

faith in **focus**

Magazine of the
Reformed Churches
of New Zealand

VOLUME 32/4 MAY 2005



**“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and he who wins souls is wise.”**

Proverbs 11:30

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Copy Deadline:

Six weeks preceding the month of publication.

All correspondence regarding distribution and payment of subscriptions to:

The Secretary:

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79 McLeod Street
Upper Hutt

Subscription per volume:

\$40.00 (eleven issues)
Bulk Rate: \$35.00
Overseas: \$60.00
Electronically Mailed (overseas only): \$40

Production Staff:

Distribution: M. & D. van der Zwaag
Design & Layout: Matrix Typography
Printed by: Flying Colours

Editorial

John MacArthur once said, *People often ask me, "How can you have a worship service when you preach such a long time? When do the people have time to worship?" Well, I'm so committed to expository preaching because God cannot be worshipped apart from an understanding of who He is as He is revealed in Scripture. I'm committed to the systematic teaching of the Word of God—week in and week out—because God must be worshipped in truth. Now I could give clever sermons that would move the motions and the attitudes by filling them with a lot of stories. And I could make it all very interesting, fun, and exciting. However, when it was all said and done people might say, "Boy, John MacArthur can sure preach!" but they wouldn't be worshipping God. It's a far greater challenge for me to teach the Word of God and let it command men to respond to God as God is revealed in His self-revelation.*

This is, of course, exactly what the apostle Peter did at Pentecost. The focus was not on the wonders that happened on that day itself, but on how they simply proved that what God has said through the prophets was being done through His Son.

What MacArthur said next brings this home: *I strongly believe that any young person going into the ministry who is not committed to expository preaching is ultimately cutting his own throat. Why? Because people must respond, in every dimension of their lives, to the truth of the Word of God. We have to worship in truth—truth that is revealed in His Word. That's why I'm so totally committed to the fact that we must teach the Word of God.*

May this issue of *Faith in Focus* do exactly this. May it also teach the Word of God, through the proper understanding of Pentecost, in our lead article and in all the other parts.

*"God has raised this Jesus to life,
and we are all witnesses of the fact.
Exalted to the right hand of God,
he has received from the Father the
promised Holy Spirit
and has poured out what you now see and hear."*

The Apostle Peter at Pentecost—Acts 2:32-33

The opinions expressed in this magazine are not to be considered the official position of the Reformed Churches of NZ unless they expound the Biblical system of doctrine contained in the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dordt, or the Westminster Confession of Faith, or reflect the successive Acts of Synod of the Reformed Churches of NZ. On the other hand, care is taken to ensure that articles and opinions do not directly contradict the official position of the Reformed Churches as contained in the above sources without attention being called to that fact.

The shy member of the Trinity

The work of the Holy Spirit

John Haverland

Some of you may wonder at times why you do not hear more about the Holy Spirit in the teaching and sermons of the Reformed churches. Your pastor will speak a lot about God the Father and about the Lord Jesus Christ but probably comparatively little about the Holy Spirit. Contrast that with many of the Pentecostal and charismatic churches where you will hear much more said about the Spirit, especially about the gifts of the Spirit. It is not that the Holy Spirit is never mentioned in Reformed churches and in Reformed preaching, but overall there is certainly less said about him than about the Father and the Son.

You may be tempted to think that this indicates a deficiency in Reformed theology and preaching, and that this is an area where we can learn something from the charismatic churches. Yet this muted talk about the Holy Spirit is entirely in keeping with the emphasis of the Bible and of the Lord Jesus himself. Before we consider the evidence for this we should remind ourselves of the broad scope of the Spirit's work.

The scope of His work

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Trinity and is fully and completely God. He has a vital function in the hearts and minds and lives of believers and there are many aspects to his work. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment (John 16:8-11); regenerates the hearts of God's elect (Titus 3:4-5); fills us (Eph 5:18) and dwells within us (John 14:16-17). He has an active role in the life of the Christian. He assists us in prayer (Rom 8:26-27), assures us of our salvation (Rom 8:15) and guides us into all truth (John 16:12-14). Through him, Christ Jesus gives gifts to every member of the church (1 Cor 12) and works in us all the fruits of the Spirit (Gals 5:22-23). The Scriptures urge us to live by the Spirit (Gals 5:16), to be led by the Spirit (Gals 5:18) and to keep in step with the Spirit (Gals 5:25). We are warned against grieving or quenching the Spirit (Eph 4:30, 1 Thes 5:19). It would be worth our while to meditate and reflect on each of these activities of the Spirit. But in this article I want us to notice the primary focus of his work.

The shy member of the Trinity

Despite the broad scope of all he does and the vital importance of his role in the life of every Christian, the Spirit does not want to stand in the centre of the stage. He does his work in the background. He does not want to attract attention to himself. One writer describes him as the "shy member of the Trinity" (1). This is

because one of the primary roles of the Spirit is to focus our attention on Jesus. His task is to help us understand who Jesus is. His aim is to glorify the Lord. Jesus Himself taught us this when he spoke to his disciples about the Spirit's work and said; "He will bring glory to me by taking of what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:14).

Jesus said this in his last conversation with his disciples before his death during the last Passover meal he had with them. He had much more that he could have said to them but it was more than they could bear at that time. They would only be able to understand the full truth about Jesus after he had died and risen again. Even then they would need the help of the Spirit to grasp the truth about Jesus and its implications. This is why Jesus promised to send the Spirit of Truth; he would help them understand who Jesus was and what he had done, and would glorify Christ.

When the Spirit took what belonged to Jesus and made it known to the disciples, he did not give them a new revelation disconnected or different from what Jesus taught. Rather it was all one piece with what Jesus had said. It was a continuation of his teaching, a development of his revelation, a further expansion of all he had said. The Holy Spirit took the teaching of Jesus and interpreted it for the disciples, explaining its meaning and implications.

Jesus told the disciples that when the Spirit came he would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). This was necessary for the disciples because after Jesus had ascended into heaven the disciples were in a new landscape. If you venture into unfamiliar territory, like central Africa, you need a guide. You don't know the way and you need someone who knows the land and who can show you around and explain it to you. This was the role of the Spirit after Jesus ascended into heaven. The disciples were in a new country. They had entered the New Covenant. Some of the landscape was unfamiliar to them. So they needed a guide, the Holy Spirit, who would enable them to follow Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant.

The Spirit of Truth

Some of the teaching and preaching about the Holy Spirit in the wider church misses this emphasis on Christ. Too often the focus is not on the content of the Bible and the truth of God's word but rather on a person's experience; not on what a Christian believes but on how he feels; not on theology but rather on therapy.

Jesus promised that the Spirit would guide the disciples into all truth. He described the Spirit as the *Spirit of Truth*. The truth refers to all that God has revealed to us in the Bible.

Central to all of this is the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ, who said; "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." He is the fulfillment of all that God promised and prophesied in the Old Testament. He is the climax of God's revelation. After Pentecost the Holy Spirit would enable the disciples to understand what Jesus did in dying on the cross, how this fulfilled the Scriptures and how he had paid the price for sin. He would enable them to believe the resurrection and to grasp its great implications and application for all who believe (as the apostle Paul developed these in 1 Corinthians 15). The Spirit would also guide them into the meaning of Christ's kingdom and how it would increase and grow during this present age. He would also tell the disciples about what the future would bring - the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment and the new heaven and earth.

Glorify Him!

All that the Spirit announced to the disciples focused on the Lord Jesus and gave him glory. The entire ministry of the Spirit is to direct our attention to Jesus. This is why we do not hear as much about the Spirit as we do about the Lord Jesus and the Father - because the Spirit is focusing our eyes on Jesus. You could compare this to floodlights that light up a building. Such lights have an important function but they are set down low so our attention is not drawn to them but rather to the building they illuminate. In a similar way the Spirit is



like a floodlight. He remains down low, in the background, and throws the light on the Lord Jesus. Our focus must be on him.

Our lives are often impoverished because we have a meagre knowledge of Jesus and we only grasp a minute part of his glory. Our great need is to have a knowledge of him that is ever expanding, to have a deeper insight into

what he has done, to grasp more of his person and work, to know the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. We need to pray that the Spirit would help us to see Jesus in all his greatness and glory!

An old hymn from the seventh century beautifully expresses this great truth:

*O Christ be thou our lasting joy,
Our ever great reward!
Our only glory may it be
To glory in the Lord.*

(1). "The Holy Spirit - Shy Member of the Trinity by F D Bruner and W Hordern. (Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1984).

World in focus

Lutherans recommending removal of Bishop

Leaders of the Lutheran World Federation are recommending the removal of Kenyan Bishop Walter E. Obare Omwanza as an advisor to its main governing body after he consecrated a bishop for a breakaway Lutheran grouping in Sweden opposed to women priests and same-sex marriage.

"This action by Bishop Obare, together with those who assisted him, must be considered as inappropriate interference in the life of a sister church, with negative consequences for the unity of the Lutheran World Federation as a communion of churches as a whole," the Lutheran Federation's executive committee said.

+ Lutheran World Federation, 150, route de Ferney, PO Box 2100 CH-1211 Geneva 2 Switzerland

Russian Church sets up Orthodox TV channel

The Russian Orthodox Church is considering setting up a general television channel in Russia, a senior church official states. "Already the volume of Orthodox programming is enough to fill the airtime of a major cable or satellite channel," the Rev. Vsevolod Chaplin, deputy chairman of the external relations department of the church's Moscow Patriarchate told the Russian daily newspaper Kommersant this month. He said having a broadcasting medium espousing the values of Orthodoxy was on the horizon.

+ Dept. for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, 115191 Moscow, Russia <http://www.mospat.ru>

Lutheran Professor leaves Theology School after Catholic conversion

A former Lutheran professor at the Institute for Ecumenical Research in Strasbourg, France, who converted to Roman Catholicism, has resigned from his post at the Lutheran School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger, Norway. At first Dogmatics Professor Ola Tjorham was allowed to continue as Professor of Systematic Theology and Ecumenical Theology but later the faculty decided he should be moved to the less contentious

field of the Theory of Science. Tjorham, at the beginning of 2005, decided to leave his post after reaching an agreement with his faculty.

+ Institute for Ecumenical Research, 8 rue Gustave Klotz F-67000 Strasbourg, France
StrasEcum@ecumenical-institute.org

Christian groups in Eritrea face persecution

A source at the Association of Evangelicals of Africa told Ecumenical News International in Nairobi that minority Christian groups in Eritrea are facing arbitrary arrests and detention. "Many have been persecuted. They have been arrested at worship, weddings, and other functions."

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW), reports that 131 children between ages two and 18 were rounded up by a group of policemen as they were in their Christian classes at the Medhanie-Alem Orthodox Church in the capital of Asmara.

After nearly four hours, the children ages two to 14 were released. The remaining group of 30 children was transferred to police stations where they are still reportedly detained.

"The arrest of this large group of children shows just how far this regime is prepared to go to persecute innocent Christians, said Stuart Windsor, National Director of CSW. + Christian Solidarity Worldwide, PO Box 99, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3YF admin@csw.org.uk
+ Association of Evangelicals of Africa, No. 5 Valley Rd., PO Box 49332 00100 Nairobi GPO

Former Muslim named Dean of Liberty Baptist Theological College

On 4 Feb. Dr. Jerry Falwell announced the appointment of a converted Muslim to head the Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary on the campus of Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia, the school Falwell founded in 1971.

Dr. Caner immigrated with his family to America to build mosques in the Midwest. It was while he was in high school in Ohio that a friend invited him to church and led him to Christ. Dr. Caner was subsequently disowned by his family.

Falwell wrote that "Dr. Caner, 38, has

been a very popular professor in the School of Religion of Liberty for two years, and has become known for his humorous and pointed preaching and his national profile, as well as his large classes."

