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221



*The speakers at the Reformed conferences in Nigeria. From left to right: Christopher Buss, Dr Babbs Umoetok, Paul Cooley, Ani Ekpo, Stan Murrell, Dr R E Ekpeonyong, Tony Okoroh and Joseph Jacowitz. See News.*

Contributors to this issue. Dr. J Ligon Duncan III, a native of Greenville, South Carolina, was born and reared in the home of an eighth-generation Southern Presbyterian ruling elder. He earned a PhD from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1995. In 1990 he was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and joined the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS), Jackson, Mississippi where he was Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology. He became the senior minister of First Presbyterian, Jackson in 1996.

Mark Troughton is the pastor of the York Evangelical Church.

Bob Davey is co-pastor of Looe Evangelical Church in Cornwall.

Dr Frederick Hodgson is a deacon at Mirfield Evangelical Church. He is the manager of Reformation Today. For subscription details see inside back cover.

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Front cover picture – *A group of Sunday School children in Nigeria. See News.*

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## Editorial

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Martin Luther described the doctrine of justification by faith as *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* – the article of a standing or falling church. The history of the Church bears this out absolutely. The way of salvation is buried under layers of tradition in the Greek Orthodox Church and in the Roman Catholic Church. The doctrine of justification can also be subverted in the name of scholarship which turns out in the end to be unreliable. The net result is confusion and souls are eternally harmed. This is the reason why two articles are devoted to this subject. It is also the reason why John Piper, a very busy pastor, took time out to address the contemporary threat to justification in writing his book *The Future of Justification – A Response to N T Wright* (see Book Reviews). Frederick Hodgson's article *Reformation at Meaux* is the first in a series tracing out main streams in the great 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation. The Reformation was not misguided as the opponents of justification by imputed righteousness maintain, but the recovery of the saving gospel of Christ.

Two key articles, one on justification and the other on righteousness by the Bishop of Durham, N T Wright, appear in the *New Dictionary of Theology* published by IVP in 1988. Justification as we have always understood it is turned from individual personal justification into collective covenant status. God's righteousness imputed to the believer as expounded by Paul in Romans chapter four is re-interpreted. We are informed

that Luther is misleading in his exposition of this subject.

My understanding of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith accords with that of a long list of commentators such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, William S Plumer, Robert Haldane, Charles Hodge, William Hendriksen, Leon Morris, John Stott and more recently Thomas R Schreiner. My concern about Tom Wright's commentary on Romans is that justification by faith as we know it, that is by imputed righteousness, is eliminated. That is not a minor issue. Bishop Wright's thesis is based on the contention that the Jews of our Lord's time did not believe in 'works righteousness' as a basis for personal salvation and the manner in which the above named have always understood Paul in Romans, especially in Romans 9:30 – 10:4, is erroneous. It is helpful to be reminded of the text:

'What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone". As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame." Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.'

A number of leaders have responded to the new teaching known as the 'New Perspective on Paul' (NPP). John Piper has given this subject detailed attention. On 5<sup>th</sup> November Dr Piper's book on the NPP was published. The book is commended with the following blurb:

*The Future of Justification – A Response to N T Wright by John Piper. November 5, 2007.*

*N T Wright, a world-renowned New Testament scholar and bishop of Durham in the Church of England, has spent years studying the apostle Paul's writings and has offered a 'fresh perspective' on Paul's theology. Among his conclusions are that 'the discussions of justification in much of the history of the church—certainly since Augustine—got off on the wrong foot, at least in terms of understanding Paul—and they have stayed there ever since.'*

*If Wright's framework for interpreting the New Testament text and his understanding of justification find a home in the church, not only could the doctrine of justification be distorted for generations to come, but the New Testament writers' original intent could be silenced.*

Dr Piper is a champion for justification by faith alone. He is also noted for his passion for souls to be saved. That passion was missing in the writing of N T Wright on Romans which is further reason why my confidence in him as a teacher is undermined.

Dr Ligon Duncan has an excellent overall grasp of the NPP and has published his work on the Internet. Material by Dr Duncan on this subject is included in this issue of *Reformation Today*. An important contributor to this subject is Brian Vickers in his book *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness* (Crossway, 254 pages paperback, 2006). Brian Vickers teaches New Testament at Southern Seminary in Kentucky. Readers who may not have the time to read at length on the challenge of the NPP can find a lucid seventeen page overview of the subject in the recently published commentary on Galatians by Peter Barnes. He is the pastor at Revesby Presbyterian Church in Sydney, Australia. (Peter Barnes, *Galatians*, EP, 364 pages, hardback, 2006).

The thesis of the NPP rests on a historical question which is vital to the whole. Mark Troughton in his article explores the background. His conclusions confirm that the leaders and teachers of the Church have understood Paul correctly. Hence we do not need the NPP. A further comment in an e-mail from Mark Troughton is insightful, 'I think the big issues are twofold: a) How does the Bible understand Sin? b) Is salvation by works, grace plus works or grace alone? Should you mention this? Wrong anthropology is at the back of all that NPP says. NPP writers all seem to have a less than biblical understanding of sin, so their diagnosis of the human condition is mistaken and so is their remedy. To say like Stendahl did that personal sin and the need for forgiveness are not what Paul is talking about is breath-taking in its foolishness!'

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## A Godly Pastor

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### *One in a thousand*

In Job 33:22-24 we read of a man who is lost. He is drawing near to death. The funeral undertakers are not far away. The angels of death are ready to remove this lost soul to hell. Suddenly a messenger intervenes. It is a visitor who comes to the bedside of this sick man. This messenger tells him the way of salvation. He describes a ransom that has been made for sinners and proclaims the gift of eternal life for every repentant believing soul. Hope is kindled in the dying man. He believes the good news of salvation. He embraces the Saviour. His physical condition begins to improve. His life is spared. His soul is saved. As Matthew Henry puts it, 'These joyful tidings delivered to him by God's messenger shall revive his spirit, and by degrees restore his former health and vigour.' But who is the kind visitor who has brought glad tidings? Who is this man of knowledge who cares for souls? He is described as one in a thousand. Where can we find such a man?

John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress* describes the pastor as one in a thousand. 'Then he (Christian) went on till he came to the house of the *Interpreter*, where he knocked over and over; at last one came to the door, and asked, Who is there?

*Christian* – Sir, here is a traveller, who was bid by an acquaintance of the good man of this house, to call here for my profit; I would therefore speak with the Master of the house: So he called for the Master of the house; who after a little time came to Christian and asked him what he would have?

Sir, said *Christian*, I am a man that am come from the City of Destruction, and am going to the Mount Zion; and I was told by the Man that stands at the Gate, at the head of this way that if I called here, you would show me excellent things, such as would help me on my journey.

Then said the *Interpreter*, Come in. I will show thee that which will be profitable to thee. So he commanded his man to light the candle and bid *Christian* follow him: So he had him into a private room, and bid his man open a door, the which when he had done, *Christian* saw the picture of a very grave Person hang up against a wall; and this was the fashion of it – It had eyes lifted up to Heaven, the best of Books in his hand, the Law of truth was written upon his lips, the World was behind his back; it stood as if it pleaded with men, and a Crown of Gold did hang over its head.

Then said *Christian*, What means this?

*Interpreter* – ‘The man whose picture this is, is one of a thousand; he can beget children, travail in birth with children, and nurse them himself when they are born (1 Cor 4:15; Gal 4:19).’

As we look around society in the 21st century, that man is a Christian pastor. He is one in a thousand. In many places he is one in ten thousand for there is an increasing shortage of godly pastors. A truly called, godly, caring pastor who loves souls and who unfailingly proclaims eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ is truly one in ten thousand. Take cities of a million souls. How many faithful, reliable, caring shepherds are there? The answer is too few. You have to search for them.

The English Puritan, William Perkins (1558-1602), searched out reasons why there was a shortage of pastors in his time. He suggested that there is contempt in the world for those who unflinchingly declare the truths of the Bible and who apply the gospel to lost souls. Any person contemplating the ministry must reckon with difficulties. The pastor must be a brave man to leave the world of financial gain and worldly honour and take on a calling which is despised and often precarious.

The calling to be a pastor is awesome in its responsibility, as Perkins expresses it: ‘To stand in God’s presence, to enter into the holy of holies, to go between God and his people, to be God’s mouth to his people, and the people’s to God; to be the interpreter of the eternal law of the Old Testament and the everlasting gospel of the New. To stand in the place and even bear the office of Christ himself, to take care and charge of

souls – these considerations overwhelm the consciences of men who approach the office.’

‘It was this that made the apostle Paul cry out, “Who is sufficient for these things?” (2 Cor 2:16). And if Paul said, “Who is sufficient?” it is no surprise that many others say, “I am not sufficient,” and therefore remove their necks from this yoke and their hands from this plough, until either God himself, or his church, presses them into it.’<sup>1</sup>

Financial considerations often deter men from the ministry. God gave instructions about maintaining the Levites (Num 18:26). Even though the office of a full-time pastor is deserving of what the apostle Paul calls ‘double honour’ which means double salary, too often it is the opposite and in practice turns out to be half or less than half of the average wage in the congregation. Why would Paul suggest double? The reason surely is that a pastor who is generous and active in hospitality and efficient in his work to reach out to all his people and to the community around him, will have many additional expenses.

Perkins comments like this: ‘The lack of such provision is the reason why so many young men with unusual ability and great prospects turn to other vocations, especially law. That is where most of the sharpest minds in our nation are employed. Why? Because in legal practice they have all the means for their advance, whereas the ministry, generally speaking, yields nothing but a clear road to poverty.’<sup>2</sup>

A good pastor is one in a thousand. Therefore suggests Perkins, ‘If their number is to be increased, training institutions must be well maintained. In order to uphold the kingdom of Satan, Antichrist is careful to erect colleges and endow them with financial backing.’ (He is referring to Rome, Rheims and Douai as centres of training priests for the Counter-Reformation). What would Perkins think of the phenomena of modernism today, which has destroyed many seminaries and turned them into institutions of spiritual destruction?

The godly, caring and diligent shepherd is one a in thousand. Therefore it is vital that he should be encouraged by the prayers and support of the

flock he oversees. Pastors are not dispensable. They are not there to be abused and to be dismissed for frivolous reasons. Such treatment can well lead to the displeasure of the Lord and lead to the loss of faithful expository preaching. It is tragic when churches are deprived of pastors who feed the flock and care for souls with loving care, gentleness and wisdom.

