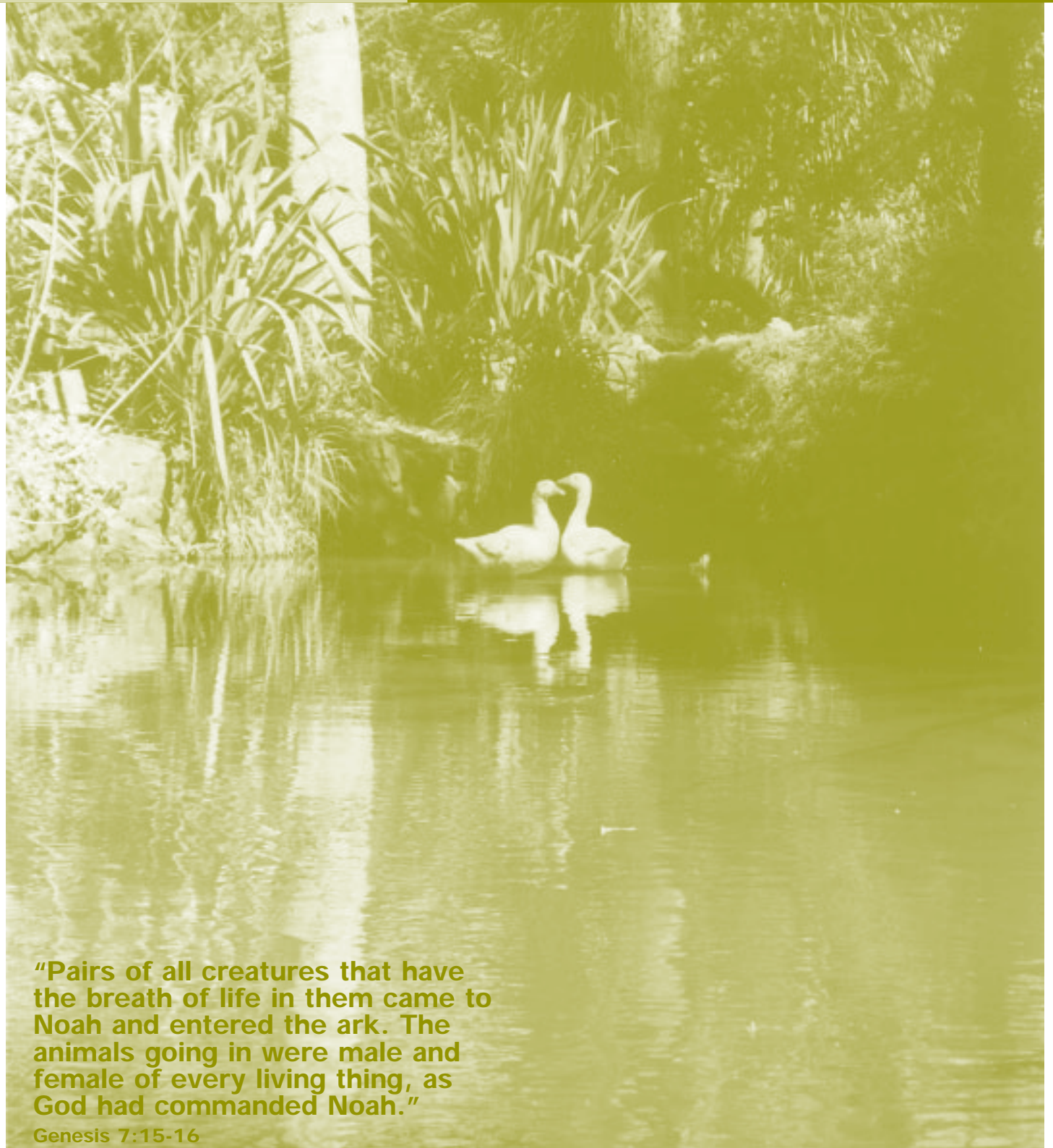


# faith in **focus**

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**"Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah."**

Genesis 7:15-16

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**Editorial**

Some years ago I was speaking with two young Christians about to travel to Israel. They were excited they were going to the 'Holy Land'. They had been told it was such a blessing to be in that land, the place which was still so special to the Lord, the place where biblical prophecy was about to be fulfilled. Then they began to speak of how special the Jews were in God's plan. To them anyone who had even the slightest amount of Jewish blood had an extra special something from God.

This is a thinking that is very prevalent amongst many Christians nowadays. There are even a number of leading Pentecostal ministers who have said that because of their physical lineage Jews don't need to come to salvation the same way Gentiles have to. They say they are part of a different 'covenant'. And there are the books and the movies which promote the same theology. The 'Left Behind' series is but one example of this.

So we welcome Professor Steve Voorwinde's contribution in this area. It is a contribution which he acknowledges differs from the traditional continental Reformed and English Presbyterian views. So you may well have a different thought on this. Therefore, I invite any feedback on his article, or this area in general. In fact, if you have a view on any issue raised in our magazine write a letter to the editor about it. Constructive criticism is always welcome.

In this issue we also hear from a new student for the ministry. Our churches are blessed at the moment with the number of suitable young men who are studying for the ministry. It looks like we will have a good number being available for vicariates in the next few years. But let's not take this for granted. Church history has shown that this is a situation that can quickly change and certainly in our present world the pressures on the ministry of the Word are quite intense - spiritually and economically. Continue to pray for those shepherding us in the way of the Lord (Heb.13:17).

*The Christian church is the only society in the world in which membership is based upon the qualification that the candidate shall be unworthy of membership*

**Charles Clayton Morrison**

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

# Rethinking Israel

## Considering a crucial text

### Steven Voorwinde

Hardly a day passes when Israel does not feature prominently in the news media. Terrorist bombings, peace accords, cease-fires, Israeli settlements on the West Bank and Gaza—these are the stuff that news releases, editorials and documentaries are made of. In these dramatic events that continue to unfold in the Middle East are we to see the fulfilment of biblical prophecy? More significantly, does Israel today still have a place in God's redemptive purposes for the human race?

These are fascinating questions. They are also controversial questions. They have the potential to divide Christians along both theological and political lines. Seldom has there been a greater need for believers to think carefully and biblically about the role of Israel in the world today. Although a comprehensive discussion of the scriptural data is beyond the scope of this article, it is my purpose consider what has to be the key New Testament passage on Israel—Romans 11:25-27:

*<sup>25</sup> I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. <sup>26</sup> And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:*

*"The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. <sup>27</sup> And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

### The basic issue

Within this crucial passage the most significant expression comes at the beginning of verse 26: "And so all Israel will be saved." What precisely did Paul have in mind when he made this prediction? In his commentary on Romans, Douglas Moo calls this saying "the storm centre in the interpretation of Romans 9-11 and of the New Testament teaching about the Jews and their future." In fact, Romans 11 is arguably the only chapter in the New Testament that specifically discusses any future role that God may still have for Israel. Hence it is imperative that these verses be correctly interpreted. The trouble is that they are found in a context that is—according to Tom Wright—"as full of problems as a hedgehog is of prickles."

The centrepiece of the problems, to which

Wright so picturesquely refers, is the term *all Israel*. Not surprisingly, the meaning of the expression has been hotly debated down the centuries. In the history of interpretation—and for that matter within the context of Reformed theology—three major schools of thought can be identified. Each of these views has its merits and has been defended by able expositors.

**(a) All Israel as the elect:** This position is most frequently associated with the name of John Calvin. He followed Augustine in identifying *all Israel* with "the Israel of God" (Gal 6:16). He saw this expression as referring to all the redeemed Jews and Gentiles who will make up the body of Christ.

**(b) All Israel as the elect Jews throughout history:** William Hendriksen, the well known commentator from the Christian Reformed Churches of North America, emphatically defended this position as being "the right view." In *The Bible on the Life Hereafter* he



argues that in each generation God gathers out from among the Jews a remnant that will be saved. To use Paul's imagery in Romans 11, certain branches are grafted back into their own olive tree. When all these remnants from every generation are put together, then you have what Paul calls *all Israel*.

**(c) All Israel as the majority of ethnic Jews in the future:** According to this view, there will be a large ingathering of Jews at the end or at least at some future point in history. It also enjoys some solid scholarly support. The Princeton expositor Charles Hodge argued for this position in the nineteenth century, while the Westminster theologian John Murray did the same in the twentieth. This view was also popular among the Puritans in England and the Covenanters in Scotland during the seventeenth century.

Each of these major views clearly has its appeal. Each can claim a healthy scholarly

pedigree and strong historical precedent. These credentials for what are essentially mutually exclusive viewpoints suggest that we proceed with due caution. Here, equally competent and godly expositors disagree. The opposing views can be substantiated by cogent arguments. All these factors underscore the difficulty of the problem. It would therefore be unwise to rush to hasty conclusions.

### The question in context

A glance at history shows that we have a knotty problem of interpretation on our hands. The old maxim—"a text without a context is a pretext"—is probably never as pertinent as it is here. We will therefore first need to consider Paul's reference to *all Israel* in its broadest possible context:

*Where was Paul when he penned these elusive words? Where was he geographically? Where was he in his missionary career? Where was he in his argument?*

Similar questions could also be asked of his readers. Where were the Roman Christians—in terms of their faith, their doctrinal and spiritual understanding, and not least in terms of their relationship with one another?

### (a) The historical context:

A close reading of Paul's letter to the Romans in conjunction with the book of Acts suggests that Paul wrote this epistle from Corinth before leaving for his last visit to Jerusalem. By this time he is a veteran missionary with some twenty years of experience behind him. He has just completed his three missionary journeys in the Eastern Mediterranean. Now it is time to set his sights westwards—to Rome and, beyond that, to Spain (Rom 15:22-29).

A decisive juncture has therefore been reached in Paul's missionary career. In his letter to the Romans he presents a brilliant summary of the gospel. This is the gospel that he has been preaching to both Jew and Gentile in the Eastern part of the empire. Now he is looking for an opportunity to preach it in Rome (Rom 1:15). He is also keen to get their support for his Spanish mission (Rom 15:24).

In the meantime, the church at Rome has had its own story to tell. Although we can only guess how that church began, it reached a significant point in its history in 49A.D. This was the year when the emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. This included

Jewish Christians, Priscilla and Aquila among them (Acts 18:2). This expulsion of the Jewish Christians from Rome must have had a significant impact on the church there. With the Jewish believers expelled, the Christian community became exclusively Gentile—at least for a time.

Claudius died in 54. The expulsion order lost its force, and Jews began to return to Rome. By the time Paul wrote his epistle in 57, it is clear that Jewish Christians had also made their way back to the capital. Evidence for this is found in Paul's greetings to Priscilla and Aquila and their house church (Rom. 16:3-5).

As a direct result of the expulsion, the composition of the Roman church probably changed radically. It is highly likely that prior to 49 it had been largely Jewish. When Paul wrote to the Christian community in Rome several years later, the Gentiles would probably have been in the majority. This reversal was bound to have its effects on church life. The Jewish returnees may well have been viewed with some condescension by the dominant Gentile wing.

#### (b) The literary context:

In Romans 9-11, Paul is meeting one of the most serious objections that his opponents raised against his gospel. If the message of justification by faith is true, then why was it rejected by those for whom it was originally intended?

This argument may not pack much of a punch today, but it did in Paul's day. It also affected him deeply. For him, Jewish unbelief was a personal and heart-rending issue: *"I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart"* (Rom. 9:2). His emotions are deeply stirred. At the same time he addresses the turmoil of his soul by way of a clear and cogent argument.

In chapter 9, God shows Himself to be a God of surprises. Here Paul's argument is based on the principle of reversal. Isaac, the younger son, is chosen over Ishmael, the older son (vv. 7-9). Jacob, the younger twin, is chosen over Esau, the older twin (vv. 10-13). The principle is then broadened when Paul observes that the lost tribes of Israel will be called "my people" and "beloved" (vv. 25-26), while only a remnant of Judah will survive (vv. 27-29). These reversals are then compared to Paul's day, when only a minority of Jews responded positively to the gospel. The Gentiles, on the other hand, received it in large numbers (vv. 30-33). The Old Testament pattern is repeating itself. Another reversal is taking place.

