

faith in  
**focus**

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Reformed Churches  
of New Zealand

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To the ENDS of  
the EARTH

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# Editorial

In the world of Reformed and Foreign missions, the RCNZ is a small player amidst some bigger and more experienced church federations such as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church USA, the United Reformed Church in North America and the Canadian Reformed Church.

Currently, we have a missionary, the Rev Alan Douma, on the mission field in Papua New Guinea. This particular mission is quite internationally diverse, with involvement from churches in Canada, Australia and New Zealand co-operating on the same field in order to bring the biblical, Reformed Faith to the people of PNG.

Churches such as the OPC have a strong focus on foreign missions and keep their members informed through their magazine *New Horizons* where articles about missions in Uganda (Mbale and Karamoja), Asia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, etc., as well as the ongoing work at home, feature in many issues. In the Lord's providence, the RCNZ has been able to work alongside the OPC in Uganda for over a decade by sending ministers to teach in the Knox Theological College and preach in the local churches.

Our involvement in these two fields is possible partly because of our membership in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), where we associate with many other Reformed federations from all around the globe. The ICRC has been a good forum to get to know other reformed churches, to encourage and learn from each other in regard to missions and the changing face of missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The biggest spin-off, is that the Word of the Sovereign LORD is extending to the ends of the earth, and we in the RCNZ may be privileged to be part of it.

Our contributors write about the foreign missions they are, or have been involved in.

Miss Janice Reid writes about the changes that affect missions.

Mr Heon Soo Kim (from the Kosin Church in Korea) reports about the ICRC.

Mr Anthony Curto looks at missions across two continents.

Mrs Sally Davey reports on hopeful signs of reformation in China's churches.

Mrs Jenny Waldron considers five important principles to serve the Lord.

Mrs Sonja Vorster shares an honest assessment of her vocation as a mother.

Mr Guy M. Richard writes on *Speaking the Truth in Love*.

Mr John Goris remembers Czech national hero, Jan Hus and the 600th anniversary of his execution at the stake.

*World in focus* takes a look at some events around the world.

The *Gleanings* section of *Focus on home* has returned.

Mr Samuel Green considers the depiction of Christians in the Qur'an.

Mr Cornelis van Dam writes about the Islamisation of France.

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

**NB:** In line with common publishing practice *Faith in Focus* reserves the right to publish the names of all contributors with their articles, unless compelling reasons are given to the editor for not doing so. This applies to both print and online versions.

# Missions: what next?

**Janice Reid**

### The world is changing

When I was young, I collected stamps from exotic countries. The ones I liked best were from Czechoslovakia. Maybe my interest in such places formed the seed of my interest in missions; I became a believer, by God's grace, at age 13. I wanted to be a missionary ever since I was 14 years of age.

In those days it all seemed simple. A Christian who responded to the Great Commission would go out, "from the West to the rest," supported by his or her church. They would live in a different country, culture, context. They would tell people about Jesus.

But so much is different, now. The Good News remains the same, but the circumstances of mission are very different. I'd like to look at a few that have a great impact on missions, and should cause us to re-think our strategy and methods of outreach. I don't have answers, really ... but plenty of questions!

### Changing places: moving people

Migration has caused a huge change in the global landscape – and the context in which we do missions. There are many reasons for migration; civil war and ethnic violence is only part of the picture. People migrate to escape from religious persecution – such as the Yazidis of Iraq<sup>1</sup>. Others migrate for economic reasons. A recent example is the flood of refugees from Africa to Europe, often travelling on unseaworthy vessels and in great danger, in hopes of a better life. In 2014, the migrant tide carried 219,000 people from Africa to Europe; and some 3,500 are known to have died along the way<sup>2</sup>.

This massive, global movement of people must lead us to redefine the traditional areas of mission: even if we're sent from "the West," where are we sent

to? Many people who were born in areas that traditionally received missionaries, have moved out – permanently. So perhaps we should be redefining missions as something that happens not across borders, but across spaces<sup>3</sup> – into the places where people of other cultures live

(even if that's in our own home town!).

What questions does this pose for us? I can think of a few: should I learn about Islam, so I can witness more wisely and compassionately to my Muslim neighbours? Should I eat at that Indian restaurant more often so I can start



*Culturally and religiously, Asia is a diverse mission field.*

conversations with the owners, and befriend them for the sake of Christ? I know of one couple who did just that – with the result that a mainland-Chinese family who owned a café in New Zealand became believers.

#### Changing influence: Christians in the Majority World<sup>4</sup>

As of 2011, 60.8% of the world's Christians<sup>5</sup> live in the Majority World – the part we used to call the “Global South,” or the “Third World”. And, almost half of the top missionary-sending countries are also from the Majority World<sup>6</sup>.

But this is only part of the picture. Paul Borthwick, in his book *Western Christians in Global Mission* focuses on the North American church, but several of his points are salient for New Zealand Christians. Borthwick points out that churches in the West may be:

- Concerned with their own affairs, rather than with mission
- Far wealthier than churches in Majority World countries
- Overwhelmed with the range of options for spending their time (and their dollars) – whether it's local outreach, church activities, or missions
- Plagued by a lack of awareness or lack of accurate information about international events, and thus prone to oversimplify political and even religious issues
- Unwilling to sacrifice comfort and personal safety for the sake of the gospel<sup>7</sup>.



A land of contrasts. A radio antenna shares the skyline with the prayer tower of a mosque.

If true, these points raise their own set of questions about the future of missions. *Can we go on with the traditional paradigm, where western countries control the wealth, make the decisions, and generally hold the reins of missionary endeavour? Probably not.* Borthwick states, “Power now lies in places where it didn't exist before, and we are the ones called to get used to it”<sup>8</sup>.

To some, this very circumstance justifies the idea that westerners are no longer needed overseas: “there are plenty of Christians there already, and the need is great at home.” Yes, there is a need at home; but there is also still a great need for us to be involved in cross-cultural missions.

Churches in countries like New Zealand have a unique range of gifts to bring to the global Body of Christ. Our generosity and economic wealth can facilitate activities that national believers could never undertake for themselves. Our experience and resources in training can encourage believers in other countries to deepen their faith – helping people to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus (2 Peter 3:18).

And by God's grace, there is fruit as His people plant and water at His behest (1 Cor 3:6-9). At the first ICRC meeting I attended, held in Thailand in 2003, a Taiwanese minister approached me. He asked if I knew Reverend Opelaar, who had served in Taiwan in the 1970s. I didn't, so the minister went on to explain. He thanked me on behalf of his denomination; he said it would not exist if it hadn't been for the service and sacrifice of Rev. Opelaar and those like him, all those years ago. People still remembered him fondly and with gratitude.

Above all, as Reformed people we have a precious and profound theological heritage that can be a great blessing to those in other nations who do not have the resources to grow without help. I've heard it said that 90 percent of the Christian resources in the world are only available to 10 percent of the Christians; so yes, we could stay home. But would it be fair?

#### Changing technology: introducing the internet

Earlier this year, Facebook reported that 1.39 billion people log into their network each month. So if Facebook was a country, it would be the most populous nation on earth – surpassing China's 1.36 billion people<sup>9</sup>. As Borth-

“One shortcoming of the technology revolution is how easy it is to fall in love with it! ... We must not lose our vision for those who don't have the technology.”

wick says, “Technology has introduced us to a world where we're just going through like, like, like, liking each other – that's a Facebook analogy, in case you didn't get it – but sacrificing relationships of substance”<sup>10</sup>.

Social media should give us pause when it comes to matters of faith. Tim Chester, in his thoughtful booklet “Will you be my Facebook friend?” describes some significant problems with our modern addiction<sup>11</sup>. One of them is the temptation to fake our online identities. This is not something reserved for perverts or stalkers: would *you* ever post a photo that was uncomplimentary? I wouldn't! On social media, people typically portray themselves in the way they would most like others to think of them. That means it's often hard to get past the image, to the truth. And that, in turn, makes evangelism more difficult – it's predicated on a person acknowledging the ugliness of sin and their need of a Saviour. It can still be done – but must be done carefully, with strategy and care.

Other forms of technology have also changed the missions equation. Last year I attended a conference that considered the electronic distribution

of media for evangelism. We had many sessions: how to record videos on an iPhone, mobile apps and ministry, website building, and more. I helped teach a workshop on radio; one attendee was a woman serving in a middle-Eastern country. She wanted to learn to produce Christian programmes so she could distribute them on micro-SD cards – for people to listen to in secret, on their cell-phones.

One shortcoming of the technology revolution is how easy it is to fall in love with it! Designing websites for outreach is great – but we need to remember our focus. If our aim is to reach the “unreached,” there are surely many internet users who are in that category. But some 60% of the world’s population still has no access to the internet<sup>12,13</sup>. In the rush to use the tech we love to reach out to the Christless, we must not lose our vision for those who don’t have the technology in the first place.

### Changing the techniques: short-term missions

Short term mission trips can expose people to things they would never see at home:

- Believers who are profoundly poor and yet experience joy amidst suffering
- People who love Jesus and yet face daily persecution
- Christians who speak openly about their faith in ways we never could in New Zealand.

The potential benefits of short-term trips are widely-promoted, and billions of dollars are spent each year, globally, on the planning and execution of such trips. But what are the benefits to those in the countries that short-termers visit? There surely can be benefits: I know one man who became a believer as a result of a basketball team that came to his country for just two weeks. He went on to seminary, then the pastorate, then became the international director of a well-established mission organisation.