The scarcity of pastors in the world is an increasing problem. The precarious nature of the ministry to which I have referred has resulted in many candidates for the ministry showing more concern for what we in the 21st century call 'perks'. Their first questions concerning a call to a church are about how much holiday time there will be, when and how long a sabbatical, and above all, what the salary will be? While these are legitimate concerns for any pastor who must care for his family, the first questions should be spiritual. The man who is 'one in a thousand' will be concerned about the spiritual challenges in that church and how they can be met with spiritual weapons. What kind of unity prevails and what climate prevails for progress under the Word of God? What is the sphere of evangelism? What are the parameters of soul care? These are the primary issues. As expressed above financial provision is important. 'If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever' (1 Tim 5:8).

There are worldly people who imagine that a Christian pastor has an easy life. The 'one in a thousand' pastor never has time enough for all his responsibilities. The pastor must be a fervent and diligent student of Scripture and of theology. He must be a man of prayer. He must, like Aaron the high priest, bear upon his heart and on his shoulders the names of all the people committed to his care. Moreover he will always seek the salvation of the unbelieving. He will always be missionary-minded and involved in the support of missionaries abroad. He is the caring visitor found at the bedside counselling that dying, despairing man described above. He is indeed 'one in a thousand'.

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<sup>1</sup> William Perkins, *The Art of Prophesying*, Puritan paperback, Banner of Truth, p. 94

<sup>2</sup> *ibid* p.95

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## Reformation at Meaux

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*St Etienne Cathedral, Meaux*

25.5 miles to the north-east of Paris lies the satellite city of Meaux, pronounced Mo. The town, lying in a loop of the Marne River, is dominated by the Gothic Cathedral of St Etienne and is famous as being a centre for Brie cheese. Since the Middle Ages the surrounding area has been intensively cultivated. Meaux was a centre of reformation of the Church in France in the sixteenth century.

King Louis XII had secured the advice from his parliament in 1510 that it was lawful for him to make war on the warlike Pope Julius II and within two years he had gained victory and had a coin struck in Naples with the inscription, *Perdum Babylonis nomen* (I will destroy the name of Babylon). The nations were fed up of the Pope who marshalled armies but avoided the pulpit. At a council at Pisa, called by Louis and the Emperor Maximilian I, when the Pope failed to appear, the council suspended him from office and forbade the people to obey him. The council failed to produce the reformation desired by the two sovereigns.

Upon the death of Louis and Julius the talk of war was replaced by the love of culture. John de Medici became Pope Leo X in 1513 and Francis I became king of France in 1515. Both these men embraced the Renaissance and the arts and love of learning prospered.

After the battle of Marignano (1515) an event took place that would have a serious effect on the Reformation in France. In 1516 The **Concordat of Bologna** sealed an agreement between Leo and Francis. This stated that the Pope could collect all the income that the Catholic Church made in France but the king of France could continue to collect tithes from the clerics and to restrict their right of appeal to Rome. The Concordat confirmed the king of France's right to make appointments of archbishops, bishops, abbots and priors. This allowed the Crown to decide who would lead the church in France. The agreement also allowed the Pope to veto the appointment of any leader that the king of France chose if the Pope thought he was unqualified. On Francis's part, it was at last firmly conceded that the Pope's powers were not subject to any council. The Concordat resulted in lots of revenue flowing from France to Rome. The infamous, cruel, ambitious Antoine Duprat was present at Bologna and was awarded a cardinal's hat for his contribution. He subsequently used the agreements to gain considerable sums of money for himself. The Concordat was important because it meant that there were no strong political reasons for the rulers of France to support the Reformation. The kings of France controlled the appointment of ecclesiastical leaders. The church in France still had more freedom from Rome than elsewhere but continued to suffer from the scandals experienced elsewhere in Europe. Bishops and abbots disregarded canon law and indulgences were sold as elsewhere.

Jacques Lefèvre (1454-1536) born in Etaples, Picardy, northern France had a deep thirst for learning of all sorts. He was a master of diverse subjects such as ancient languages, history, mathematics and philosophy. His love of learning had taken him to Asia and Africa and he had been appointed to a chair in the Sorbonne Theological Hall of Paris University. Such an eminent man of learning and gracious manners attracted many admiring disciples and not unsurprisingly the envy of some of his fellow professors. These jealous men watched him, hoping that he would make mistakes that could lead to his undoing. Lefèvre was pious and wanted to honour the saints of the past. He knew the original languages in which

## FRANCE AND THE REFORMATION DURING THE REIGN OF FRANCIS I

- 1509** Birth of Calvin in Noyon.
- 1510** Farel enrolled as a student in Paris.
- 1512** Lefèvre published commentary on the Epistles of Paul.
- 1513** Leo X became Pope in Rome.
- 1515** Francis I became king of France.
- 1517** *Luther nails theses to door in Wittenburg.*
- 1519** Birth of Gaspard de Coligny who eventually became Admiral of France.
- 1520** Briçonnet starts reformation of Diocese of Meaux.
- 1521** Conversion of Margaret (Queen of Navarre) and sister of Francis I. *Diet of Worms*. Luther's books banned in France.
- 1522** Lefèvre publishes 4 Gospels in French.
- 1523** Sorbonne advises that Lutheranism in France should be quashed by use of 'the stake' and Briçonnet recants.
- 1524** Lefèvre publishes complete NT in French. Pavane recants and then repents and is burnt followed by Hermit of Livry.
- 1525** Psalms published in French. Circle of Meaux dispersed; eventually Leclerc martyred in Metz. Francis captured by Spanish forces at battle of Pavia in northern Italy.
- 1526** Calvin enters La Montaigu to train as a priest. Francis I released after Treaty of Madrid.
- 1527** Conversion of Calvin and he becomes a law student.
- 1528** Birth of Jeanne d'Albret, who succeeded mother as queen of Navarre in 1555.
- 1529** Martyrdom of Berquin in Paris. Calvin returns to Noyon and eventually becomes a personal evangelist in Paris.
- 1531** Du Bellay sent by Francis I to attempt an alliance with German princes.
- 1532** Francis I has treaty with Henry VIII of England. Farel begins work in Geneva and withdraws.
- 1533** Queen of Navarre encourages Rousset to preach to thousands in the Louvre. Beda of Sorbonne banished and then returns to Paris. Alexander preaches in Lyon, but captured and brought to Paris for execution. Cop flees to Basle and Calvin leaves Paris and meets Lefèvre. Catherine de Medici marries Henry son of Francis I. Farel returns to Geneva.
- 1534** Calvin establishes a Protestant congregation in Poitiers. *Act of Supremacy in England makes an independent Church of England*. Conference at the Louvre to discuss reformed and united Church of Rome failed. Beda persuades Parliament to pass law which punishes by death anyone who holds evangelical opinions. Calvin returns to Paris and shortly afterwards breaks with Rome and leaves France intending to go to Germany. Night of Placards 24<sup>th</sup> October followed by fierce persecution and burnings. Margaret leaves Paris for Bearn in the Pyrénées.
- 1536** Calvin publishes the first edition of 'The Institutes' in Basle and later in the year enters Geneva. France at war with Spain until 1538 and persecution was reduced.
- 1538** Calvin and Farel forced to leave Geneva. Calvin goes to Strasburg. Series of persecuting edicts announced in France.
- 1540** Calvin returns to Geneva.
- 1541** Marot publishes 30 metric Psalms in Paris.
- 1542** Calvin's *Institutes* banned in France.
- 1543** Marot publishes 20 more metric Psalms.
- 1544** Marot dies and Beza completes metric Psalms. Sorbonne issues an index of prohibited books.
- 1545** Jean Meynier burns Waldensian towns and massacres 3000 Waldensians.
- 1546** Congregation at Meaux attacked and 14 members tortured and burned
- 1547** Francis I dies and Henry II becomes king of France.

the Bible had been written and was attracted to it so that he might find information allowing him to write on the ancient saints. He discovered the letters of Peter and Paul and more importantly discovered the plan of a free justification. In 1512 he published a commentary on the letters of Paul. Wylie mentioned that a copy of this could be found in the Bibliothèque of Paris. Lefèvre stated in this book, 'It is God who gives us, by faith, that righteousness which by grace alone justifies to eternal life.' A full account of the development of the Christ-centred theology of Lefèvre by Guy Bedouelle is published by Blackwells on the Internet. Not surprisingly the revolutionary teaching of Lefèvre made a huge impact on the Sorbonne. The teaching of Luther had not yet burst on the scene in Europe.

One of Lefèvre's students was Guillaume (William) Farel who came from Grenoble, close to the area populated by the Waldensian believers. He however was not one of them but was a devoted follower of the Pope. 'I would gnash my teeth like a furious wolf when I heard any one speaking against the Pope.' Farel had a thirst for knowledge and at the age of 21 made his way to the Sorbonne. He was startled by the words of Lefèvre, 'Salvation is of Grace.' 'The Innocent One is condemned and the criminal is acquitted.' 'It is the cross of Christ alone that openeth the gates of heaven and shutteth the gates of hell.'

Farel was deeply troubled and had no peace of mind until he trusted the Saviour. All things became new and he confessed, 'Instead of the murderous heart of a ravening wolf he came back quietly like a meek and harmless lamb, having his heart entirely withdrawn from the Pope and given to Jesus Christ.'

Another of Lefèvre's students was William Briçonnet, Count of Monthrun and Bishop of Meaux. He was sent by Francis I as an ambassador to Leo X in Rome. Briçonnet was impressed by the magnificence and pomp of the religious ceremonies of Rome but sickened by the lack of virtue found there. On returning to Meaux he found that biblical light was beginning to shine in France. On reading the Bible he too came to see that the sinner's justification is not found in his good works but in 'Christ's finished work apprehended by faith'. Wylie reported that he embraced the new doctrines but apparently without the severe mental conflict that Farel passed through.

In 1520 Briçonnet rigorously attacked the greedy Franciscan monks who made their rich living by telling jokes at fairs. He became a conscientious bishop and visited the churches in his diocese, removing the ignorant priests and replacing nine out of ten of them with men who could teach. In order to deal with the ignorance he established a theological seminary at Meaux. He became a busy preacher himself to deal with the shortage of suitable pastors.

