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GOD made them Great: Reformation 500

'History Makes Men while Men Make History.' -- Celia Sadler

God raises up ordinary people to accomplish extra-ordinary exploits at critical times. The title of this article is suggested by John Tallach's book (published by Banner of Truth), in which he shows the heavenly call made to weak instruments, likely to be overlooked by others. The Lord in His outworking of history, also bids the rulers of nations to fulfill His sovereign purposes. *'For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, even for this purpose I have raised you up, that I might show My power in you and that My Name might be declared throughout all the earth.'* (Romans 9:17). Of course the great of this world think that they are independent and in control, and cannot be 'pawns' in the outworking of Divine Providence. And as has been commented by Alexander Carson in his *History of Providence* regarding the unwitting part played by Cyrus, Alexander the Great, Caesar, and Napoleon: *'They served God, but they did not intend to serve Him.'*

While the mighty may be reluctant to admit to an influence other than their own plans, those low in their own estimation who love the Name of Jesus, are blown over by the unconditional nature of His, 'follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.' The Lord is no respecter of persons, and uses the foolish things of this world like us! Dr Andrew Murray on his call to the Groote Kerk in Cape Town, remarked, "If God wills to bless, no instrument is too weak, and blessed it is to be the instrument which He condescends to use."

Destiny Has Overtaken You!

Such a confluence of parties, the leaders, and those who serve the Cause of Lord God, is a common theme in the Bible. Pharaoh and Moses; Ahab and Elijah; and our Lord Jesus Himself with Pilate and Herod, and the high priest, Caiaphas, are good examples.

The same risen and ascended Saviour and Lord, about 500 years ago sent a humble Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, to free mankind from its 'Babylonian Captivity' under the papacy, which boasted that there was no salvation outside of Rome and the Vatican; and that all mankind, including the Greek Orthodox Church, were damned to eternal hell if not subject to Christ's 'Vicar' on earth, namely, the pope! Another player in this momentous event, was Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. The odds were against Luther, but only if Jehovah was kept out of the equation. Enter the Protestant Reformation!

Truly great men and women of destiny sprung up all over Europe. Light shone, and Jesus would reign wherever 'the sun its successive journies run.' (Issac Watts) Church missions were to later follow, not to grow empires, but to save souls. That culture and Christianity were intertwined, is a fact of life. Dr David Livingstone, the larger than life, but practical Scot, called for commerce and Christianity to go hand in hand into the hinterland of Africa. He hoped to uplift the continent where his heart was to rest one day, symbolic of the place of his affections.

Where Is The God Of Elijah?

Fast-forward to 2016 in South Africa. We have recently left behind one of the most rudderless years since democracy. A crisis of leadership, and irresponsible 'divide and rule', rhetoric from political leaders. Xenophobia; an ongoing drought; threatening anarchy at universities; and amateur 'Monopoly'-playing with the cabinet. That is sad. Add to this the shocking violent crime that we seem to be conditioned to, and one will agree that confidence is low. Do we deserve this state of the nation?

Surely we need the Lord to raise up patriots who love and serve as a calling from the Lord. All is not lost, and I was interested to read Philip Rosenthal from the Christian News Network, referring to Africa as the 'new Christendom'. Readers of our Reformation Reveille 2015, may recall an email from a locally based Zimbabwean, Edson Siwella, who is studying for his doctorate, asking about the Reformation, and the reformers' attitude towards the Jews, and politics; also concerning Pneumatology, i.e. the Holy Spirit. Such men mean business, and may be a new crop of prophets ready to stand up to the Ahabs of this world.

Conserve the good

The entrance of the Gospel into sub-Saharan Africa should be given credit. The politicking and discounting of such a legacy, is playing into the hands of the devil, and sows confusion. The liberal dominee, president Burger of the old ZAR, is remembered for his beautiful saying: '*Neem wat goed is uit die verlede en bou die toekoms daarop.*' ('Take that which is good from the past and build the future on it.')

And all our races have put a great deal into South Africa, with prayers going up to the Lord Jesus Christ, that He will turn the tide of hatred and greed that threatens to bring the nation low. I know that the Lord is doing a new thing, and will not call us, 'Forsaken'! (Isaiah 62:4).

***'Not the cold hard things of facts and dates, of ink and parchment,
but the life as they lived it, its trials, triumphs and tragedies;
warm with the life blood of those who lived and died for us,
to make Our Country, and though they knew it not -- to make it One....
Here in South Africa we have hidden treasure beyond the dreams of avarice.'***
-- Sir Percy FitzPatrick, of *Jock of the Bushveld* fame.

-- Craig Hounsom (Editor)

Bibliography & Editor's Note:

Never A Young Man -- Celia Sadler. (Letters and Journals of Rev William Shaw)

The requested treatment of the above heavyweight topics by Edson Siwella, has been moved to the 'Winter Reveille'. Dr. J Gresham Machen, in his classic, *Christianity & Liberalism*, noted that men argue about the things that are important. These are points worth looking at!

***'He can take a man or nation who has all the impotence of the worm,
and by the invigoration of His own Spirit, He can endow with strength
by which a noble mark is left upon the history of the time.'***

-- Dr A Jowett, on Isaiah 41:14&15, in *Streams in the Desert*. (Mrs Charles Cowman)

***For your Diary:
Reformation Sunday: 30th October 2016:
Remember our Protestant Heritage every Day!***

War on the Womb

Every year, on 1st February, a march takes place in Cape Town to mourn the by now 1.3 million babies who have been killed by abortion since its legalization in South Africa nineteen years ago. It is a funeral procession addressing itself to the conscience of the nation. At the gates of Parliament a Service is held. Prayers are offered, and a wreath is laid. This year a petition was handed to the government demanding that the Termination of Pregnancy Act be overturned. Mr Steve Swart (Member of Parliament for the African Christian Democratic Party) received it and pledged to lay it before the House.

For nineteen years *Africa Christian Action* has called for and observed a *National Day of Repentance* (1st February 2016) in line with an increasingly international *Sanctity of Human Life Sunday* on the last Sunday of January. Their six meter billboard trailer bears the messages '*Abortion is Murder*' and '*Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.*' (Proverbs 31:8) Walking behind a hearse, the marchers carry baby-sized coffins, crosses, flowers and flags, as they mourn the hundreds of thousands of little dead children who never had a funeral.

The womb is the unsafest place on earth.

Abortion on demand was first sanctioned in the United States of America 43 years ago. Since then 58 million American babies have perished. According to the Guttmacher Institute's latest report, every year 42 million abortions take place worldwide. Up to 2 billion unborn human beings have perished since 1960.

There are '*six things which the LORD doth hate,*' says the Bible, and one of them is '*hands that shed innocent blood.*' (Proverbs 6:17). '*Ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are,*' God declares, '*for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it.*' (Numbers 35:33)

In South Africa 1.3 million innocents have been slain, and their blood pollutes the land. Each little one, however small, was '*made in secret,*' '*covered in its mother's womb,*' and was '*fearfully and wonderfully made.*' (Psalm 139). The death of each babe has brought guilt and sorrow; and to its mother, life-long grief.

The UN's Radical Abortion Agenda

Though many countries, especially in the developed world, now have a negative population growth, the United Nations continues to promote abortion. In their report, *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014: Gender Equality and Sustainable Development*, they claim to promote '*reproductive health*' and the welfare of women, but its coded language hides '*nothing less than a battle plan for a deadly assault on life and marriage.*' So says Steven W. Mosher of the *Population Research Institute* (a Pro-Life organization).* The words '*Reproductive Health,*' he says, mean sterilization campaigns aiming at '*chemically or surgically disabling as many female reproductive systems as possible.*' The word '*sustainable population*' means to '*restrict the population by promoting sterilization, contraception and abortion.*' The word '*safe abortion*' means '*legalization of abortion on demand throughout all nine months of pregnancy.*' The UN supports the cruel one-child policy of China under which, over the past 34 years, millions of young women have been forced to abort and to be sterilized.