Paul begins chapter 10 on the same note of personal concern on which chapter 9 had opened (v. 1). But then the focus shifts from Israel's fall to Israel's fault. In theological terms, the emphasis now moves from divine sovereignty to human responsibility. Although

*"God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden"* (9:18), human beings are still held accountable (10:16-21). For Paul, the pointed and painful application of this truth is that Israel is responsible for its present state of unbelief.

But the drama is not over yet. At the end of chapter 10, it would seem that God has disqualified His people from playing anything but a negative role in His saving purposes. Yet it would be wrong to conclude that God is finished with Israel. Paul's major theme in chapter 11 is that Israel still has a future. A further reversal will take place. There is another surprise in store!

#### Interpreting the key verses (Romans 11:25-27)

**Verse 25:** Here Paul is beginning to draw out the consequences of his preceding argument. His language is very emphatic. These consequences are clearly a matter of special importance. He refers to them somewhat tantalisingly as *this mystery*. But what precisely does this mystery consist of? There are four possibilities:

- (a) that Israel has experienced a hardening in part;
- (b) that the full number of Gentiles will come in;
- (c) that all Israel will be saved;
- (d) all of the above.

A decision cannot be made until we are clear on the meaning of the word *mystery* in the New Testament. Usually it refers to an "open secret" which for ages had remained hidden, but is now known to us through divine revelation. It is the kind of information that we would never have figured out for ourselves in a million years, unless God had told us. The kingdom of heaven, the gospel, and even Christ Himself are such mysteries. They have become "open secrets" because God has now revealed them to us. Yet there are some mysteries that are still to be fully revealed, such as the transformation of our bodies at the resurrection (1 Cor 15:51). Another such mystery concerns God's future dealings with Israel.

In Romans 11, the partial hardening of Israel creates room for the conversion of the Gentiles. After the acceptance of the Gentiles, all Israel will be saved. But precisely what this means, and how God will bring it about, have not yet been fully disclosed to us. One day—perhaps very soon—all of this will become an "open secret". Till then, an element of mystery remains.

So the precise nature of the mystery does not lie in (a), (b) or (c), nor even in (d), but rather in the correlation of (a), (b) and (c). It would seem that the partial hardening that has happened to Israel comes to an end when "the fullness of the Gentiles has come

in" (v. 25), and when "all Israel will be saved" (v. 26a). But does this mean that the hardening will not cease till every Gentile is saved who will be saved? And how does this relate to the Deliverer coming from Zion in v. 26b? Is this a reference to the Second Coming? Is that when Israel will be saved, after the acceptance of the Gentiles?

As we continue our exposition, some of these questions will be answered, but not all. Paul introduces his readers to a mystery, but he does not unravel it completely. Then why introduce it in the first place? His reason is clear—*so that you may not be conceited*. The mystery is introduced to guard against Gentile arrogance and complacency (vv. 18, 20). When God's mighty work among the Gentiles is essentially complete, the next phase of his global program of salvation will come into effect:

**Verses 26-27:** Here *all Israel* is to be understood in an ethnic sense. In Romans 9-11, there are eleven occurrences of the word *Israel*. In every instance, Paul is speaking of those who are Jews by race and children of Abraham by descent. He never uses it to refer to Gentile believers or the Christian church as a whole. Most telling for our interpretation is the fact that *Israel* has been explicitly distinguished from the Gentiles as recently as v. 25. It is difficult to believe that, without warning, Paul would change the meaning of such a key term within the space of a single sentence.

Granted that Paul has ethnic Jews in mind when he speaks of *Israel*, what does he mean by *all Israel*? The expression is found several times in the Old Testament (1 Sam 7:5; 25:1; 1 Kings 12:1; 2 Chron 12:1; Dan 9:11). In each case it refers to the nation as a whole, but not necessarily to every individual Israelite. Paul would appear to be using the expression in much the same way.

Hence Paul is teaching that at some time in the future the majority of ethnic Jews will be saved. This majority is not necessarily equivalent to the current nation state of Israel. Paul says nothing about a political entity or about a return to the land. What he envisages for his people is infinitely better. He is forecasting a full-scale spiritual revival amongst the Jewish people, a massive turning to Christ as their Redeemer. This is what he had referred to earlier in Romans 11 as "their fullness" (v. 12), "their acceptance" (v. 15), and their being "grafted back into their own olive tree" (vv. 23-24).

This is a bold prophecy. Paul therefore immediately appeals to the Old Testament for support. But he does so in a highly complex way. The first three lines of his quotation in vv. 26-27 come from Isaiah 59:20, 21. The last line is from Isaiah 27:9. The phrase *from Zion* appears to have been imported from Psalm 14:7. To make matters

even more complicated, Paul is not quoting from the Hebrew Bible but from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament).

Textually, Paul's quotation is difficult. In your English Bible you will not find that Paul's quotation and his sources match word for word. Contextually, however, this quotation is nothing less than brilliant. The contexts from which Paul is quoting clearly indicate that he is not plucking some verses and phrases at random from here and there in the Old Testament. The three passages from which he cites—Isaiah 59, Isaiah 27 and Psalm 14—all speak of Jacob suffering judgment and/or oppression. But they also share the common denominator of restoration and salvation. In each case the Lord is going to restore the fortunes of Jacob. In quoting the Old Testament as he does, Paul makes the point is that the Lord is going

to do this for Israel once again.

Needless to say, the restoration of which Paul speaks is spiritual in nature. The promised deliverer will turn godlessness away from Jacob and forgive the sins of the people (vv. 26-27). God's plan culminates when he shows mercy to all (v. 32), including the Jews (v. 31). Again, there is nothing in this context to suggest a national or political restoration. Nor is there any reference to the Jews returning to the land of Israel. Any such restoration is simply not within Paul's prophetic line of vision.

When Paul contemplates the prospect of a great spiritual awakening amongst his fellow-Jews, the tone of his discussion changes completely. He began Romans 9 with a heartfelt lament for the state of his people (vv. 1-5). By the time he concludes his discussion of Israel's glorious future in Romans 11, Paul's heart is stirred with a

ringing doxology (vv. 33-36).

#### All Israel will be saved

Yes, *all Israel will be saved!* Then the extravagant promises of Rom. 11:12, 15 will be fulfilled. Greater riches and life from the dead will accompany the salvation of all Israel. The conversion of the Jews is a blessing worth praying and working for!

*The Rev. Dr. Steven Voorwinde is Professor of New Testament at the Reformed Theological College, Geelong. This article is a condensed version of the one published by the same title in the current issue of the RTC's journal Vox Reformata. Copies are available at \$10.00 from the Reformed Theological College, 125 Pigdons Road, Waurn Ponds, Vic. 3216.*

## Whose day is it?

### The case for attending public worship twice on the Lord's Day (2)

#### G. H. Milne

Biblical and confessional arguments where the authority of the elders to call the congregation to worship is affirmed

The view that we are to attend all the worship services called by the church on the Lord's Day is something taken for granted by our Reformed forebears. The church order agreed upon by the famous Synod of Dort, for example, puts the matter simply: "*The consistory* [Session of elders] *shall call the congregation together for worship twice on the Lord's Day* (Article 52. *Worship Services*)". Did the Synod not believe that it had biblical warrant to require this double attendance, then this article would never have become part of the Dutch church order. The Second Helvetic Confession, Chapter 22 is equally emphatic:

#### Meetings for worship not to be neglected

As many as spurn such meetings and stay away from them, despise true religion, and are to be urged by the pastors and godly magistrates to abstain from stubbornly absenting themselves from sacred assemblies.

The Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), Chapter 21, *Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day* has this to say: *but God is to be worshiped everywhere, in spirit and*

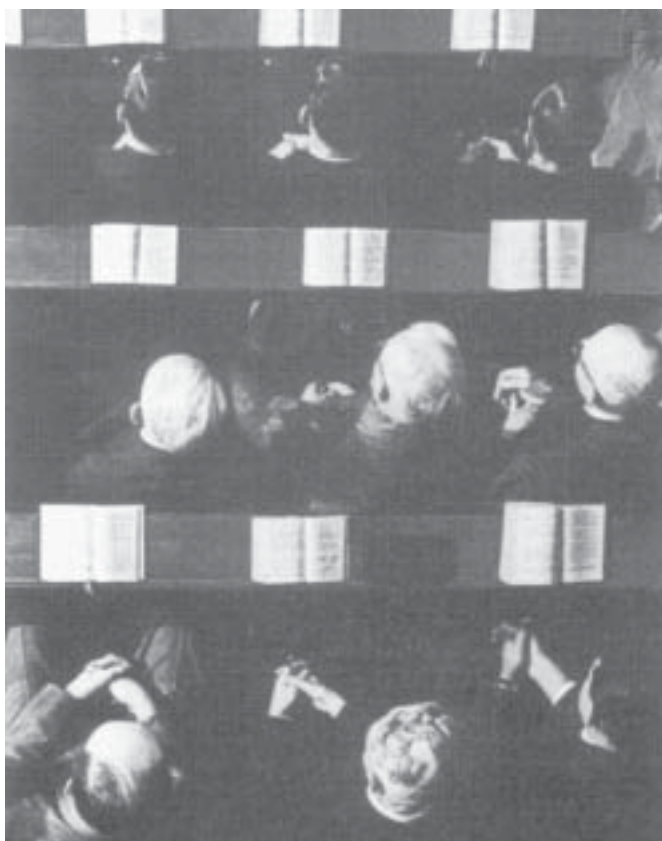
*truth; as, in private families daily, and in secret, each one by himself; so, more solemnly in the public assemblies, which are not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God, by his Word or providence, calleth thereunto [emphasis added].*<sup>1</sup>

#### The authority of the elders

Notice that it is not **one** public assembly that is "not carelessly or wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken", but public assemblies. That God calls us by His Word to worship Him publicly cannot be disputed, but the precise times of worship are left to the discretion of the ruling elders. The question of the authority of the elders is crucial at this point, because God calls us to worship through the order established in the church, and therefore through the delegated authority of the elders appointed by Christ. Consider what the New Testament teaches concerning the authority of the elders and the responsibility of the congregation to respond. Elders who call the congregation to worship in the Lord's name, are to "**take care of the church of God**" (2 Tim. 3:5); elders are to be **appreciated** (1 Thess. 5:12); elders are to be **esteemed highly** (1 Thess. 5:13); elders are to be **imitated** (Heb. 13:7); and finally, elders are to be **obeyed** (Heb. 13:17): *Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls as those who*

*will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.*

To what degree, however, are we to obey the elders? The elders can only require of us what can be supported by Scripture. They cannot, for example, require you to never take a vacation, or demand that you do not possess a television. But the Lord **has** left the circumstances of church worship, including the times of gathering on the Lord's Day, to the elders. The great principle is found in 1 Cor. 14: 40: "*Let all things be done decently and in order.*" The setting of worship times is a task of pastoral oversight and this oversight belongs to the "**overseers**" who are to "**take care of the church of God**" (2 Tim. 3:5). Therefore, when the elders set the times and call us to worship, we are obliged to obey them and come and worship the Lord. So God calls us by His Word through His elders, whom He has appointed to govern the church. If the elders can be disobeyed in such a matter as the call to attend worship, why would any of their other demands need to be obeyed? This is a thoroughly biblical reason for not only why we should, but why we must attend the two church services of the Lord's Day. Either the elders have the duty to settle two services for the Lord's Day or they have not. If they have, then we must attend. If they have not, then they are unlawfully establishing a second service and



are therefore sinning against God if they require the attendance of the congregation as a duty.