But there is also a down-side, and not just in financial terms. In the Great Commission, Jesus told us to “make disciples” (Matthew 28:19-20). But how can that be done by somebody on a short-term trip, who visits a village for a day – and is scheduled to go to somewhere else the next day? As Borthwick says, “in the last century, the global church has excelled in making

converts ... we have not done a great job in making disciples<sup>14</sup>”. To fulfil the Great Commission, we need more than a short-term mentality: we need a commitment to the long term, to build relationships and live among those we serve.

Sadly, it’s common for people to go on a short-term mission trip but never follow through with continued prayer, giving, or long-term service. That’s not what short term trips should be. They take huge resources, not only the time and money of those who travel, but also weeks of advance planning in-country: time that *could* be spent helping those the host missionary has come to serve. Sadly, short-term trips that bring no lasting fruit are little more than “voluntourism”<sup>15</sup>.

And yet, there sometimes is a lasting benefit to short-term mission trips. Just this week I was speaking with an American who went on a short-term trip to encourage his friends on the mission field. While there, he felt the call of God to long-term service in missions. A dozen years later, he is a regional director within his organisation.

So, here are still more questions! Should we continue to promote short-term missions? In what way, and guided by what principles? It was recently pointed out to me that in the entire history of Christian mission, the short-term phenomenon is the first time mission has been done that is designed, primarily, to be of benefit to the “missionary.”

### The world is changing (still)

In these days, nothing is simple. Many missionaries go out from the “rest” as well as the West, but the call remains: to us in New Zealand, as well as to those in other countries. Mission is still necessary because God has told us to do it. There are specific tasks that we in New Zealand and other western countries are uniquely suited for, that can bless the church in the Majority World and help it grow deeper into conformity to the One Who Saves. And it’s also necessary, because He deserves the praise! Praise from all the people – in all the nations – all the time. “May the peoples praise you, O God; may *all* the peoples praise you!” (Psa 67:5, NIV)

### Notes

- 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdIEm1s6yhY>
- 2 AP International, 20 April 2015. “Survivor: Smugglers locked hundreds in hold of capsized boat.”



- 3 Cruz, G.T. “Expanding the boundaries, turning borders into spaces,” in Kalu, O.B., Vathanayagamony, P., Chia, E.K. (eds). (2010). *Mission after Christendom: Emergent Themes in Contemporary Mission*. Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago: Westminster John Knox Press. ePub edition.
- 4 That part of the world’s population living outside of Europe, North America, and Australasia. Rather than giving a judgment about the development status of these countries, “Majority World” simply refers to the fact that it constitutes the largest demographic block in the world. See Pocock, M., Van Rheenen, G., McConnell, D. (2005). *The changing face of world missions: engaging contemporary issues and trends*. Baker Academic. ePub edition, Sidebar 1.1.
- 5 <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/>
- 6 <http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2013/july/missionaries-countries-sent-received-csgc-gordon-conwell.html>
- 7 Borthwick, P. (2012). *Western Christians in Global Mission: What’s the Role of the North American Church?* IVP Books. ePub edition. Chapter Two: An Appraisal of the North American Church.
- 8 Borthwick, P. (2012). Part One (introduction): Where are we Now?
- 9 [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/28/facebook-biggest-country\\_n\\_6565428.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/28/facebook-biggest-country_n_6565428.html)
- 10 Borthwick, P. (2012), Part One.
- 11 Chester, T. (2013). *Will you be my Facebook friend? Social media and the Gospel*. 10 Publishing, Leyland, England. ePub edition.
- 12 <http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/>
- 13 Pocock et. Al., also note the dangers of introducing nontransferable rather than appropriate technology, creating tension in Majority World contexts between those who have access to certain technology and those who do not.
- 14 Borthwick, P. (2012). Chapter 1: The State of the World.”
- 15 Borthwick, P. (2012). Preface.

*Miss Janice Reid is a member of the Reformed Church of Hamilton and works as a radio trainer for Reach Beyond.*

# ICRC: When, where, what?

**Heon Soo Kim**

In October this year, Lord willing, the Asia-Pacific regional conference of the ICRC will be held in Korea. What is ICRC? The acronym stands for “International Conference of Reformed

Churches.” It is a group of denominations that adhere to the traditional Reformed theological standards, and which meets periodically (usually every four years) for mutual upbuilding and encouragement. This year’s theme at the Asia-Pacific regional conference will be “Baptism

and the Lord’s Supper.” The Rev Dirk van Garderen will attend as one of the keynote speakers.

Whenever ICRC is mentioned in the same sentence as “Korea,” I tend to think of the only ICRC member denomination I know in that country: Kosin. But there’s another, much smaller denomination: the Independent Reformed Church (IRC) – and they will be our host for this year’s meetings.

The IRC has four congregations, with a total membership of some 665 people (as of June 2014). It was formed in 1964, at a time when the Korean Presbyterian churches were in great turmoil in the aftermath of World War Two, and partly as the result of a schism within the Presbyterian church over the ecumenical movement, represented by the World Council of Churches (WCC). The new denomination took the name “independent” not to indicate a form of church government, but to declare themselves “liberated” or “free” of worldly influence.

In its early years, the growth of the church was guided by Dr. Hong Chun Kim, a reformed minister who was influential in the Korean churches since the 1940s.

Dr. Kim’s preaching focused on five points: first, what the gospel is; second, what a real spiritual life is – that is, how a believer is led by the Spirit; third, what the means of grace are; fourth, what the church is; and finally, what the Kingdom of God and Christian living in the world are. Dr. Kim’s teaching on these five subjects brought transformation – indeed, reformation, to the lives of those he ministered to<sup>1</sup>.

As you know, a reformed church that preaches the whole counsel of God cannot be founded in a day. It took almost a generation for the IRC to strike root in Korean soil, fertile to the Pentecostal movements, but very infertile to reformed teachings. The church that started in 1964 planted a second congregation in 1974, which in turn planted



*School Day at the Theological Academy, which is held at the Riverside Church.*



*Graduating class, 2014.*

a third congregation in 1990. In 2005 the fourth congregation was organized after ten years of planting work.

Since its inception, the IRC has worked hard to explore the riches of the Word and publish them for their fellow Christians in Korea. Since 1973 one hundred and thirty titles have been published and have sold a total of around five hundred thousand copies. Their best sellers are translations of the Catechisms!

This small federation established the Theological Academy in 2010, and the first four students graduated in 2014.

One of them is working in North East China with the OP China Missions. At present another four students from four denominations are studying at the Academy, one of whom was sent by the OP China Missions<sup>2</sup>.

We will be hosted by the small, but sincere and faithful federation, the IRC. It is into this context that delegates of churches who are ICRC members will come, by God's grace, in October this year, to enjoy fellowship and learn from each other. The conference will be hosted by the Riverside Church in Anyang.

#### References:

- Rev. Heon Soo Kim, Paper presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the IRC. Philadelphia, 2001.
- Rev. Heon Soo Kim, Introduction of the Independent Reformed Church (in Korea). Paper presented to the Sixth Assembly of the ICRC. Pretoria, 2005.
- Rev. Heon Soo Kim, Paper presented to the Eighth Assembly of the ICRC, Christchurch, 2009.
- Rev. Heon Soo Kim, Letter presented to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church General Assembly. 2014.

#### Notes

- 1 In July 2003, Dr Hong Chun Kim, founding minister of the IRC, was called home to be with His Lord and Saviour.
- 2 This is a ministry of the OPC (USA).

## To the ends of the earth (3)

# From Africa to Europe

### Tony Curto

I have been asked to write on the work of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Uganda, East Africa, and in German-speaking Europe. Many of you probably know something about our work in Uganda, since your churches have supported our mission through the labors of Barry and Anne James, Paul Archbald, Leanna Hoyt and John Rogers. What you may not know is some of the history and circumstances that led to our beginning a work in Uganda. God's providence always makes us marvel at how he works all things together for good.

In the fall of 1978 I was a student at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. There was a man there at that time named Kafa Sempangi. Kafa was a Ugandan refugee. The Lord in his good pleasure had brought an end to the reign of terror of Idi Amin, and Mr. Sempangi was to return home. In a chapel service he asked students to join him in a special mission to plant a Reformed and Presbyterian church in the capital city of Kampala. So in January 1979 a band of students went to Uganda and started First Presbyterian Church. Due to more politi-

cal struggles a concerted mission effort was not possible. In 1986 the situation improved and the bothers in Uganda asked the OPC to send a full time resident missionary. At that time it was not possible to send someone but through the labors of Dr. Henry Krabbendam a

relationship with the church in Uganda was maintained. Several years passed and then in the summer of 1993 the OPC decided to send a pastor, Bill Welzien, to survey the field and do some preaching. Plans were made and all was ready to go when pastor Welzien had to cancel



Tony and Kathleen Curto in Ethiopia.

his going. Mark Bube was in California at the time visiting a mission work in Tiajauna, Mexico. I also was visiting the work and Mark asked me if I could go. I agreed, not knowing it would change the labors of my ministry for the rest of my life. I was in Uganda preaching and teaching from July to mid August 1993.

Upon my return home I found out that the brothers in Uganda had requested that the OPC send me as a full time missionary to work with the Presbyterian Church in Uganda as a missionary evangelist in the Northeast District of

Mbale. After some consideration I asked the OPC to allow me to take my wife Kathleen to visit the field before I made a decision. They agreed and Kathleen and I visited Uganda in the summer of 1994. The story of our decision to go to Uganda is an amazing testimony to God's faithfulness to make His people willing in the day of His power – but that will have to be told at another time.

