

the presbyterian banner

April 2010

*How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
“Your God reigns!”
Isaiah 52:7*

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Editorial

In a month Synod is upon us once again. In fact, it turns up the same time every year! And that's something I'll have to get used to, coming as I do from Reformed Churches where there is a tri-annual cycle to the meetings of Synod. Soon our Sessions will be receiving the various Reports for the Synod. There will be proposals made. Certainly there will be a Moderator very busy leading the meetings and a Clerk whose work at this time becomes that much more busier!

But what really is a Synod? Is it like the Annual General Meeting of an organization where the CEO gets to present the company's position in the best possible light in front of a big group of quite diverse shareholders? Will we have to perform too and present things in the most positive angle?

I hope and pray that this will not be our way. While many denominations have taken on the approach of the political spin meisters, may we continue to speak the truth. Yes, it must be the truth in love, but let it not be so 'loving' that it is a lie.

Rather, Synod must be the meeting of the churches in the widest body. What cannot be done on a local Session level, or through Presbytery, because it involves us all, is what we deal with there. That is the Acts 15 model, where the early New Testament churches met together in their widest body to deal with issues affecting them all. The result of that meeting was a reaffirmation of what the Lord has already said through His apostles, and it brought a true peace to the churches. Mind you, that 'peace' was not the absence of strife or division, but it did establish the scriptural doctrine, as we have seen down through the centuries up until this time. Even when it seemed that false doctrine might just win the day, the Lord raised up faithful men and faithful synods to keep His Church on the right track.

This is not to say there are not unfaithful synods. Our Confession of Faith speaks of the 'Synagogues of Satan' which are churches where the gospel has long gone (XXV:5). There will always be, however, in the further words of that Article, 'a church on earth to worship God according to his will'.

Will that be our Church this Synod? Let's pray and work that it will be so. Most of all, let's make sure that what we say and do is done His way!

*If what you call your 'faith' in Christ
does not involve your taking the slightest notice of what He says
then it is not faith at all—
not faith or trust in Him,
but only intellectual acceptance of some theory about Him.
C.S. Lewis*

Cover Picture: 'The Three Sisters' in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney

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Literary contributions are welcome. Submission by email is preferred. The opinions expressed in signed articles are those of the authors - not necessarily of the editor or the PCEA and may not be reproduced without permission.

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Calvin and the Lord's Supper

David Kerridge

Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper was forged out of applying, or rather reapplying, a Biblical understanding to the doctrines of the Church. In all the history of the Church, the doctrines of the Sacraments had never been hammered out in controversy and polemic, as had the great truths about Christ and the Trinity in previous centuries.

Context to Calvin's time

The Sacraments had been for so long obscured by the traditions of the Roman Church and had devolved into a series of superstitious rites, presided over by a priest who blasphemously called down Christ into the elements of the Mass, or else washed away your original sin in the water of baptism.

Calvin said this about the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in particular, under the Roman Church, in his great work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*:

'...Satan has tried to obscure with thick darkness and to defile Christ's Sacred Supper — in order at least to prevent its purity from being preserved in the church. But the height of frightful abomination was when the devil raised up a sign by which it was not only to be obscured and perverted, but — being completely erased and annulled — to vanish and pass out of human memory. This happened when he blinded nearly the whole world with a most pestilential error — the belief that the Mass is a sacrifice and offering to obtain forgiveness of sins.'

As part of the great struggle in Reformation times to re-establish the Bible as the only authority in matters of faith and life, the Reformers all sought to return to a right understanding of the Church, worship and the Sacraments. However, in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, if you removed the long held mystical, heretical belief in the transformation of bread and wine into Jesus' body at the celebration of the Eucharist — What *did* happen at that Sacrament? What happened to

the elements of bread and wine, if anything? And what happened to the person who partook of them, if anything? Most importantly, how was Jesus Christ, the Lord, involved in His own Supper?

Reformers disagreeing

A return to Scripture was necessary to answer these questions, but the problem was that the Reformers, Lutheran and Swiss Reformed, could not agree on the answers. The problem of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was a continual thorn in the side during the Reformation.

In the Autumn of 1553, a ship of 175 refugees from the Stranger's Church in London, fleeing the persecution of Queen Mary, sought to take refuge from a storm in the port of Elsinore. The Danish Lutherans there, however, refused them asylum and the refugees were made to travel on. The same rejection occurred at Rostock, Lubeck and Hamburg until finally they were given sanctuary in East Friesland. The refugees were Calvinist Christians led by the Polish John á Lasco, a personal friend of John Calvin.

The reason they were refused entry into these Lutheran towns was due, in the main, to the interference of Joachim Westphal, an ultra-Lutheran (or 'Gnesio-Lutheran' — Genuine Lutheran) who saw the refugees' persecution under Bloody Mary as divine justice for their denial of the Lutheran idea of the Sacraments set down in the Augsburg Confession. He incited the crowds against the asylum seekers and called the refugees 'martyrs of Satan'. This act reignited a simmering dispute between Calvinists and Lutherans over the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

As far back as October, 1529, the Colloquy of Marburg had been an attempt by Phillip of Hesse to reconcile the German Lutherans and the Swiss Reformed into one united Protestant state, especially since the Protestant lands were being threatened by Rome

with invasion at the time, and the way of understanding the Lord's Supper had always been a point of contention. Phillip wanted the parties to come to an understanding, and quickly.

The Colloquy was generally successful on most points, including baptism, in uniting the two sides, but the meeting broke down over what actually happened in the Lord's Supper. Luther, always ready to stand his ground, was stubborn on this point: that the body and blood of the Lord Jesus was *REALLY* — literally, physically — present in the Lord's Supper.

He stuck to one point taken from the institution of the Lord's Supper where Jesus said

THIS **IS** MY BODY [emphasis Luther's]. Opposing him was Ulrich Zwingli who, in part because of Luther's vehemence at the Colloquy, took a stance that there was no 'Real Presence' of Jesus' body in the Supper.

Zwingli argued the point that we are familiar with in Reformed circles: that Jesus could not possibly have been referring to his physical body since he was standing before them. Rather Jesus' words in the institution meant: THIS **SIGNIFIES** MY BODY. To Zwingli, the whole Sacrament was a physical sign of spiritual things and a memorial of Christ's death.

To Luther, the Lord had to be present with the believer in the Sacrament, so much so that he had to *physically* be there.

The Colloquy of Marburg broke down over this difference and the parties retreated suspicious of each other and unreconciled.