#### The Lord's providence in this

The *WCF* also closely relates the call of providence to attend worship to obedience to the Word of God. In the Lord's Providence, we are called to public worship by the elders twice on the Lord's Day, so in this second way, the *WCF* supports the requirement to attend two services on the Lord's Day. In its eighth section, the Confession adds that the whole Lord's Day is to be "taken up...in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy." The implication is clear: public worship on the Lord's Day is an imperative, not an option. The Directory for the Publick Worship of God (*DPW*), a companion document produced by the Westminster Assembly, likewise assumes that *everyone* will be at both worship services.<sup>2</sup> The *DPW* requires: "that *all* the people meet so timely for publick worship, that *the whole congregation* may be present at the beginning, and with one heart solemnly join together in all parts of the publick worship, and not depart till after the blessing (*Of the Sanctification of the Lord's Day*)" [emphasis added]; and that between the "publick worship" services they are to perform works of piety, necessity and charity only. The whole congregation was expected to be at worship, which involved meeting twice, so none could be exempt in the afternoon on the basis that they had

attended in the morning. They were still part of the congregation of God's people and were expected to act as such. That it was considered the norm for the elders to require two worship services is confirmed in the *DPW* section, *Concerning the Observation of days of Publick thanksgiving*. Even on those days, which were not the Lord's Day, there were to be two public gatherings for worship.

#### Twice a Sunday

Neither should it be assumed that our Reformed fathers were arbitrary in establishing two worship services on Sunday. They saw a pattern in Scripture where worship was offered to the Lord in both the morning and evening:

Behold, I am about to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, dedicating it to Him, to burn fragrant incense before Him and to set out the showbread continually, and to offer burnt offerings morning and evening, on sabbaths and on new moons and on the appointed feasts of the LORD our God, this being required forever in Israel (2 Chr. 2:4).

It was the same pattern which was appropriated by the New Testament church. When Paul is preaching in the evening on the Lord's Day as it is recorded in Acts 20, we can assume with commentator Matthew Henry that Paul would also have preached in the morning. We can see the great wisdom of the morning and evening sacrifice pattern for our personal devotions. To start the day with the incense of prayer and the sacrifice

of praise and to close it in the same way is a faithful acknowledgement of our daily need to worship and praise our God, and of our constant reliance upon His means of grace. Should not such a pattern be a part of the one Sabbath day that is ours in the New Covenant for public worship? The Church, then, was being eminently biblical in imposing the same order for the public worship of the Lord's people.

Furthermore, we are obligated to make the Sabbath our delight, and not pursue our own desires on the Sabbath Day. Isaiah 58:13 is another proof text for *WCF* 21:8.<sup>3</sup> The *WCF* interprets this text to mean that we are to take up the whole day with worship and acts of piety, necessity and charity. Specifically we are to be taken up with "*the publick and private exercises of his worship...*" [emphasis added] "Not *one* public exercise only but *the* public and private exercises. If there is a public exercise of worship, then the *WCF* says we are required to be part of that. We must, therefore, attend both worship services. This was something undisputed by the predecessors to the Westminster Assembly and the Westminster divines themselves, because they saw it in Scripture.

#### Public worship is where God is

William Perkins (1558-1602) was one of England's most important Protestant theologians and teacher of many of the Westminster divines at Great St Andrews', Cambridge. Discussing attendance at preaching, Perkins notes:

*The hearer must be in hearing, see himselfe in the presence of God. "Now therefore (saith Cornelius to Peter, Act. 10.33.) are we all present before God to heare all things commanded thee of God." The reason is, because God is always in the congregation where the word is preached.*<sup>4</sup>

William Ames (1576-1633), another important and influential early English Puritan, writes on the duties of the Sabbath Day: *Exercises of publike worship in a Church wel constituted, and enjoying her libertie, ought to be held both before and after noone, Ibid. Psal. 92.1. Acts 20.7. And where solempne meetings are wanting, there every occasion to be laid holdone[hold on], to make up that defect as much as may be, Acts. 16:13.*<sup>5</sup>

The Westminster divines in their other writings were also without question devoted to the importance of the Lord's Day and held to the necessity of attending both services. In a work warmly commended by John Owen and Richard Baxter to all Christians, the esteemed Westminster divine, Henry Scudder (d.1659?), in his discussion on sanctifying the Lord's Day observes:

*It is not enough that you observe a rest, but you must keep a "holy rest"...Joyn with*

*the Minister and Congregation. Set your self as in the special presence of God, following the example of good 'Cornelius', with all reverence attending and consenting, saying Amen with understanding, faith and affection, to the prayers uttered by the Minister: Attending unto, "believing", and "obeying" whatsoever by the Minister is commanded you from God...The like care must be had before, at, and after the Evening exercise.<sup>6</sup>*

### The whole family

Furthermore, it was taken for granted that a holy resting from all your labours on the Lord's Day involved attending both services of the church with **all** your family. Westminster divine Thomas Case in some practical meditations penned upon the death of a Mrs Anne Browne illustrates how the Puritans saw a faithful Sabbath observance requiring family, including servants, to attend both public worship services. Case noted that "*her Servants souls were as precious to God, as her own, and cost Jesus Christ as much blood to redeem*": Therefore, [s]he was careful that every one of her Family, should not only attend the 'Publick Ordinances'; but that they should improve the "whole overplus" of Sabbath time, in "holy exercises" of Religion.<sup>7</sup>

They attended the public ordinances and not one only, and they attended as a family. These principles are being lost in many churches, and it is surely our present duty to assert them and to seek to have the prevalent carelessness replaced by a godly Sabbath observance. Once the church and its members have decided that public worship is optional or that attendance at one worship service is sufficient, though God through His appointed office bearers calls us to both, the destruction of the church, to use Calvin's terminology, has begun.

### Legitimate exemptions

There are, of course, those who cannot always attend both services of the church. Works of necessity can keep us from worship at times. This not only applies to the "*caring*" professions, as they are termed, but to some farmers and other workers such as sailors, for example. Equally the elderly may not be able to cope with two services, and often get to the point where they cannot attend the services at all. Still others may live a long way from church and are unable to travel the distances sometimes required to be travelled to attend a faithful church. Nonetheless, these are exceptions. Let us, therefore, strive to overcome any complacency of laziness in our own hearts and let each member with the whole family come expectantly to both services on the Sabbath Day to meet with God and give Him the praise and adoration He deserves and demands.

### Implications that arise from this study

Faithful church attendance twice on the Lord's Day is a biblical and confessional requirement.

Church membership requires double attendance and is implicitly agreed to in the membership vows. Children, though not communicant members, should also attend twice.

Unfaithful attendance at worship should invite pastoral and disciplinary sanctions.

Church members and prospective members should have it drawn to their attention that church attendance twice on the Lord's Day is mandatory, because it is both commanded and beneficial.

*The Rev. Gary. Milne is presently serving the Wanganui Home Mission Post of the Reformed Church of Palmerston North*

<sup>1</sup> Proof texts: Isaiah 56: 6-7; Heb. 10:25; Prov. 1:20-21, 24; Prov. 8:34; Acts 13:42; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:42.

<sup>2</sup> The DPW cannot be held to contradict the WCF since both documents were considered part of the basis for religious uniformity in the three kingdoms.

<sup>3</sup> "If because of the sabbath, you turn your foot From doing your own pleasure on My holy day, And call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, And honor it, desisting from your own ways, From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own word..."

<sup>4</sup> William Perkins, *The Second and Third Bookes of the Cases of Conscience* (Cambridge: Printed by John Legat, 1606), 293.

<sup>5</sup> William Ames, *Conscience with the Power and Cases thereof, Divided into Five Bookes* (London: I. Rothwell, T. Slater, L. Blacklock, 1643), Book 5: 98-99. Ps. 92: 1-2: "A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath day. It is good to give thanks to the LORD And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning And Your faithfulness by night"; Acts 20: 7: "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul began talking to them, intending to leave the next day, and he prolonged his message until midnight"; Acts 16: 13: "And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled".

<sup>6</sup> Henry Scudder, *The Christians Daily Walk in Holy Security and Peace* (London: William Miller, 1690), 97-98.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Case, *AGIWMIMESIS. The Imitation of the Saints* (London: 1666), 47.

## Primary Teacher WANTED

The Christian School Association (Wellington District) [CSAWD] is presently seeking committed and enthusiastic Reformed Christians to help teach our covenant youth. We have a vacancy starting in January, 2005 for a qualified teacher interested in serving the Lord in this capacity full-time.

**Head Teacher of Primary School:** This is a permanent position for a registered teacher. The successful applicant will be a team player who is able to supervise others and work as part of the Executive Team of the CSAWD schools. The role involves teaching a combined class full-time as well as the day to day supervision of Silverstream Christian School. Some experience with Special Needs education will be considered an advantage.

The range of levels at Silverstream Christian School is Years 1-6 and is the elementary or "grammar" school run by the CSAWD. The secondary school (Years 7-12) run by the CSAWD is Wainuiomata Christian College. The CSAWD curriculum is Reformed and classical Christian in intent. We are committed to developing a biblical Christian worldview in our students at all levels.

Silverstream Christian School is located in the Hutt Valley, near Wellington, New Zealand. The roll is forecast to be about 42 students in 2005.

Applicants can obtain more information by contacting the CSAWD Teacher Search. Applications close by Friday 27 August 2004 though late applications will be considered if we have been unable to fill the vacancy by then.

OUR CONTACT DETAILS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

e-mail: [wainuiomatachristian@clear.net.nz](mailto:wainuiomatachristian@clear.net.nz)

telephone: (04) 564 8552/ fax (04) 564 9305

Postal: PO Box 43-127, Wainuiomata 6008, New Zealand

## World in focus

### Sudanese Archbishop evicted by troops

On Thursday, 27 May, armed riot police stormed the office of the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, the Most Rev. Joseph Morona, and evicted him and his staff from the property. It was later learned that the building had been sold to an Arab business, the Amal Company, by Gabriel Roric, who was disposed as Bishop of Rumbek last year. Roric, who also held a position in the government until 2001 and remains a member of the ruling Islamic party, represented himself as the Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Sudan while transacting the sale of the property.

+ Rev. Mr. Charles A. Collins, Jr., *Christian Observer* Correspondent, 289 Hastings, Dr., Goose Creek, SC 29445 (843) 832-6408

### Moore appeals to US Supreme Court

Former Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore announced he will appeal to the US Supreme Court his removal from office. "I'm appealing this decision because of the hypocrisy of the judicial system which allows public officials to say one thing and do another," Moore said in a statement.

The announcement came after a special court 30 April, unanimously upheld the November decision of the Alabama Supreme Court to oust Moore for his refusal to remove a Ten Commandments monument. Moore noted federal courts open with "God save the United States and this honorable court" and take their oaths "so help me God" and then "take away the public acknowledgment of God." "We have now moved from moving monuments out of buildings which acknowledged God, to removing public officials from office for expressing a belief in God," Moore said.

In November, Moore announced he will propose federal legislation to reassert the power he insists Congress already has to limit the jurisdiction of federal courts.

+ US Supreme Court Public Information Office: (202) 479-3211

### Temple University student proceeds with lawsuit

A federal judge has ruled a former Temple University student can proceed to trial in his suit against two school officials who he claims tried to commit him to a psychiatric ward because of his religious beliefs.

Michael Marcavage alleges William Bergman, Temple University vice president of operations, and Carl Bittenbender, managing director of Campus Safety Services, forcibly detained him and attempted to have him involuntarily committed in the school hospitals'

psych ward in the fall of 2000. The lawsuit seeks unspecified money damages from the administrators.

Marcavage had been working to offer a Christian alternative on campus to the play "Corpus Christi," which portrayed Christ and His disciples as homosexuals. According to a statement from the American Family Association Center for Law and Policy, which is representing the former student, Bittenbender, in seeking to commit Marcavage, claimed the student had "inflicted or attempted to inflict serious bodily harm on another ..." and that Marcavage had "attempted suicide." He said there was a "reasonable probability" of suicide unless Marcavage received adequate treatment. The admitting form, by statute, requires that at least one of these factors be present before involuntary commitment can be sought, the law center said. In denying the Temple officials' motion to dismiss the claims, Judge Petrese Tucker wrote, "Bittenbender... (in his deposition) conceded that he had no knowledge of (Marcavage) threatening or causing harm to others," and he "also conceded that he had no knowledge of (Marcavage) attempting suicide...."

Brian Fahling, senior trial attorney for CLP, said, "What these men did to Marcavage is despicable, and now they are going to be held responsible for their actions. The arrogance and abuse of power evidenced in this case is particularly loathsome."

