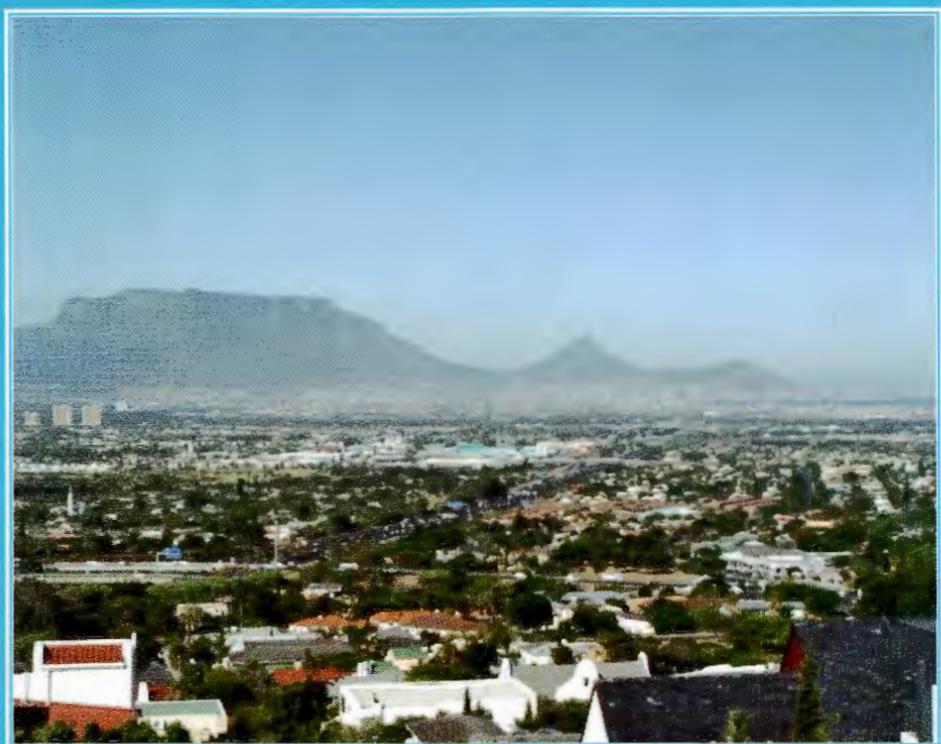


REFORMATION TODAY



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Bill James and Stephen Wellum. See Carey Conference report.



Reno Ulfo pastor from Sicily (left) and Dinu Moga of Oradea, Romania. These photos taken at the prayer and sharing session at the Carey Conference.

Note on Authors

Tom Wells is the co-pastor with Newton Bush of King's Chapel, West Chester, Cincinnati, US.

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Front cover picture - This photo of Table Mountain and Table Bay was taken by the editor from Plattekloof. When Jan van Riebeck of Holland in 1652 sailed round the Cape and landed nearby he called it the Cape of Good Hope. That was an apt title for so it has proved to be since the gospel of everlasting salvation spread northwards from the Cape.

Editorial

The New Testament portrays the Church as a gathered out, holy community, separate from the world. For the first two hundred or so years of the church's life, it was never identified with the State or with the surrounding culture. Under Constantine (c 287-337) persecution of Christians ceased in 313 with the Edict of Milan, Christianity later being declared the official religion of the empire. Refusal to be baptized was punishable by death. Conquest of new territory was followed by forced baptisms. From being the voluntary mark of discipleship, baptism had been transformed into the 'badge' of belonging to a territorial unit. The assumption was that to be born into an area meant to be a member of the Christian religion. This assumption was inherited by the sixteenth-century Reformers.

From the time of Constantine onwards there were small groups who challenged the concept of the 'State-Church' and its various outworkings. During the fourteenth century, for example, the Waldensians objected to Constantinian 'christening', and practised rebaptism, and the baptism of children of believing parents. But such groups were always a small minority and always fiercely persecuted.

The sixteenth century saw a magnificent rediscovery of the biblical doctrines of salvation. Luther expounded the bondage of the human will and justification by faith. Calvin clarified the doctrines of grace. Through the teachings of the Reformers many were liberated from a system which held people in bondage and superstition.

The Reformers inherited the assumptions of a 'sacral society'. Thus when they taught the need for individual, personal repentance and faith they were plunged into a dilemma, one that is well summarized by Verduin:

'When it came to the doctrine of the Church the Reformers were torn between two loyalties. On the one hand was a loyalty to the New Testament Scriptures, which knew no church other than the believers' church. On the other hand was a loyalty to the State'. (Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, 1964, p.19).

In the heady early days of rebellion against Rome, both Luther and Zwingli expressed doubt about the biblical warrant for infant baptism, both 'toyed' with the idea of a 'believers' church'. Zwingli admitted, 'Nothing grieves me more than that at the present I have to baptize children, for I know it ought not to be done. If however I were to terminate the practice then I fear that I would

lose my prebend.' (Verduin, pp. 198-9). Or again, 'If we were to baptize as Christ instituted it then we would not baptize any person until he has reached the years of discretion, for I find it nowhere written that infant baptism is to be practised – however one must practise infant baptism so as not to offend our fellowmen'. (Verduin, p. 199). Expediency rather than *sola scriptura* was followed.

Not only did the Reformers uphold infant baptism themselves, they endorsed the death penalty for those who in all conscience practised believers' baptism and refused to baptize infants. In 1525 the City of Zurich published an edict threatening banishment for any parent who did not have their children baptized within a week. Zwingli himself later asserted harshly, 'Let him who talks about "going under" go under!' drowning often being thought of as the most appropriate punishment for the 'crime' of 'ana-baptizing' or 're-baptizing'. In 1529 the Imperial Diet (or Council) at Speier decreed death by fire or by the sword or by some other means 'for every rebaptized person of either sex'. Both Catholics and Protestants concurred with this. From 1525 to 1530 most of the early leaders of the Anabaptist movement were killed and by 1535 over 5,000 believers had been executed. Magistrates in both Catholic and Protestant areas forcibly baptized children against the wishes of their parents, a practice not halted finally in some places until the nineteenth century.

The Reformers were unable to break with sacramentalism. Infant baptism was the cement of sacramentalism.

From the time of the 16th-century reformation the evangelical church was found inside the mainline denominations whether Lutheran, Reformed or Anglican. This is what is called *ecclesia in ecclesia* - the church within the church.

Tom Wells explains sacramentalism in his article and in his further review article brings us up to date with some current thinking on the subject of baptism.

Today sacramentalism is not enforced in 'Christian' countries. In contrast to that we should take note that most Muslim countries are fiercely sacramental. Execution is the rule for anyone who defects from Islam.

The Life of Andrew Reed

Short biographies of Christian leaders warm and encourage readers. Highly commended is the story of Andrew Reed, in the review of his full biography. Reed's achievements were extraordinary and exemplify the love of Jesus.

Jesus and Sacral Society

Tom Wells

I have a friend whom we will call Bill, though that is not his name. He serves as an American army officer in Iraq and has with him a Muslim translator trained in Britain. One day the translator said to him, "Bill, I love you as a brother, but the day may come when I will have to kill you." Why would he say such a thing? I think he said it because he was looking ahead to the day when he and men like him could put together a 'sacral society' in Iraq.

Sacral Society Defined

What is a sacral society? A sacral or 'holy' society is a society in which virtually all citizens serve the same god(s) and perform the same religious acts. This does not happen by accident but because the national law demands it. In a sacral society the members of the state and of the national religion are the same people. You can't have one membership without the other.

In theory, of course, this is a wonderful idea for an ideal world. Most religions look forward to a time when all men will serve the god they worship in a 'heaven on earth'. This is, for example, the hope of Muslims, Christians and Jews. But it looks impossible in this world, in this age, because of human depravity. Despite this fact many societies have been sacral. They manage(d) it by making religious rites both public and universal, that is, with every citizen participating. One effect of this is to de-emphasize inward religion in favour of the public acts.

The philosopher Plato described his view of religion in sacral terms:

Let this then be the law. No one shall possess shrines of the gods in private houses, and he who is found to possess them and to perform any sacred rite not publicly authorized, shall be informed against in the ear of the guardians of the law; and let

these issue orders that he is to carry his private rites to the public temples; and if he does not obey, let such a penalty be inflicted as to make him comply. And if a person be proven guilty of an impiety, not merely from childish levity but such as grown-up men may be guilty of, let him be punished with death.¹

Though no two sacral societies are alike they all share an intense interest in the public acts of religion. In the words of Leonard Verduin: ‘Sacral society is act-bound society.’² Since the officers of the society must know who is participating, the acts are done in public. Such acts tend to bind the tribe or nation together in unity. Private acts do not do that. How important is that fact? Plato tells us in his last sentence above – it is a matter of life and death!

