

the presbyterian banner

October 2010



*And God said,
“Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds:
livestock, creatures that move along the ground,
and wild animals, each according to its kind.”*

And it was so.

Genesis 1:24

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Editorial

October 31st is Reformation Day. On this day in 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses upon the door of the castle church in Wittenburg. It was a way they then debated the issues of the day, but this time it begun something that has brought tremendous blessing right to this present day!

Martin Luther would have had no idea whatsoever of those consequences, but he fully supported what developed, for he desired that the Church come back to the Word of her Lord. It was the proclamation of God's Word which broke through the superstitious darkness in much of Europe. The Gospel brought the light that even today still shines in those places or churches or believers who treasure it.

We are thankful for the Rev. Jim Cromarty contributing a most suitable piece on Luther for this issue. And we're thankful for the Rev. George Ball's next and final sermon from Haggai, the book reviews from the Rev. Andres Miranda, the regular and additional contributions from the Rev. Dr. Rowland Ward, together with those contributing through the Youth Search Word, Church News, and so on.

Please pray for us, as we pray for you in your congregations. Pray that this magazine ministry may be a vital link between our church, between us and the wider Christian community, and with the Christian world at large. Pray that the gospel will be the heart of all we think and say and do.

*Dear Father,
Please take away from us that sophistication of our age.
Remove the scepticism which has come, like frost,
to wither our faith, and to make it weak.
Bring us back to a faith which makes men strong and great,
a faith that makes us to love and to live,
the faith by which we are victorious,
the faith by which alone we can walk with you.
We pray for a return of that simple faith;
that old-fashioned trust in God;
that made strong and great the homes of our forefathers.
They were indeed blessed in stepping out for the Biblical faith,
and have left us such a rich heritage.
In the Almighty Name of Jesus Christ, our ever-reigning King,
we offer up this, our prayer, Amen.*

(After Peter Marshall)

Cover Photo: A picture taken by Vivian Vyas.

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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God Keeps A Promise

Sermon on Haggai 2:20-23

George D. Ball

Haggai consists of four dated messages – as though pages out of his diary - between August and December 520 BC. The burden of the first message (chapter 1) is that the returned exiles had delayed too long rebuilding the temple. ‘Give careful thought to your ways.’

The second message (Haggai 2: 1-9) comes in October. It was a message of encouragement. Discouragement had quickly set in because the beginnings of the new temple were no comparison to the old. Haggai’s message was: - ‘be strong; keep on working; ‘I am with you’; and, understand that you are building more than what you can see’.

The third message (Haggai 2: 10-19) comes on 18th December – when winter crops were planted. It was a promise that from that day God will bless the people (v.18). Why? Because they had gotten their priorities sorted out – they were giving God the honour.

The Fourth Message

The fourth message also comes on the 18th December. This time it’s a personal message to one man – Zerubbabel (v.21) – though a wider audience is also in view. Who was Zerubbabel? We don’t know an awful lot about him. In 1: 1 he is introduced as, ‘son of Shealtiel and governor of Judah.’ He was, however, more governor in name than practice (not unlike our state governors!). He hadn’t a lot of freedom to do anything. He was more a ‘puppet’ governor. He was the grandson of Jehoiachin who had been taken into exile in 597 BC. He was therefore in the Davidic line - the messianic line. As his name suggests, Zerubbabel was born in Babylon – ‘seed of Babel’ — and was one of the remnant who returned in 539 BC. He was a good man.

The word to Zerubbabel is in essence a reassurance that God’s long-term plan for His people hasn’t changed. It was natural for those who had been carried away to Babylon and who were now back in Jerusalem to wonder about the future. Is it possible for us to still have the same relationship with God as before? Will God still care

about us? Does He still have a plan for us in the future? If He does, what does that future include?

That’s the subject the prophet addresses in these closing verses. As we shall see this little book that begins on a discouraging note, ends ‘upbeat’ and confident about the future.

There are two great promises to note: -

1 - I Will Shake the Heavens and the Earth (vs.21-22)

‘Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah that I will shake the heavens and the earth. I will overthrow royal thrones and shatter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses and their riders will fall each by the sword of his brother.’ (vs.21-22).

The earlier promise of Haggai 2:6-7 is repeated here. There is going to be a global shake-up. God will shake the heavens and the earth as we might shake a child’s snow globe. He will send everything topsy-turvy within the world. However, in this case God’s shaking will not cause disorder – but order. The nations that are disorderly – God will bring to order. Haggai is declaring that the scene envisaged in Psalm 2 is intact. Despite the fact that nations and rulers have taken their stand against the Lord and His anointed – ‘The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them. Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath saying, ‘I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.’ (Psalm 2: 4-6). God’s plan will not be derailed by past failures, present circumstances or future difficulties.

What’s the point of this for Zerubbabel? He needed to know (or be reassured) that God is in sovereign control of the all the nations. He feared that a tiny, feeble, insignificant nation like his own would be crushed out of existence. He needed to know that, ‘It is the Lord who acts on a universal scale for the sake of the house of David and for the good of his people.’ (Mackay).

We need to know that, too. It’s the Lord who does the shaking. He reigns over all things for the sake of the church. Instead of seeing the shaking as evidence that the world and the nations are out of control – the exact opposite is in fact the case!

2 - I Will Take You, My Servant Zerubbabel... and I Will Make You... (v.23)

‘I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel’, declares the Lord, ‘and I will make you my signet ring, for I have chosen you,’ declares the Lord Almighty. (v.23). I will ‘take’ you, in the sense of select or choose. Zerubbabel is God’s servant, chosen to fulfil God’s purpose. This son of Shealtiel, and grandson of Jehoiachin, is God’s chosen instrument to perform God’s plan. God’s choice of Zerubbabel reinforces the point that God had not abandoned His ancient commitment to the line of David. The presence of Zerubbabel is evidence that the stump is not dead; he is as it were ‘a green shoot’ coming forth from the old line. In Zerubbabel God has reinstated His interest in the Davidic line. God keeps His ancient promises. The future has already begun.

(This is immensely instructive and encouraging especially for anyone who has had unbelieving parents or grandparents – as Zerubbabel had. Despite the fact that God had rejected his grandfather King Jehoiachin ‘who did evil in the eyes of the Lord,’ -see Jeremiah 22: 24ff and 2 Kings 24: 8ff, - did not mean that therefore that God was against him. We need to see this clearly otherwise we could give up hope or wrongly accuse God. Some misunderstand the second commandment here - see Exodus 20: 4-6 - and think that God punishes children for the sins of the fathers. But this is not so – see Ezekiel 18: 14-20. If we are punished it will be for our own sin and not the sins of our parents. But God does ‘visit’ the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. Chil-

dren suffer the consequences of the sins of their parents – not because of some arbitrary decree of a revengeful God, but by the law of cause and effect. We never sin to ourselves – but it always affects others. Zerubbabel, Hezekiah and Josiah are all examples of men who had apostate fathers yet who themselves ‘did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord.’)