+ Temple University, 1801 North Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19122 (215) 204-7000

### PCA churches in Germany and Okinawa

On 27 Apr., 2004, the Presbytery of Southeast Alabama approved a petition from a group in Okinawa, Japan, to be recognized as a mission church under the Presbytery (it is now seeking a pastor). Since 1993, Southeast Alabama has had a church in Kaiserslautern (Ramstein), Germany, which is the sponsor of the Okinawa mission. Both churches are made up of English speaking persons, many of whom are Air Force personnel, and were introduced to the PCA while stationed at Maxwell and Gunter Air Bases in the Montgomery-Millbrook-Prattville area. Trinity Reformed Presbyterian Church in Kaiserslautern is self-supporting and pastored by Rev. Doug Hudson.

+ PCA Historical Center, 12330 Conway Rd., St. Louis, MO, 2002

### Child pornography facts

The US Customs Service estimates that there are more than 100,000 Websites offering child porn. One study found a 345 percent increase in the number of child pornography

sites over a five month period.

More than 20,000 images of child pornography are posted on the Internet every week.

More babies and toddlers are appearing on the Net. The typical age of children is between six and 12, but the profile is getting younger.

Forty percent of people charged with child pornography also sexually abuse children, police say.

+ [www.protectkids.com](http://www.protectkids.com)

### First national teaching elder in Kazakhstan

On 23 May, 2004 the Association of Reformed Churches of Kazakhstan ordained its first national teaching elder, Ruslan Velilayev, and installed him as Associate Pastor at the Almagul Church.

This ordination comes, in part, as the result of the investment of the EPC through its World Outreach missionaries in Almaty over the past ten years, as well as the work of the Kazakhstan Commission, which was appointed by the 21st General Assembly.

+ Evangelical Presbyterian Church, 29140 Buckingham Ave. Suite 5, Livonia, MI 48154 (734) 261-2001

### Weekly devotional e-mail from Peace Makers

Peace Makers is offering a new electronic resource called PeaceMeal: Food for Thought on Biblical Peacemaking. This is a weekly devotional e-mail containing brief excerpts from the book *The Peacemaker* by Ken Sande. It also includes a "Food for Thought" section, which gives a thought or reminder about how you can directly apply these principles of Biblical peacemaking each week. PeaceMeal would make a great sidebar or feature in church bulletins.

+ Presbyterian Church in America, 1700 N Brown Rd. Suite 105, Lawrenceville, GA 30043 (678)825-1000 byFaithonline.com

### Iranian police arrest Christian pastor

Iranian police arrested a Protestant Christian pastor in northern Iran, jailing him along with his wife and two teenage children. Pastor Khosroo Yusefi and his wife Nasrin were arrested on 23 May. Together with their 18-year-old son and a daughter age 15, they remain imprisoned without known charges. "The police have found out that people have come to Christ in that city, that's all," an Iranian Christian told Compass today. "We don't know whether somebody was spying on them, or what." Reportedly dozens of believers from two of Yusefi's church groups were jailed in the first week of May and later released. The majority of Christians meeting in secret

house-church groups in Iran are former Muslims.

+ *Compass Direct, PO Box 27250, Santa Ana, CA 92799-7250*

### Student allowed to wear pro-life clothing

Heather Holbrook, a member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Manassas, Virginia, was allowed to wear her pro-life sweatshirt during the waning days of school at Osbourn Park High School, after being ordered to take it off or turn it inside out earlier in the spring.

The sweatshirt, marketed by Rock for Life, says "Abortion is homicide" on the front and "You will not silence my message, you will not mock my God, you will stop killing my generation" on the back.

Ed White, an attorney with the Thomas More Law Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan, threatened Osbourn Park High School and the Prince William County School Board with a lawsuit, and Kris Pedersen, associate superintendent of the county schools, replied June 3 with the simple statement that Heather would be allowed to wear the sweatshirt, but with no clarification of the school system's policy.

+ *Thomas More Law Center, 3475 Plymouth Rd., Suite 100, Ann Arbor, MI 48105-2550 (734) 827-2001 info@thomasmore.org, www.thomasmore.org.*

### Southern Baptists quit World Alliance

The Southern Baptist Convention voted Tuesday to quit the Baptist World Alliance following complaints that some members of the loose, global association had adopted liberal theology and "anti-American" thinking. "Our concern is not financial," said the Rev. Denton Lotz, General Secretary of the World Alliance. "Our concern is schism and division. Christians need to be a united voice."

The December report complained that some in the alliance had questioned "the truthfulness of Holy Scripture," refused to affirm the necessity of conscious faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, promoted women preachers, criticized the SBC and its foreign mission board and adopted an "anti-American" tone.

The last straw came in 2003, when the alliance accepted as a member the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a rival group to the SBC formed by Moderates who oppose denomination leaders' conservative policies. + *Southern Baptist Convention, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203-3699*

### Japanese Christians oppose use of flag and anthem

At the Executive General Committee meeting of the 35th General Assembly on 27 May, 2004, the National Christian Council in Japan took the position to oppose the compulsory use of the Hinomaru (Japanese national flag) and the Kimigayo (Japanese national anthem).

The Tokyo Metropolitan Board of Education issued protocols for the Hinomaru and the Kimigayo at public school ceremonies in October of 2003. In April, 2004, it punished teachers who refused to sing and play the piano for the Kimigayo at the graduation ceremony of public schools in Tokyo and it also punished teachers whose students did

not stand up to sing the Kimigayo.

These acts of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government contradicts the word of late-Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi who clarified that the national anthem and flag law will not be carried out by force.

+ *Rev. Toshimasa Yamamoto, General Secretary, National Christian Council in Japan, Tynccj@aol.com*

## The saints of ancient British history

### St. Patrick

*Patricia van Laar*

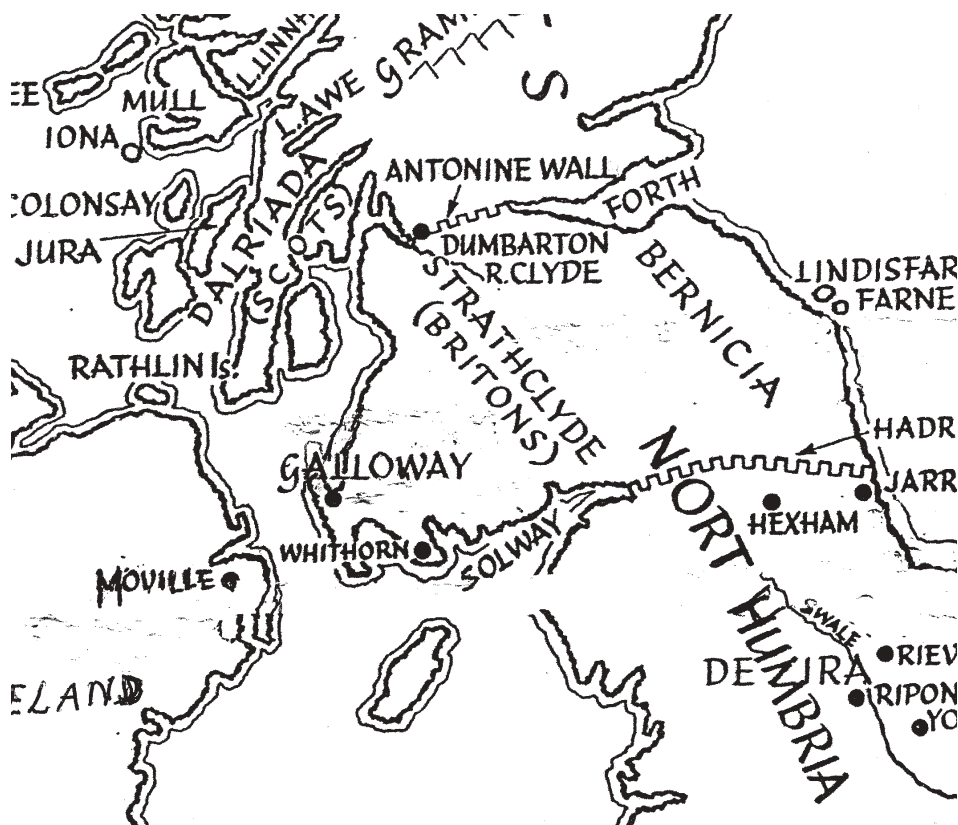
#### The living versus the legend

St Patrick of Ireland? More annual 'hoo ha and ballyhoo' surrounds the memory of this saint than any other Christian of ancient time barring, I suppose, the figure of Saint Nicholas (alias Santa Claus). In the entire English-speaking world, Irish migrants and settlers' descendants have made the 17th March, the supposed day of his death, into almost a global occasion. This date is plastered into our minds by the media—radio, TV, the Press. These media reminders supplement local celebrations of the legendary Patrick, many with alcohol and parades, the wearing of green, the display of shamrocks, green greeting cards and in one city at least (in San Antonio, Texas) the dyeing of the river green. The real Patrick is lost in all this hullabaloo.

It did not occur to me as a child that I myself had the feminine form of his name, not for any religious reasons, but merely because, tossing up between Pamela and Patricia, my parents liked the latter better. I did not know much at all about the saint. What started me extricating him from the muddle of adulation associated with his name was my introduction as a teenager to the hymn known as "*St Patrick's Breastplate*," which although recognised as not actually written by him, nevertheless is an expression of the faith he displayed. I began to find the Patrick of history, who had been ousted by the Patrick of legend. The magic Patrick venerated by the Irish community was a far cry from the missionary to the Irish of the 4th/5th century (c.385 - 460). My estimation of him gradually rose, so that I even had the temerity to suggest (tongue in cheek) to a certain minister known to many of us, whose twins were born on 17th March, that he give one the second name of Patrick and the other of Patricia. (He did not take me up on that!)

The facts known about St Patrick's life are scant, so that the true historical figure is confused with the very different St Patrick of legend, so much so that one historian, Alannah Hopkin, in "*The Living Legend of St Patrick*," prefers to give him in the first chapters of her book, which deal with his own account of himself, the Latin form of his name, Patricius. She does this so as to aid her readers to remove from their minds the common concept of Patrick, while she gives them as authentic a picture of him as is possible to produce today.





**The development of a legendary St Patrick**

Hopkin summarises the development of the legendary Patrick as follows:

*Early Irish society rewrote St Patrick's life as that of a secular hero. In medieval times his life was rewritten again, this time to conform to the continental idea of sainthood. The modern image emerged in the late 18th century when he was adopted as a symbol of the nationalist movement. We all are aware of the honour, or dishonour, depending on your viewpoint, done to his name today.*

Who, then, was the true St Patrick, historically, culturally, spiritually?

**The authentic St Patrick**

The picture of the historical Patrick is short on all that normally makes up a biography. Any knowledge of his background comes only from the undoubted writings of Patrick himself, namely his Confession and his letter to Coroticus, and even in these it is merely incidental to his purpose. The letter is a protest to Coroticus, supposedly a British Christian, for capturing and enslaving a large number of newly baptised Irish Christians, both men and women. It gives us a glimpse of the passion and of the powerful preaching of Patrick. The Confession, a defence of his authority, gives us the only account we have of his background, and sparse it is. Yet though details of his life may be scarce, these very writings give us an unprecedented

picture of a British saint, revealing the person himself.

Patrick recounts that he was born a Romano/Briton, but does not say exactly where. His birthplace was formerly thought to be on the shores of the Severn Estuary, or somewhere on the southwestern coast of Britain, but recent evidence of Roman villas has come to light near an area of Strathclyde, on the coast of Scotland, so academics are now inclined to favour this region. But does it matter? Knowing mankind's propensity for superstition, and for the glorification of sites and shrines, it is probably better that the birthplace of such an eminent but misrepresented Christian leader remains in obscurity. His Christian father Calpornius was a deacon and a decurion. Decurions were men of property, allocated the unpleasant duty of collecting taxes in their district. (Who likes a tax collector?) Any shortfall the decurion had to make up out of his own pocket, but he was able to rid himself of this chore by becoming a church deacon, for since the ascendancy of the Emperor Constantine in 313, Christianity was official in the Roman Empire.

