

# faith in focus

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The Christian and the professions

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## Editorial

This issue of the magazine might be helpful for young people who are considering their options regarding employment in the professions. When I use the term professions, I am not referring to those who conduct themselves in a professional manner. I am referring to those who are professionals by virtue of their occupation – which really means occupations which offer learned advice for a fee. Doctors, dentists, lawyers, veterinary surgeons, engineers, architects ... Get the idea?

In order to be a “professional”, one needs the necessary gifts and skills, and is required to undergo extensive study for quite a number of years. Most likely a sharp, enquiring analytical mind would be of benefit.

The kingdom of our Lord needs more professionals. As I look at the RCNZ, most of the people in our churches are involved in the trades and a variety of other types of work. But, how many do we have in the professions? I believe the professions are under-represented.

What a great benefit could be derived from Christian doctors, lawyers, vets etc. Just think of the “salting” effect they also could have in society.

Are you a young person who has got what it takes? Why not have a read of these excellent articles and give it some serious thought?

Our contributors are all professionals and share their experiences, knowledge and insights into their particular vocations with some very detailed and revealing articles. I heartily recommend these articles to our readers and their children.

Mr Bernard Vaatstra reflects on a career in the veterinary profession.

Mr Gary Haverland considers the benefits of engineers in society.

Mr Daniel Flinn poses questions about Christians who work in criminal law or as crown prosecutors.

Mrs Sally Davey writes a tribute to the life of Edith Schaeffer.

Mrs Harriet Haverland and her team of “gleaners”, keep us up to date with Gleanings from the Churches.

A couple of letter writers grace our pages.

Mr Michael J. Kruger reviews, *A “New New Testament”*: Part 2, by Hal Taussig.

Messrs Ed Leenders, Tim Fransen, David Kajiser and Matt Saathof report on their visit to PNG in Missions in focus.

Mr Albert Couperus greets us from Chicago, where he is studying at Mid-America Reformed Seminary.

Cover images: (top right) courtesy of Gregory Szarkiewicz / FreeDigitalPhotos.net; (top left and bottom right) fotalia.com

Images: p3,5,6 Mr Bernard Vaatstra; p8-10 Mr Gary Haverland; p23,24 Mr Albert Couperus.

*“The great need in the church is for a spirit of evangelism,  
not just a spurt of evangelism.”*  
*John Blanchard*

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

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

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## The Christian and the professions (1)

# Pulling the bull out of the pit – reflections on a career in the veterinary profession

### **Bernard Vaatstra**

For many people, ideas about veterinarians and the veterinary profession are at least partially informed by the colourful and descriptive James Herriot books and television series (*All Creatures Great and Small* etc.). These tales paint an idyllic if somewhat earthy picture of a profession that can be strenuous and demanding, but is also at times wonderfully rewarding. Descriptions of surgery on stropky cows in muddy yards, imaginary disorders in pampered toy dogs and run-ins with mad sows or odd-ball farmers bring a wry smile of recognition to vets of all generations.

But although the typical mixed practice clinical veterinarian in the style of James Herriot still exists, the accumulation of knowledge has made it more difficult for individual vets to be able to do everything, and has led to increasing specialisation within the profession. As a result, people who studied veterinary science may be found in companion animal practice, production animal or equine practice, food safety (meat works vets), biosecurity and disease surveillance, public health, farm advisory work, research, teaching and laboratory work. My own career as a veterinarian has included time in rural clinical practice, post-graduate training and teaching at university, and an internship at a veterinary pathology laboratory leading to my current position as a veterinary anatomic pathologist. The information provided by pathologists assists vets to diagnose the cause of disease or loss of production in large and small animals, detects incursions of foreign disease before they become widespread, allows certification of New Zealand animals for export, and helps detect adverse effects of chemicals and drugs in animals before they are used in people.

As people who are redeemed by Christ, we are first and foremost citizens of heaven rather than citizens of this world. Whether or not we are apt to serve as ministers of the word, we are all prophets, priests and kings and need to bring our faith to bear on our respective careers. We may thus regard ourselves not so much as primarily doctors or teachers or lawyers, but as Christians who serve through medicine, Christians who teach, and Christians who interpret the laws of the land. So in that light, how does a career as a veterinarian fit within the context of a Christian life?

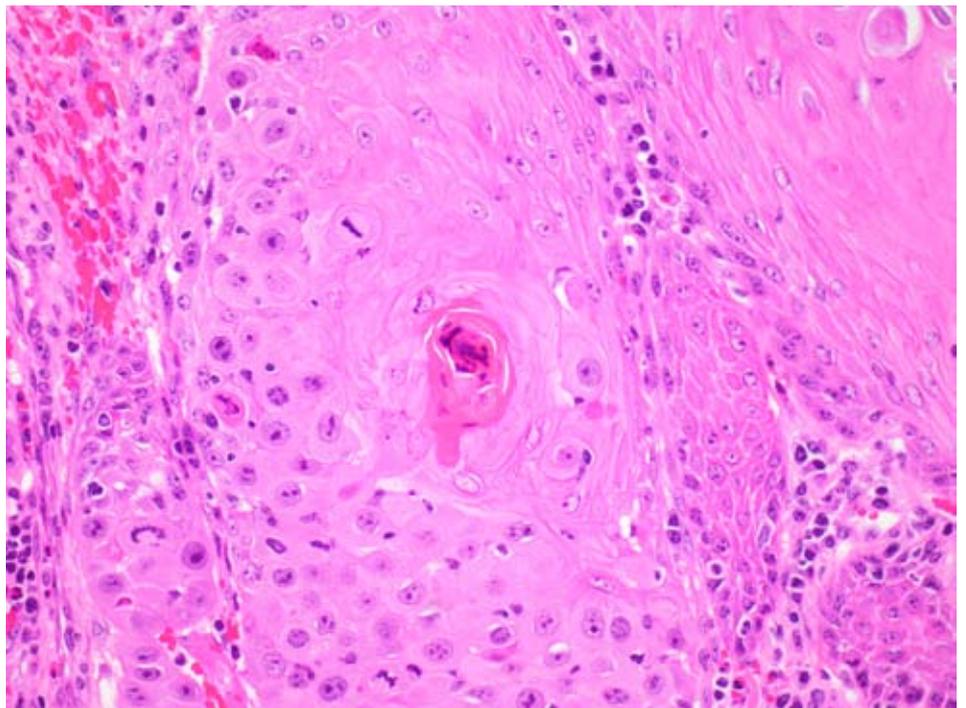
This article will seek to answer that question by looking at how Scripture informs our view of the animal creation, how the veterinary profession views its own role in society (and whether this is compatible with a biblical world-view),

and some of the challenges facing a Christian veterinarian.

### **Veterinary medicine in the Bible**

Although the Bible refers to the medical profession (e.g. Luke the physician, the physicians who attempted to treat the woman with a haemorrhage in Mark 5:25-26), there are no direct references to animal physicians. Scripture does, however, provide broad principles which inform us of our obligations with regard to the animal component of creation.

Firstly, as God's image bearers we should reflect God's own attitude toward His creation. Genesis 1:20-25 describes the creation of the sea creatures, birds and terrestrial animals in all their wonderful variety. Verse 25 states, "And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground



*Cancer cells from the eyelid of a dairy cow – an example of the effects of the curse in a histology sample from a veterinary pathology laboratory.*

after its kind; and God saw that it was good." If the creatures of the earth are good and valuable in God's estimation, then so they should be in ours.

Scripture also describes God's care of His creatures and His expectation of our care for them also. Psalm 104 speaks of how God provides for the needs of wild mammals, birds and sea creatures: "These all look to you to provide them their food at the proper time." (verse 27). Matthew 6:26 states in the context of our own value to the Lord: "Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet

number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." God later gave Adam the responsibility of naming the animals (Genesis 2:19-20), provided skins for Adam and Eve to wear after the fall (Genesis 3:21), re-affirmed man's sovereignty over creation to Noah (Genesis 9:2) introduced animals as part of the diet (Genesis 9:3), and prescribed animals as sacrifices (Exodus 12). Scripture speaks of horses being the strength of an army, the ox being a beast of burden, fishing as an occupation

“We must care for and love the creation. But our relationship with it must also be seen within the context of our position as God's sole image-bearers and stewards.”

your heavenly Father feeds them." When God flooded the earth, he took special care that Noah would create a craft big enough to fit all the animals along with their provisions (Genesis 6:19-21). God wants a world full of animals! He is pleased with and cares for His animals, and this should be our attitude also. In addition, Genesis 9:4 and Leviticus 17:14 indicate that the lifeblood ("the life") of animals is precious and should not be wantonly shed. And Proverbs 12:10 equates caring for the needs of our animals with righteousness.

We see then that we must care for and love the creation. But our relationship with it must also be seen within the context of our position as God's sole image-bearers and stewards. We should not love the creation to the point of idolatry. People within organisations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) believe all living creatures have the same intrinsic worth and capacity to suffer as humans, and so should have the same rights. According to their philosophy, exploitation of animals for our own use (whether as pets or pork chops) is akin to human slavery and cannibalism.<sup>1</sup> In Genesis 1:28-30, God said, "Be fruitful and increase in

and a lowly donkey bearing our Lord into Jerusalem. Animals are ubiquitous, wonderfully diverse, and are provided for our utility and delight. We may use them, but must treat them with respect and mercy.

In the light of Scripture then, the role of the Christian veterinarian (and others involved in animal husbandry) may be seen to encompass **stewardship, mercy and witness**. Stewardship helps to maximise the usefulness and enjoyment of animals for people. Mercy recognises the role of suffering due to sin in every aspect of creation, and seeks to treat animals with care and respect as God requires. And witness is made possible by interacting with animal owners and handlers in a way consistent with the above biblical principles.

#### **How does the veterinary profession view its role?**

When considering any career path, it is wise to research how your chosen profession views its own role and to assess whether that is compatible with a Christian worldview. There are some professions that may be less suited for Christians because they require regular compromise of Christian principles.

Others pose more subtle and veiled challenges, so a good grounding in the faith is needed in order to recognise and negotiate them. How does the veterinary profession fit within this spectrum?

The role of the veterinarian in New Zealand is regulated by the Veterinary Council (VCNZ), which has formulated a code of professional conduct.<sup>2</sup> The Code is built around seven principles that form the basis of professional behaviour expected of veterinarians. These are as follows:

1. Protecting animal welfare and alleviating suffering
2. Practicing in a way that promotes effective communication, trust, meets confidentiality and consent requirements and recognises clients' right to choose
3. Interacting with colleagues honestly and in a way that fosters good relationships and communication
4. Acting in a way that promotes the public's trust and confidence in the profession
5. Striving to provide a high standard of veterinary practice
6. Exercising sound judgement when authorising, dispensing, recommending, selling and using veterinary medicines
7. Practicing in accordance with relevant legislation and other applicable standards

Most would agree that the above principles do not compromise the conscientious Christian; in fact, despite the secular origins of the Code, many of the statements are consistent with a biblical approach to the world. Protecting animal welfare, alleviating suffering, honesty, being at peace with and doing good to all men, obeying the relevant authorities, and doing our work to the best of our ability are all examples of principles that may be found in Scripture. So the role of the veterinarian as defined by its regulatory body is certainly not a problem for the Christian veterinarian. But as with any profession, there are moral and ethical issues that arise within the practice of a veterinarian that need to be met and wrestled with.

