

# REFORMATION TODAY



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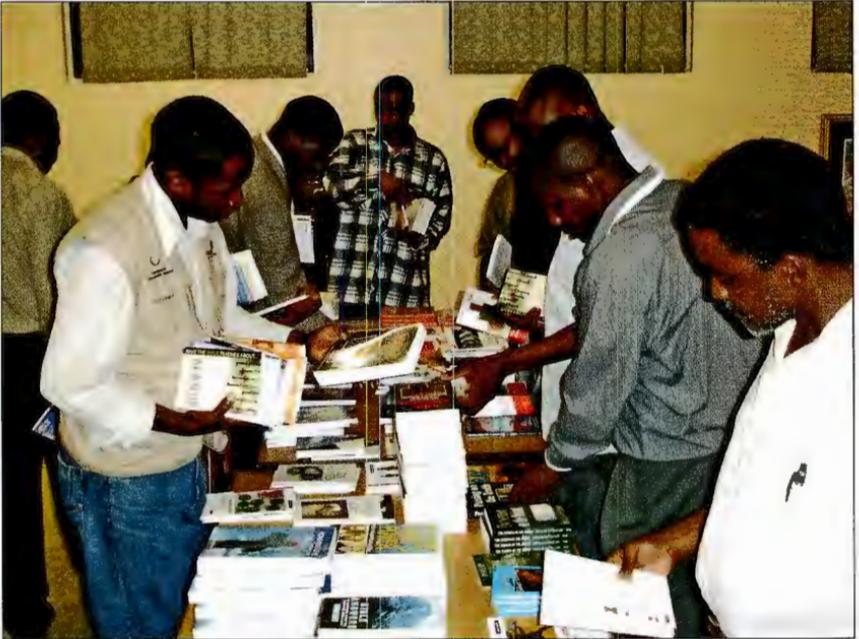
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*Conferees had to be alert*



*Pastor Irving Steggles, Bonang Lekoba (organiser of the conference) and pastor Ronald Kalifungwa of Zambia*



*The books were greatly appreciated*

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Front cover picture – Group of pastors in attendance at the first African Pastors' Conference in Botswana which took place at the Orapa Game Reserve. See News for report.

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## Editorial

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*The Transforming Power of God* is the title given to a new book by John Legg. The sub-title is *Encountering Christ in the Life of Elisha*. For many years we have turned to the German writer Krummacher for his fine commentary on the life and ministry of Elisha. This study by John Legg is excellent in every respect and has the advantage of contemporary application. The third chapter appears in this issue of *Reformation Today*; the chapter includes the difficult account of the mockery of the youths at Bethel who were destroyed by bears coming out of the woods.

*Where do we come from?*

Prof Andy McIntosh alerts us to the fact that the issue of creation is again heating up as we move to 2009 and the 150<sup>th</sup> year after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. In an e mail to his supporters he says, 'I thank you for praying for these opportunities and I would ask you to remember the work in this next year when we expect the opposition to become even more fierce. Some of you may care to look at the Teachers' TV website <http://www.teachers.tv/news/30218> where I and others have spoken out. It has been suggested that those who believe in creation be stopped from teaching or else retrained ... such is the mindset of those who reject creation – they would accuse Christians of bringing in a theocracy of tyranny, and yet the opposite is true. If we do not stand against the tide of evil ideas sweeping across our land, we will soon be in the great bonds of an atheistic tyranny which will ban all public Christian influence. We are already suffering from this in many areas. Can I encourage you to stand as Daniel and be counted for Christ, and to pass on the gospel faithfully to the next generation?' Prof McIntosh refers in particular to a book by Denis Alexander with the title *Creation or Evolution – do we have to choose?*

Prof McIntosh contends that Alexander's book is compromised both in theology and in science, and sadly represents so much the prevalent view in the Christian Church that you can marry the Bible and evolution. The battle is not only with worldly secularism but also within the evangelical Church. The Lord said it would be so, and we have to expect to stand within our own churches. One of the major issues with theistic evolution held by Alexander and others is the complete removal of the theology of death following the sin of Adam. Death has to be after and not before, else 1 Corinthians 15:22 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' makes no sense.

In correspondence with Prof McIntosh I testified that before I was a believer I rejected evolution on the simple observation that it is not happening. In other words I noted that every species is perfect in its kind and while slight changes can take place there is no evidence for macro-evolution. Also intelligent design is everywhere evident not only in the design of every single species but in three million of them. They are all inter-dependent so it takes a super intelligence of infinite wisdom combined with omnipotent power to cause them all to harmonise together. The Bible encourages the observation of intelligent design (see Psalm 104).

Romans chapter one explains why accord with God as Creator is rejected by those who do not believe. 'The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.' Intelligent design is automatically rejected by people who are disposed by nature to reject God.

I asked Prof McIntosh a couple of questions. For instance, Where is the fossil evidence for apes changing into man? He replied, 'Evolutionists do not say that chimps or apes changed into *homo sapiens*. What they say (see Denis Alexander : *Creation or Evolution – do we have to choose?*) is that *homo sapiens* and chimps / apes have a common ancestor which was ape-like.' However there is a lack of consistency among evolutionists. I watched a nature program by David Attenborough (evolution is his religion) where he claimed that our direct line of descent is from chimpanzees in Africa. That program ended with David Attenborough triumphantly sitting among half a dozen chimps. In that program there was not one shred of evidence to show the links developing from chimps and humans. (The pelvic problem is explained in the article by Prof McIntosh).

A further question concerned birds. It only takes the removal of one of the perfect mechanisms in an eagle to cripple that creature. So how did it reach its perfect state by degrees? Prof McIntosh replied: 'There is no answer from an evolutionary perspective since there are no fossils clearly showing feathers (with the clever hook/ridge interlocking barbule structure) beginning to grow on reptile-like bones. Irreducible structures also occur at the biochemical level in the molecules of proteins and DNA. This argument is a very strong one,

since even if there were a “possible” slow set of changes, the most obvious explanation still stands – intelligent design.’

Finally I asked, Why is evolution not happening now? Answer: ‘The reason is that it never was going on before. Adaptation does take place, and natural selection does mean that some features are accentuated in the genome so that the richness genetically is gradually being reduced, not increased. Genetic mutations always lead to deleterious ones dominating. The evidence is strongly against the “just so” tales of evolution.’

The reviews in this issue concentrate further on this subject.

### **How to Vote**

Conrad Mbewe, pastor of a church in Lusaka, wrote his article in view of the recent election in Zambia. There are instances when voting was extremely close.

Contrary to what people may believe, election history shows that just one vote is often the difference between victory and defeat for a party, candidate or issue. Consider these historical examples:

- In 1645 one vote gave Oliver Cromwell control of England.
- In 1649 one vote caused Charles I of England to be executed.
- In 1776 one vote gave America the English language instead of German.
- In 1845 one vote brought Texas into the Union.
- In 1868 one vote saved US President Andrew Johnson from impeachment.
- In 1875 one vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic.
- In 1876 one vote gave Rutherford B Hayes the Presidency of the U.S.
- In 1923 one vote gave Adolf Hitler leadership of the Nazi Party

### **James Hudson Taylor and China Today**

Bob Davey intends to write on the ongoing history of the Church in China through the 20<sup>th</sup> century but part four concludes his series on the life of Hudson Taylor. Pastor Davey makes this comment, ‘Hudson Taylor would not want to be remembered except as one of a body of many, all raised up and called of God to carry the good news of salvation to a lost world in obedience to the command of Christ. He regarded himself as an unworthy servant of Christ. His motto “Advance, always advance” still stirs the heart today.’

Recently the well-known magazine *The Economist* published a long article about the growth of Christianity in China. Xiao Zhao, a former Communist

Party official and convert to Christianity, thinks there are over 130 million Christians in China. A more realistic statistic is 70 million. This is remarkable when only 35 years ago Madame Mao boasted that she had put Christianity in the museum! The major part of the increase is by the proliferation of small house churches which when they reach about twenty-five begin a new one. These believers can use the Internet to download Bibles and hymn books. The shortage of trained pastors is acute.

One of our readers who is an experienced pastor writes: I want to express my thanks to you for your faithful prayers as I travelled to China recently to serve with the house church believers. The Lord continues to do great things in China and the doors for ministry are opened wide to serve him there. The main area of ministry this time was in a Bible college under the direction of a professor at a university in Shanghai. I taught a course in New Testament Survey every day for nearly two weeks to over twenty young and spiritually hungry disciples. It was so refreshing and encouraging to see their love for the Word and deep interest in learning more of it. These believers are all full-time students sent to the college to prepare for serving in various ministries. Most of them are from the poorer provinces but are spiritually rich and blazing with zeal for the Lord. I was greatly inspired by my time with them and touched by their love and appreciation for the teaching. I also taught a course in Systematic Theology to a group of young professionals whom I had met on two previous trips to Shanghai. This group of doctors and lawyers are also very eager to study the Word and each of them are involved in ministry in various house churches. We also had a full-time theological student studying with us in this class. I have since been corresponding with him about various books and matters related to the life of the church and ministry.

### **Whatever happened to the Huguenots?**

The history of Protestantism in France has been described so far in six articles by Frederick Hodgson. His work continues as he is researching the story of the Huguenots who were subject to extraordinary persecution and suffering. The emigration of the Huguenots proved to be France's loss but rich gain to the countries to which they fled. This work has developed into materials which will make a useful book, a work which should be translated into French and published in that language. We will keep our readers informed as to progress on this work.

### **News from Indonesia**

Pastor Stephen Nowak of Montpelier Place Baptist Church, Brighton recently returned from about two weeks, intense ministry in Indonesia. He was able to encourage the students of SETIA (see News) who have had to abandon their campus because of violent persecution.