Briçonnet learned of the opposition that Lefèvre, Farel and others such as the Roussels, Martial Mazurier, president of St. Michael's college and eloquent preacher were experiencing. He called them to join him in reforming the church in Meaux and the area around. Lefèvre wanted the Bible to be available to the people and published the entire New Testament in French in 1524. The Psalms followed in 1525 and these too were read in private and in families. Conversations about biblical truths became more frequent and public. Workers in the important wool trade of Meaux and labourers in agriculture were exposed to the transforming power of the Bible. Erasmus in publishing the Greek Testament reached the learned, but in publishing the French version Lefèvre reached a much wider class of people.

The people of Meaux received the Word with joy, apart from the tavern keepers who lost much of their trade and the begging friars who also lost much of their revenue.

Light shone out from Meaux and even reached the court of Francis I. His spiritually troubled sister Margaret read the Bible and came to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. She was a key person in restraining her brother from persecuting believers and saving many from the stake. Meanwhile the proud wise men of the Sorbonne in Paris became increasingly alarmed at the spread of the gospel. Noel Beda was a professor at the Sorbonne and Wylie commented that Beda regarded his position as second in importance to that of the Pope himself. He was a zealous minded bigot and Erasmus commented that 'in a single Beda there are more than three thousand monks.' He had previously been responsible for driving Lefèvre from the Sorbonne.

In 1525 a political event took place that would have serious consequences for the reforming circle at Meaux. Francis I was engaging

in a war in Italy and in this year his army was crushed at the battle of Pavia and he himself was made a prisoner and carried off to Spain to be confined by the Emperor Charles in Madrid. Many French nobles had been killed at Pavia. Queen Louisa, a woman steeped in hatred of the gospel, led the government in the absence of Francis. Beda and Duprat exploited the power vacuum. These men listened to the Franciscan monks who no longer benefited from their performances. These monks accused Briçonnet and the circle around him of heresy and of poisoning the diocese of Meaux.

A year or two earlier Louisa had asked the Sorbonne, 'By what means can the damnable doctrines of Luther be chased and extirpated from this most Christian kingdom?' Their reply was that heretics should be burnt at the stake. Briçonnet was summoned before parliament and urged to recant. Although he initially stood firm, he eventually gave in and after paying a fine returned to Meaux publishing three edicts. Firstly public prayers to the Virgin and the saints were to be restored. Secondly people were not allowed to buy or read the books of Luther and finally Protestant preaching was suspended.

The Reformers were scattered. Lefèvre went to Strasburg. Farel turned towards Switzerland, where he was eventually to be joined by Calvin. Gérard Roussel went to Navarre where he contributed powerfully to the cause of the gospel. Sadly Martial Mazurier followed Briçonnet. The remaining believers in Meaux continued to meet secretly for prayer and reading the Scriptures in secluded places. The authorities caught some of them. One of these, called Denis, was imprisoned and visited by the sad, humiliated Briçonnet. He was given the job of getting Denis to recant. The godly Denis replied, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him shall I also deny before my Father who is in heaven!' Denis was rewarded with the stake. Many others followed him.

The believers were not left without a leader. A humble wool worker called Leclerc was courageous and well taught in the Scriptures. 'The church' had not ordained him but the believers accepted his gifts and call to preach. One day the sight of the monks capturing the pulpits stirred his spirit and he fixed a placard naming the Pope as antichrist to the door of the cathedral. He was caught, tried and whipped and branded on his

forehead as a heretic before being banished from Meaux. He was later to be cruelly cut limb by limb before being burnt at the stake in Metz.

The believers in Meaux did not simply disappear at this point. In the year 1546 the Reformers of Meaux organised themselves into a church. A wool worker, Pierre Leclerc, a brother of the man who was burnt at Metz, was chosen as their first pastor. Their number increased under his preaching and not surprisingly this news came to the authorities. The congregation was raided and sixty people were arrested and sent to Paris for trial. In particular they were accused for celebrating communion. The result of the trial was that fourteen were sentenced to be tortured and burned, five to be flogged and banished; ten, all women, were set free, while the remainder were to undergo graduated forms of penance. The sentences were carried out at Meaux shortly afterwards. Those sentenced to death experienced 'extraordinary' torture, and all had refused to reveal the names of other Reformers at Meaux. Before dying at the stake six confessed to a priest. As a reward they escaped the penalty of having their tongues cut out. The others who remained firm suffered this barbarity, which was standard treatment for those who died impenitent. The congregation scattered but carried the gospel to other towns in France.

Several things are to be learned from the Reformation at Meaux. We are immediately reminded of the words of the apostle Paul, that those who would live godly lives in Christ will suffer persecution. At times this persecution can be very fiery and fierce and we are warned of this in the Scriptures so that we should not be taken by surprise. It has been sometimes stated that the church in the UK needs a period of persecution. The terrible sufferings of the church in France, which went on and intensified later in the sixteenth century, would have refined the church, but the evidence is that at least some of those professing faith turned aside. In some cases those we would have recognised as the leaders of the church were the ones who failed under pressure. The reforms of the conscientious zealous Briçonnet were wise and thoroughly undertaken, but the apostle Paul reminded his readers at Corinth that he was aware of the danger of preaching to others yet becoming a castaway himself. We all need to keep our hearts with all diligence lest we turn aside. We are warned by Briçonnet's experience that if we think we stand, we should take heed lest we fall.

These Reformers were swimming against the tide of political intrigues and the intellectual bigotry emanating from the Sorbonne. The gatherings of believers were tender shoots in an alien and threatening environment. There are countries and societies today where it is a dangerous thing for a person to forsake his or her old religion and turn to Christ.

The fledgling church at Meaux was well taught by Briçonnet, Farel, Lefèvre and the others. The confidence of many of the believers was in the Lord rather than in their leaders so it was able to stand the fires of persecution when the leaders were taken away from them. Leaders emerged from out of this suffering fledgling church.

At critical times in the history of the Reformed church in Meaux, Christians were scattered as a result of persecution. We must see the hand of God in this. For instance the removal of Farel to Switzerland was part of the story of John Calvin's settling there. Reformation was to be fed and encouraged from Geneva not only in France but also in many different countries in Europe during the sixteenth and subsequent centuries.

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## Do we need a NPP?

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*Do we need a new perspective on justification?*

*Ligon Duncan*

One of the hottest theological debates in the evangelical and Reformed community today relates, surprisingly, to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. A number of contemporary theologians, including some with evangelical credentials, are suggesting that we need to revisit, correct and move beyond the formulations of the great sixteenth-century Protestant Reformers and confessions (and their conservative heirs) on the nature and meaning of justification. The school of thought that is promoting this particular reassessment has been called the New Perspective (or Perspectives) on Paul. What is an evangelical pastor, elder or congregant to make of this? What are the proponents of the New Perspective(s) saying? How should we respond? What's all the fuss about? What are the pastoral consequences of the various positions? This is the first part in a series of considerations to clarify the issues.

The New Perspective(s) on Paul (NPP) represents a paradigm shift in the scholarly study of Pauline theology (with ramifications for New Testament Theology as a whole). It calls into question the Protestant Reformation's reading of and conclusions regarding Paul's doctrine of redemption and its application to the believer. In other words it suggests that the Protestant Reformers' exegesis of Paul on justification and their theological formulations of what Paul taught about our being justified by grace through faith alone, and not by works, based on the work of Christ alone, imputed to us, were mistaken. The NPP even questions whether Paul was primarily concerned with the question 'How can I be saved?' For instance, N T Wright says flatly 'that "the gospel" is not, for Paul, a message about "how one gets saved", in an individual and a-historical sense' [*What Saint Paul Really Said* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 60, see also 113-117].

The NPP has its origins in the academic historical-critical tradition, quadrants unfriendly to evangelical approaches to New Testament Theology. Though precursors can be found, for instance in the 1960s in the work of Krister Stendahl, the NPP was really launched through the work of E P Sanders, especially his celebrated *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress), published in 1977. If you want a quick taste of the NPP from the

original proponents in their own words, see E P Sanders, *Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), and James D G Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, originally printed in the Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester 65 (1983): 95-122; and reprinted in *The Romans Debate*, ed. Karl P Donfried (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 299-308.

But in the evangelical world its best-known exponents are James Dunn and N T Wright. It is especially Wright who has mediated the NPP to the evangelical seminaries and churches, and so this little piece will concentrate on him. Wright views his version of the NPP as an essentially compatible corrective to historic Protestant exegesis and theology relating to Pauline soteriology. He says things like, 'if you start with the popular view of "justification by faith", you may actually lose sight of the heart of the Pauline gospel; whereas if you start with the Pauline gospel itself you will get justification in all its glory thrown in as well' (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, 113). This kind of assertion by Wright has produced both positive and negative responses within certain quarters of evangelicalism. Some are convinced that he's right, and that one can both embrace historic Protestant theology and the NPP without fundamental contradiction. Others, including many respected evangelical and Reformed New Testament scholars and theologians, vigorously contest his claim.

The NPP argues that what distinguishes Paul from his Jewish contemporaries is his core conviction that Jesus is the Messiah for Jews and Gentiles, who are now admitted into the people of God on the same basis. Paul did not view contemporary Judaism as Pelagian, or charge it with teaching some form of works-righteousness. No, Paul's problems with the common Judaism of his day were ecclesiological, eschatological and Christological, not soteriological. Let me say that again, in English. Paul, according to the NPP, did not criticise Judaism for legalism in its teaching on salvation. As far as Paul was concerned, there was nothing wrong with Judaism's theology of grace. Paul did not view Judaism as a religion of merit, and expound over against it a distinct doctrine of divine monergism. Instead, Paul charged his Jewish contemporaries (1) with misunderstanding the doctrine of the people of God (ecclesiology), an error especially seen in the exclusive first-century Jewish mindset that looked to the 'works of the Law', especially to circumcision, the Sabbath, and dietary laws, as badges of covenant membership, rather than to faith in Jesus as Lord and Messiah; (2) with a failure to rightly appreciate the Old Testament's eschatology, especially seen in Judaism's failure to grasp the ramifications of the eschatological event of the incarnation in which Yahweh has acted to save his people, and (3) with an inadequate Christology, evidenced in the general Jewish rejection of Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

We should pause at this point and comment on the ‘old perspective’ on Paul and the common Judaism of his day that the NPP is supposedly seeking to correct. One reason this is important is because of the caricature of the historic Reformed view that one encounters in even the most evangelical-friendly versions of the NPP (such as with Dunn and Wright). One pro-NPP writer, for instance, asserts that the Reformed position has historically taught that (1) Judaism was a religion of works-salvation in which one merits or earns redemption; (2) that Paul’s conversion was like Luther’s – Paul was dissatisfied with his inherited religion’s inability to give him peace with God, his inability to attain holiness, and his inability to be right with God; (3) that Paul’s essential religion changed when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, that justification by grace was a new religious concept and that Paul made it the center of his theology; (4) that the focus of Paul’s writings was upon how individuals find acceptance with God; (5) that Paul juxtaposed faith and works, believing and doing, as two fundamentally different principles of religious life and salvation; and (6) that Paul taught that law (OT religion) stood in opposition to grace (NT religion).