‘I will make you like my signet ring for I have chosen you, declares the Lord Almighty.’ (Thus reversing the judgment on his grandfather — see Jeremiah 22: 24-26). The signet ring was the symbol of executive power. The signet, engraved with the king’s seal, was used to endorse all official documents; the equivalent of a signature today. It was a very precious object, kept on the ruler’s finger or around his neck. God was telling Zerubbabel that he was going to be like that to God. God was, metaphorically speaking, going to place him on His finger, or hang him around His neck, that he would be kept safe to fulfil his God-appointed destiny. God was thus confirming that the line of David had not been cut off. Like the burning bush, the promise of God would not be extinguished. Zerubbabel would be the guarantee that one day the

Messiah, descended from David, would come. And He did — see Matthew 1: 12-13. Luke 3: 27.



Picture of Haggai preaching

The Ultimate Fulfilment

Many commentators point to the fact that there are too many references here for this to be completely fulfilled in Zerubbabel. There are too many indicators that point beyond him. Zerubbabel died. But one individual remains. The one descended from him, the Lord Jesus, is the signet ring of God. He speaks and acts with

all the authority of God. All authority and power is given to Him and flows from Him. (Matthew 28: 18-20).

‘In the meantime though, as we wait for the final shaking of heaven and earth, our calling is to be faithful. Like Zerubbabel, we are to be faithful in the little things, the daily grind of chores and studies, of work and witnessing, of labouring for God and for our daily bread. Sometimes our task seems to be like that of Sisyphus in Greek mythology, who daily rolled a stone up the hill, only for it to be returned to the bottom every night. Christian ministry often looks like the ministry of stone rolling! So we trudge on, hoping that we too may hear the words of our God: ‘Well done good and faithful servant! You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much.’ (Duguid). Remember – God keeps His promises.

The Past for Today

What about the last things? (2)

In the July issue, we saw that the Reformers adopted a largely chronological historicist interpretation of the Book of Revelation — basically seeing it as history written beforehand. The Pope and the Turk (Islam) were viewed as the predicted man of sin and false prophet respectively. The millennium was in the past, ending around 1070 or 1300, and now the kingdom of antichrist was being broken down by the Reformation. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the reign of Elizabeth I in England encouraged this thinking. The Preface to the KJV of the Bible (1611) refers to the way King James’ defence of the

truth had given such a blow to the man of sin as will not be healed. However, the historicist approach tended to lead to date setting as commentators sought to identify other parts of Revelation with historical events. And of course, interpretation varied depending on changing political and religious circumstances.

Date setting

In 1593 John Napier, the Scottish mathematician generally credited with the invention of logarithms, employed the principle that a day in prophecy equals a year. He predicted the fall of the Papacy in 1639 and the return of

Rowland S. Ward

Christ with the end of the age between 1688 and 1700. In 1602 Thomas Brightman, a minister in Bedfordshire, interpreted Revelation 20 as having two millenniums. The first was from 300 to 1300 and the second was from 1300-2300. About 1650 the power of Rome and the Turk would wane, the Jews would be converted, the final ruin of the Papacy would occur in 1686, and triumphs of the Gospel would follow until the end in 2300. Because of its half-hearted approach to reformation Brightman identified England as like Laodicea, but more thoroughly reformed Scotland and Holland as

like Philadelphia.

A future millennium

The idea of a future millennium was not a mainstream Puritan view, but interest was increasing. From about 1622 John Alsted of the Reformed Academy in Herborn moved towards it, influenced by the terrible upheavals of the Thirty Years War (1618-48) and a disastrous fire in Herborn itself. He taught a future millennium beginning about 1694 with Christ in heaven but the resurrected martyrs governing for him on earth. Cambridge scholar Joseph Mede was not a Puritan like Napier and Brightman and was committed to the government and worship of the Church of England, even under the reign of Archbishop Laud 1633-40. However, like virtually every Protestant writer until the 19th century, Mede identified the Papacy as Antichrist; a view that meant his writings could not be published, because of censorship under Laud. Mede sought to synchronise Daniel and Revelation, advocating a future millennial reign of the saints beginning no later than 1715.

The Westminster Assembly

The collapse of censorship in England in 1640 saw a fantastic increase in books, pamphlets and newspapers. Before 1640 newspapers were illegal, but by 1645 there were 722. Twenty-two books were published in 1640 but over 2000 in 1642, the year before the Westminster Assembly was convened. While most Scots generally held more to the Augustinian 'idealist' view outlined in the July *Presbyterian Banner*, some leading Puritans, including men like William Twisse and William Gouge, who were members of the Westminster Assembly, were rather taken with Brightman and Mede's approach.

Happily, none of the speculations of such were incorporated into the Confession and Catechisms — which nowhere cite Revelation 20, limiting themselves to the great and clear truths concerning the return of Christ, the resurrection and the Last Judgment. Some at the time believed the Jews would be returned to Palestine to be the centre of God's kingdom in the millennium. The Directory for Public Worship and the Larger Catechism refer to the calling of the Jews, but do

not determine the precise nature of this. A few believed that the material temple would be rebuilt and that the converted Jews would rule other nations, but these ideas were distinctly a minority viewpoint in the ferment of society in the time of the English Civil Wars.

Pre-millennial views

In the 18th century a more definite pre-millennial view became quite evident, although the post-millennial approach remained dominant and had an influential advocate in Jonathan Edwards in America. The revivals of the 18th century came to be seen as anticipatory glimpses of the promised latter-day glory and they fuelled the tremendous development of missionary societies in the 1790s in the aftermath of the American War of Independence (1776) and the French Revolution (1789), an optimistic expansion. But then appeared a change that might have had something to do with the massive impact of Napoleon in Europe. Prophetic interest was stirred but proceeded on a literalistic path. At least as early as 1821, it was being said that the Old Testament promises had *primary* and *literal* reference to ethnic Israel. Out of it all came a new view that became dominant in the 20th century among evangelicals in America. John N. Darby (1801-82) propounded a strongly futurist and dispensational view of things to come. Israel and the Church were to be sharply distinguished. The tribulation was a future 7 years near the end, but



John. N. Darby

believers would be snatched away (or raptured) from the earth before this event, although others said after; hence we saw pre- and post-tribulationists.