A Biblical Sacral Society

For most Christians the best-known ancient sacral society is Old Testament Israel, a society formed by God himself. Everyone in Israel’s society professed faith in the same God. Male children were introduced into the nation by a circumcision commanded by God. Early in each male’s life he was taken to the city where the tabernacle/temple was located to engage in mandatory celebrations three times a year. At various times the family would offer sacrifices prescribed by God. They were not offered at home but at the sanctuary. If any Israelite sought to sacrifice to another god, he had to be put to death. In that way the society was bound together as a unity with no other gods. To be a citizen was to be a servant of Yahweh. While personal heart religion was commanded by God the religious tests were tests of public acts. Though Israel was more than a sacral society, it illustrates this point. Public acts require public places and public officials. Israel, for example, was unthinkable without a central sanctuary. As far as society was concerned deeds were the important thing. No one could measure a man’s heart so as to bring an indictment against him. Though he was told to love God and not to covet, the society did not seek to gauge such things unless he committed a crime. That is the way sacral society works.

How Israel Was Also Different

The description of Israel that I have given above omits one important fact. Unlike other sacral societies Israel had the living and true God, the one who could see hearts. He could tell infallibly whether men loved him and whether they kept or broke the other laws that addressed the heart. With these insights he providentially controlled Israel's history. He sometimes reacted graciously to her misdeeds and sometimes reacted with judgments.

Not only that, he began with Moses the prophetic ministry and used the prophets to denounce or encourage his people as it seemed fitting to him. Because of this prophetic ministry through much of her history, an observer could see something not so evident in other sacral societies, a growing division among the people even when they kept up their religious rites. All nations have men and women who act hypocritically in secret until they are caught committing a crime, but only Israel could be infallibly rebuked for hypocrisy in her technically correct public acts. Amos, for example, could speak in Yahweh's name and say to the people of his day:

I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies.

Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them.

Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for them.

Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps.

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! (5:21-24).

Though Yahweh prescribed those public acts, he denounced the hearts of those who brought them. Public acts could not offset ungodly hearts!

Jesus Had a Different Idea for His Society

Anyone who glances through the New Testament will see that Jesus did not form his church to be the religious half of a sacral society in this

age. If he meant to unite it with a political entity, the nation of Israel would have been the obvious choice. Israel had been formed by God to embrace both religion and civil society, both priest and king. Due to the sinfulness and rebellion of Israel and her leaders the experiment failed. But no other nation would have done better than Israel did. One of the purposes of her failure was to demonstrate the depravity of all humans. She had advantages that others did not have and yet she failed.³ It is important to emphasize Jesus' intention here. Why? Because though anyone can see that he did not form his church for this, in the fourth century that same church seemed to unite itself with the Roman Empire.

That raises the question: did Jesus change his mind? The question is not as strange as it might first appear. It is not impossible that Jesus formed his church to be without political ties in its beginnings, while planning an advance for its later years. In fact, as I wrote earlier, Christians look forward to a sacral society in the eternal future. The citizens of the new heavens and new earth will worship God perfectly as part of their civil duty. We will be perfect then.

Did Jesus Change His Mind?

The fair way to treat this question is to see what kinds of things he and his agents said would characterize the age in which we live. The following points seem most important:

1. We start with the general statement of the Lord Jesus before Pilate: 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place' (John 18:36). This statement is about the origin of Christ's kingdom first of all. In addition we see in the New Testament the fact that he rules his kingdom from outside this world. Luke illustrates this point throughout Acts. The kingdom of Christ is inaugurated, but the King is unseen even though all authority in heaven and earth is his. Acts suggests that this relation of Christ to his world will continue until 'the ends of the earth' are reached (1:8). But there is no political entity in this world that can claim him as its exclusive king.

2. Both the Gospels and the Epistles speak of this age as consisting of two opposing parts, his people and the world. Both will exist at the end of the age when his people will be vindicated and the world-system will be destroyed.

3. Jesus predicts for his people the breakup of their families as a sign that his people belong to him, while many natural family members will hate his people. Take, for example, Matthew 10:34-36:

'Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. – For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law – a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

We must keep in mind that the family is the basic unit of all political societies. Yet here Jesus said that he would test it which would result in members being against one another. Oddly enough, this is a reference to Micah 7:6 where it is a statement about the disintegration of the family in Judah, but here it is part of Jesus' program for his own people. So far from its being a curse to them, it implies a promised blessing to those being persecuted as we can see in the next point.

4. Jesus promises his people persecution. For instance, listen to these words from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:10-12:

'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. – Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. – Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'

This is unthinkable in a normal sacral society since all citizens share the same religion. Yet it was already true in Israel that men persecuted God's prophets. How could this be? Because God could read the thoughts and intents of his people as well as see their public acts. But for the society as a whole, the public acts were the religion. Jesus planned to begin a new kind of society that found its unity not in public

acts but in heart religion. And that would bring persecution from the nations of the world.

These facts show that Jesus' new nation (Mt 21:43) would not be a political unit in this world. Instead they would be 'a people who will produce its fruit', the fruit of godly lives. The early church took these things to heart. The writers of the NT embraced persecution as from God. When Paul discusses human government in Romans 13, he commends the governments of the Roman empire. 'The authorities that exist,' he writes, 'have been established by God' (13:1).

From the standpoint of Israelite history, Paul's teaching is extraordinary, and it was soon to be tried to the utmost. It is astonishing to note how the Fathers unanimously support the apostle's position, even under the most extreme provocation from the Roman authorities. Persecution, they came to believe, was a blessing from God, and therefore the rulers who brought it were to be thanked, not cursed.⁴

Unfortunately in the fourth century the church abandoned this earlier understanding. In part this arose from widespread misunderstanding about the use of the OT. It began to be seen as the blueprint for church and state. Already there was talk of literal priests in the church. At some time in the third century infant baptism began.⁵ This act eventually would be of great use to sacral society to bring all of Roman society into the church. When the Emperor Constantine made the outlawed church legal, Christians naturally rejoiced, but in some ways it was a monumental tragedy.

The newly-victorious Emperor claimed that he had seen Christ in a vision. In that vision the Lord commissioned him to conquer the Roman empire by the sign of Christ's cross. By the fifth century Christianity was the sole legal religion. Only Judaism and the Turks were a partial exception. In that century the church stopped being persecuted; instead it began a long history of persecuting others. In the words of James Carroll: 'The triumphalism of an empowered Christianity led to a betrayal of faith that all of pagan Rome's legions had failed to bring about.'⁶

Did the Reformation Change This?

Many of us look to the time of the Protestant Reformation as the highlight of the history of the last 1000 years. We give testimony to the importance of that era for us personally – second only to the time of Christ and the earliest church. Unfortunately, however, that is not the whole story.

When the Reformers broke with the Roman Church it was not to extend religious liberty to one and all. Instead they almost immediately set up miniature sacral city-states in which all the citizens belonged to the Protestant denomination that prevailed in that territory. These city-states were Lutheran or Reformed, alongside others that remained Roman Catholic. None of these groups, of course, wanted to be persecuted. But that did not stop persecution – far from it! All sides persecuted and killed others, chiefly those who rejected the idea of sacral society.

How widespread was that rejection? Pockets of rejection of sacral society existed in most of what we now call ‘Western Europe’. Until the nineteenth century most of these rejecters were lumped together under the name ‘Anabaptists’ (i.e. those who baptize again). Today careful scholars confine that name to the large number of sincere, largely orthodox Christians who would have probably joined a free church in those same city-states if one had existed.⁷

But this is not simply a historical study. Both Britain and America have inherited sacral ideas from our forebears. The Puritans in Massachusetts and others who practised infant baptism sought to make their states and countries ‘Christian’. Here in the United States we often hear men and women say, ‘We must make America a Christian nation once more.’ Where this cry expresses no more than a desire for a more nearly moral society than we have today we can applaud it. But where it conveys the idea of making America ‘Christian’ by legislation it is a formula for disaster. For our Lord Jesus the world and the church were two distinct entities. Until the day when the appearance of Jesus Christ does away with the depravity of man they must stay distinct.

Near my desk is a book on America with the subtitle: ‘How A “Christian Country” Has Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse

Nation'. When I open it at random I shudder at much of the diversity the author celebrates. But that is not all. I remind myself that part of that diversity is the liberty I enjoy to follow Christ. And I remind myself of something else. Where men with even the best intentions try to legislate religion for other men, they wind up persecuting and killing those who disagree. In the church we must have discipline, but in the world we must be content to let the good seed and the weeds grow together until the harvest at the end of the age. Then an infallible eye will sort things out forever.