#### **Challenges facing Christians in the veterinary profession**

##### *Euthanasia*

One of the difficult issues that veterinarians grapple with is the killing of animals. Every new graduate on their first weekend or night duty will be presented

with a request to put an animal to sleep. Typically there will be dozens of weeping family members present, all crowded round while the nervous vet tries to find a collapsed vein on a distressed dog or cat. Often this is an elderly, beloved pet collapsed in the garden, or perhaps a horse with a severe injury. Occasionally the request is made to euthanase a healthy animal for behavioural reasons or because they have come to the end of their usefulness to the owner. How does a Christian approach these cases?

Scripture clearly indicates that animals may be used for human benefit, such as for production of food or fibre. But as we have already seen, there is a warning not to spill blood for frivolous reasons (Leviticus 17:14). Taken together, a biblical approach would be that it is legitimate to end an animal's life, but we need to ensure that there is a good reason for doing so, and that we do not cause unnecessary suffering in the process. Such considerations extend from killing animals for food production purposes to pest control (e.g. biological control of rabbits, poisoning of possums, euthanasia of stray cats) or to preserve human life (e.g. shark nets).

A frequent comment that veterinarians hear from animal owners after putting a pet to sleep is that if we can provide this merciful release for our beloved pets, why can't we extend the same to people who are suffering? This is an opportunity for witness, as it provides an opening to discuss the sanctity of human life and our position as image bearers of God and stewards of His creation.

### *Animal welfare*

Animal welfare is another highly polarising topic that the veterinarian must navigate. There are certainly cases of unacceptable animal cruelty reported in the media from time to time,<sup>3</sup> and veterinarians must be prepared to protect and advocate for those who can't speak for themselves. However, the general trend of society today tends to over-emphasise animal welfare and somewhat anthropomorphise animals. While this approach may be rightly criticised, the Christian response should not be to swing in the opposite direction, but to promote a right view of man as God's steward over the creation and sole image-bearer. Unfortunately, the reaction to an over-emphasis on animal welfare can be a somewhat cavalier attitude toward animal welfare. Treating animals in a cruel or careless way or thoughtlessly ending animal life

is inconsistent with God's Word and the law of the land; we need to be careful of our witness in this matter.

Veterinarians need to be aware of, abide by and promote the five key requirements for acceptable animal welfare laid out in the Animal Welfare Act 1999:

1. Proper and sufficient food and water
2. Adequate shelter
3. The ability to display normal patterns of behaviour
4. Appropriate physical handling
5. Protection from, and rapid diagnosis of injury and disease

These broad freedoms are of course open to divergent interpretations. Does freedom to behave normally mean that we should leave horns on cattle and potentially let them gore each other? Does tipping lambs upside-down, putting a ring around a vital structure, poking them with needles and burning off their tails constitute appropriate physical handling? Without knowing that these procedures prevent and ameliorate serious disease (freedom 5), one would think not. But of course a practical balance must be met, otherwise any sort of animal husbandry intervention would be excluded. Christians who work with animals are in a great position to be able to contribute to these debates in a constructive way, by teasing out and applying biblical principles of stewardship and mercy. (For further on this subject see Paul Davey's excellent article in the December 2012 *Faith in Focus*.)

### *After hours duty and isolation*

As in the medical profession, there is a requirement for vet clinics to provide emergency cover during nights and weekends. In larger towns, clinics may cooperate in order to spread this load among many vets. Some smaller practices in cities pay a fee to an after-hours clinic to cover nights and weekends. However, in smaller towns and rural practices the after-hours is typically divided up among the vets of that practice. This can mean a vet is on duty on a regular basis, especially during busy times of the year such as spring calving. Having to deal with emergencies during the night and weekends with little or no professional support and isolated from friends and family can be very stressful, such that there is a relatively high rate of drug abuse and suicide among veterinarians.<sup>4</sup> Christian vets living some distance from larger centres may also find it difficult to attend worship, and family life can be



*Mr Bernard Vaatstra in the field.*

impacted. Although these challenges are not insurmountable, young people who wish to pursue a career in the industry need to weigh the possible impact that after hours duty has on family life and spiritual health.

### *Evolution*

The scientific community prides itself on evidence-based research, peer review, controlled trials and rigorous protocols in order to test hypotheses and reach consensus. Publishing research in scientific journals requires thorough review of the literature, conformity to strict protocols and standards of reporting, animal ethics approval, statistical analysis, and critical assessment of the manuscript by several experts in the field. These standards are laudable, but along with the progress made in veterinary and biomedical science comes a tendency for pride in human achievement and dismissal of anything not verified through experiment. People who express faith in a creator God and trust His revelation about the beginning of the universe risk marginalisation or worse in the scientific community. An example is seen in this quote from the popular evolutionary biologist, Richard Dawkins: "It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody

who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)".<sup>5</sup> Anyone traversing a university degree in the sciences will strike this way of thinking from time to time and needs to be ready to make a defense to anyone who asks for an account of our hope (1 Peter 3:15).

This attitude was also recently illustrated by a debate on the New Zealand Veterinary Association discussion boards, questioning whether creationist veterinarians are fit for dealing with issues in veterinary medicine in a reasoned, scientific way. We as believers know that applying a Christian worldview is the best way to produce good science (think of all the major scientific achievements made by men of faith – Copernicus, Kepler, Pascal, Boyle, Newton, Faraday, Linnaeus, Mendel, Planck among countless others). Dishonesty, fraud and back-handers are well-documented even in rigorously reviewed science,<sup>6</sup> and may easily occur when status, money, or even a sinful desire to 'prove a point' informs the researcher instead of God's law. When it comes to scientific research, a Christian approach seeks not to bear false witness, to do good to others, to fulfill the dominion mandate responsibly, and ultimately to bring glory to the one who created all and knows before time what the truth of the matter is.

#### *Questionable animal husbandry*

It is often more important for vets to communicate with and resolve owner issues than to treat the animal. Because people have a wide range of uses of

and attitudes toward animals, vets are often placed in situations where ethical dilemmas are raised. The following are just a few of those confronted by vets in practice:

- **Financial issues:** Veterinarians frequently deal with cases of injured or sick pets in urgent need of medical attention where the owners have limited funds to pay for that care. Owners may fail to appreciate how much veterinary attention costs because they are used to a publically funded medical system. Usually veterinarians can deal with these cases by suggesting less expensive options than the 'gold standard', offering payment terms over a period of time, or in cases where welfare is severely compromised, putting the animal down. On other occasions, owners see their pets as little people and spend large amounts of money on fancy diets, general pampering and elective veterinary procedures. This can be somewhat of an ethical dilemma for a vet: Is it justifiable to let someone spend thousands of dollars on specialist veterinary care for their Labradoodle, when they could spend that money more wisely on their children? At the end of the day, the owner has the right to refuse or accept advice offered so long as there is no serious welfare breach. But the vet can certainly subtly influence one way or another, and has to be careful not to make decisions based only on profit.
- **Racing industries:** There is no doubt that race horses are impressive creatures. Seeing them charging around

the track with muscles taut and turf flying is a sight to behold. But unfortunately, relative to other sports, horse racing is very much undergirded by gambling. Where large amounts of money are involved, the focus shifts away from the prowess of the horse, jockey and trainer, and the potential for unethical practices increases. Having worked at training stables during veterinary studies, I can attest to horses being administered interesting brews prior to racing. Not many people realise that there is a drug-testing program for race horses that rivals that for professional cyclists! In addition, injured and broken-down horses (and Greyhounds) are not always dealt with mercifully. Because of these concerns, being a race-day vet was not something I aspired to.

- **Pig hunting:** In my rural practice, each weekend on duty there would be at least one or two calls to patch up badly injured pig dogs. Boar tusks often make a deceptively small puncture on the outside, but severely lacerate muscle and other structures underneath. One particularly stoic dog stood out: It presented to the clinic standing up and wagging its tail, but on examination had collapsed lungs, fractured ribs and tear in the diaphragm (the muscle between the abdomen and chest cavities). Another dog had what the owner thought was a pig wound in the skin of the armpit, but on further exploration had a fractured humerus and a fragmented bullet, which was accidentally fired by the owner in the thick of the melee. These examples illustrate what can be a hazardous occupation for dogs. Vets will certainly provide care for these animals regardless of their thoughts about their occupation. However, as some dogs are more prone to injury than others, the stewardship of continually using such dogs, knowing the risks, is questionable.
- **Dairy cow inductions:** Each year, many thousands of dairy cows are scanned to check whether they are in calf. If too many cows are "empty", the length of artificial or natural mating is extended to increase the in-calf rate. In order to maximise milk production and the chances of the cow getting back in calf for the next season, the practice for late calvers has been to induce them to calve early through hormone injections. Often the premature calves don't survive, but when they do they



*Animals are graciously given for our use and enjoyment.*

are weak and under-developed. It is then up to the farmer to despatch them. There has been much discussion in the veterinary industry about whether this is an ethical management tool to improve reproductive efficiency on farms. There is now a plan in place to reduce and gradually phase out inductions. The welfare of the calf and market perception are strong drivers to move away from this practice. As with animal euthanasia, this subject can provide an opportunity to discuss the relative importance of animal and human life and suffering. Many farmers are bemused at the amount of contention caused by inducing/aborting cows, while the practice of aborting 17,000-18,000 human babies each year<sup>7</sup> is swept under the carpet by large segments of society.

These are some of the challenges and issues facing veterinarians in today's society. It is a career path that takes commitment and resolve, but also provides great opportunity to apply God's dominion mandate mercifully and productively. For any occupation, understanding the underlying biblical principles enables the Christian to identify and deal with ethical challenges that may arise. Out of these challenges may come opportunities to be a witness for Christ and to bring glory to the Creator of all things.

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## The Christian and the professions (2)

# Professional Engineers and their work in society

### Gary Haverland

One of the questions that I am often asked is – “so what does a structural engineer actually do?” I guess up till recently it has been one of those jobs that has been shrouded in a bit of mystery. It is also probably fair to say that this cloud of mystery dissipated after the February 2011 Canterbury earthquake, which caused such widespread devastation and so many fatalities. The almost daily appearance of structural engineers in the Christchurch newspapers and on television during the Royal Commission Hearings has provided most people with much greater awareness of what structural engineers are responsible for.

One of the more unflattering descriptions of what structural engineers do is, “mechanical engineers build weapons and structural engineers build targets”. This definition was clearly given by a mechanical engineer!

Many years ago there were only two types of engineering; military and civil.

Military engineering had to do with the defence of the city, which was very important to the community's continued existence against the attacks of enemies. Civil engineers' work revolved around the functioning of the city; for example, its water supply, sewer disposal, houses, buildings and transport. As time has gone on and technology has progressed, “civil engineering” has been divided into many more specialized areas, such as mechanical, natural resource, agricultural, electrical, fire, process and chemical.

#### Designed for safety

The structural engineer's role is to ensure buildings and other structures are designed to withstand the forces of nature, such as wind, earthquake and snow loads, (and any other loads that can be reasonably expected to occur) so that the building or bridge being designed has a low probability of collapsing and causing injury or possibly death. In some countries, explosion due to terrorist attack on one part of the building,

while preventing the other parts from collapsing, is also to be considered as a design requirement.

Contrary to popular opinion engineering is not an exact science. Many years ago a British Engineer stated, “Engineering is the art of modelling materials we do not wholly understand, into shapes we cannot precisely analyse so as to withstand forces we cannot properly assess, in such a way that the public has no reason to suspect the extent of our ignorance”. To illustrate this amusing, and in some respects, true statement, we can ask the following questions: How big is a *big* earthquake, how far away is the fault line from where the building is; what magnitude earthquake can that fault line generate; and how often are earthquakes on that fault line likely to occur? The forces of nature are very large and are difficult to predict.