Patrick's grandfather Potitus was a Christian priest (presbyter) from the unknown village of Bannavem or Bannaventa Taburniae. Calpornius owned a farm or villa near this village, but neither name is any help in trying to locate it. It was from this villa that Patrick at the age of 16 was captured (with many others from the area) by raiding Irish pirates and was sold as a slave in Ireland. There he was forced to work as a

herdsman, traditionally near Ballymena, Antrim but, more likely, some distance to the west of Ireland. It is probable that Patrick's home was fairly comfortable. In Britain, well-off men in his father's position obtained some of the building benefits of the Roman civilisation: stone walls, paved floors, plumbing, baths and in some cases even central heating. If this was Patrick's style of living, then his abduction to primitive Ireland, parts of which even today can be without modern facilities (as my party experienced when touring there by car in the 1950s), then Patrick must have suffered a shock of dismay. He would see Ireland as a land inhabited by primitive, pagan barbarians, whom he later learned to love.

This abduction and enslavement, however, did not fill Patrick with bitterness and resentment. Instead, it caused him to turn in repentance from his former careless and indifferent life, to prayer. He sought the Lord, who through these events was seeking him.

**The Ireland of the 4th century**

What was Ireland then? A people untouched by the Roman culture that had moulded Patrick's own British society. There were no towns, but tribes or extended families, with what has been called "their own hidden glories of society" and a structure of chiefs or kings who held great sway. One supreme ruler was recognised as 'High King'. Society was made up of these tribal units (tuath). There was no real political unity, but strong cultural similarities, and a definite hierarchy: the aristocratic community under its ruler (protective, autocratic), followed by the noblemen (Behons, Druids, bards), the craftsmen, the land-owning commoners, then labourers, serfs and slaves. Here, Patrick was in the lowest strata, a slave without rights.

We know little of the religious practices of pagan Ireland—just suggestions of sun worship and reverence for the dead, hints of many sacred rivers, streams and wells and of certain gods held in awe, probable animism and superstition, but no knowledge of worship customs. The common people lived in wattle huts. Life consisted of wars, fighting and raids, of superstition and magic, of Druid priests who were to be the chief opponents of Christianity.

Patrick was to find the social structure of great benefit in his work of spreading the gospel. (Convert the chief and the rest will follow). Idol worshippers and impure, he saw them being made into a people of the Lord called sons of God, and included amongst these were many sons and daughters of the kings of the Irish. Whatever the reason, Patrick found the Irish disposed to accept the teaching he brought, with an amazing response. Although he lived in some fear of

murder, fraud and captivity, not one martyr is recorded in the conversion of the Irish. There was no violence between the converts and the pagans.

#### The return to "exile"

To continue Patrick's story, after some six years of slavery, inspired and guided, he records, by unmistakable urging and dreams from the God he now knew, he managed to escape at the age of about 22, perhaps to Gaul. After travels and adventures of disputable duration, in regions also not clear (Gaul or Britain), he returned home and found his parents still alive—after all, it may have been only about ten to fifteen years since he had been snatched from them. A different Patrick returned: not the carefree, careless youth who had left, but a serious young man bent on serving his Lord.

#### A call from God

Patrick now studied for the priesthood, probably in Britain, (although some say in Gaul under Germanus at Auxerre.) In 432 he felt called by God, in a dream, to return to Ireland as a missionary. It is possible the pope commissioned him, although there is no certainty of his ever having visited Rome, so this may be questionable. In spite of his own inclination and his parents' desire for him to stay he obeyed God, going back to the country of his enslavement with a certainty of his call, leaving his parents reluctantly and always looking upon his adopted country as a kind of place of exile. The certainty of God's call was his mainstay in later life when his authority was challenged by those who, years after, opposed his position as a bishop and sneered at his broken education and "bad Latin."

Patrick's mission proved remarkably successful. In ten years the knowledge of Christianity spread over the whole country, and many native clergy were appointed. In Meath he confronted Laoghaire the High King, silenced the Druids and converted the king's daughters. In 444 he established his seat of primacy at Armagh. Britain was entering the "Dark Ages" following the fall of the Roman Empire, but to Irish historians it was a positive time, for in their land it was the dawn of Christianity.

#### An appraisal of St Patrick's influence

Seldom, if ever, has the spread of the Gospel in any one country been the work and witness of one man. Contrary to popular belief, Patrick was not the single-handed person responsible for the conversion of Ireland. Prior to Patrick was Palladius, although what happened to him eventually is unknown beyond tradition. Prospero of Aquitaine wrote in his Chronicle that in 431 (a year before Patrick was commissioned to Ireland), Palladius was sent as bishop to the "Irish

who believe in Christ." Bishops (overseers) were not sent as missionaries, but to care for a substantial number of already existing believers. Palladius is also mentioned in the Annals of Ulster and Innisfallen, substantiating the existence of a large Christian community before Patrick. These annals were written at a much later date, yet Palladius is acknowledged, in spite of the fact that by the time they were compiled, the legend of Patrick's 'single-handed' work was well established. This is a sure indication of the strength of the claim of Palladius's

presence, and the existence of Christianity prior to the arrival of Patrick. There are also memories of helpers associated with Patrick, especially Sechnaill (alias Secundus) and Auxilius, both considered, perhaps wrongly, as subordinate to Patrick. Presumably they were part of a fairly large mission which had earlier come over from Gaul. Groups of these appear to have existed prior to Patrick. There is also evidence of Irish settlements in Wales, sea traffic between the two countries, and of pagan Irish raids, such as the one which captured Patrick, carrying off slaves,

## ST PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE "INVOCATION OF THE TRINITY"

(Attributed to St Patrick, but not, most likely, written by him. Nevertheless it is a true, even if we find it rather a quaint, expression of what is well recognised as Patrick's faith.)

I bind unto myself today the strong Name of the Trinity;  
By invocation of the same, the Three in One and One in Three.

I bind this day to me forever, By power of faith, Christ's incarnation;  
His baptism in Jordan River; His death on cross for my salvation;  
His bursting from the spiced tomb; His riding up the heavenly way;  
His coming at the day of doom; I bind unto myself today.

I bind unto myself today the power of the great love of Cherubim;  
The sweet 'well done' in judgement hour; The service of the Seraphim.  
Confessors' faith, Apostles' word, The Patriarchs' prayers, the Prophets' scrolls;  
All good deeds done unto the Lord, and purity of virgin souls.

I bind unto myself today the virtues of the star-lit heaven.  
The glorious sun's life-giving ray, The whiteness of the moon at even.  
The flashing of the lightning free, the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,  
The stable earth, the deep salt sea, around the old eternal rocks.

I bind unto myself today the power of God to hold and lead,  
His eye to watch, His might to stay, His ear to hearken to my need.  
The wisdom of my God to teach, His hand to guide, His shield to ward,  
The word of God to give me speech, His heavenly host to be my guard.

Christ be with me, Christ within me, Christ behind me, Christ before me,  
Christ beside me, Christ to win me, Christ to comfort and restore me.  
Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,  
Christ in hearts of all who love me, Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

I bind unto myself the Name, the strong Name of the Trinity;  
By invocation of the same, the Three in One and One in Three,  
Of whom all nature hath creation; Eternal Father, Spirit, Word;  
Praise to the Lord of my salvation,  
Salvation is of Christ the Lord.

(At the time of Patrick's death, 461, Pope Leo's words were being fulfilled – "What your (Rome's) toils in war subdued is less than what the peace of Christ has conquered." In a century more, from Ireland the Church would cross the sea to claim Britain and reach further north than even Rome did.)

many Christians amongst them. Etymology of the 5th century suggests the British origin of many religious words. It is thought that the Irish were predisposed towards Christianity: it was the first country outside the Roman Empire to be converted, and was unparalleled for its lack of bloodshed. There is not one recorded martyr in the course of the conversion of the land.

### The legend of Patrick as sole missionary to Ireland

The teaching that Patrick was solely responsible for Ireland's conversion began with writers of the seventh century based in Armagh, two writers in particular—the hagiographers, i.e. 'saint-writers', Muirchu and Terechan (c. 665-680). Patrick's own writings may have given the impression that he worked alone, although that was doubtless far from his intention: mention of others was not necessary to the purpose of his Confession. Patrick specifically stated that he was called to the Irish who did not know Christ, and it is this that could have given rise to the misconception. While he would have meant the parts of Ireland which were untouched, later the statement was taken as meaning all of Ireland, as though no Irish had yet been reached for Christ. In actual fact, St Patrick's activity may well have been based in Ulster and Connaught—the north and northwest of the land—for the pre-Patrick missionaries seem to have been active in the midlands and southeast.

Muirchu and Terechan followed the growing custom of crediting early Christians and medieval saints with repetitive, fantastic miracles and feats of endurance. Hagiography is a mixture of truth and legend or fancy, usually to prolong the memory and legitimise and enhance the prestige of the saints as examples to the Christians. Sometimes hagiographers had a political

motive. Other hagiographies were meant to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over paganism. Folk tales often appear in them disguised as miracles. Often they are merely heroic—their purpose merely to keep an audience amused. The saint becomes a new kind of hero. It was not unusual for the same miracles to be attributed to several saints. "Irish saga" also inherits the power of the Druids.

There is no need in this article to outline the writings of these two St Patrick hagiographers apart from saying that according to them, Patrick conducted amazing and sometimes retributive, vindictive and cruel signs of his control over man, over enemies and over nature. He punishes one opponent by turning him into a fox. His portrayed character is far from appealing. He appears as the more familiar St Patrick apostle of Ireland, magician miracle worker. There is no need to elaborate further.

These far-fetched stories of Patrick and other saints sound badly in modern ears. Even the Vatican itself has in recent years endorsed the demotion of some of them (e.g. St Christopher, patron of travellers and St George of England, dragon killer.) They were dismissed as the 'products of gullible and over zealous scribes'.

Why has Patrick not been similarly dismissed? We can thank his own writings, which reveal the true saint to us.

### Patrick's assessment of himself

Patrick's Confession from the first sentence reveals his humility. The impact on the reader is that here is a writing simple and direct, the writing of a man who is both courageous and humble, yet not obsequious nor of fawning humility—no oily Uriah Heap rubbing his hands together ("I'm a very 'umble man, Mr Copperfield"). This St Patrick rings true. He was so sure he had been chosen by God, yet he questioned himself. "Why should God choose me??"

His writings are alive with thanksgiving and with faith. His Confession, written in the 5th century, is the only autobiographical writing surviving from that time in British or Irish annals. It was written in rough Latin, full of imperfections, for which he apologised. It has recently been recognised that he was actually writing in the spoken Latin of his day, not classical Latin. In this he acknowledged his limitations, pointing out that he had needed to learn a different language from the language of his youth. He felt that he never recovered from the schooling interruption caused by his capture.

Yet Patrick shows a profound knowledge of the Scriptures, quoting time and again in his Confession phrases that indicate that he was steeped in Scripture—phrases that we are familiar with, phrases from both

testaments, all indicating time spent in reading and meditation on the Word of God. Patrick begins, "I am Patrick, a sinner, most unlearned, the least of the faithful and utterly despised by many."

He proceeds to show God's dealings in his life. He would see God's hand in allowing him to be taken captive. He found in these events his own 'wake up call.'

He defends his calling as of God. He acknowledges the caring hand of the Father and the guiding Spirit in everything. He worships the Holy Trinity. He sees that God 'went before.' In the manner of Scripture he writes,

"We were, so Scripture says, a letter of Christ for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth, and, though not an eloquent one, yet... written in your hearts, not with ink, but with the spirit of the Living God."

"I do not trust myself as long as I am in this body of death"

". ...the purity of true religion, to which I have devoted myself to the end of my life to Christ my Lord..."

"I lie not ... up to now, thanks to the grace of God, I have kept the faith."

### Shades of Paul?

"...my time had not yet come..."; "ravens wolves"; "grace"; "God's pre-ordaining love";

"a prophet is not honoured in his own country". All these flow from his pen when he seems stuck for his own words. There is also a direct quote acknowledged by him as from the book of Hosea. In thirteen pages of printed translation of his Confessions, there are over two hundred of these Biblical quotations, an average of 15+ per page.