Notes:

1. Leonard Verduin, *The Reformers and Their Stepchildren* (Sarasota, FL: The Christian Hymnary Publishers, 1997 [1964]), 135.
2. Ibid.
3. In speaking of Israel's 'failure' we do not mean that she failed in the purposes for which God created Israel, such things as producing the Scriptures, bringing forth the Messiah, and many other things. She failed, however, as a stable genuinely holy (sacral) society.
4. Gerald Bray, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), xxi.
5. David F Wright, *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?* discussed elsewhere in this issue of RT, for the beginning of infant baptism suggests a date in the second century (pages 39-40). This is based on the recent theory that the ancient book entitled *The Apostolic Tradition* has a core that goes back to that period and that mentions the baptism of infants. I am not qualified to make a judgment on this and do not have space to pursue it further. Suffice it to say that this view, whether true or false, is a subject of controversy among qualified scholars. As Wright himself shows in his book, the NT assumes the baptism of believers as the norm. For another view see [cite Stander and Louw pp. 63ff. if that is correct for the more recent edition.]
6. James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 55. This immensely moving book records a major tragedy and a lesser one. The first is the history of the persecution of Jews by 'Christians' through the centuries. For this it won the National Book Award in the United States and was selected by the Los Angeles Times as its book of the year. Woven into the story is a good deal of tragic autobiography in which the author reveals how he has distanced himself from historical Christianity in various ways including adopting the kind of critical views of the Gospels promoted by the so-called 'Jesus Seminar'.
7. The larger group earlier known as 'Anabaptists' is now known as 'the Radical Reformation'. The standard work on the subject is the book of that title by George Hunston Williams and published by Westminster Press, Philadelphia, in 1962. With one notable and horrible exception by a group in Münster in the Netherlands, those now known as Anabaptists all believed in separation of church and state. In addition they were almost all pacifists, thinking that all violence was forbidden to believers by the Lord Jesus. Another important work on the Anabaptists is Verduin's work cited in endnote 1 above. For persecution in Christian history since the fifteenth century, see Roland H Bainton, *The Travail of Religious Liberty* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958). Bainton's book was first published by Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1951.

What's Happening in the World of Baptism?

Tom Wells

Not many years ago the issues about baptism were all settled. They were not settled to anyone's complete satisfaction – there was a great divide between Baptists and Paedobaptists – but there seemed to be little else to say. But among scholars things have changed dramatically since the middle of the twentieth century. Now, at last, we have some volumes on the subject accessible to ordinary mortals. In this article I survey three that speak directly to the matter. In addition I will make a few remarks about another that attacks an even more basic issue: must a person be baptized in order to be saved?

Let me start with the most recent volume entitled *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?* The author is David F Wright, an Emeritus Professor in New College, University of Edinburgh.¹ Its central point, reflected in the title, is that Christians have distorted baptism due to an overemphasis on baptism of infants. I use the word 'overemphasis' advisedly, because it is no part of Wright's thesis to say that infants should not be baptized. He is a faithful son of his church in this matter. The baptism of infants is important, but we have overdone it for both practical and theological reasons.

On the practical side Wright sees that infant baptism was an important tool in the formation of Christendom. He writes, 'This universal baptizing of babies formed one of the building blocks of Christendom, by which I mean that long phase of Christian history during which the church and the civil order, whether people, nation, or empire, were coterminous. Human society consisted of a single population viewed from one angle as the Christian church, from another as a state' (page 12).

Whatever the merits of that kind of society were – if it had merits – we can see plainly that in the western world it has largely passed away.² Infant

baptism as a cement to bond state and church together is no longer necessary.

On the theological side he cites Augustine as the one 'who provided the theology that led to infant baptism becoming general practice for the first time in the history of the church, perhaps in the later fifth century, more likely in the 500s [sixth century] or even later' (page 12). Wright tells us what part of Augustine's theology he has in mind:

That theology – necessitated baptism if one was to escape condemnation to hell for the guilt of original sin, irrespective of whether one had lived long enough to add sins of one's own. – Given perinatal and infant mortality rates for centuries to come, such a theology of baptism dictated its administration promptly after birth and often in an emergency (page 25).

In this view baptism meant salvation for infants that were baptized and damnation for the rest. Few parents would fail to get the message. On the eve of the Reformation that was still true. Nor did the Reformers do anything to change the frequency of infant baptisms. The Anabaptists of the sixteenth century raised their voices in defence of believers' baptism, but Catholics, Lutherans, and the Reformed drowned their voices – and sometimes their persons! The abuse of infant baptism that Wright complains of hardly missed a beat.

But now we are in the 21st century. Christendom is but a memory and continued widespread infant baptism alarms even those who defend it in principle. Why? Wright tells us it is because 'of taking with greater seriousness the New Testament, rather than the Old Testament, in considering a theology of baptism' (page 15). He makes plain that whatever the status of infant baptism in the time of the apostles 'the norm of baptism [in the NT] is faith baptism' (page 14). Another reason for that alarm is the large number of those who have been baptized and who give no evidence of faith in later life. 'The shell of Christendom – constitutional establishment of the church, as in England, or national recognition, as in Scotland – may live on long after majority allegiance to the church among the populace has been lost' (page 13).

But what of remedies? For some of us the obvious answer is to eliminate the baptism of infants altogether. Wright is unwilling to do this for several reasons. First, he still believes that infant baptism stems from the apostles, though ‘indiscriminate infant baptism’(page102) does not. He thinks that we could avoid a great deal of the abuse by making sure that those who bring children to baptism are themselves serious Christians. It seems likely that most evangelical paedobaptists would agree to this.

Second, Wright is very much a sacramentalist, that is, he believes the NT teaches that baptism is not a mere symbol but accomplishes something spiritual in the lives of many who receive it, including infants. He also finds this conviction in the Reformers and in the creeds their churches produced. He is anxious that this conviction must grip the rest of us as well. That will be an important part of remedying the light views of baptism that he finds in many churches.

Of the NT he tells his reader ‘to tabulate all of its varied references to and statements about baptism, and then to ask himself whether this is an ordinance or sacrament which is merely symbolic rather than truly effective as a means by which Christ or the Holy Spirit works our blessing’ (page 88). Of the Westminster Confession he says plainly that ‘the Westminster Confession teaches baptismal regeneration of infants and older persons’, and he cites an essay on this subject where he treats it at length (page 99).

The main point of this volume, if I read it correctly, is to stimulate us all to think more biblically about baptism. As with so many of the problems that the church has not resolved over the centuries, Wright would like for us to keep working away at it. More than that he has set us an example with his even-handed approach to the evidence and with his persistence. In Tony Lane’s foreword to the book he says, ‘I personally know of (and have read) at least twenty of his [Wright’s] earlier, shorter pieces on this topic, written over some twenty years’ (page vii). That suggests that we may yet hear more from Professor Wright on this subject.

Another valuable paedobaptist work is a book entitled *Baptism in the Early Church* by H. F. Stander and J. P. Louw (hereafter 'S&L').³ The authors have been professors in the University of Pretoria, South Africa for some years. (Prof Louw is also the joint producer of a Greek Lexicon valued by translators of the NT around the world.)⁴ They say, 'It is not the aim of this book to defend any theological point of view' (page 2). The aim is rather to discuss in chronological order the references to infant baptism found (or alleged) in the Greek, Latin and Syrian literature of the first four centuries.

The book opens with some observations on the use of the early church writers. Then, chapter by chapter they quote one early father after another. They evaluate those quotations in the light of the larger context of each writer's thought. They close their work with brief chapters on early Christian art and some conclusions they have drawn from their study.

While Wright concerned himself with showing that infant baptism was not a main emphasis of the NT or the early church, S&L demonstrate that the arguments from the church fathers used to defend infant baptism very often are misconstrued. For example, after quoting Irenaeus in two passages that have been alleged to suggest infant baptism, the authors write, 'No comment is required to show that such passages can in no way, by whatever stretch of one's imagination, be used as reference to substantiate any point of view on baptism in the early church' (16). Some further examples with the names of the ancient writers will show what I mean.

1. Aristides of Athens. 'Aristides says nothing specifically on baptism, but is included here since he is often quoted in discussions on baptism in the early Church ... Jeremias, for example, gives the following quotation:

And when a child has been born to one of them they thank God; and if he dies in infancy, they thank him exceedingly, because he (=infant) departed this life without sins. (Aristides Apology 15.11, page 43).

What is there here on baptism? Jeremias thinks that 'they thank God' refers to baptism. If that is the case, what can 'they thank him exceedingly' mean? (That comment is mine. S&L refute Jeremias at length.)

2. Tertullian. It was of Tertullian that a nineteenth-century historian, Samuel Miller, wrote, ‘Tertullian, about two hundred years after the birth of Christ, is the first man of whom we read in ecclesiastical history, as speaking a word against infant baptism ...’⁵ Is that true? Yes and no. Yes, because no extant document from history before Tertullian’s time including the Bible mentions infant baptism!⁶ But no, because Tertullian mentions only children’s baptism, which might or might not have included infants in his mind. S&L write:

This passage from Tertullian is indeed the earliest reference to children being baptized. However, to equate baptism of children with the baptism of babies ... is to neglect the fact that these children were not baptized within a theological framework of the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision. The passage from Tertullian does not speak of infant baptism as it is understood today; it merely refers to a practice among some Christians (of which Tertullian disapproves) to baptize people at a very early stage as young children (page 18).⁷

3. Origen. After quoting three passages from Origen speaking of the baptism of ‘little children’ or ‘infants’, S&L make several points. First, both the Greek and Latin terms translated ‘little children’ or ‘infants’ are not confined to babies. The Greek term includes teenagers; the Latin term is not confined to infants or babies but speaks of ‘relatively small children’ (68-69). Second, we are already later than Tertullian.