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## The Ministry of Elisha

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*An exposition of 2 Kings 2:19-25 by John Legg*

Young teachers are often given the advice, ‘Begin as you mean to go on.’ They are advised to be strict or severe initially, with the understanding that they can relax a little once they have established discipline. God seems to follow the same principle in his dealings with his people. At the commencement of a new stage in his work he demonstrates both his love and grace, but especially his holiness and justice. Immediately after his anointing, symbolised by taking up Elijah’s cloak, Elisha begins his ministry with two acts that record these things. The healing of the water at Jericho speaks of God’s healing and salvation, while the cursing of the youths at Bethel reminds us that we cannot treat God and his justice less than very seriously indeed. In due course we shall see that Christ’s ministry also displays the justice and grace of God in action. In Romans 11:22 Paul directs us, ‘Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God.’ How easy it is to be unbalanced: all kindness or all sternness! We must neither neglect the terrors of hell, so encouraging a casual attitude to God, nor minimise the sweetness of God’s grace and leave tender consciences in despair.

### **Bad water at Jericho (2 Kings 2:19)**

The men of the city of Jericho appealed to Elisha: ‘Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive’ (2 Kings 2:19). All seemed well and prosperous, but there was ‘a fly in the ointment’: the water was poisonous and, as ‘unproductive’ probably means, produced miscarriages for the women of the city. The ‘but’ sounds rather like the later description of Naaman, the Syrian general who, we are told, ‘was a valiant soldier, *but* he had leprosy’ (2 Kings 5:1).

Jericho had a background, or rather a history. When Joshua finally conquered the city he pronounced a solemn oath: ‘Cursed before the LORD is the man who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho: “At the cost of his firstborn son will he lay its foundations; at the cost of his youngest will he set up its gates”’ (Josh 6:26). So the city was declared to be under the curse and, therefore, the wrath of God. Years later, in the time of King Ahab, a man called Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. ‘He laid its foundations at the

cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun' (1 Kings 16:34). Whether this curse was responsible for the condition of the city and its land after all those years we cannot say. However, it appears that, at the time of Elisha, Jericho was again under the displeasure of God. Certainly the inhabitants would interpret the situation as being God's curse.

This is a good summary of the situation in which many people find themselves. Many aspects of their lives are going well, but there is a fly in the ointment: one day they must die. This is the result of the curse that God pronounced, not just on Jericho, but on all mankind in Adam. Because of his sin, 'Cursed is the ground because of you ... until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return' (Gen 3:17-19). The whole of the Old Testament speaks of God's curse on Israel because of their breach of the law. The apostle Paul sums this up: 'All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law"' (Gal 3:10), quoting Deuteronomy 27:26. The sad condition, too, of the majority of people today is that while they may prosper in the things of this life, they have no answer to the curse and wrath of God. However pleasant they may find life, the fact is that they have to die and face God. Many of them think that by trying to obey God's law, by doing their best to keep the Ten Commandments, they can deal with this threat, but Paul makes clear to us all that we cannot obey in such a way as to put aside the curse.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem in the days of Jesus were, no doubt, confident that they obeyed the law well enough and were under the favour of God. Yet Jesus made it clear that they were not producing the fruit of covenant obedience that God required (see Micah 6:8). He told a parable about a man who planted a fig-tree, symbolising Jerusalem or Israel, in his vineyard, but when he went to look for fruit on it, he did not find any. He told the man in charge of the vineyard that he had been looking for fruit on the fig-tree for three years (probably a reference to Christ's three-year ministry), but had found none. His verdict was, 'Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' (Luke 13:6-9). This apparent threat was actually a gracious warning to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the parable, the keeper of the fig-tree pleaded for a year to 'dig round it and fertilise it'. So they are warned that they still have just a little while to repent and 'produce fruit in keeping with repentance' (Luke 3:8). We must see ourselves in this picture and in the situation presented to Elisha. We must get behind the

appearance of a life of peace and prosperity to see our real need in the sight of God. Underlying all these situations is the fact that we have to face death and that death is the result of God's curse. Therefore, death is only the prelude to bearing God's wrath and punishment. We cannot avert that curse by our own efforts and works, because we are all sinful by nature and practice. For us all, death is truly the fly in the ointment, the badness of the water such as the men of the city of Jericho experienced. Like them we must seek help and salvation from God's prophet.

### **Healing the water (2 Kings 2:20-22)**

Elisha's remedy was 'a new bowl' containing 'salt', which was provided by the men of the city. Both elements of this are clearly symbolic. The bowl is new, not having been used by men for a merely secular purpose; now it is consecrated to the service of God. Salt, of course, is frequently used in the Bible to refer to preservation from corruption or even removal of corruption. Old Testament references to the salt of the covenant stress that it will not be broken; it is preserved. Both of these aspects mark the salt as being God's remedy, just as Elisha is God's representative. Similarly, the colt on which Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday, which had never been ridden before, marked the Saviour out as God's Messiah, consecrated to the work of salvation from the curse of God.

The fact that the men of Jericho obeyed this apparently strange request shows that they trusted Elisha enough in their time of need to submit to his way of salvation. Frequently God uses means which seem strange to us, or even hopelessly inadequate, to test our faith. He uses weak means to prove that the power to save is God's, not ours. This is true not only for Moses, who used 'a piece of wood' to sweeten the bitter water at Marah (Ex 15:23-25), but also for Jesus, who used mud to open blind eyes (John 9:6-7). Even more relevant to us is the fact that the gospel is weak in the sight of men. The cross itself is foolishness, not only to the Greeks of old, but also to modern man. The act of preaching is regarded as ridiculous in the age of mass media and sophisticated communication (1 Cor 1:21-25). The saving effects of Paul's preaching in Corinth were due, not to his oratory – his 'wise and persuasive words' – but to the 'Spirit's power', 'so that [their] faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power' (1 Cor 2:4-5).

The healing of the water means that the curse has been dealt with and removed. This, too, links the account here with the cross of Christ. The power of the apparently weak cross lies essentially in the fact that on the cross Jesus bore the punishment of our sins, the curse and wrath of God:

'Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree"' (Gal 3:13). Any removal of the curse in the Old Testament looks forward to the coming of Christ. His atoning death is the basis for all deliverance from condemnation, whether before or after his coming (see Rom 3:25-26).

We must not attribute the healing of the water to the salt itself, but to the power of God. Elisha quotes the Word of God: 'I have healed this water. Never again will it cause death or make the land unproductive' (2 Kings 2:21). And so it proved, as the writer comments, 'And the water has remained wholesome to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken' (v. 22). Like them, we are given the assurance that those who drink of the water of life will 'never thirst' (John 4:14). New life is eternal life; death is banished for those who trust Christ and accept God's way of salvation, however strange it may seem at first. They, too, prove that the Word of God brings permanent change; his salvation never fails.

In fact, it seems from the account that the healing of the water came by the word of God, which Elisha spoke as he threw the salt into the spring. Christ's word to the leper, 'Be clean!' (Luke 5:13), meant that 'immediately the leprosy left him'. In the next few verses we also hear the Lord say to the paralysed man, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.' Jesus then provides visible proof of his authority to forgive sins by commanding and empowering the man to 'take [his] mat and go home' (vv. 20,24). Lazarus, too, responds to the living and life-giving word of Christ: 'Lazarus, come out!' (John 11:43). This combination of the word of God and the power of God in the effective preaching of the gospel is what we mean by the effectual call. It has been said, rather facetiously but nevertheless instructively, that if Christ had not specified 'Lazarus', all the graves would have been emptied. God directs his gospel to individuals and those who have been chosen and redeemed hear and believe the gospel and are saved.

### **Mockery at Bethel (2 Kings 2:23)**

Again the place is significant. Bethel was the seat of false religion, where not long before this time King Jeroboam set up one of two golden calves. Fearing that the Israelites of the northern kingdom might 'revert to the house of David' and 'again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah', Jeroboam provided an alternative attraction to the temple sacrifices at Jerusalem (1 Kings 12:26-30). This opposition to the true religion and to the Word of God appears to have persisted and no doubt led

to the mocking of God's holy prophet. The actual meaning of their jeering, 'Go on up, you baldhead!' is debated. Was he being told, mockingly, to go up to heaven like Elijah, parallel with the Jerusalem crowd's sneering demand of Jesus: 'Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him' (Matt 27:42)? Or was it just a crude form of insult like the current 'Get lost!'? Was it in some way related to Elisha's lack of hair? This is unlikely, both because of his age and because his head would be covered.

Was it just a common form of insult, like calling someone 'pig-face'? Baldness is seen as a form of shame in the consequences of God's judgement in Isaiah 3:17 and 24. Either way, insult it certainly was: a blatant display of hostility to Elisha the prophet and to his God. Such jeering is seen in the first psalm as the culmination of opposition to God by those who do not only 'walk in the counsel of the wicked' and 'stand in the way of sinners', but also 'sit in the seat of mockers' (Psalm 1:1). This is typical of the response within Israel to the ministry of the prophets. We find a summary of this in 2 Chronicles 36:15-16: 'The LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.' So he sent them into exile. Judgement delayed in forbearance is still judgement certain, as these youths were to discover.

### **Judgement at Bethel (2 Kings 2:24-25)**

The mockery was aimed at Elisha, but, of course, reflected on Elisha's God. It is relevant, therefore, to note Paul's warning: 'Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked,' that is, with impunity (Gal 6:7). This is a serious warning to those who oppose God's servants and even mock them. When the Israelites grumbled to Moses and Aaron about the lack of bread in the wilderness, Moses' reply was: 'Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD' (Ex 16:8). This does not justify those arrogant leaders who use biblical warnings against 'touching the Lord's anointed' to deflect any criticism of their behaviour or teaching, but it should make us wary of unjustified attacks on preachers of the Word.

