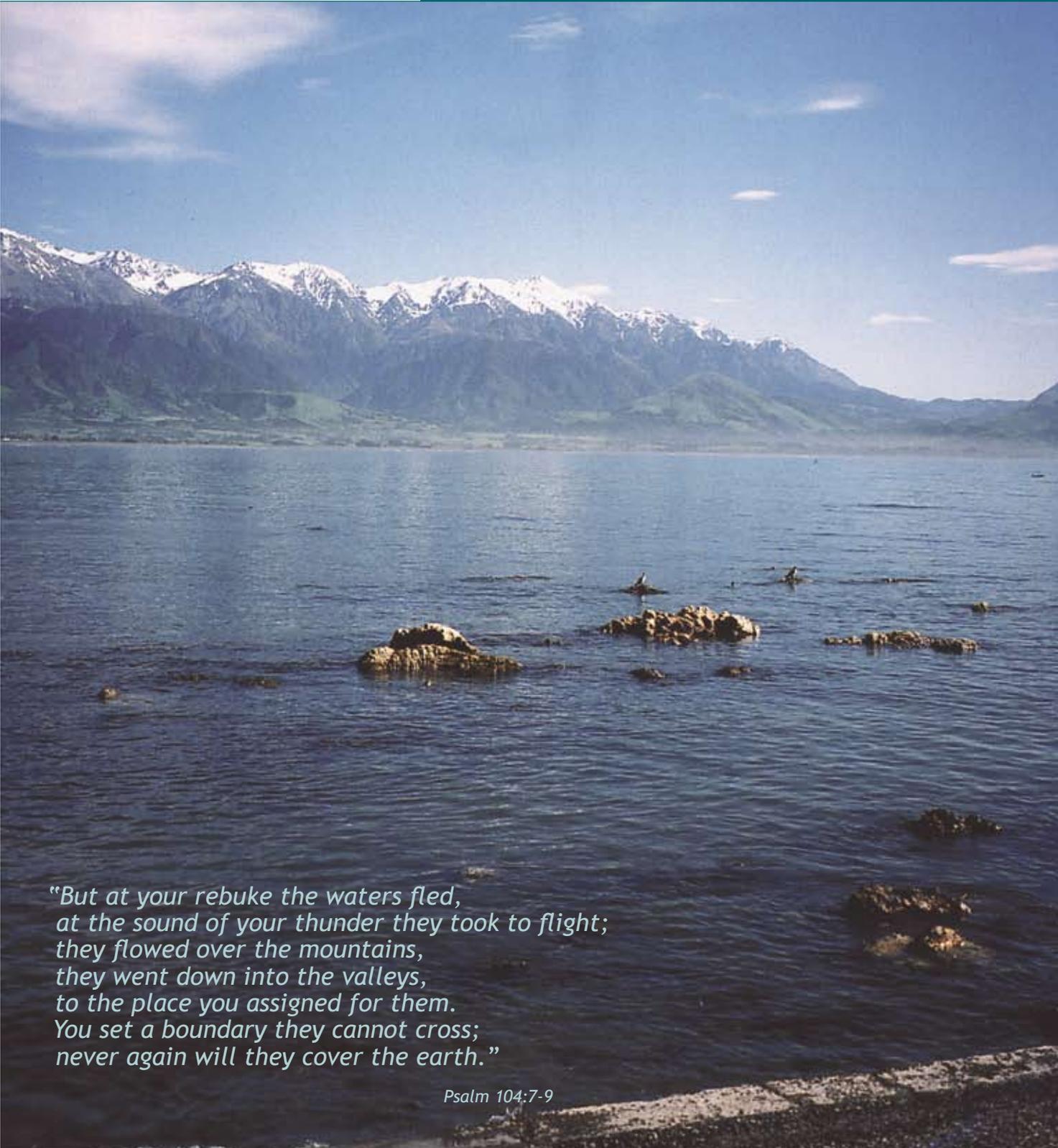


faith in focus

Magazine of the
Reformed Churches
of New Zealand

VOLUME 33/2 MARCH 2006



*"But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;
they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.
You set a boundary they cannot cross;
never again will they cover the earth."*

Psalm 104:7-9

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Editorial

Well, you're back in the saddle again. The holidays are at best a distant memory. Work or study and home life have fallen into their well-worn routines. And how about spiritually? Back into the same old grind again? Or is this year going to be a different year? In fact, what you have learned since last year means it cannot be the same. So we should see then a greater attendance in our worship services - A.M. and P.M.. There will be better supported Bible studies during the week. Leaders and teachers will be found more readily for the Sunday School, Cadets & Calvinettes, Youth Club, and so on. You now read 'Faith in Focus' the whole way through.

Growth and the Christian life aren't strangers that might meet on an occasional basis. They are actually married to each other. It's when the believer isn't continuously growing in his faith that he's in reality going away from the Lord. This is what the apostle Paul means by telling us that living by the Spirit is keeping in step with the Spirit (Gal.5:25).

Please note that I have a new email address. It is found in the 'Contents' masthead.

*"God judges a man not by the
point he has reached,
but by the way he is facing;
not by distance, but by direction."*

James S. Stewart

Photo: Looking from Kaikoura Peninsular across the bay towards the Southern Alps

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 Dort, 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.

Amazing Grace!

Hans Voschezang

Andrew was raised in a God-fearing family. His father was aware of his Christian responsibility to instil the fear of God in his children, and the consequences of sin. Misbehaviour was not tolerated. They went to church regularly, and the children were taught at a very early age the importance of loving God and their neighbour, and how this should take precedence over anything else in life. Andrew's parents were sincere. In short, he grew up in a loving and caring family.

But Andrew, as he grew older, went to church only because his parents told him to. He simply wasn't interested. His mind shut off, and he resented everything his parents were trying to do. He despised his Dad, because he was always 'preaching.' As arguments became more frequent, Andrew would stomp out of the room and go somewhere else, where he was not bothered with this religious nonsense. In the end he spent practically all his spare time in his room, and came out only to have something to eat and then disappear again. He couldn't be bothered to sit and listen to the Bible reading and daily devotions which were taken seriously by his parents. They agonized over his behaviour, and many sleepless nights were spent in prayer beseeching the Lord for guidance and wisdom. Only Divine intervention could save him, so it seemed.

Andrew went to high school. Being intelligent, he reached the top of his class. Popular among his schoolmates, he picked the wrong kind of friends and got involved with cannabis. He would not smoke the stuff himself, but would sell it to others who wanted to try. Cannabis was easy to get at certain tinny houses in the neighbourhood if you knew where to go. He was clever enough to stay out of trouble, and not get caught. It was easy money: the pocket money Dad gave him wasn't enough, by a long shot. Andrew graduated with honours from high school and in no time was snatched up by a reputable company. They offered him an engineering apprenticeship and he fitted in well with his colleagues.

By now he had moved out of his parent's

house, and lived with three guys in a rented flat. Once again he got mixed up with the wrong people, going to nightclubs and having endless parties. As the saying goes, he 'burned the candle at both ends.' Nightclubs are often linked and controlled by drug gang targeting the ignorant teenagers: introducing them to party drugs, cocaine or even heroine. Andrew saw his chance. Here was big money to be made! First he bought a small quantity of cocaine, and in no time at all he had sold it. That's how he started being a drug dealer. Then he started to wonder what the big attraction was in taking drugs. He

started experimenting with cocaine, using some which he was supposed to sell. No one would notice! But by doing this he got in the bad books with his drug gang, because they were short-changed. One night, three burly heavyweights dragged him in to a dark alleyway. They beat him up severely and told him what they expected of him. No more short-changes, or they'd kill him. They left him to fend for himself, bleeding profusely. He stumbled back to the flat, but his flatmates were not impressed. They liked party fun, but no involvement with drug gangs! They threw him out on the street. That night he found a



Rembrandt's "The Prodigal Son"

derelict building, and in one of the upstairs rooms he made his "home."

Meanwhile, Dad found out from a friend what had happened. On several occasions he tried to contact Andrew, but to no avail. Andrew didn't want to talk to his father and listen to yet another of his "sermons." Although distressed, Dad couldn't give up on

his son. He searched everywhere, and finally found out where he 'lived.' The shock of what had become of his son was nearly too much to bear. But unbeknown to Dad, the police were also quietly watching from 'a distance,' monitoring what was going on: Andrew's drug dealings, the gang's involvement in all this, and Dad's private investigations and progress. Andrew fell deeper and deeper into the trap of drug addiction: he couldn't sell enough drugs to feed his own habit. Smaller dealers avoided him, because he had become unreliable and unpredictable. Desperately in need of drugs for himself, he started to skimp off on the quantity he sold again. He was naive to think that the drug boss wouldn't find out. One night he took a "cocktail" to get his fix. After a while he started hallucinating, lying in his own filth. At that moment the gang members appeared on the scene to finish him off; he had become a problem. Dad saw them go in the building, and followed at a distance. The police were also closing in. Dad entered the building, and could hear and see what was going on. He realised instantly that the men were armed, and created a diversion to draw the attention away from his son. The gang members tried to flee. Dad rushed to his son. At that very moment the last of the three men turned and fired a shot, aiming wildly at the two figures back in the room. Dad had his son in his arms when the bullet struck. The police, although close by, couldn't prevent this shot from being fired. Andrew, doped up, heard his Dad crying out: "Andrew... I love you," then dying. Andrew's brain registered what had happened. The shock lifted the drug-induced fog somewhat and he cried out, "What have I done...I should have listened...It's all my fault...I can never talk to you again...I can't ask for forgiveness anymore...And now it's too late....too...late..." In total anguish he knelt by the body of his Dad, pouring his soul out in heart-wrenching sobs. At that moment the police sergeant, who was also one of the elders in his church, knelt alongside him and put an arm around his shoulder. The sergeant said, "Son, your Dad saved your life, because he loved you and he cared for you. That bullet was meant for you. You are right, you can't ask your Dad for forgiveness anymore and that's a fact you have to live with. But the Lord is able to forgive you. It's never too late." Together they prayed, asking the Lord for forgiveness and healing.

It was the first time in his life that Andrew had prayed.

