooks designed for the way they like to learn, so we're excited to introduce the first ever disability ministry course for iPad users," said founder and CEO Joni Eareckson Tada. "This dynamic, new format provides students hands-on access to the multifaceted course by combining the Study Guide and Leader's Guide into one interactive, multi-media book. It's our prayer that this course, whether in print or on an iPad, will equip the next generation with the skills to think critically about the complex issues impacting people with disability and their world."

The "Beyond Suffering" curriculum contains 16 lessons organized into four modules: An Overview of Disability Ministry; The Theology of Suffering and Disability; The Church and Disability Ministry; and An Introduction to Bioethics. The "Beyond Suffering" iBooks Edition takes advantage of all the iPad's accessibility features for students with visual and hearing impairments.

The iBooks Edition puts the entire course in the palm of the student's hand:

- The new interactive format provides students instant access to the compel-

ling videos from Joni and Friends' Award-Winning Television Series and articles from the Leader's Guide.

- New colorful photos, graphics, videos and links embedded in this multi-touch book will enhance the learning experience for tech-savvy students.

- Resources, stats and articles can be added or updated as current issues on disability ministry are in the news.

- Downloadable PDFs of promotional flyers, e-cards, surveys and evaluations are linked for ease of use.

The iBooks Edition contains everything students need to complete the course. However, leaders teaching a large class may want to purchase the "Beyond Suffering Leader's Guide" for large screen projection or for adapting the PowerPoint slides to personalize the course.

The "Beyond Suffering" iBooks Edition is available on iTunes, with more information online at Joni and Friends.

The original curriculum, as well as the Spanish and Braille versions, are available for purchase online at the Joni and Friends online store, along with an introductory video on the need for these materials featuring Tada, Bundy and other contributors.

For more than 30 years, Joni and Friends has worked to accelerate ministry to the disabled community, offering a wide array of life-affirming ministries to people with disabilities around the world. Joni and Friends does this through the Christian Institute on Disability; the International Disability Center; international radio and television programs filled with inspirational stories; Wheels for the World, which every year sees thousands of individuals receive wheelchairs and the life-giving message of the Gospel; and Family Retreats, where families affected by disability learn they are not alone.

+ A. Larry Ross Communications, melany@alarryross.com

+ Joni and Friends International Disability Center, Post Office Box 3333,

Agoura Hills, California 91376, 818-707-5664, 818-707-2391

### Christians Mark Legacy of Scottish Missionary 'Trailblazer' David Livingstone

EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND (ANS) – As part of a series of events to mark the bicentenary of David Livingstone's birth, Christians met this week in Edinburgh to reflect on the legacy of the Scottish missionary and explorer.

*Scottish missionary and explorer David Livingstone*

Speaking at the conference held by the University of Edinburgh's School of Divinity the Right Reverend James Tengatenga, Bishop of Southern Malawi, said there was still a sense of "awe" surrounding David Livingstone in his country today.

Livingstone was born in the small Scottish town of Blantyre. He went to Africa as a medical missionary in 1840 and would lead extensive explorations across the interior and central Africa.

*Christian Today* reported that during the conference Bishop Tengatenga said the explorer had been different from others in his day for the respect he showed indigenous cultures and languages, a respect that often gained the trust of local people and chiefs.

#### *Livingstone's Legacy*

Bishop Tengatenga described Livingstone as an "itinerant trailblazer" who did not understand himself as a typical missionary.

"He was just a small part of the greater work being done by others. He understood missions differently. Exploration was not antithetical to it but integral to it."

The bishop explained that many Christians in Malawi, including himself, trace their faith in some part

back to Livingstone.

"The story [of the church] is not complete without giving David Livingstone a place or role in it. I can't tell the story of my faith without telling the story of David Livingstone," he said.

Livingstone was a vocal campaigner against the slave trade and he was concerned about economic development and self-sufficiency not only for the indigenous people, but for the missionaries spreading the Gospel among the people.

"David Livingstone was a visionary, he dreamed of things to come," said Bishop Tenganenga said.

#### *Poverty Today*

The conference also reflected upon the challenges facing Malawi today, including widespread poverty.

The conference was told that less than one per cent of the population of Malawi went to university. Delegates heard that Livingstone would have been disappointed with some of the developments that came after him, including the widespread poverty that exists today.