Who exactly were these mockers? The NIV and NKJV translate 'youths', while the AV and ESV speak of 'small boys'. The word is used both for Samuel in the temple (a small boy) and for David facing Goliath! 'Small' could refer to size, but is also used in relation to moral stature to mean 'worthless'. The debate, of course, arises because interpreters are worried

about God's punishing little children and want to make it more acceptable. The 'older' idea may well be right, but we should beware of trying to defend God's actions. For it must have been God who sent the bears out of the woods. Elisha's curse had no independent power: 'Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow, an undeserved curse does not come to rest' (Prov 26:2). Just as we take comfort that the curses of our enemies cannot harm us, so we must accept that the deserved curse of God's servant is valid (cf. also Gal 1:8-9, ESV; and 1 Cor 16:22). Whatever their age, these 'boys' are responsible for their actions and words. If the children of Jerusalem who honoured Jesus on his entry into the city (Matt 21:15-16) deserved to be commended, then these deserved to be punished. Instead of trying to defend the justice of God, we ought to take heed to ourselves and our attitude to God's Word. This event must be part of that putting to death of those who escaped the sword of Jehu, of which 1 Kings 19:17 speaks.

But was Elisha right to curse at all? Ought he not rather to have been forbearing, forgiven them and remained silent? Did not Jesus give us the right example, when he was on the cross? 'When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly' (1 Peter 2:23). Even apart from the fact that it was to the Judge that Jesus entrusted himself, this is not the correct occasion to quote. We should, indeed, follow that example when we are being attacked personally, but there was a different occasion when Jesus did pronounce a curse. After telling his parable about the barren fig-tree, Jesus illustrated and confirmed it with an acted parable. When he encountered a fig-tree, which was in leaf but fruitless, he cursed it, saying, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' The disciples, on their way back into Jerusalem the following day, saw the fig-tree again. Peter said, 'Rabbi, look! The fig-tree you cursed has withered!' (Mark 11:12-14, 20-21).

Some have regarded this as an act of bad-tempered spite by Jesus, because he had found no fruit to satisfy his hunger! However, we know that Jesus did not deal in petty spite. On the contrary, this was a gracious warning to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This was not a case of personal attack on Jesus, but a deliberate and persistent refusal to render to God what was God's, the fruits of covenant obedience. All through Scripture such disobedience has provoked God's curse (see Deut 27-30).

### **Kindness and severity**

So, at the commencement of his ministry, Elisha has made clear the twofold thrust of his prophetic task. By both word and deed he has

declared the goodness and grace of God, which can and does remove the curse upon sinners. Lest there be any mistake, so that they take liberties with him and with the Lord, he has also demonstrated the wrath of God upon those who will not repent. At another critical stage in Israel's history, soon after David, by the grace of God, became king over all Israel and then captured Jerusalem, he decided to bring up the Ark of the Covenant. God showed his holiness and justice by making an example of Uzzah, who rashly 'took hold of the ark', by striking him down. Similarly, in Peter's ministry at the beginning of the book of the Acts of the Apostles we find a warning that we cannot treat God lightly. Ananias and Sapphira lie to Peter and, through him, the Holy Spirit, with the consequence that they both in turn fall down dead (Acts 5:1-11).

In the same way, after his baptism, anointing and temptations, Jesus went out 'in the power of the Spirit' to begin his ministry in Israel (Luke 4:14). He healed, preached and taught in the synagogues, making clear that he had come to fulfil all the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. It was in the synagogue at Nazareth, where he later cited the example of Elisha in support of his actions, that he read from Isaiah 61. In this way he identified one part of his purpose as being 'to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour'. He ended his reading before the mention of the day of vengeance of our God, but later included that in his ministry with reference to the future. The amazing manifestations of his grace and power are, therefore, accompanied by warnings of future judgement and wrath. This is a balance that we must maintain in our evangelism and witness, whether preachers or not. Even more, we must not presume ourselves on the grace and longsuffering of God in Christ and go on in obstinate disobedience. We cannot mock God; we must repent.

When the Lord renewed his covenant with Israel on the Plains of Moab before they entered the Promised Land, he set before them both blessings and curses (Deut 27-29). In the light of this, he then pressed home the message: 'This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life...' (Deut 30:19-20). In the same way, Jesus, near the close of his New Covenant manifesto, the Sermon on the Mount, warns his hearers, 'Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it' (Matt 7:13-14). Like Elisha's first prophetic actions, he sets before us new life and eternal death, everlasting blessing and the ultimate curse. Therefore, choose life.

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## News

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SETIA

### Indonesia

In RT 195 the editor described his month-long visit to Indonesia and in particular highlighted the extraordinary work of training young church planters at the Arastamar Evangelical School of Theology (SETIA).

During October Pastor Stephen Nowak spent two weeks ministering in

Indonesia and to students of SETIA in particular.

To give readers an idea of this work of training pioneers to reach unreached people groups there is the example of one young man called Cristoff who became a good friend of Stephen Nowak. After two years' training Cristoff travelled a long way to a remote part of

Indonesia. He then walked for four days through the jungle to reach an unreachable people group. He stayed there living among the people for a year. He then undertook the four-day return walk through the jungle.

Stephen's visit to Jakarta followed the violent attack during July of the SETIA campus. Details are reported here to share the trauma when over 1,000 students forced out of their campus.

Urged on by announcements from a mosque loudspeaker to 'drive out the unwanted neighbour', hundreds of protesters shouting "*Allahu-Akbar*" [God is greater] and brandishing machetes, sharpened bamboo and acid had forced the evacuation of staff and students from the SETIA campus in Kampung Pulo village on July 26 and 27, following a misunderstanding between students and local residents. Attackers injured at least 20 students, some seriously.

Key among motives for the attack was that in that area Muslims felt 'disturbed' by the presence of the Christian College. They want it to be moved to another area.

The students have moved into an abandoned vacant office in Jakarta after management at the Bumi Perkemahan Cibubur (BUPERTA) campground demanded that 700 students temporarily resident there had to leave by Oct. 14. Following the evacuation of some students were temporarily billeted in church offices, while others slept in the lobby of Indonesia's parliament building. Officials then moved 600 female students to the BUPERTA campground, where they were later joined by 100 male students. A further

400 male students remained at a migrants' centre in Bekasi, while 32 post-graduate students were accommodated in a housing complex in Kota Wisata, not far from the campground in Cibubur.

Campground manager Umar Lubis sent a letter to SETIA principal Matheus Mangentang on Oct. 6 ordering the students to vacate the premises in advance of a pan-Asian scouts jamboree scheduled at the facility for Oct. 18-27. Lubis sent a copy of the letter to Fauzi Bowo, the governor of Jakarta.

Mangentang initially protested, since the campground could accommodate up to 30,000 people and there would only be 300 participants in the jamboree. He also noted that despite an agreement reached in September, Bowo had failed to repair and extend bathroom facilities in an abandoned mayoral office in Jakarta offered for use of by the staff and students.

When the council made no attempt to begin renovations on the mayor's office, Mangentang himself hired bricklayers and carpenters to install more toilets, repair damaged ceilings on two floors of the building and erect partitions to create 13 classrooms.

The premises into which the students have moved is unsatisfactory. But the building still lacks many basic amenities, according to staff. Students carry well water into the building in large plastic drums for showers, toilets, laundry and cooking.

One staff member told Compass that the water was slimy to the touch and not suitable for showering.

## *Broken Promises*

Bowo had also promised Mangentang that the students could return to their original campus at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. He then promised to find a site for a new campus and provide an official building permit, but at press time there was no evidence of action taken to fulfil these promises.

Mangentang has refused to cover costs for the campground, which now amount to some 580.7 million rupiah (US\$58,418), on the grounds that since they were unfairly evicted from their campus, the governor's office should fund the cost of temporary relocation.

Cibubur campground officials had also charged SETIA 50,000 rupiah (US\$5) per day for water. When Mangentang refused to pay this fee, officials restricted the water supply so that there was not sufficient water available for laundry and shower facilities for the students.

Bowo had committed himself to paying those bills but said he must first meet with the local House of Representatives to request funding for them and any other expenses that would be incurred by providing a new building site and campus for SETIA.

SETIA staff sought advice from the National Commission on Human Rights in Jakarta on Sept. 7. The commission then wrote to the superintendent of police in Jakarta, asking for a police escort to return the students safely to their campus, but the superintendent did not respond. Neither has any investigation been carried out against the residents who violently attacked staff and students in July.

Last year the Muslim extremist Islamic Defenders' Front demonstrated in front of the college, accusing it of having misapplied its permit.

Since 2007 protesters have held six demonstrations. On March 7, 2007, more than 200 Muslims set fire to construction workers' quarters in an effort to keep SETIA from adding a fifth dormitory.

Three days later some 300 people gathered to protest against the construction, demanding that the school close. They claimed it was disturbing area residents when students sang during their classes and that students were evangelizing people in the area.

Government officials have arranged talks between the conflicting parties, without success.

## **Pakistan**

It is probable that most of us think of Pakistan as a spiritual wasteland, a stony ground place as far as the gospel is concerned and where only small assemblies exist. With four companions, one of whom was his translator, Pastor Mick Lockwood ministered for three weeks in several centres in different parts of Pakistan. He discovered a great desire to hear the Word of God preached. The largest gathering consisted of 2,500. That meeting took place at 11.00 at night.

The following report is by Pastor Lockwood.

It was a great blessing to meet some of the choicest of the Lord's people. Amongst them are those who, through devotion and zeal in the midst of severe

trials, have emerged clearly showing Christ in their lives.

The commitment to hospitality, and daily care and involvement in each other's lives is undoubtedly one of their great strengths. This includes a clear understanding of biblical responsibilities within the family and especially towards the elderly.

There is a general boldness regarding evangelism and a number of different approaches to observe. Within the Christian hospital and schools visited there is a very clear testimony to Christ, and a biblical marriage between doing good and telling out the gospel. A trip into the hill country north of Abbottabad to visit a sole Christian family giving basic medical help to surrounding villages typifies the necessity for Christian witness to be accompanied by practical help.

Church planting is also on the church's agenda and part of their vision for the future. There is some discussion as to the way forward regarding those who convert to Christianity. Some advocate a clear open confession of Christ with immediate association with Christians, the fruit of which can be clearly seen in subsequent generations. Others advocate a confession of Christ, but without associating openly with established churches.