The police sergeant helped him to get out of the building, for he was unable to walk unaided. That night there were many raids and arrests, all over the city and in the surrounding area. The whole drug gang was arrested. A court hearing followed. Andrew received a non-parole sentence of seven years in prison. The Judge took into account his Dad's involvement in the whole affair, and Andrew's cooperation. He was sent to a Drugs Rehab unit to be weaned off the drugs. The first couple of months of detoxification and withdrawal were the hardest and the most difficult experiences in his life.

In the meantime, Andrew's Mum was devastated. She was not allowed to visit him during this period of detoxification. She lost her husband in such a cruel way and her son was in prison; it was all too much for her. The hurts were so intense that she wondered whether they would ever go away. But she found solace and strength in her God, knowing that He would work out everything for the good of everyone whose hope is in the Lord. In all her grief and sorrow she never doubted God's promises. One day He would 'find' her lost son and bring him back to her. The sergeant visited her regularly, and told her about the progress her son was making and the subtle changes he noticed in him. He told her that Andrew had calmed down significantly and that now, while he had plenty of time to think, he felt remorse and regret for what he had done. He felt ashamed of himself for betraying her and the family. Andrew had become depressed and had hit rock bottom; maybe it was the right time for Mum to visit her son. The sergeant spoke with Andrew's prison supervisor and the chaplain, and explained the situation: his mother would like to visit him privately, if that could be arranged. The following day the sergeant brought Mum to a room in prison where she could meet her son.

How sweet the sound

Andrew entered the room. As soon as Mum saw him she ran toward him and just hugged him, held him in her arms and kissed him. Overwhelmed by so much love shown by his mother, he could only stammer a few words asking her for forgiveness for all the hurt he had caused. Mum's reply was only, "Andrew, I love you." Upon hearing these words spoken by his mother, he broke down. They were

50th Wedding Anniversary

With praise and thanks
to the Lord
we celebrate the
50th Wedding Anniversary
of our parents and grandparents,



Anne & Siebrig BAJEMA

on the 31st March 2006, D.V.

Sjirk & Betty-Ann (Auckland)
Eileen, Andrew

Douglas & Moira (Nelson)
John, Cain, Kelly

Gerald & Adila (Wellington)
Amira

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path."
Psalm 119:105*

10 Dundas Street,
Nelson
New Zealand

the same words his Dad had used when he died in his arms. They sat there for a long time, not able to say a word. Finally there was a knock on the door. Their sergeant friend came in and asked them to join him in prayer, asking the Lord for guidance, strength and encouragement on the long road of recovery, and for spiritual healing and His mercy in this very difficult time ahead of them. When Mum stood up she gave Andrew his own Bible, which his parents had given him on his 12th birthday. She opened the Bible at Psalm 103 vs. 8-12 and with wavering voice she started to read. *"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will He harbour His anger forever; He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heaven above the earth, so great is His love for those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."* She closed the book and gave it to her son. They hugged one more time before they all left the room. Outside Mum broke down herself; it was not only Andrew who needed support.

One day the Chaplain had a chat with Andrew. He had noticed his absence at the discussion groups where all the inmates could share their own stories and the reasons behind their drug abuse. Andrew explained to him that he didn't experience any support by hearing all those sorry tales—they made him even more depressed—but he promised to come to the morning devotion and prayer meetings in the chapel. The first morning, he arrived early. He stood in front of a huge mural of 'The homecoming of the prodigal son' on one of the walls in the Chapel. It was a beautiful work of art. The love shone from the Father's face, and the sorry state his son was in made a deep impression on Andrew. The chaplain came up behind him unnoticed and said, "We can discuss that this morning if you wish." Andrew only nodded in agreement. When all the others had arrived, the Chaplain read the parable of the prodigal son. He explained how this boy had so badly messed up his life in his rebellion against everything decent. In his deepest despair, starving for lack of food, he came to his senses and went back to his Father. When the son was still a long way off the Father saw him coming. He ran to his long-lost son, threw his arms around him, and kissed him. It was a story of a Father

whose heart is so forgiving that he pardons all the son's horrible offences. The Chaplain went on to say, "When you've wasted all the good things God has given you, when you've made a terrible mess of your life, "home" is still waiting for you and the Father is still watching you. You can't pay back all you've squandered, but the Lord Himself takes the loss and pays the price in full. Jesus did that, by suffering on the cross for our sins. There's still hope. You can go "home" to your Father and say, 'Father I've sinned...' God will embrace you as His child. That's the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It's never too late to do that."

But this son in the story has not killed his Dad, Andrew thought. Andrew struggled with questions for a long time. How could God be merciful to him when he had killed his Dad? Why would anyone, for that matter, be able to still love him after all he had done? His self-loathing and his recent despicable behaviour brought him low. So on one of the sergeant's visits, Andrew asked him about it. The sergeant explained that he was able to still love Andrew because God loved him first through Jesus Christ, who died on Calvary's Cross for his sins. It's a reflection of this unconditional love of God the Father toward sinners like you and me. Andrew looked at him disbelievingly. How could that be? His actions had killed his father. Surely there was no forgiveness for him. In his confused state of mind, he couldn't think clearly. The sergeant asked him if he was still reading his Bible. Andrew nodded.

"Keep it up, son," said the sergeant. "That's the only source where you will find God's love. It spills over on every page of that wonderful book." With that last remark the sergeant left, leaving Andrew many things to think about. Weeks slipped by, and Andrew was put onto antidepressant medication. Every morning he went to the Chapel for the morning devotion and discussions afterwards. He couldn't help looking at the mural every time he walked past, and puzzling about the Father's love towards his wayward son. How far away from "home" was he? The Chaplain went out of his way to explain every topic in depth, seeing that Andrew took everything in. He felt for the boy, and prayed silently for God's help in his difficult task. One day Andrew asked for some reading material "to catch up on many things I didn't want to know about in my earlier years." And so, lit-

tle step by little step, Andrew's mind opened up to the teachings of the basic doctrine of grace. It slowly started to dawn on him that he too, could get up and go to his Heavenly Father and tell Him he had sinned and was not worthy of anything.

That saved a wretch like me!

Andrew took a liking to gardening, and looked after the huge prison vegetable garden. It gave him time to think in solitude. He still used medication to give him a decent night's sleep. In his case time was not healing all wounds, and so the years passed in spiritual struggle. One night he forgot to take his medication. He couldn't sleep. He tossed and turned, and his mind was in turmoil. Finally he got out of bed, turned on the light, and picked up his NIV Bible to read the page where he had left his bookmark. Initially, when he opened the Bible, it showed Isaiah 1vs18. It drew his attention and he started to read, *"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."* These words hit him like a thunderbolt. It was the last prod he needed. He sank to his knees in total surrender and poured his heart out to God, confessing all the wrongs he had done and pleading for mercy and forgiveness. He reached out in faith to the outstretched arms of the Lord Jesus that could save him by grace alone. After his prayer, he calmed down. He felt as if a huge burden had been lifted off his shoulders. He knew the Lord had taken over, and now he felt at peace. Sleep wouldn't return that night; there was too much to think about. Andrew recovered quickly after this and people close to him, like his Mum and other friends, noticed a dramatic change. His life exemplified it: *my mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure. (Ps 71 vs 15)*

After Andrew had served his time in prison he became an anti-drugs counselor, visiting schools and youth groups to testify how destructive drugs can be, and teaching children the value of having faithful and loving parents.

Recommended reading:

A Father's Heart by: David Feddes

The Riddle of Grace by: Scott Hoezee

The Gospel of Grace by: James M Boice

The bigger the better?

A review of Celebrating the Small Church by Martin Robinson and Dan Yarnell

Hans Vaatstra

This volume of 224 pages is based on statistics and experiences in England yet has relevance for all churches, especially those which are small. The authors, Rev. Dr Martin Robinson (Director of Missions and Theology at the Bible Society) and Rev. Dan Yarnell (MA in New Testament, who has pastored small churches in England since 1983) have written to assist smaller churches to be more effective in their mission.

Small Church Characteristics

In the opening chapters Robinson identifies several characteristics of smaller churches and makes the following observations: The small church is 'normal.' In England 36% of churches have less than 50 adult members. The location of small churches

often represents the front line of mission: in other words, small churches are often located in areas where the Christian witness is weakest. Small churches are generally caring churches, and they are often bearers of valuable traditions. However, it is often assumed in today's culture that bigger is better. Church-goers today often have high expectations concerning the standard of worship, fellowship and the number or quality of programmes churches provide. Consumerism effects small churches in such a way that they feel they are unable to compete in terms of providing the programmes and atmosphere of larger churches. These factors may cause discouragement and a sense of hopelessness as if to say, "there is nothing we can do". Robinson warns against such negativity, saying that one of the dangers smaller churches face is the danger of re-

maining static. Hence a prominent theme in the book: the church must be 'on the way.'

On the Way

Martin Robinson elaborates on this theme by describing his experiences in a diversity of small congregations, including an Indian Tamil congregation in Paris. He explored the journey of faith that the members of this congregation took in order to be where they were. Back 'home' in India some had been farmers, fishermen, teachers and civil servants. Socially, they had little in common. All had come along a different route, but they all ended up in a little congregation in Paris sharing a common Book and a common conviction. They were on a journey of faith together. Using examples from Scripture Robinson makes the point that though as Christians we'd prefer to be "settlers" than "pioneers," the Church on earth may never become settled. It needs to continue being a Church "on the way." This is in keeping with the Biblical idea of the believer as a sojourner or stranger in a foreign country who lives in tents and is looking forward to a better place: the Promised Land. (cf. Hebrews 11:9). Sometimes small churches remain small or get smaller because they fail to move. Little is attempted and less is gained if members just want to keep on being 'settled.' New folk may come in with good new ideas who then become discouraged by the settled 'establishment,' who want things to continue as they always have.