All this, of course, is couched in Human Rights terms and alluring language, but we must not be deceived. **The War on the Womb is real.** It is a battle against life itself, and ultimately against the Lord of Life, Who said: '*Suffer little children... to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*' (Matthew 19:16). Every Christian, every civilized person, needs to stand up against abortion which is an assault on our humanity and a defiance of God, the

Creator. We must not shy away from it. With one voice we must *'speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.'*

Teardrops are falling. We embrace this sad day.

A sweet little baby has just passed away.

So perfect his spirit, so perfect his love,

So perfect a gift from the Father above. (Ron Tranmer).

-- Dorothea Scarborough

*Steven W Mosher, *The UN Continues to Push a Radical Abortion Agenda*, Population Research Institute Review, Volume 25, Number 1, January-February 2015.

Editor's Comment:

How will history judge our Spartan and cruel generation?

More important, what of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Protector of children and the weak?

'But who shall offend one of these little ones who believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.' (Matthew 18: 6)

'Speak the truth, even if your voice shakes.' -- Unknown author.

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879)

The devoted daughter who dedicated her life to praising God

Occasionally, you have the privilege to meet someone who is really too 'good' for this tarnished world -- someone who is kind, caring, and for whom transitory pleasures and the pursuit of material gain mean nothing. Instead, their whole being is suffused by a love of God which illuminates their personality. Frances Ridley Havergal was just such a person.

She was born in the village of Astley, Worcestershire, in 1836, a few months before the Accession of Queen Victoria. Frances was the youngest in the family of two sons and four daughters of the Rev. William Henry Havergal and his wife, Jane. He was a gifted musician with a wide knowledge of psalmody, who composed and published church services as well as hymn tunes and chants. A fervent evangelical clergyman, he had a reputation as an effective preacher and a caring pastor; and was later made an Honorary Canon of Worcester Cathedral.

Frances was a high-spirited and affectionate child with a mop of golden curls, who was dubbed 'Little Quicksilver' by the family. She revelled in the countryside around her home and developed a deep love and knowledge of Nature. Taught both by her sisters and her mother, who had grown up in the Sussex town of East Grinstead, where she had been known as the 'lovely Jane Head', Frances proved a bright pupil. By the time she was seven years old, she was writing her own hymns and, having inherited her father's musical talents, she was soon writing tunes for them as well!

In 1848, Frances's beloved mother died after a long illness. Shortly before her death she had said to her daughter: *"Fanny, pray to God to prepare you for all He is preparing for you."* Frances never forgot those words and she later said the message became 'a life prayer' for her.

Pray to God to Prepare you

It was eventually decided that Frances should continue her education at 'Belmont', a boarding school near Campden Hill in London. The school was run by a Mrs Teed and it was renowned for its fervently evangelical teaching. Frances, who had many doubts and worries about her faith, found the school provided the spiritual guidance she was seeking and, soon

after she was 15, she recorded: 'I committed my soul to the Saviour ... and earth and heaven seemed bright from that moment.'

Frances was confirmed in Worcester Cathedral in a service which left a deep impression on her. She wrote that when the words, '*Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly Grace, that she may continue Thine forever*' were pronounced over her head, 'if ever my heart followed a prayer, it did then; if ever it thrilled with earnest longing, not unmixed with joy, it did at the words '*Thine forever*.' She continued ever after to mark the anniversary of her confirmation.

It is my meditation all the day

Frances read a great deal, but within the narrow confines dictated by her father's very Puritan tastes. Some poetry was permitted, but he would not allow her to read any classics of English literature -- even Shakespeare was taboo! The Bible was the only book he really approved of, and as a result Frances virtually knew it by heart. She had a great gift for languages and became proficient in German, French, Latin, Italian, Greek and Hebrew. However, by far the most important language to her was music, which she regarded as 'a sort of alphabet of the language of heaven -- not any more equal to it, of course, than an ABC book is to Milton -- but a sort of introduction.'

If Frances fretted and rebelled against her rigid upbringing, it is not recorded. Instead, she seems to have been the perfect vicar's daughter, throwing herself wholeheartedly into philanthropy. She started Sunday School and Bible classes and went around the community helping others wherever possible and regarded herself as 'a maid of all work in the household of God.'

While governess to her nieces, she regularly contributed hymns, poetry and articles to various publications. She said that her work had nothing to do with her being 'clever' or 'gifted' because God spoke the lines to her. He had not given her a poetic chest of gold to do whatever she wanted, but instead kept hold of the treasure, and gave her a gold coin every now and again.

Consecrated Lord to Thee

Early in 1874 Frances went on a five-day visit to a friend's house. There were about ten people there, some of whom were unbelievers, and others who were lukewarm Christians. She prayed that everyone in the house would be given the blessing of true faith, and her prayer was granted. On the very last night of her visit she was woken up by the governess of the two daughters of the household. They were very upset and confused, but Frances talked to them and suddenly they, too, became firm believers. Frances was so happy that she could not sleep and the words of a hymn formed themselves in her head, until they ended with the words '*Ever, only, all for Thee!*' This was the story behind Frances Ridley Havergal's most famous hymn '*Take My Life, and Let it Be.*' She always sang the hymn to the tune 'Patmos' which her father had written, although now it is sung to a variety of different tunes, including 'St Bees' by J.B. Dykes, and also 'Consecration', which is attributed both to William Havergal and Mozart! In the same year -- 1874 -- another book of her work was published. Entitled *Under the Surface* it proved as popular as the earlier volume. Frances also wrote a number of children's stories which achieved a wide circulation.

After the death of her stepmother, Frances went to live with her maiden sister, Maria, at Caswall Bay, near the Mumbles in Wales. Even though she had recurring bouts of ill-health, her work-load seemed to grow rather than diminish. There were increasing demands for her work, as well as the needs of her new community to administer to.

It was because she insisted on addressing a Temperance meeting on a wet and misty day towards the end of May 1879 that she caught a chill which turned into a fever. Her condition rapidly deteriorated, but she viewed her dangerous illness with joy rather than dismay. She knew that she would soon be in her true home, which all her life she had been striving to be worthy of. Frances Ridley Havergal died on 3rd June, 1879.

Two years before her death Frances had written: "I am not one of those terrible 'strong-minded women', I think we have quite 'rights' enough in proportion to our powers and position."

It's a comment that was very typical of a Victorian lady, although it would doubtless make some modern women cringe! However, despite her modesty about her weakness in resolve and her creative ability, Frances Ridley Havergal proved to be one of the most remarkable hymn-writers of her time. Like the words of her famous hymn, her life was consecrated to God, and she had the will and the determination to live **'ever, only, all for Thee.'**

-- Susan Beaty: This England: Spring, 2001 (Shortened – the Editor)

"Faith sees in every disappointment, 'He is love, He is working'."

