

# the presbyterian

*Before the mountains were born  
or you brought forth the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God*

**Psalm 90:2**

March 2013

# banner

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ISSN 0729-3542	

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**Subscriptions for 2013**  
 11 Issues per year  
*Within Australia:* \$35 [Bulk \$30]  
*Overseas:* AU \$50 Airmail.

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

# Editorial

One of our denominational distinctives is that we believe that every part of our worship must be what God has clearly and specifically told us to do from His Word. This is different from most churches, which believe that as long as God doesn't specifically ban something we may do it. You may have come to our church because those churches following this principle have got a bit 'carried away.' Yet where do you draw the line on what you should or should not do if the principle to begin with is so open-ended? Then, the only determining factor becomes whatever is the most popular thing. Or at least what the church leadership thinks will be the most popular thing — whether to the people in their congregations, or those they hope to attract into their churches.

This will often mean the principle our denomination goes by is not a popular one. We are saddened by this. We would love God's people to love His Word so much that they would join themselves to a church that believes and practices the same. That has become less and less the situation in churches today as so many hurry to follow the way of the secular entertainment industry.

Recently I attended the thanksgiving service for the funeral of one of those 'avant-garde' church leaders. He had truly been revolutionary in his promotion of change throughout his denomination. That was openly proclaimed at this service. In fact, you couldn't get away from gaining the strong impression of how great and humble a man he had been. Now I am not calling into question his faith, but there was little of the gospel in that service. Yes, there were constant references to the Kingship of Christ, all the big theological words, and the reference to prominent emergent writers, but nothing whatsoever about sin and salvation. There was mention of the 'ice-breakers' he loved to do and so we did one or two; there were the balloons we were encouraged to release into the air upon a thought about him popping into your mind during the singing of the last chorus; there was the constant reminder that this was a celebration. As one senior believer said to me afterward, "We always used to have funeral services that were all about God, and you felt just a little should be said about the man who died, but this was all about the man and so little of God."

That is a fair synopsis. The Christian Church as a whole has become Christian-centred rather than Christ-centred. It has been guided less and less by what God said and more and more by what pleases people. It's a change that seems to get more people in – but at what cost?

What would you want the minister to say at your funeral service?

*So we make it our goal to please him,  
 whether we are at home in the body or away from it.*

2 Corinthians 5:9

*Cover Photo: The Olgas, Northern Territory, by Alex Steel*

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

Literary contributions are welcome. Submission by email is preferred.

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## The Adequacy of God

### Considering Romans 8: 31-39

I have nothing new to say on this very familiar portion of scripture – which is for many a favourite. But what I have to say is, I hope, true. I have borrowed the title from the last chapter of J. I. Packer's book, *Knowing God*. (If you haven't got a copy of it get one, and read it. It's a classic. A classic has been described as a book that everyone knows about but very few have read. I hope that's not true of this book.) My outline is borrowed from John Stott. It first appeared in 'Men Made New' – an exposition of Romans 5-8 which he delivered at the 1965 Keswick Convention and subsequently enlarged and expanded it in his commentary on Romans in, 'The Bible Speaks Today' series.

I mention this in particular to acknowledge the debt that I owe both of these men. John Stott died recently - in July 2012. He wrote about 50 books. Two of his earlier books, *Basic Christianity* and *Baptism and Fullness*, were particularly helpful to me as a young Christian. Packer's *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* helped clarify for me what was then a controversial area. I mention this to emphasise the importance of reading good books in the life of the Christian. Spurgeon said, '**It's not the reading of many books that makes a man wise – but the reading of a few (good) books well that makes him wise**'. Chesterton said, 'A room without books is like a body without a soul'.

The passage before us is majestic. It's the apostles' grand and glorious climax and conclusion, not merely to what was said in verses 28-30; but to everything said since chapter 5: 1. Stott writes of the last 12 verses of Romans 8 that, 'the apostle soars to divine heights unequalled elsewhere in the New Testament. Having described the chief privileges of justified believers – peace with God (Rom.5: 1-11), union with Christ (Rom.5: 12-6: 23), freedom from the law (Rom.7: 1-25), and life in the Spirit (Rom.8: 1-27) – his great Spirit directed mind now sweeps over the whole plan and purpose of God from past eternity to an eternity still to come; from the divine foreknowledge and predestination to the divine love from which absolutely nothing will ever be able to separate us.'

**Now I want you to pause;** to think and reflect; to savour what we have in Christ. Remember that Paul's purpose was to write a pastoral letter. Romans was never designed to be a systematic theology. It was never meant to be abstract doctrine. It's a book for living. Paul's purpose is to produce Christians who know what they believe and who are assured of their eternal security in Christ. He wants us to know that we are as safe in the hands of God now as we will be in the glory when we will be in His very presence. This is what the Lord would have us all know and enjoy.

#### Romans 8:31-39

<sup>31</sup> What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written:

"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Westminster Confession of Faith chap 18: 1 states, '**...such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love Him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before Him, may in this life be certainly assured that they are in the state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.**'

Our God is a God we can trust at all times: even in times of perplexity. '**We cannot always trace God's hand, but we can always trust God's heart.**' (Spurgeon).

Notice the five questions the apostle

### George Ball

asks; and all defy an answer.

#### Question 1: 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' (v.31b)

If Paul had simply asked, 'who is against us?' we could answer it easily. The world, the flesh and the devil are against us. The unbelieving persecuting world is against us. Indwelling sin is powerfully against us. Death, which is working in us, is against us. The devil and all the powers of darkness are marshalled against us. There is the catalogue of hardships mentioned in verse 35 that are against us. Sometimes under calamity the whole universe seems to be against us. So we don't have to look too far to discover things that are against us. But Paul doesn't ask the simple question, 'Who is against us?'

His question is: '**If God is for us**' – i.e. 'since God is for us;' the God who has justified us in Christ, adopted us; reconciled us; the God who has loved us from eternity past and will love us into eternity future; the God who lives in us by His Spirit; the God who works all things for the good of those who love Him; who predestined us, who called us, who justified us and even guarantees our glorification; if such a God is for us – '**who can be against us?**' To that question there is no answer. All the powers of hell may be against us, they can point their weapons at us; but they can never prevail because God is on our side. Think of Psalm 124, 'If the Lord had not been on our side – we would have been swallowed up – we would have been swept away... Our help is in the name of the Lord who made the heaven and earth.'

#### Question 2: 'He who did not spare His own Son but delivered Him up for us all – how will he not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?' (v.32)

Follow the simple logic of heaven here. It's the argument from the greater to the lesser. (For another example see Rom.5: 10)... If God has given His best and His highest, if He has given us His unspeakable

and indescribable gift (the Cross placards the generosity of God; The Cross is the great testimony of His love for us); will He not also give us all lesser gifts that we need. He will give us all things we need for life and godliness. What we have in Christ is a first class salvation. If ever you are tempted to think that God is niggardly and narrow and mean – go back to Calvary!