Scottish Presbyterians remained generally post-millennial; but an influential group, including Thomas Chalmers, and prominent early Presbyterians in Australia like John Dunmore Lang and Adam Cairns, plus our own John Sinclair of Geelong, were moderate pre-millennarians. The most active Scottish Presbyterians of this mind would be Horatius and Andrew Bonar; but for all these mentioned, the Gospel and not Middle Eastern politics was central.

Calculation of dates continued all too frequently in Protestant circles in the 19th century. Some earnest students of prophecy thought 1843 or 1844 was the date for Christ's second advent. They were disappointed; but some explained that the date was right, but the event was something more spiritual and heavenly — hence one of the distinctives of Seventh-day Adventism. I'm convinced that the idealist approach to Revelation (see July TPB) is correct both on exegetical grounds, but also because history illustrates the faulty foundation of historicism and futurism. Idealism can still recognize the Papacy for what it is, but it also allows that passages in Revelation on such themes can apply more widely than to one historical event. Our Westminster Confession rightly stresses the great contours essential to a Biblical view of the last things.

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The Reformation in the Banner

A sinner who found peace with God

Jim Cromarty

Associated with the name Martin Luther is the Christian doctrine of 'Justification by faith alone'. His story is of a man who saw his sinfulness and struggled to find peace with an offended God.

Martin was born on 10 November, 1483, to working class parents, who hoped that one day their son would become a lawyer. He was born into a German society that believed in the existence of fairies and witches. His mother claimed that a local woman was a witch, who had placed a curse on her family. Martin's parents freely used the rod to keep their energetic son under control, and when he took some nuts from the table without permission, his mother whipped him, drawing blood. Martin's father was a hard working miner and later a mine owner.

Lives of fear

The Pope and the local priest exercised a feared authority over church members. Excommunication from the church and the subsequent penalty of the eternal fires of hell were a burden too heavy for people to bear.

The church taught the fearful doctrine that the destiny of all who died in union with the Catholic Church could not enter paradise until they had fully met the penalty for their sins in the flames of purgatory.

This doctrine gave the church a continual source of money, as it was taught that the Pope had at his disposal the huge unused merit of Christ and the works of the saints, which could be purchased and applied to help a suffering soul escape the anguish of purgatory's flames. Of course, it was expected that the

person purchasing the indulgence had first been to confession.

The Luther family saw their spiritual hope in the compassionate Mary, the mother of Christ, and St Anne the patron saint of miners.

Beside the power of the church there existed the Holy Roman Empire; a loose union of Catholic nations and states under the jurisdiction of an elected Emperor.

Martin described his school days as little better than 'purgatory and hell'. One day he was whipped 15 times by teachers he described as 'tyrants and jailers'.



The school taught Latin, the language of the educated, the church and law, with all lessons given in that language. While Martin, with other students, was taught the catechism, the ten commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, some hymns, formal prayers and some Scripture, he was unaware of the existence of the Bible.

Mathematics, history and geography were neglected subjects and Martin knew nothing about the discovery of America in 1492. He believed the world was flat and the centre of the earth was either Rome or Jerusalem. Following his seventeenth birthday, his father decided that he should attend the University of Erfurt and study law. This city had 36 monasteries and convents. Only on rare occasions did visiting priests preach the gospel of repentance and faith in Christ. It was taught that salvation was to be obtained through church membership and

works of the flesh, especially through a life of monasticism.

Martin had once seen Prince William of Anhalt, who became a friar, begging on the streets in the hope of gaining sufficient merit to escape the fires of purgatory. He wrote: 'With my own eyes I saw him.... I saw him carrying the sack like a donkey. He had so worn himself down by fasting and prayer that he looked like death's head — mere skin and bones.'

How hard Luther tried

During his University days Martin became increasingly aware of his sins and desperately longed for spiritual peace with the God he feared. He longed for

purity of heart through his works, but wrote: 'The more we wash, the less clean we become.' During his University days he returned time and again to the copy of the Latin Vulgate he found in the library. As he read its pages he became deeply convicted of his sins, and there grew in his heart an awesome fear of God, death, judgment, purgatory

and hell. His fear of Christ intensified as he saw him to be the Judge who cast sinners into hell.

In 1503 when travelling home, his sword fell from his belt, cutting an artery in his leg. As a friend ran for help Martin cried out, 'O Mary, help me!' Later he commented, 'At that time I would have died relying upon Mary.'

In 1505 he gained his Master of Arts, coming second in a class of seventeen students. His academic reputation spread when he commenced some lecturing, while his studies continued. His philosophical studies taught that man's will could be trusted, but Martin was convinced that when Adam fell into sin, man's will was corrupted. He argued that the only thing untouched by sin were the Scriptures. As he read the pages of the Bible, the Holy Spirit continued to touch his heart, convicting him of his sinful state even more deeply than before. He longed for peace with God, but could not find the way to that peacefulness.

Meanwhile, his proud father gave him a valuable law book, as Martin was still studying for a life of law.

Two events resulted in his entry into the Augustine Monastery. First, when a friend was killed in a duel, he thought, 'What would become of me if I suddenly died?' Martin was well aware of the church's teaching on purgatory and hell.

Secondly, when he was caught in a violent thunderstorm he was knocked to the ground by the lightning. In terror he cried out: 'St Anne, help me! I will become a monk!'

Martin sold his law books and was accepted into the Augustine Order, which he believed was a leader in spiritual matters. Martin walked through the monastery gates on 17 August, 1505, when he was only twenty-one years of age. There in the confines of his small cell he hoped he would find peace with God.

This move caused a deep rift with his father, who had his heart set upon his son becoming a lawyer.

Martin's life became one of poverty, begging, prayer, fasting and convent work. The senior monks delighted in giving him the most menial tasks, all of which he believed would gain him spiritual merit, to be used

when he died and faced the cleansing flames of purgatory. Later he said of his fasting: 'If I could have got to heaven by fasting I would have merited that 20 years ago.'

During his study for the priesthood, he still failed to find peace with God. His terror grew at the thought of God and Christ and the coming judgment. He absorbed the words of Scripture found in the chapel Bible, and when he read of the righteousness of God, he trembled with fear, believing that 'the righteousness of God' (Psalm 31:1) meant eternal damnation for sinners.

Of those days Martin wrote: 'We fled from Christ and ran to the Virgin Mary... O Often I was horrified at the name of Jesus... When I heard his name mentioned, I would rather have heard the name of the devil, for I believed that I must by my good works make Christ my gracious friend and thereby reconcile an angry God.'