+ Liberty University, 1971 University Blvd., Lynchburg, VA 24502 (434) 582-2000

Primates call ECUSA and Canadians to repentance

Emerging from their meeting in Northern Ireland last week, the Primates of the Anglican Communion requested that the Episcopal Church in the USA and the Anglican Church of Canada immediately remove themselves from the Anglican Consultative Council, one of the four recognized Instruments of Unity within the Anglican Communion and further directed that those jurisdictions meet with the ACC in June so that they might have an opportunity to set out the thinking behind their recent actions. They also affirmed the Windsor Report, which called for a moratorium on both homosexual ordinations or the consecration or ordination of any more openly homosexual clergy.

+ Rev. Mr. Charles Collins Jr., Christian Observer Correspondent, 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

Church in Lebanon needs new baptismal font

The National Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Rabiya, Lebanon, has made an unusual appeal to the Church of Scotland - they are looking for a new baptismal font.

The congregation's minister, Rev. Georges Mourad, commented: "Our church has 250 members officially, but many others attend services and activities. Our church depends on its members financially, but due to the civil war and to the bad economic situation, in income has not been steady."

Rev. Ian Alexander of the Church of Scotland's Board of World Mission stated: "The Christian community in Beirut is healthy and active and co-exists, as it has for centuries, alongside the Muslim and Druze communities. It would be a fine gesture of hope for the future if a congregation or individual with a spare wooden font were willing to present this to Mr. Mourad's congregation."

+ Rev. Ian Alexander, ialexander@cofscotland.org.uk

Lutheran pastor suspect in missionary killing

Authorities in Mozambique have reported arresting a Lutheran suspect in the 2004 murder of Brazilian Lutheran missionary Doraci J. Edinger. Edinger was killed on 21 Feb., 2004 in Nampula, Mozambique, after it was reported she had discovered information about trafficking in human organs.

Lutheran World Federation (LWF) General secretary, Rev. Dr. Ishmael Noke stated his "appreciation for the progress reflected" in the arrest of the suspect, who is a pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Mozambique.
+ Lutheran World Federation, 150, route de Ferney, PO Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

Muslim militants attack Christian community

Muslim militants attacked the Christian community in Demsa village, Adamawa state, northern Nigeria, on 4 Feb., killing 36 people and displacing about 3,000 others. The surviving Christians have taken refuge in Mayolope village in the state of Taraba. Rev. Jolly Nyame, governor of the state of Taraba, expressed sadness over the attacks and said the country could progress only through peaceful coexistence.

+ Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0314

Mt. Olive Tape Library mounts internet

Mt. Olive Tape Library is placing its collection of more than 4,500 sermons and lectures on the Internet at Sermonaudio.com. The collection can be searched by speaker or topic and ranges from material by Jay Adams and Morton Smith to Henry Morris and G.I. Williamson. These are great resources for ministers, theological students and interested laymen. Whole courses can be found such as Old Testament Survey.

+ Mt. Olive Tape Library, PO Box 422, Mt. Olive, MS 39119 http://www.sermonaudio.com/source_series.asp?sourceid=mtolive

Temple University faces lawsuit

In 1999 Temple University sponsored the controversial and blasphemous play *Corpus Christi*, in which Christ is portrayed as a homosexual. Michael Marcavage, then a Christian student at the Philadelphia school, complained to administrators. The complaint filed on behalf of the former student alleges that two university officials "unlawfully and intentionally assaulted and forcibly restrained" Marcavage and then unlawfully ordered police to handcuff and transport him to the university hospital, where he was involuntarily committed for psychiatric evaluation.

An attorney with the American Family Association Center for Law and Policy, Steve Crampton believes the school tried to muzzle

Marcavage's religious viewpoint, ignoring his First Amendment rights in the process. "So we expect and hope that the jury will want to send a message to Temple and to its officials that interference with constitutional rights simply can't be tolerated." Jury selection began on 7 Mar., 2005.

+ American Family Association Center for Law and Policy, PO Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803 (662)844-5036

Christ Church Overland Park to leave Diocese

Christ Church Episcopal Church in Overland Park, Kansas, has voted to leave the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Kansas due to theological differences. The 2,200 member church will be allowed to retain its property after assuming its US\$1.7 million mortgage debt and paying the Diocese US\$1 million according to the terms of an agreement worked out between the parish and the diocese. As is standard ECUSA practice, the clergy of Christ Church will be inhibited from practicing within the church and deposed for "abandonment of communion." The parish has not, as yet, decided with whom they will affiliate.

+ Rev. Mr. Charles A. Collins, Jr., Christian Observer Correspondent, 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445

Dr Edmund Clowney called to glory

Distinguished Presbyterian educator, author, and pastor Dr. Edmund P. Clowney died at 6:35 PM Sunday night 20 March in the University of Virginia Hospital at Charlottesville, Virginia, following an extended bout with pneumonia.

Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 30 July 1917, Clowney earned degrees from Wheaton, Westminster, and Yale. Ordained to the ministry in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, he served congregations in Connecticut, Illinois, and New Jersey before becoming a professor at Westminster Theological Seminary where he served on the faculty from 1952 to 1984 and as president from 1966 to 1982.

From 1982 to 1990, Dr. Clowney held a position on the ministerial staff of Trinity Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Charlottesville. At the time of his death Clowney was an adjunct professor at Westminster Theological Seminary in California.

+ Rev. Mr. David Shank, Christ Covenant Church [FORC], Harrisonburg, Virginia

Marriage law found unconstitutional in California

San Francisco County Superior Court Judge Richard Kramer has ruled that marriage cannot constitutionally be limited to a legal union between a man and a woman. The judge wrote that the state's historical definition of marriage alone cannot justify not providing equal protection to gay and lesbian couples and their right to marry.

If upheld on appeal, California would follow Massachusetts in allowing same-sex couples to wed.

Last March, a pair of lawsuits seeking to overturn California's statutory ban on gay marriage were brought by the city of San Francisco and a dozen same-sex couples, after the California Supreme Court halted the four-week marriage spree Mayor Gavin Newsom had initiated when he directed city officials to issue marriage licenses to gays and lesbians in defiance of state law.

+ Mayor Gavin Newsom, 4104 24th St., #766, San Francisco, CA 94114 (415) 986-8009

Mississippi allows posting of religious texts

The Mississippi House of Representatives passed a bill that allows for the posting of religious texts in public, including the Ten Commandments, the national motto "In God We Trust" and pronouncements from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

+ Mississippi House of Representatives, PO Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39215-1018

New International Version of Bible modernised

The New International Version of the Bible, one of the world's most widely read Bibles, has been modernized by a team of 15 American and British scholars. More than 45,000 changes, which is about seven per cent of the text, have been made. The title has also been changed to Today's New International Version.

Paige Patterson, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that the translators had gone beyond trying to clarify meaning. "They have an agenda - to attempt to force egalitarian and even feminist perspectives on readers in the name of translation.." But the scholars who worked on the book rejected the charges, saying that their changes were a fair reflection of the original Greek or Hebrew texts or updated colloquial English words.

+ Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Press, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203

Church of Nigeria consecrates ten new bishops

On 13 Mar, 2005, ten new bishops of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) were consecrated. Many came with some of their parishioners from the over 17-million Nigerian Anglican community.

The Most Rev. Peter Akinola, presided at the service which consecrated the largest number of bishops in one sitting since Akinola's presentation in 2000.

The consecration ceremony marked the beginning of nine new missionary dioceses in the 26-year old Church of Nigeria, bringing the total number of dioceses to 91.

+ The Church of Nigeria, Contact Information, The Rev. Canon Akintunde A. Popoola, 23 Douala St., Wuse Zone 5, Abuja, Nigeria tpopoola@Anglican-nig.org

Reformation Translation Fellowship

Reformed Christians around the world are concerned that the most populous nation receive and know the gospel. The Reformation Translation Fellowship, established in 1951, now has boards in Australia, Japan,

Singapore, and the United Kingdom as well as in the United States and the publishing company in Taiwan. God is using this ministry to spread His gospel through the translation of theological works into the Chinese language. China officially opposes the gospel in the mainland, "but the Word of God is not bound." [2 Tim. 2:9].
+ Reformation Translation Fellowship, 302 E. First St., Bloomington, IN 47401

Presbyterians open new Bible School in India

A new Bible school was opened by the Presbyterian Church of India (PCI), in May 2004. It was decided by the synod to start this school because the local Aizawl Theological College could no longer offer short-term training in theology and grant a certificate after a three-month course.

The Presbyterian Church of India was founded in 1841. The PCI has 2,320 congregations and 680 preaching stations. The 938,000 members and regular attenders are served by 651 pastors and 1,236 evangelists. The General Assembly meets every two years and the Executive Committee meets every six months.

+ Rev. Wailie C. Kongwir, Presbyterian Assembly House, Central Ward, Shillong Meghalaya 793-001
India pcishillong@yahoo.co.in

Presbyterian Executive condemns Confessing churches

President of the Presbyterian Publishing Corp., Davis Perkins, has condemned the Confessing Church Movement within the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Perkins stated that "the term 'confessing church' has come to mean something altogether different in the current Presbyterian context . . . as right-wing organizations seek to use confessional statements as theological sledgehammers to bludgeon Presbyterians into a rigid orthodoxy that divisively excludes certain persons from ecclesiastical leadership."

By "certain persons," Perkins was referring to practicing homosexuals, who are prohibited by the church's constitution from being ordained as officers. But denominational leaders have chosen not to enforce the prohibition and many ministers and lay officers are open about their same-sex relations.

+ Presbyterian Church (USA), 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396

Radio minister leaves electronic media ministry

The Rev. David Feddes, English language radio minister for the Back to God Hour,

which is an electronic media ministry of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, will be leaving the electronic media ministry to pursue a Ph.D. in cross-cultural ministry. Rev. Feddes has served for the past 15 years as the Back to God Hour's English language radio minister. Feddes' radio programs are heard around the world.

+ Rev. Robert Heerspink, (616) 532-4129

Historic Presbyterian Church in Chicago seeks members

At the turn of the 20th Century, Second Presbyterian Church in Chicago, Illinois was crowded on Sundays with well-known people such as rail magnate George Pullman, grain merchant George Armour, and store owner Marshall Field. But in the 1920s families moved away when the neighborhood turned heavily industrial. Now the congregation of about 150 hopes to restore Second Presbyterian to its former glory. Thousands of people are moving into newly constructed town houses and high-rise apartments in the area.

The Rev. M. Coleman Gilchrist established a "phone-bank ministry" and placed 3,000 phone calls of which 175 families

expressed interest in attending and only 17 families showed up, but Gilchrist considers it a triumph. Next they will be mailing 6,000 brochures. The small congregation has struggled to maintain the church, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

+ Second Presbyterian Church of Chicago, 1936 South Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60616 (312) 225-4951

Lutheran University attacked

Lutheran churches in El Salvador have called on the government to ensure the safety and protection of the Salvadoran Lutheran University after a raid on 29 Jan. More than 30 computers, three television sets, sound equipment, and other materials were stolen and a guard was killed and left hanging from a tree.

There is concern that the incident is linked to the El Salvador Lutheran church's action to defend human rights in that country. Salvadoran

Lutheran University is an institution of the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod, a member of the Lutheran World Federation.

+ Lutheran World Federation, 150, route de Ferney, PO Box 2100 CH-1211, Geneva 2 Switzerland

The saints in ancient British history

Tangled threads – Paulinus & King Edwin

Patricia van Laar

Sometimes Christian history and the individual Christian life have been likened to a tapestry, which viewed from the back seems just a mass of tangled threads, yet look at the front and you behold a beautiful picture. Sorting out the tangled threads of Northern England from the wrong side of the picture almost brings on a headache, yet viewed from the right side it is indeed a tribute to the beauty, design, wonder and grace of God. Pope Gregory would have rejoiced to see how his own plans for Deira, apparently thwarted by his decision to send Augustine to southern England, were in God's inimitable Hand fulfilled in the events that unfolded.

While Augustine of Canterbury was introducing Christianity to South and West England, what was happening in the North? Pope Gregory I, you will recall, had his interest in England aroused by the fair skinned and fair

haired slaves offered in the Rome marketplace, the children of Deira (York) whose King Aella brought from him the pun, "They must sing Allelujah." But in the wonderful way of God, He chose his own men to spread His message, in His own time. In this we trace the links in God's chain.