The cost of open confession after converting from Islam was brought home to us when we heard of a family who a few days earlier had had their home burned down, and were forced to leave their village.

The people I was able to speak to about what a new convert ought to do,

however, were adamant that a clear association with a church was necessary, whatever the consequences. (These included people who had suffered persecution.)

Some converts we heard of remained in their community and opened up new places of worship calling themselves 'the class of the faithful' and witnessed to others as the true 'Muslims' (ie servants) of God.

In Abbottabad we enjoyed a morning where Christian and Muslim leaders developed a genuine friendship, and found common ground together in furthering justice. Given the present situation and tension in Pakistan, this initiative, chaired by a local lawyer who is also a church elder, seems a truly significant meeting.

#### *Some weaknesses*

There appears to be a widespread misunderstanding of what a Christian is. There is a significant nominal Christian population, who adhere to their community without understanding the necessity of personal commitment and new birth.

As in the UK the general immorality of our society constantly infiltrates church life, so the general corruption of Pakistan society infiltrates church life there.

There is also a tendency among some to see western money as a solution to all their problems. Amongst those who have worked there for many years however, there is a general consensus that more harm than good has been done in the church through western money.

### *Suggestions for helping the church in Pakistan*

There is a great need for basic Bible teaching. Requests from several sources have been made from churches for further preaching visits, and help in the training of pastors and leaders. Some progress could be made in both these areas.

Opportunities to help are found in short-term or long-term service by people from the UK working in Pakistan. Professional people, especially in the Christian hospitals and schools, are needed. Specific needs at the moment include opportunities for a dentist in Bach hospital, Abbottabad, and teachers for the Christian school at Murray.

The present Muslim-Christian forums in the UK seem to be in the main opposed to gospel work. Local forums carry with them the aim to 'promote religion'. As Bible-believing Christians do not have the promotion of religion on their agenda, they have not been able to join the present forums. Maybe we need to think through the possibilities of setting up opportunities for dialogue on similar grounds to the one in Abbottabad.

We must encourage closer links with churches in Pakistan and the UK. This could involve arranging future visits of small teams to encourage the churches in Pakistan. This I think would be of mutual benefit.

### **Botswana**

From 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2008 an African Pastors' Conference was held in the Orapa Conservation Center, in the beautiful Orapa Game Park, Botswana. This was the first APC in Botswana.

Pastor Bonang Lekoba (Central Baptist Church, Gaborone) was instrumental in spreading the Word and bringing together, under God, 17 men, many of whom said that they would be able to bring more pastors to subsequent conferences.

Irving Steggle, pastor of Birchleigh Baptist Church, South Africa, delivered his first two messages titled *What is a Christian?*, followed by two on *What is Revival?* Ronald Kalifungwa, pastor of Lusaka Baptist Church, Zambia, delivered three messages on *What is a Church?*

During each session the delegates were assiduous note-takers. They exhibited a humble, God-glorifying teachableness throughout the whole Conference. A number of useful questions were asked during Q&A sessions, including: Are there still apostles? How does the Church raise money? and What about generational curses?

During times of informal fellowship between sessions and during meal times there was a beautiful servant-spirit among these brothers.

The gracious sponsors and supporters of this APC were instrumental in providing a selection of greatly discounted books – 500 in total. Of those, about 330 were sold to only 17 men! Pastor Enias Chaitezvi of an Apostolic Faith Mission church expressed his desire to get similar good biblical literature into the hands of his 500-strong congregation. Lucky Chishiki, another delegate, e-mailed us shortly after the conference to let us know that he is 'reading some of the fantastic books our Lord blessed me with through you'.

After the final session on the Friday free CDs of the conference messages were made for the delegates.

Pray that God's promise concerning his Word might be fulfilled:

'...it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I  
purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which  
I sent it' (Isa 55:11).

See  
<http://africanpastorsconference.com/botswana> for the audio messages, photos and other material related to this Pastors' Conference are available on line see

## Portugal

I have just returned from a very profitable time in Portugal. We had an excellent conference, which received about 55 people from various parts of the country. Three speakers brought 4 messages each under the general theme of 'Powerful Preaching'. Speakers were Pr. Bob Dickie, from USA; Pr. Franklin Ferreira, from Brazil and Pr. Jean-Claude Souillot, from France.

We sought to emphasize a word of encouragement and hope to ministers who labor in very adverse conditions, facing the many obstacles of the ministry there. We understand that a great part of Europe is immersed in thick darkness, especially the countries that have historically rejected the gospel. Liberalism, naturalism, humanism, Catholicism, and other 'isms' are common terms that describe the pandemic of the European religious kaleidoscope and are common enemies to faithful ministers on that continent, particularly in Portugal. We know that

the temptation to seek for pragmatic methods to 'make the Church grow' is greater in a context like that. Hence, we aimed at encouraging them to preach the Word of God faithfully and he is the one who will produce life out of it. Please keep us, FIEL, Mr. Richard Denham and his wife, Mrs. Pearl Denham in your prayers. *Tiago Santos BRAZIL*

## Kenya – Eldoret

In May 2006, Naphtally Ogallo, a pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Nairobi, moved 350 km away to Eldoret for the sake of his wife's health. Helida had been taken seriously ill but received medical attention in Eldoret. After much prayer the two of them recognised a need to establish a Reformed Baptist church in this strategic town. Although it was not easy to leave the responsibilities in the Nairobi church, in September 2007 the church released them for the work and the Ogallos transferred their membership to Grace Baptist Church in Kisumu, about 140 km from Eldoret. This church provided the oversight of the church plant work in Eldoret.

The Ogallos settled in the West Indies Estate of Eldoret, given this name by the Asians who first occupied it. It was quickly apparent that there were no Christian churches in the whole estate, consisting of 15,000 people. However there was a Hindu temple, an Islamic Madrasa and a Jehovah Witnesses Kingdom Hall. They felt convinced that this was the place to preach the gospel of grace. However, providentially before the witnessing could begin, Ogallo witnessed to Jua Kali men and some were converted.

These men are engaged in various kinds of self-employment under the 'Hot Sun'



*Eldoret congregation*

hence *Jua Kali*. The struggling spiritually forgotten *Jua Kali* feel life is unfair to them. They are known for being rough, drunkards, immoral, swindlers and extortionists. The post-election violence from January to March hindered development as many of the converts left Eldoret for their villages. Some never returned.

During their first year in Eldoret the Ogallos held Bible studies in their home every Sunday afternoon. In November 2007 Sunday morning worship commenced in their sitting room. Week by week the Lord brought needy souls to the sound of the Word and the number of professing believers increased. The number of attendees also increased so that the house could not contain the congregation. In October 2008 the Lord provided sufficient funds for a tent to be attached to the house. The tent can hold up to 100 people but the Ogallos request

that we join them in praying that the Lord will enable them to purchase a piece of land for a permanent building.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008 they were constituted as a local church. 11 new converts were baptised and included in the 17 who became the first members of Grace Baptist Church – Eldoret. Others were prevented for a number of reasons from being baptised on that occasion. Representatives from Grace Baptist Church Kisumu, Trinity Baptist Churches of Nairobi, Kericho, Chebangang and Othoo shared the joyful event. A number of churches were also represented from within Eldoret.

As yet there has not been sufficient time or energy to evangelise the West Indies Estate as the work with the *Jua Kali* has been so demanding. Please pray for another labourer to enable this outreach to take place.

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## How to Vote

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*Conrad Mbewe*

Yesterday I cast my vote in the unscheduled 2008 presidential election. As a citizen of my country I am now waiting patiently to hear what the collective decision of the people of Zambia is. In a few days' time, we shall have a new president. He will either be the person I voted for or someone else – ouch! As I await the final verdict of the counting that has already begun, I must remind myself, as I have done so many times before, that the future of Zambia does not really lie in the ballot box but in the sovereignty of God and in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Due to space I will be very brief in explaining what I mean.

It is true that having 'a devil on the throne' will take the nation backwards economically and socially. It will mean that levels of corruption that were beginning to go down will soar once again. It will mean that many investors will withdraw from the country and a downward economic spiral will commence. It will mean that the civil liberties that we were beginning to experience in the nation will slowly get eroded. Yes, it will mean that and much, much more. No one wants that to happen and hence the sense of grief and despair among those who know better if a cheat and fraudster ends up in Plot One.

It is equally true to say that having a godly man of integrity on the throne can only be a blessing to the nation. It would mean greater investor confidence, more fiscal discipline in the public sector and more development for our nation. It would mean a better ethos for the Church to carry out its divine mandate of evangelism and missions. So, it only makes sense that if there is such a person among the candidates vying for Plot One, then the hopes of the godly are that in a few days' time such a person will be sworn in as Zambia's fourth president.

I can understand all that. However, we need to realise that ultimately the person who will be our president would have been chosen by God before time began. God is totally sovereign in this matter. He does not only choose the godly but even the ungodly in order to achieve his purpose at that time in history. Sometimes he wants to bless a people and he gives them a righteous leader. At other times he wants to judge a people and he gives them a ruler who will break their backs. Yet, this is never out of malice or caprice. At the centre



Choolwe Mwetwa has just celebrated his twentieth anniversary as pastor of the Central Baptist Church of Chingola, Zambia. Choolwe is scheduled to preach at a number of African Pastors' Conferences in January 2009 – Mseleni in Kwazulu 6 January, Koinonia, Hillcrest, Kwazulu 7-9, Waverley Hills Conference Centre near Port Elizabeth 14-16, Ora et Labora Conference Centre near Pretoria 19-21, Welkom in the Free State 23, and Newcastle 24 January. In addition he has other preaching engagements during this time. This is a demanding time for him and we pray he will have safe travel and stamina.

of God's purpose is the extension of his kingdom through the gospel. You will often find meaning to God's acts in history by looking at the state of the Church at that time. So whether God gives us a good or bad president will depend on what he wants to do with us as his people today.