Kathleen and I arrived on the field in September 1995. The next nine years for us until the summer of 2004 is a story full of victories and defeats, trials and

blessings, crying and rejoicing, highs and lows, but always triumphs in the Lord Jesus. During our labors in Uganda we saw many conversions, churches planted, elders and deacons trained, a Christian primary school started, a theological school established, a medical clinic begun, a new mission station to evangelize another district erected and three Ugandan sons added to our family. Our God is glorious beyond words! Through those years we saw the mission in Uganda grow to be the largest mission work of the OPC. The OPC sent many fellow missionary families both short term and long term to these white fields of harvest as well as the RCNZ. But we shouldn't be surprised, for didn't Jesus say he would draw his people from every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue?

Kathleen and I left Uganda in 2004 but the work in East Africa continues. The OPC continues works in both Uganda and Ethiopia as well as maintaining contacts in Eritrea and Kenya; and the RCNZ continues to partner with us to see the gospel goes to all nations!

I have one more connection with the RCNZ and that is how I came to have the opportunity to work in German-speaking Europe. Through the contact of Paul and Sally Davey with Greenville Presbyterian Seminary a young Swiss lady, Miss Simone Buob, came to study for an MA in Christian Education. During her stay she became very close to our family. When she graduated and returned home she began attending a congregation of the Evangelical Reformed Church (Westminster Confession) in Rankweil, Austria. The summer after Simone's graduation Kathleen and I visited Switzerland. During our time there we visited the congregation. As a result of that visit I was able to establish a relationship with that congregation and others of the ERKWB that has grown to the place where the OPC has designated it as an exploratory mission field for future missionary labors. What all that will entail still remains to be seen. What we can marvel at is how through a simple contact God has bigger plans than we realize!

I will close with some personal thoughts. I do not know many of you brothers and sisters in the RCNZ but I realize that because of your prayers and the support of your churches' mission I have been truly blessed in my labors as a missionary. My wife and I thank you for your devotion to our Savior and His kingdom!



*A congregation in Ethiopia under canvas, coming to hear the gospel.*



*Tony Curto preaching in Rankweil church with pastor Reinhard interpreting for the congregation.*

Sally Davey

# The Reforming of China's Churches

As everyone knows, China has emerged as a major force in world affairs. In the past twenty years, the country has become an economic powerhouse; to the point that even the wealthiest nations, such as the United States, are increasingly reliant on China as a source of finance. In fact, it worries many international observers. Will China begin to flex its military, as well as its economic muscle? The sight of China's President watching the recent parade of Russian military hardware as the guest of Mr Putin had many concerned. What if China joins forces with a newly aggressive Russia and becomes a super-threat on the world scene?

But what if, instead, China becomes a powerful force for good on the world scene? Right now, there is potential for that to happen, in the providence of God. China is home to some of the fastest-growing Christian churches in the world – and is seeing an enormous proliferation of numbers of churches. In a November 1<sup>st</sup> 2014 article the *Economist* magazine noted that:

*"It is hard even to guess at the number of Christians in China. Official surveys seek to play down the figures, ignoring the large number who worship in house churches. By contrast, overseas Christian groups often inflate them. There were perhaps 3m Catholics and 1m Protestants when the party came to power in 1949. Officials now say there are between 23m and 40m, all told. In 2010 the Pew Research Centre, an American polling organisation, estimated there were 58m Protestants and 9m Catholics. Many experts, foreign and Chinese, now accept that there are probably more Christians than there are members of the 87m-strong Communist Party. Most are evangelical Protestants."*<sup>1</sup>

Most of us have heard of the rapidly-growing house churches, meeting as they

do because, for most of China's communist history, it has been illegal for Christians to meet in unregistered churches (*ie* those refusing to conform to the "Three Self" movement which stressed loyalty to China's communist regime, and which would characteristically adapt its theology to fit official Communist Party doctrine). House churches, usually small congregations, loosely organised, attracted much less official attention, and were easier to hide if persecution erupted. But because they are independent from one another (thus lacking accountability), and are often led by young Christians without theological training, they have been prone to fall prey to false teaching. Chinese Christianity – like African – has sometimes been described as "a mile wide and half an inch deep."

But perhaps this is all changing, too. A May 2009 blog post by Andrew Brown in the *Guardian* newspaper commented on the rapid spread of Calvinism in Chinese churches, particularly among

the educated urban elite. This is happening fastest in the top universities, where "prodigies of learning and translation" lead the way. For instance, Wang Xiaochao, a philosopher at one of Beijing's universities, has translated Augustine's *Confessions* and *City of God* into Chinese directly from Latin. Singapore minister May Tan, whom Andrew Brown interviewed, predicted that "very soon" Christians could become the majority of university students. The Reformed faith, seen as providing intellectual substance, and being worthy of respect, is winning favour among Christians.<sup>2</sup>

A book published only last year, *China's Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity, and Ministry in the Next Christendom*, edited by Bruce Baugus, a professor of philosophy and theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, makes exciting and encouraging reading. It chronicles the growth of interest in – and adherence to – Reformed theology and Presbyterian church prac-



Morning Light Christian bookstore in Beijing.

tice in China. Much of what follows in this article is drawn from Baugus's book.

### The early years

Calvinism has actually been present in China for a long time. In fact, the first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison, was a Presbyterian from Scotland who worked for the East India Company between 1807 and 1834 in Macao, one of the few port cities where foreigners were allowed to live at that time. Though Chinese were forbidden to teach foreigners Chinese on pain of death, it was Morrison's great achievement to produce a Chinese-English dictionary and a translation of the entire Bible into Chinese.

After China was forced open to foreign trade after defeat in the Opium Wars, missionaries were allowed much greater access to the Chinese population. Eventually, almost the entire eastern seaboard saw the presence of western missionaries and the establishing of Christian churches. Both Presbyterian and Re-

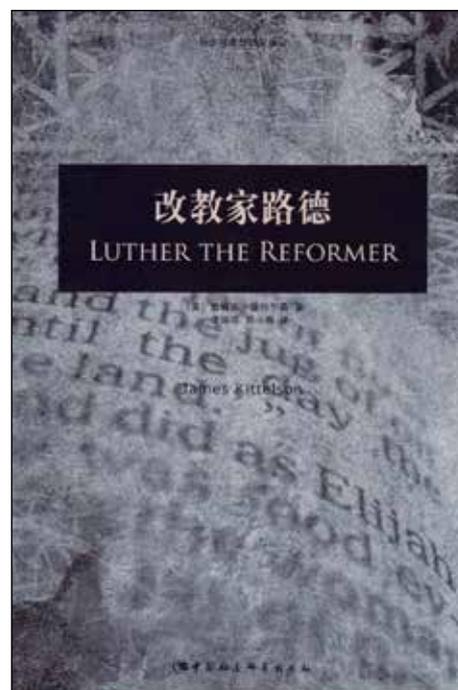
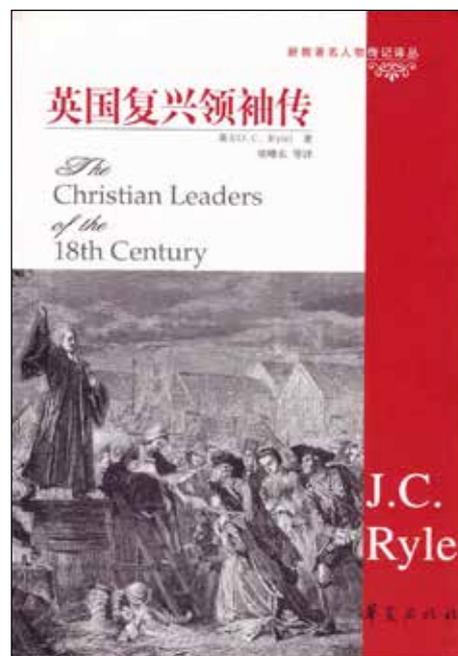
formed churches in North America and Britain (and even New Zealand) sent more and more missionaries during the course of the nineteenth century. Some churches favoured making the Chinese church plants part of the sending denomination, while others, like the Southern Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS), encouraged the new churches to train and support their own leadership. Seminaries (with foreign teachers) were also established.

Over time, though, and especially during the early decades of the twentieth century, the foreign Presbyterian and Reformed denominations were becoming theologically liberal, and as a consequence, many of their missionaries were also increasingly liberal. (One famous example was American Presbyterian, Pearl S. Buck). This affected the Chinese churches, too, as at this stage they were ill-equipped to deal with the sophistication of the error. But soon the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, the coming of World War Two, and finally the Chinese Communist revolution forced almost all foreign missionaries out of China. From about 1950 to 1990 the Chinese church, thanks to the Communist government's hostility to both Christianity and foreign influence (which were connected in their mind anyway), had to fend for themselves. Of this development, an Orthodox Presbyterian Church minister who has been serving in China now for a decade, has observed:

"One consequence... is that it purged China of theologically liberal missionaries. Since then, many orthodox evangelical missionaries have returned to China, but relatively few theological liberals have. However tragic the expulsion of orthodox men and women from China was, the very real danger posed to the church in China by western liberal theology was checked. Likewise, however much we may mourn the destruction of much good Christian literature and the theological famine the Communist Revolution produced, it also rid the country of most of the harmful Christian literature as well, leaving the Chinese church with one major document: the Bible."<sup>3</sup>

### And today...

Since the 1990s, the government has increasingly relaxed its attitude to law-abiding Christians, so long as they don't meet in too large a group (thirty seems to be the "safe" upper limit) and so long as they don't pose a political threat. Though, as everyone acknowledges, it



Examples of books that are translated and available for sale in China. J.C. Ryle's book "Christian Leaders of the 18th Century", and "Luther the Reformer" by Kittleson.

depends on where you live – and the government's attitude could change suddenly at any time.