Other questions that are relevant are; how important is the building that is being designed? Is it a storage shed for hay bales in a remote location on a farm that is infrequently occupied by

people? Is it a large central city hospital where on-going functionality following a significant natural disaster is essential? These questions are all relevant when a structural engineer designs the beams, columns, walls and foundations of a building.

As buildings are designed to be stronger they also become more expensive. In order to ensure buildings are economically viable, which includes the cost of replacement if they are damaged beyond repair yet still providing an adequate level of protection and safety, different buildings are designed for different strengths. For example, a hospital, because it has an essential function following a natural disaster, is designed to be stronger than a house or a small office building. It is for this reason that engineers will often describe events in probabilistic terms rather than absolute terms. For example, a structural engineer who has assessed the earthquake strength of an existing building may say "this building is unlikely to collapse in a design earthquake", rather than say "this building will not collapse".

The origins for this requirement to preserve life originate from God's instructions to us. The overarching command God has given to us is to "love your neighbour"; however a more specific command that demonstrated one aspect of love and protection was given to the Israelites. This

stated: "When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof". (Deuteronomy 22:8) House construction in the time of the Israelites was very different from the houses that we build today. Going onto the roof of the house was as much a part of daily living as being in any other part of the house at that time. The issue here is that someone who may be on the roof of the house may fall off and injure themselves or die from the fall. The Israelites had to protect their families, visitors and neighbours from such an event. A similar practice occurred where the discovery of mildew in a person's house required the priest to inspect the house to see if it was an infectious or spreading mildew. This could affect the health of people and potentially cause sickness and death. In our modern society we hold to these same principles, which are outlined in God's Word, and are now also prescribed in our laws and enforced by the legal system. In our society there are disciplinary action and possible fines for persons who practice outside the laws that affect the safety of people. In structural engineering this includes designing buildings outside the laws and codes that are currently in place.

In addition to the codes and standards that buildings are required to be designed to, engineers also have a code of

ethics that must be upheld in our daily practices and activities. In summary the code of ethics for engineers is:

*Protection of life and safeguarding people*

*Sustainable management and care for the environment*

*Commitment to community well-being*

*Professionalism, integrity and competence*

*Sustaining engineering knowledge*

As you might expect, these ethical standards have biblical foundations; and by God's grace are generally practised by both believer and unbeliever. In reality, while we work, mistakes can happen. It is often **how** we respond to errors and mistakes that mark a greater distinction between the Christian engineer, who is governed by the Word of God, and the unbeliever, who often has this or her own standards and interpretation of the code of ethics. Psalm 15:4 speaks of the man who "keeps his oath, even when it hurts". While most people give the appearance of being honest, and it is easy to be honest when things are going smoothly, the real test comes when an item needs to be corrected and it costs us our reputation or finance to correct the matter.



Basement of new office building in Christchurch city, under construction

A very enjoyable and satisfying aspect of a structural engineer's work is finding successful engineering solutions to challenging problems that arise. There are many times when a structural engineer's work is valued and appreciated. For example, many building owners in Christchurch have greatly appreciated the hard work and effort made by structural engineers in being able to re-level or strengthen buildings that have settled or been damaged following the recent earthquakes. There are, however, also days when we have to find an engineering solution to a problem that has arisen that we have directly or indirectly contributed to. This can be a more challenging and stressful aspect of the work, and requires the Christian engineer to respond with a much greater level of humility and honesty than the unbeliever might in similar circumstances. It is a great witness in our secular society when honesty is clearly displayed by the admission of an error or oversight,

and there is willingness to put the situation right.

### Engineering as a career

A question that faces many young people today is; "What career should I choose in which I may serve God?" There seem to be so many choices of study and work today. If you enjoy mathematics and science, (and are good at both of them) then one of the disciplines of engineering could be a good choice of career. God has given us talents in many different areas for us to use for His glory, and God often blesses us through that. It is a wonderful blessing if we are able to choose a career that we will enjoy: not all people have opportunities like this.

Structural design engineers will spend a significant part for their day working through calculations associated with forces that are to be applied to buildings; carrying out computer modelling and analysis of building structures; and determining the strength of various

members, (beams, columns walls, floors and foundations) to ensure the building structures can withstand these applied forces. Their role will also include interacting with other members of the design team in the office. A design team leader, normally a Chartered Professional Engineer with significantly more experience, will spend much of their day responding to design questions raised by the design engineers, reviewing and checking the design, attending design team meetings and checking through the drawings as they are completed. When the building is being constructed, the engineer will visit the building site regularly to check that the building is being constructed according to the engineer's drawings.

Training to be a structural engineer requires a university degree, normally taking four years of intensive study to compete and then a further four years of on-the-job training before a person can become a qualified Chartered Professional Engineer. This can only be



(Left and bottom right) Demolition of Grand Chancellor Hotel, damaged by the Christchurch earthquake.

achieved after further oral and written exams are completed and suitable work experience has been obtained.

The size of engineering companies varies significantly from businesses with just one or two people, right up to national and international companies that employ hundreds and sometimes thousands of people. Some people may be attracted to the larger companies, both for employment and to carry out design work for their buildings. This is a good example of where size does not (necessarily) matter. In reality most buildings are designed by one or two engineers and one or two draughtsman. For example, the structural design of a recent multi-storey essential services hospital building was designed by a team of six people. There were of course many

other people involved in the design, such as specialist hospital architects, services engineers and planners. It does demonstrate that some sizable projects can be carried out by relatively modest-sized engineering companies.

It is fair to say that a large part of our professional day revolves around the tasks that we are employed to carry out; however, it is important that we conduct ourselves in a manner that reflects the fact that we are children of the living God who has created an ordered and structured universe. In my opinion, it is not the choice of profession or career that makes a person more or less able to serve God, but rather the attitude by which we conduct ourselves in that job. I am reminded of the words that Paul spoke to slaves and masters in Ephesus;

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free. And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favouritism with him.” (Ephesians 6:5-9)

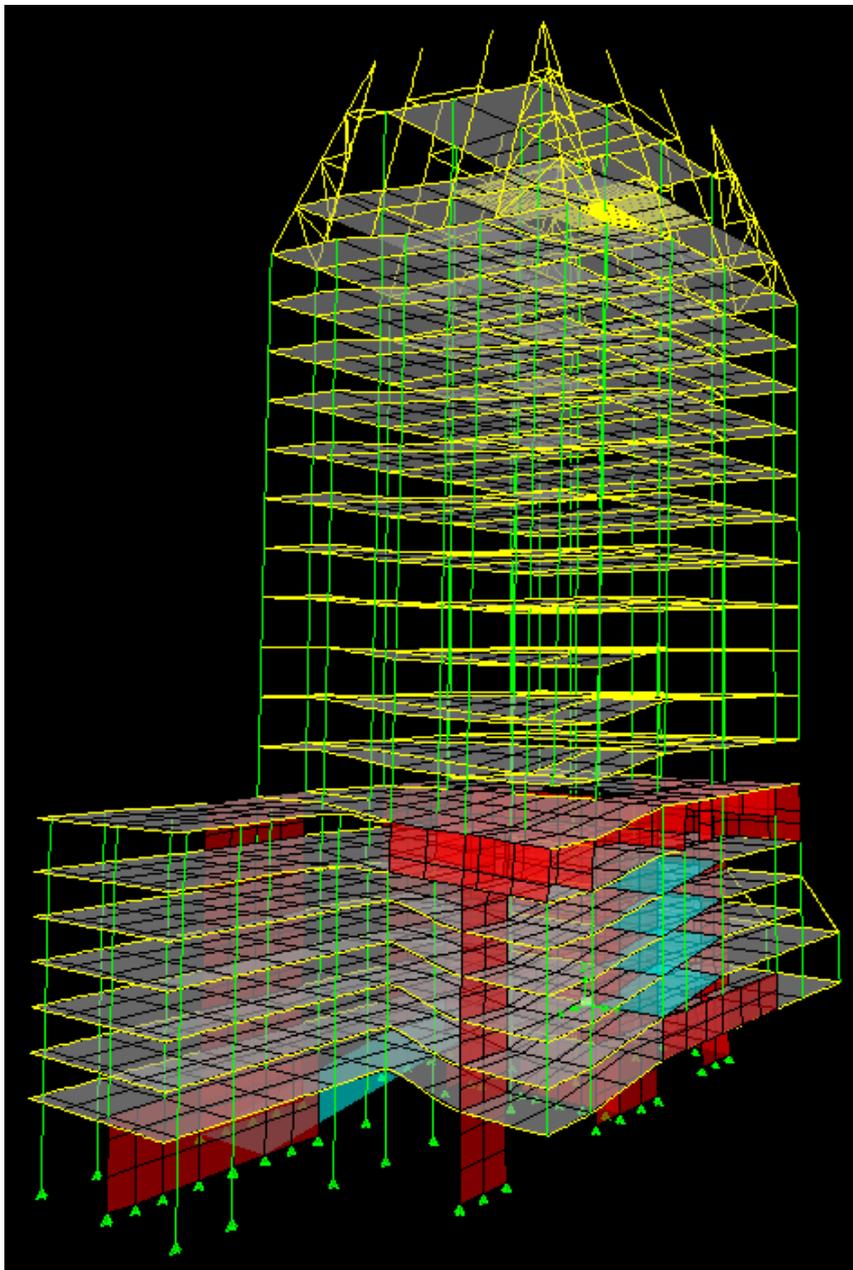
We serve our Lord by carrying out our work cheerfully, competently, honestly and diligently. Unfortunately in this world, the sin of greed is common amongst many people, even people who seem to have a lot of material possessions already. One thing that marks us as being different is in the fair way we act towards other people.

During the working day there is some opportunity to tell our colleagues about God’s work in our lives. However, in my experience the greatest opportunities to witness to colleagues and clients have occurred when my wife and I have taken the time to meet with other professional colleagues outside the normal work environment. This has occurred over time as we have built up friendships, sometimes with only a little contact at first, but where there has been a common connection. As we have invited couples into our home to share a meal together, we have been able to talk freely outside the normal busyness of the working day. A family home can often provide a suitable place to see the functioning of the Christian family, which can be and often is very different to unbelievers’ family life.

One thing that continues to surprise me is the large proportion of Christians who work across all disciplines of engineering. Young people who are studying or considering the study of engineering are likely to find good support from other Christian engineers who are already well established in this profession.

Although I personally thoroughly enjoy structural engineering as a profession where I may serve God, there are many opportunities to serve God in our work place, regardless of our profession or work situation.

*Mr Gary Haverland is a structural engineer and a member of the Reformed Church of Dovedale.*



Graphical Image of the Grand Chancellor Hotel analysis model in its damaged state.

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## The Christian and the professions(3)

# Which law for the Christian Lawyer?

### Daniel Flinn

“What do you want to do when you grow up?” You might have heard that question a number of times in your life, and you might even have asked that question of someone else. But I’d like to suggest that “what we want” should not be our primary focus. Instead, we should ask: (1) What gifts has the Lord given me? and (2) How can I use those gifts to serve the Lord most effectively in His kingdom?