-- Dr Andrew Murray Jnr

Sayings of Frances Ridley Havergal

Seraphic Composer of Commitment

- *Just in preparation to my sense of personal insufficiency in writing anything, God sends His blessing and power with it I can't write a single verse unless I go to Him for it and get from Him.*
- *How to start? Begin where you are, do the next thing.*
- *Writing is praying with me.*
- *I am lost in amazement! There has not failed one Word of all His good promise.*
- *I suppose that God's crosses are often made of unexpected and strange material.*
- *....give thanks for 'spiritual mercies negative.' We cannot even imagine all that God has suffered us not to do.*
- *I have learned a real sympathy with others walking in darkness, and sometimes it has seemed to help me to help them.*
- *For successful or unsuccessful alike, 'vanity of vanities' seems the truest characteristic of every life not devoted to the very highest aim.*
- *Why should I not take for granted all I find in the Bible?*
- *Prepare me for all that Thou art preparing for me.*
- *And the cry is not long, connected thoughts and prayers; a cry is just an unworded dart upwards of the heart.*
- *... a great deal of living must go to a very little writing.*
- *'O Master.' It is perhaps my favourite title, because it implies rule and submission.*
- *... because He knows best what will really ripen and further His work in us.*

-- Frances Havergal on her nine years' being laid aside by ill-health, and her pen of a ready writer unused.

Frances Havergal also preferred the word 'transfer' to 'substitution' concerning Christ's Death, seeing our Lord as 'Pilot, Life-boat, and Haven.'

-- Quotations compiled by Craig Hounsom (Editor).

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The Vision Lives: BH Pearson; & *A Short Biography of Christian Women.*

'Faith is believing in spite of the evidence; and watching the evidence change.'

(A quote given to the editor by Mrs June Booth of Sea View Congregational Church, Durban; and which has Jesus' glory in view. This lady of faith as a little girl was present at the opening of the 'new' church building on 17th May 1939, prior to the outbreak of World War II!)

Morning & Evening Reading (October 5th)

(Charles Spurgeon)

'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' (Mark 16:16.)

Mr Macdonald asked the inhabitants of the island of St Kilda how a man must be saved:

An old man replied, "We shall be saved if we repent and forsake our sins, and turn to God."

"Yes," said the middle-aged female, "and with a true heart too."

"Ay, rejoined a third, "and with prayer"; and, added a fourth:

"It must be the prayer of the heart."

"And we must be diligent too," said a fifth, "in keeping the commandments."

Thus each having contributed his mite, and feeling that a very decent creed had been made up, they all looked and listened for the preacher's approbation, but they had aroused his deepest pity. The carnal mind always maps out for itself a way in which self can work and become great, but the Lord's way is quite the reverse. Believing and being baptized are no matters of merit to be gloried in -- they are so simple that boasting is excluded, and free grace bears the palm.

It may be that the reader is unsaved -- what is the reason?

Do you think the way of salvation as laid down in the text to be dubious?

How can that be when God has pledged His own word for its certainty?

Do you think it is too easy? Why, then, do you not attend to it?

Its ease leaves those without excuse who neglect it.

To believe is simply to trust, to depend, and to rely upon Jesus Christ.

To be baptized is to submit to the ordinance which our Lord fulfilled at Jordan; to which the converted ones submitted at Pentecost; and to which the jailer yielded the obedience the very night of his conversion. The outward sign saves not, but it sets forth to us our death, burial, and resurrection with Jesus; and like the Lord's Supper, is not to be neglected.

Reader, do you believe in Jesus? Then, dear friend, dismiss your fears, you shall be saved.

Are you still an unbeliever, then remember there is but one door, and if you will not enter by it, you will perish in your sins.

The Minister's Fainting Fits

Spurgeon in his brilliant *Lectures To My Students*, entitled a chapter, 'The Minister's Fainting Fits'. The blurring of the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the Law of Moses, goes back to New Testament times. It is with this particularly in mind that Paul wrote in his epistle: 'O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you having begun in the Spirit, are you now made perfect by the flesh?' (Galatians 3:1-3). I suppose that such blurring must have really tested the apostle to the Gentiles!

Pastors have hearts, and times of feeling 'down'. They are not to be confused with the archangel Gabriel! One respected British-born preacher told me that some congregants on a Sunday leave the service to go home to have 'roast minister'! Rather than such power tussles, the servants of Jesus should be held up in prayer. Once, while at Mentone, France, Spurgeon was asked the secret of his success by a Doctor of Divinity from the USA. Significantly, he replied that *his people pray for him!* It is indeed true that the most encouraging mark of our ministry is that our churches know the ABC of the Gospel.

-- Craig Hounsom (Editor)

***'Lord, what is to be done to teach Thy ministers
the inconceivable glory of their calling?'***

-- Dr Andrew Murray Jnr

THE THIRD MAN: Ulrich Zwingli

An introduction to the Swiss Reformer

The sinister and mysterious old movie, *The Third Man* (1949), was based on a novel by Graham Greene. 'The Third Man' in eminence of the Protestant Reformers, is the enigmatic Ulrich Zwingli. In chronological terms, born 1st January 1484 (died 11th October 1531), Zwingli is second to Luther, but he is somewhat forgotten; and hence is overshadowed by another Swiss-based leader: the Frenchman, John Calvin.

Dr Merle D'Aubigne, the renowned French-Swiss historian, discerned a certain spontaneous movement of God in both Germany and Switzerland that transcended geographical borders. Zwingli was born within months of Luther, and like him grew up a devout Roman Catholic. While Luther initially hoped to reform 'Rome' from within; as a papal partisan, Zwingli enjoyed honour in the form of an annual pension from Pope Julius II.

By degrees their eyes were opened, and they later, as with the other reformers, identified the papacy with 'the man of sin.' (2 Thess. 2: 3&4).

Birth of the Swiss Reformation

'Renaissance humanism, with its universal values of emphasis on scholarship, had taken root in the country. It was within this environment, defined by the confluence of Swiss patriotism and humanism, that Zwingli was born.'

Though the great Erasmus of Rotterdam influenced Zwingli, he was neither Erasmian nor Lutheran in his theology. The Master of Arts (1506 Vienna), did utilize Erasmus' Greek New Testament; and on 1st January 1519, his 35th birthday, he gave his first sermon in the city his name is associated with, namely Zurich. The young priest deviated from a Gospel lesson prescribed for that particular Sunday, to the Gospel of Matthew.

That same year he would survive the plague. That was a catalyst, strongly reminiscent of the Morning Star of the Reformation of Fourteenth Century England, John Wycliffe, who getting up from his sick-bed, amidst the gloomy predictions of the monks who resisted his reforms, quoted Psalm 118:17:

'I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord!'

The Affair of the Sausage (1522), was a counter to the bondage of a 'touch not, taste not' approach to life and foods. This seemingly petty matter is considered to be the start of the Reformation in Switzerland. The reformer was truly radical in certain sensitive areas – *'His attack on the claim that tithing was a divine institution, has had the greatest theological and social impact.'* There is maybe a hint of a modern man here, for he tended to look at the Bible in a different light to the Vatican that felt it owned the faithful.

Progress of the Swiss Reformation

The thirteen Swiss states, or cantons, were independent, unlike the modern federal Swiss government. From 1526 the Reformation in the Confederacy took place.

It is claimed that Zwingli hoped for a theocracy in Zurich, where God's direct rule is brought to bear on society, similar to that which Calvin much later mooted for Geneva.

The conflict with the Anabaptists, the so-called Radical Reformers, over the extent of reforms, has left a stain on Zwingli, and some of the other Reformers.