Martin committed much Scripture to memory, and commenced the study of Greek and Hebrew. He spent many hours in prayer and fasting. On one occasion he fasted for four days. Soon he began to look like a walking corpse, but still he failed to find peace with God through the works of the flesh.

On 2 May, 1507, Martin was ordained to the priesthood. Again, under deep conviction of sins, he now hoped to find that elusive peace with God.

It was John Staupitz, the Vicar General of the Augustines in Germany who, when he visited the monastery, spoke to a downcast Martin. When Martin spoke of his spiritual terror, Staupitz pointed him to further studies of the Scriptures, and to the crucified Saviour. However, Martin replied, 'I cannot and dare not come to God till I am a better man; I have not yet repented sufficiently!'

When Martin spent hours confessing his sins to one old priest, he commented: 'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.'

To this the old priest answered: 'No, you are to believe not merely in the forgiveness of David's sins, and Peter's sins; you must believe in the forgiveness of your own sins!'

Believing he would help Martin, Staupitz, in 1508, transferred him to Wittenberg, where he was to lecture at the newly established university, which was the pride and joy of Elector Frederick of Saxony.

Rome despairs him more

In 1510, Martin was one of two priests appointed to visit Rome and argue a case for the Augustine order before the Pope.

He was greatly surprised that the vast majority of priests were worldly and mocked the Pope and the church. When he saw some Benedictine monks eating meat on Friday, he rebuked them saying, 'On this day, such things may not be eaten. The Pope has forbidden them!' But no one took any notice of the monk from Germany.

All the time Martin continued to meditate upon the words, 'The just shall live by his faith' (Habakkuk 2:4).

In Rome he did all he could to earn merit that he allocated to his grandfather, who he believed was still in purgatory's flames. He even wished that his parents were dead in order that they might receive the merit he was earning for souls in purgatory. He crawled up the Lateran Steps, believed to be the steps from Pilate's palace, transported to Rome by some angels.

For many years indulgence could be gained for a soul in purgatory by crawling up those steps and on each one repeating the Lord's Prayer and kissing the stone. Extra years of indulgence were gained for the prayers on the step marked with a cross, as it was supposedly the step on which Christ had stumbled. While on his knees the text, 'The just shall live by faith', burdened his mind. He also wanted to earn many years indulgence by saying mass at this spot, but later sarcastically said, 'I could not get near it, so I ate a pickled herring instead.'

When he was saying mass elsewhere, some Italian priests said to him, 'Make haste! Have done with it!' and 'Be quick and send our Lady back her son.' Elsewhere he heard some priests saying the Latin mass to a congregation, and during the words of transubstantiation mocked the teaching of the church, saying:

'Bread you are, and bread you shall remain.' Priests nearby heard what was said and laughed.

When Martin returned to Wittenberg he again meditated on the words, 'the righteousness of God' (Romans 3:21), and 'Deliver me in your righteousness' (Psalm 71:2).

He still saw God as a 'consuming fire' and Christ as the One who cast sinners into hell. He hated what he saw as the justice of God and the God of justice.

Martin, bowed down by the weight of his sins, still believed that peace with God could be obtained by the works of the flesh.

One of his periods of confession lasted 6 hours, after which the priest declared, 'Man! God is not angry with you! You are angry with God!'

John Staupitz spent many hours with Martin, explaining that salvation was the consequence of faith in the finished work of Christ.

When Martin commenced a study of Augustine's writings, he came face to face with the doctrine of 'election'. Later he said of that time, 'I wished I had never been created. Love God? I hated him!'

On 19 October, 1512, Martin successfully gained his Doctor of Divinity degree and commenced lecturing in Latin on Genesis, Romans and Galatians, but he still had no understanding of the doctrine of justification. His lectures were topical

and he spoke out against the evils in society and the church, openly condemning Pope Julius II for his war against Venice. Then he made a remarkable change in his teaching — he commenced lecturing in German.

Righteousness by faith alone!

In autumn 1515, Martin sat in his small cell in the monastery tower, puzzling over Romans 1:17: 'For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;

as it is written: "The just shall live by faith"'.
Then he looked at the words, 'My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me?' (Psalm 22:1).

Suddenly the truth burst upon his mind. Christ had been forsaken by his Father, because he had become the sin Bearer. Christ the Judge had become an outcast, nailed to the cross. In the act of judging the sinner, Christ had made himself one with his sinful people, bearing their punishment and assuming their guilt and shame.

Now Martin understood the difference between law and grace....

Law said, '*Pay me what you owe!*'

Grace said, '*Your sins are forgiven!*'

Martin now understood that a great transaction had taken place at Calvary; his sins had been placed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sin Bearer, and Christ's righteousness had been imputed to him!

Now, the peace he longed for flooded his heart; and with a new vitality, the Bible in his hand and the truth in his heart, he lectured his students with the saving gospel. His lecture hall was soon overcrowded with students from near and far who longed to hear Biblical truth in the German language. The Wittenberg University suddenly attracted many great minds in Europe.



The sale of indulgences. On a pole, in the form of a cross, hangs the Papal authorisation for the sale; on the ground lie scales; two sacks of coins show the profit. <http://www.ianpaisley.org>

Martin now taught the great doctrine of justification by faith alone which is defined in the Shorter Catechism, prepared by the Westminster assembly as: '....an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.'

Justification was, a legal act; a declaration of God wherein he pronounced and treated a guilty sinner, as being not guilty in his sight and thus not liable to any penalty for sin, because of Christ's saving work.

Now Martin had peace with God, and that only through the saving, substitutionary work of his Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. He now rejoiced in the truth of Romans 8:1: 'There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus....'

Elector Frederick rejoiced in the growing reputation of his university and would make sure that Martin was protected from all who opposed his teachings.

Putting it into practice

The Wittenberg Castle Church was a depository for many valuable relics. Most important was the 'genuine' thorn from the crown of thorns that pierced Christ's brow, a

hair from Christ's beard, 4 hairs from Mary's head, a straw from Christ's crib, a nail that pierced Christ's hand and a piece of bread from the Last Supper. On All Saint's Day everyone who visited this display of relics, repented and gave to the church, received an indulgence — a certified reduction of time in purgatory for themselves in the future or to someone already in the flames of torment.

Now Martin began to attack the doctrine of indulgences. He questioned

the failure of the Pope to use, as an act of love, his reservoir of merit to release all the souls in purgatory.

By attacking this doctrine, Martin spoke against the source of money that kept the University functioning. Frederick had used the indulgence money to build roads, schools, hospitals and other public works, including the University.