The three passages above were all written towards the middle of the third century. It thus seems that these passages – prove that infant baptism – began to appear in the third century. However, it was still not universally, nor even widely established, since there are too many writings in the third, fourth and fifth century which still bear evidence of so-called adult baptism though, in fact, adults as well as grown children were involved (page 83).

What conclusions do S&L draw on the subject of baptism that are of most interest to us? First,

one should never think of the early church as a unity having a specific codified dogma. – This can best be seen in the development of infant baptism which was already advocated and practised in North Africa in the third century while the same occurred much later, during the latter part of the fourth century, in Europe and Asia’ (page 182).⁸

Second, when infant baptism began to occur it was not justified by a covenant theology (pages 18, 37, 83). Finally, baptism was normally by immersion (pages 34, 37, 39, 145).

In 2004 Joshua Press issued a work entitled *Baptism: Three aspects – archaeological, historical, biblical* by a Frenchman, F. M. Buhler.⁹ Under the three headings in the title Buhler discusses briefly many of the nagging questions about baptism that have separated Baptist and paedobaptist over the centuries. He comes out favouring the believers’ baptism position.

The unique feature of the book arises from Buhler’s involvement in archaeological digs that have uncovered the baptisteries used by the church in the early centuries. He not only discusses these but includes colour photos of them. One important result of Buhler’s work is that he traces the change from believers’ immersion to infant immersion to infant affusion by the progressively smaller sizes of the baptisteries. At first they can be described as *pools*; later merely as *fonts*. Here are a couple of samples:¹⁰

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| Douros Europos, Syria | mid 3rd C | 1.61m (63 in) x .95 m (37 in) |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------------|

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Mariana, Corsica | 4th-5th C | 2.00 m in diameter (79 in) |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|

As history advanced most but not all new pools were created smaller. Beyond that workmen reduced many formerly large pools, in some cases more than once! From the fourth to the fourteenth centuries many baptisteries were in separate buildings. Starting in the seventh century some pools were within the church. Eventually they became the fonts we see today.

Reading these volumes reminded me of a conversation I once had with Michael Haykin, associate editor of RT, and another friend. I said to our mutual friend, 'In my judgment infant baptism did not become dominant until the fourth century.' Michael responded, upping the ante, 'I would say not until the fifth century.' Not to be outdone we have seen David Wright above contend for the sixth century. Now add to this Buhler's statement that doesn't describe dominance as such, but geographical distribution. 'It seems, furthermore, that the baptism of children had its origin in North Africa, country of Tertullian and Cyprian, and that it was finally adopted in Spain during the sixth century and in other countries only [later yet]!'¹¹ It is very difficult to reconcile any of these dates with the words we have heard over and over again: 'Infant baptism is an apostolic or NT practice.' True or false, there is no historical evidence for this claim. On the NT evidence let me quote a Roman Catholic paedobaptist scholar, Raymond Brown:

Were children and infants baptized? There has been a long dispute on this question – The present writer thinks that passages like Mk 10:14 and Mt 18:3 make it plausible that sometimes, and perhaps often, children were baptized as part of a household (Acts 16:15; 16:33). He is less sure that new-born infants were baptized in NT times. However, the most that can be asserted is that such baptism of children was acceptable; there is no real evidence that the baptism of children and infants was thought necessary.¹²

In sum Brown thought that it was plausible that children were baptized and even less sure that such children might have included infants. When paedobaptists themselves speak this way we are bound to sit up and listen. And what do they tell us? They tell us of grave doubt that either history or the NT can be called upon to confirm infant baptism.

Finally I would be less than honest if I did not say that the current widespread discussion, whether intended or not, favours the believers' baptism position, or so it seems to me. Others will see things differently, but I at least rejoice at any advance in truth and this discussion seems to me to be a great advance indeed.

Endnotes:

- 1 David F Wright, *What has Infant Baptism done to Baptism?* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2005. Its subtitle is 'An Enquiry at the End of Christendom'.
- 2 See my article on Sacral Society elsewhere in this issue.
- 3 H F Stander and J P Louw, *Baptism in the Early Church* published by Reformation Today and distributed by Evangelical Press, 2005.
- 4 Johannes P Louw and Eugene A Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 2nd Ed. 1989), 2 vols.
- 5 Quoted in Robert R Booth, *Children of the Promise* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1995), 168.
- 6 Wright cites the *Apostolic Tradition*, traditionally ascribed to Hippolytus, as a possible earlier witness to infant baptism from mid-second century. I am not competent to make a judgment on this difficult subject, but Wright frankly remarks, 'Almost everything concerning this text remains the subject of lively debate' (page 38). In the present state of the question Tertullian remains as the only sure witness to children's baptism by c. 220 AD. For S&L's discussion of the date of the *Apostolic Tradition* see pages 74-80.
- 7 The parenthesis in my quotation from S&L is their parenthesis, not mine.
- 8 S&L recognize that infants were sometimes baptized in the third century in Europe, but such baptisms did not arise from a doctrine of infant baptism. These cases were due to imminent death. The fact that these baptisms of children of various ages occurred a day or two before death shows that these same children would have grown older before baptism otherwise. See their discussion on pages 91-95. For the approximate date for the beginning of baptism of infants, not children, see 184 where one reads: 'Probably the first instances known occurred in the latter part of the third century ...'
- 9 F M Buhler, translator: W P Bauman, *Baptism: Three aspects – archaeological, historical, biblical* (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2004).
- 10 In visualizing these one must remember how much smaller the average person was 2000 years ago. In addition the person administering baptism often stood outside the baptismal pool. See figure 2, page 49.
- 11 I have supplied the words *later yet* where the text says *in the sixteenth century*. It's clear that Buhler wants to extend his statement further, but I have to think that this may be a typographical error.
- 12 Raymond E Brown, article 'One Baptism for the Remission of Sins – New Testament Roots', in Paul C Empie and William W Baum, editors, *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue II* (no place given: Published jointly by Representatives of the U.S.A National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and the Bishops' Commission for Ecumenical Affairs, n.d. [apparently 1966]).

Our Bodily Hope

Tim J R Trumper

Sickness and death are prominent in our experience. Yet, how rarely we speak of the new bodies God has promised his people. Indeed, on one occasion after hearing the American preacher D James Kennedy mention the redemption of the body, a friend – who’s a member of a church known for its biblical teaching, and no ignoramus – asked me if I thought the idea is biblical. It is! But no matter how often we read of it in Scripture, very rarely do we draw comfort from God’s promise that he will give us new bodies. Given that one in three of us will at some point contract cancer, many others of us will suffer heart disease, and all experience, in the words of the historian Simon Schama, ‘the scythe of mortality’ (‘always busy, never fussy’), this is surely a truth worth grasping.

A Neglected Truth

Theologically speaking, the neglect of the body’s redemption is a by-product of the Church’s longstanding indifference to the doctrine of adoption (Eph 1:5; Rom 9:4; Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15 and 23).² In Romans 8:23 Paul draws an indissoluble connection between the two doctrines, such that the neglect of the climax of adoption has inevitably resulted in the oversight of the deliverance of the body.

Spiritually speaking, the neglect of the body’s redemption may be attributed to the dualism we often tolerate between the body and the soul. For every professing Christian who puts the welfare of the body before that of the soul, there is another who hyper-spiritualises life as if it were all about the psyche. On this understanding, the body serves as but its carrier or vehicle. But this is not what Scripture teaches. In warning that bodily exercise profits a little, the apostle Paul implicitly taught that physical fitness is beneficial nonetheless (1 Tim 4:8). In noting Gaius’ spiritual prosperity, the apostle John also expressed concern for his bodily health (3 John 2). And yet, when it comes to our eternal existence, many of us contemplate only the wonders in store for our souls.

This is because many of us think of heaven just in terms of its intermediate state, that is, the paradise we enter at death: an ethereal state inhabited by spirits – God, angels, and the naked or disembodied souls of those already departed. The New Testament points us, however, to heaven in its grander final state, which is the product of God's regeneration of the cosmos (Matt 19:28) and the relocation of heaven to the new earth (Rev 21:1-6). There the people of God shall live fully redeemed lives (in body and soul) in his immediate presence.

Practically speaking, our neglect of the body's redemption is born of a reaction to the materialism of the age. Spurning society's idolisation of the money-earning power of the body's most curvaceous forms and exceptional abilities, some of us avoid the hype surrounding the models, actors, and sports personalities of the day by focusing on the soul, as if that is all we are. The devil loves, however, to push biblical responses too far. He tricks us into thinking that the best defences against the spirit of the age are man-made. Yet, nowhere in Scripture are we called to ignore the corporeal nature of our existence, or to decry it. Neither are we to become the sorry souls who live their lives through the bodily achievements of others. In time God shall grant his people a bodily glory (enjoyed endlessly in our souls) that the beautiful and the best of this present earth can but dream of.

While we share unashamedly, then, with the world a longing for psychosomatic wholeness, we differ markedly in our attitude towards it. Whereas the Christian hankers after a new body that will first and foremost reveal God's glory, the non-Christian clutches, pitifully, to the fading glory of his/her present body, only to observe the personal glory it has attracted dim with the passing of the years. Think of George Best, Frank Bruno, Paul Gascoigne, and a host of others, and you'll see the point.