While the Reformers agreed on the great 'Solas' of the Reformation, they sadly showed gross impatience with each other on non-essentials. The Marburg Colloquy (1529), was a meeting of the Reformation giants. Luther was very literal on the word 'is', as used by our Lord Jesus at the Last Supper. Zwingli steered away from anything close to the *transubstantiation* of the Vatican's mass, where the elements of the bread and wine are 'changed' into the real substance of the Lord's body and blood by the priest. Nor did he

accept the *consubstantiation* of the Lutherans, which holds that the bread and the wine co-exist with the body and blood of Jesus, and become real to the believer through his or her faith. The outcome was that there was no accord on the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.*

The Swiss Reformer, in rejecting a literal sense interpretation (based on the words of Jesus in John 6:63A: 'It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing'), always maintained the Divine authorship of Scripture:

'According to Zwingli, the cornerstone of theology is the Bible. Zwingli appealed to Scripture constantly in his writings. He placed its authority above other sources such as the ecumenical councils or the Church Fathers, although he did not hesitate to use other sources to support his arguments. The principles that guide Zwingli's interpretations are derived from his rationalist humanist education, and his Reformed understanding of the Bible.' (Wikipedia).

The end battle

One of the possible reasons for Zwingli being the 'forgotten Reformer', is his untimely death in battle at the age of forty-seven. The tension between the Swiss cantons, some *for* (Zurich and Geneva, etc), or *against* the Reformation (Berne, etc), with their soldiers notorious for their mercenary dispositions, would tragically result in loss of life, one being Ulrich Zwingli, who accompanied the troops of Zurich.

He should have remembered that the pen is mightier than the sword!

*The beauty of Israel is slain upon your high places;
how are the mighty fallen!
Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
lest the daughters if the uncircumcised triumph. (2 Samuel 1: 19 & 20)*

Zwingli's aversion to externals and a sacerdotal priestly authority holding power over the saints of Jesus, may have left a far greater legacy in the Protestant church, with its embracement of the Bible's teaching of the priesthood of all believers, than he is generally given credit for.

-- Craig Hounsom (Editor)

Notes & Bibliography:

*See Book Review [2] below: *A Clear and Simple Treatise Respecting the Lord's Supper.*
The History of the Reformation in Europe: Dr. Merle D'Aubigne
The History of the Reformation: Principal Lindsay; & 'Ulrich Zwingli': Wikipedia

Zwingli's 'Pestlied' ('Plague Hymn')

*'THY purpose fulfil:
nothing can be too severe for me.
I am THY vessel
for YOU to make whole or break in pieces
Since, if YOU take hence
my spirit from this earth,
YOU do it so that it will not grow evil,
and will not mar the pious lives of others.'*

'He is your friend who pushes you nearer to God.'

-- Abraham Kuyper (theologian, and former Prime Minister of the Netherlands)

Gearing the Church for Evangelism

Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher, pastor and evangelist in London, once said to a group of clergy:

'Go forward in actual work, for after all, we shall be known by what we have done. We ought to be mighty indeed, as well as word. We must have done with daydreams and get to work. Brethren, do something. Do something. Do something. While committees waste their time over resolutions, do something. While societies and unions are making constitutions, let us win souls. Too often we discuss, and discuss, and discuss; and Satan laughs up his sleeve. It is time we had done planning and sought something to plan. Our one aim is to save sinners, and this we are not to talk about, but to do in the power of God.'

Yes, friends, it is much easier in our churches to talk indefinitely about this challenge, but never to take it up.

The primary task of the church

Apart from worship and prayer, evangelism, I believe, is the primary task of the Church. Our Lord's last word in His Great Commission was to go out and preach the Gospel in all the world and make disciples of all nations. And surely his *last words* must be our *first concern*. Indeed, the power of the Holy Spirit, as promised in Acts 1:8, is given so that we may be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the ends of the earth. However, many churches are like an ingrown toenail. You have a group of people who have a lovely, 'clubby' time together and the toenail doesn't hurt at first while it is growing in, but after a while it will start to hurt as the in-grownness of the church and its 'exclusive club'-nature begins to be registered. The spiritual body begins to hurt, if it doesn't have a strong outward focus on mission.

I like to think about the local church as a place out of which evangelism should flow. The local church is the best, most logical and most effective vehicle for this activity -- it is God's Plan A. And when the church doesn't get on with its task of evangelism, God calls up His Plan B and raises up various types of para-church agencies which go out and do the job. But it is the local congregation that should primarily have on its heart the evangelisation of its community, region, and the world. This cannot be fobbed off on para-church agencies, useful though they may be.

Some people in our churches say: "Oh well, I am not keen on evangelism. I have reservations about certain types of evangelism." So nothing ever happens!

A woman once came up to D L Moody, the great American evangelist, and said:

"Mr Moody, I don't like the way you do evangelism."

Moody said to her: "Madam, do you do evangelism?" She replied: "No, I don't."

He replied: "Well, I prefer my way of *doing* it, to your way of *not doing* it!"

It is very important to realise that the major outreach of the Lord to the world happens in two primary ways: through the local church, and through lay people in the local church. Notice I did not say through the pastors. Christianity is not primarily an ecclesiastical movement. It is primarily a lay movement.

The pastor's task is to train and to activate the workforce of the lay people. Ephesians 4:11-12 says there are different gifts in the Body of Christ 'for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry.' The ministry is primarily the lay person's job and a good pastor will ensure that this is the case.

In fact, God is already using lay people to win others to Christ. If I were to ask the members of your church how they came to know the Lord, I can already predict that the

majority came to know the Lord through the witness of an individual -- not by a radio programme, a pastor's sermon, or an evangelistic crusade. It's almost foolproof.

Out of 4 000 international church leaders present at the Lausanne Congress on World Evangelisation in Manila in 1973, more than 3 000 came to know Christ through the witness of another lay person.

So lay people, you are whom God has chosen to get His message out! Are you doing it? Or are you relying on the pastor to try and do it all for you?

-- Dr Michael Cassidy: African Enterprise (www.africanenterprise.com)
(Extract from an article in *'Practically Speaking'*, October 2015 – the Editor.)

'A crucified style best suits a crucified Christ.' -- John Flavel

(from the biography of Philip Henry by Peter Lewis. Henry was a 17th century Puritan and Presbyterian; and the father of Matthew Henry, the author of a classic Bible commentary.)

'Let your preaching be plain.'

'Painted glass is most curious, plain glass is most conspicuous.'

– Philip Henry, to a fellow Non-conformist (from the biography of Philip Henry by Peter Lewis, as above.)

Towards Religious Freedom at the Cape (Part 2)

Man of the Moment: Martin Melck, founder of the Lutheran Church in South Africa

After a decades' long stalemate, the time came when one man decided to take a great risk to secure full religious liberty for Lutherans at the Cape. That man was Martin Melck:

Born in the Lutheran town of Memel in East Prussia in 1723, Melck had been trained in every aspect of the building trade and had qualified as a master builder at the early age of twenty-three. He then joined the Dutch East India Company as a soldier destined for service at the Cape, where he arrived in 1746.

He was assigned as a builder and labourer to Jacob Cloete, burgher and member of Heemraad (local court) of Stellenbosch. A year later he was earning his living by supplying builders with bricks and lime, and in 1750 he bought two farms. Next, upon discharge from the Company, he registered as a free burgher (citizen), and in 1752 married the widow Anna Margaretha Giebeler, daughter of the prominent German Lutheran Johann Heinrich Hop. By 1766 he was generally considered the wealthiest man, and certainly the most influential Lutheran, at the Cape.

To him the religious impasse was a new challenge.

Strand Street Plotting

By 1770 Melck had acquired several large plots in Strand Street. On one of these he now erected a large building, ostensibly a warehouse. But when it reached roof-height it was quite apparent that it could not be an ordinary warehouse. Rumours began to spread that it was meant as a church. Even Governor Ryk Tulbagh had his suspicions, but did not interfere with this highly respected member of the community. He is said to have warned Melck that he did not want to see a Lutheran church during his lifetime, and Melck is said to have answered: 'That is as God wills it'. Tulbagh died very soon thereafter -- in 1771!