Pastors

Dan Yarnell turns the readers' attention to the pastor's task. He makes some insightful observations about the struggles pastors have in small churches—touching on subjects such as time management, expectations of growth not being met, self-expectation, and short-term versus longer-term pastorates. (It was argued that the most productive years of the pastor's ministry come after 4-6 years in any particular congregation) What does one do when the pastor of a small church believes, prays, works and expects miracles, but the church doesn't grow? The



same people turn up week after week. Yarnell reminds us of an abiding truth. Though small church pastors are likely to feel despondent about lack of numbers, God loves the small church and loves small church pastors. Moses felt inadequate for the task God had given him. Jeremiah lamented the lack of response from his fellow Jews. Yet Moses and Jeremiah were loved and used mightily by the Lord. Yarnell also encourages pastors "not to overlook what God has already done in their church and community in the past" and to "allow the Lord to lead them into their futures." He also reminds us that there are no 'successful' churches. There are instead communities of sinners gathered before God week after week in cities, towns and villages all over the world. The Holy Spirit gathers them and does His work in them. In these communities of sinners, one is called the pastor and given a designated responsibility in the community. The pastor's responsibility is to keep the community attentive to God. Thus, pastors are also urged to get alongside people as "listeners, learners and lovers". For the pastor of the small church this is the heart of the matter: being a 'lover.' In the community, in the church, in his home, the love of God must be demonstrated in the life of a minister. The one who loves God and His people is the one who knows what ministry is all about.

Giving

The book includes a helpful section on financing the small church. Different approaches to giving are mentioned. There are those who give nothing, and assume that the minister is paid by the government or some other mysterious central fund. The private club mentality, where subscriptions are duly paid to meet the most conservative budget. Yarnell strongly encourages congregations to rally around particular needs. Often, when a clear need is identified, giving is much more generous and consequently the community spirit is strengthened among members. Sacrificial giving is also encouraged, because life in the church is a struggle. It's a "struggle of fellowship, fidelity and more but God gives us the power to remain steadfast in the struggle and God uses our struggles as a means for growth." Yarnell argues that motivating the church for mission and having special appeals relating to missions provides great incentive for giv-

ing. Finally there is a chapter entitled "*The awesome power of the tithe.*" According to one source, "about one third of Christians tithe and the other two thirds let them." I think that was somewhat 'tongue in cheek.' Nevertheless Malachi 3 is used to impress on readers the blessings that tithing can bring to churches, and it is suggested that the key to this is faith. To give in faith is to grow in faith. The act of giving encourages faith; faith in God and the power of His Word to transform lives, churches, communities and the world.

Strategies

The book concludes with a section on strategies by Martin Robinson. He begins by posing questions for readers concerning their own churches such as: Why is this church here? What does the church want to accomplish for the community? What should the church's mission statement be? Robinson encourages leaders to: Set goals that are relevant, measurable, achievable, significant and personal. List honestly the strengths and weaknesses of the church.

Pray. No church can ever be a healthy church without a deep prayer life.

Celebrating the Small Church contains a mine of helpful information designed to encourage us in our mission as churches and make us better stewards of our resources. It presents a strong challenge not to be static, but to be a church 'on the way.' I don't think that necessarily means forsaking Biblical patterns for church life but it means we can never be content with the status quo. We must always be looking for opportunities to be effective on all fronts, especially outreach. There is also some excellent encouragement for pastors of small churches, and a helpful section on giving. In the 224 pages of *Celebrating the Small Church* the authors have graciously, with humour and judicious use of Scripture, provided us with a good deal of wisdom gained from years of experience.

Celebrating the Small Church was published in 1993 by Monarch Publications in conjunction with the British and Foreign Bible Society. John Haverland has a copy, and is willing to lend it out.

World in focus

Sweden's highest Court acquits pastor of hate speech

On 29 Nov., the Swedish Supreme Court (SSC), in a unanimous decision, acquitted Pastor Ake Green of charges of "hate speech" arising from a sermon he preached in July, 2003 denouncing homosexual behaviors.

Lawyers Christian Fellowship says Green was initially convicted under Sweden's new hate crimes law. This law enacted in 2003, makes illegal any expressions of "disrespect" or "incitement" "towards a group of people," including groups with "sexual inclinations."

Lawyers Christian Fellowship said, "It was claimed by some that he had referred to homosexuals in a disrespectful way, but Green explained to the courts that he was referring to homosexual acts, not persons." Green stated that "I don't take back what I said. I still think we should be able to voice our convictions without ending up in jail and if that happens I will be showing how ridiculous things have got."
+ Lawyers Christian Fellowship, National Secretary, Hilary Lyndon, Church Villa, 29 Church Lane, Temple Normanton, Chesterfield S42 5DB <admin@lawcf.org>

Online research database for pastors and researchers

Pastors, researchers and theological students/graduates looking for an online database for theological research can go to The Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN), a searchable library with over 10,000 theological thesis/dissertation titles. Dissertations are available for order in digital, downloadable e-docs, paper, and microfiche format.

There is a charge for each dissertation ordered. TREN also features hard-to-find resources that researchers will find helpful. Go to <<http://www.tren.com/>>
+ Presbyterian Church in America, 1700 N Brown Rd. Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043 (678) 825-1000

American Baptists disappointed at decision

American Baptist leaders have expressed regret and concern over the recommendation issued on 8 Dec. by the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Churches of the Pacific Southwest to withdraw that region from the denomination's Covenant of Relationships.

The conflict among the American Baptists is described as a liberal/conservative division over the issue of homosexuality.

A regional meeting of its churches to advise the leadership is scheduled tentatively in May 2006. The Board will make its final decision after that meeting. If approved, the recommendation would remove the region from a formal relationship with the American Baptist Churches in the USA. (Ed. This denomination is not related to the Southern Baptists.)

+ American Baptist Churches USA, PO Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851 (610) 768-2000

New DaVinci Code resources available soon

Tyndale House Publishers will be releasing new titles soon to help Christians stand firm in their faith and to help others know the light

of God's truth when the Da Vinci Code movie is released in May, 2006.

DaVinci Deception, in paperback format and DaVinci Deception "Answer Kit," an all-in-one resource for pastors, churches and small groups preparing to view the movie are both by Erwin Lutzer, senior pastor of Moody Church in Chicago. The DaVinci Code: Fact or Fiction by Hank Hanegraaf and Paul Maier will be released in an "evangelism pack" of 6 units for US\$17.97. Complimentary copies of Cracking DaVinci's Code (James Garlow and Peter Jones) are available from the General Assembly Office while supplies last.

+ Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 351 Executive Dr., Carol Stream, IL 60188 (800) 323-9400

+ Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Office of the General Assembly, 17197 N. Laurel Park Rd., Suite 567, Livonia, MI 48152 (734) 742-2020

Open Doors USA reports increase in persecution of Christians

Open Doors USA, which is celebrating 50 years of supporting and strengthening persecuted Christians, report there has been an increase in persecution of Christians in such countries as North Korea, Indonesia, and Eritrea in 2005.

An estimated 400,000 Christians in North Korea faced daily persecution, including torture in prison camps.

In Indonesia, more Christians were killed and churches burned. In the eastern African country of Eritrea, 26 pastors and 1,700 evangelical church members are now imprisoned and some have been tortured by government military forces.

+ Open Doors USA, PO Box 27001, Santa Ana, CA 92799, Jerry Dykstra, Media Relations Coordinator, (616) 915-4117

Custodian of Presbyterian Church donates life's savings

Dave Wesley worked only three months as a custodian at House of Hope Presbyterian Church, where he was as known as quiet, kind, and polite. Some also knew that he spent part of his life homeless.

Wesley would walk or ride the bus each workday to the church from St. Paul's Union Gospel Mission, where he lived for nearly 10 years. House of Hope meant so much to Wesley that he bequeathed his life savings - US\$2,000 to the church.

Jan Snell, the church's director of children's education said "We're not very diverse here - we could be more diverse - and it took Dave a little while to feel comfortable." "We'd say 'Hi, Dave, and he'd have his eyes down and barely acknowledge you, but after a while, he would say 'hello' back, and one day, he said 'hello' first. I think he somehow started seeing this church as his place," she said.

+ House of Hope Presbyterian Church, 797 Summit Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105 (651) 227-6311

Robert Schuller hands over leadership to son

Rev. Robert H. Schuller 79, has handed over the leadership of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, to his son Robert A. Schuller, 51. The announcement was made at the close of his New Year's Day sermon. Robert A. will also take over the "Hour of Power," a religious program broadcast around the world. Robert A. Schuller will be installed as senior pastor on 22 Jan., 2006.

Schuller, Sr. stated "I am not retiring." Schuller plans to raise an endowment of about US\$100 million to cover the US\$4 million in annual maintenance needed for the church buildings and grounds. This will give the Crys-

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brouwer@curl.aunz.net or
icalvin@netspace.net.au

Applications should be directed to:

The Staffing Committee,

E-mail:

icalvin@netspace.net.au

Address:

PO Box 89, Launceston, Tasmania, Australia 7250

tal Cathedral the solid financial foundation to continue for “a thousand years.”
+ *Crystal Cathedral, 12141 Lewis St., Garden Grove, CA 92840 (714) 971-4000*

Persecution continued in China

Conflicting reports continue to appear regarding the state of religious liberty in China. Improvements in the past 20 years have given Chinese people a wider range of religious and cultural expression, unofficial house churches are multiplying, and many cities allow Christian activities. But a house church pastor in Beijing told of continuing persecution of house churches in rural Henan and Shandong provinces.

When President Bush visited China in November, a few religious prisoners were released even as eight house church leaders were arrested and tortured.

+ *Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0304*

Ex-minister wins right to sue Kirk

It has taken almost a decade for Helen Percy to win the right to have the claim that she was unfairly dismissed and sexually discriminated against by the Kirk at an employment tribunal. This judgment by the House of Lords could alter permanently the relationship between the Church and its ministers.

Percy was accused of having an affair with a married church elder in her parish. She claimed sex discrimination when she was told she was an office holder—in effect employed by God—rather than an employee of the Church.

After Percy resigned her position in the church, she announced her intention to sue the Church of Scotland for unfair dismissal and sex discrimination, saying that the Kirk did not deal equally harshly with male ministers who had been guilty of infidelity.