#### *Missionary Myth*

Dr T. Jack Thompson, of the University of Edinburgh, said a "myth" surrounding Livingstone in Malawi had been created in Livingstone's time largely by the Scottish missionaries who followed him "because to them he was a hero".

"We would like to think that we Westerners have transformed Malawi but when you go into the poorest villages, has it really changed all that much since David Livingstone was there in 1859?" he said.

#### *Unjust Colonialism*

Dr Ken Ross, Honorary Fellow of the School of Divinity, spoke of the deep sense of injustice that grew with colonialism, saying Livingstone's legacy was "not without its moments of ambivalence and conflict".

Malawi in the 20th century would, he said, be characterised largely by a tension between white domination and rising African aspirations.

However, Dr Ross that the difficult race relations that emerged later with European settlers was "at odds" with Livingstone himself and that the missionary had an "unyielding hostility" towards racism.

Bishop Tenganenga said that while Livingstone had sometimes been blamed

for colonialism and accused of plundering the land, he did not believe these had ever been Livingstone's intentions.

Dr Ross concluded that Livingstone's influence would be with Malawi "for some time to come", not least because of his contribution to the Christian faith, the enduring strong relations between Malawi and Scotland, and Livingstone's vision for social and economic development which continues to inspire new anti-poverty initiatives today.

He said: "It could look like a story of despair but a generation of Malawians is coming up now with entrepreneurial skills that gives us great hope about what the future could be."

"There are very hopeful signs as well and I hope this bicentenary will be a chance to celebrate them as well."

+ *Peter Wooding, Europe Bureau Chief for ASSIST News Service*

#### **New Preaching Website Launched**

A new preaching website, [www.pssermons.net](http://www.pssermons.net), has been launched by Bible Presbyterian Church pastors the Rev Steven Brinegar, pastor of Grace Bible Presbyterian Church of Cape Canaveral, Florida, and the Rev Tim Prussic, pastor of Columbia Bible Presbyterian Church in Scappoose, Oregon.

Pastor Brinegar writes:

"This site is dedicated to the craft of preaching the Word of God. I'm a pastor who loves preaching. Most Mondays, I give some time to thinking about my sermon from the previous Sunday. Hindsight is a great teacher. As I think about my own successes and failures, I'm going to write about them.

"My method will be to think theologically and practically about preaching. These two, theory and practice, must always go hand in hand. Hindsight is an excellent teacher. These post scripts will look back at mistakes I've made, lessons I've learned, and applications I've missed all leading to improvement in my preaching. My prayer is God will bless my preaching and perhaps even you and your preaching as well."

+ *PSSermons*

+ *Bible Presbyterian Church*

#### **77 Politicians Commit Act of 'Cultural Vandalism'**

In response to the 'shot-gun' passing of the bill redefining marriage this eve-

ning, National Director of Family First NZ and co-ordinator of the Protect Marriage campaign, Bob McCoskrie, says: "In passing the 'shot-gun' same-sex marriage bill, Parliament has chosen to reject the obvious cultural and natural character of marriage and the subsequent creation and care of children, and made marriage just about partnership. In ramming through this bill in a shameful way without due consideration, and with no clear public mandate, politicians have committed an arrogant act of cultural vandalism."

"The equality cause is not advanced by destroying institutions. Equality should respect difference, not destroy it. There was no discrimination in the law as it stood."

"Ironically, marriage now has become meaningless. We will now be using the word to describe something else – not commonly or traditionally conceived, but conceived by politics and political correctness."

"With the accompanying consequence of changes to adoption laws, politicians have also weakened the rights of the child in favour of pandering to the demands of adults. A child has a right to a mum and a dad. We should not set out in public policy to deny a child that basic right. This is not a sexuality issue. This is a gender issue. The gender of the parents does matter to a child."

"We also note that Prime Minister John Key has effectively split the National party down the middle by strongly promoting this bill, and the party now has a crisis of unity as it gets confused over its identity and values. Traditional National supporters may be looking for a new 'home'."

"THIS WON'T GO ANY FURTHER" - Remember 2004?

TIM BARNETT (Labour): "The Civil Union Bill is an acceptable alternative; marriage can remain untouched."