The three main views

At this point I think it would be good to explain the three main views of the Lord's SUPPER that then prevailed and still do, and that way we can better understand how Calvin wanted us to understand the Sacra-

ments:

The Roman Catholic idea requires that the bread and wine of the Mass, physically or 'substantially', becomes the body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ by the incantation of the priest who presides over the Mass. Hence a bell is rung at one point in the Mass to indicate that Jesus is now present in the elements – the bread and wine. Even though the elements still look like bread and wine they *are* the body and blood of Christ. This is called TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

Of course, if this happens then the Lord Jesus is sacrificed again and again for sin, and the unbeliever who takes part in the Mass receives the same benefits as the believer, despite the warnings of their Catechism that the recipient **should** be in a state of grace having undergone the so-called 'Sacrament' of reconciliation or penance before taking the Mass. This whole notion of transubstantiation is a blasphemy and was rejected by all Protestants at the Reformation.

However, Martin Luther, in his desire to maintain the highest understanding of the Lord's Supper, upheld a position that became our second main view of the Sacrament, and it is very close to the idea of transubstantiation. The generally accepted Lutheran view was, and is more or less, one of CONSUBSTANTIATION, which means that Jesus Christ's body was 'under' or really present with, but not transformed into, the bread and wine which formed part of the Sacrament. Hence CON – meaning 'WITH' – SUBSTANTIATION, - 'with the substance'.

With this view, both the believer and the unbeliever eat of the Real substance of Jesus' body but the believer eats of Jesus' body for his Spiritual nourishment. The unbeliever eats to their judgement (as in 1 Cor. 27). Luther wrote in his *Larger Catechism*:

'Even though a knave takes or distributes the Sacrament, he receives the true Sacrament, that is, the true body and blood of Christ, just as truly as he who [receives or] administers it in the most worthy manner.'

Such a view, so close to the Roman Catholic heresy, was unacceptable to the Swiss. The other difficulty that remains with the Lutheran view of

consubstantiation, as well as transubstantiation, is that Christ's body is everywhere present, or ubiquitous, when the Lord's Supper is taken. This goes against the testimony of Scripture, which states that Christ's body is in heaven.

The third main view, that of Ulrich Zwingli and others, is that the word 'sacrament', from Latin *sacramentum*, means in one sense, a seal of a future promise. Just as a Roman soldier took the *sacramentum* – an oath binding them to military service – so Christian believers took the Supper as a mark of their coming to Christ and resting in that promise of salvation in Christ.

But more importantly in Zwingli's view, a sacrament was a sign of something else represented: The bread was a sign for the body, which was present elsewhere; the wine a sign for the blood, which also was present elsewhere. Zwingli demanded that the bread cannot **be** the body of Christ but merely **represents** it.

Following on from this, Zwingli held that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is not only a seal of future promise and a sign representing the body of Christ, but a memorial – taken from Jesus' words, 'Do this in remembrance of me'. In the sacrament, for Zwingli, we were remembering Christ, not physically present, until he came again in glory.

The problem that Zwingli had was that, in rightly separating the signs from the thing signified, the bread and wine from the body and blood of Jesus, Zwingli didn't really explain what happened to the believer when they partook of the Lord's Supper, nor did he say anything about where the Lord was, if not **in** or **under** the elements.

He most probably did not intend to deny that the Lord was spiritually present in the Supper, nor that the believer received spiritual nourishment and communion with Christ in the meal. But to his Lutheran opponents he was a 'traducer and blasphemer' of the Sacrament. (The Lutheran Formula of Concord of 1577, completed in 1580, calls Zwinglians Sacramentarians; and they included Calvin without naming him, as a 'more subtle' Sacramentarian. However, since I

want to express Calvin's views of the Sacrament separately, and they are somewhat different to Zwingli's, I intend to name Zwingli's view of the Sacraments 'MEMORIALISM'.) So we have Transubstantiation – the bread and the wine transformed into Jesus' substance; Consubstantiation – taking the body of Christ with the bread; and Memorialism – or, in taking the bread and wine, remembering and representing Christ by signs until His physical return.

The Calvinist view

So where does Calvin fit in? Calvin entered the debate over the Lord's Supper in the next generation of Reformers in which the problem of a common understanding of the sacrament remained as the main hindrance to a wider union. In 1540, he wrote *A Short Treatise on the Holy Supper of Our Lord Jesus Christ* and later other tracts and treatises on the Sacrament, born out of the troubles created by Joachim Westphal. The most complete treatment of Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper can be found, of course, in his *Institutes*.

What Calvin sought to do in the discussion with the Lutherans, up to and following Luther's death, and with the Swiss who followed Zwingli, was to try to reconcile and conciliate.

Calvin saw a middle way of understanding the Lord's Supper and sought to bring consensus on the issue for all in the Protestant world of the time. Although he stood closer to Martin Luther on the matter of the Lord's Supper, Calvin did agree with Zwingli's view in part.

For Calvin, the monstrosity of the Roman Mass was denied outright. This is what he said in his *Institutes* (Bk 4 Ch. 18 Sect. 1):

'I am here contending against that opinion with which the Roman Antichrist and his prophets have infected the whole world: namely, that the Mass is a work by which the priest who offers up Christ, and the others who participate in the oblation, merit God's favour, or it is an expiatory victim, by which they rec-

oncile God to themselves.'

But the consubstantiation of the Lutherans was also irreconcilable with Scripture, despite their appeal to the sovereign power of God to overcome all seemingly physical obstacles to Jesus' body being everywhere present, wherever and whenever the Lord's Supper was taken.

Calvin says that to suggest that Jesus is anything other than a physical person, even in his glorified body, is to deny Scripture, especially the witness of the Apostles in Acts 1, who saw Christ ascend bodily into Heaven. In effect, Consubstantiation resurrects the heresy of Marcion who said that Jesus did not have a body as we do.

On this point, Calvin agrees with Zwingli and says that the elements of the Lord's Supper can only be signs of Jesus Christ's body and blood, since he is physically in Heaven and not on the Earth.

But Calvin does what Zwingli failed to do, in that Calvin says that although Christ is not Physically or Really present in the Sacrament, it is not just a bare sign, or memorial of Him, as one absent.