Well, where does one begin in replying to such a presentation? First of all, let us grant that one can find these kinds of unqualified assertions in generic evangelicalism, especially in dispensational and antinomian circles; but let us also recognise that these kinds of views are found nowhere in Protestant confessional theology without important qualifications. Second, we should note that the historic Reformed and Protestant view of Jewish religion is complex. On the one hand, you will find all the great magisterial Reformers acknowledging that OT religion is a religion of grace, that justification by faith is an OT principle, that faith and works are both necessary in the Christian life, and that there is continuity between OT and NT religion. On the other hand, you will find the Reformers raising the same theological criticisms of the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus and Paul as they did in their own day. The Reformers also rightly understood that the nature of the Jewish religion fundamentally changed after its final rejection of Jesus as Messiah and its loss of the sacrificial system. The law took on a role in Judaism that it had never held before, and the principle of substitutionary sacrificial atonement diminished.

So, in fact, the ‘old perspective’ recognised that (1) The Judaism of Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Malachi, Simeon, and John was a religion of grace, as God had revealed it, but that when the majority of the Jewish people in the time of Christ rejected Jesus as Messiah, they themselves thereby fundamentally altered the role of the law in their religion (since Jesus and all orthodox early Christians believed that the law pointed to Christ and was

fulfilled in him), thus they perpetuated, elaborated and codified mistaken notions about the law that had been developing in Judaism since the return from the exile, creating fertile soil for legalism of various sorts to grow.

(2) The ‘old perspective’ Reformers also recognised that Paul’s and Luther’s experiences were very different. For instance, Paul was admittedly self-righteous before his life-changing encounter with Christ, while Luther was wracked with guilt and felt a total lack of righteous standing with God. However, Paul also admits that despite his self-confidence he was self-deceived as to God’s approbation of his life, and thus, just like Luther, needed God’s grace for salvation and the atoning work of Christ on his behalf. In this way, Paul himself is the perfect picture of the predominant religious problem of the Judaism of his day, self-confident of their righteous standing with God and unaware of their need of the saving grace held out in Christ.

(3) The Reformers, coming from the ‘old perspective’, understood that justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone was not a NT doctrine but an OT doctrine, explicitly revealed at least as far back as Genesis 15! In this, they are simply affirming precisely what Paul himself affirms in Romans 4. Furthermore, though they viewed justification by faith as a key Pauline doctrine, they did not necessarily assert that it was the central Pauline doctrine (though they certainly saw it as key, and rightly so, in their dispute with Rome). Calvin, for instance, polemically, thought wrong Roman worship (idolatry), even more than false views of justification, was the key issue in the Reformation; and exegetically he rightly set justification in the larger context of the Pauline doctrine of union with Christ.

(4) Though the Reformers certainly believed that a personal response of faith is required of God from every individual who will be saved, they also strongly emphasised the doctrine of the Church, and God’s central plan for his people, his family as a whole. They recognised that we are saved individually into a community, and thus had a better balance on the individual and the corporate aspects of God’s redemption than most today.

(5) The Reformers rightly understood Paul, not as being ‘against’ works, but stressing that one must understand where they fit in the Christian life and where they don’t. We are not saved by good works, but to good works, and that difference makes all the difference in the world. Everyone who believes also works, but is not chosen by God because of works but unto good works. In other words, the Reformers believed that everyone who is saved is both justified and sanctified, but no one is justified by sanctification. The Reformers rightly understood that everything that Augustine gained in the

Pelagian controversy could be lost by sneaking works into justification. The Reformers, by the way, did not view their Roman Catholic opponents as Pelagians, but as semi-Pelagians.

(6) Finally, the Reformers did not believe that OT religion was a religion of law and works, while NT religion was a religion of grace and faith. The Reformers taught that all believers in all ages, Jew or Gentile, were/are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The Reformers also recognised that the law had a key role in the Christian life, so that the gospel enables the believer to delight in God's moral law.

Until the NPP really comes to grips with the 'old perspective' in its best representative forms the value of its corrective criticisms will be minimal. I encourage interested pastors especially to dig into three books and one ecclesiastical report.

First, Guy Prentiss Waters' *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004). This is, perhaps, the best single book-length introduction and critique of the NPP, written by a PCA minister, professor and scholar. A review of the book can be found in this edition of *Reformation 21*. Here's what the highly regarded New Testament scholar Don Carson has to say about this book: 'In the last few years there have been several careful evaluations and critiques of the new perspective. This one excels for its combination of simplicity, fair dealing, historical awareness, and penetration. For the pastor who is vaguely aware of the debates, but who has little mastery of the confusing details, this book's careful presentation of each scholar's position is a model of accuracy and clarity. Even those who have been pondering the issues for years will see some things in a fresh light. The ability of Waters to combine exegetical, historical, biblical-theological, and systematic reflections, and all in relatively brief compass, enhances the credibility of the argument. Combine these virtues with pedagogically helpful chapter summaries and an annotated bibliography, and it is easy to see why this book deserves wide circulation. In a domain where the issues are too important to ignore and where polarisation is dividing congregations and denominations, it is a relief as well as a pleasure to come across a book noted much more for its light than its heat.'

Second, Stephen Westerholm's *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The 'Lutheran' Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). Here's where you go after Waters. Westerholm's revision of his 1988 *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* is one of the most comprehensive and penetrating volumes

addressing the NPP. Part One helpfully offers the reader summaries of Paul as Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Wesley have read him. Part Two updates Westerholm's 1988 survey of recent scholarship on Paul. Part Three expands and revises Westerholm's 1988 exegetical discussion of Paul's understanding of 'righteousness', 'law', and 'justification by faith'. The introduction will leave you on the floor laughing.

Third, read D A Carson, Peter T O'Brien, and Mark A Seifrid, eds. *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, volume two: The Paradoxes of Paul (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004). This book is for the intrepid (so go ahead, get volume one as well!). Following the 2001 companion volume that addressed Second Temple Judaism, this volume concentrates on the biblical and theological issues touching the issues that the NPP has raised concerning the interpretation of Paul. Among the many fine essays in this volume are thorough exegetical studies of Rom 1:18-3:20 (Seifrid), Rom 3:21-4:25 (Gathercole), Rom 5-11 (Moo), and a treatment of Paul's language of faith and works in Galatians (M Silva). O'Brien argues in two separate essays that Paul was not a covenantal nomist, and that Paul was called and converted at the Damascus Road. Yarbrough and Carson attempt positively to define Paul's relationship to the Old Covenant. Timothy George offers a contemporary defense of the Reformation's (and particularly Luther's) reading of the apostle Paul. Each student of the NPP should prioritise a careful reading of this volume. See especially Stephen Westerholm's chapter 'The "New Perspective" at Twenty-Five' – this essay competently surveys recent Pauline scholarship in the wake of Sanders' scholarship on ancient Judaism and Paul. It both abbreviates and supplements his overview of scholarship in the *2004 Perspectives Old and New on Paul*. Westerholm in this essay and in *Perspectives* is especially helpful in grouping the works of contemporary Pauline scholars into 'families' of shared sympathies or similar approaches.

Fourth and finally, go to the Internet, download and read the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (PCA) Report on the 'New Perspectives on Paul', including the theology of N T Wright; and on the theology of Norman Shepherd; as well as the so-called 'Auburn Avenue theology' or 'Federal Vision' (Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley, 2005). This document is available online at:

<http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/apologetics/PDFs/Public%20Miss%20Valley%20Pres%20AAPC2.pdf>

After one has read large doses of the NPP, it is helpful to have someone summarise and organise to clear the fog. This report, especially in its documented summary of the NPP and N T Wright, will do the trick.

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## The Works of the Law and the NPP

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*Mark Troughton*

The New Perspectives on Paul (NPP) on justification claim the rather original insight that the Judaism that Paul opposed in the NT was not legalistic in its teaching on salvation (E P Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 1977, SCM Press). It was *not* a religion of 'merit' by which the Jew earned his right standing before God by works of righteousness. NPP claims that 'merit theology' (salvation by works) only became the dominant characteristic of Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70 when the system of atonement was abolished. The Jew then, it is claimed, had no option but to rely on his 'works' for salvation. This became the dominant feature of orthodox Judaism which still marks it today (e.g. Rabbi Mordechai Becher, *Gateway To Judaism*, 2005, Mesorah Publications). The works of the law, according to NPP, refer to the ethnic boundary markers, such as circumcision, dietary laws etc. that distinguished Israel from the nations. What Paul is therefore opposing in the NT is a clinging to these 'badges' and a refusal to recognize in Jesus the Messiah under whose Lordship Jew and Gentile may now be included together in the covenant community. This very Postmodern concern for tolerance, inclusiveness, non-judgmentalism and racial harmony is, we are told, Paul's main concern. He is not concerned with

how an individual might be 'saved' from 'wrath' as much as how Jew and Gentile might corporately be accepted into the covenant community.

NPP is essentially a many-headed Hydra, calling into question the fundamentals of the gospel as understood by the Reformation, but in this article I want to look at the reconstruction (or to use the Postmodern jargon 'deconstruction') of Judaism that E P Sanders, one of the first contributors to NPP, offers us.

Are the 'works of the law' merely ethnic boundary markers? Or are they also ethical activities of a moral nature? Are there really two types of Judaism before and after the destruction? Do Jews themselves recognize this? What characterizes the Judaism of the post-exilic period right up to the times of Jesus and Paul, stretching up to the present century? And what does the Bible say, more importantly?