Let me tell you the story of an art collector, who had in his private collection some of the world's greats – Rembrandts, Van Goghs, and Picassos, etc. This man had a son who was killed in the war and never came back. Sometime later a mate of his son turned up at the father's house and was able to tell this man what had happened to his son on the battlefield. He also brought a gift with him – a painting of his comrade – the man's son. That painting was no masterpiece, but it occupied central place on the mantle. It was a prize among his masterpieces... Some years later the man died. All his great works of art were up for auction. Buyers assembled from all over the world; commissioned to buy for various museums and galleries and private collections. The first item on the list was the painting of the man's son. There were no bidders. 'Who will bid me \$200?... \$150?...\$100?' The gardener offered \$75. The gavel came down. The offer was accepted. The auctioneer then announced: 'Gentlemen, the auction is now over. The terms of the auction as stated in the will were: 'the person who gets the Son gets everything.' This may be only a story – but it makes the point. We have everything we need in Christ – past; present; future!

### Question 3: 'Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?' (v.33)

Again if the question was, 'who will bring any charge against us?' answers are not hard to find. Our hearts condemn us. Our conscience accuses and condemns us. People who know us well could condemn us; we have critics who watch us like hawks who want to condemn us. The devil is called **'the accuser of the brothers'** (Rev. 12: 10). Many of his accusations are credible and valid. He devises many schemes to condemn us. One of his most vicious and mali-

cious schemes is to stir up sin in our hearts. He can bring sudden temptation into our minds – even at times blasphemous thoughts! They take us by surprise and we wonder, 'where did that come from?'

Poor Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrims' Progress* had this experience as he was going through the Valley of the shadow of Death. Bunyan writes of Christian; 'Just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind...' (Penguin ed. Page 98). Such an experience was distressing and confusing.

What would you do when something like this happens? Where will you go? To whom can you turn? To whom can you appeal? Paul replies: **'It is God who justifies'**. We are



*Christian in the Valley of the Shadow of Death*

justified by faith in Christ. Satan has no weapon that can penetrate the 'breastplate of righteousness.' None of his slanderous accusations can penetrate the righteousness we have in Christ. He is our defence. He is our Advocate. He is our Mediator. Our defence rests not on what we have done but on what Christ has perfectly and completely done in his life, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Let's be clear: It's not faith in Christ that saves us. **'It is Christ who saves us – through faith.'** Our faith can be a poor and crumbling thing, but Christ alone is qualified and able

to save us because of who He is and what He has done.

### Question 4: 'Who is he that condemns?' (v.34a)

We have plenty of opponents and critics who will try. But nothing sticks. Why? Because of Christ Jesus 'who died, who was raised to life, is at the right hand of God, and is interceding for us.' Jesus has an ongoing ministry – it continues even now. So that we can confidently say, **'there is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus'** (Rom.8:1). Think of Simon Peter. He sinned. He denied his Lord. He screwed things up. He made a mess of things. He was a 'write off.'... However, before Peter's denial Jesus had said to Peter, **'Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers'** (Luke 22: 31-33). Peter was condemned by everyone – by himself, by the other disciples, by Satan – but not by Christ!... God is greater than our hearts and He knows everything. Sinclair Ferguson helpfully states that, **'when Satan's darts of condemnation bring you low, never forget: God never sees you as His child without first looking at you through the Son – His Son – who is interceding for you'**. John Owen writes, **'Jesus Christ is the beam of the Father's love and through him the Father's love reaches down and touches us.'**

### Question 5: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?' (v.35a)

The apostle lists several adversities; including sin, suffering and death (all of which Paul experienced with the exception of the 'sword'). He includes a quotation from **Psalm 44: 22**; a psalm of complaint to God in the midst of suffering. In the context of the psalm, the suffering did not come because of Israel's infidelity. It came about despite the fact that Israel had been faithful. In other words, trouble is par for the course: it has always been part and parcel of the experience of God's people. However, God's love for us is like a circle: it is endless and unbreakable.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Paul says something remarkable in verse 37; **‘in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.’** It’s ‘in these things’; not ‘after these things’ or ‘in spite of these things’ or ‘apart from these things’. It’s in the sphere of these things that we are more than conquerors. We would like to be airlifted and evacuated when these things strike us. But we don’t live in a scientifically controlled environment. We are not living in a perfect world. We live in a fallen world and caught up in the same bundle of life as everyone else. We are not immune from the rough and tumble of life. Indeed, as believers we

can expect more trouble for the privilege of following Jesus. But it’s ‘in’ these things that we are ‘hypernikomen’ i.e. **‘more than conquerors’**. What does that mean? We know what a conqueror is. But what does it mean to be ‘more than a conqueror’?

Hendriksen comments insightfully, **‘A conqueror is a person who defeats the enemy. One who is more than a conqueror causes the enemy to become a helper.’** That’s exactly what God did, for example, with Saul the arch persecutor and enemy Number One of the Church! God conquered him. But He did more than that. He put him to good use so that

the Church’s greatest persecutor became the Church’s greatest preacher. That’s what God does with ‘all these things.’ He turns these ‘enemies’ into ‘allies’ that now work for His glory and our good.

What is the secret and source of our victory? Is it our faith? Is it our perseverance? No. It is, **‘through Him who loved us.’** He, that is Christ, is able to overcome all His and our enemies. He is our sovereign protector, our sovereign benefactor, our sovereign champion, and our sovereign keeper.

Christian reader, let us rejoice in God’s adequacy!

## The Past for Today

### A Life Transformed

Ross Murray

In the picturesque old cemetery at The Bight, across the river from Wingham on the mid-north coast of NSW, lies a broken but still readable gravestone. It records the death of Alexander Lobban, one of the district’s pioneers. Lobban had a lot to do with the founding of Wingham and made an enormous contribution to his community. A road in Wingham bears his name. His children were pillars of the local society. The inscription on Alexander’s gravestone reads:

“In memory of Alexander Lobban, native of Banffshire, Scotland, who departed this life at Parkhaugh, 30th January 1876 aged 73 years, and who for 26 years was a resident of the Manning district, the interests of which he always strove to promote, and for most of that time as an elder of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. He performed the duties of that office with a zeal guided by intelligence and sanctified by divine grace. Strong in faith, he was called to his rest leaving an example worthy of imitation as a loving husband, a tender father, a wise counsellor, a faithful friend, a sincere Christian, and in all the transactions of life an honourable man.”