There are a number of gifts which can helpfully be used in the practice of law. A good lawyer will be assisted by an analytical mind, the ability to communicate (difficult concepts) clearly, the ability to prioritise, to use one’s time efficiently, and the ability to exercise good judgement. Much could be said about each of these characteristics. However, this article seeks to focus on an attribute which is of great importance for the Christian lawyer: namely, to do justice. Micah 6:8 says: “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God”.

The Lord takes a great interest in justice, not only in the church courts, but also in the secular courts. For example (and there are many others), consider God’s lament regarding the unfaithfulness of Jerusalem in Isaiah 1:21-23: “How the faithful city has become a harlot, she who was full of justice! Righteousness once lodged in her, but now murderers... Your rulers are rebels, and companions of thieves; every one loves a bribe, and chases after rewards. They do not defend the orphan, nor does the widow’s plea come before them”. God is lamenting because the city is full of murderers, and it is led by rebels and thieves. The leaders are corrupt, and they do not protect the innocent. God’s concern for justice stems from His own

nature, because “The LORD is a God of justice” (Isaiah 5:7), and He says of Himself “I, the LORD, love justice” (Isaiah 61:8).

As we will see, “doing justice” involves obeying God rather than man. To put that another way, a Christian lawyer must “fear only the LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:13). To fear God “only”, means not to fear man, because “the fear of man brings a snare” (Proverbs 29:25). Doing justice involves doing what God wants, regardless of what man wants or might do to you. The remainder of this article explores how a Christian lawyer

get out of bed, would not get dressed, and was not going to go to school. His mother argued with him for an hour, and eventually told him she was going to take his computer off him. The mother then obtained a fabric belt, and, holding it by the buckle end, she reportedly hit her son twice around the legs, leaving a one-centimetre mark.

The article records that the mother then took her child to school, returned home, and cried before going to work. Somehow, the matter was brought to the attention of a social worker (possibly via the school that the boy attended,

“Is it possible to obey God’s law and man’s law, where there is a direct conflict between the two?”

might be called to “do justice” in a way which might differ from a non-Christian’s idea of “doing justice”.

### Do not condemn the righteous

I was reading an article on stuff.co.nz this last week, about a South Canterbury mother who had been found guilty of assaulting her child with a weapon after she hit him twice with a fabric belt.<sup>1</sup> In the Timaru District Court, the Honourable District Court Judge, Judge Joana Maze, was reported to have found the charge proven beyond reasonable doubt, but allowed the woman’s lawyer to apply for a discharge without conviction.

The brief facts of the case (as reported) were that the primary-aged schoolchild began arguing with his mother when she tried to get him out of bed to go to school. He said he didn’t want to

although the article does not state this), and the matter subsequently came to the attention of the Police, and eventually before the Courts. The Honourable District Court Judge was quoted by the article as stating in her summing up that the child “was not verbally or physically abusing [the mother] at the time of the assault”. Her Honour described the mother as having “lost control” and being “very angry”. The apparent motivation of the mother was that she wanted to let her child know that “enough was enough”. Her Honour concluded that “The force in this case was not reasonable to use what can only be described as an assault with a weapon”. The charge of “assault with a weapon” carries a maximum penalty of five years’ imprisonment.<sup>2</sup>

What is a Christian lawyer to do, when working in a Justice system like

this? The Bible says “Stripes that wound scour away evil, and strokes reach the innermost parts” (Proverbs 20:30). The Bible also says “Do not hold back discipline from the child; although you beat him with the rod [not the “fabric belt”], he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol” (Proverbs 23:13-14).

Again, when weighing up the law of God, alongside the law of man, what is a Christian to do? This can be a difficult question for some lawyers, because some lawyers (called “Crown prosecutors”) are required to prosecute individuals whom the Crown says have committed a crime. But can a Christian prosecutor do this where the Crown calls something that the Lord commands, a “crime”? Can a Christian lawyer expect to prosecute those who have done nothing wrong in the eyes of the Lord, and also earn the commendation “well done, good and faithful servant”? Or would such a Christian be viewed by the Lord as taking part, like Saul, in a “great persecution” against the church? Like Saul, who “began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off

men and women, he would put them in prison” (Acts 8:3)?

Is it possible to obey God’s law and man’s law, where there is a direct conflict between the two? Would it satisfy the Lord, to stand before Him on the Day of Judgment and say “I was only doing what I was told, Lord, but I love you as well”? I suggest that the answer to this question is “no”. Proverbs 24:11-12 says “Deliver those who are being taken away to death, and those who are staggering to slaughter, O hold them back. If you say, ‘See, we did not know this’, does He not consider it who weighs the hearts? And does He not know it who keeps your soul? And will He not render to man according to his work?” Of course, we understand that these verses speak to our obligations under the sixth commandment – to preserve the lives of others. But we also understand that our obligations under the sixth commandment are broader than that – they also include a duty to “protect and defend the innocent”.<sup>3</sup>

What would God require of the Christian prosecutor tasked with prosecuting a woman who had disciplined

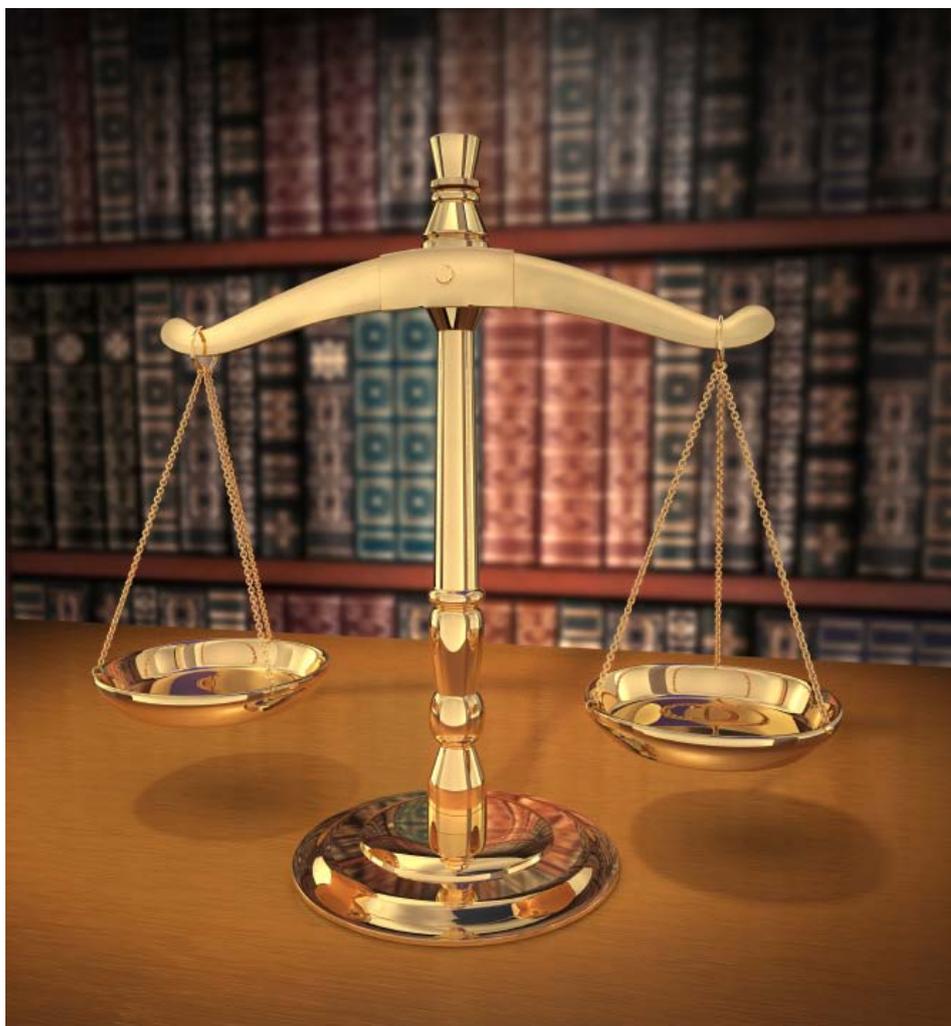
her son with a fabric belt? Prosecutors have a discretion to “offer no evidence” in support of a charge. This is a special phrase prosecutors use to indicate to the Court that the prosecution will not proceed in respect of that charge. “Offering no evidence” can be done for a variety of reasons, but it is a discretion which should be used in circumstances where it is not “in the public interest” to prosecute.

Would it be inappropriate for a Christian prosecutor to “offer no evidence” on a charge against the woman with the fabric belt? This question might be answered with reference to Joab, David’s military commander. After David had sinned by sleeping with Uriah’s wife, Bathsheba, David planned to murder Uriah, who was one of the soldiers under Joab’s command. He wrote a letter to Joab, commanding him to “Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die” (2 Samuel 11:15). What should Joab have done? He should have obeyed God rather than man (Acts 5:29). Even if it meant disobeying a direct order from the hand of King David himself, Joab was not permitted to disobey God by murdering Uriah. Similarly, a Christian prosecutor must not prosecute the innocent, even if offering no evidence would involve direct rebellion against the law of the land.

Would this frustrate the purposes of the secular law, and be an abuse of the lawyer’s responsibility to the Court? No it wouldn’t. The law of the land says that it stands for justice. So even if a Christian lawyer opposes the justice system in order to do what is right, ultimately we understand that this is what justice requires – it is what God requires.

### **Do not justify the wicked**

There is another way that the Christian prosecutor should stand for what is right, and it involves the opposite situation. Prosecutors can be put under pressure to “offer no evidence” on charges that are actually very serious – like “wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm”, which carries a maximum penalty of 14 years’ imprisonment.<sup>4</sup> This charge is often used where someone has caused a serious injury to someone else – they might have stabbed someone with a knife or machete, or might have smashed someone’s bones using a blunt weapon like a club. In serious cases, it is possible to wound someone without a weapon, using one’s fists, for example.



Because our justice system is so busy (in other words, because there is so much crime), there is a pressure to “dispose” of cases as quickly as possible. “Offering no evidence” can occur in certain circumstances. But prosecutors also have a discretion to accept a plea to a lesser charge. Where there are many cases waiting to be heard, it can seem “efficient” to “resolve” a case by giving an accused the opportunity to plead to a lesser charge. Sometimes this practice can be appropriate. For example, if two friends are out hunting for deer, and one of them accidentally shoots and kills the other, having mistaken him for a deer, it might be appropriate to charge him with “careless use of a firearm causing death”, which has a maximum term of three years’ imprisonment,<sup>5</sup> rather than with manslaughter or murder, both of which carry maximum penalties of life imprisonment.

However, the danger in offering a

lesser charge is that the lesser charge might not properly reflect the gravity of the offending. To use a well-known illustration, many people wouldn’t have regarded it appropriate if Ewan McDonald were prosecuted with “careless use of a firearm causing death”, rather than with murder. Should Christian prosecutors resist the urge to unjustly “dispose” of cases by offering no evidence or by accepting guilty pleas to lesser charges? Yes.

Proverbs 17:15 says “He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD”. Both principles then, should guide a Christian prosecutor to act differently from a non-Christian prosecutor in a range of circumstances.

Are you considering the practice of law? Make sure that, if the Lord calls you to practice law, you do justice, doing your work “heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men” (Colossians 3:23).

“Like a trampled spring and a polluted well, is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked” (Proverbs 25:26), but “Who may dwell on Thy holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, and speaks truth within his heart ... He who does these things will never be shaken” (Psalm 15: 1b-2, 5).