The 'works of the law' as redefined by NPP are merely the badges of racial or ethnic distinction that marked the Jews out from the Gentiles. What Paul was opposing in the NT, therefore, was *not* salvation by works ('merit theology') as traditionally understood by the Reformation, but the refusal by the Jews to accept that in Christ, and under his Lordship, Jew and Gentile are now included in the covenant family. This becomes for NPP the new definition of

justification by faith. No longer the forensic declaration that before the bar of God I am innocent of moral failure in God's sight by the double crediting (imputation) of my sins to Christ and of his righteousness (ethical obedience) to me, purely by faith in his life and death, but now the declaration by God in the present that there is an ecumenical covenant community of which I am part. On the last day God will declare included in this people all those who have lived a life of obedience to the covenant (it is not clear whether N T Wright includes obedience as part of the grounds of our acceptance with God – a semi-Pelagian view of justification – or not). So when God 'demonstrates his righteousness' in Christ as Paul says in Romans 3, 'righteousness' means, according to NPP, the covenant faithfulness of God towards his promises, not the moral attribute of God's purity of character shown in his acts of salvation and judgement. NPP applies a reductionistic sledge-hammer to 'justification', 'righteousness' and 'works of the law' and denies the need for imputation altogether.

But as far as the 'works of the law' are concerned, the Jews would disagree with NPP's definition! They are fully persuaded that by their merits, or righteousness (understood as moral virtue) they obtain God's grace. This is already apparent in the non-canonical Apocryphal books of the Old Testament written c. 100BC. E J Young in 'The Canon of the Old Testament', in *Revelation and the Bible*, pp 167-168, states, *'The books of Judith and Tobit*

*justify falsehood and deception and make salvation depend upon works of merit... Ecclesiasticus teaches that the giving of alms makes atonement for sin (3.30). In Baruch it is said that God hears the prayers of the dead (3.4).'*

It is also apparent in the first century writings of the Pharisee Josephus.

In his 2003 lecture on the 'New Perspective' given at the European Leadership Forum, D. A. Carson criticizes E P Sanders' work for not having included, amongst other things, the work of Josephus (37- c.100AD). Josephus was a Pharisee, a first century Jewish historian and apologist of priestly and royal ancestry who survived and recorded the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Carson states, *'He often writes about 'grace' (Greek 'charis') in his works. He repeatedly asks, 'Was this grace given because such and such deserved it or not? Answer: Because he deserved it (sic), otherwise God would not be fair.'* Grace has been merited, no less! Carson argues that the Hasidim or Pharisees of the first century were merit-oriented in their view of salvation, something which is not hard to see in the Gospels, e.g. Luke 18.9-14. (cf. *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Volumes 1 and 2: *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism/The Paradoxes of Paul* by D A Carson, Peter T O'Brien, and Mark A Seifrid).

This merit theology is also present in other rabbinical writings of the first century.

Rabbi Akiba ben Joseph, circa 15-135AD, was a Rabbi who straddled both periods before and after the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. He writes:

*'...If free will was given to men, and it is in their power to be wholly righteous (italics mine), why should they be punished "on account of the serpent"?''*

It is well known that Akiba denied the doctrine of original sin. He adopts what is essentially a semi-Pelagian view of free will and proposes that man and God cooperate in salvation i.e. the grounds of my salvation include my own contribution, or works righteousness. Ephraim E Urbach, in *The Sages, The World and Wisdom of the Rabbis of the Talmud*, 1979, Harvard University Press quotes Rabbi Joshua in the *Mishnah (Shabbat 89b)*, as saying, *'Only death came with Adam's sin, but not the necessity to sin. In regard to the possibility of transgressing and the freedom of choice between the way of life and the way of death, Ben Sira made no distinction between Adam and his offspring...This was the opinion of Rabbi Akiba.'*

Urbach continues, *There was no Tanna among Rabbi Akiba's disciples that attributed the existence of sin to Adam's transgression...* (p 426).

Here we have a denial of the transmission of original guilt or pollution – a Pelagian view of sin and free will. This inevitably results in the view that my works of righteousness will contribute in some degree or other

to my salvation. Whether semi- or full-blown Pelagianism, the end result is the same: grace no longer saves and is therefore not grace. As Jacob Neusner, a Rabbi with whom Sanders interacts the most, has explained, in *Torah From our Sages: Pirke Avot*, Rossel Books; reprint edition (Aug 1997):

*'The schools of the Pharisees and rabbis were and are holy because there men achieve sainthood through study of Torah and imitation of the conduct of the masters. In doing so, they conform to the heavenly paradigm, the Torah believed to have been created by God "in his image", revealed at Sinai, and handed down to their own teachers ...The Mishna in the beginning of Avot and (in more detail) Maimonides in his Introduction to Mishna Torah records a chain of tradition (mesorah) from Moses at Mt. Sinai down to R' Ashi redactor of the Talmud and last of the Amoraim.'*

Salvation by works as ethical activity and not just ethnic badge-wearing is evident here as is the belief that there is no break in continuity between pre- and post- AD 70 Judaism as far as the fundamentals (such as sin and free will) are concerned. So when NPP claims that 'the works of the law' are merely the ethnic badges that marked Israel out, we have to reply that this is a superficial and reductionistic view that does not find acceptance with the writings of the Jewish sages whether BC or AD.

Now Sanders argues that Protestants have been guilty of reading Talmudic

Judaism back into first century Judaism. But it is not just Protestants who see ‘merit theology’ in Judaism, as the above quote from Neusner shows. One Jewish historian that Sanders quotes widely is G Foot Moore. Interestingly, on the subject of continuity he states, ‘Judaism, which had been splintered into various sects, achieved, in the two generations after the Destruction (AD 70) a homogeneity and authority that characterise it to this day. Although a ramified development in the details of the Halakha (Jewish Law) took place in the schools of the Tannaim (Rabbis) in the second century, *yet this unfoldment does not evince different principles or new features in relation to the earlier epochs, nor are such to be found in the fundamentals of the religion and ethic. The basic tenets and principles had been fixed long ago and it was necessary to emphasize them and to make each generation more fully conscious of them, but not to search for them and reveal them*’ (italics mine). This Jewish historian believes in *semper eadem* (always the same), before and after the Temple was destroyed.

So according to him there is a continuity in the fundamentals both before and after the destruction of the Temple. The Oral Law of the Jewish sages received by Moses at Sinai (or so they claim) continued to be transmitted until c. 200AD when it was written down as the Mishnah. Over the next few centuries additional commentaries elaborating on the Mishnah were

written down in Jerusalem and Babylon. These additional commentaries are known as the Gemara. The Gemara and the Mishnah together are known as the Talmud. This was completed in the 5th century AD. The fact that Urbach is entirely comfortable with quoting passages from the Talmud, the Mishnah and from other earlier rabbinic sources *as indicative of mainstream Jewish belief from the time of the Second Temple onwards*, shows that he believes that what the Talmud said in 500AD the Sages going back to 200BC also said. Some more examples of ‘confidence in the flesh’ as being not merely ethnic ‘badges’ but ethical behaviour.

**On the reason for the commandments,** Urbach p 365

One reason of the precepts is the reward. ‘*Rabbi Hananiah ben ‘Aqashya said: The Holy One, blessed be He, wished to grant merit to Israel, therefore he multiplied for them Law and commandments...*’ Again, ‘*...the multiplicity of Torah and precepts brings merit to those who observe them, for the Divine Commander has no need of the commandment, but the commandment subserves only the benefit of man. The sole purpose of the precept is to endow man with righteousness,*’ p 366. Again, ‘*...precepts, Hebrew ‘huqqim’, are so-called because they bring man to life in the world to come...*’ Again, ‘*...the observance of the commandments also gives him added holiness or... sanctity,*’ p 367. Again, ‘*...the Sabbath enhances*

*Israel's holiness,' p 367. Similarly, '...all the commandments serve to heighten Israel's sanctity...' p 368. 'The sanctity is, as it were, withdrawn from the precept itself and transferred to the act of the precept and to him that performs it', p 368.*

So we are not surprised to read later under 'The righteous and the wicked', p 483: *'We have learned that the struggle against and defeat of the Evil Inclination make a man righteous.'*

Clearly, there is no need for a divinely imputed righteousness by faith in such a Pelagian scheme of things. Why would I need God's perfect righteousness by faith in the Messiah when I can obtain my own through struggling to obey the commandments? Is this not the whole point of the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector in Luke 18?

*9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men – robbers, evildoers, adulterers – or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." 13 But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." 14 I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be*

*humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'*

This is precisely what Paul discovered as expressed in Ephesians 2.8-9:

*'For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast.'*

With this appreciation of ancient and modern Judaism in mind, is it really that hard to understand what Paul means by 'confidence in the flesh' in Philippians 3.2-11?

### **How does a Gentile get right with God?**

As far as Gentiles are concerned, it has been a long-held belief, corroborated in the Talmud, that righteous Gentiles, such as Oscar Schindler, the Swedish businessman famous for his marvellous rescue of Jews in the Second World War, have a share in the World to Come on the basis of 'works of the law'. So the question is, what are these? Are they only 'badges of Jewish ethnicity'? No indeed. In *The Path of the Righteous Gentile* by Chaim Clorfene and Yakov Rogalsky (1987, Feldheim Publishers), we learn that, according to the Talmud, Gentile 'works of the law' are none other than moral obedience to the Noahic Laws. We might be forgiven for asking what the Noahic or Noachide laws are. According to rabbinic thought these are sevenfold\*:

(1) Civil justice [the duty to establish a legal system];

- (2) Prohibition of blasphemy [which includes the bearing of false witness];
- (3) The abandonment of idolatry;
- (4) The prohibition of incest [including adultery and other sexual offences];
- (5) The prohibition of murder;
- (6) Also that of theft;
- (7) The law against eating flesh [a limb] cut from a living animal [ie., cruelty in any shape or form].

(\**The Noachide Laws' from The Encyclopedia of Judaism*, edited by Jacob Neusner. Alan J Avery-Peck, William Scott Green, Published 2001, Continuum International Publishing Group Limited).

Although NPP argues that Second Temple Judaism differs completely from post AD70 (and therefore Talmudic) Judaism, we have argued above that such a seismic shift in Jewish thinking is not corroborated by the literature pre or post AD 70 (and certainly not in the Scriptures themselves, let us not forget). Indeed the evidence points the other way: works of the law are ethnic and ethical – moral acts intended to accrue merit for the doer. If there was such a major change in the understanding of the works of the law from one moment to the next (from pre AD70 ‘badges’ in a supposedly ‘covenantal nomist’ system to post AD 70 ‘works of moral obedience that contribute to my righteous standing before God’) would we not expect to see major debate on this issue at the Council of Jamnia after the destruction of the Temple where there were present plenty of representatives of Second Temple

Judaism e.g. Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai, the disciples of Rabbi Akiba *et al?* Yet there was none. And there was none because Pharisaic and now Rabbinic Judaism are both endemically semi-pelagian. NPP’s attempt to exonerate Judaism from ‘merit theology’ by reducing ‘works of law’ to ‘boundary markers’ clearly falls flat here.