Calvin held that Jesus Christ is *Spiritually* present in the Sacrament symbolised by a sign. In his Commentary on the passage in 1 Corinthians 11, where Paul reminds the Corinthians of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper, Calvin writes:

'The statue of Hercules is called *Hercules*, but what have we there but a bare, empty representation? On the other hand the Spirit is called a *dove*, as being a sure pledge of the invisible presence of the Spirit. Hence the *bread* is *Christ's body*, because it assuredly testifies, that the body which it represents is held forth to us, or because the Lord, by holding out to us that symbol, gives us at the same time his own body; for Christ is not a deceiver, to mock us with empty representations. Hence it is regarded by me as beyond all controversy, that the reality is here conjoined with the sign; or, in other words, that we do not less truly become participants in Christ's body in respect of spiritual efficacy, than we partake of the bread.'

Calvin uses the term 'metonymy' to describe what he understands hap-

pens in the Lord's Supper. To explain: we understand words that are 'synonymous' are very close in meaning. For example, AGGRESSION means VIOLENCE. Metonymous words are those that do not mean the same thing but **stand** for the same thing. For example, A SUIT can mean A BUSINESSMAN. The TRACK can mean HORSE RACING. Thus BREAD means CHRIST'S BODY.



For Calvin, as we eat of the bread, and drink of the wine here on earth, metonymously we eat Christ's body (partake of Him), by faith, *Spiritually*. In this sense, He is very present with us in the Lord's Supper. This idea is, or should be, very common to us in our Reformed thinking. Even so, there is a nuance to Calvin's thought regarding the location of Christ's presence during the Supper. We partake of the Lord Spiritually, and are said to feed upon Him Spiritually. But for Calvin, this was not here on earth: by faith, Spiritually, metonymously as we sit around the Lord's Table here on Earth, *at the same time* we are drawn up to partake of the Lord by His Spirit in Heaven. The Latin phrase '*sursum*

corda' was the beginning of a call to worship. What it meant was 'we lift up our hearts', and the response of the congregation to this call was to be 'we lift them up to the Lord'.

Calvin's Scriptural teaching

Calvin saw this very act of *sursum corda* happening, not only in our ordinary worship, but visibly and tangibly in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

In fact, right before partaking of the Lord's Supper, Calvin's *Form of Administration* – similar to the *Directory for Public Worship* – had these words of exhortation to the communicants:

'With [the precious sacrifice of Christ] in view, let us raise our hearts and minds on high, where Jesus Christ is, in the glory of his Father, and from whence we look for him at our redemption. And let us not amuse ourselves with these earthly and corruptible elements which we see with the eye, and touch with the hand, in order to seek him there, as if he were enclosed in the bread or wine.

Then only will our souls be disposed to be nourished and vivified [i.e. enlivened] with his substance, when they are thus raised above all terrestrial objects, and carried as high as heaven, to enter the kingdom of God where he dwells.

Let us be contented then, to have the bread and wine as signs and evidences, spiritually seeking the reality where the word of God promises that we shall find it.'

Thus Calvin maintains the idea of a Real Presence of Christ, yet also shows that the Sacrament is only a sign of a higher, truly real event taking place in Heaven. But the words here in Calvin's *Form of Administration* highlight one other thing that Calvin, and all other Reformers, demanded as necessary to accompany the Sacrament: the presence of the Word of God. Calvin says at the end of his *Form* that in the Sacrament we see bread and wine, we seek a higher Spiritual reality; but the knowledge that there **is** a higher

Spiritual reality and that the bread and wine are signs, and seals, and memorials of it, can only be found promised in God's Word.

In the Mass before the Reformation (and after), the words of institution were always read in Latin. Often they were hardly audible at all since the priest reciting the incantation mumbled because of his poor pronunciation, or even knowledge of the language. All that the congregation heard were a few foreign words, and then a bell was rung to signify that something magical had just occurred.

The Sacrament was offered to them in 'one kind' only; meaning that only the bread was offered. They were told that by eating that piece of bread their sins had been forgiven and they were protected from grave sins by the bread's magical powers. It is no wonder that superstition and idolatry crowded round the Mass and crowded out any notion of the true nature of the Supper of Christ. Calvin, in his *Short Treatise on the Sacraments*, attacks this foolish and horrible mockery:

'The principal thing recommended by our Lord is to celebrate the ordinance with true understanding. From this it follows that the essential part lies in the doctrine. This being taken away, it is only a frigid unavailing ceremony. This is not only shown by Scripture, but attested by the canons of the Pope, (Can. Detrahe. i. 4,1,) in a passage quoted from St. Augustine, (Tract 80, in Joan.) in which he asks — 'What is the water of baptism without the word but just a corruptible element? The word (he immediately adds) not as pronounced, but as understood.' By this he means, that the Sacraments derive their virtue from the word when it is preached intelligibly. Without this they deserve not the name of Sacraments. Now so far is there from being any intelligible doctrine in the Mass, that, on the contrary, the whole mystery is considered spoiled if every thing be not said and done

in whispers, so that nothing is understood. Hence their consecration is only a species of sorcery, seeing that by muttering and gesticulating like sorcerers, they think to constrain Jesus to come down into their hands. We thus see how the Mass, being thus arranged, is an evident profanation of the Supper of Christ, rather than an observance of it, as the proper and principal substance of the Supper is wanting, viz., full explanation of the ordinance and clear statement of the promises, instead of the priest standing apart and muttering to himself without sense or reason. I call it buffoonery, also, because of mimicry and gestures, better adapted to a farce than to such an ordinance as the sacred Supper of our Lord.'



Returning to the right understanding

The Word of God explains what we do in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and without it, all we have is a bare, empty sign, open to superstition and abuse. Thus, in reapplying a Scriptural understanding of the Lord's Supper, Calvin has established it for us as: firstly, a sign of a higher reality in physical elements that remained physical elements

before, during and after the Sacrament; secondly, as Zwingli had maintained, a seal of faith and a memorial of Christ's death; thirdly, a Spiritual nourishment received by faith whereby, to Calvin's view, the believer was also lifted up to partake of Christ in the Heavens; and finally, to be accompanied always by the Word of God which explained it to, enlightened and enlivened the believer's understanding.

Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper soon began to be the dominant view amongst Reformed in Europe, even amongst some Lutherans such as Melancthon, who were called Crypto-Calvinists by their sterner brethren. All this sounds very familiar to us as modern, Reformed believers. Yet our understanding of the Lord's Supper is due, by God's grace, to the influence of John Calvin and those who followed him. Professor Joel Beeke, in his introduction to a recent edition of *Calvin's Treatises on the Sacraments* states:

'Readers of Calvin's Catechism can't fail to notice how much it influenced later works such as the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of the Westminster Divines. Members of congregations in the Dutch Reformed tradition will discover how much their own historic liturgy owes to Calvin's *Forms of Prayer, Form of Administering the Sacraments, Visitation of the Sick*, and his *Form and Manner of Celebrating Marriage*.'