In Rome, the newly elected Pope Leo wanted to restore St Peter's church, which was believed to have been built over the remains of the apostle Peter. He had directed the Dominican, John Tetzel, to sell indulgences and raise money for this project. Elector Frederick refused to allow Tetzel to enter the territory of Saxony, but when citizens crossed over to other towns and returned with certificates of indulgence, Martin spoke out more vehemently against the activities of John Tetzel, who claimed that all who purchased his indulgences were forgiven their sins and restored to the spiritual state of a newborn baby. He preached: 'At the very instant that the money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies liberated to heaven.' He also claimed his indulgences could be purchased to gain remission of specific sins yet to be committed. He even claimed divine power for the Pope: 'The Lord our God no longer reigns. He has given all power to the Pope!'

The 95 Theses

At noon on the 31 October, 1517, the eve of All Saints Day, a lone monk pushed his way through the crowds and nailed his 95 Theses to the church door, inviting debate the following day on the issues he raised. No one turned up for the discussion! Many heated words followed between



Wittenburg Castle Church

Luther and representatives of the church, until Luther's preaching could no longer be tolerated. He was commanded to appear at the Diet of Worms, on 28 January, 1521, and face the power of both the Pope and the Emperor. There it was that he finally made his break with Rome. Having spoken out against the heretical doctrines of Rome, it was on 18 April that he concluded his speech, refusing to bow to

the Pope's authority and stating: 'Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or on plain or clear grounds of reason, so that conscience shall bind me to make acknowledgement of error, I can and will not retract, for it is neither safe nor wise to do anything contrary to conscience. Here I stand. I can do no other. May God help me. Amen.'

The break with Rome was now complete and the truth of the gospel spread throughout Europe and beyond.

Luther's greatest exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith alone, is to be found in the book of Romans. In 1552 he wrote of this epistle of Paul: 'This epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel, and is worthy, not only that every Christian should know it word for word, but occupy himself with it every day as the daily bread of the soul.

It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with, the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.'

Maybe you could begin such a study of Paul's epistle to the Romans.

Please note new subscription prices for 2011

Due to increased printing and postage costs the annual subscription rate for The Presbyterian Banner has had to be increased.

The new prices is \$30 per annum within a bulk order (5 or more), \$35 per annum for an individual subscription within Australia, and \$AU50 for individual overseas subscriptions.

We also welcome any donations to this ministry within our wider church life, as that helps sending our magazine to theological colleges and elsewhere.

The World in the Banner

Saudi Arabia: Christians Threatened – and Honoured

On 11 August deputy leader of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Said al-Shihri, posted an audio message to the Internet calling for the overthrow of the al-Saud regime, attacks on Israel and killing all Christians living in the kingdom. Meanwhile, quite a stir has been caused by the popular sitcom 'Tash Ma Tash' ('No Big Deal') which screens every Ramadan and pokes fun at the problems of daily living in Saudi Arabia. The writers' stated purpose is to 'criticise social customs, traditions, administrative procedures and political habits'. While the royal family is protected, religion is not. Naturally, Saudi clerics hate and denounce the show, but it gets spectacular audience ratings and every day Saudi newspapers devote pages to discussing its episodes and themes. This year a two-part episode entitled 'Uncle Boutros' has ignited intensive debate over its positive portrayal of Arab Christians as pleasant, honest and charitable. Outraged Islamic clerics have urged Muslims to stop watching the series as it could shake their faith. Pray that God will shake the faith of Saudi Muslims that truth might prevail. Pray that God will protect all Christians living in Saudi Arabia, especially his Saudi Church, which is a reality despite Saudi claims to the contrary.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin* | RLPB 070 | Wed 25 Aug 2010

"A Site to Behold"

It's a hard time to be a teenager. Well, actually you could say that of any time since the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Or, you could probably say that of any time ever. But, it sounded like a good way to start a column. Back in the early decades of Christianity, Paul wrote to Timothy about the difficulty of being young. "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). Paul's words echo across the centuries as a challenge to all Chris-

tians, but particularly to those who are young.

Our culture sets low standards for its young people, encouraging them to follow their passions, live in the moment, and seek only earthly pleasure, a far cry from Paul's call to live an exemplary lifestyle, above reproach. Alex and Brett Harris (younger brothers to Josh Harris, senior pastor of Covenant Life Church in Maryland and popular author of a fleet of books on courtship and Christian living) are twin brothers who are taking Paul's charge to Timothy seriously. They are calling their generation away from hedonism and into a radical Christian life. Their blog, "The Rebelution" (www.therebelution.com), boldly declares itself to be "a teenage rebellion against the low expectations of an ungodly culture" (click on "learn about the rebelution" to read their whole mission statement; it's quite resolute). It is quite encouraging to see two young men taking a stand against the prevailing lethargy of today's world. One of the Harris brothers' mottos is "*Do Hard Things*," which is also the title of their first co-authored book (followed by the sequel *Start Here*, detailing exactly how to "do hard things"). Through their blog, their books, and their national conferences, "The Rebelution" is challenging teenagers (and indeed all of us) to take a stand and get out there and live out our Christian life.

"The Rebelution's" blog provides many challenging posts on a variety of subjects like modesty, movies, and missions. There are many long in-depth articles as well as short little blurbs, all of which are challenging and thought provoking. They have great book recommendations and links to many other fine blogs. "The Rebelution" provides an online place where teenagers can come and be challenged, and forms an online community for like-minded rebels with a cause, rebels against low expectations. "The Rebelution" has gained attention from World magazine, Fox News, and dozens of theologians. Even though I'm not a teenager (in years, anyway), I still visit "the Rebelution" regularly. I can sometimes

spend hours browsing and checking out all their great materials -- and it's always time well spent. So, whether you are a teenager, know a teenager, or ever have been a teenager, check out www.therebelution.com and let it be a tool for you to start rebelling against society's low expectations and start living a radical Christian life.

James Oord (Taken from the Jul/Aug issue of The Outlook 2010.)

Aid workers killed in Pakistan

Following the killings of aid workers in Afghanistan in August 2010, we read this week the distressing report of Compass Direct News Service about the kidnapping and the killing of three Christian flood-relief workers in Mingora, Pakistan. The bodies of the relief workers were recovered on 25th August 2010 by the authorities, with their names withheld by the officials at the international humanitarian organization that employed the workers for security reasons. The killings have been carried out by a group of Taliban, who attacked the vehicles of the foreigners, returning to their base. The foreign aid workers have been working in Mingora and the surrounding flood-ravaged areas. Pakistan has been hit by its worst flooding in decades, with the United Nations now estimating more than 21.8 million people have been affected. The President of Pakistan's advocacy organization *Life for All* strongly condemned the killings. *Life for All* additionally point to alleged discrimination against minorities in distribution of humanitarian aid, stating that Christians in severely flood-damaged areas in Punjab Province have been neglected.