A Wonderful Prospect

When we mention the redemption of the body, we declare, first, that God will raise our bodies from death. In our flesh, says Job, we shall 'see God' (Job 19:26; *cf.* Ps 16:9). As the Westminster Larger Catechism (Ans. 86) puts it:

'The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made

perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, *waiting for the full redemption of their bodies*, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls.’

Just as Christ was raised, so shall we be (1 Cor 15:20, 23). Yet, resurrection entails more than a mere repeat experience of our present plane of life. Our bodies shall resemble our present identities (regardless of the age recaptured), and shall function much as they do now (capable of eating, drinking, touching, and being touched [Luke 24:39]). Yet God shall adapt them to the perfect conditions of the new earth. In all likelihood then, we shall be able to appear and disappear (Luke 24:31, 36), as did the resurrected Christ, and yet remain fully human.

Second, our bodies shall possess a glory appropriate to the splendour of the new earth (Phil 3:20-21). The impaired and fading, but real, glory of our present bodies is nothing to the higher, undiminishing and perfect glory of our future bodies. All effects of the fall, whether direct (addictive abuses) or indirect (ageing, wear and tear, sickness), shall be gone. Tears (excepting tears of joy) shall be history. Death, sorrow and pain shall be no more (Rev 21:4). Our bodies shall not only know no corruption, bearing (ineradicably so) the image of Christ – the heavenly man, who neither sins nor dies – they shall be incapable of corruption (‘in corruptible’). In perfect harmony with our souls, they shall reflect the immortality and perfect quality of life on the new earth (1 Cor 15:52-54). Indeed, says Paul, no present suffering can compare in its pain with the joy of the glory to be revealed in us (Rom 8:18)! Whatever our scarring now, it is the will of *Yahweh Rophe* (cf. Ex 15:26) that we should be spiritual and physical beauties at the last.

Third, our redeemed bodies shall be free – fully so in the totality of our psychosomatic existence. No license shall spoil or enslave. Freely, we shall think God’s thoughts after him, and without mental reservation. Freely we shall converse, without trace of malice, gossip or misrepresentation. Freely we shall act without the endless frustrations of the present order. At every turn the liberated creation shall feed our perfect and unending desires to serve God (Rom 8:20-21). Gone will be the desire for the escape of death or the inhibiting presence of its shadow. We shall have said ‘goodbye’ to goodbyes, for heaven is the Father’s never-ending family reunion. Ours shall be the

freedom, in Christ and by the unfluctuating fullness of the Spirit, to enjoy him and his redeemed creation forever.

A Welcome Tonic

As central as Christ is to our hope, surely we should make more of the fact that it is in our bodies that we'll see him most. Certainly, American caskets reflect this truth more than do our British coffins. Shaped and decorated like a bed, and often open for all to see, they express graphically the prospect of the body's resurrection. What a tonic for our church's invalids and emaciated, and their forlorn carers! Observing multiple sclerosis, cancer and then pneumonia assault the health of my father and deplete the physical resources of my mother, I have found it so. It was one night, alone and abroad, having heard of my father's collapse, that the Lord pressed home to me its wonder. Meditating on Romans 8:22-23, I envisioned him with a new body, all contraptions now obsolete: the wheelchair, hoist, stairchair, tablets, and even glasses, hearing aids, and inhaler. At that time I could see his corpus obeying the commands of his mind and the desires of his heart to serve his Lord. Dad recovered, but the vision of his impediment-free future remains.

This teaching, we need to remember, is not just for Christians. Death lost its taboo in a Parisian tunnel in 1997. Westerners now talk freely of the afterlife. Mitch Albom's best-seller *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, shares, for instance, the desire that heaven will resolve life's conundra and be as tangible as is this earth. Middle Eastern suicide bombers daily expend their lives for the reward of seventy virgins. The caricature of a heaven filled with sublime light, clouds, winged angels, and harps has taken a hit. God is calling us to appropriate more fully his vision of a redeemed creation, and to utilise more adeptly the kernels of truth about heaven found in contemporary views. We possess in common with humanity a desire for psychosomatic health (let's not kid ourselves otherwise). Dare we hold back then, how in Christ it can be obtained? God holds out to the penitent and believing not the possibility of eternally existing as naked souls, but a *full* redemption, as corporeal as it is spiritual.

¹ I have traced this neglect at length in my doctoral dissertation 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition' (University of Edinburgh, 2001 [also housed at the library of Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia]).

The Carey Conference

Bill James

The main theme of this year's Carey Conference was the Message of the Cross, and around 135 gathered in Swanwick 3-5 January. Prof. Stephen Wellum of Southern Baptist Seminary, Louisville, KY, USA gave two fine papers on '*Penal Substitution*' reminding us of the central importance of this theme. He surveyed the various attacks which have been made against this doctrine in recent times, and provided a robust defence and positive presentation of biblical truth. Many will want to revisit these sessions on tape to enjoy the full benefit of his scholarship.

It was good to have Andrew and Cora King from Brazil back at the conference. Andrew asked the simple question: What was the gospel message preached by the apostles in the book of Acts? And do we still preach the same message, with the same emphasis today? He looked first at Acts 2 and showed us the strong eschatological content of Peter's sermon. The Lord Jesus Christ was presented as the fulfilment of Old Testament promise, and the warrior king soon to come in judgment. Then in his second paper we saw from Acts 14 the approach of the apostle Paul to a pagan audience. Andrew's ministry in Brazil is teaching pastors to preach biblically; we were given not only a sample of his great skills in this regard, but also a model of good preaching with both content and passion.

Phil Arthur spoke from the heart, with a call for us to plant churches. He preached from the letters to the churches in Revelation to provide a model for our own congregations, and the sorts of churches we should want to plant. It was noted that it is not always the large and prosperous churches which receive the greatest commendation from the Lord.

Gary Brady is becoming known for his ministry from wisdom literature. With commentaries already published in the EP Welwyn series on Proverbs and Song of Songs, he spoke on Encouragement from Ecclesiastes. Gary's characteristically winsome presentation brought the powerful yet practical wisdom of this book home to us in a fresh way.

Andrea Ferrari of Italy brought a practical paper on '*Preaching in a Visual Age*'. He made many good points about how we learn, and how knowledge and understanding are acquired. There was stimulating discussion, which proved to be most helpful.

Meanwhile there were two sessions specifically for women at the conference, given by Sarah Dalrymple. Sarah spoke from 1 John on the theme of '*Walking as Jesus Walked*'. These sessions were models of careful Bible exposition along with plenty of very practical application to the situations women face in our churches today.

The conference began and ended with calls for unity between churches. In his opening session Brian Talbot gave an overview of Scottish Baptist history, focusing on their attempts at unity. Practical lessons were drawn, with practical encouragement for cooperation between churches. He urged us towards formal structures for unity. Erroll Hulse closed the conference with a call for unity amongst reformed Baptists, working together to bring the gospel to our modern generation.

It was unity and common purpose which characterised the whole conference. The quality of fellowship at the Carey is always excellent, and this year was no exception. It was good to hear reports in the Prayer and Sharing session, especially from Eastern Europe and from students at the EMF School of Biblical Studies. We look forward to meeting again next year 2-4 January 2007.

Tapes of the sessions are available from John Rubens
john.rubens@evangelicalpress.org

The Olive Tree

Richard Gibson

There is much controversy in evangelical circles over the place of the Jewish people in God's continuing purposes. The debate has become unnecessarily heated and the positions polarised because it has been forgotten that the issue at the heart of the question of Israel and God's purposes is soteriology not eschatology. To speak of God's sovereign covenant faithfulness to the Jewish people, however, does not necessarily mean one is talking about Dispensationalism or any other eschatological scheme. The discussion also becomes extremely emotional and the real issues often become obscured when New Testament theology collides with Middle Eastern politics.

When it comes to the subject of Israel some Calvinists become Arminian. While professing to believe in eternal salvation, they nevertheless maintain that Israel has lost her predestined covenant salvation because of the failure of some within the nation to recognise Jesus as the Messiah. They seem to believe that God elects on the level of the individual but not on the level of the national. Equally, it is exquisitely ironic to see Arminians become Calvinistic in order to maintain that God continues to be faithful to Israel in spite of her unfaithfulness to him. They accept that God elects on a national level but not on an individual one.

If unconditional predestination to salvation before the foundation of the world is biblical, why deny salvation to a future generation of Jews just because they are Jews? Romans 9-11 are key chapters in which God reveals the central role of Israel in his master-plan for the triumph of the gospel: 'For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?' (Romans 11:15).

Some have debated the meaning of the term 'Israel' in Romans 11. This article will assume that the interplay and contrast of 'Gentile' and 'Israel' in verses like Romans 11:11 are sufficient to clearly set the parameters for understanding Paul's use of 'Israel' as ethnic Israel: 'Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, *salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.*' Why does God want to make Israel jealous if he has no further purpose for them, or if 'Israel' is really the Gentile church even if it does include a Jewish minority?