#### Lobban’s background

This is a fair description of a fine, upstanding citizen and a good man, but it does not tell the whole story. Alexander Lobban had in fact come from a

poor family, some of whom had a reputation for clashes with the law. His uncle, Joseph Lobban, who was just a few years older than Alexander, as well as Joseph’s two sons William and Charles, were criminals specialising in theft, assault and numerous other crimes. They have been referred to in a Scottish newspaper as “the lawless Lobbans of Glass”. This impoverished family inhabited a remote and isolated settlement near Glass called Parkhaugh, the name which Lobban eventually gave to the property on which he settled near Wingham. The village of Glass is some 10k west of the town of Huntly. Lobban was born at Portsoy, Banffshire, on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1803, but seems to have moved to the Glass area at an early age.

In December 1827 Lobban married Margaret McLennan, daughter of John McLennan of Gairloch, Ross-shire, in the house of Mr David Scott of Aldunie, some 15k south of Glass. The officiant was Rev James Gordon, Parish Minister of nearby Cabrach. Just a year later, Alexander Lobban was tried and found guilty of forging bills.

At his trial, in November / December 1828, Lobban declared that he had been a merchant at Whitehilllock of Cabrach in the County of Aberdeen for the previous two years, selling groceries he obtained from Aberdeen. He said that he was “about 27 years of age”. He declared that he “went to

the Cabrach about ten years ago as a Servant and since he was able to work has been employed as a farm servant in different places of the Country”. One gains the impression of a poor young man trying everything to eke out a living in a period of great social upheaval. Lobban was sentenced “to be transported beyond seas for the period of seven years ... and ... to be detained until removed for transportation”. Margaret was pregnant at the time. Baby Thomas was born shortly afterwards, in January 1829, during Alexander’s lengthy imprisonment as he awaited transportation.

Lobban arrived in Sydney on the *Burrell* on 19th December, 1830, two years after his trial, having been forced to leave Margaret and infant Thomas in Scotland to struggle on in poverty.

#### Reunited

In October 1834, Lobban petitioned Governor Bourke to bring his wife and son to Australia. His employer, Charles Boydeell, of Paterson’s Plains, supported this petition with a strong recommendation as to Lobban’s character and his ability to support his family. Lobban received a ticket-of-leave in December 1834, allowing him to work for himself. Margaret and Thomas joined him, and during the late 1830s and 1840s he rented various farms on

the Paterson and Allyn Rivers, before arriving on his own farm, "Parkhaugh", on the Manning River on 9th June 1851. Lobban's son, Alexander Jnr, the district's first school inspector, described the family's journey from Lewinsbrook in the Hunter Valley to "Parkhaugh", which Lobban Snr had purchased at an auction. Two families, the Lobbans and the family of Mr William McLeod, fourteen people in all, travelled together up the rough bridle track as far as Mondrook, near modern Tinonee, where they rested at the home of Mr William McLean. For the last stage of the Lobbans' journey, from Mondrook to "Parkhaugh", a dray road had to be cut through the dense scrub to enable the family to reach their newly acquired property. The Lobbans had purchased tons of flour, sugar and other household requisites in Sydney and had sent them ahead by sailing ship. Disastrously, the ship was wrecked on the Manning bar and all these provisions were lost. To add to the family's troubles, two men who had been employed and sent ahead to erect a primitive residence had fled to the newly opened Turon goldfields!

After the reunion of Alexander with his wife and son from Scotland, Margaret gave birth to David (1837), Isabella (1839), Margaret (1841), Alexander Jr (1843) and Janet (1845). Another daughter died six days after her birth in 1847. The 1851 journey from Lewinsbrook to "Parkhaugh" took two weeks, quite an ordeal for such young children.

### Alexander's conversion

It was not uncommon for ex-convicts to carve out a life of prosperity and respectability in response to the new opportunities available to them in Australia, and no doubt these factors played a part in improving Lobban's life. However, the major factor that appears to have turned his life around was his Christian conversion. In 1838, a Gaelic-speaking clergyman, Rev William Ross, established the first Presbyterian congregation at the township of Paterson. It appears that

it was through him that Lobban became a Christian, as Lobban does not appear to have had any significant church connection up to that point. Ross baptised all the Australian-born Lobban children.

Lobban's new-found faith became the motivating force for everything that he did. When he settled at "Parkhaugh", the land had not been surveyed and there were no other settlers within four miles. Soon afterwards, how-



*Alexander Lobban's Headstone*

ever, government surveyors marked out portions of the unpurchased land and opened it up for sale and settlement, resulting in a new influx of people, mainly Scots. Lobban was determined to establish congregations of the PCEA in the area and it was he who was instrumental in bringing to the district the Rev Allan McIntyre, who lived with the Lobbans until permanent accommodation could be provided for him. The first PCEA service was held in Lobban's slab barn. Alexander Lobban Jnr wrote of McIntyre's first service in his father's barn:

"Mr McIntyre's first service on the Manning was... crowded with persons anxious to hear the new minister from Scotland... One cannot fail to remember the marvellous strength of the preacher's face, his striking personality, and, at the same time, his tender-

ness when discoursing on the ineffable love of the world's Redeemer... No pastor ever ministered to a more loving congregation."

People travelled considerable distances to attend these services, and regular congregations were soon established in Wingham, Tinonee and Redbank (Pampoolah). After the death of McIntyre in 1870, it was Lobban who conducted meetings and kept the congregations together. He was also for a time the congregational representative at the Synod of Eastern Australia.

### Community service

A significant social development in Australia and New Zealand, imported from Britain, was the formation of Mutual Improvement Societies. These tended to be founded by Christians and were an important means of adult education in the nineteenth century. It is no surprise that Alexander Lobban was President of the Mutual Improvement Society that met weekly in the original school room built in response to the efforts of Allan McIntyre. Andrew Thomson, the first school teacher, was the Secretary. Activities included lectures, the reading of essays and recitations by members, and a public debate once a month.

Lobban was also a strong advocate for the development of the village of Wingham. He billeted Captain Creagh, the Clerk of Petty Sessions, until a courthouse was built in the new township.

It is perhaps significant that for at least a decade after Lobban's settlement at Wingham in 1851, his relatives in Scotland were still being arrested and punished for crimes such as sheep stealing and violence, including the assault of a police officer.

I have in my possession a copy of the book *History of the Work of Redemption* by the great American reformer and theologian Jonathan Edwards. It is fairly solid reading. It was owned by Alexander and Margaret Lobban, and is inscribed by

both of them. It was so well-read when I inherited it that I had to have it completely re-stitched and re-bound. Its very existence testifies to the kinds of people the Lobban's were.

### A child of God

We noted earlier the inscription on Lobban's grave. What is probably more significant than these words, however, is the open Bible carved into the top of the stone, with the inscription: "Rom 5:1 Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This quotation provides the explanation for the most dramatic changes in Lobban's life. He had found peace with God through his faith in Jesus Christ. For Lobban, it was more than just a case of taking advantage of the opportunities available to him in Australia. It was rather a living out of his new life as a child of God, in particular by developing the kind of Christian home life that pro-

duced children of character and calibre who made enormous contributions to their communities. One of those children was Margaret, wife of George Murray, my great-grandmother. George and Margaret farmed at Pampoolah on the lower Manning.