Joachim Van Plettenberg acted as Governor for the time being. He would not interfere with the Lutherans who, on Sundays, congregated in this warehouse, in which there were an organ, a lectern and several pews, even when it was evident from the singing of hymns that they were conducting a service there. Van Plettenberg was nevertheless adamant that he would not countenance the extension of the *'Batavian privilege'* (i.e. freedom of worship for Lutherans in *Batavia*) to the Cape.

In 1774 a deed of gift was registered to the effect that this plot and the warehouse would become the property of the Lutheran congregation on the death of either Melck or his wife. Transfer was passed when Mrs Melck died in 1776. In the same year a group of 20 Lutherans, all but one of

whom were Germans, asked the Consistory on behalf of all Lutherans at the Cape to inform the Lords Seventeen in Holland that they now had a building which would serve as a church, and sufficient funds to support their own Pastor. The Lords were prepared to grant the freedom asked for, provided the Council could vouch for the existence of the fund, and when this assurance was given, they authorised the Consistory to nominate a Pastor. On 22nd November 1780 Andreas Lutgerus Kolver disembarked at the Cape and on 10th December he was inducted as pastor of the newly constituted Lutheran congregation, which had 441 registered members -- 414 men, and 27 women. Of these 330 were Germans, 10 Netherlanders and 31 Scandinavians; the nationality of the remaining 21 is not known. The first church committee comprised four Company employees and four free burghers, among them Martin Melck, who had in the meantime also donated the adjacent plot for the erection of a parsonage. Transfer of this was passed on 16th February 1781. Tragically, a mere seven days later Melck passed away at the early age of fifty-eight.

Limits on Freedom of Worship

It was not long before Kolver discovered that the freedom of worship by no means placed the Lutherans on an equal footing with the Calvinists in practice. Thus he could baptise or confirm sons only if the father was Lutheran and the mother Calvinist; while daughters had to be baptised or confirmed by Calvinist ministers, who could, if the mother so wished, baptise or confirm sons as well. Under no circumstances was he permitted to baptise a sick or dying child in its home. Appeals to the Council or the Lords Seventeen were in vain, as these always sided with the Calvinists.

Discrimination against Lutheran Company employees on religious grounds

In December 1783 the Lords Seventeen struck a hard blow at the Lutherans when they decided that in future non-Calvinists could not be appointed, or, if they were already in their service, promoted to any post in the Company. This time the Governor and the Council unanimously objected, as such a policy would certainly create chaos -- ability and reliability should, they wrote, be the only criterion. The Lords relented in so far as they now decided that half the vacancies in the lower posts could be allotted to non-Calvinists, but decidedly no promotions. Once again the Governor and the Council objected, reporting at the same time that they had in the meantime promoted two German Lutherans, who had been in their employ for many years and were the only employees that could qualify, to two important senior posts which unexpectedly had to be filled without delay. In 1786 the Lords Seventeen replied that both were to be demoted with immediate effect. They were to revert to their previous posts and Calvinists were to be promoted to both vacancies, even if they were less capable!

End of the Struggle for Religious Liberty

Partly owing to the political situation, but mainly because of mismanagement, the dire financial position of the Dutch East India Company had by then deteriorated to such an extent that two commissioners were appointed by the creditors with full authority to save what could still be saved. They arrived at the Cape in 1792, and in face of loud remonstrations on the part of the Calvinists, they appointed four leading Lutherans to the most important posts, saying that they were acting on authority vested in them. From here they proceeded to Batavia in 1794. Shortly after they left, the First British Occupation (1795 – 1803) put an end to the authority of the Lords Seventeen.

In 1803 Holland (i.e. the short-lived Batavian Republic) again took over the control of the Cape. The Lutheran church committee approached Commissioner-General J. A. De Mist with a petition that all restrictions formerly placed on the Lutheran Church at the Cape be lifted. De Mist considered their wish as most reasonable.

Was it perhaps the result of this request that on 25th July 1804 De Mist issued his 'Kerkorde' ('Church Regulations'), which granted equal rights to all denominations?

Thus ended the long struggle for religious freedom at the Cape.

-- Dr WHC Hellberg: *Lantern*, February 1992

[Permission to use the above article was kindly granted to the editor by the late author's son, Dr Bert Hellberg, a retired KZN surgeon, and a member of St John's United Church, Pietermaritzburg.]

'There is no greater satisfaction to a good man than to know he is a public blessing.'

-- from the Matthew Henry Bible Commentary on Acts 27

(with reference to the storm, while Paul was being shipped *en route* to Italy.)

Reconcilers in Madagascar

If you go online to seek information about Madagascar, you will be overwhelmed by references to animated films about zebras, penguins, and other zoo animals. Dig a little deeper, though, and you will find a still more amazing true story about the making of a country and its thriving Christian history.

An island off the coast of East Africa, Madagascar covers an area a little smaller than Texas. Like many African territories, it is growing rapidly in population. A country that had 4 million people in 1950 has some 24 million today, and that number should roughly double by 2050, making it more populous than Italy. This growing country has a vibrant Christian tradition; Christians make up roughly half the population. The country's people -- the Malagasy -- are a major migrant presence in France, and especially in newer French churches.

Nearing 200 years

Christianity didn't arrive until 1818 -- a bicentennial is imminent -- but the first believers were very determined, and took seriously their pledge to resist apostasy. Their efforts brought them into sharp conflict with the equally motivated pagan queen, Ranaivalona I, whom early mission histories recall as a diabolical persecutor, a female combination of Nero and Caligula. Catholics speak of her rule as *'the time when the land was dark.'*

You get a sense of the country's Christian origins in the capital city Antananarivo (in popular usage, Tana), where *no fewer than four cathedrals commemorate early martyrs!* One of these, Andohalo, stands on an intimidating cliff, which in the mid-19th century was the site from which stubborn believers were thrown to their deaths.

Persecution faded after Ranaivalona's death in 1861, leaving a small church immensely strengthened by so many recent stories of martyrdom. Some of Ranaivalona's successors required Christian participation quite as fiercely as the old queen had prohibited it. Since then, Christianity has grown by means familiar throughout sub-Saharan Africa.

Initially, the missionaries laid their own foundations, but their efforts were soon overwhelmed by a series of native revivals, the **Fifohazana**. As often happens in Africa, these indigenous movements emphasize healing, undertaken by charismatic 'shepherds', supported by faithful women disciples. One great beneficiary of the **Fifohazana** is the Malagasy Lutheran Church, which now reports three to four million members.

Christian influence expanded

Also as in much of Africa, demography has vastly expanded Christian influence. Modern-day Madagascar has a population 12 times greater than in Ranaivalona's time.

From 1897 through to 1958, Madagascar was part of the French empire. Decolonization had little effect on Christian growth. Today, around one-third of the island's Christians are Catholics; a quarter are Lutherans; and the remainder belong to strong and distinctly native congregations. The most important of these is the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar (**FJKM: *Fiangonan'i Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara***), a Protestant Reformed body formed in 1968 from the merger of several missionary groups. A deeply impressive body, the FJKM today claims some 5 800 congregations and over 3 million members; and its large network of schools is critical to education in Madagascar.

It is all but impossible to understand the nation's post-independence history without reference to these churches and their highly activist role. Since the 1960s, Madagascar has repeatedly suffered waves of violence and political turbulence, in sharp contrast to the stability and sound organization of the churches. As so often in Africa, the churches work when the states do not.

Political conflict

This contrast has been obvious in the political conflicts that have riven the island over the past 15 years, and especially in the career of reformist business magnate Marc Ravalomanana. His wealth and media influence gave him a foundation from which to attack the unpopular regime of the day, but he also owed his power to being the vice-president of the FJKM. That supplied a basis for organizing votes and mobilizing communities, laying the groundwork for his victory in national presidential elections in 2002.