1st Reading Civil Union Bill  
METIRIA TUREI (Green): "Marriage as understood in our society, and as formalised in law, is a specific culturally and historically bound institution. ... This bill does not affect the Marriage Act. It does not change in any way the structure, the validity, of the institution of marriage."

1st Reading Civil Union Bill

JOHN KEY (National): "i don't think there's a real need to change the current legislation or to adopt new legislation." 2008

+ *Protect Marriage Media Release 17 April 2013*

## Protestants in Uzbekistan Harassed And Bullied

Uzbekistan's President Islam Karimov rules according to Communist Soviet methods, so society is heavily regulated. Revolutionary and jihadist Islam are real threats to his regime. Religious laws primarily targeting these Islamic groups are also used to persecute Protestant Christians whom the regime considers are threatening social cohesion. Small house churches are routinely raided by hostile security police. Protestants charged with breaching the religion law by possessing Christian literature, witnessing or worshipping without registration face exorbitant fines often 50 and 100 times the minimum monthly wage. These fines leave them destitute. This persecution has nothing to do with state security and everything to do with making Protestant Christianity undesirable to its members and to the masses. Despite this, Uzbekistan's Protestant and independent churches are growing. Please pray for them.

*+Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 206 | Wed 17 Apr 2013*

## Boston, Islam and Terrorism

In my earlier piece on the Boston bombings I mentioned that it was too early to apportion blame. Well, it no longer seems to be, with two Chechen brothers now clearly linked to the attacks. Brothers Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, 19, and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, 26 are now history: the former is in police custody while the latter was killed in a gun battle with the police.

We know they are Muslims who come from a region near the republic of Chechnya in Russia, which has been a hotspot of Islamic insurgency. They have been in the US for a decade, and have posted jihadist and anti-Western material on the Web.

And there may even be an Australian connection: "Two videos from controversial Sydney Sheik Feiz Mohammed, one condemning Harry Potter, appear on a YouTube channel under the name of bombing suspect Tamerlan Tsarnaev."

So it seems once again we have another example of the religion of peace in action. In fact, since 9/11, just 12 years ago, there have been over 20,000 Islamic terrorist attacks – 20,730 to be exact. Consider the month of March just passed: there were 189 jihad attacks in 21 countries resulting in 988 deaths and 2093 injuries.

Yet once again the secular leftists, the mainstream media, and Western dhimmies are telling us these are just isolated incidents, and not representative of Islam. President Obama has been peddling this line for years, and we will hear much more of it in the days to come.

These apologists for Islam are quite wrong however. The good Muslim, the faithful Muslim, as the Koran, hadith and sira make quite clear, are the ones who fully follow the example of the ideal man, the perfect example, the prophet Muhammad.

All true Muslims are to pattern their lives after what Muhammad has done. Thus if he had many wives, so too the devout Muslim. If he married young girls, so too can Muslims. If he killed for the faith, led raiding parties, and killed his enemies, then so too the true Muslim today.

Indeed they are commanded to do such killing in the authoritative Islamic documents. Slaying the infidel for Allah is not only enjoined upon the faithful, but if one dies in the attempt, it is the only sure guarantee of making it into paradise. So there is an extra added incentive for Muslims to follow in the footsteps of their prophet here.

But we will keep hearing the usual claptrap that these jihadists are not real Muslims, or are only the "extremists," or are just a radical minority. So the lamestream media and the other Western dhimmies will play down if not ignore altogether the Islamic connection with these Boston bombers.

Mark Steyn spoke about this recently with Rush Limbaugh and his words are worth citing here. As one write-up puts it: "Steyn reminded his listeners of the media reactions to other terrorist attacks tied to Islam, including U.S. Army Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, who was accused in the November 2009 shooting of 13 people and wounding of 29 others; the so-called 'underwear bomber' Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to detonate plastic explosives hidden in his underwear on Christmas in 2009; and the Times Square bomber, Faisal Shahzad, who was a Pakistani-American citizen arrested for an attempted May 1, 2010 car bombing.

"None of these guys, none of these lone wolves, none of these lone wolves stretching as far back as the eye can see, are ever typical of anything,' Steyn said. 'We don't know that any of these lone wolves belong to the United Amalgamated of Lone Wolves and Isolated

Extremists. They're all just one-offs — all jihad is local.' Steyn compared that to the treatment of conservatives when anything else has happened, even if there isn't necessarily a direct link to conservatives.