Some, who have been following Calvinistic teaching, are considering the benefits that presbyterian forms of church government could bring them. In the Chinese setting it has been common for house churches and networks of house churches for one strong and highly-respected leader to become, in function, a bishop. Those who are giving Reformed teaching serious thought argue that a plurality of elders would serve the churches better. In some cases, as churches study the matter, elders become convicted, and

“Should China, with an increasingly significant Christian influence at work in its culture, become an influence for good in our world, it would not be the first time in the history of the church.”

dominant ones have given up the leading positions they have held as they strive for a more consistent biblical church order. Naturally, increasing partnership between churches and a deepening of formal accountability tends to attract increased government attention; and for some it has led to church closures or even the imprisonment of their pastors. This has led some observers to claim that China is “not yet ready” for Presbyterianism. Nonetheless, those in China committed to it argue that Presbyterianism should be adopted for no other reason than that it is biblical.

A great need at the present time is theological training. A very common route to the ministry is simply to be recognised within a house church as a leader; maybe even only a handful of years after a Christian’s conversion. A big problem for theological education is that seminaries, by their very nature, involve concentrations of Christians, and thus, potentially, attract attention. It is unwise to advertise, and so many hear of the seminaries that exist by word of mouth. Bruce Baugus describes one typical seminary he recently visited. About 60 students were packed into two rooms of a converted apartment; the instructor standing at the apex of the L-shaped arrangement. The students took copious notes, and were enjoying their few weeks of instruction. (They come several times a year, leaving their families and churches behind, but greatly appreciating the fellowship of the other students). The library consisted mostly of photocopied volumes, as the originals were in safe-keeping as protection against confiscation.

One thing that the Chinese churches desperately need is suitably qualified theologians; Chinese men who can teach Reformed theology in their own culture. No Reformed seminary is currently prepared to offer a doctoral programme; and those who are sent to study overseas seldom return to China: there are better standards of living and more political freedom in the countries they go to for study.

Related to this lack is the wider problem of the scarcity of good, Reformed Christian literature. Serious work on the publication of good material was done by missionaries in the later nineteenth century, but in the early decades of the twentieth century more attention seems to have been given to building schools and hospitals – the idea being then that the proclamation of the gospel

should come after the introduction of western culture. Commentators like historian Kenneth Scott Latourette have observed the respect held for learning and the printed page in Chinese culture; and that more should have been done to produce it. However, in the average Christian bookshop in China these days, save for translations of writers like Paul Tripp and John Piper, much of the offering is the poor-quality literature we know only too well here.

This is largely due to the fact that, to be legally sold in China, a book needs a Beijing-issued ISBN number, and these are expensive (\$US3000-4000) and slow to obtain. The Chinese government also expects books to be sold at low prices, so that the rural poor can afford them. Thus it is a daunting task for a publisher to produce a book in China with any hope of profit. Christian publishers feel the pressure, and not many solid, Reformed titles look promising enough in terms of potential sales.

However, this is where a very exciting project came into being; one that I remember reading about some years ago in the *Banner of Truth* magazine<sup>4</sup>. Phil Remmers, founder and director of the Robert Morrison project, writes about it at length in *China’s Reforming Churches*. While it is true that books can be published underground (and there are advantages in this), there are also disadvantages such as the inability of publishers to promote them or distribute them widely. Books can also be published electronically and made available online – to be sure, there are more than a billion cell phone users in China, including, it was predicted, 500 million smartphone users by early 2014. However, most of the huge numbers of rural poor do not have Internet access; and online publication would exclude the many rural churches from literature disseminated by this means.

What the Robert Morrison project does is facilitate the publishing of good Reformed books by channelling the funds necessary for translating and arranging ISBN numbers etc. This also helps fledgling Reformed publishers in China. Remmers writes that for approximately \$US1 million, fifty to sixty Reformed titles could be translated and legally published in China – and that publishing contracts could be signed tomorrow if funding were available. What an opportunity – for such a hungry Christian population, in such a pivotal country...

Should China, with an increasingly

significant Christian influence at work in its culture, become an influence for good in our world, it would not be the first time in the history of the church. God has turned hostile empires into instruments of the gospel of peace several times before; and there is no reason why he would not do it again. Instead of fearing China, why not pray that its churches would prosper?

#### Notes

- 1 <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21629218-rapid-spread-christianity-forcing-official-rethink-religion-cracks>
- 2 Andrew Brown, “Chinese Calvinism flourishes”, *The Guardian*, Wednesday 27 May 2009.
- 3 Michael M., “History of the Western Presbyterian and Reformed Mission” in Bruce P. Baugus, ed., *China’s Reforming Churches: Mission, Polity and Ministry in the Next Christendom* (Reformation Heritage Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 2014), pp. 56-7
- 4 See *Banner of Truth*, no. 568 (January 2011), pp. 8-13.

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## EARLY MORNING RUSH

Downtown Wellington  
a-rush to get a-move  
cars moving swift  
then slow  
adrift  
in parking groove

Train-driven workers  
in droves the station leave  
dispersing through the city  
rushing with “brol and brief”

Sidewalks a-stir with people  
coffee-cups in hand  
symbols of current fashion  
flooding a thirsty trend

School-girls a-foot and giggling  
some grouped and some alone  
the groups sometimes assorted  
of racial flair a-prone

Come wind, come weather  
a-blow or not a-blow  
Wellington’s weekday scene  
something that’s sure to grow  
on you: Oh yes! I know.

*Wellington, May, 2004*

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## Feminine focus

Jenny Waldron

# Seek first His Kingdom ...

A woman may have times in her life when she is faced with the huge decision (and indecision) about her future. She may have just finished high school and now what? Should she go onto University and study and is it even wise for her to do so? Should she stay home and care for her family and siblings? What skills does she need for marriage and raising a family? Or perhaps the children have all left home. Should she begin working in a paid job, or be working for the good of the church and/or family? Should she pursue a career? What is her calling and vocation? What talents and gifts has God given?

As a Christian woman these are difficult questions, and require some careful prayer and wisdom to discern the way forward, however, there are principles laid down for us in God's Word.

**Principle #1** - Seek first the Kingdom of God:<sup>1</sup>

God has called all believers to faith<sup>2</sup> and good works, so let's look at the first priority in our lives as children of God. No matter what you feel that you are being called to do, it is vital that you seek the Lord. Seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you. Seek God.<sup>3</sup> Your identity is never reliant on what you do, whether it is a stay-at-home mum, a nurse, scientist or doctor. Your identity is in Christ. You are a child of God.<sup>4</sup> There rests the answer to the "who are you?" question. So whatever vocation, job or endeavour you engage in and whether you are married or not, you are a child and heir of God through Christ.<sup>5</sup>

**Principle #2** - A Wife and Mother:

In Genesis, God created woman to be a helpmeet for her husband and for them to be fruitful and to multiply. Being a helpmeet and a mother is the norm for a Christian woman. I am not saying that all Christian women should be married and have children, God may have a different plan for your life, but being a wife and mother is the norm. It

is a high calling and challenging and yet, so rewarding. The remuneration may not be high in a dollar value, but to be an encouraging, loving wife and mother, a woman who makes a house a home, is beyond value. Sadly, however, we live in a world that suffers from the Fall, and in a society where family values are tipped upside down, children are often treated like commodities, marriage is scorned and despised and feminism threatens to stamp its ugly foot on any woman who

school and who do any kind of job because they are pretty sure they are going to be married very soon, so they don't need to or want to do anything particular in the meantime. Sadly, several of these young ladies have found themselves in no-mans land (literally) well into their 20's, feeling like they have wasted the last several years, and they are then having to re-think what they are going to do in the future, which seems to be stretching out in front of them like a



deigns to stay at home and to look after her children.

Let us not fall into the trap of buying into the feminist agenda of "empowerment" for women at all costs. Our marriages and families should not and cannot be bought for any price. These are precious in the sight of the Lord. If the Lord blesses you with a husband and children, these are to be your highest priorities. You may need to work but first and foremost your task is to build a godly home.

**Principle #3** - Redeem the Time:<sup>6</sup>

I have met many girls who have left

desert! At what stage does she decide to do "something with her life" instead of being in "limbo land"? Marriage and motherhood don't necessarily happen quickly or even at all for some.

One of the gifts God gives to us is time. We are not to squander the time He has given to us but to redeem that time. How does that fit with a young woman looking for a vocation or job? Or an older woman whose children are all going to school or who have now all left home?

Whether you are 17, 27 or 57, develop a close relationship with Jesus. If

you are close to Jesus and trusting Him, you will be content with the present, planning for the future, and resting in His plans for you.

If you are single, you have precious time that a married woman doesn't. Use this time to further God's kingdom, by studying God's word, participating in Bible studies, helping in church activities, doing mission work, visiting the sick and elderly, getting alongside other women. This use of time may also apply to women whose children have left home and they are debating whether or not to return to the workforce.

**Principle #4** - Be Christ-like:<sup>7</sup>

Whatever vocation you find yourself in, be Christ-like. Be diligent in your work and study efforts. Be kind and gentle toward others. Be self-controlled in the use of your time, money and leisure pursuits.