Percy stated that she was “relieved that at last I have the opportunity to have the case heard, which there has never been to date, in a civil court which I believe will be fair.”
+ *Church of Scotland, 121 George St., Edinburgh EH2 4YN*

Encyclopedia Puritannica project now available

The latest Encyclopedia Puritannica Project electronic text product, version 3.0, is now available.

The new version has over 230 works, over 110 authors, and over 70,000 source pages of electronic text. It has approximately 1 million hyper-links integrating the material with the holy scriptures and 97.9 percent of the Bible's verses have at least one link. There are over 580 Puritan and Reformed sermons. Thomas Boston, across the 12 volumes of his works,

references nearly a third of the Bible's verse all by himself.

New features include improved compatibility with the Mozilla Firefox browser as well as non-Windows platforms. Cross-references are now available for each chapter as well as each verse. The glossary mechanism has been tuned to reduce the amount of “over-linking” in previous versions, and the number of daily “Devotional” works has more than doubled.

+ *Stephen Mouring, PO Box 573, Bealeton, VA 22712-0573 <<http://www.puritannica.com>>*

Minister banned from pulpit after headbutting his wife

Alan Blackwood has been banned from the pulpit for five years by the Church of Scotland after headbutting his wife Sandi, also a minister, causing her to need stitches to her nose after the attack.

The violence occurred when Sandi took the bulb out of a bedside lamp because she wanted to go to sleep.

Blackwood had been suspended since his arrest in April 2004. The civil court sentenced him to probation for 18 months.
+ *Church of Scotland, 121 George St., Edinburgh EH2 4YN*

Group suing contraceptive ruling in Illinois

The Washington-based American Center for Law and Justice is suing to stop Illinois from requiring pharmacies to fill prescriptions for emergency contraception, saying the rule violates a druggist's right to refuse on religious and moral grounds.

The lawsuit names Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the heads of the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and its Division of Professional Regulation as defendants.

The Illinois rule requires pharmacies that sell federally approved contraceptives to fill prescriptions for emergency birth control “without delay” if they have the medication in stock. If the contraceptive is not in stock, the pharmacy must order it or transfer the prescription to another pharmacy of the patient's choice. If a pharmacist won't fill the prescription because of a moral objection, another pharmacist must be available there to fill it.

+ *American Center for Law and Justice, PO Box 90555, Washington, DC 20090-0555*

Stott honoured by Queen

The Rev. John R.W. Stott, D.D., noted author, speaker, and Christian Statesman, was named a Commander of the British Empire on the Queen's New Year's Honour's List for “services to Christian scholarship and the Christian world.”
+ *Rev. Mr. Charles A. Collins Jr., 289 Hastings Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445*

Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria celebrates centenary

Karl Kumm, a German missionary, who in 1905 settled in the town of Ibi along the Benue River, sent his colleagues John Burt and Lowry Maxwell across the Benue River to visit Wukari in Taraba State. In 1906, the regional chief invited these men to live in Wukari. These two men and others formed the Sudan United Mission, a collaborative effort that continues today.

The Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria (CRCN), marked these events as the beginning of the gospel in their area. On 12 Nov., 2005, the church celebrated the 100th anniversary of Kumm's arrival at its current headquarters in Takum. The first formal congregation of the CRCN was not organized until 1917. In 1918, the CRCN began its partnership with the Christian Reformed Church in North America, when the CRCNA's first missionary, Johanna Veenstra, requested from the Sudan United Mission the responsibility for this area to be given to the CRCNA.

The CRCN currently has about 100 congregations, more than 200 ministers, and more than 300,000 believers attending worship services. The CRCN have many divisions of ministry and have sent evangelists across Nigeria and into neighboring Chad and Cameroon.
+ *CRCN Secretariat, PO Box 31, Takum, Taraba State, Nigeria, Africa*

Simple Catechism in several languages

Several years ago, as Harold Kallemeyn was consulting with some west African church leaders, they discussed how memorizing the Qu'ran had influenced their thoughts. Kallemeyn compared that experience to memorizing Christian catechisms, and they asked if they could produce a catechism.

Kallemeyn started a consultation with 60 leaders in several continents, which in 2004 led to the publication of *I Belong to God* (Excelsis, France), a simple text based on classical Reformed confessions, but easier and shorter. In several French-speaking African countries, the French version has been used widely. Translations are underway in about ten indigenous languages.

+ *The Reformed Ecumenical Council, 2050 Breton Rd., SE, Ste 102, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 (616) 949-2910*

CRCNA demands compliance from Toronto congregation

A letter drafted 10 Nov., by the Toronto Classis, a regional governing body of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), demanded that the First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto must provide a “clear

and unambiguous answer...stating that it is prepared to bring its practice, pastoral care, and teaching ministry within the guidelines of Synod 1973."

The demand is the latest response in a series that began in 2002, when the First Toronto congregation announced its intention to allow its gay and lesbian members to serve as elders and deacons. After initial protests, the congregation suspended its intention pending a review. The matter has gone to the synod of the CRCNA, which appointed a committee to advise and monitor the case. The letter from the classis mainly concurs with this committee's advice from September 2005.

The classis did not threaten disaffiliation explicitly, but it may consider this option at its January meeting if the First Church does not respond to the demand of the letter.

+ *Christian Reformed Church in North America, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave., SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560 (616) 241-1691*
+ *The First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto, 63-67 Taunton Rd., Toronto, ON M4S 2P2 (416) 481-1785*

Building regulations ease in Egypt

Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, after 150 years of restrictions on building improvements and repair, has enacted a new law that will allow churches to do basic repairs without waiting for governmental approval.

The new law also states the Governors have just 30 days to process requests for major renovations of existing churches and they are only able to reject an application by producing detailed reasons for the decision.

Some Christians are skeptical about the vague language in the new law, saying that they could get permits only after "consulting with concerned authorities" and who that "concerned authority" might be is not clear and could lead to further delay or denials of permits.

Others believe that this law is just another tactic being used to relieve pressure that is being applied to the government by both Christians and Muslims.

+ *Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250 (949) 862-0304*

Gereformeerde holds the line

Women remain shut out of most leadership positions in one of the country's most orthodox Afrikaans churches.

The Gereformeerde Kerk (Reformed Church), which has 414 congregations and about 250,000 members countrywide, slightly opened the door to women officers in 2003 when it allowed them to serve as church deacons. But this week it was shut again. After deliberations during which Professor Callie Coetzee of Potchefstroom University urged them "To get out of

the mudhole," it was decided that only already-ordained women deacons could remain.

Women will still not be able to become elders or ministers in the church.

The debate started almost two decades ago and erupted as a result of the 2003 decision. Some of the 47 churches that objected to women holding church office threatened to break away.

+ *Die Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, Posbus 20004, Noordbrug, 2522*

United Church of Christ year-end report

The United Church of Christ's (UCC), end-of-year report, which will be released this week, will acknowledge losing more than 50 churches since July, when it affirmed gay marriages during its General Synod.

Of the 5,700 affiliated UCC churches there are 230 in the Southern Conference, which includes North Carolina and eastern Virginia. At least 20 churches have let the Southern Conference since July, about 70 in the last 3 1/2 years, "most around the issue of homosexuality," according to Stephen Camp, conference minister.

+ *United Church of Christ, 700 Prospect Ave., Cleveland, OH 44115 (866) 822-8224*

Presbyterians help in Pakistan

Since the deadly earthquake in Pakistan in October, the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan has been helping with the relief efforts. No members of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan were among the 80,000 killed, but churches and the manses were badly damaged. Fifteen other houses belonging to church members were destroyed.

+ *Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, 2 Empress Rd., PO Box 13, Pakistan 54000 Lahore, Pakistan*

Church sues to recover sex abuse award

An Ottawa church has sued its former youth pastor to recover money that Calvin Christian Reformed Church paid to a sex abuse victim. Insurer Royal & Sun Alliance joined the suit that seeks US\$150,000 from ex-youth pastor Herbert de Ruyter, who pleaded guilty to sexually abusing a congregant while she was a teenager.

Legal experts said this type of suit is a new tactic for churches coping with sex scandals, a number of which have been driven to bankruptcy.

+ *Calvin Christian Reformed Church, 1475 Merivale Rd., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K2E 5N9 (613) 225-2889*

Lutheran gay wedding condemned by Russian Orthodox Church

During the last annual meeting of the Holy Synod, the Russian Orthodox Church decided

to break relations with the Lutheran Church of Sweden.

"It is with great disappointment and sorrow we have learned that the Lutheran Church of Sweden not only failed to oppose the so-called same-sex marriages but also issued a decree to establish an official blessing rite for those marriages," says a statement issued by the Synod. "Approving the shameful practice of same-sex marriages is a serious blow to the entire system of European spiritual and moral values influenced by Christianity. Such novelties undermine the moral foundations of European civilization and cause irreparable damage to its spiritual influence on a worldwide scale."

The Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest Protestant Church in Sweden and holds the status of state religion.

+ *Lutheran Church of Sweden, POB 1764, 111, 87 Stockholm, Sweden*

Free Trial Subscription to Reformation issues

The Reformed Presbyterian Witness has just begun a five-issue series on *The Reformation for Today*, which seeks to apply the major principles of the Protestant Reformation. Writers for the series include Wayne Spear, Rich Ganz, Barry York, Ken Orr, Tom Reid, Leverne Rosenberger, and Christian Adjemian.

Anyone who is not a current subscriber to the Witness may receive a free, five-month trial subscription. You will receive every issue on *The Reformation for Today*. Following that you will be given an opportunity to subscribe for another year, but there will be no pressure to subscribe.

Congregations are encouraged to accept this offer. For trial offer send name and address to <info@rpwitness.com>.

+ *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, James McFarland, Treasurer/Stated Clerk, 7408 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15208 (412) 731-1177*

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A feminine focus

Dorothy, Charlotte and Grace – the Three Wives of William Carey

Sally Davey

Christians hold William Carey, pioneer missionary to India, in tremendous awe. And this is deservedly so: he was a selfless, courageous man. After all, he went to a most inhospitable place at a time when overseas missionary service was almost unknown. A loved minister, he left an appreciative and growing church; and all that was familiar at home. Not the least of the obstacles he faced was the fact that the governing body of India, the East India Company, was firmly opposed to his meddling—lest he upset the Hindu and Moslem status quo, and create disturbances that would hinder their trading activities. Carey was prepared to face all this because he cared about the future of men and women who had never heard the Christian gospel. He was the first of many who began to feel this responsibility and take action. (Romans 10:14-15). As Britain's empire began to expand, and accounts of newly encountered native peoples reached home, the great explosion of missionary activity of the nineteenth century followed.