Does all this sound like the Patrick you have previously visualised?

### Our assessment of the man

We see a man of simple and steadfast faith, humble, hardworking, courageous with deep and reverent love of God, a man who knows his weaknesses, who acknowledges his educational and cultural shortcomings, a man who loves his spiritual family and his converts, but who dearly misses his own blood family and his childhood home—a man willing to obey his God, yet one who marvelled that he was chosen for such a demanding and rewarding task.

If it were not for his own writings, poorly worded though he acknowledged them to be, we would know nothing of this humble, industrious and courageous Romano/British bishop who was as Hopkin puts it, "so endearingly ashamed of his bad Latin."

Yet it is this very aspect of his writings that marks them as authentic. Thank God for those several people who thought it worth while to preserve these writings, bad Latin and all!



## A feminine focus

*"If thou but suffer God to guide thee..."*

### The life and hymn translations of Catherine Winkworth

#### Sally Davey

Catherine Winkworth is probably not a name familiar to you—unless you are a very assiduous reader of the small print beneath the hymn texts in the hymnal. But it is her work that opened up, for English-speaking Christians, the great wealth of the German chorale tradition. If it had not been for her translations into English, we would not have had available to us fine hymns like *"Now thank we all our God"*, *"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation,"* *"If thou but suffer God to guide thee,"* *"Deck thyself, my soul, with gladness,"* *"Wake, awake, for night is flying"*—and many more. True, John Wesley had done translation work a century earlier—but, given his connections with the Pietist movement in Germany, he concentrated on hymns in that tradition, most particularly those written by Count Nikolaus von Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravian church. These hymns have much to do with the feelings, and religion of the inner heart. It was not until the work of this young Victorian Englishwoman that we were given the sturdy hymns of Lutheran pastors who wrote of the great, objective truths of the faith. These were hymns that kept their witness sure through the fires of turbulent warfare and personal suffering. To our benefit, we can sing the words originally written in German by Paul Gerhardt, Johann Franck, Georg Neumark and Philip Nicolai.

#### Catherine's early life

Catherine was born in London in 1827, but spent most of her life in Manchester—in those days a burgeoning city bustling with the vigour of industrial expansion. Britain was the most powerful nation in the world at the time; and cities like Manchester were the engine room of her wealth. When she was 18 Catherine spent a year in Dresden, and probably perfected her knowledge of the German language while she was there. Commentators on her translation work all remark that she was an intelligent woman who moved in academic circles, associating with freethinking people who were exploring the more liberal ideas of the age. Catherine apparently moved in Unitarian circles. She was a strong advocate of women's education

(supporting higher education for women, and women's high schools and colleges). Perhaps it would seem strange that a woman with these kinds of views should have been interested in the hymns of pastors who were convinced of the objective truths of the Bible—and who declared them unequivocally in song. But it seems that she loved them,



Catherine Winkworth

declaring in the preface of her most famous collection of translations: "Luther's hymns are wanting in harmony and correctness of metre to a degree which often makes them jarring to our modern ears, but they are always full of fire and strength, of clear Christian faith, and brave joyful trust in God."

#### Catherine's talents

Whatever Catherine's personal theological views, she possessed remarkable linguistic and literary talents. Her knowledge of the German language, and of German poetry, have earned her wide praise. But more importantly, these were coupled with an ability to render both German words and the unique rhythm of German hymns into fine English equivalents. Catherine's translations have given us the hymns of German pastors

Gerhardt, Franck, Neumark and Nicolai, enabling us to sing their verse as heartily as did their own congregations.

As a young woman, Catherine was fascinated by, and admired greatly, a book of translations of German hymns by Frances Cox (eg *"Who are these like stars appearing?"*). Inspired by it, she decided to begin her own translations of German hymns, and her work appeared, with the title *Lyra Germanica*, in 1855. She was only 27 when she achieved this feat—and a feat it is, indeed. Her English renditions were so highly-regarded that in an era of almost unprecedented activity in hymn-writing, hymn singing and in the recovery and translation of hymns from past ages of the church, a significant number of her hymns were picked up and adopted by the compilers of the first edition (1861) of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. This was by far the most-used and best-loved of English hymnals for over a century. Catherine's translations were so close to the metre and spirit of the German originals that some of them were able to be sung to the German tunes for the originals. This is the case with Joachim Neander's *"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation,"* for instance. Catherine was well aware of the tone of the words in German, and commented that these German hymns were "popular and homelike" in their own language, and "must sound so in ours if [they are] to be really available for devotional purposes." With the help of two distinguished musicians, William Sterndale Bennett and Otto Goldschmidt, she produced in 1863 *The Chorale book for England: German hymns*, many of them with German tunes. Her translations were specially shaped to fit the tunes. Many students of hymn-writing have noticed her predilection for the imperative voice, and her use of a type of metre reflecting the solemn mood created by the German writers she was translating. (It is also worthy of note that she, like other 19<sup>th</sup> century hymn-writers, used language no longer found in the conversation or usual writing of her day, such as "thee" and "Thou", and "suffer" for "allow"—as in *"If thou but suffer God to guide thee"*—to convey the tone of respect and reverence for the "otherness" of God she was wanting

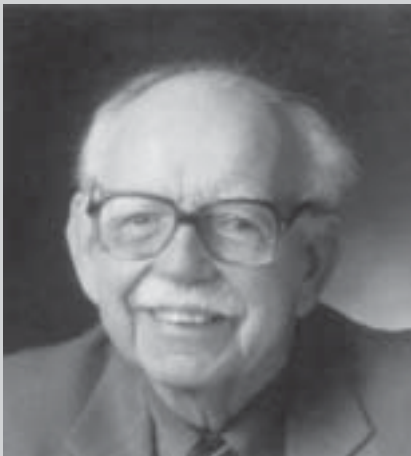
to characterise her translations.) She had hoped this *Chorale Book* might become widely used in the churches in England; but it appears that the popularity of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* tended to put all other hymnals into a shadow. As one commentator has written, “its failure to succeed, in spite of its excellence, is a further testimony to the power of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.”

#### Catherine's sudden death

Catherine died at the early age of 51—quite suddenly, of heart failure, while in Geneva at a conference. She is buried in nearby Savoy. But the work of this remarkable young woman has lived on—to our profit—for over a century. Let us make a closer examination of some of her translations, and the lives of the original writers whose words she honoured.

*In loving memory of*

## Mattys Karelse



*7th August 1926 to  
6th June 2004*

### *Husband of the late Aart*

*A thanksgiving service was held  
in the Reformed Church of Nelson  
on the 9th of June 2004*

*Jesus said, “I am the  
resurrection and the life.  
He who believes in me will  
live, even though he dies;  
and whoever lives and  
believes in me will never die.”  
(John 11:25-26)*

#### **“Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation”**

Joachim Neander, the writer of “*Lobe den Herrn*” (translated by Catherine as “*Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation*,” was regarded as one of the greatest of all German-Calvinist Reformed hymn writers. (And I know how the German Reformed churches love singing fine hymns: I have a good friend, a Presbyterian pastor in the U.S., who comes from the German Reformed churches established by emigrants to the Mid-West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and who testifies to this!). Neander was born in Bremen in 1650, only two years after the Thirty Years’ War had finally been concluded by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Germany had been devastated by them; and many of its pastors had had to deal with families in terribly tragic circumstances, requiring the strongest of faith in the God of the Bible. Neander himself was a pastor in Dusseldorf; and in addition a noted scholar in theology, literature and music. Though he died when he was only 30 years old in 1680, he wrote about 60 hymns, and composed many hymn tunes. Almost all his hymns are triumphant expressions of praise to God; and this one, “*Praise to the Lord*,” is considered perhaps his finest. Read, sometime soon, the words of No. 327 in our *Psalter Hymnal*. We have here only 3 of the verses translated by Catherine, but I am sure you will find here plenty to give you appreciation for the care with which she has rendered the words of Neander. There is indeed sturdy faith here - in the God who cares for all He has created - and powerful reason to praise Him for it.

#### **“Now thank we all our God”**

Martin Rinkart, the writer of “*Now thank we all our God*” (No. 316 in the *Psalter Hymnal*), was a pastor of a generation earlier than Neander. Born in 1586, he was from a poor family, so worked his way through university in Leipzig, and had served for a time as a choir boy in the St Thomas Church of that city (where J.S. Bach was later music director). Perhaps he picked up musical skills while there. He was ordained to the ministry of the Lutheran Church—and at the age of 31 was called to be the pastor of his native town, Eilenberg. He arrived there just as the awful bloodshed of the Thirty Years’ War was beginning. Because Eilenberg was a walled city, it became a refuge for those fleeing from the carnage elsewhere. Because of the resultant overcrowding, several waves of epidemic swept through the town, and famine as well. At various times armies also marched through, leaving death and destruction in their wake. The Rinkart home often provided refuge for the suffering—even though Martin at times had difficulty finding food and clothing for his own family. The plague of 1637 was especially severe. At its

height Martin was the only minister left, and he often had to conduct 40 or 50 funeral services a day. Amazingly, he also wrote 67 hymns.

During the final years of these Wars Eilenberg was invaded by armies on three different occasions—once by the Austrians, and twice by the Swedish. During one of these invasions by the Swedes, there came a demand that a large tribute payment be made by these struggling local people. Rinkart himself pleaded with the Swedish army leaders. Apparently, when the Swedish commander was unwilling at first to relent, Rinkart turned to his poor people and said, “Come, my children, we can find no mercy with man; let us take refuge with God.” On his knees he led them in prayer and in the singing of a familiar hymn. This so moved the Swedish commander that he acceded to their request. This is the kind of man, and these are the kinds of circumstances, that gave us this hymn, so finely rendered in English, and so familiar to us still today. (The tune, composed by Johann Cruger in 1647, was sung to Martin’s German words; and has always been sung to Catherine’s English translation as well). It is no coincidence that some of the truest, finest and sturdiest hymns of praise to God have come from some of the most testing times in church history—and from the pens of some of those who have suffered deeply. Solid, lasting praise that means what it says does not usually come from those whose faith is shallow and lightly worn.

Let me close with these words of Martin—and Catherine:

*“Now thank we all our God,  
With heart, and hands and voices,  
Who wondrous things hath done,  
In Whom this world rejoices;  
Who from our mother’s arms  
Hath bless’d us on our way  
With countless gifts of love,  
And still is ours today.*

*O may this bounteous God  
Through all our life be near us,  
With ever joyful hearts  
And blessed peace to cheer us;  
And keep us in his grace,  
And guide us when perplex’d,  
And free us from all ills  
In this world and the next.*

*All praise and thanks to God  
The Father now be give,  
The Son, and Him Who reigns  
With them in highest heaven,  
The One eternal God,  
Whom earth and heav’n adore,  
For thus it was, is now,  
And shall be evermore.”*

## Focus on home

# Gleanings from our bulletins...

**Andrew Reinders**

## Avondale

Growing Kids God's Way: We are planning to run the course, "Growing Kids God's Way", depending on how many would be interested in coming. If there is sufficient interest, we will commence on July 20 for six consecutive weeks. We will then have a short break, and run for another six consecutive weeks. After another break, we will complete the course with the final six week block. If you are interested in attending, you must let us know by Sunday June 20. John & Corrie TerHorst.

## Bishopdale

Christchurch City Choir Concert Dedication. Some of you may already know that Jack de Graaf was a long serving member of this choir. In the next concert we are singing his favourite piece of music, Brahms' Requiem. The Board have voted to dedicate this concert to Jack, which shows how highly he was thought of. It is magnificent music dealing with the wrath of God and the Last Judgement. Brahms selected biblical passages of comfort and consolation for the bereaved, which are of timeless beauty. If you would like to know more about this concert, please see me. Janine Heeringa.