A number of views on the status of God's covenant relationship with the Jewish people are current in the church today. They may be labelled: 'Replacementism', 'Supersessionism' and 'Fulfilment'. I believe that, of the three theologies, 'Fulfilment' is the most consistently biblical and God-honouring.

Replacementism asserts that all Israel's promises have been transferred to the Church and that there is nothing left of the blessing promised to ethnic Israel in the Old Testament. All that is left of the promises to ethnic Israel are the curses! Why doesn't the Church get those as well? Contrast this view with Paul's clear declaration of outstanding future plans for Israel in Romans 11:25-27:

I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.'

The unambiguous but often ignored statement of Paul in Romans 11:1 prophetically pre-empts and neuters replacementism.

I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin.

There is an elect within the totality of Israel, past present and future because not all Israel are Israel (Rom 9:6). This does not mean Gentile Christians are Israel instead; just that not all Israel was elect Israel! There is a future predestined generation of Israel that will be saved as we read in Romans 11:26 'All Israel shall be saved.' In every generation of Israel there is a remnant of the elect according to grace, but a greater day will come when they will no longer be a remnant.

Supersessionism more subtly asserts that all the Old Testament (which includes the promises of blessing to Israel) was not only completed in Christ but also terminated in him. The implication, therefore, is that since the promised blessings to Israel reach their fulfilment in Israel's Messiah, nothing remains for the nation of Israel. This perspective imposes a rigid spiritualising framework around all prophecy to do with Israel and fails to take into account the clear future elements of many prophecies, some within the New Testament, such as Romans 11:28-29:

As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for *God's gifts and his call are irrevocable* (italics mine).

Fulfilment theology agrees that the Old Testament is indeed fulfilled in Christ but, it argues, some elements in the Old Testament promises to Israel are still pending. Though it is true that the Old Testament finds its perfect expression in Jesus, there are continuities as well as discontinuities between the two Covenants. For example, although the Old Testament law was fulfilled in Christ the law continues to reflect God's unchanging moral standards. In fact, it is precisely because it is fulfilled in Christ that the law continues to have binding moral worth. However, in a post-Calvary world, the ceremonial law no longer has power to effect reconciliation with God. The fulfilling of the ceremonial law brought the temple and sacrificial institution to a terminus.

Romans 11:17-25 provides a startlingly clear statement about God's continuing relationship with the Jewish people. Israel is an 'Olive Tree', of which Jewish believers are natural branches, whereas Gentile believers enjoy a relationship with God by virtue of the fact that they have been artificially 'grafted in' to the 'Olive Tree'. Paul warns his Gentile readers not to boast against the natural branches that have been broken off the tree because of their unbelief:

Do not be arrogant, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

Gentile Christians do not replace Jewish Christians in the olive tree; God did not break off the natural branches to replace them. Those that were broken off were broken off because of unbelief. Gentile Christians are warned not to be arrogant but afraid because if God deals with the natural branches in such a manner he will and does judge Gentile Christians. Neither do Gentiles absolutely replace Jews meaning there can be no re-grafting into the olive tree.

This great vision of the future in Romans 11 cannot be fulfilled if God has 'finished with the Jews'. It becomes a nonsense sentiment if Israel has been superceded even if it is by Christ. What then is Israel's fullness? Romans 11:26-27:

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

God will take away their sin the same way he deals with yours and mine.

Paul calls Jews and Gentiles in Christ the 'New Creation'. The New Testament nowhere uses the terms 'New Israel' or 'Spiritual Israel'. The only text that appears explicit enough to defend the concept of a 'new' or 'spiritual' Israel is Galatians 6:16: 'Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to *the Israel of God.*' Calvin, in his commentary on Galatians, suggests that Paul is sarcastically calling the Judaizers the 'Israel of God'.

Paul declares peace on those who agree with his view that circumcision is not a vital element of being a real Christian and extends his wish of peace to his ideological opponents, those within the Jewish Christians' camp who had not grasped what God was doing amongst the Gentiles. 'The Israel of God', therefore, is the epithet with which Paul labels the Jewish-Christian component of the New Creation.

Reformed Christians who claim that God has 'finished with Israel' inadvertently contradict their own professed Calvinism. Either God predestines to salvation or he does not. Whether it is the individual or a future generation within the Jewish nation; it makes no difference. The issue centres around the question of how God saves; not an eschatological one about when and how Christ will return. Gentile Christians must not boast over the natural 'branches' that have been broken from the olive tree which is Israel. Neither must they be ignorant of the mystery of God's unconditional electing grace toward the Jewish nation, which enables him, in spite of the majority's hardhearted rejection of the gospel to declares his intention to one day re-graft the natural branches back into their own olive tree. Through the preaching of the gospel, 'all Israel shall be saved'. The Jewish people will believe in their Messiah and repent; the natural branches and the wild branches will partake together of the supporting root of the olive tree, Jesus Christ. Together they will become the 'New Creation' not the 'new Israel'.

The theologies of 'Replacementism' and 'Supersessionism' have the potential to erode all serious concern for the evangelisation of the Jewish people. If God has finished with ethnic Israel and there is no hope of large numbers of Jews coming to faith in Christ, is it not something of an empty gesture to say that, though they have been rejected by God, Jews still need to hear the gospel? But if we really do believe Jewish people need the gospel, what are we doing to help them hear it?

The Greatest is Charity

A review article by Sharon James

The Greatest is Charity: The Life of Andrew Reed, preacher and philanthropist

Ian Shaw

Evangelical Press, 432 pp. pbk. £18.95

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All that you have you have received; all that you have received, you are freely to bestow. It were a robbery to retain what is given to ourselves... You lose what you selfishly keep; you multiply the treasure you generously bestow. (Andrew Reed)

In her classic work *Evangelicals in Action*, Kathleen Heasman argued that three quarters of the total number of voluntary charitable societies in the second half of the nineteenth century were Evangelical.¹ Untold numbers of believers willingly gave time, energy and money to help the burgeoning number of organisations reaching out to help street children, prostitutes, orphans, prisoners, the sick and disabled, and other vulnerable members of society. A few names stand out, but most have been forgotten.

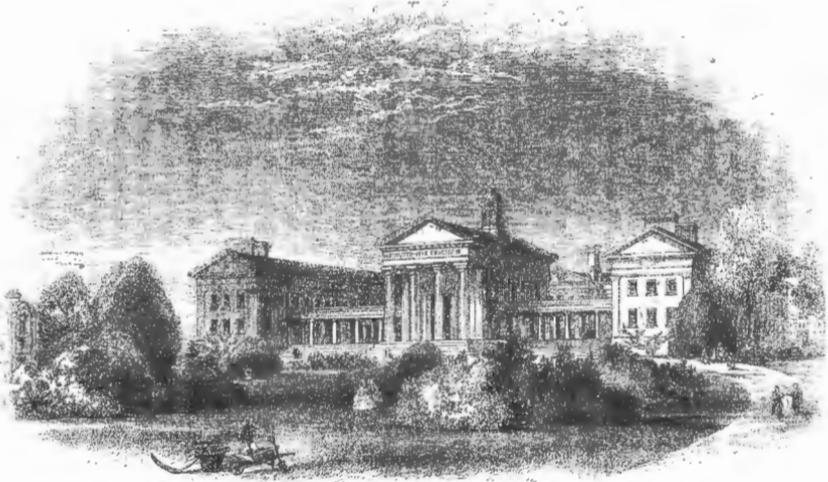
Andrew Reed (1787-1862) is not well known today, but this splendid book documents his pioneering work in care for orphans, those with learning disabilities and the terminally ill. Reed came from a humble background, initially training to work as a watchmaker. He was converted at the age of fifteen, through the Independent New Road Chapel which his family attended in Stepney, London. When he was nineteen, he began studying at Hackney College, a small institution for the training of nonconformists. Shortly afterwards, a wealthy benefactor offered to secure Reed a place at Cambridge to study under the famous Charles Simeon. This would have provided Reed with a far better theological education, but to graduate from Cambridge Reed would have to compromise his Free Church principles and join the Established Church. His conscience would not allow him to take up this tempting offer. At the end of his training, Reed was offered a number of pastorates in well-to-do and sizeable churches, but he chose to accept the invitation extended from his own home church, New Road Chapel. This was a step of faith, as the Chapel

was then declining, with only about sixty members. Reed was ordained on his twenty-fourth birthday: 27th November, 1811. His pastorate lasted fifty years, during which time the church grew to about two thousand. New Road Chapel could seat 800, and by 1829 the congregation had grown to about 1,200. A new building on a nearby site, Wycliffe Chapel, was opened in 1831. It could accommodate 2,000.

Reed commenced his ministry as a very young man, but his own experience of hardship and poverty meant that he had a great empathy with the needy. He never forgot his own and his family's anguish at the death of some of his younger siblings, and he thus maintained a warm sympathy for the bereaved. New Road Chapel was situated in a poor area, with scenes of squalor and destitution all around. Life expectancy was very short, and if their parents died young children and infants might be left with no-one at all to care for them. In the years prior to his marriage, Andrew's sister Martha lived with him as his housekeeper, but she also worked alongside him in ministries of mercy, as well as in pastoral and teaching work among women and children. When Andrew and Martha took some destitute orphans into their home, this marked the commencement of a lifelong ministry.