We also need to understand that for us to have better leaders in the nation the Church must be faithful in proclaiming the gospel. The problem in the world is not bad economic policies but bad hearts and these can only be changed by the gospel, which is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe (Rom 1:16). The gospel has always been in the vanguard of civilisation and true human dignity. It changes lives in the grassroots of society and, since rulers come from there, in due season it gives us rulers with pure hearts. It is the failure to realise this that makes Christians excited about a new leader coming into power even when the state of the Church still leaves much to be desired. That is totally misplaced confidence. Our excitement, rather, should be when a purer gospel finds its way into the homes of our land. That alone is the true hope of Zambia because it produces a righteous people.

Does that mean we were wrong to vote? No, I think we should. God uses our vote to bring whom he pleases to Plot One. But we cheat ourselves if we think that there is a political leader who will bring Utopia to our country. Politicians will promise us heaven, but they know that the promises they make are merely to woo voters so that they can get into their much-coveted positions of power. Once they get what they want, history will only repeat itself! Our hope lies in the gospel alone. Christians, even after casting our votes and waiting with bated breath for our new president to be announced, let us get busy with real gospel endeavours, praying that through them God will extend his kingdom in Zambia and even beyond. That is where the future of Zambia lies.

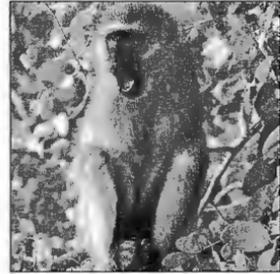
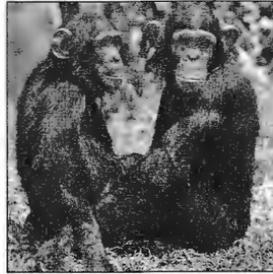
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## Where do we come from?

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*This article is by Professor Andy McIntosh*

The pressure from the media is that everyone should accept evolution as scientific and that creation should be banned as unscientific.

There are questions that we should ask the scientific fraternity.

Pictured above are six creatures. They are very distinct: Gorilla, Chimpanzee, Orang Utang, Baboon, Gibbon and Vervet Monkey.

Over vast periods of time all of these and man are supposed to have evolved from a common primate ancestor. Indeed it is seriously proposed by men who claim to be

evangelicals<sup>1</sup> that all life on earth has evolved from a common ancestor, so that even the ant you trod on the other day is your distant cousin and primates are to be regarded as much closer.

Rather than taking the fossils as being primarily deposited by the Flood, the evolutionist looks to the fossils as being a story of development over vast aeons of time. But a very simple fact emerges when we actually look at the evidence. After plant material fossilized fish are the most ubiquitous of all fossils. Have you ever tried fossilizing a fish? Try shooting your goldfish and see whether it will conveniently lie

down at the bottom of your goldfish bowl and fossilize. Even if you shot it in your garden pond it wouldn't do so. A basic observation shows that 99% of dead fish float. What happens then in nature may not be very appealing to most of us cocooned city dwellers but the fish then get eaten by hungry predators both in the ocean (with sea birds above) and inland in streams and lakes. Even if they don't become food for some animal, very little stays together – the carcass decomposes and falls apart. How then do you get fish fossils in the Himalayas, the Pyrenees and the Rocky Mountains of USA? It has to be catastrophic when all these (now) high mountain slopes were lower down at the beginning of the Flood year.

But even if we did take the fossils as a long sequence of supposed ancestry where is the evidence of ape-like creatures changing into men? The best that evolutionists have come up with is Johanson's 'Lucy' skeleton from Ethiopia which is supposed to be an ancestor to the hominid-like creatures that led to humans. Marvin Lubenow in his book 'Bones of Contention' shows clearly that the bones are actually ape-like and that the pelvis in particular is not consistent with a human pelvis because of the position of the hip socket into which the femur (thigh) bone is located. As David Menton has entitled his

excellent DVD available from Answers in Genesis<sup>2</sup> – 'Lucy, she's no lady...'

So in reality even if you were to accept that the sediments are supposed to have been laid over millions of years, the fossils do not bear out the story of evolution. Take the recent finding of what can only be described as a bird since it clearly has feathers – yet lying in sediment in China where supposedly reptiles were in the process of changing into birds there is a fossil of a modern bird – hardly what one would have expected!

In actuality there is no clear experiment that can be done to show that one creature can change into another.

And in the so-called evolutionary story for human evolution the evidence of long forelimbs in 'Lucy' puts paid to this creature's being an early hominid but strongly implies in fact that Lucy was ape-like and that she was not connected with humans at all. The moral is we need to be careful to separate true experimental science from what is actually mere speculation.

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<sup>1</sup> D. Alexander, *Creation or Evolution – do we have to choose?* Lion, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Menton 'Lucy – she's no lady,' DVD available from Answers in Genesis – see [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

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## The Third Servant Song

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The Third Servant Song of Isaiah 50:4-9 is entirely autobiographical, rather like a personal daily diary.

The division of the text is provided for us by Isaiah's poetic construction of the material into four parts each of which begins *Adonai Yahweh*. Isaiah brings the two principal words for GOD in Hebrew together. The Lord Jehovah – translated in the NIV 'The Sovereign LORD', – in the NKJV and in the ESV 'the Lord GOD'.

The autobiographical nature of this song is wonderful because here we have the young Messiah Jesus expressing his daily spiritual experience which we will now examine under four appropriate descriptions.

### 1. The daily devotional life of our Lord Jesus

<p>4 The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.</p>
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'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men' (Luke 3:52). As he was growing up Jesus increased in his knowledge of Scripture.

The first observation is that as he wakens morning by morning the very first reality is that Jesus hears as one who is learning. Every day begins with hearing and learning the Word of God. There is no interval between awakening and hearing. The text says the Sovereign LORD wakens him and all his faculties become alert to hearing the wisdom of Yahweh.

Every Christian needs to begin the day with the a time of quiet, of meditation and reading and praying before the LORD? Where did the idea originate of a morning quiet time? The answer is that Jesus is our model and here is the text to prove it.

Before being overwhelmed by the responsibilities and activities of the day the soul must be prepared, strengthened and equipped. The text tells us that he has 'an instructed tongue'. Jesus knew precisely how to use words to comfort and

encourage. He has words to sustain the weary. He is the great encourager. Isaiah 9:6 describes the Messiah with four titles the first of which is Wonderful Counsellor. The word Wonderful (Hebrew *pele*) means something that transcends human understanding. The word counsellor is in a participial form. In other words he is active in his counselling. Jesus is the Counsellor *par excellence*. Throughout his life his counselling was divinely instructive, divinely encouraging and divinely corrective.

The knowledge and wisdom to counsel with the right words was not mechanical as though he were a machine or computer. Also to be resisted is the notion that Jesus was super-human as though his divine nature took charge of everything. We must think correctly and know that Jesus was fully human. Jesus learned wisdom. This was apparent from a young age. When he stayed behind in Jerusalem and spent time among the teachers there Luke reports that, 'Everyone was amazed at his understanding and his answers' (Luke 2:47).

## 2. The complete obedience of our Lord in suffering

5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears; I have not been rebellious, I have not turned away.

6 I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

Here for the first time in the four Servant Songs the grim reality of dreadful suffering is introduced. Jesus is informed that he will be subjected to flogging and humiliating torture, to barbarous mocking and wicked depraved behaviour like spitting. He was required to endure this terrible ordeal with patience.

This striking description immediately reminds us of the physical and spiritual agonies suffered by our Lord as reported in the Gospels. 'Then they spat in his face and struck him with their fists. 'Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Christ. Who hit you?"' (Matt 26:67). 'Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" And they struck him in the face' (John 19:1-3).

The Messiah's response to this awesome knowledge of impending suffering was one of total submission and obedience. 'The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears' means that the Messiah has been informed of the appalling tunnel through which he will have to pass. He does not rebel against this. Moses argued, Jeremiah complained bitterly (Jer 20:7-18), and Jonah ran away when

confronted with a difficult mission. Jesus did not turn away from the horrendous path before him. Everything in our common humanity shrinks to escape from pain and suffering and find an alternative route. So great was the weight of suffering ahead of Jesus that in the garden of Gethsemane he almost expired under the weight and horror of it. Yet he continued to pray, 'Yet not as I will, but as you will' (Matt 26:39).

It is clear from the Gospel accounts that our Lord prepared thoroughly for the ordeal through which he was to pass. He warned and prepared his disciples for it but they were reluctant to face up to that kind of reality (Mk 8:31-33).

### 3. The complete confidence of our Lord in his suffering

7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.

8 He who vindicates (justifies) me is near. Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who are my accusers? Let them confront me!

9 It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.

How did Jesus know if he would succeed in his trial? Would he collapse and fail? Here in his autobiography reasons are given. The LORD who is sovereign will help him through so he will not be disgraced. Everything in his trial under Pilate, in his rejection by the Jews and in his crucifixion was designed to disgrace and humiliate him. Through it all he was not put to shame. In the eyes of heaven he was vindicated. History has vindicated him. I have inserted the word 'justifies' in the text above because it has, as E J Young notes, a strictly forensic sense just as *dikaiōō* to justify, has in the New Testament, that is, to declare to be just or to pronounce a person to be just.

'Therefore I have set my face like flint' is fulfilled in the words of Luke 9:51, 'As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.' Mark tells us that the disciples were astonished while those who followed were afraid (Mk 10:32). At that time he warned them in detail about the betrayal and the condemnation to death that he would experience.

Who then will bring charges against me? Let us face each other! Who are my accusers? Let them confront me! It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? When we recall the details of Jesus' sufferings we are

reminded of the fact that it would be impossible for any sinful being, no matter how noble, to endure that humiliation without retaliation. The apostle Peter reports that, 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly' (1 Peter 2:22-23). 'Only one who was entirely without sin could undergo such suffering without a rebellious spirit' (E J Young).