A published tribute after Lobban's death recorded that:

"... it was his custom to hold family worship in his house, and regularly every Sabbath to instruct his children in the Holy Scriptures and the Shorter Catechism... In his church connection he manifested uniform and cordial kindness towards those who were in the ministry... This faithful servant of God... has gone to rest... but his memory will be long cherished amongst those with whom he was associated, and with whom he so long walked to the house of God."

Lobban made his will "acknowledging with gratitude the goodness and

mercy of Almighty God and the long-suffering forbearance manifested towards me...". He wrote that he wanted his house cared for because "it is associated in my mind with many days of Spiritual privileges and enjoyments...".

God is still in the business of changing the lives of those who put their trust in him.

*Ross Murray is a Taree-born teacher and active Christian now retired in Tuncurry. He has just published an life of one of our PCEA pioneers, "Of Greater Worth than Gold – the History and Legacy of Isabella Murray."*

## Missions in the Banner

### Presbyterian Free Church, Chhapara, India

Once again.....this past year has been one of trusting God and seeing Him come through as a faithful God and Saviour. There have been many changes as well as challenges within our institutions, culture, society and way of life. We have been looking at the changes within our society and what our attitude and strategy needs to be to cope with these changes. This year we are looking at the challenges we face day by day and year by year.....

As we put our trust in, and focus on none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His will for our lives, the changes and challenges (which will always be there) will be seen as opportunities to grow and mature into His likeness.

### Our Mission

There is no doubt that the greatest commandment underlies the Great Commission. Therefore Paul says, - "Unto me the grace was given to preach" – This has been the supreme goal and task of the Church, School, Grace Ministries of India and The Rev. P. Kumar Memorial Trust as they work together for the Kingdom and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### Evangelism

During this year the Church and the above mentioned institutions have sought to get a flavour of what is happening, what is not happening, what should be happening and what should not be happening in evangelism across this vital area where many people are not aware of the true Lord and Saviour. This led us to consider how best we can change our strategy and encourage more people to work in this area for His kingdom.

### A new programme: Certificate in Theology

This course is suitable for people who are not able to go to the seminary for residential theological training but at present are involved in a Church planting ministry. With this course, we aim to provide them (a few selected persons) with some theological training and introduce the Reformed Presbyterian Faith to them. We know that the Reformed faith is the closest to Biblical faith, yet it has not been known to most of the present-day missionaries working in our region. There are some evangelists from other areas who are willing to join the PFC as church planters. This course

### Pradeep Kumar

will give us an opportunity not only to train them but also to observe their calling and character before employing them as church planters for the PFC, and also to help them fulfil the academic requirements of the PFC.

It is also amazing to notice that most of our present-day ministers, evangelists, and elders have had no training in Presbyterian doctrines and practices. In other words, we have Presbyterian churches with no Presbyterian pastors and elders. This lack of knowledge in the past has caused certain doctrinal disputes and governmental perplexity. Therefore through this project the PFC aims to Scripturally convince them of the Presbyterian faith and governmental structure, and also to upgrade the ministers' theological and missiological knowledge. At the end of the project we aim to have at least four/five persons who have applied themselves in studies and proved their calling as church planters to become part of the PFC church planting ministry. The ultimate aim of the project is to extend the work of the PFC by planting a few more churches in our region.

The course has 16 subjects that will be taught in 16 different seminars of five days duration. The first of the seminars was held during the last week of November 2012, and the next is expected to be held D.V. from 16th to 23rd February 2013.

12 Missionaries, along with three pastors of the PFC, were enrolled for the course. We still hope that the number of missionaries will increase to 15.

DeVare Naste (The Netherlands) and the Presbyterian Theological Seminary (India) are our partners. DVN has agreed to fund this project and the PTS sends its teachers to conduct the seminars and finally provide a Diploma of Theology for the students. We are grateful for your prayer support for this project; you are definitely a partner with us in our church planting vision which we, God willing, want to pursue through this project.

We request you once again to kindly uphold the project and its vision in your prayers. We believe that this project is an answer to our prayer together, and its completion will testify to our unity of faith in Triune God.

#### **Catechizing the youth**

As you are aware the PFC used to organize an annual youth retreat. This year, the organizing committee assessed the previous efforts and the present financial position of the Presbytery and recommended the following:

Instead of having an annual retreat, the Presbytery shall have four one day youth retreats: one in each local church each year.

Each local church shall share 75% of the total expenditure and the rest will be contributed by the Presbytery.

As many of the church youth, (except Chhapara) had never come across the Westminster Shorter Catechism, in each seminar the youth will be taught a few of the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions and answers and also have a few sessions of youth-related topics.

The Pastors and elders of the PFC will serve as teachers of the Seminar. Presbytery has approved the recommendations and accordingly three one day youth retreats have been held: in Lakhnadon (13th November), Chhapara (26th December), and Jabalpur (30th December). In these seminars Q/A 1-3 from WSC and sessions on Friendship and Bible and Science have been held.

In Chhapara 18 participants attended

the one day youth retreat. They were really encouraged by watching some videos which used Science to explain the majestic truth of God and his creation. The youth were so blessed with the session that some have proposed having a PFC youth community on Face Book where they can interact with each other and clear their doubts regarding the truths of the Scripture.

#### **The Grace Ministries of India**

It was helpful to receive a detailed report from Mr. Vinay Das, State Coordinator of the GMI who has been working extensively in 70 villages in the Chhapara area with just seven missionaries of the tribal background including two new missionaries who joined this year. It is a matter of praise and thanks to God that there are about six hundred new believers and seekers in these villages. Among them 250 people have professed their solid faith in the Lord and they have been baptized. This year (2012) 35 people were baptized. Many of them have become members of Chhapara Church. In addition, 8 house churches, some children's ministries, some Sunday Schools and free tuition classes for poor students and free health camps are also being run by GMI.



*Chhapara Free Presbyterian Church*

#### **The Rev. P. Kumar Memorial Trust**

As per the objectives of the Memorial Trust, it is of concern that our evangelism be based on the Word of God and also aimed at the consolidation of reformed teaching in this area. The trust is interested in developing new ways and strategies of reaching the new believers and seekers and also of communicating with them where they live. It has developed a quarterly programme which aims to reach peo-

ple in villages in association with the Church session and GMI, through organising a one day spiritual programme and providing food for them. Over 500 bibles have been distributed; and poor students and the missionaries' families are being helped in various ways. Christmas and New Year events were organised in 5 different villages with an average attendance of 200 men and women.