**Principle #5** - Use the talents and gifts God has given you:<sup>8</sup>

God has given each of us talents

work to fund your studies instead of taking out a student loan. You may go on missions trips or try some short courses to determine a direction for the future.

We need Christian women in all walks of life: mid-wives, doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, scientists, concert pianists or flautists, engineers and architects as well as nurses and teachers. Many jobs and vocations these days, require some sort of formal qualification and hence the need to study.

Further study: Some women choose a vocation that requires further study at poly-technic or university. Some parents are reluctant to allow their children especially their daughters to attend these secular institutions and for good reason. These places of learning are thoroughly worldly, and therefore, anti-Christian. Having said that, if we acknowledge that, and the young woman has a strong faith in the Lord, a supportive church and family, then they are in a good position to make the most of the learning that

until well into her 20's, she diligently applied her mind and hands to spending the time wisely.

Home-based work: A woman may be talented in creating some sort of craft, e.g. Sewing or knitting or making earrings. With many people doing their shopping online, it is possible to sell your work from home. Caring for other's children in your home, baking, tutoring, hair-dressing, book-keeping, writing, painting, taking in laundry, are some ways of earning money from home. For example, I have a friend who works from home as a music teacher and physiotherapist.

Part-time and full-time work: There can be a number of reasons why a woman may enter the work-force part or full-time. To earn money for study or living. To use a particular skill or talent. To help the household budget. To become proficient in a field or career. Whatever job you are in always remember the principles of God's Word. If you are married and considering working outside the home what is the main principle to keep in mind? Is this job still going to enable me to fulfil my God-given role of helpmeet to my husband and mother to my children (if you are a mother)? Some women re-enter the work-force when they have raised a family but now there is (so it seems) nothing for them to do. Before jumping into full-time employment, look around the church and see if there is need for your skills and experience. There will be! Young mums need encouragement and help in loving their husbands, submitting to them and in raising children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.<sup>9</sup> Some women have health issues or are struggling emotionally and/or with depression. They need prayer and care, and maybe practical help too. Widows and single women would appreciate someone to get alongside them and spend time with them. Maybe you could meet with another woman once a week for an hour, for prayer and Bible reading. You may like to volunteer to baby-sit so that mums can enjoy a Bible study uninterrupted, or lead a study.

God may well call you to full-time employment to spread His gospel through you. Pray about what God wants you to do and how can you be of service to Him. God may call you to work alongside your husband. Any kind of work, if you are married, ought to always be with your husband's blessing and authority. Discuss through the



and gifts that He wants us to use, for His glory. Sometimes it takes a while to find the pathway which best employs our gifts. We may need to push against some 'doors' and see which one opens, sometimes we may be employed in one area so that we know that isn't what we should be doing. Occasionally it may take several years to see the fruition of training and experience to get us to where we are fulfilling our vocation.

Taking a "gap" year or two, may be helpful. This is a time that can help consolidate what you want and don't want to study/work at. You may be able to

such a place can provide them. Studying via correspondence or internet is another option; it still requires discernment and also a high degree of self-motivation.

Learn skills: I have a young friend whose desire was to get married and have children. So, from the time she finished school, she learnt wall-papering, tiling, house-painting (inside and out), learnt about and practiced healthy eating, gardening, knitting and many other skills she thought would be helpful in her marriage. She mentored younger girls and studied God's Word, and helped her parents. Although she didn't marry

ramifications. Talk about how this will impact him and/or the family.

**Money:** The money a woman brings into the home may be helpful, but always the priority is to be to supporting husband and children. Before looking for work, consider whether there are changes in your lifestyle that may help you to cut costs and live on one wage. Op-shopping, running only one car, turning off the lights more often, using less hot water, walking instead of driving, down-sizing house or mortgage (or both). These things may enable you to live within a single-income budget,

but if not, and a woman needs to work, still keep to the principles stated above.

God's plans are wonderful. I never dreamed I would be a pastor's wife and stay-at-home mum with seven children. What an adventure it has and continues to be! Use the time given to you, to further Christ's kingdom. Your vocation in life may not be quite what you envisioned but if you seek His kingdom first and trust Him, you will find joy, satisfaction and peace in whatever your endeavour. Remember that your identity and life is in Christ. There will be hard times and tears, along with joy

and fulfilment, in whatever vocation you choose. Its called LIVING in a broken world. Pray, seek good counsel from people you trust, redeem the time given to you and be diligent in whatever you are called to do!

- 1 Matt 6:33
- 2 Gal 2:16
- 3 Col 3:2
- 4 Gal 4:4-7
- 5 Eph 1:3-14
- 6 Eph 5:15-17
- 7 Col 3:12-15
- 8 Col 3:17, Rom 12:6-8
- 9 Titus 2:3-5

## My Vocation as a Mother

### Sonja Vorster

My vocation is called many things. I am a homemaker, a stay-at-home mum, and/or a housewife. This is a vocation that is largely undervalued and not particularly popular in the present time. It does not really fit with the secular views of gaining success or standing in the workforce or in society. It is thought to be a bit old fashioned and selfish even ... a capable, able bodied woman who is not in the workforce and not contributing to the household income. However, when considered from a biblical perspective the vocation of being a homemaker entails more than meets the eye.

I am a mother and a wife and these roles/callings play an important part in my vocation as a homemaker. Apart from the basic and physical needs of the family (like healthy meals, clean clothes etc) that need to be met, my most important tasks are to be a wife to my husband and to raise our three children together with him, in the fear of the Lord. And a sinful mother raising three sinful children in the fear of the Lord is a challenge to say the least!

In this article I have expressed my views, my struggles and the joys of my vocation and I hope that others may find encouragement from it. Not because I have described my successful

endeavours as a homemaker, but because our Lord's power is made perfect in our weakness.

### My greatest struggles as a homemaker

I have a very good idea about the kind of home I want my family to have. I want to create a home where prayer is frequent, where the Bible is read often, where the values being taught can be related to a verse or verses in the Bible, where discussions about our dependence on the Lord Jesus are part of the thread that makes up the fabric of a typical day in the Vorster household. However, creating some sort of structure in what can be an ever-changing and often chaotic setting with little children is a challenge at times.

It is not that I don't have the resources ... the Bible has a lot to say about the kind of wife God expects me to be and there is a lot written in the Bible directly relating to instructing our children. We were also fortunate enough to have been able to do a course called *Shepherding a Child's Heart*, which was the answer to many of our prayers for wisdom in parenting. But I sometimes struggle with putting the theory into practice. I don't always know how to use a situation to teach biblical values, and by the time I have figured out the appropriate response the kids have already moved on to the next offensive and infuriating thing to say or do. However, it is very likely the same behaviour will be repeated, and





*The Vorster family – Jacob and Sonja with children Jacob Jr, Benjamin and Haley.*

the next time around I will hopefully be better prepared.

I want to be a patient mother who is quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, but the reality is that I am not *that* patient. When we have a meal and I turn around, just to get the tomato sauce, and by the time I turn back my 3 and 5 year olds are having a sword fight with their forks while the youngest is meticulously covering the part of the counter where he is sitting in sausage meat ... I am not always patient. Patience is something that is very necessary as a mother of young children and it is a weakness of mine. It is something that I have to work on daily to try and overcome.

In my calling as a mother I have six little eyes on me for the majority of my waking hours. We are called to be an example to others, to let our light shine before men so that they may see our good deeds and praise our Father in heaven. So when my 2 year old waddles down the hall impatiently telling his sister off in a tone that does not reflect the qualities that we as Christians are to exhibit ... and I recognise those words as mine, I know that I have failed at being the example to others that God calls me to be.

It is a daily struggle to try to overcome my personal weaknesses in order to model what being a Christian looks like to my children.

### **The joys of a vocation of service**

My roles as a wife and mother involve serving others. A vocation of service can be used by God to provide great personal blessings.

There are many positive aspects to being a Christian homemaker. I get to spend time with my kids every day and I get to know and be involved in what it is that makes them tick. I get to enjoy daily the blessing of raising the children that God is graciously lending to us and of sharing experiences with them.

I have also found that there is the added blessing of being able to share some of both my responsibilities and experiences with my husband and best friend, and of knowing that we are both working towards the same goals.

The Bible has very specific instructions on what my role as a homemaker is to include. In Titus 2 it is written that I should love my husband and children, be self-controlled and pure, be busy at home and be kind and subject to my husband. I am called to raise my children in the Lord and to be a good wife to my husband. It gives me a sense of satisfaction knowing that I am doing something that God calls me to do.

I love my calling. While I do not wake up refreshed and rearing to go every morning, I can honestly say that I have not woken up a single day in my vocation thinking ... "I really don't want to do this today". It obviously has

aspects to it that I do not particularly enjoy ... like piles of washing that seem never ending, a kitchen floor that seems to never be clean no matter how often I sweep it ... and the feeling that since late 2010 I have endlessly been repeating "Sit down, turn around on your chair and eat your dinner". There are many repetitive things that need doing every day, but I don't really mind doing them because they are just part of the picture, not the whole painting.

“What God has given me to do, I am to do to the best of the abilities that He has blessed me with, for the glory of His name.”

I am called to give myself fully to the work of the Lord knowing that my labour is not in vain. At this point in my life the work God has called me to do includes washing and vacuuming and endlessly building puzzles with little teddy bears on them, while matching

the enthusiasm of a 3 year old girl. I do not get it right all of the time and some days I don't get it right at all. I have to put my trust in God and rely on the almighty power of His Holy Spirit to overcome my sinful nature day by day as I try to be an example for my

children, modelling the behaviour and heart of one of God's people.