The other half

But what about the women who accompanied these men, and who similarly gave up everything to follow the call of the gospel? What was it like for them with small children, illness, and the need to keep house and prepare meals? What did it cost them? We hear less, of course, about the wives of missionaries, since it was their husbands who did much of the more visible work—such as preaching, Bible translation and teaching. I think, as you can imagine, these women are some of the unsung heroines of the Christian faith. Their stories are often quite remarkable. Some were courageous witnesses

themselves. Some simply persevered as loyal helpers of their preacher husbands. Either way, we can honour them.

Dorothy Carey

William Carey's first wife, Dorothy, was the companion to his humble beginning in mid-eighteenth century Northamptonshire. Carey had begun life as the son of a weaver of cloth and village schoolmaster. It was a poor family. William was apprenticed at a young age to a shoemaker. In his late teens that he was converted through the witness of one of his fellow-apprentices, a Baptist. Carey had been brought up in the Church of England, but over the next few months he became convinced by the teaching he heard in Baptist chapels in the neighbourhood. (It should be noted that these churches, like the majority of Baptist churches in England until the late nineteenth century, were Calvinistic in doctrine, and held to a covenantal view of the role of the child in a Christian family).

Dorothy Plackett was 25 when she married the 20-year-old Carey in 1781. They met because she was the younger sister of the wife of the man to whom Carey was apprenticed. Carey himself was still coming slowly to his convictions about baptism, and two years after their marriage he requested to be re-baptised on profession of faith. Not much is known about Dorothy's family background except that, like Carey, she belonged to the Church of England. At the time of her wedding she could neither read nor write, and signed the marriage certificate with an X. During the next few years Carey began preaching in local Baptist chapels. His hearers found him quite remarkable—both in his zeal for the Gospel, and in his own personal devotion to Christ. He always described himself, however, as a "plodder." Dorothy must have worked through many of these questions of doctrine and practice with William for in 1787, six years after their marriage, she was baptised by her husband in the chapel at Moulton, the first church to

call him as minister.

William's wife, Dorothy, faced many difficulties in their married life. Their firstborn, Ann, died of a fever when she was only two years old. Despite the frequent death of small children in this time, it was a tragedy. Forty years later William's sister, Polly, wrote, "How I did love that child!" Carey himself nearly died of the same fever. They lived in almost constant, grinding poverty, and would often go weeks without eating meat. But three healthy little boys were born, and they were loved by their congregation.

Carey's wider interest

This was the age of voyages of exploration and of the beginnings of Britain's empire. Carey had an inquisitive mind, and read widely. He later said it was the reading of the voyages of Captain Cook in the South Pacific that "was the first thing that engaged my mind to think of missions." This was not surprising. The great evangelical revivals of the eighteenth century in England had heightened awareness of the Gospel, and when the explorers' descriptions of the native peoples they encountered were read by Christians home in Britain, a great concern developed for the souls of these people who had never heard the Gospel. But Carey's interest was an early one. His reading of Cook's travels in the 1780s and works on geography, the

British empire and international news in the local newspaper did not fill all his compatriots with compassion for their lost state as it did him. But he began to pray, and to speak with others about the matter. Eventually it led to his writing a small book entitled *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens. In Which the Religious State of the Different Nations of the World, the Success*

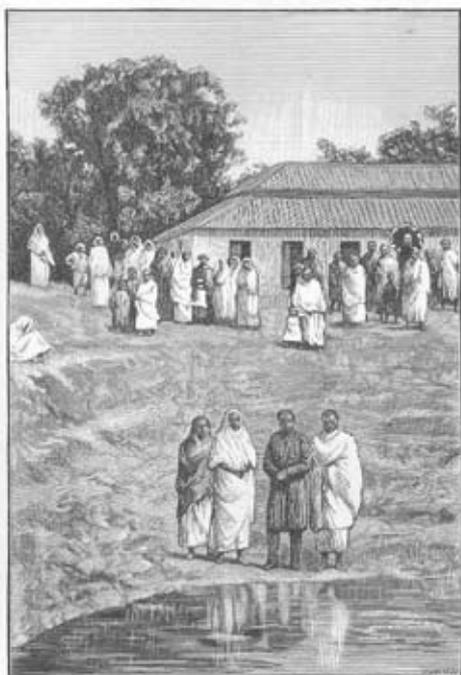
of Former Undertakings, Are Considered. This book was a major instrument in the birth of the modern missionary movement. He became more and more persuasive, pleading with nearby Baptist ministers as well as his own congregation, asking them how they could rest easy in their consciences while so



William Carey

many souls who had never had the benefit of the gospel were perishing? He continued to study geography, to learn about these far-off nations and people, and developed a great thirst to learn their languages. (In fact, Carey had a natural aptitude for language: he had already taught himself Latin, Greek and Hebrew during his apprentice days). He also, on his own, acquired a reading knowledge of Dutch and French.

Carey's own commitment to missionary service would have seemed a natural progression of his burden for the spiritual needs of heathen peoples, but in fact he was not certain he would go himself until



Carey's Christian village – baptism in the tank

some months before his departure for India in April 1793. His children were young (his two daughters had died in infancy) and Dorothy, who could barely read and write, had never been outside the neighbourhood she had grown up in. But in January 1793 John Thomas, an English Baptist who had spent several years in India, came to speak at their local Baptist Association. Carey, who until then been focused on Tahiti (where Captain Cook had been killed), was “sold.” He was determined to accompany Thomas back to India. Thomas was an enthusiastic, committed missionary but a rather impulsive and, at times, rather an overbearing and tactless man. On meeting Thomas Carey committed all, agreeing to go with him for two or three years. He broke the news to Dorothy, who

refused to go herself, as she was due to give birth one month after Carey's date of sailing. However, she finally agreed to Carey's taking Felix, their oldest (aged 8) with him.

A difficult passage

Not all went smoothly as the two men departed. The two Careys, on board with the Thomas family (John Thomas, his wife, and little daughter) were unsure of their reception in India, as persons unauthorised by the East India Company could be turned back on arrival. (Missionaries, especially, were not at all welcome). Thomas was being pursued by debtors at the time. Writing to Dorothy on board the ship as they waited, Carey thanked her for the “account of your safe delivery. This is pleasant news indeed to me... You wish to know in what state my mind is. I answer, it is much as when I left you. If I had all the world, I would freely give it all to have you and my dear children with me, but the sense of duty is so strong as to overpower all other considerations; I could not turn back without guilt on my soul.” Dorothy had asked him about Mrs Thomas's view of the expedition. Carey's answer tells something of the sacrifice made by these early missionary wives, in pursuing such an undertaking: “She is very delicate, brought up very genteel, and cousin to Squire Thursby of Abingdon. But she is in good spirits, and the sea agrees with her very well. She sends her love to you, and is glad to hear the good news concerning your delivery. She would rather stay in England than go to India, but thinks it right to go with her husband...”

Actually, news of Thomas's intentions (perhaps from his creditors?) led to him and Carey and young Felix being removed from the ship, and they had to scurry around on shore for another ship—or other means of getting to India. Still cherishing hopes that Dorothy might be persuaded to go with him, Carey went back home with Thomas. They were unable to make her change her mind, so he went off to arrange for more needed funds. But Thomas insisted on trying to persuade Dorothy again. If she did not go, he told her, her family would be spread apart forever. And she would repent of this for as long as she lived! As Dorothy later said, she became “afraid to stay at home.” (But how would you feel, with a new baby and one hour to make such a decision?) She bravely agreed, on condition that her

unmarried sister, Katharine (Kitty), would accompany her.

A hard start

So this is how Dorothy Carey went to India with her missionary husband, little baby boy and three older boys. On arrival in Calcutta, the Carey family faced many difficulties. Thomas disappeared to escape creditors, and spent his own as well as Carey's meagre savings. Carey went in fruitless search for work, while the family lived in near-starvation in a shack on the outskirts on the city. Dorothy and the two older boys were suffering from dysentery—Felix nearly died. They were not happy. They had no friends, did not speak the language, and were desperately lonely. Dorothy and Kitty were not the most enthusiastic missionary supporters. “If my family were but hearty in the work,” Carey wrote to a friend back home, “I should find a great burden removed.” Hearing of a bungalow which they could use while he set up farming on an adjacent plot of land, Carey instigated the family's fourth major move in three months. But this was three days' boat trip along rivers and salt lakes to a huge, swampy, jungle region. When they arrived the bungalow was already let to someone else, and it would be weeks before Carey could construct a bamboo hut for the family to live in. Amazingly, an official of a salt company, Charles Short, who did not at all see eye to eye with Carey's missionary plans, took the family in for as long as they needed shelter. Short married Kitty, Dorothy's sister, and came to trust in Christ soon after.

A 'tent-making' ministry

Not long after this Thomas reappeared remorsefully, offering Carey a share in a new venture supervising the growing of indigo, some 350 miles away. The good thing about this move for Dorothy was that it gave them a permanent and comfortable house, in which they were to live for the next five years. Carey, who had always believed missionaries should support themselves, saw great usefulness in this work. He hoped his 90 employees would form the nucleus of a Christian church. But the physical dangers of the environment struck the family again. This time William contracted malaria; and just as he was beginning to recover Peter, aged five, fell ill of a worse fever and died.

This final blow proved too much for Dorothy. The grieving parents could find no one to help them bury their little boy (it was against the rules of caste to touch a corpse). Finally an “untouchable” was found to save them carrying the coffin to the grave themselves. It seems that poor Dorothy never recovered from Peter’s death. She could not see the “wise ends” William claimed God must have. She bore another baby boy in this home, but this child could never replace Peter. When the new baby was three months old, Carey wrote home to his sisters that “My poor wife must be considered as insane, and is the occasion of great sorrow.” This had all happened within three years of their arrival in India.