#### Notes

- 1 <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/crime/8541002/Mother-found-guilty-of-assaulting-son-with-belt>
- 2 Crimes Act 1961, section 202C.
- 3 *Westminster Larger Catechism*, question and answer 135 “What are the duties required in the sixth commandment?”
- 4 Crimes Act 1961, s 188.
- 5 Arms Act 1983, s 53(1).

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## Feminine focus

Sally Davey

# How God uses a family and a home: A tribute to Edith Schaeffer (1914-2013)

On Easter Saturday this year a very old lady died in Switzerland. She was 98; and though she had been born in China and brought up in the United States, the great bulk of her life and service to Christ was spent near Lausanne, in Switzerland. Edith Schaeffer has been an inspiration to me since my earliest days as a Christian. She has been a model for me of concern for the lost, of love for young people in need of guidance, and of generous hospitality at considerable personal cost. I love her for setting the standard of Christian discipleship high – much higher than we are inclined to set for ourselves. It was my dream to visit L’Abri, her home in the Swiss Alps, all my student years. I never made it there, though through reading her books I could picture the kind of place it was. But my student days, the late 70s and early 80s, are a long time ago now; and perhaps, being younger than me, you have never

heard of this amazing lady. It’s for you that I write this tribute to her.

### Edith’s early life

Edith was born in August 1914; the month World War One broke out. Her parents were George and Jessie Seville, American Presbyterian missionaries serving in Wenchow (near Shanghai) with the China Inland Mission. These were the days shortly after the Boxer Rebellion, which had seen 58 CIM missionaries brutally murdered. They were also, still, the days when unwanted baby girls were left exposed to die – Edith remembered them crying, many years later, when she was teaching young western women why abortion was wrong.

Because Jessie needed medical care the Seville family returned to the U.S. when Edith was 5 years old; and so she grew up in north-west Philadelphia (only a few blocks away from the young Francis

Schaeffer). Hers was a happy home, with loving parents and good friendships with her two sisters. Her father supplied a number of pulpits, and served in missionary organisations. During her teenage years increasing liberalism in the Presbyterian church led to the founding of Westminster Theological Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Her parents were involved in both of these developments; and Edith was accustomed to discussion of theology and church life. She completed high school, and in the summer she graduated, she met Francis, who had just finished his first year of college in Virginia.

Both of them had recently believed in Christ. They met at a young people’s meeting on a Sunday night; and Francis was impressed with Edith’s outspoken defence of the faith as she answered what had been said by the (liberal) speaker. “Who is that?” he asked. Their

walk home afterwards was the beginning of a three-year-long courtship. They wrote many letters to each other as Francis completed his study in philosophy and theology at college in Virginia, and as Edith began a degree in domestic science at a local Christian college. This training – while she did not finally complete her degree – was to prove very useful to the Schaeffer family in the years ahead. Edith became an expert dressmaker and a highly-organised and accomplished homemaker. Cooking, gardening and home decorating were skills she used to the full, on a limited budget.

The Schaeffers married in 1935 after Francis's graduation, and set up home together in Philadelphia, where Francis began his study for the ministry at Westminster Seminary. Soon there was further theological turmoil. Francis was one of a group that split from the OPC to form the more fundamentalist Bible Presbyterian Church. This church began a new seminary in Wilmington, Delaware, so they moved there to complete his studies. Francis was ordained a Bible Presbyterian minister, and they began their ministry in Grove City, central Pennsylvania.

Their life's pattern was really established here. They worked hard, caring for the congregation, and befriending local children from non-Christian families so that they could introduce them to the gospel. Francis used to barbecue sausages and invite the children in to enjoy them. Three years on, they had two daughters and the church had been well-established. They then accepted a call to another church, in Chester, Pennsylvania; and two years after this Francis received a further call, to a larger church in St Louis, Missouri. They accepted this one, too. It was now wartime.

The St Louis ministry was a significant one, both in the church, and evangelistically, in the wider community. They and their congregation were very hospitable – there were lots of meals and open homes. Edith loved her ladies' Bible class. It started when the aunt of one of the little 5 year old girls in her Children for Christ class asked if she would give a book review of the Bible for her ladies' literary club. Edith saw this as a most unusual request – but perhaps an opportunity for the gospel. She told the aunt "you may not want me – I believe the Bible to be true, not just a book." "Oh please come, we want something vital", the aunt replied. So, on the day, she began a survey, or "bird's eye view" of the Bible. After half an hour she stopped,

but they begged her to continue... And again, after an hour. The outcome was that the club voted to change its name and became a Bible class, meeting in a library! (This survey of the Bible was often used by Edith over the years to teach others, and was ultimately the basis of her book, *Christianity is Jewish*.)

All this time the three Schaeffer daughters were watching what their parents were doing; and learning themselves to be good friends, good witnesses and hospitable Christians. Francis and Edith encouraged them, and taught them through their words and example.

### To Switzerland

Soon after the War, the Bible Presbyterian Church became concerned about what had been happening to the churches in Europe. They wanted to help, knowing there had been physical destruction and suffering in the occupied countries; and knowing also that Barthian theology had undermined people's confidence in the authority of Scripture. Karl Barth had been



Edith Schaeffer in the 1960s.

teaching that the Christian's faith belonged to the sphere of spiritual things, separate from the world of everyday life – and that Scripture, while true in the former sphere, may not be in the latter. The denomination decided to send Francis over to see what could be done to strengthen and encourage the European churches. In those days, travel was not as simple as booking a ticket, jumping on a plane and arriving 8 hours later. It meant a ship voyage, trains, delays and months of absence. Francis was away on an exhausting trip of several months.

The outcome was that the Schaeffers were sent to Europe in 1948 as missionaries, to help churches learn how to teach children with the good Bible materials they had written themselves. What did they find? They found churches where the Christian faith had endured in people's hearts through tough times; but which were weakened by the onslaught of liberal theology. Edith and Francis worked hard. Based in a small apartment in Lausanne, they travelled a great deal, often having to leave their daughters with the friends they made at their new home.

Slowly, during their first year, they made many new friends. They put a lot of effort into learning French. They held little church services and invited the old ladies who lived in their boarding house. They started a Bible class for children. A local Protestant chapel attracted English-speaking tourists staying locally for services, and Francis was asked to lead a Christmas Eve service. At the end of the year, the family was tired, the children needed a change of air, and their landlady suggested they rent a chalet in the mountains above Lausanne.

Several finishing schools were situated nearby, to which British, American and French girls were sent to learn languages and a few social graces. The Schaeffers met some of them around the village and invited them for tea and cake. Edith's angel food cakes and chocolate cakes became great attractions. The girls came readily. They talked about the big questions of life – and the Bible's answers. Their three girls joined in and helped with translating for the French-speaking girls (as children do, they had learned the new language more quickly than their parents). The girls also invited friends home from school – for more tea and cake. And there was more talking about big questions and the Bible.

Within a year the family had decided to stay on in the mountains – the girls loved it. They made more friends with neighbours in the little alpine village of Champéry. But suddenly, they received orders to leave the canton and Switzerland (it turned out that the local Roman Catholic bishop saw their evangelistic work as a threat and called them a "religious disturbance"). It was very much a matter of urgent prayer. By now they had an established network of friends in the U.S. called their "praying family", and many joined their prayer. They had just a few short weeks to buy a house in a canton that was willing to have

them stay (conditions of their visa). To cut a long story short, this prayer was answered with only hours to spare, and so they were able to stay in Switzerland – in the little village of Huémoz.

### L'Abri

This became the centre of their work to the present day. L'Abri, which is French for “the Shelter”, began at this time – the early 1950s. It was really an extension of their normal, hospitable family life. They had come to see that the way God was blessing their simple work of befriending the locals – children and adults – was pointing them in the direction of extending their family life in an evangelistic, apologetic and discipling way. The girls had continued bringing their friends home from boarding school – and then when Priscilla, the oldest, began her studies at the University of Lausanne, she brought her student friends with her. Soon there was a steady stream of students and other young people staying for weekends. They developed a habit of cooking and eating Saturday evening meals outdoors whenever the weather allowed. The numbers grew – and the house was really not big enough!

Bunks were added. Two ground-level bedrooms were turned into a large living room by knocking down a dividing wall. A large stone fireplace, comfy chairs and a shelf of books created what was to become definitely the most important room in the house. Francis spent many, many evening hours here talking through the big issues with those who had burning questions. His training in philosophy and theology was critically important – but so were Edith's high teas, fresh-baked orange rolls and nutritious salads. Perhaps you think they had a big missions budget to help support them? No, quite the reverse. They had decided to live by faith, making no requests for money, just praying that God would supply their needs. Sometimes things were difficult: for one thing, Edith had a small kitchen – it was crowded when several people were in there helping her.

However, there was great fruit. By the 1960s the work had grown tremendously. Due to Francis's books and the help they had been to many a reader searching for truth, perhaps hundreds had come to believe in Christ. As Edith hovered “around the edges” with her tea and cakes, she saw her reward in faces alight with new-found certainty. She herself contributed a lot to the lives of younger women. Some of them

she befriended because they had big problems in their marriages. Or tragedy had come in the death of a child. She was very good at speaking loving, wise words of truth that really helped. As the numbers of visitors and the work grew, they took on volunteer “helpers” who would stay for a few months, a year or longer, and Edith would disciple them as they helped her in the work of keeping the home going.

As their three daughters married, and as more chalets were purchased with donations from friends, they and their sons-in-law also helped in the work. Both

much to draw them to Christ. She was a friend to so many; and through these friendships won their hearts to God. She was disciplined and faithful in prayer – so much so that I wonder if this was the key to the whole ministry of L'Abri. Nothing was too small a matter for her prayer; and the lists she drew up are a testimony to her habit of prayerfulness.

But there are two aspects of her life that I'd like to highlight – for us, in New Zealand, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. They are things we are in danger of losing if we're not careful; and they are so basic and important that we

“It's clear that she saw [her home] as a base of operations for Christ's work. It was not a fortress for her family.”

Francis and Edith wrote books, with the result that they became household names in the evangelical world internationally. Soon there were requests for them to speak at conferences, and to university groups in Britain and the United States. Ultimately, more L'Abris were established in England, the U.S. and Canada. Francis also made two films with the encouragement of their son, Franky. The first was a historical survey of western culture; while the second, *Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, was on medical ethics. He made this in conjunction with Dr C. Everett Koop (later the Surgeon General of the U.S.)

Francis died of lymphoma in 1984; so Edith has spent nearly a third of her life as a widow. She continued to serve in numerous ways in the ongoing work of L'Abri; and wrote several books in these years. But perhaps it is a tribute to the life-giving energy of Christian marriage that their greatest work was achieved *together*. Edith was a remarkable woman who loved God and served him as an individual. But she was also a remarkable wife; and Francis, who loved the work that God had given him, owed a huge amount to his devoted wife. None of it would have been possible without her.<sup>1</sup>

There is much more that could be said; and much that we can learn, from Edith's walk of faith. She was an evangelist who loved people and did so

miss the whole point of being Christians if we neglect them.

### Her home

The first is Edith's attitude to her home. It's clear that she saw it as a base of operations for Christ's work. It was not a fortress for her family. It was a place to make the love of God available for all who came in. It was her custom to pray that God would send those he wanted to come; and to keep away all others. This (rather unusual) prayer meant that she was able to view everyone who *did* come to their door as someone who was there for a special purpose. Be she tired or low in energy, this was a person to love and serve.

Sometimes this was costly, requiring a dying to self. The days were long, meaning she sometimes found herself planting vegetables by torchlight when the daylight ran out. Francis, I'm sorry to say, had a temper – and there were famous moments when he threw pot plants! She remembers once running from the house in tears, shouting that she wasn't coming back (though of course she did).