I have been blessed with satisfaction in my vocation. God has used it to teach me a lot about the grace, mercy, forgiveness and the strength that can be found in Him. He has enabled me to grow spiritually while doing what He has called me to do, as I keep relying on His grace in the face of my weaknesses and failures. This is what God calls me to do and He graciously gives me a real sense of joy and contentment doing it.

### **The effects of a Christian world view on my experience of being a homemaker**

The dictionary definition of a homemaker is "a person, especially a housewife who manages a home". I guess from a secular perspective that is pretty much it ... in a nutshell. It makes it easier to understand the 'just a housewife' comments society likes to throw our way. After all, there is not much of a challenge in the repetition of changing nappies, doing washing and cooking dinner. The secular world does not even really 'rate' my vocation as work. There is no pay check or hourly rate for being a homemaker. When we decided that I was to stay home with our kids instead of going back to work, my colleagues wanted to know how I could "just throw my 'career' away like that"?

However, as a Christian I know that there is much more to being a homemaker than the accompanying chores. And I think that this is probably true of most vocations ... God calls us to be more than what the title of the job entails from a secular viewpoint. Once you are blessed enough to be able to put the word 'Christian' in front of any job title or role, that changes things. I am a *Christian* homemaker. There are specific things that God expects of me in this vocation. There are specific promises that I have made as a wife on the day I married before the Lord and as a mother of God's covenant children when they were baptised.

This is what God has given me to do, and I am to do it to the best of the abilities that He has blessed me with, for the glory of His name.

*Sonja Vorster is a wife and mother and a member of the Pukekohe Reformed Church. This article is an adaptation of a presentation she made at a series of seminars at the Pukekohe Church on the subject of Vocation and Work.*

## Speaking the Truth in Love

**Guy M. Richard**

One of the Scriptural passages that is subject to great misunderstanding within the church is Ephesians 4:15. What exactly does it mean for us to speak the truth in love? Many, if not all, of us have been on the receiving end of hurtful remarks made by a brother or a sister under the guise of speaking the truth in love. Does Ephesians 4:15 give us the right to hurt others with the things that we say just because they are true? Does it mean that we should always make the truth known in every situation and never remain silent under any circumstance?

Quite simply, I think the key to answering these questions and, thus, to applying Ephesians 4:15 in our lives is the word love. Since we are to speak the truth in love, that means love-as biblically defined – must control our speaking. If love is defined as doing what is best for the loved one and not what is most convenient or even best for oneself, this will directly affect our truth-speaking in at least two significant ways: it will affect how we speak the truth, and it will affect what truth we decide to speak and what truth we decide to leave unspoken.

If love is what is driving us to speak to others, we will, first of all, be concerned about how we speak. We will seek to watch the words that we use as well as the attitudes, motives, and tones of voices with which we speak them. We will strive not to give offense by the way we speak the truth. This is precisely what Solomon is talking about in Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Second, if love drives us to speak to others, we will also exercise restraint in the truth that we choose to speak. We will recognise that "speaking the truth in love" sometimes means saying nothing at all, as it seems to on at least two occasions in the life and ministry of Jesus. Both Matthew 5:38-40 and

27:11-14 teach us that there are times when it is better for us to remain silent than to speak the truth, either because the individual involved is not yet ready to hear the truth or because saying it would do more harm than good. Whatever the reason may be, the point is that love for others ought to cause us to think very carefully about what we say before we say it. We need to examine our intentions. Are we really chiefly concerned for the best interest of the other person? Or is it a selfish desire to clear the air or get things off our chest?

No doubt, there are times when the best interests of others will require us to speak the truth in ways that may sting. But we need to be very careful and very prayerful in those situations and in every situation – to ensure, as much as we can, that we are motivated by love and not by selfish pride.

*Dr. Guy M. Richard is senior minister of First Presbyterian Church in Gulfport, Miss., and author of *The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford*.*

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# The life and times of JAN HUS

**(1360-1415)**

## John Goris

The Reformation of the Church stands out in our minds as having started on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1517.

On that day Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the chapel door at Wittenberg in Germany. That will be 500 years ago in two years' time.

However, the roots of the Reformation were already alive and well several centuries before that time. Things did not go well for the Church, and many people were conscious of that.

The papal leadership in Rome was experiencing corruption in many ways, even to the point of having two rival popes at the same time, viz. one at Rome, and one at Avignon (France).

Besides, Christianity in the Balkan lands and in the Middle East was threatened by the spreading empire of the Ottoman Turks. In China, where the Mongol empire was eventually broken up, centuries of Christian influence were undone, and in the Middle East the remnant of Mongolian leaders became Muslims.

The internal corruption in the Church stirred up discontent in Western Europe. Various groups arose who sought reformation and renewal. In Italy there were the Waldensians under Peter Waldo, a group persecuted but yet persevering

even till today. In France the Cathari and other "purist" sects e.g. Albigenses, suffered severe persecution and were virtually wiped out: over a million followers! In the Netherlands the group of "The Brethren of the Common Life" arose and persevered. Thomas 'a Kempis became the well-known leader there.

There was a growing desire to return to the Scriptures among leading figures such as John Wycliffe, who began to translate the Bible in the language of the people, and sent out groups of preachers known as the "Lollards". Wycliffe taught at Oxford, and it was through that connection that John Hus became acquainted with "the Morning star of the Reformation" (i.e. Wycliffe).

John Hus himself was a leading figure at the Prague University. Hus was a Bohemian, and strongly influenced many people in the region.

The leadership of the Roman Church became uneasy about these various attempts of reform, even though they saw some of their own failures, and set up Church coun-

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*(top) The picture of Hus with the Bible in his hand was in his birth-town.*

*(bottom) The statue of Hus on the stake, has the word Pravda (=truth) on it, which was near the home of the Reformed pastor of Prague.*



Remarkable contrasts seen in these two monuments to Jan Hus – pastor and heretic.



(left) John Goris outside the home of Jan Hus.  
(above) The Czech people are proud of their national hero and advertise that fact.

cils. These councils tried to deal with “unruly” popes, and so-called “heretical” groups in the church. Popes John XXIII and Gregory VII were deposed in 1415, and Pope Benedict XIII met the same fate in 1417. It was this same Pope who condemned the teachings of John Hus at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), before he himself was deposed. Hus was ordered to be burned at the stake, despite the fact that Emperor Sigismund had promised to protect him.

Hus had sought to redirect the church in Bohemia back to the Scrip-

tures, and had stressed that the “cup” of the Lord’s Supper was for the ordinary church member as well as the “bread”. However, the church had taken the “cup” away from the laity. The symbol of the “cup” (chalice) can still be seen on many public buildings in Bohemia, even after 600 years. I personally witnessed this.

It is actually amazing that in a secular Central European country such as the Czech republic there is still a public recognition and holiday to commemorate the death of Jan Hus (as he is known in Bohemia).

The many memorials of Jan Hus, scattered all over Bohemia, bear witness to a man of God who upheld the Bible. When visiting his birthplace and the home where he was born in Husinec in 2005, his statue (with a Bible in his hand) testified to that. Even today Hus is still regarded as the primary historical figure in the Czech republic. Bohemia is the Western part of the country and Moravia the Eastern part. This part is known for the activities and witness of the Moravian Brethren. It is also known as the birthplace of another famous Czech person, Jan Amos Komensky (or Jan Amos Comenius, 1592-1670). He was a theologian and a reformer in the area of education. Komensky studied in Heidelberg, and died in Amsterdam.

This year on July 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrate the 600<sup>th</sup> year since the death of Jan Hus on the stake at Constance. It is a worthy occasion to give thanks for the life and labours of a man born a poor peasant, who became Rector of the Prague University, and preacher at Bethlehem Chapel. But above all, Hus stood up for the Truth at the expense of his life. Praise God for this forerunner of the Reformation!

**Books consulted:**

- A.M. Renwick, *The Story of the Church*;
- Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation*;
- Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The Thousand years of Uncertainty*;
- W. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*.



*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge."*  
Prov 1:7

## Teacher Vacancy

Silverstream Christian School is seeking the services of a Reformed Primary/Intermediate School Teacher for the 2015 school year. Silverstream Christian School is a school set up to provide Christian education to our covenant children. Our aim is to develop a biblically consistent world and life view in our students based on the Reformed Faith. Applicants must be committed to the Reformed Faith and Reformed Christian Education. This is an opportunity to be a part of a vibrant covenant community.

If you have any questions or wish to apply please email:

**board@silverstreamchristian.school.nz**  
**or phone Koen van der Werff on (04) 5297 558**

### Westminster Abbey accused of 'denial of Christ's Lordship' in Muhammad prayer row

Westminster Abbey has been accused of "denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ" after the prophet Muhammad was described as "the chosen one" in a prayer at a First World War service.

The Abbey, which is a Royal Peculiar under the personal jurisdiction of the Queen and outside the Church of England's diocesan structures, included a Turkish prayer in the recent service of commemoration and thanksgiving marking the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign.

The Archbishop Cranmer blogspot noted that God was thanked in the Abbey, and referred to as Allah, and there was no problem with that because Allah is simply Arabic for 'The God'.

"We may quibble over conflicting doctrines and cavil over contradictory revelations, but if St Paul can address a meeting of the Areopagus and exhort the incipient virtue in the ignorance of Athenian religiosity, whether you call the Creator of the universe 'God', 'Jehovah', 'YHWH', 'I Am' or 'Allah', you are acknowledging (in mirrors darkly) the One who does not live in temples built by human hands, and the One who gives everyone life and breath and everything else," he wrote.