Encouraged by young missionaries

One wonders how Carey managed to keep going in his work, with the responsibilities of three small sons as well as an incapacitated wife. Certainly, he gave all the credit to God’s grace. But as well as daily strength of spirit, God also gave him easier circumstances with the arrival of a group of younger Baptist missionaries sent from England to join them. They were prevented providentially from proceeding inland to his station, and had no option but to remain in the Danish settlement of Serampore. Carey ultimately decided to join them there and together they established a remarkable missionary community, sharing everything in common—as had been the habit of the Moravian missionaries of earlier times. There they began the work of translation and printing the Bible into Bengali and Sanskrit; and an amazing set of schools for natives that established the pattern for many a mission work in other parts of the world in the nineteenth century. The wives of these newer missionaries—especially the indomitable Hannah Marshman—made Carey’s life much easier. They cared for Dorothy faithfully, and did much to mother his teenaged sons through worrying years of rebellion. Carey himself, though busy with teaching at college level and with ongoing Bible translation, looked after his wife year in and year out. He worked in the next room to hers, even though her rantings must have often disturbed him deeply. He steadfastly resisted all suggestions that he commit her to an asylum (they were not pleasant places for their inmates); and until her death at the age of almost 52, he loved her as his wife.

Charlotte

Shortly after her death he intimated to his friends that he was planning to marry again—after an appropriate interval. At first they were shocked but his second wife, Charlotte von Rohr, was so gracious and lovely a Christian lady, and so committed to every aspect of the mission work, that they recovered their equanimity. She was a Danish noblewoman who had come out to India in the hope that the warmer climate would give her some relief from a chronic illness. An educated, literary, well-read woman, it is hard to imagine her as anything but a complete contrast to poor Dorothy. Like Dorothy, though, she was converted through William’s witness, and he baptised her in the Ganges. It seems that theirs was a truly happy marriage. Fluent in several languages, she doubtless helped him in his translation work. She was devoted to the mission, and gave much to its support from her own estate. She also had a tender affection for the four Carey children; an affection which they returned and wrote of later. Carey was heartbroken when she died at the age of 60, in 1821. He was terribly lonely, as he confessed to Jabez, his youngest son.

Grace

Unsurprisingly, Carey married a third time—to Grace Hughes, also a widow, who had likewise been married twice before. Grace, too, was converted through Carey’s witness, and he had the joy of baptising her as well. Grace was also an enthusiastic supporter of the mission and cared faithfully for him during the rest of his life (he lived till 1834, aged 72), nursing him through illnesses and the sorrow of his missionary son Felix’s death. Carey spoke of the happiness of his life with Grace, but it seems that Charlotte was the deep love of his life. He left a request that he was to be “buried by the side of my second wife, Charlotte Emilia Carey.”

The lesson in love

Certainly, Carey had experienced the kind of married love that enabled him to pass the wisdom of experience to his sons. Shortly after Jabez was married, and as he was about to set off as a missionary with his wife, Eliza, Carey wrote these words:

“You are now a married man. Be not satisfied with conducting yourself towards your wife with propriety. Let love to her be

the spring of your conduct towards her. Esteem her highly and so act that she may be induced thereby to esteem you highly. The first impressions of love arising from form or beauty will soon wear off, but the esteem arising from excellency of disposition and substance of character will endure and increase. Her honour is now yours and she cannot be insulted without your being degraded.”

Those are wonderful words, as any wife will agree. Carey certainly seems to have lived them, especially in his relations with his second and third wives. And yet, there is no doubt that he loved and protected Dorothy as well. But the big question that lingers—especially in respect of a wife’s duties towards her husband’s calling, and his to hers—is what we should make of the story of William and Dorothy?

Many have condemned Dorothy for her lack of sympathy for her husband’s missionary calling, and for her complaints at the difficulties the family faced in India. Why could she not share his sacrificial zeal for the sake of the Gospel? Why could she not see that the spiritual peril of the Indians was a far more important cause than her own comfort—as did he? Most of Carey’s earlier biographers treat Dorothy’s part of his story as cause for pitying Carey. She was a great hindrance to his work: he was the saintlier for his endurance of her troubles. One such biographer, George Smith, wrote, “Never had minister, missionary, or scholar a less sympathetic mate,” all the while Carey “showed her loving reverence” and bore with patience her “reproachful tongue.” For many years during the nineteenth century Carey’s work, and the idea of a missionary wife as helpmeet in personal sacrifice, were emblematic of the way British Christians saw mission work. Missionary wives were expected to live up this high spiritual calling as helpmeet at every level. We see this, for instance, in the way Jane Eyre’s missionary cousin, St John Rivers, proposed to her in Charlotte Brontë’s novel, *Jane Eyre*:

“in the unflagging energy and unshaken temper with which you have met [the difficulties of studying Hindustani]—I acknowledge the complement of the qualities I seek. Jane, you are docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic: cease to mistrust yourself—I can trust you unreservedly. As a

conductress of Indian schools, and a helper amongst Indian women, your assistance will be to me invaluable."

Jane herself doubted hers was "the existence to be long protracted under an Indian sun." But she expected St John would not be troubled: "...when my time came to die, he would resign me, in all serenity and sanctity, to the God who gave me." (Charlotte Bronte, Jane Eyre, p. 489)

Was Carey completely wise?

It seemed, in such a picture of missionary life, that all the emphasis was on the sacredness of the high and sacrificial gospel calling; and that the wife must give, whole-heartedly, in the same way as her husband. While this is partly true, it is also fair to ask whether Carey did all a wise and loving husband should, in Scriptural terms. Several things need to be considered:

Firstly, there is not much evidence of his consulting Dorothy in his decision to go to India as a missionary. Probably it was obvious that his desire was becoming strong in this direction. But the speed with which he decided to leave, upon first meeting

John Thomas, suggests he was impetuous. Certainly, he lacked true understanding of Thomas's character. Dorothy herself, about to give birth, was in no condition to leave. She did not show much sign of serious calling to missionary service herself. This was a perilous way for a missionary to begin his work. Missionary societies became much more careful about this a generation later. By then quite a lot of effort was put into investigating the wife's keenness to go, her fitness, and so on.

Then there was Carey's behaviour once they reached India. He knew so little about the country and the people before he arrived, and as a consequence put great trust in John Thomas. As events transpired this proved unwise, and the whole family suffered. Constant house-removal, lack of money for food, and serious illness were their lot for many months. It must have been severely tempting for Dorothy to lose confidence in her husband's judgement.

Carey's answer to their sufferings was that they must trust God. We do not know what specific things he said to Dorothy during the first, terrible years of their difficulties.

But it does seem as if, by the time of little Peter's death, poor housing, inadequate food, sick children and the oppressive heat of India had taken a grim toll. Dorothy, by then, could not see the "wise ends" her husband talked about in God's ordering of her life. What should we make of this? Can a wife's lack of trust in God be blamed on her husband's lack of wisdom, or proper consideration for his family? In the end, no. (It is clear that Carey's Calvinist theology was what enabled him to keep going through many years of discouragement before the mission work began to prosper). But that she was a "bruised reed" there is no doubt. Her Lord, we can be certain, knew with wise and merciful understanding what she suffered, and what it cost Dorothy to follow her husband "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, and in sickness and in health."

Wives have their own gifting

Then there is the question of a wife's relation to her husband's calling in life. This question is critical when a missionary calling is in consideration, but it is something every wife needs to consider. How far should I be supportive of the work my husband does? Do I need to be actively involved in it, or simply encourage him in it? To what extent do I need to make it my own? One can look carefully, and simply say "yes" or "no" to his calling, and consequently to marriage, beforehand; but should a husband wish to make drastic, sacrifice-requiring changes to his manner of life once he has a wife and family, then surely he needs to ask whether his wife is able-or willing—to continue as a helpmeet for him in those changed circumstances. It seems to me that wives have a duty to help their husbands as far as they can; but their own lack of gifts, abilities, or simple capacity, can make some kinds of helping impossible. This, it seems to me, was Dorothy's difficulty. Carey's second and third wives had the advantage of seeing, beforehand, what his ongoing work would be—and they had the ability to help him in it. In addition, his life then had stability, order, and considerable material comfort when compared with those first few years in India. Dorothy's were the terrible and testing years—years she had no opportunity to weigh up before she said "yes" or "no". Perhaps she did fail in many of her tests of faith. But perhaps—and I hope this is so—her reward in heaven is great.

Calling all country boys and girls to become

NETWORKERS



If you have always wanted to be a Cadet or Calvinette but live too far away from a club, we would love to hear from you!

NETWORKERS is for children aged 9-15 years old, and you would be a correspondence member with the closest club, able to attend camps and any club functions that you could make.

Your counsellor and cadre would be your correspondent friends and leader.

INTERESTED?

Then write to me –
**Cr Rob Wierenga, 35 Humber Street
 Island Bay, Wellington**

The gates of Jerusalem

Introduction to a new series

Patricia van Laar

Luke 24: 27 (NIV) *Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures, concerning Himself.*

What a Bible study that must have been!

Yet how seriously do we take those words, 'In all the Scriptures?' Do we, as we read, seek to find things concerning Him, in all the Scriptures?

We have to approach any study of this with caution, not extremism, and must compare Scripture with Scripture. But I think we are more prone to overlook the pictures and teaching about Him in many of the Scriptures, than we are good at winking them out. We find Him easily in Psalms 22 and 23 and in Isaiah 53, but not all Scripture is as clear as this. Where, for example, is He in books such as Ezra and Nehemiah?

In my possession I have a devotional commentary on these two books and Esther. I studied the section on Ezra years ago as a help with preparation of studies for a Youth Camp series; but the book has sat ever since then on my bookshelf, waiting for me to pay more attention to Nehemiah and Esther. That means over fifty years! So I recently opened it up at Nehemiah, to study it in depth. I saw, for the first time, a clear picture of our Lord's work in Christians, that I had overlooked whenever I read the book of Nehemiah. This led to a development of my own thoughts on the matter. My meditations, which I want to share with you, owe much to the commentary, but also to my own subsequent musings on the topic.