#### **Chhapara Mission School**

The school in Chhapara has faced many ups and down in the past year. Still, by the amazing grace of the Lord it has been standing firm against the storm. The Employees' Provident Fund Inspectors demanded that the school deposit all provident fund monies in their accounting system and not in our bank account as previously was the case. They also fined us two million Rupees. Our provident funds were in order but with this heavy fine it was not possible to transfer funds immediately. Furthermore, because we have been paying the fine, our teachers have had to forgo their payments for some months and will have to continue to do so for some time. We are humbled by the fact that all members of our staff have stood with us through this ordeal. We hope that this trial will terminate within the next seven months. Under God's good hand our school has prospered with over 1000 students and forty staff, just because of the prayer and support of His people at home and from many parts of the world, especially our friends in the FCS and PCEA. The Employees' Provident Fund fine of two million rupees along with the requirement of the five additional classrooms has always been a matter of concern and prayer. We praise and thank God for caring for His children and answering prayer. He has enabled us to construct three new classrooms and three toilets (for the staff and girls). The school is thankful to the FCS and PCEA for their kind support. The Lord also helped the school to raise more than 400,000/- INR locally for the same purpose. The Chhapara School is still in need of two more classrooms and furniture for those classrooms. It is worthy of mention that God willing; the school will be able to resolve the crisis of



the EPF by the end of the month of August this year. The school is delighted to have a volunteer English teacher, Mr. Hugh Varner from St. Georges, Sydney, Australia, here for two months. His efforts

are greatly appreciated and will be of long-term benefit. We send our loving Christian greetings to you all! "O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures

forever!" Psalm 107:1  
To God be the glory.

## Religions under the Banner

### Z is for Zoroaster

If you were around in the late 1950s you might remember some episodes on TV about Zorro. Zorro (Spanish for 'fox') is a fictional character, a kind of Robin Hood set in the Spanish colonial period. But Zoroaster (or Zarathustra, to give him the Greek form of his name) was a priest of the old Iranian religion who founded the Zoroastrian religion. Some of its followers migrated to India more than 1000 years ago where they are

#### Claims

One frequently sees the claim that Zoroastrianism may have been the world's first monotheistic faith. It is also claimed that, apart from religious conservatives, most religious historians believe the Jewish, Christian and Muslim beliefs concerning God and Satan, the soul, heaven and hell, the virgin birth of the Saviour, the slaughter of the innocents, resurrection, the

### Rowland S. Ward

not well founded, which is not to say that prophets like Ezekiel and Daniel were unaware of the religious views current in Babylon: they didn't speak in a vacuum.

#### Dating

The Greeks knew about the religion and about 300 BC Zoroastrian priests calculated that Zoroaster



Persian Empire 558-330 BC

known as Parsees (=Persians). Today there are about 2,500 follows of this religion in Australia, most from India. The Magi from the East who visited Bethlehem are often thought to have been Zoroastrians from Persia, although a good case can be made that the Magi were from Arabia (cf. Isaiah 60:5-6).

final judgment, etc. were all derived from Zoroastrianism. These claims could arise from poor understanding of the history of Zoroastrianism. They could also be supported by the argument of religious liberals that Moses never existed and that the core of Old Testament teaching was only put into coherent form during the Jewish exile in Babylon. However, the claims are

lived approximately 600 BC. This is the traditional date and in fact we know nothing of Zoroaster or his religion before that time. In the latter half of the 20th century, it has been argued that he must have lived earlier. There are linguistic similarities between the surviving Zoroastrian hymns (the Gathas) in the Old Avestan language and the early Hindu hymns in Sanskrit called the Rigveda, so a date before

1000 BC, such as 1200 BC by the notable researcher Mary Boyce (1920-2006), has been claimed. Some former prominent advocates of an early date, such as the eminent Gherardo Gnoli (1937-2012) have returned to a later date, suggesting his life spanned 618-541 BC. [Others want to claim a date of 1800 BC or even earlier (6,000 BC), but this is wishful thinking.]

If a date around 1200 BC is correct, Zoroaster lived among nomadic people who believed in various gods and spirits who impacted their lives and needed to be kept happy with appropriate offerings as directed by a priestly class. Even so, a happy future life was reserved for the elite; the poor had only a shadowy hope. If the later date is correct, society was more advanced but the religious situation was similar. Along with three Ahuras (Lords), various nature gods (spirits) were worshipped. Zoroaster sought religious and ethical reform, and believed he received a revelation at age 30. Zoroaster rejected animal sacrifice and the use of intoxicants in rituals. He believed the supreme God, Ahura Mazda (the Wise Lord), had appointed him to reform the existing religion. He taught that Ahura Mazda was the true God, who was in conflict with an uncreated spirit called Angra Mainyu (Evil Spirit). Ahura Mazda created the universe to help him in the fight against Angra Mainyu. Ahura Mazda is the creator of truth, holiness, goodness, and the giver of health and happiness. Human beings assist him in the cosmic battle with the evil spirit by freely choosing to do good in thought, word and deed, but they may also choose evil.

Although on the late date, Cyrus the Great (c.600-530 BC) was a contemporary of Zoroaster, we have no hard evidence that Cyrus was a Zoroastrian; although his toleration of the various religions of his vast empire is well known, illustrated by his permission for the Jews to return from exile. Zoroastrianism certainly became the official religion of Persia about 550 BC. The priests of Iran, called 'Magi', with the addition of certain of their own concepts, spread Zoroastrianism into the central and western parts of the Persian (Achaemenid) Empire, but it is not easy to trace particular developments. It was certainly not

monotheistic but dualistic, and relapsed into explicit polytheism for a period in the 4th century BC under Artaxerxes II.

### Scriptures

In the period of the Parthian Empire (141 BC-224 AD) efforts were made



*Cyrus the Great, Olympic Park, Sydney*

to collect the surviving materials which make up what is called the Avesta. During the Sassanian period (224-651 AD) the Zoroastrian scriptures were also compiled, lost material summarized, and a commentary in Pahlavi, the language of the period, provided. The developed form of Zoroastrian eschatology (the last things) is known only from the Pahlavi writings, and is obscure if present at all in the Gathas, so the suggestion that Zoroaster influenced Judaism and through it Christianity on these subjects is not firmly established, despite widespread claims to the contrary. It looks like the reverse. Teaching includes belief in three future saviours who it is believed will arise at 1,000 year intervals. They will be each be born of a virgin impregnated by sperm of Zoroaster miraculously preserved in Lake Kansaoya where young women bathe. Each will contribute to destroying the evil creation of Angra Mainyu, and the third, called Saoshy-

ant, will bring in the Last Judgment.