Before long, Andrew raised funds for a large home to accommodate orphans, and then later a home for infants. After five years in the ministry, Andrew married Elizabeth Holmes, daughter of a wealthy Anglican merchant. She supported Andrew's ministry wholeheartedly, working alongside Martha in her various ministries with the women and children until Martha's untimely death in 1821. Andrew managed to juggle pastoral responsibilities and preaching with ceaseless fundraising and practical oversight of the orphanages. Elizabeth took the major part of caring for the family. Of eight children born, five survived infancy, all of whom were converted and joined the church. Elizabeth was a gifted and devoted woman. Andrew and Elizabeth both wrote a number of hymns (Andrew's 'Spirit Divine, attend our prayers' is still in many hymn books). When Andrew published a selection of hymns in 1817, twenty-four of them were by his wife.

Andrew Reed was committed to the Free Church principle, but he was also gracious and flexible. He worked alongside Anglicans in the establishment of his first two orphanages (the London Orphan Asylum and the Infant Orphan Asylum), steering a non-dogmatic course, and reckoning that the priority was to care for needy children. He was willing to allow a measure of freedom as to whether they ended up Free Church or Anglican. Sadly, a few dogmatic Anglicans on the board eventually effectively hijacked the running of the



The London Orphan Asylum

This drawing taken from the book (page 180) pictures the London Orphan Asylum. The generous proportions of the work reflect the compassionate heart of Andrew Reed combined with a remarkable ability of organisation.

orphanages. When they insisted that even the youngest infants should learn the Anglican catechism, that was a bridge too far for Reed, and he felt compelled to resign. He then founded the Asylum for Fatherless Children in 1844 on a completely non-sectarian basis. A beautiful new building, to accommodate over 300 children was officially opened in July 1858, in Coulsdon, Surrey.

During the course of his ministry among orphans and other destitute children, Reed became increasingly aware of the total lack of provision for children with learning disabilities. There was no distinction made between those who were born with learning difficulties, and those suffering mental illness. Asylums, hospitals, and workhouses might have sections for 'lunatics' where all were just put together indiscriminately and often appallingly treated. Reed travelled through Europe researching how such children were cared for in a number of pioneering institutions run by Christians.

Reed opened a home in 1848 at Park House, Highgate for 'mentally defective children', the first in Britain. A well-known MP then offered the use of a larger building, Essex Hall in Colchester. Reed determined that an even larger home should be built, and purchased the Earlswood Estate, near Redhill, Surrey. Prince Albert laid the foundation stone in 1853. Reed managed to secure financial backing for a massive building project to house up to 500

children. He personally visited the building site 400 times between 1851 and 1855. Earlswood became internationally known for the enlightened way in which children with disabilities were treated. Good diet, fresh air, plenty of exercise and lots of kindness were key to the approach. As much as possible, children were given the love and care of a 'family setting' and with proper physical and other education made far more progress than had previously been thought possible. They were taught simple skills, and provided with a place for life if necessary. One of the doctors appointed to work there was Dr Langdon Down (who gave his name to 'Down's Syndrome'). When the 1886 'Idiots Act' was passed, it was the first time the State had recognised any distinction between those with learning difficulties and those with mental illness, and this was due in large measure to Reed's pioneering work. ('Idiots' was then the accepted term for those with learning disabilities).

Reed himself was convinced that every human being was made in the image of God, and believed that the love of Jesus could be shared with the most damaged children. He was thrilled when some of the children in the home showed clear evidences of spiritual appreciation. Near the end of his life he said, 'I have always had their souls in view. Who was it once asked me if idiots had any souls? Yes, and I remember that little fellow at Highgate who said "I love God" ... I shall meet them soon in heaven.' (p.316) .

As if that were not enough, Reed also became a pioneer in the care of the terminally ill. Again, his pastoral work in a very poor area meant that he knew first hand of hospitals discharging patients who were 'incurable'. The very poor might end up on the streets, or in the workhouse. Charles Dickens wrote in *Household Words* in 1850 of the national scandal that there was no provision for incurably ill people. In 1854 Reed wrote: 'It would be a blessed thing if we had provision in this land to give shelter to despairing incurables.' He opened a home in Carshalton in 1855, which looked after about forty people, which was then replaced by a much larger Hospital and Home for Incurables at Putney. 'With a policy that pre-dated by many years the enlightened work of the modern hospice movement, staff members normally sat with patients as they neared death, to minister a caring presence and comfort in their last moments of life' (p. 352). Reed himself, now over seventy years old, regularly visited the hospital, referring to the residents as 'the family'. Again, others followed his lead, and a host of other initiatives to help the terminally ill followed.

This is a wonderful account of a man who was utterly committed to sharing the gospel with others in a holistic and compassionate way. Reed was primarily a

preacher and pastor. He was passionately concerned to see true revival, a concern fuelled by a visit to the United States where he saw something of a genuine outpouring of the Spirit (p.223), but also saw instances of artificial manipulation of emotion (pp.149, 221). His own ministry was marked with large numbers of conversions, and a time of remarkable spiritual awakening (pp. 226-230). From the start of his ministry he could not ignore the terrible suffering confronting him on every hand, and he seems to have had the support of his congregation in that they allowed him to spend a very significant amount of time in fundraising, organisation, and 'hands-on' management of his various charities.

Shaw writes: 'In total, the charities Reed established had provided care for 6,423 individuals, with a continuing capacity to care for 2,110 needy people. Between them, by the time of his death, they had raised £1,043,566, of which Reed had personally contributed £4,540. In years when a good salary was around £200 per year, this was an astonishing amount ... Andrew Reed was a man who through his organizational and business capacity could have made a million pounds for himself, but instead he gave his all to help raise that sum for some of the most vulnerable members of society. Upon each of the charities, as they began, developed and became established with major building projects, he bestowed the utmost of his creative energies. From the laying of the foundation stone to the opening of each building, Reed's was the guiding hand that presided over operations ... he was possessed of indomitable perseverance and capacity for great attention to detail' (pp.377-378).

I found this book gripping and fascinating. Dr Shaw paints vivid portraits of the godly women in Reed's life, especially his mother, sister and wife. He highlights the massive discrimination suffered by nonconformists, and the way that Reed championed their cause, and yet also co-operated with Anglicans where this proved helpful to the cause of the needy. He clearly describes the shocking conditions suffered by very many in the nineteenth century. Andrew Reed himself is portrayed as very warm and human. In his early years of ministry he was prone to depression, and during his ministry he suffered some huge blows and great disappointments. There are plenty of interesting details along the way. All in all, this is an outstanding biography of a larger than life figure in church history who deserves to be better known.

¹ *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of their Social Work*, Kathleen Heasman, Geoffrey Bles, London, 1962. (Out of print). p.14.

Papua New Guinea

*This account of the work is by
Lance Hellar*

Inception of the Work

The beginning of the gospel for the Keyagana tribe (pop. 18,000) of the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea was in early 1962. Cliff Hellar had been called by God's grace to this field which was in every sense a pioneer missionary work. When Cliff first visited, access to the tribe was via a full-day hike from the nearest road. The practical difficulties were daunting: they had two children, Cheryl age 3 and Lance age 1; Martie was expecting their third child; there was no road; no means of communication to the outside world; the language of the people seemed impossible to understand or even mimic, and the people were entrenched in a closed culture of sorcery and superstition. As Cliff contemplated working there he felt the difficulties were overwhelming. He departed from the Keyagana and accompanied the field director as he hiked further into a neighbouring tribe to encourage another missionary who had begun work there. This man was a physically strong man, with strength of character and great zeal. They found him utterly defeated, and he subsequently was to leave the field. As Cliff faced these realities he felt he just

could not do the work. This was the intention of the Lord. He stripped Cliff of all his self-reliance and confidence. Cliff said it was like a revelation! He knew now that he could not do this work. If the work were to be done, then God must do it, and God would do it! He was persuaded that the Lord had called him and Martie to the field. The Lord in grace calmed his fears, strengthened his faith, and gave him real peace.

First Steps

Cliff and Martie moved into the Keyagana in June 1962. All of their personal goods and living supplies were carried in by native porters. Cheryl and Lance were carried on wooden chairs suspended by two poles the entire way. They built a house out of bush materials and for many years lived in a house with a grass roof and a plaited bamboo floor. Cliff worked on learning the difficult unwritten language and began to teach as best he could. A simple literacy program had been developed for a related language, and they took this, adapted it and began literacy in the villages. Cliff would spend two to three days each week visiting the villages, teaching from the Word, doing literacy and developing relationships. There was great interest, and in these early

years many professed to be saved, yet time was to prove these to be spurious professions. Because of not knowing the language or culture well, Cliff and Martie were unconscious of the fact that there were many ulterior motives at work. These false professors were to set back the work of the gospel.

Cliff and Martie were soon joined by fellow missionaries Bernie and Ann Crozier who were later to relocate to the Menya tribe in the Morobe Province. During this time Bernie worked on building a more permanent type of house for Cliff and Martie, enabling Cliff to continue with preaching and language work.