But Cranmer said there was a problem with the prayer the congregation heard, which began "Bizleri yaratan" and included the phrase: "Muhammed Mustafa".

He wrote: "It's hard to be offended by something one cannot understand. And there can be no offence at all caused by any exhortation of God in Turkish, for God is not an Englishman."

The problem came in the translated succession of prophets which he described as "a comprehensible assertion of Islamic theology".

The succession of prophets "from Adam, Noah and Abraham to Moses, Jesus and Mohammed Mustafa" is chronological, with the first four common to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Jesus as a prophet is common to

Christianity and Islam and Mohammed is a prophet of Islam alone.

Cranmer continues: "Mustafa is an epithet ascribed by Muslims to Mohammed: it means The Chosen One."

He notes that the Abbey did not offer a translation of this term and says that had it been rendered in English during a Christian service, it "would have caused undoubted offence".

Rev Dominic Stockford, pastor of Christ Church, Teddington and chairman of the Protestant Truth Society said: "The recent use of a prayer equating Muhammad with Jesus, used in Westminster Abbey, was the latest in a string of shocking steps taken by the Church of England recently. And for it to be read out in Turkish, contrary to Article XXIV, being as it was 'a tongue not understood of the people' compounds the matter."

He continued: "How any Christian can think that Jesus and Muhammad can be put together as prophets is beyond me. For one thing, Jesus is no mere prophet, but is Saviour and Lord. The Bible is clear as can be that there is only one God, and that there is only one way to God – and they are Jesus own words which clarify this: 'Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."' (John 14:6). And for another, the religion of Islam is contrary to that of Christianity, denying as it does the divinity of Jesus Christ, and even denying that God has a Son (Surah 19:35-36), a Divinity and a Sonship without which Jesus could be no Saviour."

He described the prayer as a "heresy" that "besmirched the truth of the Gospel" and added: "What is really disappointing to me is that I find myself unsurprised by this latest unbiblical foolishness perpetrated by the Church of England."

Andrea Minichiello Williams of Christian Concern said: "This is an overt denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and is an attack on the central tenants of the Christian faith. It is from Jesus that all blessings flow. Westminster Abbey would do well to remember that."

Andrew Symes of Anglican Mainstream said: "Archbishop Cranmer has done us all a service in this well-researched blog pointing out that, in an

attempt to show welcome and understanding to other faiths, the Church of England has once again allowed Muslims to declare the supremacy of their religion in a Christian church."

Other recent episodes include a Muslim speaker beginning his address to General Synod in February with words in Arabic which mean "there is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet". There was also controversy over a prayer service led by Muslims at St John's Waterloo.

Symes said: "There are very effective ways of building bridges between communities and faith groups which do not involve making seriously controversial and divisive theological statements as part of misguided attempts at 'multi-faith worship'. While there may be some debate about whether the UK is still a Christian country, we should certainly be confident enough to assert that the C of E is a Christian church. Can the Cathedral Dean and the Bishop of London please publicly make this assertion and apologise for the serious offence caused?"

Christian Today is still awaiting a comment from Westminster Abbey.

*Ruth Gledhill,  
CHRISTIAN TODAY CONTRIBUTING EDITOR,  
April 2015*

### Franklin Graham: We should not mock Islam

News headlines are still swirling around the ISIS attack outside a Texas cartoon contest that displayed pictures of the Prophet Muhammad.

Evangelist Franklin Graham is speaking out on the attack – but it might not be what you expected to hear. Graham has come out hard against Islamic terrorism, and he's not excusing the incident in Garland, but he's offering some wisdom that we should all heed.

"The organizers of the cartoon contest in Garland, Texas, had the constitutional right to do what they did—but just because we have the 'right' to do something doesn't make it right! As a Christian I'm offended when people mock my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ," Graham said.

"Muslims are offended when people mock their faith. I disagree with Islam. But just because I disagree, I'm not going

to mock them or resort to violence. We need to show respect to people of other races and beliefs. What happened to civility and respect?"

Apparently, civility and respect are out the window and there may be more backlash. ISIS is now warning that "what is coming will be more grievous and more bitter and you will see from the soldiers of the Caliphate what will harm you, God willing."

Greta Van Susteren, host of *On the Record* on Fox News, is siding with Graham.

"The First Amendment free speech clause right is key to a democracy, but how one exercises that right is likewise important," she said. "Good judgment is important."

JENNIFER LECLAIRE, May 2015, *CharismaNews*

## WorldWatch Monitor – Catching Our Eye

### Two South Sudan pastors face death penalty

May 2015. Pastor Michael was arrested after speaking at the remains of Bahri Evangelical Church. Two South Sudanese pastors being held in Omdurman prison in Khartoum could face the death sentence when their trial continues on 19 May.

*World Watch Monitor* reported in February that Yat Michael and Peter Yen (also named as David Yein Reith in some reports) were held in unknown locations after being arrested during a visit to Khartoum, Sudan's capital, from their homes in South Sudan, which gained independence in 2011. On 4 May they were charged with a series of offences, two of which – undermining the constitutional system and waging war against the state – carry the possibility of the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Michael was taken into custody on 21 December after preaching that morning at the Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church (SPEC) Khartoum Bahri congregation. After the service several men who identified themselves as officers from the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) demanded that Michael go with them, and took him away without further explanation. The next day the security forces went to Michael's temporary home and took some of his clothes and personal belongings. They informed his wife that he was being held in relation to an ongoing investigation but did not reveal any further details, whether he was

under arrest or what the charges were.

Michael and his wife had taken their child to Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, for medical attention but had been asked to preach at a church during their visit, sources told *World Watch Monitor*.

### Arrested

Yen was arrested on 11 January after he delivered a letter to the Religious Affairs Office in Khartoum asking about his colleague Michael's arrest in December. Both men belong to the South Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church.

Their case was postponed until this week due to the availability of a representative of the NISS. The lawyer representing the two men believes the charges against them will be dropped, but the involvement of the NISS may lead to a different outcome. Nahmia Shaloka, a Sudanese lawyer who left the country because of his human rights activity and now lives in the United States, said the NISS legal advisor will try to connect Michael's speech at the church to the charges filed against them. "For me there is no evidence," Shaloka said. "So far the whole thing is to give their [the NISS] action legal justification. The NISS claim to have evidence and this will be clear at the hearing on May 19."

According to Amnesty International, the NISS is an agency that is above the law. Priscilla Nyagoah, a campaigner for Sudan and South Sudan at Amnesty International's regional office in east Africa, said in a recent blog that the Sudanese parliament amended its constitution in January to extend NISS' mandate to perform duties currently carried out by the armed forces and law enforcement agencies, adding that the amendment doesn't require the agency to abide by relevant international, regional and domestic law. "Conferring an intelligence agency such as the NISS with such a mandate, in addition to its already extensive powers of arrest, detention, search and seizure under the National Security Service Act, is particularly alarming," Nyagoah wrote.

### Rights violations

Nyagoah is calling for a human rights-compliant legal framework for the NISS, which would subject its arrest and detention practices to judicial oversight, and ensures that NISS agents perpetrating human-rights violations are held to account. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights recently sent out a message against the impunity of the NISS, by declaring the Republic of Sudan

guilty of violating the rights of three human-rights defenders while in NISS detention in November 2008. The decision, published in February this year, requests Sudan to pay adequate compensation to Monim Elgak, Amir Suleiman and Osman Hummeida and to prosecute all those responsible for the illegal incarceration and torture of the three.

At the continuation of their trial on Tuesday, Michael and Yen will stand charged with disclosure and receipt of official information or documents, arousing feelings of discontent among regular forces, breach of public peace, and offences relating to insulting religious beliefs. They also will face charges of undermining the constitutional system, and waging war against the state, which carry the possibility of harsher penalties.

The church in Khartoum that Michael had been preaching at has suffered pressure from government authorities over land rights, resulting in most of the church being destroyed in December last year.

This is not the first time this year that a church building has been demolished by Sudanese authorities. In February and June 2014, churches were destroyed in Omdurman and Khartoum.

While South Sudan has a largely Christian population, Sudan is predominantly Muslim. However, many thousands of Southern Sudanese who fled the long civil war to live in the north are now so rooted there, they choose to remain. There are still churches in the north to meet their needs, although some have come under pressure in recent months.

Sudan's minister of religion, Shalil Abdullah, has said that the authorities would not issue permits for the construction of new churches.

### Ukraine rebels accuse Christians of spying

Rebels in the Donetsk region of Ukraine have declared an autonomous region complete with an official religion: The Russian Orthodox Church. *Al Jazeera America* reports that commanders of the self-proclaimed "Donetsk People's Republic" have shelled churches and the buildings of other religious minorities, and have arrested Protestant and Catholic leaders on suspicion of spying for the West. A number of believers have been beaten or tossed into jail, and thousands of religious minorities have fled the region.



# Christians in the Qur'an

Muslims are usually better prepared for inter-religious discussion.

## Samuel Green

When we read the book of Acts we see the apostles of Jesus evangelise different religious groups. There are Jews, Samaritans, magicians, followers of Zeus, Artemis, and John the Baptist, but we never read of any apostle evangelising Muslims. The reason for this is of course that Muhammad, the founder of Islam, was born around 550 years after Jesus. This may sound obvious, but the absence of Islam in the Bible has an effect on Christians. It means Christians do not learn about Islam naturally from reading the Bible – instead, it is optional.