### Interpretations

Zoroastrianism only came under the notice of scholars in the West in the 18th century. The early view, promoted by Thomas Hyde in 1700, was that Zoroaster was a monotheist and not the dualist that is evident in classical Greek writers and demonstrated afresh by modern research. The monotheistic interpretation was generally accepted and was further advanced in the 19th century through the influence of Rev Dr John Wilson (1804-75), a famous Scottish minister in India who joined the Free Church in 1843 and wrote *The Parsee Religion* the same year, and Dr Martin Haug (1827-76), a professor a Sanskrit in Pune, India. The Zoroastrian Reform Society was formed in 1851 with a view to modernizing the practice of the faith and furthering the monotheistic interpretation. The materials other than the Gathas are generally discarded. Other adherents are strong traditionalists, not always denying the existence of other gods. A smaller number follow a mystical interpretation of the Avesta advanced in 1902 by Behramshah Nowroji Shroff (1858-1927) of Surat. They hold that the hymns of the Gathas assist in reaching that level of consciousness which gives true ecstasy, they give symbolic meanings to the traditional rituals, and hold to reincarnation.

Space does not allow a full discussion of the religion but it works very much on the merit-reward principle. If good outweighs evil the believer enters heaven, otherwise hell. But there will be a resurrection and further judgment in the body at the end. Since the 9th century of our era it has been held that hell is ultimately corrective of its inmates, and eventually they are reunited with Ahura Mazda. It is not clear whether Angra Mainyu ceases to exist, but he certainly can do no more harm.

### Rites of passage

Among the rituals of Zoroastrianism is an initiation of children (boys and

girls) at an early age before puberty (typically 12-15 among Iranians, 7 to 9 among Parsees). The priest gives a sacred white shirt (sudre) and cord (kusti) to the initiate which he or she should wear next to the skin like a vest throughout life, except when bathing.

Marriage is a religious duty in order to have children and expand Ahura Mazda's good creation and those who work for him. A cord is passed several times round the couple symbolising the marriage bond. After this they sit side by side, state that they wish to be married and are then blessed by the priests.

A Zoroastrian funeral traditionally involved exposing the dead body in an open Tower of Silence (dokhma) to be eaten by vultures rather than burial or cremation. In this way pollution of two of the sacred creations (earth and fire) was avoided. Of recent years the number of vultures near the main settlement of believers in Mumbai, India has decreased to almost nothing. This, as well as increased urbanization and resettlement in Western countries, means that cremation or burial in concrete lined tombs to protect the sacred earth from pollution by corpse material is becoming the prac-



Zoroastrian symbol

tice. The debate has polarized the community into 'traditionalists' and 'reformists'.

**Geographic spread**

In the 7th century Islam replaced Zoroastrianism as the religion of the Iranians, and Zoroastrians were reduced to an oppressed poor, although those who moved to India prospered under British rule and later. The Tata family of industrialists are prominent Parsees. Orthodox traditional Zoroastrianism is not a proselytizing faith and is in gradual decline due to a low birth rate, marriage outside the faith and secularisation. Modernising Zoroastrians, if strict monotheists, are more positive about conversion to the faith, while those who do not deny the

existence of other gods are less so.

The Zoroastrians of Iran now total about 21,000 (living mostly in and around Teheran, Yazd and Kerman), and there are 70,000 Zoroastrians (mainly Parsees but some Iranis) in India, and about 5,000 in Karachi, Pakistan. About 15,000 are to be found in the Zoroastrian Diaspora,

particularly England, North America and Australia, and are generally of the modern liberal outlook. Many appear to be cultural Zoroastrians rather than true believers. A centre for worship and community activities was opened on five acres in the Sydney suburb of Annangrove in 1974. Typical activities include Gujarati language classes, special ceremonies marking religious festivals, and social and sporting fixtures.

*A helpful source for scholarly discussion on Zoroastrianism reflecting a variety of viewpoints is Encyclopaedia Iranica <[iranicaonline.org](http://iranicaonline.org)>.*