The NIV omits the word 'Behold!' at the beginning of verse nine. 'Behold! It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me. Who will condemn me? They will all wear out like a garment; the moths will eat them up.'

The emphasis Behold! focuses on the source of the Servant's strength and stamina in his sufferings. All the Servant's enemies will pass away, just as a garment wears out and is thrown away. Jesus survived all his enemies who accused and rejected him. There is considerable attention given in the Olivet Discourse recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 to the demise of the powers represented by the Sanhedrin who put Jesus to death and who stoned Stephen (Acts 7). In the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 the old order passed away and with it the elaborate ritual of animal sacrifices. The old covenant order is described in Hebrews 8:13 as obsolete 'and what is obsolete and ageing will soon disappear'.

#### 4. Gospel invitations and warnings

10 Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let those who walk in the dark, who have no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God.

11 But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.

The four Servant Songs and the four victory songs conclude with elaborations or commentaries. For instance the best known Servant Song of Isaiah chapters 52:13-15 and 53 concludes with chapter 54 (a song celebrating the future glory of the Church) and chapter 55 which proclaims the universal free invitations of the gospel to all people.

Here (Isa 50:10,11) the application of the sufferings of the Messiah is directed to two kinds of people. Firstly those who walk in the dark. They struggle in darkness but nevertheless exercise faith and trust in the name of the LORD.

There is much in Scripture to encourage those who struggle especially in the Psalms. Psalm 88 is expressive of extreme desperation like being ‘in the lowest pit, in the darkest depths’ (88:6). There are many promises of support in trial such as Isaiah 43:2, ‘When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.’

The believer is fully aware that he is being tested as we see from Psalm 66, ‘For you, O God, tested us; you refined us like silver. You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. You let men ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance.’ There is a purpose in the dark times of testing as the apostle Peter explains: ‘These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed’ (1 Peter 1:7).

In contrast to those who trust the LORD in hard times of testing the wicked rely on their own resources. An example of this is the description at the end of the book of Jeremiah. The prophet was consulted but the people remaining in the land were utterly determined to go their own way. Jeremiah told them plainly that flight into Egypt would end in disaster (Jer 43-44).

We live in a depraved world in which false religions dominate. These are all characterised by schemes which encourage human self-righteousness. All human religions contradict the gospel of Christ in which salvation is offered as a gift of grace and not by human merit. False religions all teach self-reliance. This text in Isaiah reminds us that this will lead to ruin. The most difficult issue facing Evangelicalism is the subject of eternal punishment. Every effort is made to avoid this or to change it or to modify it. Preaching on this subject is full of difficulty. But from one end of the Bible to the other there is no compromise on this solemn theme. Isaiah 50:11, the conclusion of the third Servant song, confirms this reality.

Preaching on sin and judgement must be accompanied by the free invitations of the gospel. The preacher must exhort, warn, entreat, reason and weep over the lost as Jesus did.

Note: *I am indebted to Alec Motyer for the clarity of his commentary on Isaiah which is published by IVP and for the way he divides the text which I have followed here.*

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## James Hudson Taylor (1832-1905)

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*part four*

*by Bob Davey*

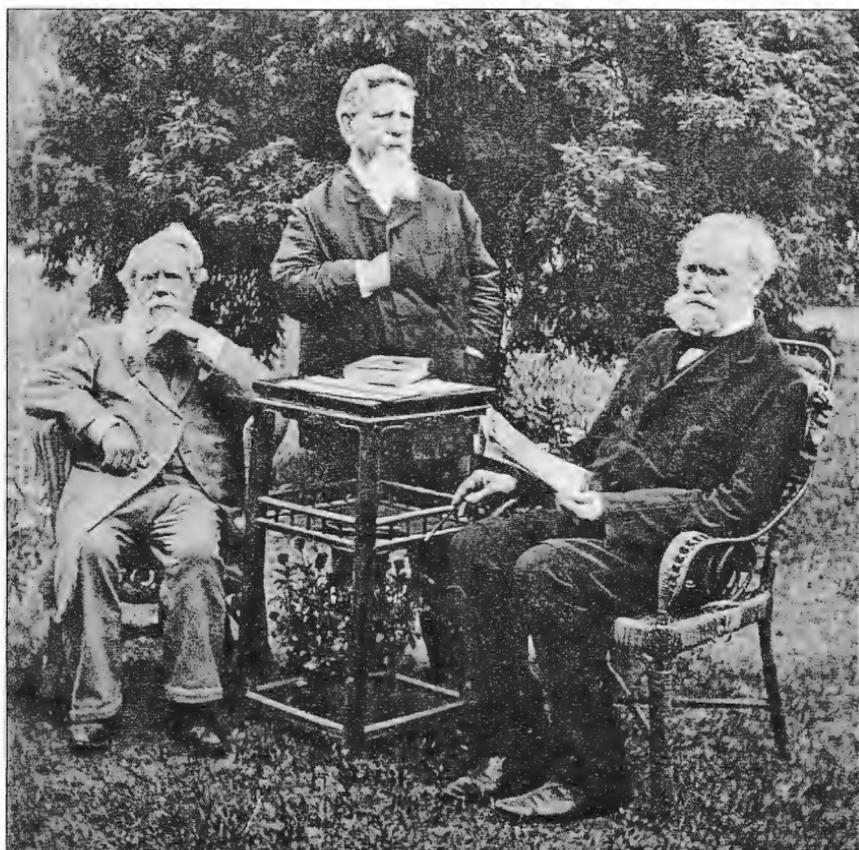
*The triumph of faith 1875-1905*

At the end of 1874, back in England, on his back in bed with excruciating pain, almost completely paralysed in his back and legs, a map of China pinned to the end uprights of his bed, Hudson Taylor had issued a public appeal in a written article, for ‘prayer that God will raise up this (coming) year eighteen suitable men’ to go into the nine still as yet unreached provinces of China.

The responses to the published appeal turned out to be astonishing with no fewer than sixty serious applications, of which eventually more than eighteen candidates were in China by early 1876. There had been a resurgence of missionary enthusiasm in general around this time in response to the news of the death of David Livingstone in Africa in May 1873 and his burial at Westminster Abbey nearly a year later. That may well have been a catalyst, but the 1870s and 1880s represented the crest of the final wave on the tide of spiritual blessing known to history as the Evangelical Awakening in Britain and Ireland and which had commenced as early as the 1730s. This final climax of widespread spiritual blessing, during which Evangelicalism was in the ascendancy in the nation, was characterised by intense gospel preaching within the nation, great popularity for conferences aimed at the deepening of spiritual life, and a leap forward in all missionary activity. The China Inland Mission took a prominent role in the expansion of missionary effort.

*Into the inland provinces*

Imperial protection for foreigners became more of a reality across all China when the Chefoo (Yantai) Convention was ratified on 17 September 1876. This was just as the last of the team for outreach into the nine unreached provinces, which included Hudson Taylor, was arriving in China. The timing was impeccable! Hudson Taylor seized the moment as the answer to prayer and forged ahead. In the next four years all of China was criss-crossed and recrossed by pioneer journeys of CIM missionaries who settled in many strategic places. This explosion of life and activity took the foreign and missionary community in China by surprise and accounts thrilled the Christian public at home.



*Three veterans, Dr Griffith John, Dr Hudson Taylor and Dr W A P Martin*

During the terrible famine of 1876-1879 in China, in which up to thirteen million perished in many horrific ways, the CIM was there on the spot to report and assist. The combined efforts of all missionaries in China were marshalled and generous support from Britain and other nations went a long way to win respect and even appreciation for the missionary by the Chinese people. About thirty missionaries distributed famine relief in the heart of the areas affected. Deep inland the Chinese saw with their own eyes missionaries who had nothing personal to gain, risking their lives time and time again for them. Indeed about a dozen did lose their lives as a result of typhus, cholera, dysentery or smallpox. Jennie Taylor and others in the CIM were allowed to set up an orphanage right in the heart of the famine area. Thus Shanxi (Shansi), one of the northern provinces, was 'occupied' by the CIM for the gospel.

It was during this time that an opium addict was converted in the province of Shanxi. He got rid of the habit through the power of Christ and started to preach the gospel to others. This was the famous Pastor Hsi whose powerful ministry was widespread and effective in the southern part of Shanxi. His work among opium addicts highlighted the problem and gave impetus to the movement to ban this evil trade so lucrative for Britain and the Western powers. Britain had at one time financed the government of India almost entirely from this trade which emanated from there! The missionaries always resolutely opposed the opium trade, but vested interests held sway until the banning of it by Britain herself in 1911 and internationally by 1913. Benjamin Broomhall, husband to Hudson's beloved sister Amelia, had been the leader of the struggle for abolition for many years. He died in 1911 within days of having the satisfaction of knowing irreversible victory won. To this day the memory and resentment of China towards the West, especially Britain, about the opium traffic being imposed upon them, constitutes a running sore.

#### *Seventy years of Protestant Missions to China*

A general missionary conference was held in Shanghai in May 1877 commemorating seventy years since the coming of Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China. A highlight of the conference was the conference sermon given by Griffith John on 'The Holy Spirit in connection with Mission work'. The Holy Spirit is the source of all spiritual illumination, the immediate source of all holiness, the source of true spiritual unity, the fount of joy, the source of all power in dealing with souls, the inspirer of all true prayer. Three questions were asked. Are we and our converts filled with the Holy Spirit? Is a new revival (Pentecost) possible? How is the fulness of the Holy Spirit obtained? The evangelical principles that had been the bedrock of China missions for the last seventy years since Robert Morrison were still foundational and one of the fundamental needs of the hour was the need of a genuine spiritual revival in China, not least among the missionaries themselves. The conference called for 'the Christian Church to evangelise China in the present generation'.