It appears that the (still) orthodox Jewish belief in the ability of man to perform works of merit was precisely the background that Paul grew up in and precisely the thing that he rejected, having come to understand that only one Person’s meritorious deeds can put us right with God – God’s own righteousness which he demonstrated in the life and death of Jesus. It is these imputed merits alone received by faith alone that can give us the washing and clothing we need to be able to appear before God both pardoned and righteous.

In conclusion, the old perspective is indeed the biblical one. The new one is a Postmodern attempt to deconstruct Paul.

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## Charles Gutzlaff (1803-1851)

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*Pioneer Missionary to China, Statesman and Explorer*

*By Bob Davey*

Karl Gutzlaff was a pioneer missionary and statesman in the first part of the nineteenth century, one of the first generation of Protestant missionaries to China. His abilities and achievements for the cause of the gospel were immense.

Karl Gutzlaff was born on 8th July 1803 in Pyritz, Pomerania (now in Poland) to a Prussian colonist family. His natural gifts were such that in 1820 he obtained a scholarship personally from King Frederick William of Prussia to study at the Moravian Missionary Institute of Berlin. In 1823, as there was no German missionary society, he applied to the Netherlands Missionary Society. He studied medicine in Paris, and also in London. He qualified as a doctor. Like Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society he was a brilliant linguist.

Ordained in July 1826, Karl Gutzlaff was sent by the Netherlands Missionary Society to the Dutch East Indies, to Batavia (Jakarta) in Java. He joined the pioneer, the Rev. Walter Medhurst, a printer by trade, at the London Missionary Society's Chinese mission there. Karl was one of only three missionaries in the Far East. He helped out at the printing press there and became fluent in Chinese. He saw his ministry at that time as a distributor of tracts and portions of Scripture in Chinese to mobile Chinese traders returning to mainland China. His medical skills opened the way on to their junks. He was brilliantly successful, living like a Chinaman among them on their junks. He found Bangkok in Siam (Thailand) an ideal base for this work where he distributed with skill and insight no less than 23 large boxes of books of literature in Chinese for distribution within China. He also learned the Thai language.

In 1829 Karl Gutzlaff, who had become independent, travelled to Malacca (Melaka), Malaya, where he temporarily took charge of the L.M.S work there. While there he met and married an English lady, Miss Newell, who was the first single Protestant woman missionary to East Asia. Karl anglicized his

name to Charles. He returned with his bride to Bangkok in February 1830. A year later both she and their baby were dead.

In his grief Charles Gutzlaff poured out his soul to God for the conversion of China! Not only that, he did something about it. He took on the lifestyle of a Chinaman and signed up as a cook and surgeon on a 250 ton junk bound from Bangkok to Tientsin (Tianjin), a port in north China. He was the only one of fifty on board who did not use the opium drug. As a 'barbarian', Gutzlaff was in constant danger of his life. His medical skill, so useful to those around him, saved him. He was not afraid to warn the crew of the judgment of God against their vices. He crew cursed him – until the day when lightning split the mast of the ship! Arriving at Tianjin in June 1831, Gutzlaff stayed a month, then audaciously travelled inland to Peking (Beijing) and back. He then went up the coast to the Great Wall of China. He distributed Christian literature wherever he went. It was dangerous work but God's hand of protection was upon him.

Charles Gutzlaff was back before Christmas 1831 at Macao (Macau), an island ninety miles from the trading port of Canton (Guangzhou). He met Robert Morrison, *the* pioneer missionary to China, who was not only amazed, but also deeply encouraged to learn first-hand that his Christian publications (off the presses at Malacca and Batavia) were known and being read all up the Chinese coast and inland.

At this point it is helpful to summarise the state of the gospel mission to China in its first twenty-five years from the arrival of Robert Morrison (L.M.S) in 1807. His bases of operations were at Canton (Guangzhou) on the mainland of China, and at the island of Macau, ninety miles distant.

In 1832 China was still closed and as hostile as ever toward foreigners. Trade was still only allowed at the one port, Canton, and that only for male official staff, and then only for the trading season of six months of the year. Robert Morrison, alone of the missionaries, had this status. There was one L.M.S Mission Station with school and printing press at Malacca in Malaya, and another press in Java, run by Walter Medhurst at Batavia/Jakarta. Robert Morrison had compiled an Anglo/Chinese Grammar, an Anglo/Chinese Dictionary in six volumes, and translated the whole Bible into Chinese with some help from William Milne, who had died in 1822. By 1833 there were only three surviving L.M.S missionaries, two American missionaries and Charles Gutzlaff in the whole of East Asia. To this number of only six we must

add the illustrious name of Liang-Fa. He and his wife were two of only ten baptised during the first twenty-five years of mission at Canton and Macau. Liang-Fa was a printer and Chinese tutor at the Malacca mission. He turned out not only to be a strong Christian but also a fine leader and evangelist. He was ordained as evangelist for the L.M.S by William Milne in 1821.

Back to Charles Gutzlaff. After his first voyage in 1831 he based himself at Macau. In 1832 and 1833 he made two more voyages up the Chinese coast, distributing Scripture and other Christian literature. On his return he immediately published in English, then in German, *A Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832 & 1833 with notices of Siam, Corea and the Loochoo Islands*. 'We know the Loochoo islands as the islands of Ryukyu, south of the main islands of Japan, of which Okinawa is the main island.

The book proved to be a sensational best seller in Britain, America and Europe, arousing intense enthusiasm everywhere among political, commercial and religious people. Gutzlaff was at that time advertising not only the needs of the Chinese for the gospel, but also all of East Asia, over a third of the world's population in all. Inspired by reading Gutzlaff's *Journal*, David Livingstone offered himself to the L.M.S for service in China. But with the future there unpredictable at that time, Livingstone was sent instead to join Robert Moffatt in Africa. The rest is history

In all Gutzlaff made seven missionary journeys, even visiting Japan. As a Missionary/Explorer, Charles Gutzlaff became as famous and as highly regarded in his time as David Livingstone of Africa became later in the century.

Writing in the *Missionary Register* Gutzlaff made the plea, 'Are the bowels of mercy of a compassionate Saviour shut against these millions? Before him, China is *not shut*! He, the almighty conqueror of death and hell, will open the gates of heaven for these millions. He *has* opened them. Neither the apostles nor reformers waited until governments were favourable to the gospel, but went on boldly in the strength of the Lord. We want no gentleman missionaries here but men who are at all times ready to lay down their lives for the Saviour and can wander about forgotten and despised, without human assistance but only the help of God.' His plea for the gospel to be taken to China continued in his optimistic book *China Opened* published in 1838.

Between 1840 and 1842, during the tragic 'First Opium War' between Britain and China, God used Charles Gutzlaff in a far-reaching historical setting and drama. He was engaged as official Chinese interpreter by the British government, and with John Morrison helped to draft the peace treaty, the Treaty of Nanking (Nanjing) which was signed on 29th August 1842. According to the provisions of this treaty there were to be five treaty ports on mainland China, in which foreigners were allowed to settle and live, who would only be answerable in law to the Consuls appointed and resident in each of the treaty ports. The ports were Canton, Amoy, Ningbo, Shanghai and Tientsin. Foreigners were also allowed to travel inland within thirty miles of a treaty port. The barren island of Hong Kong, ninety miles from Canton and fifty miles east of Macau, was ceded to Britain and was the natural base for outreach to mainland China.

By 1845 Hong Kong had six hundred European settlers and twenty-three thousand Chinese. The rapid coming of Europeans was helped by the development of the steamship, the beginning of modern globalisation. Soon railways and the telegraph were to follow world-wide.

As a direct result of the Treaty of Nanjing merchants and about twenty missionaries arrived with the Consuls at the treaty ports. At a stroke, in the providence of God, the walls of the 'bamboo curtain' were beginning to crumble. In 1844, a decree by the Emperor of China gave toleration for Christianity, in China, for Chinese subjects.

Charles Gutzlaff was appointed governor of Chusan Island, off the Shanghai coast, for nine months and then was recalled to Hong Kong in October 1843 to become Chinese Secretary to the governor of Hong Kong, which post he held until his death in 1851. His missionary work was no way abated during this period of official occupation. A typical day's work consisted of starting with a Bible exposition in Hokkien (the dialect of the Fujian province) to scores of Chinese between seven to eight a.m. From eight-thirty to nine-thirty he taught in Hakka or another dialect. Then started the day's official work. After the day's official work he would go into the Chinese town and villages to preach, or work at home on his own translation of the Old Testament and correspondence.

Gutzlaff's literary output was large. His publications were in all: 61 in Chinese, 2 in Japanese, 1 in Siamese, 5 in Dutch, 7 in German and 9 in

English, plus many articles in periodicals. His correspondence was voluminous. In all this he still poured out his soul for the conversion of China to Christ. His appeals were effective, especially in Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Pomerania and Paris who sent out recruits to the mission field. Charles Gutzlaff has rightly been called ‘the Pied Piper of China Missions’.

Between 1840 and 1847 a group of four men, led by Charles Gutzlaff, and which included John Morrison, co-operated to translate the Bible into a more colloquial version. Gutzlaff translated most of the Hebrew of the Old Testament. This version was marvellously correct and faithful to the original. This ‘Gutzlaff’ version became famous when a British sloop was sent up the Yangtzi river to make contact with the leaders of the Taiping rebellion in 1854. To their astonishment they found 400 printers were churning out Gutzlaff Bibles, under the personal supervision of the rebel leader, Hong Xiu-quan.

In 1844 Charles Gutzlaff founded the ‘Chinese Christian Union’. This was a mission by Chinese Christians, based in Hong Kong, which grew out of his daily Bible teachings. Recruits were to go forth, two by two, into inland China as colporteurs and evangelists who distributed the Scriptures and tracts and also an essay on the nature of saving faith. They were to learn chapters of the Bible, the Ten Commandments and the Creed. The principles of the mission were advanced for their day. China can only be evangelised fully by the Chinese themselves. The function of foreign missionaries is to train, as servants of the Chinese Church (tuition not tutelage). Foreign missionaries are to live like Chinese as far as possible, and live and work among them. The Chinese churches were to be autonomous from the beginning. Western culture is not to be imposed on the churches. Charles Gutzlaff urged Christians everywhere to pray for a thousand evangelists to reach all China.