In a time now when the Lord's Supper is misunderstood and increasingly misused and devalued, I hope that this will serve as an (re-)introduction to Calvin's work on the subject to bring our attention back to the beauty and worth of the Lord's Supper in our various congregations of Christ's Church.

David Kerridge is the stated supply preacher for, and an elder of, the Ulverstone congregation, and is presently undergoing his final trials for ordinations as a minister in our churches.

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

An Appeal

In the goodness of God the church has been able to financially provide for the ministry of all our settled charges.

For past years congregations who have not been able to meet all of their minister's stipend, superannuation and other running expenses of their charges have been assisted by grants from the church Synod. This has largely been possible in recent years due to a most generous bequest received from the Estate of the late DA Anderson. However, due to increased calls for stipend assistance from four congregations and few donations received, these funds have been exhausted and it is estimated that in the Synodical year 2010/11 there will be insufficient Synod funds available to fully meet requests totaling \$60,400 presented by Armidale, Hawkesbury-Nepean, Narre Warren and Ulverstone congregations.

The Synod Treasurer has estimated there will be a shortfall of approximately \$15,800 in the *Synod General Fund*, after providing for ongoing administrative expenses and covering an expected deficit of \$55,200 in the *Stipend Relief Fund*.

Whilst Presbyteries have monitored the situation in aid-receiving congregations during the past twelve months and some congregations assisted with financial help, nevertheless there is a responsibility on us all to contribute to this present need. "A compassionate heart, and a helping hand, will gather by distributing; such giving is getting; such bounty is the most compendious way to plenty. Whereupon the wise man observes, *There is that scattereth, yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. Prov 11:24*" (Thomas Gouge)

Your prayerful and financial assistance is therefore sought in meeting this anticipated shortfall of \$15,800 in *Synod General Funds* so as to enable Synod to fully provide the financial assistance sought for the support of the ministry in these congregations during 2010/11.

If you are able to help fill this need, you may put a donation in a suitably marked envelope and return it with your regular freewill offering in your congregation or send it to the Synod Treasurer, PO Box 942, Epping NSW 1710. A direct credit can be made to the "Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia BSB 082204 Account 506735725"

Synod Finance Committee
Alex H. Steel
Convener
04/03/10

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38

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The Banner on Other Churches

Scientology

It came in a plain A4 envelope, the kind I often get, much the same as with the many Christian magazines and promotional literature ministers and churches receive. It seemed the usual multiple mail-out — our address, like yours too no doubt, must be on hundreds on mailing lists by now — with the usual return address in the top left hand corner.

Yet it appeared like a magazine many of us would warm to. It was concerned — as its high quality, multi-coloured pages beamed forth — for those things we are sometimes wondering about.

That concern came very close to home as its subject was about the attack against religion, and Christianity in particular. Figures were simplified in easy-to-follow charts showing the decline in church attendance, the growth in secular psychology and psychiatry, and the attack on the family in society today, especially from this modern counselling philosophy.

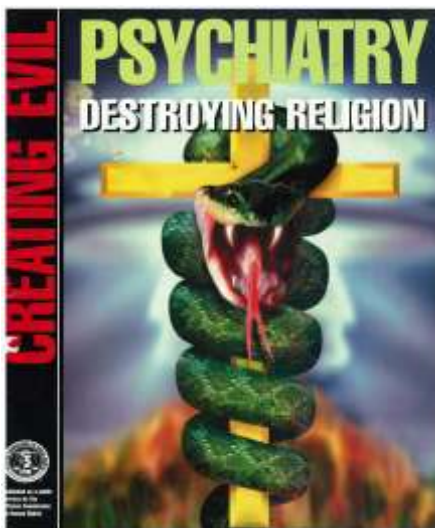
Sounds good

All this is manna for a conservative Christian. These are the right sounds, coming from an apparently respectable looking name, quoting reputable theologians, and endorsed by prominent religious leaders. Or so it appeared.

And that's just it! For when looking a little at the fine-print (actually not so fine in this case) who was the publisher? Another arm of the Church of Scientology! It's a religious organisation, founded by a L. Ron Hubbard, also known as an author of science-fiction books. But don't think it's either a church or scientific. A Church believes in God, which Scientology doesn't — and this publication avoids God's Name to the extent of a few quotes from scripture, subtly separated from the actual text. Certainly there's no mention of the saving grace found alone in Jesus Christ. And a science is a system which is verifiable and open to all examination, something which scientology is the exact opposite of. A much more plausible reason for the Church of Scien-

tology would be what Hubbard stated before he founded the 'Church of Scientology' in 1954, that: "If a man really wanted to make a million dollars, the best way to do it would be to start a religion."

But it was interesting to read this blatant attack of modern psychology and psychiatry from an organisation which itself practices an outdated and largely discredited form of psychology itself. For in Scientology one moves from one level to another, passing through a series of 'clears' (with the use of a so-called 'E-meter' which is alleged to measure the changes in electrical conductivity of the skin that



occur at moments of even slight excitement or emotional stress), until they can say that they have completely rid themselves of all negative influences. Along the way there's a huge smattering of eastern reincarnation ideas thrown in. And it's not cheap. There are enough documented cases of folk who have had their life savings spent in pursuing this treatment.

It has the stars

Scientology is more known nowadays by the famous Hollywood actors and the singers who support and endorse it. A few among these are John Travolta, Priscilla Presley, her daughter, Tom Cruise, and Nicole Kidman. The glossy publication, however, could be seen through. Aside from the

A real googlie

subtle twist of not mentioning God, or our Lord Jesus Christ, its character as a turgid attack on modern medical treatment was quite obvious. For while we should be concerned about these influences in society, as soon as anyone begins to paint them in conspiratorial tones the alarm bells should be ringing. That is devilish. One lie was the use of a current secular psychologist to discredit another, without mentioning that the one being quoted was himself a psychologist, although with a different theory of practice. It's a devious move for respectability in mainstream religion, not unlike what the Moonies have been doing just as subtly, seducing a number of prominent American church leaders along the way.

It's not free at all!

And I have a thing about the bright and beautiful magazines. I always wonder who has paid for them. When you know the way Scientology produces its income, you know you're dealing with a cult which is no different than the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses. The last thing they do is free anyone, let alone make them truly 'clear'. Like the Judaizers the apostle Paul condemns in Galatians, they only blind people even more by entrapping them through a man-made set of hoops they have to jump.