Prayer points:

* *Pray for protection over Christians and foreign workers in Pakistan.*

* *Pray for courage and peace in the small Christian minority in the country.*

* *Pray that state authorities might be able to manage the hostility and aggression in the country.*

+ WEA Religious Liberty Prayer News* *September 1, 2010*

Are you a brick in the wall?

I know there are some who say, "Well, I've given myself to the Lord, but I don't intend to give myself to any church." I say, "Now why not?" And they answer, "Because I can be just as good a Christian without it." I say, "Are you clear about that? Are you sure you can be as good a Christian by disobedience to your Lord's commands as by being obedient? There's a brick. What is a brick for? It's made to build a house. It is of no use for the brick to tell you that it's just as good a brick while it's kicking about on the ground by itself, as it would be as part of a house. Actually, it's a good for nothing brick. So, you rolling stone Christians, I don't believe that you're answering the purpose for which Christ saved you. You're living contrary to the life which Christ would have you live and are much to blame for the injury you do."

C. H. Spurgeon

Repression in Turkmenistan

President Berdimuhamedov ('elected' in February 2007), is no different from the totalitarian megalomaniac he replaced, the Soviet-appointed Saparmurat Niyazov. His initial openness and reforms appear to have been a ploy to attract investment and avoid sanctions. With the new geo- strategic realities (post August 2008), he no longer needs to play this game.

Slowly the cult of Berdimuhamedov is replacing the cult of Niyazov and everything 'foreign' and non-traditional is treated as seditious. Human rights abuses, including religious repression backed up with violent systematic persecution, are on the rise. Non-compliant, 'foreign' and non-traditional religious fellowships are being targeted for harassment, intimidation and persecution. Protestant pastor, Ilmurad Nuriev, has been falsely accused of 'large-scale swindling', a crime that incurs up to five years' jail. Please pray.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 072 | Wed 08 Sep 2010*

Full-term Abortions

If the public were properly informed of the reality of the unspeakable cruelty which results from open-slaughter abor-

tion laws, surveys would find less enthusiasm for the practise, according to the Australian Christian Lobby. The ACL was responding to claims last month that decriminalising abortion has high public support in Australia. Spokeswoman Michelle Pearse said people would be less favourable if they knew where decriminalisation of abortion in Victoria leads - the termination of unborn babies all the way to full term. "It was Dr de Crespigny's ending of the life of a 32-week unborn baby girl with suspected dwarfism in 2000 which was used as a lever for the Victorian law change in 2008. And the result of decriminalisation? A recent media report indicated that there has been a huge increase in late-term abortions at Melbourne's Royal Women's Hospital since decriminalisation - from one per fortnight to an alarming three per week. "The tragedy compounds when you consider that in 2007 - even prior to decriminalisation - 345 late-term babies were aborted in Victoria, with 52 of them found to be still alive after the procedure and left to die." Abortion claims 80,000 to 100,000 unborn children in Australia each year. Ms Pearse said the tragedy of late-term babies being born alive and left to die - at a stage when they are old enough to survive in neonatal nurseries - happens regularly in Australia.

+ *Australian Christian Lobby (as quoted in the Box Hill Reformed Church Newsletter)*

Threat Level Rising in Bekasi, Indonesia

The threat level facing Christians in Bekasi Regency, West Java, has been rising continuously since 27 June when Bekasi's Islamic leaders publicly denounced 'Christianisation' of Bekasi (98 percent Muslim) and urged Bekasi Muslims to prepare for jihad. Christians have since been threatened with death and physically attacked during worship. President Yudhoyono's dependence on Islamic parties in parliament keeps him from intervening. Last Sunday 12 September Pastor Sihombing was ambushed by militants as he walked to the vacant land his church owns and meets on for worship. As Reverend Luspida Simanjuntak rushed to his aid, she was clubbed on the face, head and back. Both were hospitalised, with

Pastor Sihombing in a critical condition having suffered multiple stab wounds to the abdomen. Please pray for the Church in Indonesia.

+ *Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin | RLPB 073 | Wed 15 Sep 2010*

A church shouldn't be comfortable

It's interesting when a teenage agnostic and a federal judge understand the nature of church better than do some church staff.

A plaintiff known as Doe 2 recently said that if s/he had to attend a high school graduation ceremony in a Christian church s/he would be "forced to submit to a religious environment ... that would make me feel extremely uncomfortable and offended."

Doe 2 (as in "John Doe") was one of five plaintiffs who sought an injunction against Enfield Public Schools, Connecticut, to prevent them from holding the graduation ceremony in First Cathedral, a Christian church. The judge granted the injunction, in part because she agreed that there was the "likelihood of irreparable harm" coming to the plaintiffs.

The phrase — "the likelihood of irreparable harm" — made me laugh when I first read it, but after examining the ruling, I understood. Doe 3 is Jewish and said s/he would not have attended the ceremony because s/he would "feel that the Cathedral is proselytising its Christian beliefs ... through its scriptures and symbols." A high school graduation is indeed an important cultural marker, so on one can empathise with how deeply disappointing it would be to miss it. But as I thought about it, I realized the judge said more than she knew, because it is true that those who spend time in church really do have the likelihood of experiencing irreparable harm — for one thing, they'll have to die to self. After all, it is the sovereign sphere of another Lord, who, like the title implies, makes unreasonable demands on His servants: expecting them to give away their wealth and to love their enemies.

+ *Mark Galli, from an article in 'The Australian Presbyterian', September 2010.*

Reply to the Response

Eric Fanet

I heartily thank Jurie Dekter for his thoughtful and precise response to my article on the shroud of Turin, and I am happy to make the following further comments:

1- In the scientific literature on the subject I have observed a multiplication of arguments and counter-arguments. For example, assuming it is correct to assert that Mediterranean pollen seeds have been found on the surface of the shroud (a point which has been contested by Guy Jalut, professor of palynology at the University of Toulouse, France) the interpretation of this fact would still be uncertain, because eastern ointments and perfumes were frequently sold in fairs in the Champagne region of medieval France and could have been used to manufacture the shroud. The historical investigation, therefore, appears more fruitful, the shroud being by definition a unique object.

2- The memorandum of Bishop Pierre d'Arcis and the bull (letter) of Pope Clement VII were unearthed by French Canon and medieval historian Ulysse Chevalier at the beginning of the XXth century. I would draw the attention to the fact that the force of this discovery was such that not even the defenders of the shroud challenge the authenticity of the documents today.