When a coup overthrew Ravalomanana in 2009, the churches again played a critical role in urging soldiers to forswear violence and respect civilian lives. Those appeals helped prevent the crisis from turning into a full-scale ethnic and religious civil war, which was all the more likely given the Catholic support for his rival and successor. Together with Lutherans and Anglicans, the Roman Catholic Church and the FJKM supervised a process of reconciliation and peacemaking at both national and local levels. These efforts culminated in free and transparent democratic elections in 2013, and the installation of a widely popular legitimate government. Madagascar offers a classic example of the Church's role in democratization.

-- Philip Jenkins: *Christian Century* (16th October, 2015)

'He can put it in the hearts of those to befriend them, from whom they least expect it.'

-- from the Matthew Henry Bible Commentary on Acts 27

CMD: The Christian Social Services of the DRC

KZN CMD (KwaZulu-Natal Christian Social Services) is an NPO (009-231) and an FBO (Faith Based Organization), that coordinates the welfare services of the Dutch Reformed Church in KZN in co operation with other church partners.

It is the vision of KZN CMD to create communities of excellence, by bringing hope to those in need.

By The Lord's grace KZN CMD has an impact on the lives of 67 000 people per year and operates on an annual budget of R34 million.

-- CMD Annual Report: 2013/2014

Comment by the Editor:

In close approximaty to the Groote Kerk offices, Gardens, Cape Town, is *Monte Rosa*, which houses seniors citizens at a fair accomodation rental. Durban has *Tuinsig*, graphically named due to its position facing the famed 'Botanic Gardens.' Add to this ministry, that of children's homes, counsel from qualified Christian social workers for families in distress, and other loving tokens of our faith in its ministry of 'helps', and you arrive at the vision of hope in CMD. *And this is only one of the CMDs in South Africa!*

Christianity leads the way, often unheralded, in not forgetting the poor!

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS:

1] The End of an Era

Ds Fanie Smit passed on to his heavenly reward at 80, and leaves his wife, Hettie. Fanie was the popular presenter of RSG's *Loof Die Here*, ('Praise the Lord') for 44 years! His strong faith carried through to his distinctive voice and choice of sacred music. It is an end of an era, but the show will go on! Our sympathies to the family.

(Thank you Peter Walker CA, our church treasurer for informing us – the Editor)

2] New Presiding Bishop Glen Lyons: CESA/REACH

Following the early retirement in 2015 of Dr Des Inglesby due to health issues, the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH), the operating name of the Church of England in South Africa (CESA), has a new presiding bishop, Glenn Lyons. His recent comments reflect a sense of calling:

"Personally, as I come to the close of my first few months as presiding bishop, I can say that in the midst of a daunting responsibility, I am comforted by the truth that God continues to use ordinary shepherds like me to call people to faith in His Son."

During 2014 *Protestant Reveille* featured the Bicentennial (200th anniversary), of Anglicanism in South Africa. Both Anglican bodies, ACSA (previously the Church of the Province of SA), and REACH, represent that community while having distinctive differences. The latter tends to hold firmly to the Protestant and Reformed tradition, the great legacy of bishops Thomas Cranmer, Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley – all men who went to the stake rather than bend the knee to the papacy with its Vatican toll gate to heaven! ACSA for its part includes a broader spectrum of influences, from high church (Anglo-Catholic), broad church (liberal), to low church (Evangelical/Charismatic).

-- Craig Hounsom (Editor)

3] A Later Reformer -- Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885)

Anthony Ashley Cooper 'The Poor Man's Earl'

Anthony was born on the 28th April, 1801, and was one of six children born to the 6th Earl of Shaftesbury and his wife Anne. Anne was not a maternal woman and was only interested in enjoying parties in the aristocratic circles in which she moved. It was said that she could not tell you how many children that she had. As soon as a baby was born the wife of a labourer on the family estate would be given the task of wet-nursing it. Wet-nursing was common at the time: what was uncommon was that when that period ended, instead of Anne taking care of the children, they were left to fend for themselves, and unless the servants fed them they would starve. So Anthony grew up without a mother's love -- he described his mother as 'a dragon.' A servant called Maria Millis cared for him as if he were her own.

Maria grew up at Woodstock in Oxfordshire and attended the local Church. The parson at that time had been greatly affected by what is called the 'Evangelical Awakening.' This was brought about through the preaching of John Wesley and George Whitefield; and transformed England. The parson preached sermons from the Bible and taught from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, explaining from the Bible how they were to be understood. Through his preaching, Maria was born again when just a young girl.

Later she went on to work as a servant at Blenheim Palace to Lady Anne's family and eventually became Lady Anne's maid. When Anne married, she moved with her and by the time that Anthony was born, had been promoted to housekeeper. This meant that she had a room to herself and the young Anthony would come and see her. She would sit him on her knee and tell him Bible stories; taught him the importance of prayer and reading the Bible; and through her teaching he also was born again when still a child.

When the time came for him to go to school he was sent to a boarding school at Cricklewood where bullying was rife and he was very unhappy. The bigger boys would steal the younger boys' food, and often he went to bed hungry. This was key to him hating cruelty to children as an adult, at a time when it was common practice, and he went on to help so many children.

Happier times came when he was sent to Harrow School where one of the masters was his relative who looked after him. Whilst at Harrow, Anthony witnessed an incident which helped to shape his life, when he was around fourteen years of age. He was walking past a rough pub and suddenly the doors burst open and some men who had been drinking came out carrying a crudely made coffin.

Inside would have been the corpse of a pauper who possibly had died in the workhouse. The men were messing around; dropped the coffin; it partially opened, and the deceased's hand came out through the gap. They put the hand back in, kicked the boards together and merrily went on their way with the coffin.

*Shaken by what he had just witnessed,
the teenage Anthony made a vow that the cause of the poor would be his for the rest of his life.*

-- The Reformer (Protestant Alliance - UK): September-October 2015
(Extract – the Editor)

4] Moreleta Park DRC speaks straight with grace!

Statement: Church Council's position on the matter of homosexuality:

1] We believe that Scripture teaches us that a marriage is the lifelong union between one man and one woman, who care for each other with the love of Christ. We accept that the only way a Christian marriage may be established, is between one man and one woman, where Christ is the centre thereof.

2] We believe that Scripture makes it clear that all sexual relations outside of marriage, are against God's will and plan.

3] We believe Scripture tells us that the practice of homosexuality is against God's will and plan, as are all other sins. For all these sins there is forgiveness and redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ.

4] The congregation's doors are wide open with Christ's compassion and love for all people. However, when a person has been persisting in sin, he or she may not serve in any leadership position (i.e. pastor, staff, management, ministry leader, or teacher).

5] As a congregation we would like to continue to welcome people with the open arms of Christ, which offer grace, forgiveness and healing.

5] Diocese of Egypt speaks straight with grace!

Statement: Refusal to accept funding on Scriptural grounds

It has come to our attention that Bishop Curry, the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church (USA) has recently issued a Lenten appeal asking the churches of TEC to remember the Good Friday offering for Jerusalem and the Middle East. In this appeal he said, "this tradition [The Good Friday Offering] is decades old and is an important statement of our solidarity with the members of the four dioceses of the Province of Jerusalem & Middle East."

I would like to clarify the fact that the Diocese of Egypt with North of Africa and the Horn of Africa, one of the four dioceses of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, does not receive funds or grants from the Good Friday offering of the Episcopal Church (TEC) in the USA. The decision not to receive these funds came after the 2003 decision by TEC to consecrate as bishop a divorced man living in a homosexual relationship.