The magazine was a real googlie. Perhaps you know this name — 'googlie' — for the cricket bowl which changes direction at the last moment. It's not what it at first seems. And we can become tricked. A sleight of hand takes place on a mental plane. But let's be alert. Let's help them see Jesus Christ instead, because we are being led by His Spirit.

Recommended reading:

"The Bare-Faced Messiah", by Russell Miller (Michael Joseph, UK, 1987)
 "The Challenge of the Cults", by Maurice C. Burrell,

The Past for Today

What is the Bible?

Rowland S. Ward

I wonder if you have a pocket New Testament perhaps also bound with the Psalms. The Bible is a large volume and the convenience of having some of it in our pocket or purse is recognized. However, there are some people who are happy with their pocket Testament and can't see the need or relevance of the Old Testament. Others positively object to part or all of the Old Testament. In a way this is quite silly. After all, how can you make sense of the New without the Old? The foundation of major Christian doctrines is there, and the New constantly quotes or alludes to the Old. However, there is nothing new in such attitudes.

The New Testament shows us that in the spread of Christianity from Jews to Gentiles significant tension arose between those who were zealous for the maintenance of various Jewish practices and those who held that these should not be required of Gentile believers. The Council at Jerusalem in AD 49 (Acts 15) illustrates the point.

Deviations on Scripture

By about AD 140 we know of two extremes that had developed on either side of orthodoxy. On the one hand there was Marcion (c.85-160), himself the son of a Christian minister. He was a wealthy man who came to Rome about AD 140, possibly after being expelled from his father's church, and gave a significant gift to the church there. However, after a while his teaching was found to be unacceptable; and in AD 144 he was expelled from the church and his gift returned.

Marcion appears to have been influenced by a Gnostic teacher named Cerdo. Gnosticism is a difficult-to-define movement but among its common features was the dualistic idea of the true God (the source of the divine spark in humans), and a false creator

God or Demiurge who is the cause of suffering. Salvation consists in overcoming by knowledge the ignorance that leads to worship of the false creator God, hence the term Gnostic (Greek: *gnosis*, knowledge). Cerdo taught that the God of the Old Testament was different from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Marcion took this idea and applied it in a radical way. He rejected the Old Testament outright, and most of the New Testament; which he regarded as too Jewish except for ten letters of Paul and a version of the gospel of Luke, all of which he edited. The revelation of Christ was the revelation of the true God of love, not the severe



and just false God of the Jews. He held that the New Testament did not fulfill the old but was intended to displace it entirely. He believed in an organized church, with Scripture as he defined it as the standard. He got a lot of support and the Marcionite Church existed for perhaps 300 years in spite of its denial of the trinity and the pre-existence, divinity, virgin birth and physical resurrection of Jesus. On the other hand was a group we call the Ebionites (Hebrew: *the poor ones*). They were not Jewish believers who continued some Jewish practices from custom, but Jews who had been impacted by Christianity yet in-

sisted that the Law of Moses was obligatory on all Christians, in the light of Jesus' exposition in the Sermon on the Mount. The Ebionites accepted only an Aramaic version of the Gospel of Matthew from which they omitted chapters 1-2 covering the infancy of Jesus. They did not accept the pre-existence, divinity, virgin birth or physical resurrection of Jesus, but thought of him simply as an anointed prophet of God.

The situation today

There are still plenty of people who have Marcionite approaches to God's word. If not in theory yet in practice many evangelicals ignore large swathes of Scripture and downplay all aspects of his character other than his love. Certainly the singing of the Psalms by Christians is seen as somewhat passé by many. We also have a number of sects that are something like the Ebionites in insisting on observing various Old Testament practices fulfilled in Christ, something also advocated by many Messianic Jewish groups.

We can thank the 2nd century movements for helping the church to more self-consciously answer the question, *Which books form part of the Bible?* Marcion departed from the norm by implying there was a norm, but that self-conscious reflection and decision had not occurred. The books of the Bible circulated along with other books useful and edifying but not from the Apostolic circle. The Marcionite heresy furthered recognition of those books that are the rule for faith and not just for edification. There's another issue too. *What is the relationship of the OT and the NT?* The early church certainly saw it in terms of promise and fulfillment but resorted to allegorizing to make

practical application of some of the more difficult parts of the OT to NT believers. This was hardly a fully adequate position. We would want to emphasize that the OT was a prospective portrayal on a physical level of the realities to come in Jesus Christ, and we would find the progressive unfolding of God's covenant purposes a clarifying and unifying idea.

When Richard Dawkins was on TV recently he showed the usual abysmal ignorance of the relationship, supposing it sufficient to dismiss the Bible out of hand because the law given to Israel prescribed death for such as

adulterers and homosexuals. Dawkins and those like him don't treat the Bible with even common respect as having a coherent message. There was no reference to the way in which the death penalty was applied in the expanded Israel of the Christian church by excommunication (cf. Lev 18:8 and 1 Cor 5:1ff.), and of course no reference to moral absolutes. Such is the blindness of the brilliant scientist as he moves into the area of philosophy and religion – though he calls it science – assuring us that nothing bad had ever been done in the name of atheism (it was not because they

were atheists but because they were bad, silly); and at the same time claiming that the Sermon on the Mount was 'good'. Obviously he hasn't read it properly or noted its frequent references to judgment to come!

It remains for the pulpit to not only expound individual passages but to keep the unfolding drama of redemption in view. And if we know what the Bible is and understand the covenant story of redemption, let us make sure we trust in the Saviour it presents and live in glad response to his matchless grace.

The World in the Banner

Ash Applied on Ash Wednesday

A 15 February 2010 notice by Daniel Crofts titled "Ash Wednesday Service to be Held at Batavia's First Presbyterian Church" in *The Batavian* announces that the First Presbyterian Church of Batavia, New York, is holding an Ash Wednesday service on 17 February 2010 at 7:00 p.m., where ashes will be applied to attendees' foreheads.

Crofts says that the Ash Wednesday service marks the first day of the forty-day season of Lent, "which is a time when many Christians dedicate themselves to fasting and prayer in preparation for Easter." Crofts describes the forehead application of ashes as "a symbol of penitence and as a sign of Christians' healing mission in the world."