It was at this conference that the first inroads of liberal theology into the mission field in China came to light. A small number of men, claiming to hold to orthodox evangelical theology, rejected the primacy of preaching the gospel for missionary work in China. They advocated that the prime place should be given to higher Western education and reaching the most influential classes as 'more likely than preaching to the masses to overthrow superstition' and

morally improve China. W P Martin, Young J Allen and Timothy Richard were the advocates. Hudson Taylor and Griffith John, no enemies of education in its place, strongly opposed this approach to mission. There was no breach of fellowship but the conference did specifically endorse the primacy of preaching the gospel (biblical and evangelical) in the missionary mandate.

### *Doubling the size of the CIM*

By 1881 Hudson Taylor saw the need of at least another seventy CIM missionaries in addition to the ninety-six already in the field in sixty-four locations. On 28 November 1881 at a CIM missionary conference at Wuchan (Wuhan), Hudson Taylor was led to pray specifically for ‘other seventy’ workers for China within three years, by the end of 1884. ‘Within twelve months we could have forty-two men and twenty-eight (more) women located and at work.’

By the time of Hudson Taylor’s departure to England in February 1883 all but two of the targeted inland provinces of China had CIM missionaries resident in key cities together with Chinese helpers. Yet such was the low state of CIM finances and so stretched was the administration that many questioned the wisdom of taking on such an immense commitment as nearly doubling the size of the Mission at a stroke and it was not until February 1883 that the public call was made in *China’s Millions* ‘to unite with us in prayer ... for forty-two additional men and twenty-eight additional women, called and sent out by God’ yet the date set was not altered; it was still to be by the end of the year 1884! Amazingly all was fulfilled.

Three factors brought about success.

1. On the trip to England Hudson Taylor learned of a large donation for the specific task of expansion of the Mission’s work. This was seen as an answer to the prayer of faith and settled the fears of friends of the CIM concerning the danger of over-stretching resources. This gift turned out to be the first of a number of large generous donations.

2. As Hudson Taylor engaged on a round of speaking engagements from large public conventions to small gatherings in private homes it was a common testimony that he was ‘a man filled with the Holy Spirit’. The fire and passion for his Master and his cause melted many hearts to tears and his personal counselling was equally effective. He was aware he was riding a tide of deep spiritual blessing in the land and he saw this as an answer to the prayers sent up to heaven for many years for China.

3. A series of missions occurred in connection with the visits of Moody and Sankey to Britain between 1881 and 1884. All classes of people were touched with the power of the gospel, not least university men. Moody was persuaded to take a week's mission to each of Cambridge and Oxford Universities in November 1882. Against all predictions these turned out a triumph and the spiritual effects had a direct bearing on the CIM. Seven graduates known as 'the Cambridge Seven' or 'the Cambridge Band' offered their services to Christ over the next two years to serve on the mission field with the China Inland Mission. This caused a sensation in the media especially as one was C T Studd, of Eton and Cambridge University, an England cricket player in the team that had won back the Ashes for England in Australia during the winter of 1882/83. Another of the seven was S P Smith, of Repton and Cambridge University, who had won his blue as stroke-oar for Cambridge in the Varsity boat race of 1882 against Oxford University and was a very able speaker and debater. One of the seven, Dixon Hoste, was to become in due course General Director of the CIM and another, W W Cassels, was to become Anglican Bishop in West China.

With the large influx of recruits the spiritual standards for acceptance of candidates for the CIM were not lowered in any way. If anything the opposite was the case. The accepted and sent candidates for 1882 were 9, for 1883 there were 18, and for 1884 there were 46, making a total of 73. The original 'prayer of faith' of Hudson Taylor on 28 November 1881 had been confirmed by its fulfilment.

#### *Remarkable expansion*

Hudson Taylor returned to China in January 1885 to be ready to receive the Cambridge Seven. He took with him twelve more new missionaries. At the valedictory meeting for the Cambridge Seven, early February 1885, forty undergraduates dedicated themselves to the foreign mission field wherever God would lead them. The blessing was not for the CIM alone! By May 1886 the CIM personnel on the field were 188 with 114 Chinese colleagues. Hudson Taylor's leadership and administrative skills were tested to the full, but he was right, the Mission was prepared and ready to harness effectively this sudden influx of raw candidates. So much so that *another hundred* were prayed for *within one year*. And they duly arrived in 1887.

The number of communicant members of Protestant missions in China in 1854 had been around three hundred and fifty. By 1887, after eighty years of

Protestant missions in China, the number of communicant members totalled around thirty-two thousand, mostly in the coastal provinces. Real and encouraging progress had been made. Yet nowhere near one hundredth of the population had been given the gospel in any way. The work of evangelising the whole nation of up to four hundred million had hardly begun and Hudson Taylor regarded the state of things as 'appalling'. The only response to such a state of affairs for a visionary like Hudson Taylor was 'Advance, always advance.' This he did with an iron will of faith nurtured by his close walk with God in his daily meditation and praying in the Scriptures. He saw Christ in all the Scriptures and drank deeply of the wells of salvation. The joy of communion with Christ was his joy and strength and this saw him through the duties of the day, however trying. Many times he was literally driven to his knees in prayer by grave and apparently intractable situations that had to be dealt with.

At the second Shanghai Missionary Conference in May 1890 Hudson Taylor was called upon to preach the opening sermon. In it he made an appeal to the conference for no less than a *thousand* new evangelists for China from the nations within five years. One is left breathless just trying to keep up with this man! Not only was the appeal adopted but it is a fact of history that by 1895 four hundred and eighty-one men and six hundred and seventy-two women arrived in China representing over forty missionary agencies. By then the CIM itself had six hundred and thirty missionaries, including wives. By 1900 the total number of Chinese Protestant communicant members of churches and mission stations approached, if not exceeded, one hundred thousand. Viewed in perspective the CIM build-up ran like this:

1866 missionaries 26

1875 - 40

1881 - 96

1886 - 188

1890 - 383

1895 - 630

1900 - 811

### *International ministry*

Back in England in the first part of 1887 Hudson Taylor had met Henry Frost from the USA, who invited him to visit North America and speak to the various student groups who were very interested in foreign missions. They wanted, in particular, to join in and support the work of the CIM. This was

backed up by an invitation from D L Moody. So Hudson Taylor decided to return to China via Canada and the United States and while there spoke at the influential Northfield and Niagara Conventions. In all he spent three months in America and on leaving their shores for China he was accompanied by a band of fourteen North American workers. This was but the first of many contingents from the USA and Canada. This development was totally unexpected to Hudson Taylor and it turned out to be the beginning of a worldwide ministry for him. Visits, again to America, and to Sweden and Norway followed in 1889. The next decade saw visits to many countries for him, including Australia and New Zealand. By 1900 the CIM had 811 missionaries in China from over twenty countries worldwide.

In China other missionary societies followed up the pioneer work of the CIM. To the great credit of the CIM it 'always welcomed any group which would share in the missionary task'. From time to time therefore the CIM withdrew from centres, as these were entered by other societies, in order to concentrate its attention upon districts still unevangelised.

#### *The ending of an era*

All this progress was achieved during a period of increasing turmoil in China as the Qing (Ching) Dynasty (Emperors since 1644) was tottering toward chaos and dissolution. War had broken out between China and Japan in 1894. The Chinese were humiliated at the hands of a thoroughly modernised Japan. The shock wave throughout China led to the realisation of the necessity to embrace Western education curricula and modernisation. The contributions of missionaries became recognised as crucial to this awakening and development. Those such as Timothy Richard, Young J Allen, W A P Martin and Gilbert Reid were honoured at the highest level and utilised. The Young Men's Christian Association (a thoroughly evangelical movement at that time) took root among the student and working youth in a number of cities, including Shanghai, after a visit to China of John R Mott, one of the founders in North America of the Student Volunteer Movement.

However the Emperor's orders in 1898 for China to modernise led directly to the anti-foreign Boxer Rebellion in 1900 and the final overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911. The death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901 also heralded the end of the great 'Victorian Era' in Britain. Within fifty years the British Empire would be no more.

## *The Boxer rebellion*

The formidable Empress Ci Xi, who hated all things foreign, grabbed the reins of power in September 1898 and by 1900 let loose the well-trained band called The Boxers, so called because the clenched fist was their emblem. The empress gave a secret order, 'Slay all foreigners wherever you find them; even though prepared to leave your province they must be slain.' The Boxers' war cry was 'Uphold the dynasty, exterminate foreigners' and they had emblazoned on their banners 'By imperial command exterminate the Christian religion.' The flood-gates of violence were opened in June 1900 at Beijing (Peking) and spread throughout its province of Hebei (Zhili) and the neighbouring province of Shanxi, where the Governor was the ruthless anti foreign Yu Xian, 'the Butcher Of Shanxi'. The blood-letting was short in duration but bloody in intensity. In all China, by its end, from ten missions 135 missionaries were martyred together with 53 of their children. Special hatred was poured out on Chinese Christians, thousands of whom paid the price of torture and martyrdom. Often their homes were burned with them and their families inside.

Swift action by a consortium of foreign powers led to the relief of Beijing in August 1900, which led to orders being sent out to stop the bloodshed and which mercifully were largely obeyed by the authorities. However, bands of Boxers continued a menace to everyone for a time, until finally brought under control and disbanded.

After a little more than a year from the outbreak of the Boxer rising, and five months since the last death in August 1900, the work of the CIM had been re-established in most of their stations in China. Heroically, 132 members returned from the coast together with 57 new recruits. The next years were fruitful for the gospel. 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.'

## *Final years*

News of the outbreak of the Boxer rising reached Hudson Taylor while he was recuperating from a long illness in Davos, Switzerland. His constitution was completely worn out by the labour of years. He officially retired on 1 January 1903 with D E Hoste (one of the Cambridge Band) succeeding him as General Director of the China Inland Mission.