The decision not to receive money from TEC is one expression of the reality that the Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa was (and still is) in an impaired relationship with The Episcopal Church.

One of our clergy in Ethiopia states our situation in graphic terms:

***"We rather starve and not receive money from churches
whose actions contradict the scriptures."***

-- Mouneer Anis & Grant LeMarquand: **Anglican Ink** (26th February 2016)

5] Call to remove 'evil show': *Lucifer*

South African church leaders have urged M-Net to remove a series called *Lucifer* from South African television. M-Net moved the series to Friday nights in the 11pm timeslot and has increased the age restriction to 16; however the church leaders are not convinced that these actions will decrease the potential harm to a vulnerable young audience.

The church leaders who belong to Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa, the Full Gospel Church of God SA, the Pentecostal Protestant Church SA, and Living Word SA, strongly urged M-Net to immediately cancel the *Lucifer* series.

In a publically issued statement they 'appeal to the management of M-Net to consider its social responsibility to a nation plagued by crime, violence and all manner of evil.... The *Lucifer* series, whether intentional or not, portrays Satan -- the personification of all that is evil -- in a sympathetic manner. This is highly dangerous especially to impressionable youth in our nation,' said the church leaders in the statement, adding that '*Lucifer*, then, is given a Hollywood makeover and becomes more appealing.'

Their concern to have the series removed stems from movies, TV programmes, and music having a psychological effect on young people.

'Evil or the personification thereof must be strongly condemned and discouraged, not positively and sympathetically portrayed in the popular media.'

M-Net was contacted to comment on the issue and had not responded by the time of going to print.

-- Kavitha Pillay: *The Witness*, KZN (formerly, '*The Natal Witness*'): 10th February, 2016

6] A South African Pastoral Diaspora

Parallel to the South Africans of various callings, including sport, who are based in other lands, are preachers from our churches. Rev. Ray Smart who has Durban roots, is on the Shetland Islands, in the North Sea. Rev. Raymond Zulu of Newcastle, KZN, and a graduate of the Bible Institute of South Africa, is pastoring in London. And Dr Nico Bougas of Cape Town who is with Hellenic Ministries (Christ for Greece and the Nations), operates mainly out of Florida, USA. A former pastor of Belville Baptist Church, Rev. Dave Stemmett, served for a number of years at the Hamburg International Baptist Church (IBC) in Germany. He is now pastoring the Trinity International Baptist Church (in Leidschendam-Voorburg, in the Netherlands) where recently an encouraging number of Muslim immigrants from various refugee centres have been coming to faith, and 'baptised on confession of faith in Jesus'.

Some of our pastors do return to the 'beloved country':

The veteran Congregationalist, Rev Malcolm Davidson, and his talented Scottish wife, Ann, spent a chapter at a church in the USA where the Revivalist, Charles Finney, once served. They were there during the wicked 9/11 attack! The church had to be opened to allow people to seek refuge 'under the shadow of the Almighty.' (Psalm 91).

Hans Combrink, with Stellenbosch roots, has returned from Penang, Malaysia, where he served as Biblica Area Translation Director, Asia Pacific.

There appears to be a shortage of ministers in certain countries, which once were 'sending nations.' A barometer of the West losing its soul? Another factor is that many of our pastors still believe in their product, namely, the Bible, and are driven by an Evangelical call on their lives. Frustrations with our political sagas, may also play a part!

Our thoughts are with them!

-- Craig Hounsom (Editor)

'Many show respect to good ministers, who will not take their advice.'

-- from the Matthew Henry Bible Commentary on Acts 27

Letters: Responses to earlier editions:

1] To the Editor (translated from Afrikaans):

Dear Sir

I take the liberty of writing this letter to you. A few things are addressed in your 'Winter' edition; but I am firmly convinced that the Church must begin to distinguish between religious systems and a religious culture, as opposed to an intimate relationship with our God and Father; and a real devotion of one's life to Christ Jesus as King and as Ruler in a New Testament Spirit or covenant; and to desist from attempting to operate continually under two covenants!

By way of illustration, I mention the campaign to retain Christmas, which in modern-day society is seen as a so-called new covenant festival; one through which persons of other faiths profit, but of which the Bible has no knowledge. We know from Church History that, originating in paganism, it took root in the Church of God under Emperor Constantine, and was specifically set in place to make pagans (cf. Sun and Baal worshippers), who were by then being forced to convert to the Christian religion, feel more 'at home'.....

We are grateful for the 'protesters' of the Reformation; but they did not move at all far enough from the Roman Catholic Church; and many traditions (against which Jesus Christ Himself warned) were retained.

.... this world is our enemy and the sooner the believer accepts the teaching of the Word of God in this regard, the sooner shall we be purified of our present-day worldly attitudes, so that we can fulfil our calling in truth.

May the Lord grant us mercy for this!

In Christ, Rentia Dippenaar (Australia).

1] From the Editor:

Dear Mrs, Dippenaar

Thank you for your lengthy and thought-provoking response to our Winter Reveille. Unfortunately, space constraints limit us to responding only to the brief extracts above.

Your clear rejection of mere surface and nominal religion, as against heart religion and an intimate relationship with God through Jesus Christ, particularly related to festivals and ceremonies such as Christmas, with its 'pagan' roots, will touch a chord in many believers' hearts. The commercialization, and 'making merchandise' (2 Peter 2:3), of such great Biblical teachings as the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God, is foreign to the spirit of true religion.

However, there are sincere saints of Jesus who hold Easter and Christmas as sacred, and do not see that as incompatible with their walk with God. One person values one day above another; another sees each day as the same: 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' (Romans 14:5). The issue is that they should not 'depend on them' (cf. Matthew Henry's commentary on Galations 5).

Such occasions are opportunities to preach the Gospel. '...whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached: I rejoice in that', said the apostle Paul in Phillipians 1:8.

The removal of such paid public holidays by the powers that be, would unfortunately be interpreted as undermining Christian influence in South Africa.

The Protestant Reformers had a subtle difference in non-essentials. Calvin and others, especially the Puritans held that Christians could follow only that which is expressly commanded in the Bible. Luther had a more flexible stance, allowing for things not forbidden by the Word of God, including certain traditions, which would equate to the Dutch theological saying of, 'That which is come about in process of time.'

Ultimately, everything is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer (as in 1 Timothy 4:5) if it is edifying to one.

Your input is greatly appreciated. In Jesus, Craig.

2] To the Editor:

Dear Craig

Thanks for the latest 'Protestant Reveille'. In battling for the biblical faith within the milieu in which we move nowadays, one sometimes feels like a lonesome Elijah. But every issue of 'Reveille' reminds one that there are still 'seven thousand' who haven't bowed the knee to the contemporary Baals.

*Reading the quote from Spurgeon about his great dislike for the rise of liberal theology because at bottom it does not believe in revelation, put me in mind of a recent contentious debate. The liberal proponent smoothly suggested that he and his orthodox opponent were really on the same page -- that they both accepted the authority of the Scriptures. Then, in my view the orthodox debater in responding, hit the nail on the head. He quietly, but firmly, told his opponent that he was being disingenuous; that he had put forward a misleading half-truth; that the issue today is not merely the authority of Scripture, but the **status or degree** of that authority. He stated that for the orthodox, Scriptural authority is supreme; but for his opponent and others it is merely primary, and can be superseded.*

A vast difference!

I think that Spurgeon would have been pleased!

Thanks for the recognised supreme status of Scripture upheld in your publication.