The first fact that struck me is that the order given to the repair of the walls of Jerusalem, and especially the order of the repair of the gates, is not just random. The account is orderly, yes; but the order of building the walls was not just any old method that suited the convenience of the builders, but indicates, I believe, the direct influence of God. Nor was the order recorded in the Bible randomly, but it has all the signs of the planning of God.

Comparing it with my local city

May I illustrate what I mean by this, by referring to my own city? Come with me around an

imaginary wall of circumference surrounding Palmerston North. I would probably begin with the main entrance nearest my home, the one from the Woodville Gorge and the Ashhurst Bridge, which leads into the city through Napier Road. This entrance indicates (by an AA sign) the first place of importance in a side street—the Kelvin Grove Cemetery. (Surely this should be last!) From here, following the Napier Road until it runs into Main Street, we see the Old Cemetery on the right, and the Memorial Park (desecrated by untidy clothing bins) on the left. Then I take you around the city in order, to the entrance past Massey University, over Fitzherbert Bridge and past the beautiful Esplanade Gardens and so into the city. This would be the start of such a drive for those of our members living in the Somerset Retirement Village up the Aokautere Hill, so if you go with one of them, you would have a different starting point.

From here we would go on round our wall to the Main Street entrance which is the quickest route from the townships of Foxton and Shannon, and also leads shortly into the city centre, past the new red Warehouse and the fire station. The next main entrance would be the over-bridge across the railway at Rangitikei Street, with the Railway Station on the right. This is the main entrance from the northern regions of North Island. Further round still we come to Milson Line, past the airport and on to the hospital, the shortest route from Feilding.

We have now circled the city, and return to

the entry from the east—Napier Road.

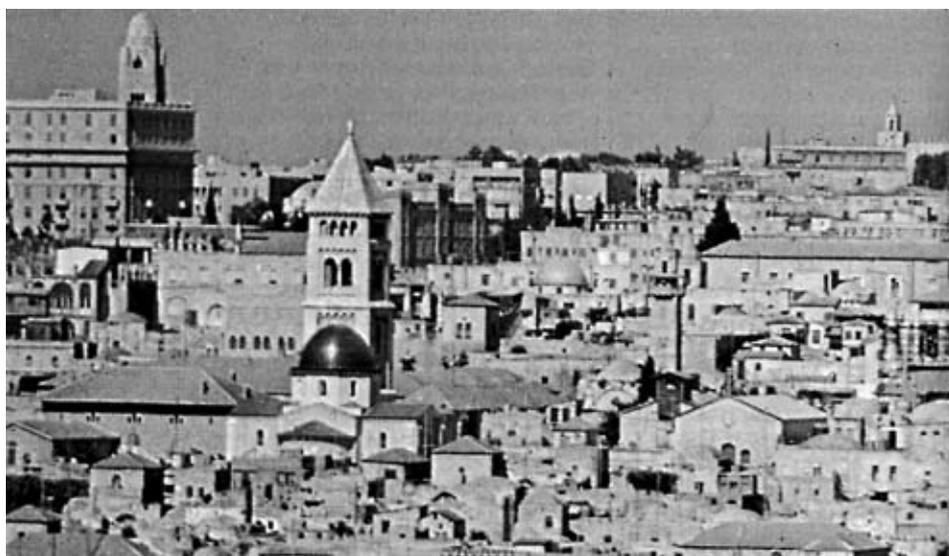
Does all this make any logical sense? New cemetery, old cemetery, Memorial Gardens; city bridge, Esplanade; The Warehouse, Fire Station and city centre; over-bridge to nothing in particular; airport, hospital. Built quite conveniently but haphazardly to suit the purposes or whims of the citizens.

Not so the planning of the entrances to the City of Jerusalem. The very order of it seems to be intended to give a logical picture of the Christian life: not the physical life, but the spiritual. This is the train my thoughts have followed.

All of Scripture matters

The second thought driven home to me was that Nehemiah confirmed my thinking that everything in Scripture is relevant to our life and learning as Christians. I long ago discovered that the seemingly endless (in parts) lists of names in the Bible are not boring, but quite fascinating, when we take the trouble to examine them instead of skimming over them. Now I realised that, just as this applied to the lists recorded in Nehemiah, it applied also to the account of the very walls and gates of the city of Jerusalem. Ezra too, as I found long ago, symbolically leads us to Christ. Let us beware of neglecting any portion of His Word.

Bear with me if I now take you on a drive, not around Palmerston North, but around the walls and through the entrance gates of the ancient City of Jerusalem.



Mission in focus

Janice Reid

Making Disciples

by Rev. P. Frank Van Dalen

Frank Van Dalen is a son of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. He and his wife, Emily, served as missionaries in Pakistan from 1986–1998. They then returned to the US where they were involved in promoting missions in churches throughout the US, training missionaries, and developing the Missionary Resources Connection for missionaries on furlough. They have three children of high school and college age (Chris, Andrew and Laura). Frank is currently the Executive Director of World Witness (the Foreign Missions Board of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in the US and Canada). He can be reached at fvandalen@worldwitness.org

I am often struck by how well we remember a dying man's last words. We want them to be significant—and many times they are. Sometimes they are as simple as, "I love you." Other times they give us an important task. For example, Jesus' last words on the cross to John the disciple were, *Here is your mother.* (Jn 19:27) The words had great impact. For, the next thing we read is: *From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.* These last words of Jesus on the cross affected John for the rest of his life.

The end of Matthew's Gospel records some of the last words of Jesus on this earth. He is soon to return to glory. His time of humiliation is over. He died on the cross and was buried for three days. But now He has risen, and has completed the task for which He came to earth. He is about to take His place at the right hand of the Father, from where He shall rule forever and enjoy the fruits of His labour. Before He does so, however, He leaves His followers with words that will change the course of history.

Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name

of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.' (Matthew 28: 18 - 20)

The Great Commission

This passage of Scripture is often called, "The Great Commission." That title is a simple short-hand way of describing our Saviour's program for His Church until His return at the end of history. In a few memorable words, Matthew records one of the final commands of Jesus. His desire is that it will have a lasting impact on our lives. The question is: Does it actually have this impact?

Jesus begins His Commission with an important declaration: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."* It is the basis on which Jesus instructs His disciples about their future ministry. It is also a direct reference to Daniel 7:13 and 14 in which we read that, *one like a son of man...was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away.*

Jesus wants us to understand that the fulfilment of this prophecy in Daniel 7 has now begun. It has not yet been completed. But it is a process which started with Jesus' claim of absolute authority and continues even to this day. Therefore, we can have great confidence in its outcome. For, although it may sometimes appear that the Kingdom of God is suffering innumerable defeats and is stumbling around in great confusion, we already have before us the confident claim that the Lord will achieve His promised victory. He has the full authority to do so.

Narnia

How many of you have seen the recent movie of C.S. Lewis's book, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*? Do you remember how the land of Narnia was in perpetual winter until Aslan the Lion came? With his arrival in Narnia we see the first signs of Spring—a time of rejoicing and celebration. That is what is now happening with the enthronement of Christ the King. He has occupied His throne and He has begun to reign over His people. He is constantly extending His jurisdiction

and bringing new subjects under it.

This is what Jesus goes on to affirm when He commands His followers to *"go and make disciples."* (Mt.28:19). They are to duplicate His work throughout the world. Where Jesus began the Church, they are to continue bringing people into it—"baptising them," in other words. Where Jesus spent three years maturing His disciples, they are to continue with that task as well—"teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

It's all about Him

Notice that the focus is always on Jesus. *"All authority... has been given to me,"* He tells us. His authority is personal. He alone is the One who has complete jurisdiction *"in heaven and on earth"*—the spiritual and physical realms. He alone is the One who is the focus of our teaching: *"everything I have commanded."* The whole Bible relates to Jesus. Its only true application is that which directs us to Him.

A clear demonstration of this is seen in the way Jesus uses the words "to me" in the Gospels. *"Come to me,"* He invites those who are weary and burdened, as He offers them rest. (Mt.11:28) *"Bring the boy here to me,"* He instructs the father who seeks healing for his demon-possessed son. (Mt.17:17) *"Let the little children come to me,"* He commands the disciples who are trying to limit His ministry. (Mt.19:14) *"Listen to me,"* He says to the crowds wondering about the identity of this miracle worker. (Mk 7:14) *"All things have been committed to me,"* He reminds His disciples returning from a short-term mission's trip. (Lk.10:22)

Remember this point above all else. For without Jesus, there is no hope of salvation. Without Jesus, we have no Good News for the world. We must preach Jesus, the Son of God, who *"humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"* (Phil.2:8) We must preach Jesus, whom the Father exalted, *"to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."* (Phil.2:9–11) *"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."* (Acts2:36). What a wonderful Gospel! What a wonderful Saviour!

Everyone!

This is the Jesus who sends us out into 'all nations.' From Daniel 7:14 and Revelation 5:9 we see that this refers not only to all ethnic groups. Rather, it refers to 'every tribe and language and people and nation.' It refers to every category into which people can be grouped. We must never assume, therefore, that we can tell Jesus when this task is complete. If we think that we have reached every ethnic group (over 3,000 in Africa alone), then we must also reach all language groups (nearly 7000 throughout the world). In India there are thousands of clans which make up the major castes (Varnas) and sub-castes (Jats) of Hinduism. The world is made up of countless groups of people.

Jesus tells us to 'go' to these people groups. We might think that there is plenty of work to do here at home. Evidently, that is what the Early Church thought in the first eight chapters of the Book of Acts. They stayed in Jerusalem even though Jesus had told them to go to "Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8) However, I believe that one of the reasons for persecution coming upon the Early Church was to make its members obey the Great Commission. In Acts 8:1 and 4 we read that the 'scattered' church finally began the work of planting churches among the nations.