The question is that of the credibility of the information given by Pierre d'Arcis. I favour credibility because, given Roman Catholic practices re-

garding relics, it is most unclear why the Bishop would not have taken a relic of such importance into his own cathedral, and why it supposedly remained hidden for approximately 150 years, having supposedly been captured in Constantinople in 1204 A.D. Moreover, it is often being overlooked that Pierre d'Arcis explicitly states he is ready to supply all necessary evidence of his case. Because d'Arcis was writing to the Pope on a matter



belonging to the ordinary jurisdiction of a bishop (even though the Pope overruled him), it was hardly necessary to present every detail of the case from the start.

3- Believing the gospels to be

founded upon eyewitnesses' accounts, I readily acknowledge that it is not easy for the exegete to harmonize each and every detail. It is however my conviction that the text of John very clearly states that the body of Jesus was 'bound' ('deô', used in the same sense regarding Lazarus, does not mean 'wrap') with 'strips' of linen ('othonion' is a diminutive of 'othonê'). As Ederheim has proposed, the single 'linen cloth' ('sindon') mentioned in the synoptic gospels may well have been 'torn into swaths into which the body, limb by limb, was then bound'. Further, one should observe that the early Church did not know of the existence of an authentic portrait of Jesus. This can be clearly inferred from Augustine, for example, who writes: '*For even the countenance of our Lord Himself in the flesh is variously fancied by the diversity of countless imaginations, which yet was one, whatever it was.*' (On the Trinity, 8,4).

Finally, I would strongly recommend reading John Calvin's *Treatise on relics* for the Reformer's precious theological insight on this matter. While we may disagree on this topic, I do not doubt that we agree with Calvin that Word and sacrament are the only appointed means by which we may approach our God.

**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)

Theme: The Holy Spirit in Biblical Christianity

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**

**Please pray for guidance and blessing from the Lord as we plan for this event.
(Youth & Fellowship Committee)**

Prescribed Search / Youth Work

OCTOBER 2010

SENIOR and INTERMEDIATE (Intermediate omit questions 1 and 6)

MATTHEW 26

1. What did the woman do with the alabaster box (flask) of ointment (oil)? What memorial would she have? (2 separate verses)
2. For how much money did Judas sell Jesus?
3. What did Jesus do with the bread and wine at the supper? (3 verses)
4. When Peter was told he would deny Jesus three times, what was his answer?
5. What was Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane when he went away the second time?
6. When the disciple had cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, what did Jesus say to him? (3 verses)
7. How did Jesus answer when the high priest adjured him to tell them whether he was the Christ?
8. What did Peter do when he remembered what Jesus had said about his denial?

JUNIOR

MATTHEW 26:1—35

1. What did the woman do with the alabaster box (flask) of ointment (oil)?
2. How much money did the Jews give Judas for betraying Jesus?
3. What did Jesus say after he took the bread and blessed it? And also, after he took the cup? (3 verses only)
4. What did Jesus tell Peter he would do before the cock crowed?

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

Mutiny on the Bounty

The Pitcairn story by Rowland Ward who, with his wife, recently spent two weeks on Norfolk Island

Probably most people have heard of the mutiny against William Bligh (1754-1817) which has featured in five films and numerous articles and books. Lieut. Bligh and his crew were on an expedition backed by Sir Joseph Banks to collect breadfruit plants in Tahiti and take them to the West Indies where it was thought they would provide a cheap food source for the slaves. After several months in Tahiti the 26 metre long *Bounty* set sail with her 44 crew for the West Indies. After sailing some 2,000 kms a bloodless mutiny occurred led by the first mate, Fletcher Christian who had left a native white on Tahiti. The date was 28 April 1792. Bligh was an enlightened man for his times and was not harsh. However, he was dictatorial, and humiliation of Christian in front of others may have been the last straw. Set adrift with 18 men in a 7 metre



launch with no charts, a broken sextant, a pocket watch and limited provisions Bligh managed the amazing feat of sailing 5500 km to Timor via Tofua Island near where the mutiny occurred. He lost no one on the voyage, which he calculated was 6700 kms altogether, except a man who was murdered by natives on Tofua. Several men died subsequently. Bligh returned to England and his report

created a sensation. Search was made in vain for the *Bounty* hence the saying 'bounty hunters'.

Pitcairn Island Meanwhile the mutineers and four loyal to Bligh returned to Tahiti where the majority remained. Nine men, led by Fletcher Christian, together with six Polynesian men and twelve Polynesian woman and a baby set off in the *Bounty*. On 15 January 1790 they chanced upon Pitcairn Island, which was not correctly marked on charts, and they felt safe on this tiny 4.5 sq km hideaway. They burnt the *Bounty* to prevent detection or desertion. Each of the sailors took a wife for himself and also divided the land into 9 parts. So there no land and only were three women for the six Polynesian men. They were treated as slaves. The sexual and racial situation was an explosive mix. Two of the sailors' wives died so they took two of the other women. Four mutineers were killed in one day, including Fletcher Christian. Soon there were only four mutineers, ten women and some children. More violence, a suicide and one death by natural causes and in 1800 John Adams was the only mutineer left, and he was constantly drunk.

However, Adams was converted through reading the Bible and the Church of England prayer book taken from the *Bounty*. In 1814 a British vessel arrived and found a quiet God-fearing community led by Adams. The news caused another great sensation in England, and much interest in the Pitcairners followed, and they were often viewed through rose-coloured spectacles. In 1856 the 193 inhabitants moved to the larger Norfolk Island which had previously been a convict settlement, and is now administered as an Australia external territory. The impressive convict ruins at Kingston, just a few weeks ago declared a World Heritage site, remind one of Port Arthur.

Move to Norfolk 1856

While some few returned to Pitcairn later, and about 50 people live on Pitcairn today, most Pitcairners remained on Norfolk where a large proportion of the permanent population of about 2,000 are descendants of the

Rowland Ward

mutineers. By the 1870s the popular image of a God-fearing community was showing marks of strain. Formal adherence to Christianity could not conceal underlying problems. High Church tendencies in the Church of England of the time, and contacts through American trading vessels saw a strong Methodist movement after the death of the long-serving chaplain/leader of the community in 1884. A small Seventh-day Adventist Group soon followed. The Roman Catholic Church only came in 1957. Today the Church of England congregation is under the Diocese of Sydney. We enjoyed a good Biblical message, but the regular attendance is only 28 or 29 plus tourists. A third of the population describe themselves as C of E, but an equal number do not state who say they have no religion. Despite its remarkable origins active



The Bounty Bible in the Pitcairn Museum

religious practice in the community is modest – no more than about 7% of the population on the average day of worship plus such as attend. Norfolk is still an idyllic place in terms of climate and life style. There is no port, so goods are landed by longboat and are expensive. But the land is productive, meat and fish reasonable in price, and taxes modest (no income tax or council rates, but a 12% GST). It's not a place for children really (just about everyone on the plane with us was older than we are!), but very interesting historically, and very restful. The Gospel is preached but the people in general are content to be caring to each other but not committed to Jesus Christ. That's not enough for them or for us. Lord, wilt thou not us revive!