But she was willing to devote her considerable homemaking gifts to making their home a place of warmth, attractiveness and delicious, welcoming meals. The skills of homemaking are creative ones; and we overlook them to our im-

poverishment. Our homes are not simply garages; and our meals should not be merely fuel for empty vehicles. Making our homes a delight to be in is a very important calling.

And there are plenty of people who are in desperate need of them. Today, fifty years after the peak of Edith Schaeffer's work, the western world is in even more trouble than it was then. Family life is more fractured than in the 1960s, though of course what is happening now is a logical outcome of developments then. If there is one area of the Christian life that stands out like nothing else as a witness in our troubled world, it is family relationships. We still know, in a clear and unshakeable way, how to build a happy home, where husbands and wives love each other; and where children can be brought up and prepared for living in the world. The world might try to prevent us doing this in various subtle and not-so-subtle ways, but we *can* do it; and we should be looking for ways to bring the walking wounded, scarred from the battlefields of failed home life, into our own homes for real gospel help. God is especially kind to those lacking home life of their own. In Psalm 68:6 David writes that he is "the Father of the fatherless and protector of widows... God settles the solitary in a home". If we don't open our homes, how is he going to do this in our day? Edith and Francis Schaeffer were prepared to give

up their personal space and time to do it. Surely there are ways we can, too?

### Her family

Secondly, she was a wonderful example to her children; and particularly her daughters. They saw in her a mother who always had room for "one more" at the table. They were included in her ministry. From the earliest age they learned how to tell others about Jesus so naturally that they were always doing it. They were part of children's Bible groups, of hospitality to unbelieving families, of the whole idea of going to Europe to serve the Lord there. Once, when they invited a Scottish family back to their chalet after a Christmas Eve service, the children were very much part of their stay and the prayer surrounding it. The guests and their two children all came to Christ, one by one, following needed serious talks with Francis and Edith. Seven year-old Debby excitedly voiced the feeling they all had when she exclaimed "I can't imagine four people all together getting saved in three days – it's so wonderful because most people take so long!"

I sometimes think we are rather handily inclined to stress danger to our children as the "lion in the path"<sup>2</sup> that stops us welcoming the lonely, the needy and the unbeliever in general into our homes. We don't need to be foolish. We don't have to leave our children to play,

unsupervised, with children from violent situations. We do these things as a family; and together, *parents and children*, share the warmth of home life with those who might never have seen it. I also think we overplay the bad character of unbelievers – they are not all dangerous beings threatening to devour us. Most are peaceable, law-abiding people. The trouble is, not knowing many, we tend to think they must be "worse" than we are. It is one thing to expose our children to real "stranger danger" – but it is quite another to be so protective that neither we – nor they – have many non-Christian friends at all.

Edith Schaeffer was one of the truly great Christian women of our day. Like us, she was imperfect, waiting for her Saviour to rescue her from this body of sin. Yet with her passing we have lost a "mother in Israel" and it's fitting to mourn her loss. Great lives leave legacies, however – and hers would be knowing that Christian women's homes and families continue to be used by God to bring the lost to their Saviour.

### Notes

1 If you would like to learn more about Edith's life and about L'Abri, there are no better places to go than her books *The Tapestry* (Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1981) and *L'Abri* (The Norfolk Press, Worthing, 1969). I have taken all the information for this article from these two books.

2 Proverbs 26:13

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## Focus on home

Harriet Haverland

# Gleanings ...

## BY THE GLEANINGS

### TEAM:

**Odette De Kock** – Auckland  
Presbytery

**Yvonne Walraven** – Wellington  
Presbytery

**Frances Watson** – Christchurch  
Presbytery

*Collated and Edited by Harriet  
Haverland*

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## MINISTERS AND CHURCH WORKERS

The **Rev. Michael Willemse** and **Rev.**

**John Haverland** visited the RTC as Deputies for Students to the Ministry to meet with **Luke** (& **Danae**) **Scheepers**, **Graeme** (& **Amanda**) **Zuidema** and with faculty, as well as sitting in on a number of classes.

## CHURCH BUILDINGS & ANNIVERSARIES

**Bishopdale:** It is so good to be back 'home' and be able to worship in our new building. Thank you to everyone who has helped to make this a reality. But God deserves the biggest "Thank you." He has richly blessed us as a congregation in so many different ways over the years. This building ultimately is another gift from Him.

However, as we share their joy, we also

remember our brothers and sisters at Cornwall St Christchurch who continue to await answers in terms of their building. May the Lord continue to smooth the way of return and rebuild according to His goodness.

**Foxton:** As from 21<sup>st</sup> April 2013 the morning service will start at 10.30am. There will be no change to the time of the afternoon service. (Foxton)

**Oamaru:** The South Island Presbytery met in Christchurch and discussed developments within the Oamaru congregation. Currently the Oamaru congregation is part of the Dunedin Reformed Church. Over the years the Lord has granted wonderful spiritual growth to that congregation, hence the elders in Oamaru are desirous of moving toward the in-

stitution of their church. The Dunedin elders have been very heartened by this development and have sought to encourage them down this road. The presbytery also gave wholehearted agreement and encouragement of this desire. Thank the Lord for sustaining the Oamaru group for many years, and pray that God would give them wisdom and unity in the months ahead.

**Pukekohe:** An alternative Worship Service Venue, Harrisville School Hall, has been found for use once construction starts on the current site. We hope to worship there from Sunday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> until around February next year.

**Wellington:** The Reformed Church of Wellington will be 60 years old on May 2!! On Sunday May 5th we will be having a shared lunch to celebrate this milestone, so please bring along some yummy food to share as we give thanks for the years that the Lord has blessed our church with.

## MISSIONS

**Wanganui:** Missions Evening – HL will visit our congregation to share her mission experiences in Asia with us. Hyojung Lee is a missionary associate working with an OPC mission and is supported by the Reformed Church of Wellington and the OMB. (Wanganui)

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EVANGELISM

**ProLife News:** A group of Voice for Life members gathers outside Hawkes Bay Hospital each Thursday, which is the day on which abortions are carried out in Hastings. Their weekly peaceful protest is having a powerful impact. Women have stopped to let the group know that seeing the signs or reading the pro-life information given out has helped them to change their mind about having an abortion. There are now twenty mothers who have instead chosen life for their babies! The group recently purchased three more bright and bold signs with one of them showing a beautiful photo of one of the babies that was saved and has since been born.

The group also runs a stall at the Napier Sunday market on Marine Parade. They display baby models and give out free information packs. Their stall is also receiving a very positive response. This group provides an excellent example of the tremendous difference a few committed people can make as they work

together in defence of life. For more information about this pro-life fact, or other life issues please go to website <http://www.voiceforlife.org.nz/>

**North Shore:** LABS – We have finished the first term and are encouraged by the constant attendance of five or six people. They are very happy to learn the basics of the Gospel as we follow a course produced by Rev van Garderen of Bucklands Beach. We advertised in a Chinese and Korean newspaper and may do one of these for the beginning of next term plus consider other forms of advertising. Please pray that the Lord will bless this small work.

## CAMPS & CONFERENCES

**Auckland Churches Ladies' Presbyterial:** Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, hosted by the Reformed Church of Hukanui.

**Queen's Birthday Camp:** Summoning ALL youth: Queen's Birthday Camp 2013 is coming! There'll be great food, fellowship, friendship and fun, alongside the challenging studies by the Reverend de Vos. And of course there will be a 'mysterious' themed dinner. Mark it on your calendars from May 31-June 3. Check out [thewryc.wordpress.com](http://thewryc.wordpress.com) or find us on Facebook to enrol and for more info. We'll see you there! *Carl Leenders*

**South Island Ladies' Fellowship:** Our next annual gathering will be held on Saturday 18 May. Cornwall Street ladies

will be your host this year and we present "Life's a Journey".

## CLASSES & COURSES

**North Shore:** New Testament Greek course: Raymond Yeo and Jim Reeve are meeting to do a beginners New Testament Greek course.

**Wellington:** Pastor Andrew will be hosting a seminar on Saturday morning, 13th April, on themes relating to leading in worship. It will be aimed to be helpful for you whether you are young or old, whether you have led many services in the past or none at all.

## APPRECIATION

**Masterton:** A compliment – One of the guests that was at our Fifth Friday Fellowship last week said "she especially wanted to tell me that ... she was so impressed with the behaviour of our children. They participated well, joining in the singing, didn't yahoo around uncontrollably, sat still when needed and obviously had a great time together." So, well done, children, you are a good witness to our community and also a big pat on the back for the parents raising our beloved covenant children in the fear of the Lord. Keep up the good work! "How good it is when brothers dwell together in unity!"

## ACTIVITIES

**Hastings:** Veronica's Place is a refuge for



**Preaching Conference**  
**September 2013**  
*Thursday 26 & Friday 27*



**Guest Speaker: Dr Peter Adam**

[www.rtc.edu.au/Calendar/Events](http://www.rtc.edu.au/Calendar/Events)

expectant mothers in need located right here in the Bay. Richard and Roseanne Dawson have recently renovated the old maternity hospital in Central Hawkes Bay, transforming it into a haven for pregnant single women and girls. Richard received great reviews after speaking at the recent Youth Camp held at Te Aute College and he has agreed to come and speak to us. This is a Ladies Fellowship event so all ladies are strongly encouraged to attend, however, men please don't be shy, you would also be most welcome

and feel free to bring a friend.

**APRIL FOOLS DAY TRADITION:  
Dunedin: Your Help Needed**

Do you have a saucepan? Do you have a wooden spoon? If so, your help is needed at 178 Forbury Road tomorrow. Most folk have so far been unaware of a growing infestation of church-mice, the numbers of which are now causing concern. Our consultant pest exterminator, Abel Faul, has advised the use of

scare tactics and red-coloured smoke to drive the unwelcome creatures from the building. We are indebted to Mr Faul for coming out on a public holiday to be of service to us in this way. ("I'd be a fool not to", he said.) Please assemble quietly on Monday 1 April at 10am, in red clothing if at all possible, and play your part in maintaining the well-being of our building.

**Short Report  
Wellington  
Presbytery**

The Wellington Presbytery met on Saturday 9 March 2013 at the Reformed Church of Hastings. The moderator was the Rev. Paul Archbald.

The meeting went from 9.30 a.m. and ended just in time for lunch. The gist of it consists of the following 4 items:

- Youth Liaison Report: the Rev. David Waldron presented a written report on the National Youth Camp, which took place in the first and second week of January this year. The report recognised the blessings of this camp and mentioned helpful suggestions for leaders at future camps.
  - OMB Liaison Report: the Rev. Peter Kloosterman reported on the work in Papua New Guinea focusing, among other items, on the workload and wellbeing of the Doumas. The Rev. David Waldron reported with joy and gratitude on the building/maintenance work done by a group of men who recently went to PNG.
  - Office Bearers' Training Seminars: After some discussion on an overture from the Reformed Church of Silverstream, a motion was passed that the Wellington Presbytery encourage local sessions to consider hosting office bearers' training seminars.
  - Release of the Rev. Andrew Nugteren: In the light of Mr Nugteren's accepting of the call to Toowoomba, a motion was passed that the Presbytery Interim Committee approve the certificate of release of Mr Nugteren upon receipt of the request from the Wellington Session.
- The Moderator extended good wishes to Mr Nugteren on his pending departure to Toowoomba, and then closed the meeting with Scripture reading, prayer and song.