John Calvin considered Lent to be a "corruption" and an "absurdity" instituted by the Roman Catholic Church (Institutes I, p.138). Further, in Chapter XXI.i. of the Westminster Confession of Faith it states: "But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture." (Dt 12:32; Mt 15:9,10; Dt 15:1-20; Ex 20:4,5,6; Col 2:23)

+ *The Batavian*,

rhoward@thebatavian.com
+ *Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), 100 Witherspoon Street, Louisville, Kentucky*

Tory MP Vows to Close Creationist Schools

A 14 February 2010 *Ekklesia* article titled "Tories Say they would Close Down Creationist Schools" reported on a 14 February 2010 BBC1 television interview with Tory Michael Gove, Member of Parliament for Surrey Heath and "shadow" schools secretary, where Gove said that a Conservative government in Great Britain would not tolerate schools that teach biblical creationism as science.

Gove said: "To my mind you cannot have a school which teaches creationism. And one thing that we will make absolutely clear is that you can not have schools that are set up which teach people things which are clearly at variance with what we know to be scientific fact."

Gove continued: ""We do have some schools at the moment - independent schools - that have been set up by religious groups. You mentioned Islamic groups. Let's be clear, there are other fundamentalist groups as well which have schools in the private sector. If those schools are properly regulated and inspected then we can ensure that anyone who teaches in a way that undermines our democratic values can be brought to public

light, challenged, and if necessary, closed down."

Gove's comments were made during a debate in honor of Darwin Day, marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin, author of "Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life."

+ *Ekklesia*, *press@ekkleisia.co.uk*
+ *BBC, 201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS, England*
+ *The Conservative Party (Tories), 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4DP, England*

Violence in the school yard, the church service, and ?

It's a disturbing trend — children are being knifed at school, worshippers are being shot at — and that's not even getting into the horrific figures of what happens in the inner city any time of day! What is going on? Something has changed, because we definitely don't remember anything like this from forty to fifty years ago — not even twenty or ten years ago!

Well, it seems some analysis has begun into what has actually been going on. And, not surprisingly, banning corporal punishment in school, the namby-pandy laws severely restricting how children may discipline their children, and so on, are all coming under the microscope. Because it seems those forms of be-

havior control criticized as primitive and barbaric actually helped turn children into adults. At the crucial time in the development of our young people they had the best security possible—and that's certainly not something many of them have now! Indeed, isn't the consistent message coming through in all those tragic cases the issue of children feeling insecure because of bullying and other such peer-pressure tactics. But put an active adult authority in control and that's soon changed.

There is no doubt our 'enlightened' leaders will keep trying to pursue the obviously flawed social philosophy with all kind of regulations which only touch up the outside instead of getting to the hearty of things. Providing free water in nightclubs and more counselors at schools appear to show something's happening when it's earlier closing hours, tougher laws, active restitution, and corporal punishment which are really needed.

But more than strong physical measures, our nation needs to have a good look at the heart of things. Because throwing out corporal punishment and firm laws was also just as much a reaction against the religious bedrock our nation has been built upon. Our justice system was built upon a biblical basis and that has been totally ripped apart.

Trying to return now to stricter laws may help to some degree. But a turning to God will help to the ultimate degree. That means the preaching of the gospel, repentance and then a reformed lifestyle on the right basis. Let's so pray. And praying this will also mean we're open to being used by God for this.

Dr. Philip Graham Ryken Appointed 8th President of Wheaton College

The Board of Trustees of Wheaton College in has announced that Dr. Philip Graham Ryken has been appointed the eighth president of Wheaton College. He will assume the presidency 1 July 2010. Dr. Ryken is a 1988 graduate of Wheaton College and is the senior minister at the historic Tenth Presbyterian Church (Presbyterian Church in America) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he has served since 1995. In addition to earning his Bachelor of Arts in English

literature and philosophy from Wheaton College in 1988, Dr. Ryken additionally earned a Master of Divinity from Westminster Theological Seminary in Glenside, Pennsylvania, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in historical theology at Oxford University in Oxford, England.

+ *Presbyterian Church in America*
ac@pcanet.org
+ *Wheaton College, 501 College Avenue, Wheaton, Illinois 60187*

Historical Marker to be Dedicated

A 19 February 2010 article in The Patriot News by Mary Klaus titled "Group Works to Mark 1752 Religious Service" reports that a historical marker will be dedicated on 21 August 2010 by the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission at the New Kingstown, Pennsylvania site of the first Covenanter communion service to be held outside of Great Britain, which occurred in August of 1752. Ms. Klaus reports that 250 Reformed Presbyterian Church members gathered under a canopy of trees for the week long event that included a nine hour church service led by the Rev. John Cuthbertson, the first Covenanter minister in America and who subsequently travelled 70,000 miles over the next forty years conducting church services.

The August 1752 service became known as the Junkin Tent service because it was held on the property of Joseph and Elizabeth Junkin, whose son the Rev. George Junkin D. D., LL. D., served as president of what is now Washington & Lee University in Lexington, Virginia, from 1848 until 1861.

The younger Junkin left the then Washington College after the outbreak of the war between the States because he disapproved of secession, subsequently ministering to Union soldiers in camps and hospitals throughout the war.

+ *The Patriot News, 812 Market Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17101, 717-255-8100, jkirkpatrick@patriot-news.com*

+ *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), 7408 Penn Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15208, 412-731-1177, Fax: 412-731-8861*

Pulitzer Prize Winner and Calvinist Novelist Interviewed

The February 2010 issue of Christianity Today includes an interview by Virginia Tech Professor of English Thomas Gardner titled "Marilynne Robinson, Narrative Calvinist," which begins with Ms. Robinson describing her early-in-life strong sense of God's presence and the people who taught her Presbyterianism in her childhood.

Gardner's interview discusses several of Robinson's books, including her 2006 publication of John Calvin: Steward of God's Covenant, where Gardner writes that Robinson shows "...the Reformer has been hidden under a caricature, known only as "an apostle of gloom dominating a gloomy city," his legacy one of "repression and persecution." Robinson instead finds three liberating themes in Calvin's thought, and in the preface and an earlier collection of essays, *The Death of Adam* (1998), she articulates how they impress upon her literary vision."

Please read Gardner's Christianity Today interview, and discover this remarkable author, Marilynne Robinson, and how her mature Reformed understanding of the Word of God is utilized in writing books from a perspective acknowledging a Sovereign God in every facet of one's existence.
+ *Christianity Today International, mwhite@christianitytoday.com*

Jonah and Nineveh in 2010 - Haiti President Replaces Mardi Gras Festival with Three Days of Fasting and Prayer

A 16 March 2010 ASSIST News Service article by Jeremy Reynolds titled "Haitian Mardi Gras Festival Replaced with Three Days of Prayer and Fasting" reports that in the wake of the 12 January 2010, 7.0-magnitude earthquake, Haiti's president René Prével, for the first time in Haiti's history, cancelled the internationally attended annual Mardi Gras Festival, and instead called for three days of fasting and prayer 12-14 February 2010.