Wedding Announcement: The session of the Reformed Church of Bishopdale rejoice with the following announcement and if there are no lawful objections will go ahead as follows: "It is with joy and thankfulness to the Lord that we, Maria van der Meer and David Vander Reyden, announce our intention to marry before God and His people. The wedding will take place Lord willing on Saturday 3rd of July 2004 in the Reformed Church of Christchurch, 63 Cornwall St Christchurch, at 1.30 in the afternoon. Afterwards you are warmly invited to join us for afternoon tea in the Church Hall."

## Buckland's Beach

This Thursday is traditionally celebrated as Ascension Day. It marks the passing of 40 days since the celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday. The relevance of Christ's ascension is often overlooked nowadays. We believe *that* Jesus ascended but when asked

how is that important? people often answer along the lines, *well, you know*. May I challenge you to think about that question? This coming Thursday evening there will be a special time for remembering, thanksgiving and praise to mark Ascension Day. Call it a 'praise, prayer and fellowship evening'. Think of it as a combined home groups meeting. Think of it as a time for you to come along for fellowship. The format is simple: we meet together at 7.30pm for prayer, praise and fellowship. At approximately 8.30pm the formal part of the evening ends and we have a cuppa and a snack.

Once again, warmest congratulations to the Buys family. Baby Alexander is his father's son and does well. Bea and Alexander came home on Monday. May God's special grace and strength be very real as the family readjustments to it's most junior member.

## Christchurch

Situation vacant. Do you have a broad knowledge of Christian music? Do you want to be involved in an outreach team doing outreach in your area? Foundations radio team is looking for a music co-ordinator to select music (from CDs) to go with Pastor Jim's radio messages, and build up a catalogue of available music for our *Foundations* programmes. If interested in this, please contact Liana Havelaar.

## Hamilton

We rejoice with Bill and Louise Weeda on the celebration of their 50th Wedding anniversary. We thank the Lord for keeping them in His grace all these years. May they and their children and grandchildren continue to revel in the goodness of our covenant God.

Evening Service Time. In view of a number of requests for the evening service to be at 7.00 pm all year, this matter will be put to the members by way of a ballot to be held after a morning service next Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June.

Congratulations to Peter and Coby Cressy who are away in Hastings with their family to celebrate their 45<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. May the Lord accept their praise and grant them many more years together in health and contentment.

The Hamilton church will be calling and hosting the next Synod of the Reformed Churches of NZ. This has been scheduled to take place next year 3-9 September. An organising committee will be appointed soon.

## Hastings

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. When Jesus was here on earth He often chose to share a meal with people he cared about. There is



definitely something special about sharing a meal together. We have had quite a few new families join our church recently, this would be a really easy way to get to know them better, as well as a good opportunity to have an evening with a brother and sister in Christ who you have known for years but just haven't had the occasion to spend time with lately. We have enough Hosts, so now we need to fill their homes and be guests, what could be easier! Please let Vera or Carla know as soon as possible so we can let you know who you will have dinner with and what to bring.

## Masterton

We rejoice with Michael and Rosalie Kloeg in the safe arrival of a daughter, Charlotte Leiana. Charlotte arrived on Saturday afternoon. She weighs 4.035 Kg. Mother and child are doing fine. The Lord has certainly been gracious. Congratulations to Opa and Oma Kloeg and Opa and Oma Stolte.

Parents who have mountain buggies are warned to keep a careful eye on them while at church. Calvinettes and Cadets are on the lookout for such wheels for the trolley derby. Small boys with spanners should attract your intense interest!

## Palmerston North

Heart Sisters. An information sheet is available after the service for Heart Sisters, which we hope to run for the ladies in our Congregation until October. This is for young and older women (and everyone between!) and for both members and regular visitors. It would be great to have as many ladies as possible participating. Please take an information sheet, have a read, complete the attached form and place it in the box in the Church Library within the next two weeks. We will find a Heart sister for you within a few weeks.

## Pukekohe

We rejoice with the news of the birth of a daughter to Keren Voschezang last Friday morning, after a long labour. Grace Reanna weighed in at 7lb 10oz. Mother and baby are both well.

## Silverstream

We give thanks for the safe delivery of Ben Russell Posthuma, to Br. Roger & Sr. Miriam. We pray that the Lord will watch over Ben, who was born 4 weeks premature. This is a blessing for the church as well, that the Lord has placed so many covenant children in our midst.

## Wainuiomata

Ladies Fellowship. On Thursday at 7.00 pm Marietjie van Schalkwyk will be holding a breadmaking evening at the church. For all those ladies keen to come along, please bring with you a baking tray, gladwrap, 2 kg standard

grade flour and a jar of your favourite homemade jam.

A total of approx 1750 voluntary hours has now been worked on the building project since November 2003. Approx 1150 hours are related to the chapel extension work that is currently being undertaken.

## Wellington

*Matt's Reflections....* I sat in church last Sunday morning listening to the call for preparation for the Lord's Supper, and I had an idea. I thought I'd write down something of what the Lord's Supper means to me. Maybe you'll find some of it helpful: When I eat the bread and drink the wine, I remember the King Who gave up

His life so that we might live. Jesus, our food and drink, God's Spirit the air we breathe: our lives' most basic needs. I don't eat alone. My family are here; my true brothers and sisters, and my true Father. Some times I remember the challenge too: I eat the broken body and shed blood, and I know I'm committing myself to the same path He trod. I'm supposed to be a sacrifice too. Sacrificing my life, my ambitions and goals for the sake of God, His people and His world. Living and maybe dying to bring God's comfort to a mourning world. Where on earth will I get the strength to live like that? *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave myself for me. (Gal 2:20). Matt B.*

## The Holtslag family off to study for the ministry in the USA

On August 2 we leave New Zealand for Mid-America Reformed Seminary (MARS) located in far northwest Indiana, just 45 minutes from the heart of Chicago.

I have been accepted for the 3-year Master of Divinity program and begin studying for the ministry at the end of August. We have been sent by the Reformed Church of Silverstream, and our departure follows discussions with the Session which began in 2001 and a subsequent period of evaluation and preparation. I served as a deacon from March 2000 and as an elder from August 2002.

The session and I were able to meet with the President of MARS, Dr Cornel Venema (son of one of our denomination's former pastors — Rev Richard Venema), when he was here as the keynote speaker of the last ministers' and wives' conference. MARS generously agreed to take the tuition fees in New Zealand dollars, and in conjunction with

local church communities they have also located and furnished rental accommodation for us to move into upon arrival.

I have also been able to consult and meet with the synodical deputies, whose task of overseeing students for the ministry was expanded to include students at seminaries other than the RTC at the last synod.

As the following information explains, MARS is strongly committed to the same creeds and confessions as the RCNZ. It supplies ministers for our sister church, the OPC, and also for the United Reformed Churches and other Reformed and Presbyterian denominations. One of its former graduates is Rev. Leo de Vos, who pastors the Reformed Church of Wainuiomata.

The following is some information about MARS, taken from their catalogue.

"Mid-America Reformed Seminary believes that the health of the Church and



Left to right: Michael, Caroline, Anita, Andre, Laura, Jonathan, Julia.

the well-being of society depend upon the faithful ministry of the Word of God and therefore we affirm that our primary purpose is to train godly men for the ministry of the Word and sacraments. We believe that a thorough knowledge of and commitment to God's Word and its essential doctrines is requisite to a God-glorifying and fruitful ministry.

"We place primary emphasis on training in the high calling of preaching and teaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all its fullness as the principal means of grace for the conversion of sinners and the edification of the congregation, all to the glory of our Triune God. In addition, convinced that principles are to guide practice and thus that study must be translated into service, the Seminary ordinarily arranges for its ministerial students a three-year Ministerial Apprenticeship Program.

"Mid-America self-consciously advocates a concept of ministry that stresses the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself through the appointed means, that is, through the faithful ministry of Word and sacraments. Christian fellowship and interpersonal relationships are important features of a healthy church-life. However, the vitality of the church must be sought in the faithful proclamation of the gospel in weekly Sunday worship. We believe this is the time-tested and most effectual means God is pleased to use for the nurture of converts, covenant children, and mature believers.

"These convictions give rise to Mid-America's particular curricular focus and shapes the training students receive. On the one hand, we believe that to be faithful to the gospel of the kingdom, a seminary must prepare its students to proclaim that gospel fearlessly and faithfully. This preparation must include all aspects of preaching, from solidly-grounded exegesis to well-articulated and effective pulpit style. This preparation is the focus of all courses taught at the school, and not only the concern of a few preaching classes.

"On the other hand, this conviction regarding the urgency of revitalizing the pulpit does not permit us to ignore either the biblical and confessional heritage out of which we have come or the spirits of the age in which we live. Indeed we believe that ministerial students must be well versed in the history and theological developments of the church of Christ throughout the centuries. This must include, of course, thorough knowledge of Reformed thinking in all its breadth and diversity. Continental Reformed thought, that of the British Isles, and that of North American Reformed thinkers all deserve in-depth analysis and study. The source and content of this study will naturally be formed by the confessional stance of the

institution and its members.

"In addition, we believe that our students must be trained to perceive the non-Reformed world-views which pervasively shape our world. This requires a thorough knowledge of the philosophies of the Western world, including an awareness of how the predominant strains of those philosophies penetrate and affect the life, thought, and ministry of the church of Christ. Modern theology in its many varieties will not escape close scrutiny, lest we fail to prepare our students to sound the clear and ringing tones of the gospel amid the din of the counterfeits everywhere present. This sharpness of focus and this breadth of training are in no way contradictory. A faithful and useful seminary training requires that both be done well, to achieve a healthy balance. To this focus, breadth, and consequent balance we are committed, for the sake of the kingdom of God.

#### **Relationship to the Church**

"As an academic institution whose primary activity is preparing men for the ministry of the gospel, Mid-America Reformed Seminary is in a key position to implement its vision for the pulpit among a variety of church communions making use of the Seminary. The school is closely associated with confessionally Reformed and Presbyterian churches. However, it is not governed by the rules of any denomination and can therefore reach out more effectively to serve several churches with sound training for a solid pulpit. This commitment consists in theological education formed by a

confessional allegiance rather than a denominational affiliation. It is our allegiance to the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Standards that permits genuine theological vigour and prevents denominational provincialism.

#### **Doctrinal position**

"All members of the Association and of the Board of Trustees, which governs the Seminary and its activities, and the members of the faculty, are wholeheartedly committed to the Holy Scriptures as the infallible and inerrant Word of God; and in conformity with the Word, to the ecumenical creeds of Christendom (the *Apostles'*, *Athanasian*, and *Nicene Creeds*); and to the following Reformation Confessions: the *Belgic Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the *Canons of Dort*, and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*."

For more information about MARS

Website: [Http://www.midamerica.edu](http://www.midamerica.edu)

Email newsletter: You can subscribe to a free regular email newsletter about life at MARS at the website or by emailing [enotes@midamerica.edu](mailto:enotes@midamerica.edu)

We hope to keep in touch with you all via Faith in Focus and ask that you remember us in your prayers as you will be in ours. May the God who created the heavens and the earth receive all the glory and honour as we together seek to do his work as members of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand.

## Mission in focus

Janice Reid

### Papua: both sides!

Today's MIF news comes from both sides of the island of Papua: New Guinea, from Walter and Jeannette Hagoort, our RCNZ missionaries in Port Moresby, and from the Indonesian side of the island, Papua, there's another update from Rev. Baas, who was recently in PNG to work with Stephen 't Hart, but has since returned to Papua to resume his ministry there.

#### **Village living - PNG style**

What were we thinking? Whose idea was it anyway? This Pacific Orientation Course requires 4 weeks of village living. Not only

will we attend lectures on cultural anthropology, attend an intensive six-week course on learning to speak and understand Tok Pisin...we will also hike up and down mountains and through jungles as well as swim a mile non-stop. Then, for the grand finale we will live in a village belonging to a local tribe for 4 weeks!!!

It was a great experience, actually! The whole course was a wonderful learning experience and yes we learnt a lot of Tok Pisin (Pidgin English). The cultural anthropology was invaluable as well as the courses on Spiritual Vitality.

Let me tell you a little about our village living phase from a woman's perspective.