The Early Church was small, persecuted and faced many problems as it developed

to spiritual maturity. Yet the Lord used that Church to accomplish great things. He was with them and, through them, enabled the nations to hear the Good News. In the same way, Jesus has promised to be "with you always, to the end of the age." With Jesus beside us, we can be assured that His Church will be established among the nations. May the words of Acts 28:28 be our encouragement as we seek to obey the Great Commission: *I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen!*

MIF prayer notes

- 1) Walter and Jeannette Hagoort have been in New Zealand for the last few weeks, reporting to churches in the South Island about their ministry in Papua New Guinea. Please pray for safety and good health, and for refreshment in spirit as they finish up their time in New Zealand and return to PNG for another year of service. Ask the Lord for travelling mercies and a quick adjustment as they settle back into work in Port Moresby.
- 2) Janice Reid expects that, by the time you read this, she will be in Indonesia and attending language study. She asks that you pray for her safety and cultural adjustment; and also that you be circumspect in the amount and type of Christian language that

you use in emails and postal communication, considering the political and religious tensions in the area where she is now working.

3) Jared Berends gives praise to the Lord for the recent growth of Christian groups in the area where he is working, in a restricted country. Jared says that local believers are really catching the vision to share the Good News with their countrymen, and several small groups of new believers have formed as a result. The need now is to train leaders so they can shepherd these young Christians, helping them to mature in their faith. Pray for Jared and others as they continue this work.

4) Heidi Posthuma has recently made a short visit to NZ to attend her brother's wedding, but is back at work in a restricted country, teaching English to more than 1,000 students each week. She gives thanks for excellent opportunities over the last few months to share the Christmas message with almost 1200 students who had never heard it before. Pray that the Lord works in the hearts of these people who are so steeped in superstition. Ask especially for His Spirit to work in the heart of a close friend of Heidi's, who has recently been doing Bible studies with her. Pray that the Lord would raise up more teachers to fill positions that are opening up later this year.

Focus on home**Gleanings from our bulletins...****Andrew Reinders****Avondale**

Celebration: On Tuesday January 3 2006 our sister Jan Phillips hopes to celebrate her 90th birthday. Certainly an occasion to celebrate and give thanks for this lovely lady's faithful service in our congregation. Among

other things she was once the Superintendent of our Sunday School; and just think of the many hundreds of cards she created and encouraged us with.

There will be an afternoon tea in our church hall at 2 pm on Tuesday, January 3, 2006 and everyone is invited to come and congratulate Mrs. Phillips and celebrate with her and her family.

Bishopdale

Update on Brian: Wait on the Lord; be of good courage and he shall strengthen your heart. Psalm 27 v14: - This coming Christmas will be the 3rd Christmas that Brian has been

in 'Parklands Hospital', a lot longer than what we expected. Brian is half the weight he was when he went in; he is not walking now, eating very little and sleeps most of the time. I often ask 'Why'? The above verse is only one of many that have been of help to me and I would encourage you all to 'Wait on the Lord and be of good courage and yes the Lord will strengthen you. I wish on behalf of Brian and myself to thank you all for your prayers, support, cards and visits over the last almost 3 years of Brian's illness. He will not be home again, he will not get better, he is dying very slowly and only the Lord knows 'why' it is going this way. Thank you all again for without your support I could not keep going. God bless. Love in our Lord Ann Stagg.

Our student at RTC



My name is Craig van Echten and I began my studies at the Reformed Theological College (RTC) in 2005.

My motivation for coming to the RTC was to study the Word of God more and I believed God was leading my life in that direction. God had prepared me in a number of ways and “made my paths straight” before coming to the RTC. God blessed me with a Christian upbringing. God also blessed me with three brothers and three sisters.

Before coming to the RTC God blessed me with full-time work in the family business at Mitre 10, which equipped me to be able to deal with the public and work with many different people in a number of different work situations. During my time at Mitre 10 God prepared me for study through off-campus business studies which involved attending exams.

God also used the Foxton Reformed Church to nurture me and to give me responsibilities within the church to prepare me for ministry; like leading the youth group.

After a year at the RTC I can look back and say that things could not have gone any better. The year has been most rewarding in terms of study and practical experience.

The RTC is not as big as most other Bible colleges but it certainly has a lot to offer. I have found it very rewarding to be among the close-knit college community which is very much

like a family atmosphere.

I have also found the lecturers very supportive. It is really easy to talk to them about problems or things that you don't understand. Lectures are very relaxed and open which is really good because this gives plenty of opportunities to ask questions and drink coffee!

All of my subjects have been really interesting which makes it a joy to learn. There is so much to learn. This year I studied church history. We were given an overview from the early centuries till now showing how nothing happens in a vacuum but that God uses people and circumstances to control history. I also studied the Old Testament, beginning with a general overview. The main themes were really interesting especially realizing that God is the hero of every story. There was also much to learn in the subjects of Evangelism and Theology of Mission especially in using effective approaches in reaching the lost in the post-modern world. Christian Worship was an interesting and challenging subject too. The subject covers different styles of worship and the key elements that should be present. For this subject we had Matthew Jacoby teach some lectures relating to worship in the Psalms. Matthew Jacoby is one of the musicians behind the Sons of Korah music. To top it all off I also studied the creeds and confessions of the church as a subject.

Most importantly in addition to the knowledge I feel that I have grown in my relationship with God and feel more confident to serve Him.

In closing I would ask that the churches uphold the students and faculty in prayer because it is not always easy. The workload for both students and faculty is very demanding especially at the end of the semester when essays are due and exams need to be prepared for. This year the college celebrated fifty years and it is my prayer that the college would continue for another fifty years.

Craig van Echten

Christchurch

Milestones to give thanks to our Lord for... congratulations to Mr. John & Mrs. Truus Nieuwenhuize who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary this Thursday. We give thanks to our Lord for the many blessings and years He has given you and those around you.

Wedding banns: Malcolm Gough and Jessica de Vries have signified their desire to be united in marriage in this church on Saturday 17 December 2005. If there are no lawful objections, the ceremony will take place at 1.00 pm on that date.

We rejoice with Titus and Esther Smith for the birth of their son, Nathan Titus Smith, born this past Monday. Mother and child hoped to return home from Christchurch Women's Hospital by this weekend. We give thanks to God for His covenant faithfulness from generation to generation, and we pray that God may grant Titus and Esther His wisdom as they seek to raise this child in the fear of the Lord.

Dovedale

Dovedale church family camp: Our 2006 church family camp will be held from April 21st to 23rd. Please book these dates in your diary or on your calendar now. It will be an exciting time of food (both spiritual and physical), fellowship, families, friendship, and fun! The camp we shared in earlier this year was a fantastic time, and next year's promises to be even better. Our guest speaker is Rev Leo De Vos, with the topic “Setting our affections and minds on things above”. We look forward to seeing you there!

Foxton

Missed the Sunday morning service? Don't worry – hear it on Foxton local radio 99.1 Friday evenings at 8.05 pm approx.

Hamilton

Profession of Faith: With great thankfulness and a joyful heart we commit Sarah Bennett, Anton Hemmes, Teresa Klinkhamer, Christie McGiven, Jordan van der Wel, Steven Voschezang and Arian Wieldraayer to our Lord and Saviour as they will publicly profess their

faith in the Lord Jesus this morning and be received in full communion with the people of God, and the full life of this church's fellowship. We thank God for His grace in Jesus the Messiah to give you this desire and pray that He may continue to carry on the good work He has begun in you unto the day of complete redemption. May all of us who confessed Your name never cease to wonder what You have done for us. Help us to continue firmly in the faith, to bear witness to Your love and to let the Holy Spirit shape our lives. Take us, good Shepherd, into your care that we may loyally endure opposition in serving You.

Hukanui

Wedding Celebrations! Dear Congregation, Jonathan Termaat and Renee Voogt have indicated their desire to be united in marriage. They desire to begin their life together in the name of the Lord and in the presence of His people, and continue it to His glory. If there are no lawful objections, the ceremony will take place at the Reformed Church of Hamilton, Aberdeen Drive, on Saturday the 3rd December, at 1:00 pm.

Congratulations to Logan and Josie Hagoort with the birth of Chloe Niela on Wednesday evening! Father, mother and baby are all doing well and we wish them every wisdom from God as they settle into family life and seek to bring Chloe up in the fear and knowledge of the Lord!

North Shore

Notes from the pastoral meeting held Thursday, 1st December. We received requests for membership from Mrs Maria Braam (formerly of the Invercargill Reformed Church and then the Presbyterian Church of Invercargill) and Mrs van den Hoek (formerly of the Invercargill and Dunedin Reformed Churches). We are very happy to receive Maria and Mrs van den Hoek as members and trust you will find a real spiritual home among us.

Palmerston North

Advanced Notice. Ladies Presbyterial will be held, Lord willing, on March 18th in Hastings. There will be a speaker from Caleb Leadership Ministeries, who will be talking about how to build more effective relationships with

others who we come in contact with. Please see the letter on the notice board for more information.

Wellington

Confession of faith. This Sunday morning eight of our youth will do their Confession of Faith in front of the congregation. They are Erich Buys, Kile Esterhuizen, André Ferreira, Paul Kruger, Allien Lion-Cachet, Heinrich Pretorius, Hugo van Greuning and Willem van der Merwe. As parents and congregation we congratulate them on it and are thankful in the Lord for this wonderful and graceful step they are taking.

Wedding banns. Unless valid objections are raised Simon Steenhof and Natasha Minnee are getting married D.V on Saturday the 17th of December at 1.30 pm. The ceremony will be held at the St John's Presbyterian Church, which is on the corner of Willis and Dixon Street in Wellington city. Simon and Natasha and their parents invite all the members of the congregation to celebrate this occasion with them and join them after the ceremony for afternoon tea and bubbly.

Senior's Day – October 18th 2005

Buckland's Beach hosted the Auckland churches Senior Day for 2005. They provided us with morning tea and a lovely lunch. Our guest speaker was Sr Janice Reid. She spoke of the radio work she had been doing in Kampuchea and what it was like living there, illustrated with pictures she had taken. Then she spoke of the work she next looked forward to being involved in, Lord willing.

Our thanks go to the Bucklands Beach ladies and Janice for a wonderful day.





Auckland Presbytery Senior's Day – October 18th 2005