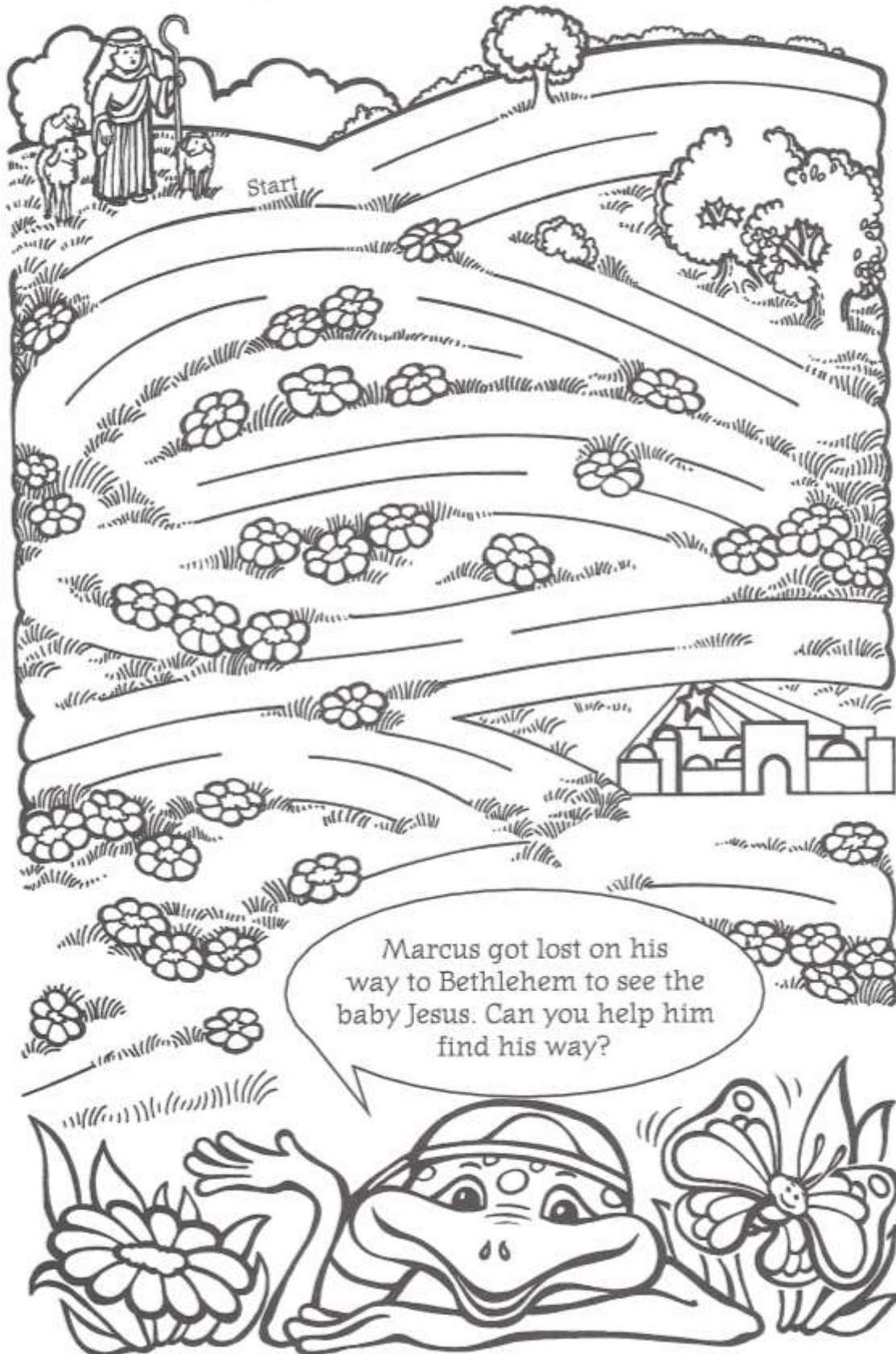


Some of the young people at the Family Camp

# Children under the Banner

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

## The Lost Shepherd



# Prescribed Search / Youth Work

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

## MARCH 2013

### SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate omit questions 1 and 2

#### 1 CORINTHIANS chapter 6

1. What is the inference from the fact that the saints are to judge the world and angels? (2 verses)
2. Though the Corinthians had been wicked sinners, what were they now?
3. What will God do for us seeing he has raised Christ from the dead?
4. What are we to do because we are bought with a price?

chapter 7 (no questions)

#### chapter 8

5. What the different effects produced by (1) knowledge and (2) charity [love]?
6. Though to idolaters there are many gods and lords, to Christians who is the one God and the one Lord?
7. Why does meat [food] not commend us to God?
8. What do we in fact do when we sin against the brethren and wound their consciences?

### JUNIOR

#### LUKE chapter 16

1. Why can no servant serve two masters?
2. What is abomination in the sight of God?
3. To which different places did the beggar and the rich man go when they died? (2 verses)

**4. What was Abraham's answer when the rich man said of his brothers, "If one went to them from the dead, they would believe"?**

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 Ninth Commandment — The Problem With Lying

Jim Klazinga

### Lying as Humour

Have you ever noticed how a lot of people seem to think lying is amusing? TV comedies make use of lying as a comic device. Some poor fellow is in a bit of a bind, he doesn't really know how to get out of it, so he comes up with a lie so ludicrous that it's supposed to be hilarious. He knows it's a lie, the audience knows it's a lie, even the character he is trying to convince in the show knows it's a lie, because of how outlandish it is. And this is supposed to be funny.

Funny? Is that what we want to teach our children, that lying is funny? That a lie really isn't so bad, as long as we can make someone laugh about it? My friends, when it comes down to it, there is really nothing funny about lying. Proverbs 6:16,17 tells us that the Lord hates a lying tongue. And in Proverbs 19:9 we read – "A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish." Revelation 21:8 tells us that the fires of hell are prepared for liars. Do you still think lying can be funny?

The thing is, lying comes from the devil, and there is nothing funny about the devil. Consider the words Jesus spoke to some of the leaders of his day, words recorded in John 8:44 – "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies." The devil is the father of lies, and has nothing to do with the truth. Those who lie show that they belong to the devil. Still think that lying can be funny?

### Children of the Lie

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who are of their father the devil, and those who are children of their heavenly Father. Those who are of the lie, and those who are of the truth. Those who are of the truth will know of the love of God for all eternity. But as for those who reject the truth: there is only the possibility of eternal punishment.

This is the terrible reality. Some will refuse to believe the truth. They prefer to listen to the lies of the devil, and they will be punished. There are so many lies and so many people who

believe lies. There are so many people on the road to hell. This is tragic, but true.

There are numerous ways to demonstrate that one is a child of lies. For instance, there is the example of lying in court. In court, there can be no place for lying. The truth must be revealed if courts are to function properly. How can you ever have justice when you can't be sure that those who are putting themselves forward as witnesses are telling the truth? There can be no justice when a lie makes an innocent person look guilty; or when it makes a guilty person appear innocent.

Lying in court is perhaps one of the more severe forms of deception; so severe, that it must be subject to seri-

*You shall not give  
false testimony  
against your neighbour.*

Exodus 20:16

ous punishment according to the law of the land.

There are many other ways people lie as well. Children lie to their parents about what their siblings did or did not do, or about what they themselves did or did not do.

How about the example of twisting a person's words, taking words out of context? For instance, if I were to preach in a sermon: "There are some who believe that God created the world using evolution. But the Bible doesn't allow for that possibility." Now, you might say to someone, "the minister said in his sermon, 'God created the world using evolution.'" Technically, you'd be correct. But you would have taken those words completely out of context, which would make you a liar.

Then there's slander. Slander involves defaming a person's character with untruths, using lies to make someone look bad.

It's terrible the kind of damage slander can inflict. And sometimes we even slander people without even realizing it. We start by making assumptions about people without just cause. We then share those assumptions with

others, and by doing so we are spreading slander.

For example, it's easy to assume that when we wave to someone driving by, and they don't wave back, then they are ignoring us. The truth could very well be that they just didn't see us. If we then go around telling people that the person who ignored us is a snob, we are spreading a lie, even though we don't realize it. You might think this to be an unrealistic example, but I've known of this very thing happening. And this sort of slandering can occur in so many other different ways as well. We have to be very careful regarding the assumptions we make about others.

Let us not forget also the whole matter of gossip. Gossiping about people can be just as bad as lying about them, even though sometimes gossip might involve the literal truth. And yet, gossip is just as bad, and it shows that in your heart you are a child of lies. If you gossip about someone, you are guilty of sinning just as much as if you had blatantly lied.

### Using Words to Help Instead of Harm

So, twisting people's words, slandering them, gossiping, these sorts of things show you to be a child of lies. The thing to remember in all of this is that lying is not just a matter of what comes out of the mouth. Lying is about what comes out of the heart.

The Bible tells us that the righteous man is one who speaks the truth from his heart. Speaking the truth can never be just a matter of proclaiming literal, historical truth. Of course, literal truth is vitally important, but when it comes to speaking the truth, there is more to it than simply being factually true.