King Aella, the "Allelujah King", ruled Deira, in the southern region of what is now Northumberland. In the northern region, the house of Bernicia was under King Aethelfrith's rule. After the death of Aella in the latter part of the sixth century, Aethelfrith, in 604, united the two kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, as Northumbria. But he saw in Aella's son, Edwin, a threat to his own succession. He set out to remove this danger. Edwin became a fugitive and was exiled (about 615) to East Anglia, where he sought refuge with Redwald, the East Anglian King. Christianity in Redwald's kingdom was linked to the Kentish mission established by Augustine. The king himself, although baptised as a Christian, had compromised his Christian profession by allowing his wife to retain her pagan temple-altar and practices. All the same, the pagan but thoughtful Edwin, during his exile in East Anglia, had made an important contact with Christianity.

Redwald was bribed and threatened by Aethelfrith, and was about to betray Edwin. A twist of fate saved the prince. Aethelfrith's queen, who as we saw, was not a Christian, and had been greatly opposed to her husband's conversion, now dissuaded Redwald from his intention, and persuaded him to act justly, so saving Edwin's life.

In 617 Aethelfrith himself was killed in battle by Redwald, and Edwin did succeed him as King. To secure his own position, Edwin in turn, exiled Aethelfrith's son, Oswald, to the monastery at Iona, with significant consequences. To use the words of a modern hymn, it could be said, "God is working His purpose out, as year succeeds to year."

A royal marriage

In 625, King Edwin, by now King of Northumbria from the Humber to the Forth, asked the hand in marriage of Ethelburga, princess of Kent. Her brother Eadbald, King of Kent, declared it was forbidden by the church for a Christian to marry a heathen. Edwin, impressed by his contact with Christianity whilst in East Anglia, stated he was of the intention to consider becoming a Christian, so she was permitted to marry him. Setting out for her new home, Ethelburga took with her Paulinus, a monk of Roman birth, to strengthen her and her companions in their faith. So it was that, twenty-eight years after arriving with Augustine, the now middle-aged Paulinus travelled north with Ethelburga of Kent who was to be queen of Edwin of Northumbria.

Paulinus – an overlooked but important teacher

Paulinus of York is one whose name is not well known. Yet his contribution is incalculable. Prior to travelling with Ethelburga to her new home, he had been consecrated as Bishop (Overseer) of York. Faithful to his calling, he began his task of preaching and teaching in a wide area.

Even King Edwin's chief priest, the pagan Coifi, was fed up with his heathen gods, declaring of them, "What good have they ever done me?" Listening with interest to Paulinus, he was convicted and brought by Paulinus to the positive position of desecrating and burning his own temple, although his motive for this and his personal faith have been questioned. Paulinus, that faithful servant of God, continued his work, preaching and teaching. The people flocked from the villages to hear the Word, these villagers being baptised in great numbers, in conformity to the command of Christ, as disciples of Christ, in the River Glen.

Conversion of a King

Fascinating is the story of Edwin's own step by step walk to the Lord, beginning while a fugitive, continuing with a famous parley between Edwin the king and his chief priest Coifi, where Coifi uttered his famous question, "What good have the gods ever done for me?" The seed



'A depiction of Paulinus preaching' (c) Northumberland County Council

planted in Edwin's mind grew, watered under the instruction and challenge from Paulinus, strengthened by Ethelburga, his Kentish Christian wife. Edwin realised (unlike Redwald,) that baptism meant a complete break with the past. He took his time, making thoughtful progress to undoubted personal conviction. Edwin was baptised a convinced Christian in 627.

Edwin now persuaded the ruler of the East Angles, the succeeding son of Redwald, to break completely with heathendom. Paulinus continued his proclamation of the Gospel, and extended the faith to Lindsey (which includes the city of Lincoln.)

But in 633 the heathen Penda of Mercia and Cadwallen the Christian King of Wales, killed Edwin in battle. Ethelburga and her children fled back to Kent. Paulinus, sad to leave but fulfilling his duty to the queen, accompanied them. Another royal House and

other missionaries were to save the Christian cause in Northumbria. Oswald of Bernicia, the exile to Iona, returned to ascend the throne of Northumbria after Edwin's death, and it was he who attacked the vastly superior forces of Cadwallen, reversing the defeat. But that, as is said, is another story.

Paulinus continued to serve his God honourably on his return to Kent, as Bishop of Rochester until his death ten years later. Neither Edwin nor Paulinus have received much honour as "Saints", although historians have given them due acknowledgement for their contribution to the history of the church. But using the true Biblical meaning of the word, these two men were indeed beloved saints of God, chosen and called of Him to play their part in England, as links in that golden chain of witnesses to His love and grace.

Focus on home

Gleanings from our bulletins...

Andrew Reinders

Avondale

It is the church building's 40th birthday this year!! 40 years ago the first stone was

laid for our current church building and we would like to celebrate this by having a full day at church with prayer & praise, lunch, dinner, games etc. We would like to form a small committee (male and female) to make this day a success. Please let me know if you would like to help out.

Bishopdale

Congratulations to Ron and Anke Wisse on the occasion of their 45th wedding anniversary. May the Lord continue to bless you as you put your trust in Him.

Congratulations to Peter & Vivien Mahoney on the birth of their daughter Poppy.

Buckland's Beach

Social Event. Don't miss out on the first social event of the year. We are going to Omana Regional Park for a BBQ/Braai on Saturday 26 February starting at 4:00pm. Please bring your own meat and a salad and dessert to share. Also togs, a chair or two and all your own cutlery. Come and enjoy a time of fellowship outside in God's creation.

Men's Breakfast: By popular demand and as a real means of building and strengthening fellowship with the Lord and each other, there will be another men's breakfast. This is for ALL men - young and old! When: Saturday, March 5th from 8.00am till 10.00am. What: A glorious, superbly prepared cooked breakfast! How much? \$5.00 per head! Register: See Gonny van Garderen What's on? As suggested last time, we will have a special guest speaker. Mr Martien Kelderman, director of the School of Contemporary Studies at the Bible College of New Zealand, will be speaking with a special focus on living out your Christian faith in the work place.

Christchurch

Cor den Brave. It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Cor Den Brave on this day, in Modesto, California. He passed on from ongoing health problems as a result of a stroke a year ago January. Cor died quite peacefully and for that we are very grateful. He was a devoted Christian, knew his Lord well and was ready to be with him. Cor is survived by his wife of 57 years, Shirley den Brave. He also leaves his son Leendert, also of Modesto, daughter Joyce Van Gorkum of Escalon, and son Michael also of Escalon. He has 6 grandchildren: Brandi Anderson, Casey, Carrie and Corey Van Gorkum, Mitch and Renee den Brave and one great-granddaughter, Jillian Anderson. Memorial services will be held in Ripon, California at Zion United Reformed Church on 25 February 2005. The Den Brave Family.

Paintball. Attention all those that are over 16 years of age (yes, that means parents too), that would be keen to play some paintball at the end of April! I need to get an indication of numbers to get prices and leave time for those keen to save up some money. Please contact me: Jason de Vries (phone 343 2700 or email „mailto:wolven@inet.net.nz“ μwolven@inet.net.nz§) leaving name and number.

Dunedin

Jubilee Celebration. Over the weekend of 25 and 26 June we expect to be hosting a substantial number of out-of-town guests. These folks have accepted our invitation to come and celebrate with us, and some of them will

require accommodation. If you can help in this way please advise Peter Braam. Thank you to those groups and individuals who have already indicated they will be performing items at our celebration. However, there are still many spots that can be filled. Also, we would like to get a feel for what photographs and memorabilia we have, and how they can best be presented. If you would like to perform an item, or if you have photos, please speak to John van Dyk. Plans for our jubilee are progressing well. Let's make it a joint effort—two days of celebration we can long remember.

This morning we have the privilege of witnessing the blessing of the Lord in the sign and seal of Christian baptism to Esther, Timothy and Charlotte O'Neill. On their response to the baptismal vows we also warmly welcome Brian and Heather O'Neill as communicant members of this church. Adam, baby son of Timothy and Charlene Storm, will also receive the sacrament of baptism this morning. Infants no less than adults are God's children and should by baptism receive the mark of the covenant of grace and be received into Christ's church. Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me".

Hamilton

Church picnic Sunday 27 February. We would like to invite you all for a picnic down at the Hamilton Rose Gardens TODAY after church. Gather together at 1pm on grassed area across from car park. Bring your own lunch and something to sit on! Please come for this time of fellowship - Everyone welcome.

Congratulations to Ron and Tina Voschezang on their 25th wedding anniversary this coming Tuesday. Word has it that they are on their way to celebrate it on the Gold Coast thanks to their children.

The forthcoming Synod was discussed and an organising committee will be formed to prepare ourselves well before the September commencement date. We will be looking for a number of people from the congregation prepared to billet delegates for the week that Synod is held.

Hastings

Youth Group Event. Due to popular demand, we will be having a LASERFORCE Night THIS Saturday (12th March). Meet at the church at 6:45pm SHARP. Bring \$3 if you want to play one game, \$6 for two games. We will be having icecream afterwards at church, finishing @ 9:30pm.

Mangere

An item I missed last week was to note the 50th Wedding Anniversary of Br & Arie & Sr Lenie Bylsma. We thank the Lord for His

blessing upon them and their children and grandchildren.

Masterton

Calling Process Rev. Kloosterman: Session would like to advise the congregation regarding the calling process. Presbytery meets this Friday and the Elders are asking advice on our proposal re the eligibility for call of Rev. Kloosterman. If Presbytery concurs with our proposal, the voting for calling Rev. Kloosterman will take place on Sunday the 20th of March DV. The benchmark is 75%. If he passes this then we may expect him and his wife here on the 12th of April 2005 to meet with the congregation and sit his full Colloquium Doctum. On the other hand if he does not pass the benchmark of 75% the Rev. Kloosterman will not be meeting with the congregation. The Calling Committee then has to go back to the drawing board to look for a new prospective minister. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this process please see your elder.

North Shore

We have set Saturday, 11th June, as a study day for Session to do some self-evaluation of our work, and our Church in general, as to how we may be able to perform better and perhaps even be more Biblically focused as a Church. To assist us in this we will use the Church Revitalisation Seminar material (from Andrew Young, Grace Theological College) that we attended last year.

North Shore Bible Study. Join up on Wednesday – all welcome. We are looking at four, pre-planned, 8-week study blocks (one per school term) for the Wednesday night Bible study. Starting this very Wednesday, we begin the two ways to live gospel training. Other study blocks are in the pipeline to be discussed at our first meeting. Be at church at 7:30. Come not for your benefit, but for someone else's!

Palmerston North

Prayer meeting. The congregational prayer meeting is today, at 3.30pm, at church. All encouraged to attend. Church Social Evening. Friday 4 March 2005. Bring and Share Tea beginning at 6:00pm. This will be a fun evening for the whole family! Please bring a main dish and a dessert.

Rest home singing. We are again organising rest home singing at Linville rest home. The first time will be Sunday 13 March at 3 pm DV, and hope to do this every 4-6 weeks. We would like many singing voices, and so would encourage you to come. The address for Linville rest home is 31 Weston Ave, and we'll see you there at 3pm on Sunday 13 March (next Sunday). The Deacons

Mainly Music Family night. Please keep Saturday 9th April free for our next family night. We will start at 5.30pm with pizzas for dinner (\$5 per family, drinks & pizza provided), followed by a mainly music session. Please bring along your favourite teddy bear or soft toy. There will be a list in the foyer closer to the time to write your family name on. There are a number of new and regular community families keen to come this year so please support us, it'd be great to have a good turnout from our Church to provide fellowship with them

Pukekohe

Tomorrow Harriet and I are hosting the regular ministers and wives get-together for our Auckland presbytery. This will be over lunchtime and gives us a good opportunity to keep up good relationships amongst ourselves in this region.