An estimated 1 million people, more than ten percent of Haiti's population, gathered each of the three days across from the earthquake-collapsed National Palace, where a Haitian Christian leader said: "In unity and humility we cried out to God. One can

truly assert that God has visited Haiti during these three days and has poured his shower of blessing and forgiveness over our nation....We closed the three days with seven tours around the National Palace (like Jericho). It took us four hours to make it because of the density of the crowd."

Reciprocal Ministries International (RMI) reports that more than 3000 people professed faith in Jesus Christ during the three days, including 120 Voodoo priests. Another church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital and the center of the earthquake, reported over 2000 professions of faith.

RMI said that President Préval had been asked by Christian leaders for three years to set aside a national day of prayer, but had always refused for fear of offending the Voodoo practitioners and Roman Catholics. When Préval was contacted after the earthquake, three days of prayer and fasting were declared in lieu of the Mardi Gras Festival.

Resolutions coming out of the three

days of prayer and fasting included:
 -- that 12 January be declared an annual National Day of Reflection and Thanksgiving;
 -- that 14 February be declared an annual day of National Prayer and Fasting;
 -- that the Bible should be adopted as the spiritual constitution of the new Haiti and should be taught in all Haitian schools;
 -- and, that the Haiti president should finish all official speeches with the words, "God bless Haiti."

A YouTube video of the three day services is available at: <http://www.allaboutgod.net/video/haiti-3-days-of-prayer>
 + Assist USA, danjuma1@aol.com
 + Reciprocal Ministries International, florida@rminet.org

The PCUSA & the Indoor Labyrinth

The 4 March 2010 The Washington Post's Fairfax County (Virginia) Religion Notes compiled by Jean Mack announced that the Kirkwood Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Virginia, held a celebration of the World Day of

Prayer on 5 March 2010 that included a prayer walk on an indoor labyrinth.

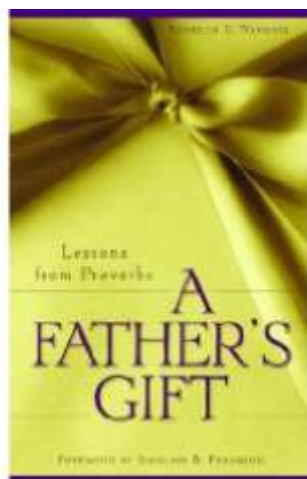
A 6 December 2005 post on The Puritan Board by the Rev. Bruce Buchanan of the OP church in Central Lake, Michigan, describes the prayer labyrinth as "an occult path of the dead. Successful navigation of it led one to heaven; the lost wandered it forever in terror, ending up in the center pit from which there was no escape. Arcane knowledge (gnosis) of traversing it or a suitable guide, therefore, was [a] necessary part of pagan religion. In other incarnations, it serves a gnostic purpose of meditation...not the "inner-peace" type, but the "path"...to enlightenment."
 + *The Washington Post*,
 + *The Puritan Board*
 + *The Orthodox Presbyterian Church*

Books in the Banner

'A Father's Gift: Lessons from Proverbs

Reviewed by the Rev. Andres Miranda

Accumulation of life experience is not necessarily evidence of wisdom. Nor does a good education guarantee that people will make good decisions. The only wise person is the one who fears God and keeps His ways. Wingate's book was written to help parents and their children live wisely on this earth. This timely book is an ingenious summary of the wisdom of Proverbs and its practical implications for real life situations. *A Father's Gift* offers wise God-centred advice. It makes accessible to readers the moral tools for becoming skilful in many spheres of life, such as handling our money, cultivating friendships, using words



constructively, guarding sexual purity, going to work, practicing self-control, making informed decisions, overcoming pride, eating

and drinking, social obligations, exercising leadership, nourishing love in marital relationships, grasping the wicked nature of evil, making plans for the future, increasing our devotion to God and understanding the real purpose of life. Although the author wrote the book as a personal gift for his three children, this is clearly a book with multiple uses. The book can be read beneficially by parents, teenagers, in small groups, or during private times of devotion. I found this book insightful, practical and encouraging. An excellent resource for managing life in God's way.

Children under the Banner

Letter Wheels

These wheels of letters contain statements Jesus made. Begin at the arrow and follow the letters. An X means a new word begins with the next letter.

“ _____ ,

_____” (John 13:34).

“ _____

_____” (John 14:3).

“ _____

_____” (John 10:30).



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

Books in the Banner (cont.)

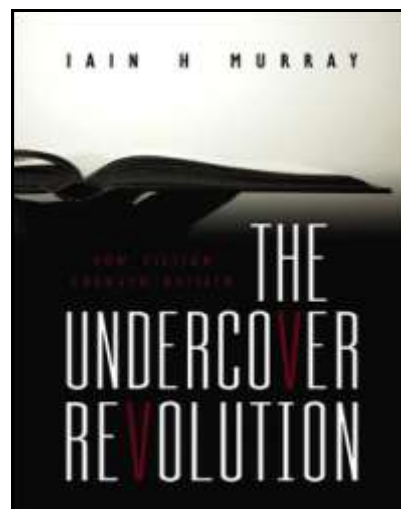
The Undercover Revolution

by Iain H. Murray, Banner of Truth,

Well, under this cover you don't actually get a lot. It was a quick read for yours truly and not a particularly insightful one either. The best part of the book was Chapter 6, 'Is Christianity Fiction?', a chapter which makes up for the rest of the book, although not directly related to it.

The best way to see what Iain Murray is trying to do in this book is to read the works of Francis Schaeffer. He is the one who most popularised the reformed analysis

of what has happened in history. But he would be at some odds with Murray as he would place the distinct demise of biblical thinking already back in the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th century, unlike Murray's particular view which ties this in with the reaction against the evangelical awakening of the 18th and 19th centuries being shown through the literary sons of the late 19 century rebelling against that biblical revivalism.



Prescribed Search / Youth Work

APRIL 2010

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate omit questions 2 and 6

Matthew 6:16--34

1. Why is it foolish to lay up treasure on earth? Where should our treasure be? (2 verses)
2. What lesson can we learn from the birds of the air; from the lilies of the field? (2 separate verses)
3. What should we seek first?

Matthew 7

4. What is the result of our asking, seeking, knocking?
5. How are evil men who give good gifts to their children compared with the Father in heaven?
6. What are the two different results from entering at the strait (narrow) gate or at the wide gate? (2 verses)
7. What kind of people enter the kingdom of heaven?
8. What kind of hearer is like a man who builds his house on a rock?