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

## Teaching Principal and/or Teacher

The Silverstream Christian School is a Christian school set up to provide Christian education to our covenant children. Our aim is to develop a biblically consistent world and life view in our students based on the Reformed faith. We believe this Reformed faith to be the most accurate expression of biblical Christianity. Applicants must be committed to the Reformed faith and to Reformed Christian education. This is an exciting opportunity to be part of a vibrant covenant community, and we look forward to your application. If you have any questions or would like more information please do not hesitate to contact us. Please forward your C.V. with 3 referees to:

**Contact details:**  
**Dirk den Harder**  
**Email: [dirk39@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dirk39@xtra.co.nz) Ph +64 4 528 8066**

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I would like to add some details to the article about the Masterton Reformed Church's anniversary which appeared in the April issue of *Faith in Focus*.

Two men who made an important contribution to the beginnings of that church must be acknowledged. They are Mr Albert Snoeijer and the Rev. GI Williamson.

Mr Snoeijer was the first elder and served continuously for a period of 12 years. This involved travelling to Silverstream Reformed Church for session meetings and conducting the catechism classes.

From July 1974 the small group that made up the Masterton congregation (the Snoeijer, Akkerman and Eldershaw families) started meeting for services at the Legion of Frontiersmen Hall. The Rev. Williamson preached there on alternate Sunday afternoons and then had to drive back over the Rimukata Hill to be in time for the evening service in Silverstream. He also came monthly on Wednesdays for catechism and Bible study.

Praise the Lord for the faithful service of these two men!

**Marty Eldershaw**

Dear Sir,

The Covenant doctrine of infant baptism is only for the infant children of believing Christians. However, readers might be interested to learn about one Calvinist clergyman in the Church of England who, as well, had some peculiarities of opinion that were not shared by even his fellow-Calvinists, let alone most paedobaptist Protestants in the various denominations of the British Isles, including the Church of England. His stubborn fight against a tyrannical prelate ended in securing the position of Evangelicals in the whole Church of England there and worldwide; though he had to fight all the way to the highest Court in the British Empire, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which gave the Gorham Judgement of 1850, following the Gorham Case of 1847-50. The plaintiff was the Rev. George Cornelius Gorham, a middle-aged curate; the defendant was Dr George Philpott, Bishop of Exeter.

Mr Gorham had accepted an offer of ministry in the parish of Brampford Speke, a village near the city of Exeter, and now just a suburb of Exeter by its urban sprawl. At that time, ministers of the Church of England's income was a gift of the Crown, through the Lord Chancellor; but it was necessary for a parish incumbent to be instituted and inducted by his diocesan bishop; and Dr Philpott first refused to countersign the testimonials for Mr Gorham's presentation. The counter-signature wasn't essential; so the presentation was made without it; but the Bishop had an aversion for Evangelicals, and was determined to wipe them out of his diocese. On several occasions he interrogated Mr Gorham, with the dispute ranging around baptism; and Dr Philpott laid what had been devised by another Bishop of that time, Dr Marsh, called "a trap for Calvinists". Well, Dr Philpott was no mean theologian, but deservedly caught a Tartar in Mr Gorham, and must have got an unpleasant surprise after setting out so gaily to bait a Calvinist! Mr Gorham coolly and adroitly refuted all the trap-questions: he was very well versed in the writings of the Puritans and of the Reformers both British and foreign. He insisted that regeneration was not tied to the act of baptism, but could precede, accompany, or follow it, or never take place at all – whichever God's predestination had determined. He was well aware that John the Baptist had been filled with grace from his mother's womb, and that his case wasn't necessarily unique among all saved sinners.

However, Dr Philpott ignored those answers, and still refused to institute Mr Gorham, so he wasn't going to take it lying down, and sued the Bishop by "*duplex querela*" in the Consistory Court of Canterbury, better known as the Court of Arches. The Court found in the Bishop's favour; so Mr Gorham appealed to the Privy Council – only the Crown has the power to overturn that Court's judgements. The Judicial Committee co-opted the three most senior prelates of England, the Archbishops of Canterbury (Dr Sumner) and York (Dr Musgrave), and the Bishop of London (Dr Blomfield) as experts and as spiritual peers, with the other judges: the final outcome was the majority judgement (with only

Vice-Chancellor Knight-Bruce dissenting) in the plaintiff's favour. It must be understood that the Judicial Committee was not asked to define what the Church of England's doctrine of baptism was, but whether Mr Gorham's doctrine of it was contrary to that of the Church of England as Bishop Philpott had claimed as his reason for not instituting him; and the judgement declared that Mr Gorham's view was not necessarily opposed to the Church of England doctrine, and was at least permissible. The implication was that more than one view was permissible, and that possibly the plaintiff's was really what the Church's formularies meant to be the C of E doctrine.

One proof of what decent, fairminded men those three prelates were, is that they all personally took the same view as Dr Philpott did: that all infants baptised were thereby instantly regenerated, but were not necessarily saved by that regeneration. However, on reflection, those three prelates had to admit that the Church's formularies could be interpreted in more than one way, including Mr Gorham's interpretation of them: they weren't going to give an opinion that might have resulted in the ejection of many godly and learned ministers and laity from the Church of England, or deprive a decent man of his right to a living. However, the Bishop of Exeter still refused to institute Mr Gorham; so this was done by Archbishop Sumner himself. Bishop Philpott vented his frustrated rage by excommunicating Dr Sumner, who was unperturbed by all this! Not long afterwards, our new settlement of Canterbury named a Christchurch suburb after him. Seemingly Bishop Philpott and Mr Gorham somehow managed to stay on civil terms as long as they were both alive, for some years. An English Christian friend of mine tells me he has visited the parish church of Brampford Speke, where the name of George Cornelius Gorham can still be seen on a plaque naming the various Rectors for the last few centuries – but it was all no thanks to Bishop Philpott! A result of the Gorham Judgement was that it hastened the defection to Rome of Archdeacon Manning and some others of the re-Romanising perversion of Anglicanism then called Tractarianism, and nowadays called Anglo-Catholicism. He

himself ended his days as a Cardinal and “Archbishop of Westminster”. The Tractarian notion of baptism was/is Romanist and more or less Philpottian; and as the Tractarians had always disliked the power that the State had over the C of E, they were not going to remain in a

Church which had been obliged to acknowledge that theirs was not the only permissible doctrine of baptism, and that Mr Gorham’s doctrine was at least permissible, and possibly the one intended by the Prayer Book, Thirty-nine Articles, and Homilies; e.g. that there could be

more than one valid interpretation of them. Note that the year 1850 was also the year of the Papal Aggression when the Pope had the audacity to restore a Popish hierarchy in Britain.

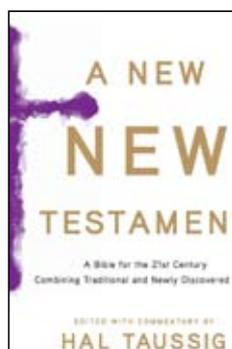
**Hector Westfold**  
**Reformed Church of Wellington**

## Books in focus

### Review of a “New New Testament”: Part 2

Hal Taussig

Reviewed by Michael J. Kruger



I have been working through an extended review of the new book by Hal Taussig called *A New New Testament* (Houghton Mifflin, 2013) which adds 10 “new” apocryphal books to the existing 27 books of the New Testament. In my prior post, I examined the promotional language on the inside cover flap. In this post, I will focus on the introduction to the book (xxxiii-xxvii) where Taussig offers his apologetic for this ambitious project.

1. Taussig opens his defense with the following statement:

*This New New Testament is not simply the produce of one author. The ten added books have been chosen by a council of wise and nationally known spiritual leaders (xxiii).*

One gets the sense that Taussig is well aware that creating a new scriptural canon will seem a bit audacious to the reader. But his attempt to alleviate this concern is stunning. Does he really think 19 hand-picked “spiritual leaders” are in a position to do such a thing? Really? Moreover, Taussig is even bold enough to call this a “council.” No doubt, the use of this term is an intentional effort to invoke memories of prior church councils that discussed

the canon (e.g., Hippo and Carthage).

The problem, of course, is that this “council” is nothing like those in the early church. For one, it is not a council called *by the church*. Indeed, it even includes members who are not even Christians (it includes two rabbis). In addition, where are the representatives from the evangelical and Roman Catholic communities? These do not make up an insignificant part of global Christianity today. Taussig calls his council “eclectic” (xxiii), but it is nothing of the kind. It should be called a “council of liberal, progressive folks unhappy with the current make-up of the canon.”

2. When Taussig addresses the question about the origins of these books, and their respective dates, a bit of terminological sleight of hand becomes immediately evident. Despite the fact that all of these books are second century or later, he repeatedly refers to them as books from “the first centuries” of Christianity (xxiii) or “from the beginnings of Christianity.” At first glance, such phrasing makes it sound like these books are from the “first century” (singular) or from the “beginning” (singular), when in fact they are not.

The necessity for such elusive language is obvious. If he just came out and told the reader that all these “new” books are later productions, not written by apostles, then the reader would see little need to add these books to the canon.

3. Taussig then states,

*There is no reason, then, to think that the Gospel of Thomas, which is not in the traditional New Testament, was ready any less in the first and second centuries than the Gospel of John (xxvi).*

But, this statement is loaded with problems. First, Taussig implies that the *Gospel of Thomas* was read in the first century. But, this is simply not the case.

*Thomas* was not a first century gospel. Second, the popularity of a book is not a determiner of canonical status. The *Shepherd of Hermas* was widely popular in early Christianity, certainly more than some canonical books, but it never had any real chance of making it into the canon, and was expressly rejected by the Muratorian fragment. Third, and most importantly, it is patently false to say that *Thomas* was as popular as John’s gospel.

4. In an effort to portray apocryphal and canonical books as equal to one another, Taussig states:

*The New Testament did not exist for at least the first three hundred, if not five hundred, years after Jesus (xxvi).*

But, again, this is substantially misleading. It depends entirely upon what one means by the term “New Testament.” If one insists that we cannot use the term until there is a final consensus, even on the peripheral books, then we don’t have a canon until the fourth century. But, left out of such usage is the fact that there was a “core” canon of New Testament books in place even during the second century. When one considers just Irenaeus and the Muratorian fragment, it is clear that the four gospels, Paul’s letters, and a handful of other books were widely received as “Scripture.”

5. In order to defend the inclusion of new books into the canon, Taussig is forced to argue that there is no qualitative distinction between canonical books and apocryphal books. He states,

*The common assumption holds that the books that became the New Testament must have been in some way more true, more divinely inspired, or more historically accurate than the ones that weren’t. One goal of A New New Testament is to rethink that misconception. The Gospel of Truth contains poetry*

*about Jesus that is as beautiful as anything found in the traditional New Testament (xxvii).*

There are a number of problems with this statement, but I will focus on just one. If it is true that there is nothing qualitatively distinctive about the books we include in the New Testament, then the whole concept of a New Testament evaporates. The whole idea of a "canon" is that some books are in, and some books are out, and that there is a reason for such distinctions. But, Taussig is basically arguing there are no differences between books. But, if there are

no differences, then why bother having a canon at all?

For that matter, why limit the "new" books to the canon to just the ten in this volume? Why not add Martin Luther King's, "Letter from Birmingham Jail"? Is it not just as inspiring, if not more so, than some of Paul's letters? Indeed, why doesn't Taussig even add his own writings to the canon? On what grounds could he exclude them?