Attention Youth! Combined Event! The 40 Hr Famine Weekend in Hamilton is officially unmissable! The 18th-20th March is the date, and it's jam-packed with fantastic stuff, all top secret, so to find out what's happening you'll have to see for yourself! All you need is \$2, warm clothes and sleeping gear. RSVP to Jess Jones (07 846 3633 or 025 671 2656) by Wed 16th March. Start your famine at 5:30pm on the 18th to be done in time for breakfast before church. You know you want to...

Silverstream

From the Building Committee. We are making progress. The architect has applied for a resource consent from the Council. Hopefully the consent process will go smoothly and we will hear back soon. Meanwhile, there have been various meetings with engineers and the like, and hopefully next week a meeting with the Regional Council, to see if there are any issues relating to the stream. We trust that in the Lord's providence we will have a favourable outcome from the Council relating to the resource consent, so we urge the congregation to study the drawings provided, and if you have comments or preferences or ideas, please contact a committee member. We will keep you posted. The Building Committee

Wainuiomata

Card-Making Evening. All ladies are invited to come along for a fun evening together at the church this Wednesday (9th) at 7.30 pm to make cards to sell at the Gala. Please take along any suitable materials you may have including scissors and glue.

Wellington

We were saddened to hear about the passing away of sister Bep Uithol last Monday, called to be home with the Lord. We express our heartfelt condolences to Jackie & Bill Wierenga, Jonathan, Rebecca, Rachel & Peter and pray for the Lord's comfort and sustaining grace.

Wedding Banns. The Lord willing, on Saturday, 19th March, 2005, Sybrand van Schalkwyk and Karina Corbett hope to enter into the holy state of matrimony at Hobsonville, Auckland. Unless valid objections are raised the wedding will go ahead as planned, and your pastor will be officiating.

PRESBYTERY AUCKLAND - 25/2 /05

The meeting was opened by Rev S Bajema with a reading from Psalm 75. He then led in prayer and asked us to sing Psalter 368.

The meeting was constituted with Rev J Rogers as moderator and Rev J Ter Horst as vice moderator. All delegates stood to signify their agreement with our confessional standards, and first-time delegates signed the register.

The agenda was adopted with some additions.

Matters discussed included:

- regarding further contact with Grace Presbyterian churches, Rev J Haverland has organised a Reformed Pastor's Fellowship, the first meeting of which to be held on April 5th.
- Bucklands Beach is to organize the next study day for office bearers, most likely in July of this year.
- Church Order Article 47 questions were answered by North Shore, Pukekohe and Avondale Sessions. North Shore were blessed with 11 young people professing their faith in the past year. Pukekohe also commented on the blessings of having a great group of young people in the church, but also requested that we continue to pray for those older youth who have not as yet professed their faith. Avondale are facing a substantial change in session with 3 new deacons and 2 new elders, and are also working through a vision mission statement. A profession of Faith class has been started and 8-10 people are attending. Rev D van Garderen led in a time of prayer taking into account the points raised by the congregations.
- Correspondence out was ratified.
- Correspondence in was dealt with. A request by Pukekohe to approve some extra songs for inclusion in worship was approved.
- The continuing supply of preachers to Hamilton was also dealt with, with Presbytery Auckland supplying a minister each fortnight.
- All other agenda items were held over to the next meeting, which will be held 20th May 2005.

WELLINGTON PRESBYTERY - 4TH & 5TH MARCH 2005 AT THE REFORMED CHURCH OF HASTINGS

Rev Stephen t'Hart gave an illustrated talk of the role of the Reformed Mission in Papua New Guinea after the official opening of the Presbytery. He likens it to an interactive wheel of interconnecting spokes namely: Evangelism > Worship > Church Membership > Teaching > Leadership > Evangelism, this time by the local people. He emphasized the need for money, resources and personnel to train local people in becoming church leaders. As the evangelizing programmes bring in more people, this need for trained leaders is very important for the future well-being of the local churches.

Article 47 C.O. questions were put to the elder delegates for Hastings and Masterton. Advice was requested from Masterton Session regarding the question asked of the Churches: "Does the session diligently promote the cause of Christian Education (including Christian day schools)?" It is understood that the current trend to Home Schooling is having a negative effect on Christian day schools. Various points of advice were given to Masterton on this issue.

The counsellor of the vacant church in Masterton, Rev Bruce Hoyt reported that Masterton are continuing to function well and especially appreciated the ministry of Rev Sikkema during his 3 month stay. They are making good progress toward extending a call to a prospective pastor and appreciate the continued help given by the Presbytery through the preaching roster.

On request of Presbytery Rev Hoyt gave a brief report of his visit to Myanmar where, along with two men from the GKN (Lib) BBK committee, they investigated the opportunities for mission work in Myanmar. While in Myanmar, all three men presented lectures on topical subjects to the Reformed Churches there. The investigation revealed that there was opportunity for training of office bearers and for translation of Reformed material into the Burmese language.

The Presbytery discussed the overture from RC Palmerston North that the Synod ratify the following statement recently affirmed (with a small addition) by the Wellington Presbytery on abortion. The overture states that "since we believe that unborn children are living creatures in the image of God, given by God as a blessing to their parents and that this life begins at conception, we therefore affirm that voluntary abortion, except possibly to save the physical life of the mother, is in violation of the sixth commandment. Pregnancy resulting from rape does not constitute a second allowable

exception." After a lengthy discussion on the value of the statement in light of the teaching of God's Word, the wording of our confessions and the Church Order, Presbytery voted in favour of forwarding the overture to Synod by majority vote.

Palmerston North Session requested advice from Presbytery on the application procedure for a preaching licence. Presbytery advised them to bring the matter before Synod in order to establish a procedure. The Presbytery voted unanimously in favour of an overture proposing that the Presbytery request the Synodical Interim Committee to invite the Grace Presbyterian Church to send an official observer to Synod 2005. Presbytery also voted unanimously in favour of overture Synod on the following:

1. That the Interchurch Relations Committee meet with the Grace Presbyterian Church to investigate how the Grace Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Churches of New Zealand might seek closer bonds.
2. That the Interchurch Relations Committee report to the sessions and the Synodical Interim Committee the outcome of its meeting(s) with the Grace Presbyterian Church during the intersynodical period.

The Masterton Session requested advice re Arts 22 & 112 of Acts 1995 (cf. Office Bearers' Handbook 3-22) concerning the procedure of calling a minister from a Non-Sister Church.

After discussion on the value of any departure from our present practice of conducting a face to face preliminary Colloquium Doctum in order to declare a candidate eligible for call, Presbytery decided that all sessions must consider the question of conducting a Colloquium Doctum via a Video conference call and reply to Masterton by the end of March. It was clarified that this conference call would not proceed if two or more sessions would object.

Rev Bruce Hoyt led in closing prayer.

CHRISTCHURCH PRESBYTERY - 19TH MARCH 2005

Moderator Rev Jim Klazinga opened the meeting with a devotion from Job 28 & 1 Corinthians 2:6ff. Following adoption of the minutes Presbytery decided to delay distribution of minutes until after subsequent Presbytery meetings.

It was noted that Presbytery has \$4500-00 of Funds remaining from the sale of the Invercargill Reformed Church premises. The Bishopdale session are to put forward a proposal to the next session meeting for the possible use of these funds.

Presbytery discussed a request from

Dovedale to provide advice on whether or not a candidate for ministry in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand is able to sign the form of subscription while having trouble assenting to aspects of the Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 21. Presbytery decided that a person holding the position would have great difficulty signing the form of subscription. The position expressed in a paper written by the candidate is contrary to the clear teaching on the fourth commandment on WCF 21 and HC LD 38. It is the judgment of Presbytery that any office bearer holding the position held would need to bring a gravamen against that section of the confessions. In particular the paper sees no direct application of the fourth commandment to the rest and corporate worship that God's people enjoy on the Lord's day.

Article 47 plus supplementary questions were answered positively by delegates from Reformed Churches of Dunedin and Christchurch.

It was agreed that the Nelson session provide oversight for the National Youth Camp to be held at the Tea Pot Valley campsite. An application to the Needy Churches Fund was tabled by Nelson delegates for the next meeting.

Hans Vaatstra

What gets our attention?

Hans Voschezang

Daniel was a young ambitious Accountant who had moved to the Big Smoke to take up a new career which he viewed as a promotion, another stepping stone on the road to success.

He grew up in a small country town, where he had started out straight from University. Daniel had big plans, he was going to be one of the best. Last month the CEO offered him a junior partnership in the Firm, responsible for the small business section and enthusiastically he had accepted this position.

Today he had just picked up his brand new Jaguar, a little reward for his effort and achievement, he thought. Driving down the neighbourhood a little too fast, Daniel noticed a group of children darting in and out from between the parked cars, so he slowed down somewhat. As his car passed, the children scattered, and with a loud bang a brick smashed in to the Jag's door. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a little boy just standing there. He slammed on the brakes and reversed to where the boy stood.

The angry driver grabbed the boy and

pushed him up against the car and shouted at him: "What do you think you were doing, this is my brand new car. Look at the damage you have done."

The boy crying and shaking with fear sobbed: "I'm sorry Sir, please help me, I don't know what to do"

"What do you mean, you don't know what to do, look at my car, that will cost me a lot of money."

Daniel was so furious, he had only eyes for his precious car.

Then the boy cried uncontrollably, and said: "I threw the brick because no one else would stop. It is my brother over there, he rolled off the footpath and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up."

Daniel was stunned and looked at the boy in disbelief, when he continued: "Would you please help me get him back in his wheelchair?" It was at this point that Daniel saw the upturned wheelchair and a boy laying on the pavement. Moved beyond words, Daniel swallowed his pride and the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He hurried to the handicapped boy,

and lifted him back in his wheelchair. He took his fancy handkerchief out of his pocket and tried to stop the bleeding as he dabbed at the scrapes and cuts. Looking around he saw the sign of a Pharmacy down the road and quickly wheeled the boy inside. A shop assistant helped him to clean the wounds and put some band aid on. A quick look told him that the boy would be ok. "Thank you Sir, and may God bless you", the grateful boy told this stranger.

Too shook up for words, Daniel watched this little boy straining to push his brother down the footpath.

This boy would have done anything for his brother, because he loved him. For Daniel it was a very long and slow walk back to his car. The whole incident had hit home the fact of how selfish he had become.

There was more to life than a successful career and a new car. He just discovered who his neighbour was. The damage to his car was very noticeable, but he never bothered to repair it. He kept the dent as a reminder of this day. Daniel learned his lesson not to wait until someone throws a brick to get your attention.

A story to close loopholes

Often the parable of the Good Samaritan has also been used as a popular story designed to inspire people to help others in need. But Jesus told this story to a man who was looking for loopholes, so that he could pick and choose and could refuse to help someone in need.

One day this expert in the Law of God, approached Jesus with a question. He wanted to show off how good he was in his field as a lawyer. He had heard about Jesus' reputation as being unusually wise and perceptive. So, it is no surprise that this man asked a legal question: "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" Even though Jesus came here to proclaim the good news of grace, Jesus didn't reframe the question, but plays along, keeping everything very legal. "What does God's Law say?" Jesus asked almost to flatter him, and adds: "How do you read it?" By asking this lawyer what the Law of God says, Jesus was giving him a lot of leeway. There were thousands of laws and statutes, it could have taken him the whole day to answer this question: "What does God's Law say."

But instead this lawyer gives the summary of the Law, he gave Jesus' own answer: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart...soul... strength...and mind; and love your neighbour as your self".

At the bottom line, God's Law is all about love: love for God, and love for your neighbour.