Gutzlaff had high standards as befits the work of God. He chose the original colporteurs carefully and travelled with them when he could. But, true to his principles, as the work developed, he took more of a back seat and put the tried and tested Chinese workers in the forefront to lead and organise. Regarding the colporteurs, he wrote, ‘As no worldly prospects are attached to their profession, we have had very few hypocrites... one of the most necessary things to introduce true Christianity is to keep the idol of the world – money – entirely out of view. Lying and falsehood are ingrained in the Chinese character and can only be expelled effectually by the Holy Spirit of truth.

Though there have been disappointments, still the great body has proved beyond contradiction that the Lord is with us.’

The priorities of Gutzlaff concerning the Chinese Mission are clear from his own words: ‘Nothing can be done without the Spirit of God, and unless the prayer for His powerful assistance is constant and earnest there can be no success.’ ‘The love of Christ in and through us must actuate all our thoughts and actions...it must be love from first to last, real, ardent, never failing love, flowing from the great fountain, Jesus Christ.’ ‘People who do not show here (in Hong Kong) a paramount interest in the gospel, will not do so at a distance...those who cannot on the spot readily communicate Christian doctrines, will not do so when far away.’

Between 1844 and 1849 one hundred and thirty colporteurs/evangelists were reported as sent, and every province, bar one, reached. Baptisms were reported in the hundreds, no less than six hundred and fifty-five, in 1847. At a time when converts elsewhere within and immediately around the treaty ports were numbered in tens or in single figures, this success was regarded as outstanding. This success fuelled enthusiasm in Britain and Europe.

In September 1849 Charles Gutzlaff set out for a European tour, his first stop being England. His object was to gain support for missions. His personal vision was for pioneer missionaries, committed to go into the interior of China and take charge of twenty or thirty Chinese evangelists, setting them an example in ‘preaching Christ’ from village to village, from city to city, wherever hearers may be found. He also called for women missionary recruits for China, as invaluable for reaching into Chinese families and for educational work among women. He called for the founding of associations, not only for the conversion of China but for all Eastern Asia, including Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Tibet and Chinese Turkestan, all countries hermetically sealed against the missionary.

Gutzlaff was in England for three months, where he organized and formed the ‘Chinese Evangelization Society’. This and other associations being formed, Gutzlaff launched a periodical ‘The Gleaner in the Missionary Field’. This magazine was to circulate news, not only about China, but missions worldwide.

It was while Charles Gutzlaff was in Germany that news broke that he had been mercilessly imposed upon by fraud. The tongs (criminal gangs) had

infiltrated his organization in a big way. An investigation found that a majority of the colporteurs did not exist or were fraudulent. The reports had been expertly and convincingly made up in Hong Kong and the literature, including the Bibles, sold back to the printers, who then resold them to the Chinese Union. This devastating revelation naturally cast a great cloud over the work and so demolished the reputation of Gutzlaff that he and his work have not been treated kindly by posterity and he has ended up as an unfortunate footnote in history. The Chinese Christian Union was disbanded by Gutzlaff, though twenty-one good and true colporteurs were taken up and served honourably under other missionaries, including William Burns. The revelation of the fraud in the autumn of 1850 was literally a deathblow for Charles Gutzlaff. The shock undermined his health somewhat and he died of a fever in Hong Kong on 9th August 1851, after a rigorous preaching trip soon after his return to China. He was aged 48.

At the time of his death Gutzlaff's own church in Hong Kong was made up of 26 loyal Chinese Christians at the time when the total in China, Malaya and the East Indies was about 200. The church prospered and within five years had trebled to eighty-seven members

God in his merciful and gracious providence has given a remarkable postscript to the story. A subscriber to 'The Gleaner' from the very first was the Taylor family, living in Barnsley, Yorkshire, in the north of England. The eldest son of the family, James Hudson Taylor, set sail for China under the auspices of the Chinese Evangelization Society on 9th September 1853, just over two years after the death of Charles Gutzlaff its founder. Hudson Taylor was in his turn the founder of the great China Inland Mission (C.I.M). He always regarded Charles Gutzlaff as the 'grandfather' of the C.I.M and put into practice most of his principles. This is a worthy epitaph of a great man of God whose only fault, a fatal fault on the mission field, was that in his zeal for the cause, he was too trusting.

### *Sources*

A J Broomhall, *Hudson Taylor & China's Open Century, Books 1 & 2*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1981, 1982, K S Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, SPCK 1929, Dr. & Mrs Howard Taylor, *Hudson Taylor In Early Years*, Morgan and Scott, 1919 edition. There is a fine portrait of Gutzlaff in the dress of a Chinese sailor opp. page 88.

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## Book Reviews

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### **The Dominance of Evangelicalism – The age of Spurgeon and Moody**

David W Bebbington

Leicester: IVP, 2005,

284 pages, hb, £16.99

ISBN: 1-84474-070-6

This is the second work to appear, of a five volume series, and covers the second half of the nineteenth century. The first chapter covers the now well-known evangelical distinctives which are held by people who identify with this stream of Christian belief and practice. These are the emphasis on the atoning work of Christ on the cross; the need for personal faith through conversion; the supreme authority and importance of the Bible; and the binding obligation for mission. Bebbington gives summaries of the life and work of Charles Spurgeon, an Englishman, and Dwight Moody, an American, who were examples of pre-eminent Evangelicals in that era. The second chapter considers the variety within Evangelicalism, giving numerous examples of the different denominational, geographical and social contexts in which Evangelicals were found. Chapter three describes the practice of the faith. It covers evangelical spirituality, patterns of worship, methods of outreach and missions to the young, revivals and overseas mission.

Chapters four and five consider the legacy of the Enlightenment and the permeation of Romanticism, showing how these contrasting movements influenced and shaped Evangelicalism. In this period Calvinism was being modified to a degree previously unknown since the Reformation, while Arminianism appeared to many Evangelicals as a more attractive theological position that attracted many adherents outside its Methodist heartlands. Likewise the older Postmillennial view of the end-times was losing ground to the newly invigorated Premillennial understanding of this matter. Challenges from the Anglo-Catholic Oxford movement, the influence of more liberal theological thinkers, often trained in Germany, and the theory of evolution propounded by Charles Darwin, were pressures that placed a heavy strain on Evangelicals. Divergence occurred with some people within the movement seeking some form of accommodation with these new opinions and others (chapter six) who sought to strengthen their orthodox theological position. Features identified as a mark of the more conservative Evangelicals included

the founding of foreign missionary societies on the faith principle, most prominently by Hudson Taylor (China Inland Mission) and at home in the establishment of children's homes run on this basis by George Müller. The rise of the Holiness and Keswick movements, together with the roots of Pentecostalism also emerged from conservative Evangelical circles in this era.

Evangelicals and Society was the subject of chapter seven, in which the role of women, race relations, religion and recreation, the temperance movement and the social gospel were amongst the issues addressed. Chapter eight summarises the evidence for the dominance of Evangelicalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is argued that Evangelicalism was in its most influential position in the church and wider culture in this era. The impressive worldwide growth of the movement and the degree to which there had been a retention of the core doctrinal views that characterised it ensured that 'the Evangelical movement was a dominant force in the English-speaking world' between 1850 and 1900.

This book is a most thorough treatment of its subject with impressive and detailed examples culled from the full spectrum of Evangelical traditions and denominations and across the range of countries in which this movement was found. It is intended as an overview of this subject and serves as a clear and helpful guide through its terrain. An impressive select bibliography provides useful resources for following up in more detail subjects raised in the book.

*Brian Talbot. Dr Talbot is pastor of Broughty Ferry Baptist Church, Scotland. This review appeared first in Themelios.*

## **The Future of Justification**

### **A Response to N T Wright**

John Piper

Crossway, 240 pages, 2007

In the course of writing this book Dr John Piper corresponded with N T Wright, Bishop of Durham. He received an 11,000 word response from NTW to the first draft of his book.

There are eleven chapters. Chapter one opens up the fact that NOT all biblical-theological methods and categories are illuminating. NTW is energised by finding new and fresh interpretations but the net result is confusion. The next three chapters are devoted to law court dynamics as they affect justification. Piper observes that NTW does not exhibit the care taken by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century

Reformers in going back to the sources. He fails to deal with righteousness as God's attribute.

In chapter five John Piper refutes the notion that the gospel is not about how people get saved.

Dr Piper shows from Acts 13:39 that according to the preaching of Paul how to get saved by justification by faith is exactly the substance of Paul's preaching. 'In Wright's passion to liberate the gospel from mere individualism to make it historical and global he leaves it vague for individual sinners'. 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 is clear that the gospel is for individual sinners to find salvation. Chapter six continues with the concern that justification is not about 'how I get saved' but how 'I am declared to be a member of God's family'. This is refuted. In chapter seven Piper expounds Romans 2:13, 'it is the doers of the law who will be justified'. He unravels more NTW confusion. In chapter eight after scrupulous examination of NTW Piper shows that his doctrine is not that of the doctrine of the Reformation. Chapter nine deals with Second-Temple Judaism. Chapter ten is devoted to the implications for justification of the single self-righteous root of 'ethnic badges' and 'self help moralism'. Chapter eleven includes exposition by Piper of 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Philippians 3:9.

The book is characterised throughout by lucid exposition of the doctrine of justification by faith. The disfigurement of the doctrine by NTW is accurately stated and then in contrast to that clear exposition and definition follow. For instance, What is the moral righteousness of God? It is 'his unwavering allegiance to uphold the worth of his glory. That is the essence of his righteousness. And that is the moral righteousness he requires of us – that we unwaveringly love and uphold the glory of God in all we feel and think and do, that is, in the fulfilment of all his requirements' (p. 79).

In conclusion of the whole the question is asked, Where will preaching go in Wright's wake? The answer given, confusion!