Some people enjoy using the truth as a weapon. They spit out the literal truth in an effort to hurt others. They will even justify this by saying that they are just calling it like they see it. They are just being honest. That sort of honesty is not necessarily a biblical honesty. Oh, I'm not at all suggesting that you should feel free to lie if you think it will make your neighbour happy. But there are certainly appropriate and inappropriate

ate times to blurt out the truth. And there are certainly appropriate and inappropriate states of the heart underlying our speaking of the truth. To emphasize this point, we need only look to the ninth commandment: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." Notice how this command is stated. It does not say: you shall not lie. It's not even: you shall not bear false witness. But rather: you shall not bear false witness against your neighbour. This is quite significant. God chose to express this commandment in terms that point to the impact of our words on our neighbour. We are not to use deceit against our neighbour. We are not to use lies to harm our neighbour. Our deceitful heart and lying tongue can do so much damage to our neighbour. The tongue, which was originally designed for use in glorifying God, has been distorted because of sin. And now the same tongue that was intended for praising God has become an instrument of attacking our fellow man, a very powerful instrument. This should not be. Instead of harming our neighbour, our words should help him. As we read in Ephesians 4:29, "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

### **The Victorious Truth**

Often, we do not appreciate just how much negative impact our words can have on those around us. We may not even realize how our words are

spreading deceit and falsehood. But it happens. It happens because of sin in the world and sin in our own hearts and because we are naturally inclined to be children of the lie.

Thanks be to God, we do not have to be children of the lie, but can be children of the truth. The lie has been defeated on the cross. Truth is victorious, and we can share in this victory. The Christian boldly proclaims that he knows the truth. And he says to children of the lie: "you do not know the truth if you do not know Jesus Christ." John 14:6 – "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'" Jesus Christ is the living word of God, and God's word is truth. In John 17:17, we read Jesus praying to the Father, "Sanctify them in the truth, Your word is truth." The Word of God is truth, and Jesus is the living representation of the Word of God. Jesus is truth. Christians have heard and believed this truth. They have the truth living in them through the power of the Holy Spirit. And they will live in the truth forever.

If you are a Christian, you are a child of the truth. As a child of the truth, how can you then turn around and lie? How can you find lying funny? Why would you want to have anything to do with deceit? You should love the truth, speak it candidly, and openly acknowledge it.

### **The Necessary Lie**

Mind you though, we can't discuss this whole matter and not deal with the subject of so-called necessary lies. There are obvious examples in Scrip-

ture of people being commended, even though they lied. The midwives delivering the Israelite children in Egypt lied to Pharaoh about what happened to the babies, and they were commended. Rahab was commended when she lied about the Israelite spies to the authorities in Jericho, and she was spared the coming destruction, and even became a descendant of Jesus Christ. There may be times when we are thrust into a situation where loving the truth may involve our spreading a factual untruth. But the thing is, these situations are extremely rare. Perhaps you have heard about how during World War 2, some people lied about concealing Jews in their homes, in order to save their lives. They should be commended for this. But how often are we going to be faced with a similar dilemma?

This sort of example further shows that we must take into serious consideration how our words will affect our neighbour. But remember this: the vast, vast majority of the time, our neighbour will be harmed rather than helped by our speaking untruths.

Remember, the Word of God clearly says that lying lips are an abomination to the Lord. Lying comes from the devil. That is strong language. We must take such declarations seriously. We must uphold the truth in any way we can. We must do all we can to promote the truth whenever we can, for the benefit of our neighbour, and the glory of God.

## Churches in the Banner

### *Brisbane, Family Camp 2013*

#### **Brisbane**

On 3rd February following the morning service, at which we had celebrated the Lord's supper, the children and young people in the Sunday School were presented with gift vouchers and certificates from the Youth and Fellowship Committee, for all the memory work they had done in 2012. Eleven of the children had written essays and most of them had learnt 3 Metrical Psalms and Isaiah 55 v 1 - 5 and some had learnt John 1 v. 1 - 12 too. It seemed a suitable way in which to start off the new year for Sunday School and to remind the congregation of their responsibility to pray for the children and the teachers.

This year Micah Klazinga graduated from Sunday School/Bible Class but we welcomed 4 new students, Paul and Nick from Holland, Miriam from U.S.A. and Sarah who has just turned 3. With nearly 20 students on the role, we are very thankful to have a wealth of people willing to be teachers. We pray that the children will learn not only head knowledge, being able to repeat many verses from the Bible and knowing all the Bible stories, but will come to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Stanwell Tops 8-11 January 2013**

It was a sweltering day that started

this year's PCEA family camp in the beautiful bush surrounds at Stanwell Tops. We started the drive from Brisbane and broke the trip at Wauchope where we were able to spend a few days catching up with friends in the congregation. It was a pleasant enough drive from Wauchope with temperatures peaking at 41C. The car's air conditioning was obviously working overtime because when we emerged from the cool the heat hit us like an oven. The kids quickly unpacked the car, found their rooms and made for the pool. The rest of the campers – nearly 60 in total – arrived during the afternoon with quite a number

# Churches in the Banner



frequenting the pool. Other campers came from as far as Melbourne and Ulverstone, with the rest from Newcastle, Wauchope and Sydney. The speaker for the camp was Rev Rudi Schwartz from the Wee Waa Presbyterian Church and the theme was the works of God in salvation. Rudi delivered four excellent studies focussing on covenant theology, justification, adoption, sanctification and perseverance. Rudi was an engaging speaker and presented these wonderful truths in humility giving all glory to God for His work in the salvation of His people. The discussion groups after each study were very detailed and beneficial and the hour set aside just didn't seem enough. The daily psalm singing (and teaching) lead by Sonya Hamilton was excellent – it was lovely to hear the psalms sung in 4-part harmony. Devotions held each morning and evening were inspirational and searching. David Bosenquet (Dapto, PRC) and Rowland Ward (Knox, PCEA) gave

informative talks on mission work in Kenya and the Mukti Mission (India) respectively. The food was delicious – except for the beef skewers, I'm not sure what the chef was hoping for but he may have ruined his opportunity to be on Masterchef. The accommodation with en suite rooms was a delight – like being at home but with no housework. The activities ranged from bush walks, table tennis, cricket, volleyball and, of course, the pool. The concert afternoon showcased yet again the diverse talents of the campers from singing, poetry, singing, flautist and – did I mention singing? Concertgoers were treated to an historic spectacle for the title of PCEA table-tennis champion 2013. Ian Hamilton

presented and we thank God for His faithfulness and covenant mercy. Each camper left on the last day refreshed by the Spirit, with thankfulness to God for the wonderful truths expounded. Many thanks should indeed go to the Youth and Fellowship committee, especially Glenn Hamilton, for yet another excellent camp. I would encourage as many people as possible to set aside the time and money needed for the next camp and make the effort, as you will not be disappointed.  
*Stewart Carswell, Brisbane PCEA*

*Clockwise from top left: Keynote speaker Rev Rudi & Mrs Heila Schwartz; Mission Speaker David Bosenquet with Tom Reeve; Three generations of (a few of) the Hamilton family; Group photo of those at Camp.*



battled bravely but was no match for his much better and much younger opponent – Shaun Hamilton. Apart from the thought provoking studies, the camp was highlighted by fellowship – spending time away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life with a group of like minded Christian friends. The "Family" camp lived up to its name with three generations of families repre-