I was nervous about going to our village, even though we didn't have to stay the full four weeks. Due to Wally's illness during March/April our stay was reduced to 3 weeks



and our village was at the base of NobNob Mountain (POC is in the top of this mountain).

### A place of our own

The people in the village built us a brand new house. It wasn't like any house that you would possibly imagine. To start with, there were no doors and no windows. The floors were made of bamboo strips. They are not nailed down, so you need to be a little careful how you walk. The strips can move sometimes. Take care, also, that splinters don't go into your feet. There are gaps in the floor so nothing is insect proof. We were advised to take Mortein surface spray to keep the insects out. We put a tarpaulin under

our lilo mattresses and sprayed the edges to keep things out of our mosquito net. I sprayed the ground around our boxes of food to keep ants out of them. They still got in! So I sprayed the boxes. Success!

The villagers also built us a "waswas" house (bathroom), as they didn't think it was decent for whiteskins to wash in the river. I was really happy about that, I didn't fancy it, either. Even more so, when I heard stories from other missionaries after their village living experiences: people come and watch you, as you take your bath! So, in the privacy of our very own "waswas" room, we enjoyed the luxury of a bucket shower each night.

We were made very welcome and people came to talk with us regularly. They were fascinated with our cooking. Most nights I cooked extra and passed it around the people to try. Some comments were favourable, sometimes there were no comments and we just guessed that it wasn't liked that night. We were also given food to eat: taro, kumara, yams, unusual green veggies and cooking bananas (which taste like wood), all cooked in coconut milk. Wally really liked this kind of food whilst I had to smile and eat and give nice compliments anyway.

### A woman's work is never done...

The average day for a woman in a village starts well before dawn. She starts to prepare food for her family and do her cleaning. Breakfast is usually rice and some veggies if there are leftovers from the night before. There is no such thing as lunch. Washing clothes for the family is done in the creek. It is a backbreaking job. They use a bar of a soap like Sunlight, and a scrubbing brush. It takes a couple of hours. Then it's off to the market to sell the produce you brought in from your garden the night before. They walk to the market with a huge "bilum" (string bag) of food on their head and sell as much as possible. You may possibly be home about 2p.m. and then you will go straight to your garden to work. There are no gardening tools at all and no fertiliser to help things grow. You use a stick to dig, and your hands. It is well after dark by the time you get home and then you need to light a fire and cook a meal for your family. Dinner-time is usually between 8 and 9 and then there are dishes to do and children to care for. There is no bedtime for children. They fall asleep during the evening and are picked up and put in bed.

Some women cook food to sell at the local fish factory. They work till almost 1a.m. to prepare the food for this. They must go and cut banana leaves, which are used for plates. The green veggies are tied together by the stalks and put in bundles. The taro is peeled (very tough job), as are the kumara. These are soaked in pots over night. The next

morning they get up VERY early, and after the washing is done they will cook the food and prepare a coconut sauce. It's not made with coconut milk as we know it, from a tin: it is scraped from the inside of a coconut on a pole. Six coconuts make about 1 litre of coconut milk. The desiccated coconut is washed with water. The water is brought to the boil and becomes thickened like a sauce. They have to walk an hour to the market and be there by 11a.m. to sit and sell this fare to the factory workers. They leave about 4 hours later, and go straight to their gardens, etc. On a good day for this work they will earn 12-20 kina (NZ \$6-\$10). This helps buy the necessities in life like rice, soap, oil for cooking and a little kerosene to light a lamp at night. There is no money left for luxuries. After living here for 3 weeks I felt that I had no idea, as a New Zealander, what hard physical work really is.

One day I sat in the market selling food with these ladies. Of course people stared at me. I was the only whiteskin in the whole market, and what on earth was I doing in a market selling food anyway! One guy walked toward us and was staring so hard, he wasn't watching where he was going. He fell over a stick and nearly landed flat on his face. Poor guy! The whole market was silent. Then one woman said quietly "sori tru" (I am really sorry). Then everyone in the market started to laugh raucously. I felt quite sorry for him. This story was repeated many a time with much hilarity.

Night times are filled with stories and music. I brought a guitar along and purchased a couple of Tok Pisin worship songbooks. One of the guys taught me several new Tok Pisin worship songs on the condition that I teach them some English ones. We had a good time. People are eager to learn and sing with gusto.

### Children and young people

On our first Saturday night in the village, there was a youth convention. I was asked to play guitar and sing a couple of songs with a group of the youth in the village. So away we went. About 200 young people were there from all kinds of villages, and each village performed two items. There was prayer and a sermon as well. The evening was supposed to start at 7p.m. but because it was raining and no one walks in the rain, it started at 9.30p.m. What a great night we had! Lots of people talked to us and asked us why we were in PNG, and we could talk about our mission here. This same little group was also asked to sing in church on the next two Sunday mornings.

The children here find pleasure in everything. They are never bored and content to sit in one spot for hours just watching and listening to the adults. We brought 100 balloons with us, and they were thrilled to

bits when they were given one. We also bought them a soccer ball. There are no toys of any sort in the village. Several times a day someone would come and ask to play with the ball. It was brought back (usually washed first) to us when they finished. Every night either Wally or I read several stories out of the Tok Pisin Children's Bible. It was not unusual to have 17 children on our porch listening to these stories. A great opportunity to talk to them about the Lord and what He has done for us. Their eyes are wide open as they discover the stories in the Bible. Please pray that the stories we read will become truths in their lives. We gave out colouring in pictures that they coloured with crayons and hung on the walls of their houses.

### Man must work from sun to sun...

Now, let me move on and give you a woman's perspective on a PNG man's life. A man living in a bush village has a pretty cushy life. It's his job to build the house. Yes, when it's time to build one, it's a big job. The men go bush and collect materials and it is hard work. But...they are never in a hurry and it can take months and months to complete one house, because relationships are important. It is much more important to sit and talk than it is to work. Work

will always be there, you can do it later.

The men will also cut the bush away if a woman needs a new garden because the fertility is gone from the old one. This is also hard work, but a woman only needs a new garden about every two-three years. This is the entirety of a man's work in a village. It gives me a whole new perspective of 'men sitting at the city gates,' which you read about in the Bible. Men do not cook, do not clean. They do not wash clothes. They are served all drinks and meals. I had a bit of trouble coping with this aspect of village living. Wally (lucky for him!) didn't take advantage of this opportunity and still helped with cooking and dishes, etc. Some of the guys looked at him strangely as we explained this was normal in New Zealand. Wally did get the opportunity to learn how to weave bamboo to make walls etc. He helped to weave the wall on the front porch of our house and he also helped sewing the morota (which is a roof made of cabbage tree-type leaves) for a house someone was fixing. He enjoyed this immensely and was really good at it and learnt it quickly.

But now we have left the village, and our very own little thatched house. We are now in Moresby—our days of being students are over and the real work has started. But that's another story!!

During our stay in Papua New Guinea, we got the message that our visas for West Papua (Indonesia) were granted. We were glad and surprised at this news. They were granted right before the general elections in Indonesia—certainly a miracle, the work of the Lord. Thanks to the Him Who rules the world and the hearts of kings—and of government officials, who think that they are in charge. They are not; God is!

We went to West Papua to process our visa and everything went smooth and quickly, allowing us to return to Port Moresby on the 30th of April.

After that, we returned to Holland. Our youngest daughter got married in June, and I was pleased to be able to lead the wedding service, at her request.

On the 13th of July we returned to Indonesia, to Bomakia in the Southern hot lowlands of West Papua. My ministry there will involve training church leaders and church workers, taking up about 75% of my time. Often, such training is done in the villages at the request of one or more local congregations. Sometimes training is conducted in Bomakia.

The other 25% of my time I will teach in Bomakia at the Bible School there. There are still two vacancies for this work in Bomakia. In Holland two couples have been found, thanks to God, to do these jobs together with me. They have to be trained and their

application for a visa is still to be processed. So they will not be able to come before next year, but hopefully they will join us soon after 1 January 2005.

We pray that the Lord will be with you, them and us, but above all that He will bless the spiritual growth of all his congregations and all his children in the whole world.

Yours in Christ,  
Peter and Trijnie Baas-Prins, Port Moresby,  
15 May 2004.

## MIF prayer notes

Please pray for the team in Papua New Guinea. Pray for **Wally & Jeannette Hagoort** as they support the ministries of the PNG Reformed Churches. Pray for them as they implement changes to Mapang Missionary Home to modernise it and provide suitable accommodation for the many missionaries who pass through Port Moresby.

**Stephen and Dorinda't Hart** are due back in PNG this month after spending two months in Australia for the birth of their fourth child. Pray for travelling mercies, refreshment from the Lord during their time with family and friends, and a safe return to take up their duties in Ekor. Also pray for **Peter & Trijnie Baas** in their work in West Papua.

**Wayne and Cheronne VanderHeide** from Western Australia should be in PNG by now, and beginning the orientation process as they adjust to Papua New Guinean culture and language. Please pray for the Lord's hand on them as they get established in their new ministry of teaching within the Reformed churches of PNG.

**Janice Reid and Jean-Luc Lebrun** are working hard to finalise the training for station managers that they are developing at the request of HCJB World Radio. Lord willing, they will present this training in Indonesia next month, to managers of several small stations that HCJB is establishing this year and next, in partnership with local ministries. Please pray for wisdom in preparations, and timely completion of all necessary resources.

Pray for short term workers sent out by our churches: **Hayden Bosgra** is in Ecuador with OMS; **Heidi Posthuma** will teach English in Tibet, after doing orientation courses in California and Beijing (she leaves this month); **Jared Berends** has returned to Mongolia for 2 more years of English teaching there. Ask for God's protection on each of them, and that they would maintain a close relationship with Him through all the hardships, challenges and delights of their time overseas. Pray that the Lord would raise up more people willing to serve Him in long-term mission on behalf of our churches.

## Baas family update

### Brothers and Sisters,

After I had finished my preparations to return to the mission field in Papua, Indonesia, I had to wait some time for my visa to be approved. While I was waiting I offered to spend some time helping any mission that needed it. Rev. Stephen 't Hart from Ekor responded.

We had a wonderful time in Port Moresby, with a nice house in Tokarara village. We enjoyed wonderful trips to Ekor and Beregoro. I preached three times in English—twice at Nine Mile, Port Moresby, and once at Ekor. You have read about the leadership training we held in Ekor in a former article.



# TV 101

## *A short course on the discerning use of television*



### **Peter Gadsby**

Of David. A psalm.

*I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will sing praise.*

*2 I will be careful to lead a blameless life—when will you come to me? I will walk in my house with blameless heart.*

*3 I will set before my eyes no vile thing. The deeds of faithless men I hate; they shall not cling to me.*

*4 Men of perverse heart shall be far from me; I will have nothing to do with evil.*

*5 Whoever slanders his neighbour in secret, him will I put to silence; whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure.*

*6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he whose walk is blameless will minister to me.*

*7 No-one who practises deceit will dwell in my house; no-one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.*

*8 Every morning I will put to silence all the wicked in the land; I will cut off every evildoer from the city of the LORD.*

—Psalm 101

Read the above Psalm and think about how you use your TV.

What programs do you like to watch, and why do you find them enjoyable? Do they lift your thoughts to the Lord and to things that are ‘true, noble, right, pure, lovely’—things that are ‘excellent or praiseworthy’ (Php.4:8)? Or do they cater to sinful desires—covetousness, pride, lust, etc.?

How do you ‘walk in your house’—that is, how do you conduct yourself at home? What do you ‘set before your eyes’? Are ‘men of perverse heart’ really entertaining? Is it time to ‘put to silence’ those who enter your home by via the TV or the web? Would you really tolerate someone sitting in your lounge room who talked or acted like that?

OTOH (on the other hand), maybe it would be OK to watch some of those ‘reality’ TV shows, so that I have something to talk about with my non-Christian friends who are hooked on that stuff. But keep in mind the word of God in Psalm 101.

Think and pray about these things!

*The Rev. W. Peter Gadsby is a minister in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, our newest sister church in Australasia, and a fellow member of the International Conference of Reformed Churches. This is used, with permission, from their denominational magazine, ‘The Presbyterian Banner’.*