Jesus says: "You have answered well! Do that and you will live". Do that? This doesn't sound like being saved by grace alone apart from works. Why didn't Jesus tell him straight away that salvation is not about what we do? But Jesus allowed this legalistic atmosphere to continue, and the wisdom of that choice shows immediately. I can picture Jesus starting to walk away. So the lawyer says quickly to hold Jesus' attention, "OK Rabbi, but who is my neighbour". Remember, this lawyer was not curious, but he was seeking to justify himself. If Jesus had pressed the man, Jesus would have uncovered all manner of racism, bias and prejudice in his heart. What he needed was a definition of, "neighbour" that would qualify the people he had ignored, and intended to ignore from being targets, of the love, God's Law demanded. He wanted an excuse to stay the way he was. If we are honest with ourselves, don't we have that tendency as well? The lawyer wanted a restricted definition of "neighbour" and so Jesus turns this right around by telling him a story as broad ranging as possible.

A certain man was walking from Jerusalem to Jericho. Jesus doesn't elaborate who he was, how he looked like or what his ethnic origin was. He could have been Mr. Anybody.

However, Jesus gets a bit more specific, when He gets to the hero of the story; it's a Samaritan.

I'm not going into details as to which degree this ethnic group of people was despised by the Jews.



The Parable of the Good Samaritan

It would have been interesting though, if in this story it had been the Samaritan who ended up in the ditch, beaten to pulp and his face smashed in. That fact alone might have made a dramatic point, because it would have been precisely this kind of despised people that this lawyer would have excluded from his definition of "neighbour". But Jesus pulls a double surprise; it's the Samaritan who does the neighbourly act for a stranger on the roadside.

When we're on the receiving end

You know, if we do something nice to a person of a class of people which whom we normally don't associate, we feel pretty good about it, and maybe we even give ourselves a pat on the back for doing this act of charity. But what would happen if we became the recipient of charity?

Well, we would be startled, shamed or even embarrassed. Maybe we would re-think our attitude.

Maybe we should see ourselves as the man in the ditch. Helplessly we would watch while two clergy walked passed. Both the Priest and the Levite were fulfilling the letter of the Law, they would be ritually defiled for seven days and wouldn't be able to perform their religious duties in the Temple.

Do you see what Jesus is trying to tell; If we are hung up on the Law, we will always find excuses not to love our neighbour. Our excuses will always sound as holy as a quote from the Catechism.

When it comes to the nitty, gritty Jesus is saying that everybody in the world is our neighbour. Jesus is exposing the futility of the Law as a way to inherit eternal life. The Law cannot save anybody.

The Samaritan who reached out to the man in the ditch, did so, not as a result of the Law but of Grace.

The finer points of the Law left the man half dead. It leaves us all there. Grace is what lifts the man out of the ditch, and Grace is what lifts us out as well. If God had not been gracious with us, we would all still be dead. Jesus is telling us that we too, are to act as neighbours to all whom we meet, or where we meet them no matter the circumstances or how different they are from us.

We also notice the Grace notes sounded over against this picky lawyer who was more interested in justifying himself legalistically than in being a gracious giver of love.

Grace then Law

This parable tells us that when we start with the Law, we will never arrive at Grace. But when we start with Grace, we find that the Law of love gets fulfilled simply and solely because of the kind of people we became after the Grace of God lifted us up out of the ditch where our sin had left us to die.

We need that Grace because if we are honest, we must confess that on our own we can be pretty unloving at times. So, how wonderful it is, that the only way to love God and neighbour is through the very same Grace that also forgives our failures of love. So, our question is not the lawyer's question: "What must I do to be saved?" But our question is: "What did Jesus do to save us?"

If we get a good answer to that question we won't need to hear Jesus say, "Go and do likewise."

Grace will so fill us with love, that we will want to go and do as Jesus did.

Mission in focus

Janice Reid

Short-term missions

Last month we heard from two members of our churches who have been on short-term mission-trips. Craig Van Echten visited the Hagoorts in Papua New Guinea, helping with construction at the church at Nine Mile, and also building a children's playground at the mission guest-house in Mapang. Hayden Bosgra has spent almost a year in Ecuador, working with local believers to reach out to the lost in their community in Cuenca. Hayden returns to New Zealand this month.

Many opportunities exist for short-term mission trips, and there is much need for more workers (both long and short term) to join in with gathering the harvest. Perhaps you want to 'test the waters' yourself, and see what missionary life involves? RP Missions, based in the USA, is one way that Reformed believers in the States gain experience of the mission-field—in both western and non-western countries. Matt Filbert, founder of RP Missions, tells the story....

RP Missions began as a project while I was a student in Seminary. I was looking for an outlet where I could use my theological training. I had participated in a short-term mission trip myself, when I was in university, and I noted several areas that could be improved.

While in Seminary I was able to visit with some of our missionaries and discuss ways

to improve short-term missions; in 1997 RP Missions was born. We began with missions to Scotland working with two small struggling Reformed congregations. Since all our short-term teams work was with established churches, we knew that all contacts made by team members would be followed up by pastors and missionaries. It was also quite beneficial for young people to work shoulder to shoulder with pastors and missionaries that they might better understand the workings of Christ's Church and better understand their place in the wider body of Christ.

RP Missions is under the oversight and authority of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. This oversight helps to guard RP Missions against the temptations to depart from Reformed teaching and also offers great counsel as the organization seeks to grow and expand. It also helps us to make sure that their is uniformity to the teaching and evangelism that goes on in our mission efforts so that we don't create unnecessary confusion on the mission field. All our participants (though they might not be Reformed and Presbyterian) are asked to submit to the teaching and doctrines of the RPCNA while on their mission field so that the ministry might run smoothly.

Since RP Missions began in 1997, more than 200 people have been through the program. A remarkable 60% of those who have gone on an RP missions trip return for another one. This return rate allows us to continue to develop the leadership skills of young people and entrust more team leadership to them. This has allowed RP Missions to go from sending two teams per year to now sending eleven teams per year. Many of those young people who have served on and led mission teams have eventually pursued long-term mission opportunities in Japan, Scotland, Kuwait, Australia and Uganda.

RP Missions is always looking for mature Reformed young people who have a desire to serve Reformed churches around the world. In the summer of 2005, RP Missions plans, Lord willing, to send teams to Scotland, Cyprus, Ireland, Canada, Japan, Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), Purcellville (Virginia), White Lake (New York), and Washington (Iowa). The trips vary in length from two to five weeks, between the months of June and August. We also have a December/January mission in Phoenix, Arizona, each year. Most of the non-US teams are filled, but we are still looking for a number of young people to serve on our North America mission teams. I will briefly describe the trips coming up this June to August:

Washington, Iowa – this team will help organize and lead a vacation Bible school and

help with a "meals on wheels" program for individuals confined by illness or infirmity to their homes. This mission runs from June 18 to July 2 and team members are responsible for their travel cost to Iowa and then \$800 USD for lodging, travel in Iowa, meals, and outreach materials. This team will be made up of 4-8 young people and we still have four places open.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – this team will be doing outreach in the inner city of Pittsburgh. They won't be going in untrained, but will also become certified in Evangelism Explosion (modified). This team will help to work with an after school program and help to organize a vacation Bible school. One week of this trip will be held in the Laurel Mountains of Pennsylvania at a Christian Family Conference where the team members will be counselors for the children. This trip runs from July 4 to August 11 and team members will be responsible for their travel to Pittsburgh International Airport and \$800 USD to cover travel, lodging, food, outreach materials, and conference. This team will be made up of young people from all around the world and consist of 6-12 members. We currently have six places left on this mission.

White Lake, New York – this trip will be held at a Christian youth camp about two hours outside of New York City. The team will act as counselors for youth and live with the campers in cabins. Team members will help with Bible lessons, leading devotions, organizing day trips for activities such as rafting, canoeing, bowling, etc. The team members will also get to visit New York City. This trip runs from July 26 to August 20 and the cost is travel to New York City, plus \$600 USD for meals, lodging, outreach materials and travel in New York. This team needs mature Reformed youth who have the ability and desire to mentor young children and serve as role-models. We are still looking for three more young ladies to serve as counselors for the young girls and two more young men to serve as counselors for the guys.

Purcellville, Virginia – this mission team will work with a new church plant effort in the outskirts of Washington, D.C. The team will help to organize and lead a vacation Bible school, will carry out door-to-door ministry and street evangelism. Time will be spent witnessing in the U.S. capital city and some time will be spent touring this historic area of the United States. This team is looking for three more young people to add their skills to this team. The dates of this mission are July 5 to July 19. The cost is travel to Dulles Airport in D.C. plus \$800 USD for food, transportation, lodging, and outreach materials.



Matt Filbert

Toronto, Canada – this will be our second mission to Toronto. This team will be working with another church plant in the heart of this growing metropolis. Toronto is a very needy city for the gospel. There are an over abundance of competing worldviews in this city of several million people and the team will explore these worldviews and seek to proclaim the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ to a city that truly needs Him. Time will be spent establishing contacts in local shopping malls and restaurants and on the streets of Toronto so that opportunities can be found to share the gospel. This trip runs from July 7 to August 1 and the cost is travel to Toronto plus \$800 USD for food, lodging, travel, outreach materials and some touring of the city.

RP Missions seeks to keep the costs of missions as low as possible. Team members most often will use fund-raising letters to generate support for the trip. Others have raised funds using other fund-raising models. Still others have paid for their trips out of their own pockets.

Young people who might be aspiring to Seminary after university, may also enjoy a 50% tuition reduction from the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary if they enrol full-time. This is the oldest Reformed Seminary in all of North America and has graciously extended this wonderful offer to RP Missions participants.

For more information about RP Missions, please visit our website, <www.rpmissions.org>, or write to Matt Filbert, <rpmissions@yahoo.com>.

Note from the OMB: If you believe the Lord is calling you to involvement with one of the mission opportunities above, please see your elder! We encourage all short-term and long-term mission workers to seek endorsement and guidance from their sessions before applying for missionary service. Please note that the prices mentioned by Mr Filbert are estimates, and short-term mission-workers will generally need to raise their own funds, for both travel and living expenses.

A thank-you letter from Rev and Mrs James

By the time readers will be looking at these lines, our time in Uganda - from September 2004 to March 2005 - should have started to fade into our memories. However, as with past times, some things remain 'longer' with us than other things, and we can look back on a busy and (we trust) productive period of service to the Lord.

We have been grateful to Him for enabling us to renew precious fellowship with brethren

(indigenous and expatriate, alike) that we came to know, and love, from past visits...and to add to that circle of 'family' members in our most recent visit.

We can also give thanks to the Lord for His strengthening Barry to get through a heavy load of lecturing (at the Knox Theological College), and undertake a constant stream of preaching assignments in the village churches. It is by His grace and mercy, too, that Anne has been able to get alongside many of the Ugandan women-folk, lead some in Bible studies, and pull her weight within the OPC Mission fraternity.

As we have found, hitherto, when we are in Uganda we greatly miss our 'folks at home'...

and when we are back in Australia, we begin to miss many aspects of Uganda! Perhaps this is as it really should be: as the Lord has brought us savingly to Himself, He brings us more and more 'servingly' to one another.

To our brothers and sisters in New Zealand (and particularly to those in Silverstream), we praise the Lord - as your representatives in the work of mission in East Africa - for your faithfulness and self-giving. As with all service to the Lord, it is those who are engaged in it that benefit the most. Indeed, we have once again found that "It is more blessed to give than to receive"...praised be His glorious Name!

Barry & Anne James

MIF prayer notes

Please pray for the Hagoorts in Papua New Guinea, as Wally teaches and preaches in Vanagi and East Boroko. Pray that the people may grow in their knowledge and love of our Lord and God. Also pray for Jeannette as the busiest time of year approaches at Mapang.

Janice Reid and Jean-Luc Lebrun are still busy providing training resources for missionary radio announcers. After the March workshop in Indonesia, it was back to the keyboard for more chapters of their text-book, which they hope will provide a useful resource for Christian radio announcers in developing nations. Please pray for clear thinking as they finish the book, and for wisdom in decisions regarding translation and distribution of both book and other training resources.

Please pray for our short-term missionaries:

Hayden Bosgra leaves Ecuador, Lord willing, on May 2. He travels to the US for a team debrief May 9-11. Please pray for safe travel back to New Zealand, for good settling back into life here, and also for wisdom as he plans deputation meetings to tell people about his ministry.