JUNIOR

Matthew 6:19--34

1. Where should we lay up for ourselves treasure?
2. What will happen if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness?

Matthew 7

3. What will happen if we ask, seek and knock?
4. Why should we enter in at the strait (narrow) gate?

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

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

FAMILY CAMP

At The Tops Conference Centre, Stanwell Tops, NSW
5 pm Monday 3rd January to 2 pm Friday 7th January 2011 (DV)
Main Speaker: Rev. Iain Smith, (SPC, Hobart)

Enjoy Fellowship with other Christian families Be seriously challenged in your thinking and lifestyle; Afternoons free to relax – games, bushwalks and pool; Missions night; Psalmody; Good food; Peaceful surrounds; Children's programme

Brochures with further details available soon.
Please pray for God's help and blessing (Youth & Fellowship Committee)

Churches in the Banner

Presbytery meetings

Southern Presbytery

Southern Presbytery met at Mulgrave on 20.2.2010. A fairly full slate of business was worked through, and this report covers only the major items. Following on a positive report from the Interim-Moderator, it was decided to take licentiate David Kerridge on trials with a view to his ordination and appointment as resident supply minister at Ulverstone. It is expected that this will occur in June following Synod. An overture to Synod seeking a compulsory retirement of ministers from inducted service on the 30 September following the attainment of age 70 was approved. This follows the practice of the Free Church of Scotland, but it is proposed not to apply to any existing minister who dissents against it either at Synod or a short time thereafter.

A number of matters concerning other churches were dealt with. Messrs John Nelson and John Cunningham, former PCEA elders but associated with Rev E.S.Turnbull's group for the last 30 years, appeared with Mr Turnbull and the two Johns apologised for their behaviour. The Presbytery was glad to receive their statements, held the end of discipline applied in 1980 and 1988 respec-

tively had been served and that they now belonged to another denomination. This does not cover the doctrinal issue and Mr Turnbull remains committed to the views for which he was removed from the PCEA ministry in 1979, but it was an historic moment. Presbytery resolved to ask our Inter Church Relation Committee to recommend Synod offer mutual eligibility of ministers to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia, and also sought informal meetings with men from the Southern Presbyterian Church and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Concern was also expressed concerning trends in the Christian Reformed Churches which we had assisted to be established in the early 1950s, and steps were taken to ascertain both sides of the issue (see *The Presbyterian Banner* for March, page 5).

The spirit of all the proceedings was most brotherly and constructive. - RSW

Northern Presbytery

The Northern Presbytery met on Friday, 19th February, 2010, in Grafton. It had a number of significant items of business to attend to, along with the usual examination of Church Records, and the reception of reports from the individual

Congregations.

1. The Vacancy in Brisbane.

The progress has been slow, but the Presbytery is thankful that there has been progress in securing the Rev. Jim Klazinga as minister for the Brisbane Congregation. He has accepted the Call, and his nomination for working in Australia has been approved. He is now awaiting clearance from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police before his visa application will be dealt with. Thankfully, he has been assigned a "case worker" but no further action will be taken before the clearance is received. Presbytery resolved that if/when Mr. Klazinga gains Immigrant status, the Moderator and Clerk, in conjunction with the Brisbane Congregation, arrange a time for the Induction of Mr. Klazinga to the Brisbane Congregation, that the Clerk be empowered to issue the appropriate Edict, and that the Moderator call a meeting of the Presbytery to attend to all the necessary procedures.

2. Overture to Synod. Presbytery has been concerned about the 2008 "Act allowing optional alternative questions and for-

mula while not reducing commitments in terms of the Act of Synod 1952". At its last meeting

[September, 2009] it agreed to consider an Overture to Synod in the following terms: "That for further assurance of where the ministry stands, directs that where a minister or student for the ministry is to be inducted to office or licensed using the 2008 Questions and Formula, such person shall also subscribe the Formula of 1952." This it did, and, in the light of a tied vote at last Synod on change, and a desire to promote harmony and consistency in the church, agreed unanimously to send another Overture to Synod to the effect "that where a minister or student for the ministry is to be inducted to office or licensed using the 2008 Questions and Formula, such person shall also subscribe the Formula of 1952." Mr. Peter Smith and Mr. Ray Murray were appointed to appear in support of the Overture.

3. The Resignation of the Rev. Alan Tripovich.

The resignation of the Rev. Alan Tripovich from the Hastings River Congregation, effective from the end of June, 2010, took up a fair amount of Presbytery's time, not because of its difficulty, but because the Presbytery wanted to pay tribute to Mr. Tripovich who had laboured for 42 years in the Congregation, and contributed a great deal to the work and witness of the Congregation, and the

Church over those years. He had been ordained, and inducted into the Congregation on the 23rd Feb-



Northern Presbytery delegates at their 19 February meeting

ruary, 1968, and had faithfully served the Lord in it since then. In speaking about his work he said that he had "always tried to do the best he could." Members of the Presbytery spoke feelingly of the friendship and fellowship they had enjoyed with Mr. Tripovich over the years. They may not have always agreed, but the bond of fellowship and Christian love had always been there. Dr. Hanna then led the Court in prayer, thanking the Lord for his goodness in providing the Church with the service and fellowship of Mr. Tripovich and his wife



Rev Alan Tripovich

Sybil, and praying that He would richly bless and use them in their retirement.

The Presbytery placed on record its appreciation of his ministry, the diligent and faithful discharge of all his responsibilities in the service of the Lord,

his loyalty to the Church and its principles, and his faithful and judicious contribution to discussions and decisions in the Church. Mr. Tripovich thanked the court, and acknowledged the grace of God to him in his work. Mr. Smith was appointed as the Interim Moderator of the Congregation as from the 1st July, 2010.

4. Armidale.

The Presbytery was also mindful of the situation in Armidale. It rejoiced in the fact that they now had three elders to carry on the work, thus releasing the Assessors from their duties. Presbytery thanked Mr. Doug Hamilton, and Mr. Bill McKinnon for their work over the years in this capacity. There had been an improvement in givings, but the Congregation still needs support. The Presbytery will be asking Synod for the usual Stipend Relief – up to 50% of the minimum stipend – for the Congregation. It has also scheduled a Presbyterial Visitation for the Congregation on the 26th March,



Southern Presbytery delegates at their 20 February meeting

part of a schedule of presbyterial visitations it has drawn up for the whole Presbytery.