"[I]f some guy shoots up a grade school, even if he has nothing to do with the NRA and he has nothing to do with the tea party and he's not the father of Sarah Palin's youngest child, he is nevertheless, those people are nevertheless responsible for the entire conservative movement. Sarah Palin, NRA, tea party is always responsible and that is why we need to gut the Second Amendment'."

Yes that is exactly how the MSM operates. Indeed, they are all so greatly disappointed that these bombers did not turn out to be white Christian conservatives. Plenty of these media lefties had said just that. Here are a few quotes:

- "Domestic terrorists ... tend to be on the far right." Chris Matthews, NBC
- The Tea Party was behind the bombings. Michael Moore
- "Let's hope the Boston marathon bomber was a white American." David Sirota, Salon com
- Rightwing extremists are likely responsible. Peter Bergen, CNN

On and on it goes. It must be the work of Christian conservatives – the religious right is obviously behind it all. But now we know who the real culprits are. So do we hear any apologies from the left and the MSM? I have not heard any so far. And what you are also unlikely to hear is any reference to the religion of peace as these brothers are further discussed in the media in the days ahead.

So we should not be surprised that the Boston bombings have turned out to be yet another Islamic terror attack. And we should not be surprised that it is basically left to the alternative media to get the truth on these matters out there into the wider public.

Dhimmitude and creeping sharia are alive and well in the US and the West. And so is the rising body count.

+ [www.billmuehlenberg.com](http://www.billmuehlenberg.com)

# Children under the Banner

From: 'Search and Solve:  
Bible Activity Sheet',  
by Betty De Vries,  
[Illustrated by Donna Greenlee]  
Baker Books, 1998

## Counting Stars

There are lots of stars on this page.  
If you circle the correct number of stars to  
answer each question, there should be just  
one star left uncircled.



1. How old was Jesus when he went to the temple? (Luke 2:42) \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many stones did David pick up from the stream to use in his slingshot? (1 Samuel 17:40) \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many spies did Rahab hide? (Joshua 2:4) \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many of Daniel's friends were thrown into the fiery furnace? (Daniel 3:19-20) \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many sons did the priest Eli have? (1 Samuel 2:34) \_\_\_\_\_
6. How many time did Peter deny Jesus? (John 18:17-27) \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many books of the Bible have only one chapter? \_\_\_\_\_
8. How many brothers did King David have? (1 Samuel 17:12) \_\_\_\_\_

# Prescribed Search / Youth Work

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

## MAY 2013

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 7 and 8)

1 CORINTHIANS chapter 11

1. Who are the respective heads of every man, of (the) woman, and of Christ?
2. Why must there be heresies [factions] in the church?
3. When the Lord Jesus took the cup after supper, what did he say?
4. What happens to the one who eats and drinks unworthily?

chapter 12

5. What enables a man to say Jesus is Lord?
6. Who have been baptised into one body?
7. Why has God made all the members of Christ's body different from each other?
8. What officer-bearers has God set in the church?

JUNIOR

LUKE chapter 18

1. What was the publican's [tax collector's] prayer in the temple?
2. What was Jesus' answer to the disciples when they rebuked those who brought infants to him? (2 verses)
3. What reward will be given to the man who has left his house or family for the kingdom of God's sake? (2 verses)
4. What words did Jesus use when he healed the blind beggar?

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

# Life under the Banner

## *The Significance of the Tenth Commandment*

*Jim Klazinga*

### **The Heidelberg Catechism on the Tenth Commandment**

The Heidelberg Catechism is one of the classic Reformed Confessions in the continental tradition. And just like the Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms, it deals with the Ten Commandments, looking at each of the commandments individually. The thing is though, when it gets to the tenth, it takes a somewhat different approach.

The Commandment reads: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

When the Heidelberg Catechism asks, "What is God's will for us in the tenth commandment?", it answers thus: "That not even the slightest thought or desire contrary to any of God's commandments should ever arise in my heart. Rather, with all my heart I should always hate sin and take pleasure in what is right."

What does this answer have to do with the question? It seems to deal with the law as a whole, rather than the tenth commandment specifically.