The situation for Muslims is the exact opposite: Christianity is a major topic in the Qur'an. As a result, a Muslim who

learns Islam is naturally instructed about Christianity – it is compulsory. This means that Christians and Muslims have different degrees of “preparedness” for each other, and this is important to realise as Islam becomes an increasing part of the theological landscape in Australia.

In this article I want to consider some of the preparation Muslims receive about Christianity. Christian beliefs: The Qur'an directly engages with many Christian beliefs and instructs Muslims to reject and refute them. These beliefs include the death of Jesus (Qur'an 4:157), the incarnation, Son of God, Trinity, and to some degree the reliability of the Bible (Q. 2:79). In fact Islam promotes itself by speaking against Christian beliefs.

The Qur'an directly addresses Christians about their beliefs and in doing so gives Muslims words and arguments to say. “O People of the Scripture (Christians), do not go beyond the bounds of your religion. Do not say anything but the truth about God. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, is truly God's messenger, and His word, which He cast into Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God and His messengers and do not say, “Three”. Desist [That is] better for you. God is one God. Glory be to Him – that He should have a son” (Q. 4:171, Jones).

And: “Unbelievers are those who say, ‘God is the Messiah’ ... Unbelievers are those who say, ‘God is the third of the three’.” (Q. 5:72-73, Jones).

The author of the Qur'an consistently misrepresents Christian beliefs, for instance saying Jesus taught Jihad (9:111) or that Mary is part of the Trinity (5:116) or relying on Docetic gospels for its understanding of the death of Jesus. However, reading the Qur'an still takes you into a debate with Christians. When Islamic leaders teach the Qur'an they teach Muslims how to have this debate,

and Islam has a 1400-year history of historical theology in this area.

The result of this situation is that when a Christian and Muslim talk the Christian may feel unprepared. They may not know the teachings of Islam, its history or what questions to ask. The Muslim, however, may feel quite prepared, and be well equipped with various books, leaflets, videos, Bible verses, and questions to ask. Muslims have even written two gospels for themselves, The Gospel of Barnabas (14th century) and the Gospel According to Islam (1979) which they promote.

Of course not all Muslims learn their faith or are zealous, but it is still important that Christians understand this whole situation so they are not caught unprepared. Sadly some have been unprepared and found the well organised Islamic refutation of Christianity convincing.

All of this also has an effect on our evangelism as Islamic culture has been taught to reject the key elements of the gospel.

Politics: Not only does the Qur'an prepare Muslims theologically to talk with Christians, it also prepares them politically and economically. This applies both when they are a minority and hold power.

For a minority, consider: “Invite (all) to the Way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious” (Qur'an 16:125, Yusuf Ali). And: “(Y)ou will certainly find the nearest in friendship to those who believe (to be) those who say: We are Christians” (Qur'an 5:82, Shakir).

When Muslims hold power, the teaching is different: “Fight from among the people who have been given the Scripture (Christians and Jews) those who do not believe in God and the Last Day and who do not forbid that which God and His messenger (Muhammad) have

“The Qur'an speaks directly about Christianity.... It prepares Muslims for Christians, and as Islam grows we will need to respond to the challenge of Islam.”

forbidden and who do not follow the religion of truth, until they pay tribute (jizyah) readily, having been humbled. The Jews say 'Ezra is the son of God'; and the Christians say 'The Messiah is the son of God'. That is what they say with their mouths, conforming to what was said by those who disbelieved before them. God confound them. How they are embroiled in lies! ... [It is] He (God) who has sent His messenger (Muhammad) with the guidance and the religion of truth to cause it to prevail over all (other) religion" (Q. 9:29-33, Jones).

Notice in this last verse that the call to subjugate Christians is because of what Christians believe.

Islam has a political agenda for Christianity and, again, Christians need to be aware of this so that we do not behave naively.

Romance: Islam also prepares Muslim men to engage romantically with Christian

women (Qur'an 5:5) and to marry them.

In summary, the Qur'an speaks directly about Christianity on many occasions and on a variety of topics. It prepares Muslims for Christians, and as Islam grows in Australia Christians will need to respond to the theological, political and romantic challenge of Islam.

Our theological colleges need to equip the Church for this challenge. Most Australian Reformed colleges still do not include the Islamic period (7-14th centuries) in their church history or historical theology, but in today's world knowledge of this period of history is just as important as any other.

I was speaking to a recent graduate who had a conversation with an 18-year-old Muslim man. The Muslim was well prepared and the graduate said to me, "It made me realise how ill-equipped theological college left me for engaging with Islam."

The Church actually does have good resources in this area. They begin with the Early Church Father, Saint John of Damascus (c.675-749), and in the modern period a lot of good work has been done, but this needs to be included, at a basic level, in our theological education.

The Apostles of Jesus may never have evangelised Muslims but the Bible and the Holy Spirit do give us the resources we need to answer the challenge of Islam and to present the gospel to them, and as more Muslims come into Western countries this is what Christians need to do.

*Samuel Green is the author of the Engaging with Islam training course, [engagingwithislam.org](http://engagingwithislam.org) and founder of the website [www.answering-islam.org](http://www.answering-islam.org)*

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## Focus on politics and religion

# The Islamization of France

### Cornelis Van Dam

As is well known, on January 7, 2015, Islamic gunmen forced their way into the Parisian offices of the satirical weekly, *Charlie Hebdo*, which had published cartoons of Mohammed, and killed eleven people. Millions demonstrated against the murders and for freedom of the press. What is less well-known is that there are indicators that France as a nation is coming very close to the point of no return in some day being subject to Islamic law. This brazen attack may be a harbinger of more to come.

Two weeks prior to this Al-Qaeda orchestrated assault, Soeren Kern, a foreign policy specialist, had published an informative article on the Gatestone Institute website entitled "The Islamization of France in 2014." What follows are some of his findings with direct quotations as indicated.

Recent studies have estimated that

the current Muslim population of France is 6.5 million, roughly 10% of France's population of 66 million. The negative influence of French Muslims is however far beyond what the figure of 10% might suggest. "More than 1000 French supermarkets, including major chains such as Carrefour, have been selling Islamic books that openly call for jihad and the killing of non-Muslims." Political correctness which continues to call Islam a religion of peace makes it impossible to face the truth that many Muslims want the submission of all non-Muslims to their Sharia law. Not surprisingly "A report estimates that 60% of the prison population in France, or 40,000 prisoners, are 'culturally or originally' Muslim," and according to an Ipsos survey 63% of French people think that Islam "is not compatible with French values." Muslims appear to agree. They are in effect establishing an Islamic parallel society. Indeed, there are many and increasing number

of "no-go" zones in France where Islamic Sharia law is rapidly replacing French civil law. But it is not politically correct to talk about this in public.

Throughout France there is also an Islamizing trend in schools. A leaked confidential intelligence document says that "Muslims are engaged in a 'war of attrition' aimed at 'destabilizing the teaching staff.'" It adds that Muslim fundamentalists are circumventing the law that bans religious symbols in schools, and that self-proclaimed 'young guardians of orthodoxy' in many schools are exerting pressure on Muslim girls."

Political correctness also means that little is being done about the fiery oratory in French mosques calling for jihad, the religious duty of Muslims to resist and struggle against those who do not believe in the Islamic god, Allah. In 2013, the last year for which statistics are currently available, France was the terror capital of Europe according to Europol, the law

enforcement agency of the European Union. The trend of the last number of years has been an increasing number of terror attacks. "French authorities have thwarted five terror attacks and dismantled 13 jihadist networks since August 2013. As of December 15, 2014, more than 1,200 French nationals or residents have left for Syria and Iraq, a figure that has more than doubled since the beginning of 2014." In August, 2014, "a poll

found that a staggering 15% of people in France support the Islamic State [IS]. Among those between the ages of 18 and 24, 27% said they had a positive view of the IS, while 22% of those between the ages of 25 and 34, and 20% of those between 35 and 44 supported the jihadist group."

Much more could be mentioned but it is obvious that France as a nation is divided against itself and becoming a

state with feet of clay. Muslims who take the Quran seriously are not interested in integrating into French society. The dictates of Islam demand that they take over and impose Sharia law on the land.

The last major challenges that Europe had with Islam were military ones. The Ottoman Empire tried but failed to capture Vienna in 1529 and in 1683. France's current challenge is not a military one but one of having absorbed many Muslims who now want to take over. This situation reminds one of the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century. One often hears of the barbarian invasions causing the collapse of Roman law and order. But as Peter Brown writes in his recent magnificent study of wealth, the fall of Rome and the making of Christianity, *Through the Eye of a Needle* (chapter 24), there was no such invasion. Barbarians had not fought their way in. Rather barbarian military groups were established in Roman territory with the approval of Romans who used them to fight other Romans in establishing new centres of government as the emperor's authority weakened. Eventually, the barbarians took over from within the empire. Could this type of scenario where newcomers ultimately take over repeat itself? Muslims have been allowed to enter France but are abusing the hospitality of their host country by seeking to dominate it and assert control, not shrinking from using violent means and intimidation. Indeed, Al-Qaeda is involved in France and its Yemen affiliate claimed responsibility for the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. Due in large part to political correctness, the momentum of events currently favours Islam; so much so, that the award-winning French author Michel Houellebecq predicts in his novel *Soumission*, which appeared just before the attack, that France will be under Muslim rule in less than a decade. Though seemingly unlikely, it is a needed wake-up call for Europe and the West. Could future historians characterize current developments as part of the twenty-first century Islamic invasion of France?

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