Jared Berends and Heidi Posthuma need our prayers as they teach English in sensitive countries. Please ask the Lord to give them opportunities to share with friends, colleagues and students. Pray that the Lord would soften people's hearts to realise the hopelessness in which they now live, and to understand the life-giving message of Christ's salvation. Pray also for the raising up of team leaders and additional English teachers as ministry opportunities expand.

Home mission in focus

Two Ways to Live: know and share the gospel

Veronica Hoyt

I'm a reserved type of person, generally much too shy to speak to someone about my faith. And then the other day we were at a work lunch and I was able to steer the conversation so

that we could talk about the gospel. It was amazing ...

You folk must have been praying for us this past week. It was incredible. We'd been wanting to speak to both my work mate and our next door neighbour about the gospel for ages, and this past week we did. I got to speak to my workmate, and then when I got home my wife was speaking to our neighbour ...

These are two real accounts of sharing the gospel from two (rather stunned) participants of an evangelism course that we've attended recently. We were a mixed group of Christians (of the North Shore Reformed Church) – men and women, younger and older, some in the workforce, others not – but we all shared an apprehension of sharing the gospel. Would we know what to say? Do we know how to share the gospel without using jargon like sin,

salvation and sanctification? What if 'they' ask a hard question? Besides, they'll think that talking about the hope within me is just too personal for this individualistic age. Do people really want to know, anyway?

Lots of questions; enough, really, to put evangelism in to the too-hard basket.

Enter: Two ways to live: know and share the gospel. This uncomplicated, helpful and thoroughly Biblical course in evangelism helps to answer these – and more – difficult questions.

Two ways to live

So what is Two Ways to Live? It is a seven-week course with two main aims: to help you to know and to thoroughly understand the gospel for yourself, and to equip you to share it with others, as you have opportunity. It doesn't seek to make 'Billy Grahams' out of everybody, but it does aim to give participants tools – or a framework – they can use in whatever situation they find themselves. It may be it in a particular conversation at work or after church, or in a relationship with a friend over months or years. It is a course that will prepare you to give an answer for the hope that is in you.

The course is structured around learning – and adapting – a basic gospel outline. Over the weeks, participants progress from thoroughly memorising this outline, to adapting it into their own style of speaking, helping to make it personal and something that comes from the heart. The gospel outline is broken down into six main points:

- God the creator; humanity ruling under his authority.
- Humanity rebels, wishing to run things its own way.
- God judges (and will judge) humanity for this rebellion.
- In his love, God sends Jesus to die as an atoning sacrifice.
- In his power, God raises Jesus to life as ruler and judge.
- This presents us with a challenge to repent and believe.

These points are accompanied in the course with a set of six simple diagrams, and an accompanying verse/passage from the Bible, which are part of the memory work. All of these elements are helpful while learning this outline, but are especially so when given the chance to share the gospel. For example, the diagrams are very helpful for visual learners, which many of us are. And, after the conversation is over, the person spoken to can take the outline (including the Bible texts underneath each diagram) away with him for further reference and reflection.

Importance of prayer

At the beginning of the course, each participant is asked to write down the names of two people they are concerned about. This is shared with the group. Throughout the course, this prayer list is a focus not only for the group's prayers, but also for their thinking about what it means to share the gospel with someone. It helps to give the course a 'reality', stimulating the thought that this is something we can share with real people in real life. For most participants this list becomes a focus in personal prayer, too, and this in turn develops a frame of mind that's waiting and ready to share the gospel. It is worth noting that these two people are only sometimes the ones that the Lord

leads into conversations with us. The point is that we are ready for whomever the Lord chooses, and that we are praying for the lost.

This is one person's account:

The two names on my list are those of two Afghani refugees I tutor in English every Thursday afternoon. It is my fervent prayer that God will release them from their bondage to Islam and come to know Him. They know very little

English, and so I am not able to tell them about Christ – although, my husband and I have spoken with their son and, through his translating, with them about Christianity. Each week, before I step out of my car and walk to their apartment, I pray: "Lord, please help me to be your ambassador. Help me to show these people the love of Christ. And, Lord, lead them to Yourself!" It's a simple prayer but is heard by Almighty God. An added blessing to this prayer is that, through it, God strengthens and reminds me of what I'm really doing in teaching these lovely people: representing Him (and His people) in a household that needs to repent and serve the Living God.

Throughout the years I have missed (and messed up) many opportunities to witness about the Lord and His Word. Since doing the Two Ways to Live course, I sense that the Lord is not only working in those witnessed to, but also in me. I've been given new skills, but, more importantly, it has awakened a sense of urgency in sharing the gospel. Sharing it is no longer an abstract ideal but something that I can and will do!

Answered prayer

This sense of excitement is common to most who do this course. We've experienced participants sharing the Two Ways to Live outline in buses, airplanes and taxis. Quite a number have been able to talk about the gospel to colleagues at work. One person even managed to use this outline in a group of about 30 of his colleagues at one time, generating

a lot of thinking, questioning and discussion. Others have beavered away in personal relationships. And one enterprising pair did some 'cold contact' evangelism at a shopping mall one Saturday morning to sharpen their new skills. We've certainly experienced answered prayer: God gave opportunities for witnessing, and also gave the courage, ability and love to do it. I don't mean that the Lord has acted especially miraculously in giving us these opportunities, but that He has certainly used our readiness and blessed it with providential opportunities.

This is not a magical church growth scheme, but a summary of the Bible's primary message to today's world. Have we had swarms of people joining the church? No, but for those who have begun to attend, we are ready – with materials needed for further study of the Bible, and with hearts that believe that God is able to soften the hardest of hearts. After all, he's done this for us, personally – and will do so for all those who belong to Him. And, in the meantime, we join the many who, throughout history, have lived out the words of Psalm 22, the messianic psalm that speaks of the suffering and the triumph of our Lord and King: "Posterity will serve Him; future generations will be told about the Lord. They will proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn ..." (vs. 30 and 31).

Two Ways to Live: know and share the gospel was first developed in Sydney, Australia, in the 1980s by Phillip Jensen, and is published by Matthias Media. Course material includes participants manuals, leader's manual and a training video. For more information see their internet website: [HYPERLINK "http://www.mathiasmedia.com.au"](http://www.mathiasmedia.com.au) www.mathiasmedia.com.au

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A feminine focus

The Feminine Virtue of Self-Control

Sally Davey

A fear I sometimes have is that I might “go to pieces” in a moment of crisis: that I might somehow lose my presence of mind and panic, freeze or go blank. It would be awful, to say the least, to be unable to think clearly and to show a shameful lack of faith. Not so much because it would embarrass me, but because it would bring discredit to Christ. Can you picture the kind of situation? Being in a doctor’s surgery – or, worse still, alone at home on the telephone – and hearing the news you have cancer? Having a knock on the door and finding the police there, telling you a loved one has been killed in a car accident? Having your husband made redundant? Being told you’re unable to have children? I’m sure everyone knows the kind of thing. They are severe, shocking trials. These are the very times the Psalmist had in mind when he wrote: “For the righteous will never be moved... He is not afraid of bad news; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.” (Ps. 112:6-7) But we fear, sometimes, that this will not be true of us when we get **our** bad news.

A presence of mind

The nineteenth century writers often included this idea of presence of mind – being equal to emergencies – in their lists of important feminine qualities. You might be surprised – thinking, perhaps, that the Victorians, at least, favoured women who were soft, dependent and more likely to faint in a crisis than rise to the occasion. Not so: they placed plenty of stress on calmness, quiet faith and strong, resourceful character capable of inspiring others. Hannah More, for instance, warned against making a virtue out of uncontrolled feelings. There was an idea afoot in her time that extreme sensitivity, or being quickly or easily affected by emotional influences was something to be admired. It worried Hannah More that young women often ignored the principles and constraints that would restrain sensitivity and make it a useful and lovely quality. Such young women would often dismiss others who exercised these self-constraints as cold, and unfeeling. But in so doing, Hannah warned, “they plunge headlong into those sins and miseries” from which more principled young women are kept safe. (*Strictures on Female Education*, Vol. II, p. 101).

Sense and Sensibility

Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* perfectly illustrates what Hannah More was warning about. (In fact, the book was written at this very time). Perhaps you have even seen the movie, starring Emma Thompson? The story is all about the virtue of sense (or self-restraint) as opposed to sensibility (or unrestrained susceptibility to emotional impulses). We see Marianne Dashwood, a sensitive, emotional young woman, heedlessly giving in to her desires, refusing to listen to the counsel of her wiser, more self-controlled older sister, Elinor. Elinor is in love with a man unable to marry her, but she is able to restrain herself so well that she can keep her sorrow to herself and even silently bear the company of other, foolish women who speculate about the marital prospects of Edward Ferrars, the man she loves. In fact, she has to endure the jibes of Lucy Steele, secretly engaged to Edward Ferrars, and even keep Lucy’s confidence as asked for. Because of this, she is unable to confide her sorrow to her sister. However, Marianne has foolishly fallen in love with a worthless man and leans heavily on Elinor for comfort in her loud, unrestrained sorrows. When finally Elinor is able to tell her sister what she herself has been (silently) suffering, Marianne is astonished. She had simply thought Elinor cold and unfeeling. But Elinor explains “...all this has been going on at a time when, as you too well know, it has not been my only unhappiness. If you can think me capable of ever feeling – surely you may suppose that I have suffered now. The composure of mind with which I have brought myself at present to consider the matter, the consolation that I have been willing to admit, have been the effect of constant and painful exertion; - they did not spring up of themselves...” (p. 256). What Elinor means is that calm, steady presence of mind in suffering is something that takes effort. Self-control does not just happen.

An inner strength

They used to call this quality self-command or self-possession – and by it they meant *strength* – a quiet, purposeful, feminine strength. An inner strength. Something strong enough to keep the heart quiet and the thoughts clear. What Rudyard Kipling conveyed in his poem If: “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you...” I like the terms self-command and self-possession, because they convey these ideas well. But because they are a little dated, and don’t seem to suggest their meaning quite so well to modern ears, I have stuck to self-control. What I want to stress, however, is that by self-control I mean more than simply controlling our desires

– as in exercising our willpower when we diet, or stopping ourselves saying something stupid or hurtful.

Self-control is a deeply biblical idea: it is both a necessary restraint on the sinful desires, and a call to gird our hearts for faithful action in dangerous situations. It is the last-mentioned fruit of the Spirit – and stands out as the “strongest” virtue in a list of softer-sounding graces. Self-control is discussed in Scripture wherever there are practical instructions on our lives as Christians. We find it in Proverbs 25:28 in the warning that anyone without it is “like a city broken into and left without walls.” She who does not exercise self-control is, in other words, utterly defenceless and vulnerable. She will be prey not only to her own desires and passions, but also to the foolish influences of others. But of course we have not been left without hope in the struggle against this, or any other sin. As Paul wrote to Titus, “The grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, godly and upright lives in this present age.” (Titus 2:11-12) Those who have command of themselves are also ready for faithful service: “Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded [“self-controlled” in the NIV], set your hope

fully on the grace that will

be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct...” (1 Peter 1:13-15). Paul, also, makes a clear connection between a “manner of life worthy of the gospel of Christ” and “standing firm in one spirit,

with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents.” (Philippians 1:27-28) Such a self-controlled life is the only kind of life to live in the face of persecution. It is the kind of life that has characterized Christians who have endured to the end in every age of the church.