The authors of the catechism were actually quite perceptive here. They correctly saw the tenth commandment as being significant for understanding the law as a whole.

How is this? How can a commandment specifically about coveting give us a key to the whole law of God? Well, the thing is, coveting is a matter of the heart. If you covet, your heart is in the wrong place, and you cannot keep God's law.

### **The Inward Focus of the Tenth Commandment**

When you look at the other nine commandments, on the surface, they seem to be dealing with matters that are external to the heart of the individual. Now of course, each of the commandments deals indirectly and implicitly with the inward heart of a person. But you might not realize

this if you look only at what the commandments specifically say.

Don't serve any other gods. Don't make graven images. Don't take God's name in vain. Observe the Sabbath. Honor your father and your mother. Don't kill, or commit adultery, or steal, or bear false witness. Each of these commandments as they are written might seem to be concerned about what we do, as opposed to what is in our hearts. Of course, the principles behind each command have very much to say about the condition of our hearts, and so each and every one of them very much applies to our hearts. But looking only at the letter of the laws, you might think you can avoid this conclusion.

*You shall not covet your neighbour's house.  
You shall not covet your neighbour's wife,  
or his manservant  
or maidservant,  
his ox or donkey,  
or anything that belongs  
to your neighbor.*

Exodus 20:17

But once you get to the tenth commandment, you are forced to see that the keeping of the law of God is not just a matter of outwardly doing the right thing, but a matter of inwardly having a righteous heart.

Coveting is not something you do with your outward body, but with your inward heart. You steal with your hands. You commit adultery with your body. You speak the Lord's name in vain and bear false witness with your mouth. And you rest from your labours with your whole body. But you covet that which is your neighbour's with your heart.

Consider this: If you speak the Lord's

name in vain, then there will be words that might be heard. If you kill someone, there will be a dead body. If you steal something from your neighbour, he will not have it any more. But without acting upon it, you could covet that which is your neighbour's without anyone possibly knowing about it. You could keep it so well hidden so as to be completely undetectable to anyone, except for God. God knows our hearts. He knows when we covet, even if no one else does.

### **Legitimate Desires versus Sinful Coveting**

Before elaborating on this further, it might be helpful to look specifically at what the tenth commandment requires of us.

The commandment itself deals with coveting. And what is coveting? To covet is simply to desire, to long for something.

Now, coveting is not wrong in and of itself. We can covet in a good way. For example, someone might tell you that they covet your prayers. There is nothing wrong with this. It simply means that we hope that others will pray for us.

Also, we might covet the knowledge of God. There is certainly nothing wrong with longing to know the Lord better, desiring to enter into his presence.

There are also earthly things we can legitimately desire: enough food to eat for ourselves and our family, a good spouse, good friends and fellowship, an adequate roof over our heads. There is nothing inherently wrong with desiring such things.

Even God can be said to covet. He covets our worship, he covets our service. He covets our whole lives. And of course, such coveting on His part can never be wrong, because the desires of the Lord are perfect.

The thing is though, often our desiring, our coveting, is not legitimate. When the Bible talks about

the sin of covetousness, it is focusing on when our desires become corrupt. We begin to covet that which is off limits to us.

For instance, those things which God has allocated for our neighbour, which God has given to him and not to us, we must not covet them. God distributes as he sees fit. He is the one who has given you what you have and calls you to be content with it. When you covet that which is not supposed to be yours, you are not being content with what God has done for you, and that insults him.

### **What we Covet Shows Whom We Serve**

Here's another problem: when we set our desires on that which does not belong to us, then our focus is not where it should be. When we focus on serving God, we praise and thank him for all he does for us and all he provides us with. But when we covet that which does not belong to us, we are saying that those things are more important to us than serving God. When we covet our neighbour's house, we are saying that acquiring a nice house is more important to us than serving God. When we covet our neighbour's fully loaded heavy duty SUV, then we are placing a value on that vehicle, a value which it should not have.

We are called to be content with what God gives us. We are called to use the gifts he gives to us to further his glory and worship his name. Everything we are and everything we have must be dedicated for the service of God. But when we covet something that is not ours, then that something takes on a value all of its own, for its own sake, and ultimately, we have made that coveted item an idol.