Throughout Piper takes great care to be accurate in citing NTW. Finally he took the trouble to have at least five other scholars check his work. He is polite and moderate in all his responses. This is wise because he wishes his work to be read by NTW's disciples. I cannot imagine the apostle Paul being patient with NTW. Luther would be exasperated and assign NTW to the category of Galatians 1:8. The reliable scholars of our day are those who run with the English Puritans. For thoroughness nobody excels John Owen in his exegesis of the Old and New Testament texts on justification. *Editor*



*The third annual 'Palabra Fiel' conference*

### **Argentina and Chile**

The third annual 'Palabra Fiel' conference has as its theme this year 'Justification: the heart of the Reformation'. For two days Pastor Eddie Florentino of Heritage Baptist Church in Mansfield, TX, brought five urgent and passionate messages on the justification of God. Pastor Jim Adams, of Cornerstone Church in Mesa, AZ also brought messages on the history of the doctrine of justification as well as a historical biography entitled, 'John Calvin: The Expositor'. Normally we focus on only one topic in the conference. But this year the conference coincided with a book distribution project for pastors, which we had been working on for two years. We planned to distribute five books on the topic of expository preaching to over 200 pastors in Argentina and Chile. So we added a full day of teaching dedicated to the

additional topic, 'Expository Preaching: the method of the reformation'. Kevin Houser, former missionary to Chile and now pastor of a 'Founder's friendly' Southern Baptist Church in Texas gave us the 'nuts and bolts' of expository preaching, and again my dear friend Jim Adams brought messages on 'Preaching Christ in all the Scriptures' and 'Apostolic Interpretation'.

Over 45 attended the three days of meetings and received the books. The conference more than doubled in size this year with men coming from nearly every direction around Carlos Paz to attend. The Spirit of God attended the preaching as men left moved by the precision of the exposition on both subjects as well as having understood more of the heart and method of the gospel that is indeed 'the power of God unto salvation to all those that believe'. I must express my deepest

gratitude to these men who came to preach in the conference as well as to the Association of Reformed Baptist Churches of America who provided funds and have been so faithful in prayer for this work. In addition I must especially thank a young man, Zac Coventry, who lived with us last year to learn Spanish and is now on a Peace Corps assignment in Ecuador, who came at his own expense to merely lend his hands and a heart of service to us for the week. What an example!

The conference in Carlos Paz ended on Thursday. I left for Chile the following Monday to transport books to the pastors that would need them at the conferences on expository preaching to be held in Santiago and Temuco in the south. With more than 500 books I arrived without incident, despite our fears of being charged high taxes by the Chileans to enter the country with free books.

Over the next four days ARBCA national pastor, Omar Ramos, Kevin and Jim Adams would train 35-40 students in expository preaching in the Bible Baptist Seminary in Santiago during the day and 50-60 other pastors from various denominations at night in a hotel in central Santiago. After these meetings the speakers moved on to Temuco in the south of Chile. There they were joined by Dr. Art Azurdia, professor of Homiletics at Western Seminary and his close friend from Washington state, Dr. Joe Cavan Cara, a dermatologist who served with joy, also Jeffrey Krohn, a missionary from Peru, along with a translator for Dr. Azurdia, Cesar Guzman, from the Anglican Seminary in Santiago. Another group of more than 60 pastors and church leaders from one association heard with eagerness the Spirit-led preaching of

these men and received with great joy hundreds of books.

A reformation has never been given to these countries. It is my continued prayer that we may yet see such a work of grace. These gatherings may be an indication of much more to come to meet the spiritual needs of these nations.

Don Donell,  
Villa Carlos Paz, Córdoba,  
[www.gospelbonds.org](http://www.gospelbonds.org)

## **Nigeria**

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation with about 135 million. Major cities are Lagos with five million, Ibadan 1.7 m, Kano 1.5 m, and Port Harcourt 1.2 m. Abujo is the capital with a population of about half a million. There are over 490 ethnic groups. Evangelicals have increased from 2.1 million in 1960 to 17.2 million in 1980 and 26 million in 2000. The introduction of Shari'a law in northern Muslim states is a direct challenge to the federal government and a danger to national stability. Evangelicalism is very broad in its categories. Health and wealth teaching is widespread.

The sixth annual Reformed Bible conference for ministers and church leaders took place in Lagos and Port Harcourt in November. The conference in Lagos was shorter and attended by 100. 250 attended in Port Harcourt. The theme was 'Understanding the Times' and the visiting speakers were Pastor Joseph Jacowitz and Dr Stanford Murrell both from America, and Chris Buss who is assistant to Dr Peter Masters of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. Pastor Ani Ekpo is the organiser. Several

Nigerian pastors contributed at the conferences.

While we have this encouraging report there is sombre news from the north where persecution is endemic. It is reported that one man in Kaduna has been killed with a sword and another bludgeoned to death following Muslim leaders appeal to wage violent jihad against youthful Christians. Muslim extremists on October 12 murdered Henry Emmanuel Ogbaje, a 24-year-old Christian, at an area known as Gamji Gate. The following day, church leaders said, a young Christian identified only as Basil was killed by the sword in the same area. Elder Saidu Dogo, secretary of the northern Nigeria chapter of the Christian Association of Nigeria, told Compass that Islamic leader Sheik Gumi had urged Muslims to wage jihad against Christians in televised broadcasts during the Islamic month-long observance of Ramadan. 'He specifically called for a jihad,' Dogo told Compass, 'that when they go killing they should not kill the elderly people, because the elderly have spent their years already, but that Muslims should kill young Christians' (October 22, Compass Direct News).

## France

### *Letter from David Vaughn*

This year saw our 11<sup>th</sup> annual Reformed Baptist Family Camp. Though attendance was somewhat down due to a number of regularly attending families having scheduling conflicts, we had a truly blessed week with the 110 attendees. David Ellis, pastor in Stowmarket, England and a former missionary in France was our main speaker and his ministry was most helpful, both in preaching and in pastoral care given to individuals seeking help. It seems that

every year at least a few of the participants tell us that this was the best camp yet, and such was the case again this year. Certainly that means that the Lord mercifully met with his people and applied his Word with blessing to their lives and relationship with him. We have changed sites for this coming year, having stayed about 6 years at the former site. We will be meeting in the Alsace region of France this coming summer and are looking forward to Raymond Perron's coming from Quebec as the main speaker.

Two French men in our congregation have recently professed conversion. The Lord had been visibly at work in the lives of both for some time. One of them, a young man of 18 years old, has given a very encouraging testimony to me, and the other young people say that his character has undergone a complete change. He told me recently that he believes that has come to repentance and faith in Christ, but that he wants to wait a bit before his baptism in order that the fruit of his conversion be clear to him and to the church. The other man is almost 50 years old, formerly a convinced atheist. The first time that one of our church members tried to speak to him about God he used a common French expression to indicate how closed he was, "Don't even try that subject. I'm 'impermeable' on that one." I have met with him several times over the last few months as he has truly striven, by God's grace and drawing power, to enter the kingdom. He asked to see me recently and said that he believes that he has come to Christ. The change in his life is also a very evident one for those who know him, and he has become one of the most bold and active witnesses for Christ in our church. Yesterday he told me that at a family reunion a week ago, he spent an hour and a half sharing the gospel with a cousin and her husband whom he had not

seen for years. They called back a day later to say that they had had a helpful time discussing with him and were now going to buy a Bible. Please pray for these two men as we prepare them for baptism.

I recently gave three historical papers at the well known Emmaus Biblical Institute in Switzerland in August. I immensely enjoyed the time there, especially the privilege of getting to know Daniel Arnold, the professor of Old Testament, just a bit better. I gave two lectures on the life of George Whitefield, an unknown figure for most French-speaking Evangelicals. The last lecture was an analysis of the life and theology of Charles Finney, as a negative turning point in the history of modern Evangelicalism. I did not know how it would be received, but Prof. Arnold asked those assembled to applaud after the question and answer session. He at least was evidently pleased and encouraged by the conference! I intend to get it ready for publication as a small booklet since we have nothing on this in French and since Finney has been known and well loved by French Evangelicals.

In September I had the privilege of preaching at a sister Reformed Baptist church in Milan, Italy, pastored by Andrea Ferrari. Nicky and I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know Andrea and Christina and the people of the church there. Andrea and Reno Ulfo, who pastors in Sicily, have done a wonderful work of literature translation and publication in Italy in the past few years and merit your prayers. We hope to strengthen the ties between French and Italian Reformed Baptists.

### **The United Kingdom**

Atheism for kids! There will be a new children's movie out in December called 'The Golden Compass'. The movie has

been described as 'atheism for kids' and is based on the first book of a trilogy entitled 'His Dark Materials' that was written by Phillip Pullman. Pullman is a militant atheist and secular humanist who despises C S Lewis and the 'Chronicles of Narnia'. His motivation for writing this trilogy was specifically to counteract Lewis' symbolisms of Christ that are portrayed in the Narnia series.

Clearly Pullman's main objective is to oppose Christianity and promote atheism. Pullman left little doubt about his intentions when he said in a 2003 interview that 'my books are about killing God.' He has even stated that he wants to 'kill God in the minds of children'. It has been said of Pullman that he is 'the writer the atheists would be praying for, if atheists prayed.' While 'The Golden Compass' movie itself may seem mild and innocent, the books are a much different story. In the trilogy, a young streetwise girl becomes enmeshed in an epic struggle to ultimately defeat the oppressive forces of a senile God. Another character, an ex-nun, describes Christianity as 'a very powerful and convincing mistake'. In the final book, characters representing Adam and Eve eventually kill God, who at times is called YAHWEH. Each book in the trilogy gets worse regarding Pullman's hatred of Jesus Christ.

'The Golden Compass' is set to premier on December 7, during the Christmas season, and will probably be heavily advertised. Promoters hope that unsuspecting parents will take their children to see the movie, that they will enjoy the movie, and that the children will want the books for Christmas.

<b>Editor</b>	ERROLL HULSE, 75 Woodhill Road, Leeds LS16 7BZ
<b>Assistant Editor</b>	BILL JAMES, 9 Epsom Road, Leamington Spa CV32 7AR
<b>Associate Editors</b>	DAVID KINGDON, UK, TOM NETTLES, USA, JOHN CAMPBELL, AUSTRALIA, MICHAEL HAYKIN, CANADA

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**CONTENTS**

- 1. Editorial**
- 3. A Godly Pastor** Editor
- 7. Reformation at Meaux** Frederick Hodgson
- 15. Do we need a NPP?** Ligon Duncan
- 21. The Works of the Law and the NPP** Mark Troughton
- 27. Charles Gutzlaff (1803-1851)** Bob Davey
- 34. Book Reviews**
- 37. News**