The world around us

Well, are we living such a life in this present age? On the face of it, it would seem that we are anything but self-controlled. We are the generation who “does it if it feels good” and never mind anyone else or the consequences. It sometimes seems that the only curb on our eating, drinking, sexual passions, and cravings for money and pleasure is fear of the health



risks. But even then, as a doctor friend once told me, it can be hard to get people to restrain themselves to avoid even obvious and immediate dangers. It's a lot easier to take some medication to "fix" the effects of indulgent behaviour, he sighed. And self-control is not taught in the only place it can really come from: the home. Parents do not discipline their children for fear of frustrating, repressing or warping their personalities. But parental discipline is how we eventually learn self-discipline – and lack of it is the cause of so many headaches for despairing school teachers. Teenagers who lack self-control become promiscuous teenagers, rebellious teenagers, whose destructive behaviour scars both their own lives and those of others. And the cycle repeats itself as they waste educational and vocational opportunities and ultimately shipwreck marriages and parenthood. In a nutshell, we are an age of Marianne Dashwoods, giving in to all our passions and exulting in our freedom from restrictions, while demeaning those who warn about principle, restraint and deferred gratification as repressive, narrow and judgemental. But sadly, there will be a great price to pay, both in this life and in the one to come.

The world in us

Well, obviously, you might say, we Christian women are not like that. We were brought up in the church and went to Sunday school and catechism class, and our parents taught us not to do those things. Well yes, there is truth in that – but unless what we've learned changes our hearts it will remain merely an external restraint. It will simply mould our behaviour out of a desire to conform outwardly to church community norms, or from a fear of hurting our families, who love us. If that is the case, it is just formalism - or maybe legalism - and not Christian self-control at all. We need to *internalize* our knowledge of the faith – believe it, with all our hearts! Only then will our behaviour be self-controlled from the right internal motive – love for Christ. There is something

tremendously steadying about saying "no" to a wrong desire for the sake of someone who sees everything we do, knows everything we are thinking – and yet loves us so much He has died for us. If you are dieting because you want to be slim and impress your friends at a special occasion in two months' time, you can be sure the diet will be out the window within three months. When we deny ourselves to impress others, it's all over as soon as we realize they aren't watching. But when we deny ourselves to please God, we can never really give it up because God is always watching. This, of course, is what parents have to remember – the goal is to teach their children not just to obey them (those whose backs are sometimes turned), but God, who is always there.

In times of crisis

And what about self-control for times of crisis? How are we Christian women doing in this respect? Do we stand firm when disaster strikes? When the going gets tough, are we the tough who get going? Often, yes. God does not desert His own when He allows them to go through fiery trials, and He will not turn away anyone who turns to Him in true faith. He often provides His help through the loving presence of a Christian friend who draws alongside and will walk through the dark valley together, arm in arm. (2 Corinthians 1:3-7) We are not left alone, as orphans. Any pastor, as John McArthur wrote in *Anxiety Attacked*, will be able to tell wonderful stories of God's provision for His suffering, struggling, bereaved children. But this is not always the case. Christian women don't always show trust in God when the pressure comes on them. It's distressing to know of Christians who have caved in at such moments – who have not found their faith equal to the trial and who've turned to other props than Christ for their relief – to pleasures, rebellious attitudes and behaviour, and to what is all too easy to obtain from the doctor – drugs that will blot out the effects of their despair. They have even turned their backs on truthful, loving Christian help. How we manage in trials is directly related to how well we prepare for them when the going is easy. And it's quite worrying to watch how poorly many of us are using our good times. We are not feeding our faith with the solid truth that will be needed for the crisis moments of our lives. You see, what comes out of us in time of trial will be whatever is in us: and if what has been going into us in our times of ease is light, superficial and merely pleasurable, then there will be nothing to keep us standing firm when the pressures are threatening to topple us. If we haven't studied the Scriptures carefully for a clear, certain view of who God really is we won't be in good shape to trust Him fully when the fiery darts of temptation and doubt start to fly at our hearts. How did Jesus stand when He was tempted? He quoted Scripture at Satan. You can only use Scripture as your

defence in that way, in that sort of situation, when you've read it, studied it and absorbed it till it's become part of your inmost being. So how will you respond when *your* crisis comes? You will respond in the way that you have prepared for it. And how is that?

The spiritual benefits

There are many spiritual benefits, not only for ourselves, but also for others when we are able to stand firm in trials. These have been proven, time and again, since the beginning. Think of the Christians who endured persecution in the early church. Some of them were women, too. Their witness astonished the pagan onlookers and led many of them to turn to Christ. They were amazed that anyone would be willing to suffer such hardship and pain because they would not deny Jesus and sacrifice to Caesar. To them, that seemed such a small thing. They began to ask why it wasn't, for Christians. Church historians, whatever they believe themselves, all acknowledge the huge effect the witness of the martyrs had on the watching pagan world. Many people today watch us in our trials. Doctors and nurses all notice the way Christian patients face illness, death and bereavement. We have hope in God, and it makes all the difference in the world. But perhaps the most important effect on others is the example we give our children. When we stand firm, place our trust in Christ and talk through some of the lessons along the way with them, priceless spiritual treasure is being passed on. I've seen more than one family endure the severe trial of a parent with cancer, and watched some of the ways both mother and father have helped their children learn to trust Jesus as they themselves have deepened in their own walk of faith. It is a wonderful thing – something, I expect, those children will never forget.

Self-control's Supreme Example

But the supreme example of self-control in this situation is our Lord Jesus himself. To observe him just before his arrest, in the garden of Gethsemane, is to learn a great deal. He went there to pray to the Father, most especially for his help to endure patiently what was to come. He knew how awful the suffering would be: he even prayed that if it were possible, the suffering be taken from him – and there were drops of blood. But the thing that astounds me is his selfless concern for others – even when he himself was facing imminent distress. Would you or I be able to think of others when about to undergo the most terrible suffering? He did. He told the disciples to watch and pray, because he was concerned that they not enter into temptation. He healed the ear of the high priest's slave – sliced off by one of his own disciples. And from the cross itself he made provision for his mother's future care. This is the kind of self-control God himself had. Surely we must want this too?

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Children in focus



Sonshine Korner



Survival Kit:

Read: Psalm 1

"We played a fun game in science," David told his Mum as he packed for a weekend at his grandparents' house.

"We had to get into small groups and decide which items we would include in our survival kit if we made a trip to the moon. Our teacher gave us a list of twenty items that we had to narrow down to eight things for our kit."

"Sounds interesting," said Mum. "Did everyone agree on the same eight items?"

David shook his head. "One of the girls in my group kept insisting on a map of the earth. What good would that do on the moon? Some kids wanted a compass. Personally, I was disappointed that chocolate wasn't even on the master list. But since it wasn't, I thought vitamins should be in the first spot."

Mum chuckled. "You and your chocolate!" she said. "But vitamins? We don't even take vitamins at home."

"I know," said David, "but I would if I went to the moon because all the good, healthy food we get here might not be available there."

A little later, David said that he was ready for his visit to his grandparents.

"Did you pack your pyjamas?" asked Mum.

"Of course," answered David

"Toothbrush?" asked Mum.

"Check," said David. "Don't forget Mum, I worked on a survival kit at school today. My mind is in gear to pack."

"What about your daily vitamins?" Mum asked.

David laughed. "Grandma will see that I eat well," he said. "I won't need vitamins there."

"What I actually meant by daily vitamins was your Bible," Mum told him. "It's important to read your Bible everyday for spiritual nutrition. It helps keep you spiritually healthy."

David looked at the Bible on his bedside table. He hadn't thought to pack it.

"I'm sure it wasn't on your master list at school," added Mum, "but whether you're going to the moon or just to your grandparents place, you need a daily dose of God's Word."

David opened his suitcase and made room for his Bible.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

If you prepared a survival kit, would the Bible be included? Reading God's Word faithfully is important for understanding the Gospel, that Jesus died for your sins, and for spiritual growth. Ask God to help you plan some 'quiet-time' in your day, so that you'll learn from His Word and receive spiritual food regularly.

MEMORY VERSE:

"I will delight in Your decrees; I will not neglect Your word." Psalm 119:16

Do you know?

1. The Bible is God's Word and His Word is Truth.
2. The Bible has the answers to every day problems.
3. The Bible should be read every day.
4. The Bible has many important verses to be memorized.

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Matthew 24:35

This verse tells you why you need to memorize Bible verses. (Unscramble the letters)

"I VAEH NDDIHE UYRO DORW NI YM THEAR HATT I GHTMI OTN ISN SAIGNAT UYO." LAPSM 119:11

This verse tells you how to walk through your life so you will not walk in darkness:

"OYRU ROWD SI A MAPL OT YM TEEF, NAD A HGIL OT YM HAPT." SALMP 119:105

Bible Quiz:

1. How many books are in the Bible?
2. Name the 2 divisions to the Bible
3. Who wrote the Bible? (2 Timothy 3:16)
4. How powerful is the Word of God? (Hebrews 4:12)
5. Name the first book in the Bible.
6. What is the first verse in the Bible?
7. Name the first 4 books of the New Testament.
8. Name the man who walked and talked with God and did not die for God took him to heaven. (Genesis 5:24)
9. Who was taken up to heaven in a chariot of fire? (2Kings 2:11)
10. Who will be next to be taken up to heaven without dying? (1Thess. 4:16-17)

Tarore's Gospel and what became of it

The Gospel in early 19th century New Zealand

Glenys Jackson

Tarore was a young Waikato Maori girl whose tribe had learnt about Christ from Alfred and Charlotte Brown, a dedicated couple who used existing portions of the Maori Bible to teach themselves to speak the language. Her father, Ngakuku, served as their personal assistant, and helped with the encouragement and education of the young people in his tribe. She learnt to read quickly and was given a copy of *Te Rongopai aRuka*, the Gospel of Luke. Tarore regarded it as a *taonga* (treasure), and carried it everywhere with her in a small bag around her neck.

In 1836, when Tarore was about twelve years old, the Waikato was inflamed by tribal warfare. The elders of her tribe made the decision to send the children across the Kaimai mountains to Tauranga, hoping they would be safer there. Ngakuku, was among those chosen to lead the expedition.

On the night of the 18th October, they stopped to camp. They expected to be with their friends in Tauranga before the next nightfall. But early the next morning they were surprised by a group of Te Arawa raiders, a Rotorua tribe. The raiders were soon repulsed, and Ngakuku gathered the children together for a headcount. Imagine his shock when he realised his own daughter was missing! He found Tarore lying dead, with her head cut open, where she had slept the night before. Her Gospel of Luke was gone.

A stolen gospel

They buried Tarore beside the Wairere Falls, where they found her. The trip which many of the children regarded as a fun-filled adventure had become a tragedy.

But this is only the beginning of Tarore's story. The Maori culture, like many others, allows for (and expects) retribution in cases where violent death is involved. The Maori call this custom *utu*. Tarore was murdered, so Ngakuku was expected to find her murderers and kill them. He refused. *Utu*, with its tradition of kill-and-counter-kill, was a surefire way of prolonging tribal wars for generations. Ngakuku's decision was revolutionary.

Meanwhile Tarore's murderers were on their way home, looking over their shoulders as they travelled. They expected to see a war party behind them. Uita, the man who committed the murder, carried a burden much greater than the small bag he had cut from Tarore's neck: his own guilty conscience. He was convinced the girl's bag held something precious. She refused to hand it over, so he killed her for it. And what did he find? Some bits of paper

joined together to make a *pukapuka* (book), with squiggles on it which meant nothing to him. He couldn't throw it away after killing its owner, but every time he looked at the book he remembered the little girl's face as she tried to hold on to the bag, and saw her covered with blood. He carried the bag, puzzled over it, and looked for somebody who could tell him what this *taonga* meant. He had murdered a child for the sake of a book he could not read.

Uita finally reached his home, still expecting a vengeful group of warriors to come after him. When they did not arrive, he became more troubled. He looked at the small bag that carried Tarore's gospel of Luke, and wished he could undo the events of that dreadful day.



A convicting gospel

Soon afterward, a Ngatitōa tribesman, Ripahau, paid his Te Arawa kinsmen a visit. This tribe was ruled by Te Rauparaha, a great Maori chieftain. Originally based at Kawhia, they made the decision to migrate south under Te Rauparaha's leadership to avoid punitive inter-tribal warfare which threatened their survival. The Ngati Raukawa, kinsmen of Te Rauparaha, joined them. They became a formidable fighting force with tribal lands spreading across large parts of the lower North Island and across to Kapiti Island, where Te Rauparaha made his base. Ripahau had been captured and enslaved by the Ngapuhi, one of the first Maori tribes reached by early European missionaries. Some of the wealthy Ngapuhi tribesmen sent their slaves to work for the missionaries, who were

not at first aware of the status of their employees. Ripahau was one of these, and took the opportunity to learn to read. When Ripahau's master died, he decided to head back to his own tribe. The Te Arawa were connected by marriage to Te Rauparaha, and members of his tribe were always welcome guests.