Our desires can either go one way or another. We can correctly desire to serve God, or we can sinfully desire to serve something else. We can't have it both ways.

In 1 Timothy 6:10 we read: "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith." Coveting the things of this world, coveting wealth as this world understands it, this causes people to

wander away from the faith. You either long for the things of this world, or you long for the presence of God. One or the other.

Jesus says in Luke 12:15, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." There are far more important things in life than material stuff, which is why coveting is so dangerous.

Heed the words of Ephesians 5:5 - "For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is ... covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." The covetous one is the one who worships insignificant created matter rather than the ultimately significant Creator. Such a person, if he remains in his sin, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

### **Set Your Heart on the Good**

It makes sense, then, to see the tenth commandment as significant with regard to the whole of the law. The tenth commandment has an important principle behind it, the principle that the desires of our heart must be set on the right things. Rather than setting our hearts on sin, we must set our hearts on that which is holy. Rather than desiring in a sinfully covetous fashion, we must flee sin and desire the good.

Psalm 19:7-10 tells us, "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb." May we truly love the will of our God. May we truly desire to obey the Lord our God. May we set our hearts upon God, seeking his favour. To desire such a thing is far better than to desire the gold that the sinful world has to offer.

Sadly, the reality of our lives is that we do not always desire to do the will of our God. We break the tenth com-

mandment, and in fact, we break all the commandments. Instead of desiring our neighbour's good, we hate him. Instead of desiring to worship the holy name of God, we blaspheme, with our mouths and in fact with our very lives. We do not always set our hearts on obedience to God and to his Word. Our desires are not where they should be.

But then you might think, well, if we are unable to do the will of God perfectly, if we are unable to set our desires in the right direction, then why should we bother with the law of God? And why should we love it?

Well, even though there is no chance that we keep the will of God perfectly, this does not mean we should stop trying. In fact, we want to keep trying. We want to continue to be renewed by the Spirit of God. We want to continue striving after perfection, not because we think we can be perfect in this life, but because we love God for all that he has done, and we wish to serve him as best we can.

The tenth commandment, along with the others, helps us in this. To be sure, it can be difficult to be made aware of how we fall so far short of the standard presented in the law. But being made aware of our sin should not lead us to hopelessness. It should lead us to Christ.

The more we see our sin, the more we recognize our total dependence on God. And the more we realize how dependant we are on God, the more we turn to our Lord and Saviour for comfort and strength.

So, it's good to be made aware of how the tenth commandment demands that we set our desires in the right direction. It's good whenever we are made aware of any of the demands of God's law. Only in being made thus aware, can we continue the battle against sin in the strength our Saviour provides for us.

# Churches in the Banner

## Narre Warren



Lord again this year to be self-sufficient and so manage by what God's people give in the offering each week. We have also been blessed with a generous gift from one of our folk so that we can now put new carpet down in the worship



### Narre Warren

Here is some news from the south-eastern suburbs of Melbourne. Our congregation continues to be blessed by the Lord as our increased numbers and commitment shows. We have had a number of regular visitors join us,

area, foyer and office of the church. We are blessed to con-

*Clockwise from top left: Top left and top right — scenes from fellowship luncheon; right — some of our young people; below right — some of our ladies in the kitchen; and below — the Boehret family during Denver's recent internship with Narre Warren.*



tinue holding two worship services each Lord's Day. Our minister, the Rev. Sjirk Bajema, has continued to preach the regular expository sermons – thus series through different parts of scripture – and also showing his Reformed Church background with confessional preaching (last year it was the Canons of Dordt and now he is going through the Westminster Shorter Catechism). Recently we had Denver Boehret undergone an internship for four weeks amongst us. This involved

We are blessed to have a number of senior folk amongst us (and a growing number), whom the Lord has been good to in continuing to grant them physical and mental health.

Please continue to pray for us, as we pray for you.

with several transferring their memberships while others have become faithful adherents.

The Adult fortnightly Bible Study, Ladies fortnightly Bible Study, Men's monthly Study, and the two Sunday School classes continue on apace and provide valuable times of fellowship. We are looking to the

together with visiting different folk, and having his family worship with us. We appreciated having him and continue to pray for the Lord's blessing upon him in preparing for the ministry of Word and Sacraments.