Scripture Translation

Language work continued and a more serious literacy program was embarked upon with assistance from the Summer Institute of Linguistics (Wycliffe Bible Translators). Cliff began to translate and put out small Scripture portions for use. This was followed by a translation of Mark and the entire New Testament was first published in 1994. A revision of the translation was published in 2002 along with numerous books of the Old Testament.

Church Planting

For the first ten years of the work there was little evidence of genuine spiritual fruit. But in the Lord's time, according

to his sovereign grace and mercy, the Lord began to work. Slowly people began to be saved and infant churches sprang up in the villages throughout the tribe. Cliff continued an itinerant ministry every week, preaching in all the villages where there was an open door for the gospel.

As the Lord raised up faithful men in these churches, Cliff would gather these men each Saturday to instruct them and build them up in the faith, training them to teach others and propagate the truth of the gospel. Every six months the churches gather for a week-long conference to hear three messages preached each day by the church leaders. These have been a means of real blessing and encouragement and often there have been over a thousand people in attendance.

Today there are twenty-two churches of the Keyagana people at varying degrees of stability and maturity. Fifteen of these churches are in the villages of the tribe and five are in towns of the country. These churches have been established as tribal people have moved out and settled in the towns seeking work.

Other Tribes

Bernie and Ann Crozier began work in the Menya tribe in 1967 and in the succeeding years were greatly privileged to see the Lord use them in

the salvation of many and in the establishment of a dozen small churches scattered throughout the tribe. Despite the fact that Bernie and Ann have not been on the field on a permanent basis since 1985, and these churches were not well established, the work has continued and many have been saved.

Largely through the life and testimony of Cliff and Bernie and their effective demonstration of the glorious nature of gospel missions, the Lord called Lance and Robin Hellar and Ray and Cheryl (nee Hellar) Gibello to the field.

Lance and Robin began work in the Qoqwayeqwa tribe (pop. 9000) of the Morobe Province in 1991. This tribe and language have been notoriously difficult to work with. However, the grace and purpose of God have prevailed, people have been saved and a small church has been established with good leadership. The gospel continues to be propagated and many unsaved hear the preaching of the gospel each week. Three separate Wycliffe Bible Translator teams have begun and abandoned linguistic work in the past. Lance recently returned to a regime of language work after a long sabbatical. Previously he had completed preliminary linguistic work and developed an alphabet and a series of primers for a literacy program. This is currently being used extensively in the tribe in a government-sponsored vernacular elementary school program. Nevertheless, much language work and analysis has yet to be done before

formal Scripture translation can be undertaken.

Ray and Cheryl began work in the *Angkave* tribe (pop. 2000) of the Gulf Province in 2001. They have devoted themselves to language work and have made excellent progress. A Wycliffe Bible Translator's missionary completed a New Testament translation in 1975 for this language; however, there has never been any gospel ministry in this tribe. Ray is preaching in a number of places and a number of people are hearing. They are hopeful that one man has been saved.

The Work of the Gospel

The overriding principle in each of these works is a firm conviction that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes. God the Father has given his Son a particular people elect before the foundation of the world. They are scattered throughout time in all nations of the world. The elect are brought in through the preaching of the gospel. But the labourers are few. Papua New Guinea has been heavily missionized, particularly in the towns and other easily accessible locations. However, there has been little or no gospel witness in most of this effort and there are many tribes which have no gospel ministry.

Pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth labourers into his harvest, to the praise and glory of his grace!

E.P. Conference in Durban



Durban Central Baptist Church. Laban is the preacher. The baptismal pool is on the right.

80 pastors, 25 day time visitors, 12 children (age 12-16) from Khulani Haven orphanage and 20 members of Durban Central Baptist Church attended the two day conference on Friday and Saturday, 13-14 February, 2006. The Durban Central members formed the work force, providing meals on site. The Khulani Haven children provided most of the music. The visiting preacher was Laban Mwashekele of Windhoek (see short biography which follows), who preached in English. Nearly all the theology taught by Laban was new

to these pastors. Since 90 percent of those present were Zulu speaking everything in the conference was translated into Zulu. Laban's home language is Ovambo. All the singing was in Zulu with the exception of a couple of well known English songs. The second preacher was pastor Ernest Mcambi (a TWR radio broadcaster) who preached in Zulu. Ernest acted as chairman for the questions and discussion times (imbizos). He made sure that all could follow in both Zulu and English.

The conference went under the auspices of Evangelical Press which signified that it was inter-denominational. The conferees came from a number of denominations. The principal organizers were Pastor Dennis Hustedt, senior pastor of Durban Central Baptist Church, his wife Lynn and the church workers. The only cost borne by the conferees was transportation to and from the conference.

Jimmy (Congolese), Gert (German) and Erroll (of RT) manned the book tables. Books were imported from the UK, mostly from Evangelical Press, Banner of Truth and Day One. The great majority in Africa cannot afford to buy books at the prices we pay in the UK so all the books were subsidised to one third or one quarter what we would pay in the UK. On the first day each registered conferee was limited to buy five books. The remaining stock was reviewed and on the second day each registered conferee was entitled to buy a further five books. Unlike the UK these books will not be simply browsed through, or left unread but will be read and studied, not only by the owner but by several others. The Evangelical Press Welwyn series commentaries were popular as well as the Banner of Truth Puritan paperbacks, especially John Owen

on mortification and on *Union and Communion with the Three Persons*. The *Grace* simplified classics distributed through EP were well received, and are especially suitable in Africa.

Durban Central Baptist Church was planted by one of Spurgeon's students in 1878 and in due course gave birth to two well-known Baptist churches in Durban. Durban Central at 155 West Street is now in the red light area. At night prostitutes emerge in force. Also the streets are dangerous as many criminals have guns. We were glad to have armed security guards. Conferees made full use of the shuttle service by minicab to their hotel about 300 metres away. Durban Central Baptist Church is ideally equipped as a venue with a large kitchen and hall which can be used as a dining area.

48 evaluation forms were filled in. Many suggested that the conference become a three-day teaching conference.

African style conferences of this kind are needed throughout Southern African countries. Evangelicals have increased in numbers. During the last four years the Baptist Union of South Africa has planted over 400 churches. However the universal problem in



Ernest Mcambi (on the left) and Laban Mwashekele

sub-Saharan Africa (where over 60 percent of the population profess Christ) is shallowness. True Christianity in which theology is processed through the mind (Romans 12:2) to the heart and to the hands is rare. Since there is a lamentable shortage of men in the pastorate, often women have taken over. Many pastors model themselves on tele-evangelists so that services are a road show rather than having anything to do with the living triune God. The need in Africa is so great and the obstacles are so daunting that many are cynical of doing any good. It takes about £3000 to fund a conference of this kind. It is well worth it.

Laban Mwashekele

Laban Mwashekele is pastor of Monte Cristo Baptist Church, Windhoek, Namibia. He was 18 when he was converted. His early years as a Christian were a struggle. Well meaning friends tried to induce him to have an experience of tongues speaking but he was filled with repugnance at the noise and hype. He imbibed Arminian ideas until he read a book edited by Timothy George with the title *Baptist Theologians*. Timothy George's introduction alone persuaded Laban of the doctrines of grace. Subsequently his soul was fed and his mind enlightened by many books he obtained from the Banner of Truth. At first he loaned these books

but when they were not returned he established a reading room where students can read the books but not take them away.

The Monte Cristo Church (Christ on the Mount) has increased in membership. Now a new building is half complete to seat 350. The foundations, pillars and roof are in place and now the walls have to be built in when funding is available.

Men are trained to pastor and preach and follow courses set by pastor Joachim Rieck of Eastside Baptist Church. This is vital as Laban has been used to plant fifteen churches and some of these are looking for full-time pastors. The elders of the Eastside Baptist Church in Windhoek assist in meeting the needs of the newly planted churches.

The most outstanding example of church planting came when there was a visitation of the Holy Spirit in the town of Luderitz. Laban led a week long evangelistic campaign. Those who professed conversion were taught for a further week which was followed by a further week of teaching in preparation for baptism. 97 (all Ovambo) were baptized and a church formed.

Laban has a 30 minute slot on radio every week which he uses for

biblical expository evangelism. On one occasion following a broadcast he was summoned to appear before the Prime Minister of Namibia for preaching theocracy not democracy. He explained to the satisfaction of the PM that by this he meant that the real ruler of the nations is Jesus Christ and not as is fondly imagined, the people themselves. He assured the PM that he was very happy with the freedom provided by God's common grace in democratic institutions.

Laban often visits Northern Namibia by the borders of Angola where the majority of Ovambo people live. Namibia with a population just short of two million is fifty percent Ovambo. The great first missionary to the Ovambo was the talented Finnish pioneer Martin Rautanen whose life was described by Joachim Rieck in a recent issue of RT.

Laban is married to Helen and they have four children. The eldest, aged 17, is a dedicated believer. His name translated from Ovambo is 'Mighty power in prayer' – a message in itself. Laban believes that it is by intercession joined with preaching the gospel that 'the earth will be filled with a knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea' (Hab 2:14).

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