Uita showed Tarore's book to Ripahau, who opened it and began to read. The gospel message, the way of peace rather than war, was strange. But it was very attractive to people who had grown up with nothing but persistent war. Uita truly regretted the harm he had done, and welcomed the chance to lay his burden of guilt down at Jesus' feet. Other Te Arawa tribesfolk followed.

One day the Reverend Brown, the missionary to Tarore's tribe, arrived with Ngakuku. The meeting between the murderer and the father of the girl he had killed can't have been easy. But it ended with forgiveness being asked, and granted!

A spreading gospel

Meanwhile Ripahau continued on his journey with Tarore's gospel of Luke, a present from the grateful Uita. He eventually reached home, carrying Christ's gospel to the tribe of New Zealand's most famous and dreaded chieftain.

As Ripahau read the book aloud and his people examined its teachings, the eyes of many were opened. They saw the folly of their warlike existence and the hope that lay in the gospel of Christ, the Son of the True God. Te Rauparaha's son, Tamihana, and a grandson (or nephew), Matene Te Whiwhi, accepted the Gospel and resolved to put it into action. In 1839, they decided to travel north in quest of a Christian teacher for their tribe. They returned with the Reverend Octavius Hadfield, a new arrival to the colony. He and Te Rauparaha became staunch friends, in spite of their many differences. Octavius Hadfield ministered in New Zealand for many years, doing his best



to stand up for his Maori friends when they were maltreated as well as ministering the Gospel to them.

Hadfield's genuineness and willingness to work in spite of his periodic bouts of ill health must have attracted the intelligent and warlike chief of the Ngaitoa. A look into Te Rauparaha's background may help us gain an understanding of his complex character.

When he was a boy his father, Werawera, was captured, killed and eaten. Te Rauparaha grew up determined that his people, the Ngaitoa, would never again suffer such treatment. They would be the strongest tribe of all. This was the reason for his move southwards to Kapiti, and for the extensive network of alliances he made with those he considered his friends. By the time European settlers and traders started arriving in large numbers, Te Rauparaha was one of the most important chiefs in the land. He lived for power. But after Tarore's Gospel arrived, the rules began to change.

The Ngaitoa had been at war with the Ngaitahu, a South Island tribe, for many years. In 1830, the Ngaitahu suffered one of their worst defeats. Te Rauparaha wanted to attack Tamaiharanui, the chief of the Akaroa-based Ngaitahu, but feared his opponent would have the chance to escape if he arrived by canoe. He decided to 'charter' a visiting whaling vessel in return for a shipload of flax. Captain Stewart of the *Elizabeth* was the second captain approached, and he readily accepted Te Rauparaha's story of wishing to avenge the wrongs done by the Ngaitahu. The promise of an easy cargo of freight calmed any scruples. On October 29, 1830, Te Rauparaha boarded the *Elizabeth* with about one hundred and twenty Ngaitoa warriors. They arrived a few days later. The warriors stayed below while Captain Stewart enticed Tamaiharanui and his daughter to come on board to discuss trade. They were seized by Te Rauparaha's men and thrown into the brig. Some hours later Tamaiharanui's wife was trapped in the same way, along with a small group of other Ngaitahu. At this stage the English sailors thought they had done enough, and encouraged Captain Stewart to leave. But it was too late. The sailors were outnumbered. They had lost control of the ship. Te Rauparaha and his men sailed ashore after dark and massacred the unsuspecting Ngaitahu. The village was burned, and the dead Ngaitahu were cooked and eaten while the sailors watched. All Captain Stewart could do was fire a ten-gun salute to the fallen before sailing back to Kapiti with the Ngaitoa. The cost for his cargo was higher than he expected.

A peaceful gospel

After that, the Ngaitoa established a base in the upper part of the South Island. The combination of European illnesses such as the common cold, together with frequent Ngaitoa raids, took its toll on the southern

tribe and Ngaitahu numbers dwindled.

Tamihana and Matene Te Whiwhi were young men who had seen enough war to last a lifetime. They wanted peace with the Ngaitahu, and became convinced that they should take the Gospel to their enemies. Some writers have suggested that Te Rauparaha may have sent them in order to lessen his number of battle fronts, but his past record with the South Island tribes makes this unlikely. The more generally-accepted story is that with Octavius Hadfield's encouragement Tamihana and Matene left their pa secretly, with no weapon but the Gospel, and sailed to the home of their enemies. The Ngaitahu were understandably wary at first but when they saw that the two men were unarmed they were impressed with their courage, and listened to them. As a result Te Rauparaha was obliged to make peace with the Ngaitahu against his will, and the Ngaitahu tribe was saved from virtual extinction.

Hadfield encouraged the local tribes to build Christian churches. The first was at Kenakena, Waikanae, home of the Ngatiawa tribe. Te Rauparaha supplied the totara for the ridge-pole of the new church, going into the forest with Hadfield to select a suitable tree. It was a symbol of reconciliation between two tribes who were previously at war.

Te Rauparaha then conceived the idea of building a Christian church in his own territory, at Otaki. It was to be named Rangiatea, the house of Io, the supreme God in Maori tradition, whom Te Rauparaha equated with the Christian God. (A parallel may be drawn with Paul's dissertation on the monument to the 'unknown god' at Athens, which met with mixed success.) The choice of name also defined Te Rauparaha's determination to create an institution all Maori could call their own. Kauri logs for Rangiatea came from Pukeatua, near Ohau. Pukeatua belonged to the Ngati Tukorehe. Logs were floated down the Ohau River into the sea and along the coast. Matene Te Whiwhi was responsible for the karakia (prayer) once the logs reached the open sea. The construction of Rangiatea took many years of dedicated labour.

A dishonoured gospel

The so-called 'Wairau Massacre,' (more correctly called the 'Wairau Incident' by many) occurred in 1843. It was precipitated by the actions of the New Zealand Company, who had 'sold' European settlers more land than they had available. Some European settlers tried to purchase land from the Maori for themselves but the correct procedures, always difficult, were not often known or observed. Frictions between the settlers and the Maori escalated. Te Rauparaha and his nephew-and-son-in-law, Te Rangihaeata, another prominent chief, "came to Nelson and told Captain Wakefield that they owned the land, they hadn't sold it and they certainly hadn't received payment for it. They had no intention of selling the block for anything



Matene Te Whiwhi

less than 'a very great cask of gold.' (Captain Arthur Wakefield told them he intended to survey the land and that if they interfered he would have them arrested. Te Rangihaeata then spent several days around Nelson telling everyone who would listen that the only way they could get the land was by conquest, i.e. they had to kill him but he intended to kill them first. Te Rauparaha acted more diplomatically but equally unyieldingly. The chiefs left the settlement intending to lay the whole matter before the Queen's Commissioner, in other words to follow the process of the law."

European sentiment was divided over the issue. The chief surveyor, Mr Tuckett, was prepared to abide by Te Rauparaha's decision, but others were determined to have 'their' land as soon as possible. The Crown Prosecutor, Mr Thompson, arrived with the Chief Constable and a group of newly-sworn-in 'special constables.' He had come to arrest Te Rauparaha for arson. Te Rauparaha pointed out that the huts he had burnt were made of rushes grown on his own land, and therefore he had burnt his own property. Mr Thompson would not listen but produced a pair of handcuffs to arrest Te Rauparaha, who objected to being treated like a slave. The Chief Magistrate then lost his temper and threatened to have his escort fire on the Maori. Nobody knows who fired the first shot, but there were several volleys from both sides. Some Europeans fled when they saw how heavily-armed the Maori were, but many were captured. One of the Maori dead was Rangihaeata's wife and Te Rauparaha's daughter.



Te Rauparaha's son, Tamihana

ter, Rongo. Utu was called for. All the captives were killed and eaten, including Mr Thompson and Captain Wakefield. Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaeata were accused of murder but many people, European as well as Maori, considered the circumstances and realised how insubstantial the charge was.

Soon after this, George Grey became Governor. He saw Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaeata as threats to British control, so took measures to silence them. In 1846 Te Rangihaeata was caught up with another conflict with European settlers, with similar causes to those in the Wairau. This time he was forced to flee to the Horowhenua, where he lived until his death in 1855. Grey hatched a devious plot to capture Te Rauparaha. He ordered a ship, the *Driver*, to sail past Te Rauparaha's pa at Taupo (now Plimmerton) as if it was on its way to Whanganui, then double back. In the early morning of 23 July, 1846, the two hundred soldiers on the *Driver* invaded the pa, and captured Te Rauparaha while he slept. He was arrested on a (supposedly trumped-up) charge of treason, but was never brought to trial during his eighteen months of imprisonment.

Te Rauparaha was freed in January 1848 after a period of intense negotiation with other tribal leaders, resulting in the sale of a large

tract of tribal land with payment to the tribe spanning a five-year period. Sir George Grey was very proud of this achievement and wrote to his relative, Earl Grey, of Howick Hall in Northumberland, *"the fact of the Ngatittoa Tribe receiving for several years an annual payment from Government, will give us an almost unlimited influence over a powerful and hitherto a very treacherous and dangerous tribe."*

Te Rauparaha, the leader of a 'very treacherous and dangerous tribe' (sic), was anxious for Rangiatea to be completed. Work had slowed down during his absence. When he finally returned home, he found a large party of chieftains from various parts of the North Island waiting to greet him. Among them was Te Pohotiraha, a Ngati Wehiwehi chief and the custodian of some of the 'sacred soil' brought from the original Rangiatea in Hawaiiki, the Maori homeland before Aotearoa. Te Rauparaha considered some of this soil as an essential part of his Rangiatea, a part which was still lacking although the church building was in its final stages. Te Rauparaha *"thrust his sword into the ground (in front of Te Pohotiraha) and said,*

*'Come, take up this weapon!
I no longer seek honour on earth,
But seek honour in heaven.
Build us a church.'*

(This translation of Te Rauparaha's words is given by the Rangiatea Vestry Committee [Te Ropu Whakahaere o Rangiatea,].)

A fruitful gospel

Te Pohotiraha took up the challenge and completed the church in 1849, soon after Te Rauparaha's death. The first six ministers were drawn from Te Rauparaha's local iwi and trained by Rev. Octavius Hadfield, his old friend.



Rangiatea served as a focal point for all New Zealanders, especially Maori Christians, until 1995, when it was destroyed by fire. A plan to replicate Rangiatea on the Otaki site is in motion, but it can never match the intense work and dedication put into the original by Te Rauparaha and his companions, with their limited tools.

Te Rauparaha is remembered not only for Rangiatea, but for the haka performed when the All Blacks begin a rugby game. He composed it to celebrate his deliverance from what was almost certain death. He lay hidden among friends in a food pit, covered by the chieftain's wife, while his enemies searched the pa for him without success. The haka begins, *"Ka mate! Ka mate! Ka ora! Ka ora!"* ("I die! I die! I live! I live!") This haka was a fruit of a crisis in his early life.

When Ripahau returned from slavery with Tarore's little book, *Te Rongopai a Ruka* (Gospel of Luke), Te Rauparaha's life changed. He was still feared and respected as a powerful chief, as well as abused by land-hungry Europeans. But he saw members of his family turn to Christ, and met genuinely godly men like Octavius Hadfield. He was a visionary who embraced ideas wholeheartedly and changed the world around him. His influence, and that of his Christian friends both Maori and European, extended through large parts of Aotearoa. When later European missionaries reached new tribes, they often found that the knowledge of Christ had preceded them. The 'treasure' of a young murdered Maori girl brought forth much fruit.

"Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." (John 12:24)