Was this space for your church news and photographs?

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

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

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

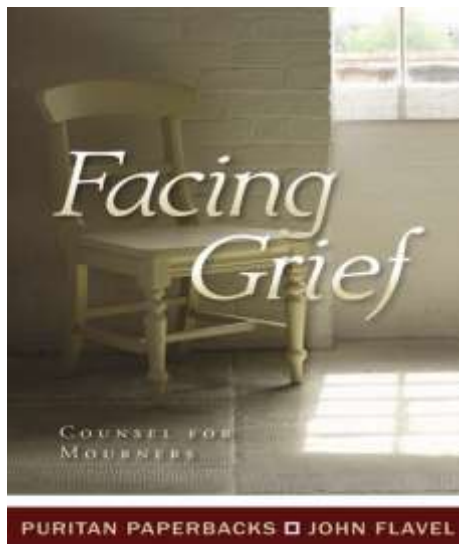
Books in the Banner

Facing Grief & Repentance

Facing Grief: Counsel for Mourners

John Flavel (Banner of Truth: Puritan paperbacks)

Men and women of all ages, of all cultures, of all levels of education and of all walks of life, are inescapably subject to emotions of happiness and sorrow. No one is free from grief, even Christian pastors! John Flavel was a pastor who knew deep grief. After two years of marriage, his first wife, Joana, died in childbirth, together with their first child. *Facing Grief* (originally *A Token for Mourners*) is a small book designed to help Christians manage the trauma of sorrow in a biblical way. In this work, John reflects on the words of Luke 7:13, 'And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, Weep not'. From this verse Flavel shows readers that our involvement in sorrow is not to forbid it or pretend is not there, but to avoid despair and practice doxology as we live through it. Flavel teaches us to achieve this spiritual state by carefully distinguishing between 'moderate' and 'immoderate' grief. This book is a warehouse of pastoral insight, comfort and healing for grieving properly.

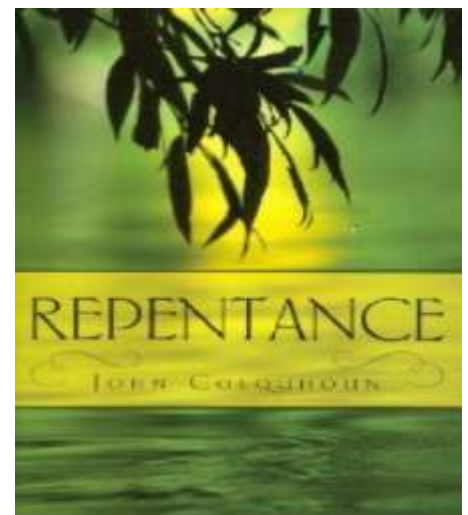


Repentance: John Colquhoun (Banner of Truth)

The puritans used to say that there are two fundamental spiritual activities in the Christian life: faith and repentance. These two graces are important because they keep a steady, God-centred, and flourishing spiritual life. That's why the doctrine of repentance is never out of date. In his book simply titled *Repentance* John Colquhoun argues that one cannot understand the Christian life for what it is, unless true Spirit-prompted repentance is felt as a bitter remorse, sincere sorrow, and a resolute renuncia-

Reviewed by Andres Miranda

tion of sin to live right before God. In a culture where pride is applauded, superficiality is widespread and repentance is rarely mentioned in evangelicalism, trying to promote repentance seems to be pointless. But nothing is more urgent today than re-introducing this emphasis in Christianity. If we want to see churches packed with people hungry for the things of God, repenting sincerely is the first step. Colquhoun's book provides the guidelines for this to happen. This book is the perfect gift for the church. It is solid wisdom and sound theology.



Churches in the Banner

Ulverstone Winter Car Rally 2010

Our 15th annual winter car rally took place on the 4th September. Pictured receiving the award from Eric Van Der Neut are Robert Kingston, Tim Aughty and Tom Parker. This years' course took us through the townships of Gawler, Turners Beach and Forth before returning to Ulverstone. Although a very wet day, we enjoyed some dry cover for the lunch BBQ and finalised the day with a 16th birthday afternoon tea for Cameron Hamilton. A feature of the car rallies is that the winners have the privilege of setting the course for the following year.



Cards for India

Recently, our Convener of Missions, Rev. Peter Smith, forwarded an e-mail from Pradeep Kumar about used greeting cards for India. We, on the Northern Rivers, would appreciate feedback from other Congregations with different ideas and suggestions about meeting this request. The postage rate for 500 grms large letter has increased from \$6 in 2000 to \$8.80 in 2010.

Our method is as follows: Instead of packaging the whole front of the card we now trim them to 8 cm x 11 cm or smaller, 1 card becomes 2 at least. The clear plastic lid from boxes of greeting cards makes a good template, if you don't have access to a guillotine. The trimmed cards are then put into 110 grm



bundles and wrapped tightly in OSO sandwich bags fastened with dux tape. Four flat bundles are then wrapped tightly in brown paper leaving one end open to add a few special complete cards to make up the weight to 500 grms. It was thought these complete cards with Text or Christian message could be a reward for collecting a certain number of trimmed

cards. Most bundles contain 50 to 60 cards depending on the thickness of paper, so 4 bundles plus 5 or 6 extra cards works out to 3 to 4 cents per card.

Mrs. Premlata Kumar,
Mission Compound,
Chhapara,
District Seoni
M.P. 480,884
INDIA

Anguri Christian Health
Centre
Mission Compound
Chhapara,
District Seoni,
M.P. 480,884
INDIA

Rev. Shyam Babu,
Azad Ward,
4 Kacheri Road,
Lakhnadon,
M.P. 480886
District Seoni,
INDIA

The cards are so well received we feel it is a worthwhile project. If you would let us know what you are doing in your congregation it would be most appreciated.

Of course it is necessary for us to add an AIRMAIL and ID sticker to the parcel, as well as a Customs Declaration stating USED GREETING CARDS and NIL value.

The addresses we use for posting to India are:

- Denice Campbell, Unit 1, 8-10 Wharf Street, Maclean, 2463, or e-mail rosscam1@bigpond.com