On 30 July 1904 Jennie Taylor died in Switzerland. Hudson Taylor then determined to return to China one last time. He sailed on 15 February 1905

with his heart set on visiting Changsha, the capital of Hunan province. Hunan had been the last province to yield to foreign missionaries settling in their midst. However, since the Boxer rising, this province actually welcomed the missionaries and by now had 13 missionary societies with 111 missionaries working in 17 central stations. Hudson's arrival in Changsha on 1 June 1905 was a crowning moment of his life. It was here he died peacefully in the presence of Howard and Geraldine Taylor on 3 June 1905. His body was carried down the Yangzi river in a coffin lovingly supplied and furnished by the Chinese Christians of Changsha. He was laid to rest at Zhejiang beside his first wife, Maria, and their children who had died in infancy. The cemetery is no longer there, but the monumental stones are in a museum in the former British Consulate.

So ceased the earthly labours of Hudson Taylor, one of a race of spiritual giants raised up by God during the nineteenth century in Protestant lands, when Evangelicalism was in its ascendancy. Hudson Taylor's missionary vision was clear-headed and biblical; his determination, single-minded and sacrificial; his spirituality, warm and Christ-centred. Not least of his achievements was welcoming and harnessing the energies of his American brethren for the CIM, which led on to the CIM becoming a truly international missionary society in his lifetime.

Hudson Taylor would not want to be remembered except as one of a body of many, all raised up and called of God to carry the good news of salvation to a lost world in obedience to the command of Christ. He regarded himself as an unworthy servant of Christ. His motto 'Advance, always advance' still stirs the heart today.

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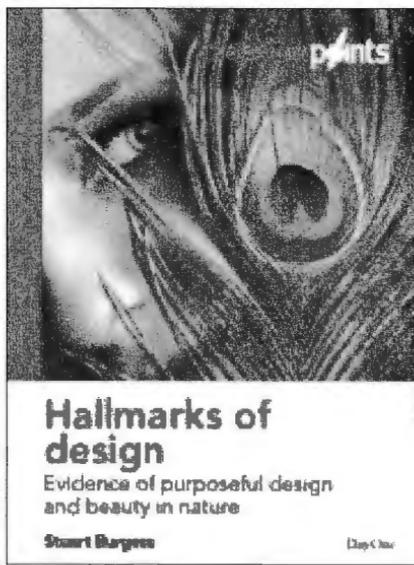
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## Reviews

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**Hallmarks of Design, Evidence of purposeful design and beauty in nature**, Stuart Burgess, Day One, 230 pages, paperback, illustrated, 2008.

Professor Stuart Burgess teaches engineering design at Cambridge University and Bristol University.

This book is valuable because of the media campaign to assert evolution and deride creation. This campaign is one in which no questions are permitted by creationists. In other words the playing field is occupied by evolutionists only. Creationists are not allowed into the ground let alone the playing field.

Since the media are closed we have to use literature to show that evolution is spurious and has no satisfactory answers to key questions.

I will review the first six of the fourteen chapters of this book and comment in a general way on the remaining chapters.

The first chapter is devoted to the human knee joint. Illustrated by diagrams Dr Burgess shows that for a human knee joint to work there has to be a perfect combination of factors. There is no route backward and no route forward. The essential constituent parts complement each other perfectly to make this mechanism work. There is no way that the human knee joint could have evolved. The knee joint of an ape is quite different in design and there is no half-way position between the knee of an ape and the knee of a human.

In chapter two the author explains the irreducible flight mechanisms of birds. He reminds us that the Bible teaches us that birds were created before land creatures. 'The fact that a bird requires several sophisticated sub-systems for gliding alone shows that it cannot be the product of evolution.' In addition there is the complexity of feathers. 'Feathers are irreducible structures which require many parts to be present simultaneously for the feather to be of any use. There is not a single known land creature that has any structures or mechanisms resembling a feather.'

Dr Burgess goes on to compare the development of man-made flying which illustrates the impossibility of the evolution of flight. No flying machine is any good at a half-way

mark. To work it has to be constructed to perfection. Man's best flying machine is clumsy and limited compared with the flight of birds. There is a total absence in the fossil record of intermediate forms between animals and birds.

In chapter three Dr Burgess explains the irreducible nature of the earth as an ecosystem. 'The earth's ecosystem has an extraordinary number of inter-dependent parts that must exist simultaneously for the ecosystem to function properly.' While reading this chapter I thought of some of the great cities of the world like London or New York. The detail required for town planning and engineering is very detailed for a city to work. It has to be meticulously designed and constructed. Likewise the inter-dependent factors in the earth's ecosystem evidence a mind that has thought through all the factors of inter-relationships to perfection. All the elements have to be present together.

Chapter four is titled 'Complete optimum design'. Here the author illustrates this subject with the modern motor car. Nothing is extraneous. Several thousand parts are fitted together for the desired result. The best possible outcome of fuel consumption and performance is sought. 'Birds provide an excellent example of complete optimum design. There are about 9,000 species and all of them supremely well designed for their particular environments.'

Chapter five addresses the subject of beauty. 'He has made everything

beautiful in its time' (Ecc 3:11). As an example Dr Burgess describes the awesome complexity of peacock feathers. 'A large peacock eye feather may contain up to 300 barbs and one million barbules.' 'The colours in the peacock tail are not pigment colours but structural colours which are produced by an optical effect called thin-film interference.' A stupendous combination of details is required to make this work. The author explains this with the help of diagrams. The genetic code of a peacock must contain all the information that is necessary to produce the eye pattern in the tail feathers.

Chapter six describes added beauty in birdsong. The bird voice is a masterpiece of design. The nightingale has the largest repertoire of songs and on average will sing 70 before there is repetition and then when there is repetition there will be perfect accuracy. Throughout the book there are brief references to how evolutionists attempt to explain the wonders of what they call nature and what we call creation.

The remaining chapters are Extreme similarity in features, Extreme diversity of kinds, Man-centred features, The unique design of man, The unique beauty of man, biblical creation account, Answering objections to the design argument, and Answering questions of life.

Of these I found the chapter, Extreme diversity of kinds, particularly helpful. The hummingbird, the camel and the

platypus are described and diagrams provided to illustrate the extraordinary nature of these creatures.

The focus of chapter ten, The unique design of man, provides a commentary on many features which completely separate man from apes. For instance the human brain has as many as 100 billion neurons and over 1,000 connections per neuron. This means that the total number of connections in the brain is about 100 trillion.

The book is easy and enjoyable to read. Where there are technical details they are simply explained.

The atheist puts the whole cosmos with its vast and dazzling array of order and beauty and intricate detail down to chance. To me as an architect that is as crazy as looking at New York City from the vantage point of a helicopter and declaring that that amazing mass of detail all happened by chance. Another example would be to say to a jungle inhabitant who had never seen a jumbo-jet in flight before that that big bird was not designed on drawing boards with 20,000 drawings by men and then manufactured in a great factory, but in fact there was a lightning strike in the sky. Hey presto! constituent parts came from all over the place and there was a jumbo!

Genesis chapters one and two describe the creation of the world and the heavens and what we now observe bears testimony to the marvels of creation and the glory of our Creator who made it all.



**He made the stars also. What the Bible says about the stars.** Stuart Burgess. Day One, 184 page paperback, 2001.

Dr Burgess divides this book into two parts. First, the Question of origins (pages 11 to 111). Second, the Question of extraterrestrial life (pages 112 to 177). Part two includes chapters dealing with the following: A historical overview of man's belief in extraterrestrial life, The importance of extraterrestrial life to the present day society, The search for extraterrestrial life, A critique of Science fiction, The united rebellion of modern man, and, We are not alone.

I will comment on Part one in which the chapters read as follows, The biblical creation account, The Big Bang theory, Clockwork motion in the universe, How the earth is designed for life, How the stars are designed for the earth, The

beauty of the universe and The attributes of God revealed in the stars.

Although familiar with some of the basics I found the whole book easy to read, fascinating and informative. There are many diagrams and photographs. Page 59 contains a diagram showing where our solar system fits into the vastness of the universe.

Of the Big Bang theory Dr Burgess comments, 'the Big Bang theory is not a reflection of scientific evidence. Rather, it is a reflection of the desire of many secular scientists to produce an account of origins that does not require belief in a Creator God' (page 35).

According to the Big Bang theory, everything we see in the universe today has evolved out of a random explosion of matter. To simple people this is difficult because all explosions as we know them result in chaos and mayhem. It takes design and genius to create order. It takes a terrorist to blow things up into wreckage. But the principal philosophical problem is that the Big Bang cannot explain where the first matter came from. Viewing the colossal size of the universe that is a lot of material.

I found especially helpful the chapter titled, Clockwork motion in the universe. The author reminds his readers that each planet has its own character different from the others and each has its own orbit. In all of these there is both clockwise and anti-clockwise motion while the whole is in balance. 'There are actually logical reasons why God would want to supernaturally and instantly create the

solar system with orbiting planets. The speed of each planet is such that all the planets are held in near circular orbits by the force of gravity. Without the orbital motion, the earth and other planets would be pulled into the sun and be burned up. The fact that there are purposeful design reasons for the motion of the solar system shows that the circular motion of the solar system cannot be used as evidence of evolution. It is very difficult for evolution to explain how a dust cloud, which is at least 15 billion km in diameter, could condense into such a small number of neat planets and moons with the extremely precise and stable orbits.'

An irreducible motion is a motion that cannot be produced by a gradually changing process. One irreducible motion in the solar system is found in the spin of the planet Uranus which has an axis of rotation almost perpendicular to the axis of the solar system. The planet Venus has a retrograde rotation. Some of the moons in the solar system have motions that are inconsistent with evolutionary theories. Dr Burgess goes on from our solar system to remind readers that stable and precise clockwork motion characterises the galaxies. The over 100 billion stars in our Milky Way and billions of other galaxies in the universe are not a mass of confusion but an astonishingly well-ordered and well-designed clockwork.

There is an urgent need for a book like this which provides clear biblical teaching on the purpose of the stars and the questions of extra terrestrial life.

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