*Also, thanks for the reminder of Luther's '**Solas**'.*

Appreciatively, Ray Alistoun

Rev. Ray Alistoun: Cape West Coast Circuit (Methodist Church)

2] From the Editor:

Dear Ray

Your word of encouragement, and well-crafted response to the increasing subtleties of unbelief, is received with gratitude. Not too long ago Methodism was a powerful voice in the Evangelical Revival in Britain. You represent that fine heritage!

In Jesus, Craig.

3] To the Editor:

Craig

Thanks for the e-mail. Yes, we had a good Reformation Day service yesterday.

My text was Genesis 12 and 15, and I spoke about two of the three great 'solos':

Firstly, sola fide, demonstrated in Abraham's faith in God's word -- he gave all his security of home and household to act in faith in response to God's word.

And then about sola gratia, God's grace and faithfulness, which were even greater than Abraham's faith. When Abraham's faith wavered (in selling Sarah for his own safety; and in suggesting Eliezer to be his 'son' and heir), God did not reject Abraham, but remained faithful to him -- and restored him.

Our faith is fundamental, but God's faithfulness even more so.

Have a good week, Francois Wessels

Ds Francois Wessels: Andrew Murray Dutch Reformed Congregation, Cape Town

3] From the Editor:

Dear Francois

Your Reformation Day sermon is both simple and profound. Abraham is a good role model , because he was normal; a man of like passions as us. Keep up the good work in Kloof Street, City Bowl (Cape Town). In Jesus, Craig

4] To the Editor:

Great reading!! Thank you!

May the Lord bless you all and keep you, your families and your ministries!

Fran Aroney

4] From the Editor:

Dear Fran

Your blessing is received with joy, and in true African fashion, with both hands open. And may it double on you and your loved ones.

In Jesus, Craig

5] To the Editor:

Dear Craig

... I am even more impressed with the circulation numbers (English: 4 275; Afrikaans: 3 950). Soon you will be able to publish a book with the best of the best topics in the Reveille over the past years. Something on your 'TO DO LIST', Mr H!!

Esme de Bruin (Secretary: Cape Town Union Congregational Church).

5] From the Editor:

Dear Esme

Great to hear from the famous mother church of the London Missionary Society. Those figures include most of the main-stream denomination ministers in South Africa. The superb Afrikaans translation is done by Siebert Neethling, founding principal of Durbanville's Stellenberg High School.

Thanks for the challenge!

In Jesus, Craig.

Personal:

Our Editor and Chairman, Rev. Craig Hounsom, comments as follows, on his on-going service to the Protestant Association as Editor:

I have fulfilled 5 years as editor of Protestant Reveille. It was my late wife Val, who inspired me to try and fill the big shoes of the legendary Englishman, Rev. AH Jeffree James, whom the Protestant faith is so identified with here, and abroad. He was a mentor.

On behalf of the council of the Protestant Association and all our readers, we would like to thank Craig for all the inspiring editions of *Protestant Reveille* that have been produced and distributed under his guidance and leadership.

On a personal note, we heartily congratulate Craig Hounsom and Esme de Bruin – see above correspondence -- on their impending engagement. We trust that the Lord will richly bless them as they serve in ministry together.

– Ivan James: Executive Officer: Protestant Association of South Africa

Book Reviews:

1] *Christ Set Forth*

Thomas Goodwin: Banner of Truth: Paperback; 242pp; £5.75: ISBN 978-1-84871-558-5

The Puritan preachers of the 17th century were amongst some of the greatest theologians and preachers this world has ever known. They never handled text in a hurried or rash way. They took their time, wonderfully unpacking each scripture text and faithfully applying it to their hearers and readers. This fine little work, by Thomas Goodwin, is no exception. The Puritan paperback series of books serves as a wonderful means of introducing to the wider public the works of these spiritual giants.

How may I know that I am right with God and accepted by Him? Goodwin takes Romans 8:34 as his text in seeking to address this most important question. It is all too easy to look in the wrong direction in our efforts to find comfort for God's acceptance of us. Yet to do so will offer no comfort to the troubled soul in seeking for rest. The answer, Goodwin tells us, is to look away from self and directly to Jesus Christ. He alone is the source and the reason for our justification before God the Father. But he would not just have us look to Christ, but wonderfully unfolds to the reader the reason why Christ is the source of our justification.

We are pointed to the death of Christ, to the resurrection of Christ, to the ascension of Christ and his being sat at the right hand of the Father, and finally we are taken to the intercession of Christ for his children. This book is superbly packed with reason and hope for the sinner.

It is written with a pastor's heart for God's people, and will repay the reader dividends for taking the time to read and consider. Of this particular work it is said, *'Turning to nearly any page in this volume, readers will be rewarded with a remarkably pastoral theology of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.'*

Thomas Goodwin (1600-80) was a personal chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and a regular preacher before Parliament. He was also President of Magdalen College, Oxford. He was a much loved pastor and preacher.

-- Reviewed by Stephen Holland: Protestant Truth (UK), September-October 2015

'... it is the old error of Deism which the teachers of Higher Criticism had revived, that a man can have true Christian experience apart from he may or may not believe.'

-- Iain Murray in *The Forgotten Spurgeon* (Banner of Truth)

2] *A Clear and Simple Treatise Respecting the Lord's Supper*

Theodore Beza: Reformation Heritage Books: Hardcover; 448pp; \$40-00: ISBN 978-1-60178-467-4: (Still to be Published)

Theodore Beza's *A Clear and Simple Treatise Respecting the Lord's Supper* (1559) advances a tireless defence of the Reformed perspective on the Lord's Supper, responding chapter by chapter to specific arguments raised against John Calvin by his Lutheran opponent, Joachim Westphal. Beza makes great use of the concept of metonymy, or a figure of speech in his interpretation of the words of institution, yet he equally champions the position that the Lord's Supper is not a bare symbol and that in it we have true communion with the risen Christ. And like Calvin, Beza refers extensively to the church fathers, especially Augustine, in defence of his position.

This often-overlooked treatise marks some of the major differences between the Reformed and the Lutheran movements during the so-called second generation of the Reformation.

A critical issue at the time, sacramental theology, was at the forefront of the original break with Rome and prevented the various Protestant movements from uniting. Its translation into English from the original Latin provides a wider opportunity for those interested in these movements to learn more about some of the substantial issues of the period.

-- Reformation Heritage Books

3] **Knowing Christ**

Mark Jones: Banner of Truth: Paperback; 256 pp; \$16-00: 978-18487-1630-8

In October last year *Banner of Truth* released **Knowing Christ**. It flew off the shelves

James Packer says in his forward:

The Puritans loved the Bible, and dug into it in depth. Also, they loved the Lord Jesus, who is of course the Bible's focal figure; they circled round him, centred on him, studied minutely all that Scripture had to say about him; and constantly, conscientiously, exalted him in their preaching, praises, and prayers. Mark Jones, an established expert on many aspects of Puritan thought, also loves the Bible and its Christ, and the Puritans as expositors of both; and out of this triune love he has written a memorable unpacking of the truth about the Saviour according to the classic Reformed tradition, and the Puritans supremely. It is a book calculated to enrich our Twenty-first Century souls, and one that it is an honour to introduce.

Comment by the Editor:

Christians have been edified through a modern classic, *Knowing God*, by JI Packer.

This respected Evangelical Anglican leader has written the forward to what can be seen as a sequel, *Knowing Christ*. Patrick Stevenson, a veteran preacher of the English Reformed Church, introduced me to the name of Mark Jones its author, a South African, whom he has known from a child.

Some of our readers will recall the name of another internationally respected Christian author and commentator, Phillip Edgecome Hughes, who rose to prominence in the USA; and who at one early stage studied at the Bible Institute, Kalk Bay. It looks like his mantle has fallen on Mark Jones, now residing in North America!

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