All of this highlights the absurdity of this entire volume. The title proposes to create a "New New Testament" when that is not at all what is happening. Instead, this volume is designed to do

away with the concept of a New Testament altogether. A canon is not being constructed. A canon is being deconstructed. The canon, we are being told, is whatever we want it to be.

*Mr Michael J. Kruger is President and Professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, NC. In addition, he is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America and serves as an Associate Pastor (part-time) at his home church, Uptown PCA.*

<http://michaeljkruger.com/>

## Missions in focus

# From NZ to PNG

Four of us: Dave Kajiser and Matt Saathof from the Reformed Church of Hastings, and Ed Leenders and Tim Fransen from the Reformed Church of Silverstream, have just returned from spending almost three weeks at 14 Mile Bible College. Our mandate was to build another student hu (No.9) and carry out some other maintenance work if possible.

This is the second time all of us have

been to this compound, as we all came approximately three and a half years ago to help with the building of 'Kiwi Haus'. Ed and Matt were on the first team and Dave and Tim were the bridging team. It was great to see the finished product and also to be able to stay in 'Kiwi Haus' this time with Alan and Odette

Douma. They really are fantastic hosts and Odette's cooking – well again we thought we would be coming back home plumper than when we got there. We all lost weight (between 2-5kg), probably from the amount of perspiring we did.

The four of us worked together brilliantly and made really good progress;



*Nawai, Alan and Tim contemplating the moving of buildings in Ekor.*



*(From l to r) Ed Leenders David Dave Kajiser, Tim Fransen and Matt Saathof.*

and we had a lot of fun doing so. We managed to complete the student hut in eight days. We were also asked to go to Ekoro to look at the church, manse and guest house and also to look at the Nine Mile Church manse. This was to offer our opinions; and we have written a couple of reports for this. They are contemplating moving the church and buildings closer to the main road and out of the village. This will hopefully bring in some more people and the church won't seem like a village or family church. The Nine Mile Church manse is in need of some maintenance and a tidy-up. It looks like the Ekoro church has called Nawai to be the pastor there and Nine Mile has called Isei. These are both recent graduates from the Bible college. How great to see the fruits of the work from the Bible college. Nawai led the service out at Beregoro (a close



This is a notice on the door of Alan and Odette's 'Kiwi Haus' something about them we noticed: "Plis yu i mas ringim belo, Mipela i laik harim yul!" which means "Please ring the bell, we would like to hear you!" Alan and Odette to a "t".

neighbour to the Ekoro church) for the second Sunday we were there. It was both a privilege and uplifting to witness a student of his calibre lead the service, deliver the sermon and see him have his congregation's attention. Nawai and Isei are the first two Reformed Papuan pastors to graduate from the Reformed Bible College, praise the Lord!

The temperatures were up there with 52 degrees in the sun the odd day: this is their hot and wet season. We were not really affected by the rain. The Lord was kind, so mostly it held off for us and when it did pour we had the roof on. When it rains, boy does it come down! Try about 50mm in 30 minutes! We all got our fair share of liklik natnat bites (little mosquitoes); and some ants surely leave a good mark on your leg here were also a few fleas for good measure. Most of us are taking malaria tablets which are an anaphylactic medicine to try to avoid

malaria. These we take for three weeks after returning home and we will also need to take de-worming tablets when home to deal with any parasites. Mozzies also spread dengue fever, another tropical disease.

It was so special to be able to spend time with Alan and Odette and the other missionaries on site. We very much enjoyed staying with Alan and Odette, our NZ Missionaries, and had a great time of fellowship together, good devotions and some great laughs. Also this time we got to see and spend a bit more time with the students and their families. The opening ceremony for the college was held while we were there followed by a 'Bung Kai' or communal dinner. All the students and their families along with the missionaries prepared dishes for this. After dinner they held an evening where there were skits, songs and poems. We introduced ourselves and were also asked to sing a song, so chose the Cadet Hymn, "Living For Jesus". It was really special to be a part of this evening and to share this with our PNG brothers and sisters in the Lord. We have a common bond uniting us.

Alan and Odette are a man and wife team on the field in a highly demanding role. There are many cross-cultural differences, constant need (24 hours a day) for vigilance from theft, violence, danger and the seemingly endless need for their time, energies and wisdom. Alan has a pastoral heart for all people, whether Papuan students, fellow missionaries, visiting builders or the local townsfolk he deals with. Both he and Odette demonstrate a love of and a call to serve the Papuan people, and do so with wisdom, compassion and an accumulated and increasing understanding of this people and their culture. The Papuan culture is vastly different from our own and has many intricacies eg the One Tok system, Papa Graun, Paybak, etc. Alan is motivated by the truth of God's Word, shows planti marimari (lots of mercy) and grace, in discipling souls for Christ. He's practical, logical, capable in general repairs, building etc, and is a man of action, get in there – get it done. This is an asset but can also be a burden when taking on too much, because of the demand of different work that needs to be done. Odette is an ideal help meet for Alan. She is highly adaptable, sensible, humorous, caring, firm when required, and practical. Alan needs her, and could not do what he does without her help and input. Her ability to take



Isei a graduate Pastor

things in her stride, and to show hospitality is legendary.

Our 2 ½ weeks went by very quickly and, to be honest, we rejoiced to be able to go home. We were so looking forward not only to being with our loved ones, but also to get back to NZ. Life in PNG is not an easy one: there are many problems, dangers frustrations and tensions. Our thoughts were with Alan and Odette as we packed and headed off. We were all done and going home, but they had been there for nearly 4 years and were staying to continue the work – the Lord's work.

#### Tim and Ed (Dave and Matt)

Please let's continue to be diligent and joyful in continuing to support of the work in Papua New Guinea as we share in what the Lord is doing in this country, for His glory. Please especially remember to uphold Alan and Odette, the students and their families in prayer.

*O God, you are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips will praise You. Psalm 63 v 1-3*

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faith in  
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# Greetings from Chicago

## Introduction

Greetings from Chicago, Illinois. We'd like to introduce you to the Couperus family. There is Albert and Hanneke, Michaela (11), Grace (9), Kate (6) and Zara (5). Albert is currently studying at Mid America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana.

The Lord has greatly blessed our path here to study at Mid America. We have been humbled with how He has chosen to make our paths straight. A couple of examples include: Selling our house privately in a depressed market, obtaining funding in principle within a couple of weeks of Presbytery's approval, finding storage for our possessions while we are away, even down to finding homes for the pets. People often ask us if we miss New Zealand. We certainly do, and look forward to going back, but it is also reassuring to know that we are here because this is where the Lord would have us be at this stage of our lives.

## Where we are living

We are living in the village of Lansing. This is about a 40 minute drive from the center of Chicago. Seminary is a 10 minute drive, or a 45 minute run. Albert tries to do this run at least twice a week so that he can get some exercise.

We are also 2 minutes' walk from the local library. It has a great children's section, as well as plenty of cubicles for Albert to study at when he needs a little more peace and quiet.

The house that we have been provided has 3 bedrooms, as well as an office. The two oldest, and the two youngest, share a room together. We have a lined basement, which is a great place for the girls to play. The girls also have a large sandpit with a playground. It has already been well used.

We were graciously provided with most of our household goods, thanks to the Seminary and its supporters. We have been very humbled by the support that we have received over here. The Lord has met our needs, and more!

## Studies

So far Albert has undertaken the following courses: Greek, Hebrew, Ancient Church History, Introduction to Apologet-

ics, Theological Foundations, New Testament Introduction, Church Education and Preaching. During the Mid Semester break he took a course in Advanced Hebrew. In the Second Semester Albert is taking: Old Testament (Canon, Text Criticism, and Hebrew Reading), Greek, Doctrine of God, Applied Sermon, Pastoral Care and Counseling, Biblical Hermeneutics, Liturgics.

He also begins preaching this Semester. The students are required to take chapel, which is three times a week. At least one of those is taken by students. It is a great way to practice, especially in front of one's peers and the Professors! There is also a sermon preached to class mates, which is constructively criticised.

Study has taken a bit of getting used to for Albert. There is a heavy, but manageable workload. After 16 years of being in the workforce it is a challenge to get back into the books. But Albert is enjoying this challenge.

The second semester has a heavy pastoral and preaching emphasis. This is to prepare Albert for his summer internship. This is a 10 week practicum where Albert will be involved in preaching and pastoral ministry in one of the United Reformed Churches (URC) congregations, somewhere in North America. This will mean a temporary change in location for our family. At the stage of writing

this report we did not know where this was to be. The summer internships are a feature of what is known as the Ministerial Apprenticeship programme. The aim is to get the students hands-on experience working with a Pastor in a local congregation.

To be allowed to preach Albert will need to undergo a licensure exam in the URC. This consists of a mini exam, as well as a couple of written sermons. It is undertaken by the local session of the Church we are attending. Interestingly, a distinction is often made here in the US between preaching and exhorting. Ministers preach, because they have received an official call. Seminary students exhort, because they have not yet received a call. However, it's not a hard and fast distinction.

## Church Life

For our time here we have become student members at Redeemer United Reformed Church in Dyer. Our Pastor is the Rev. Jacques Roets. Two of the Seminary Professors, Drs Venema and Beach, are associate pastors. We have been blessed by their ministry, as well as the warm welcome from the congregation. It is lovely to have a church home away from home. One of the things that we have been warned about is that Seminary can be a place where you are iso-



*The Couperus children dwarfed by the entrance to Mid-America Reformed*

lated from the 'outside world', so to speak. Being part of a local congregation is one way that helps stave off that isolation. There are about 200 members here in the church where we worship, and is growing. The services are very similar to what we are used to in the RCNZ.

### Family Life

Homeschooling is a new experience for our family. While in New Zealand the girls were attending one of the local Christian schools. Christian schooling in the States is very expensive, something that our budget could not stretch to. It has its challenges, but Hanneke is doing a great job, aided by some very willing students. The girls miss their school friends, but they are doing very well with their studies.

The girls are enjoying life here, and are enjoying learning new skills, such as ice skating and sledding.

### Cultural Differences

One of the questions that we often get asked here is what are the differences between New Zealand and the United States? The biggest thing is size. Everything is done on a much larger scale here. It is quite an experience to drive down a 5 lane freeway with large trucks surrounding you. We will never be intimidated by Auckland traffic again!

America is also outwardly quite religious. We were surprised by how many churches there are. The wider region where we are living has a strong Reformed background, so there are many Reformed Churches in name at least.

Language is also something that is a constant source of amusement, both for us, as well as the people that we meet. Even though we are both speaking English, there are many words that are different between New Zealand and here. Thankfully we are blessed with many interpreters here!

### Blog

Hanneke is keeping a blog record of our travels. You can follow us at: HY-



*The Couperus family with a part of the seminary in the background.*

PERLINK "<http://ladandladiesintraining.blogspot.com/>". There is a box on the side of the page that allows you to receive the posts via email. We have found it a great way to keep family and friends informed of what we are up to.

### Home

Our hearts are very much still in New Zealand. We see this as a season in our lives where we are temporarily away from New Zealand. We are looking forward to our return in a couple of years, when Albert will, Lord willing, be able to serve in the RCNZ. We also love to hear from home!

### Support

We'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our many supporters back home, both in prayer and financial. It all helps, and we certainly feel the prayers of His people. Without this support we would never be able to undertake a mission such as this.

### Prayer requests

Please pray for:  
Albert's Studies. That he would be diligent in his studies, and that they would equip him for future service.

Hanneke, as she continues in her

role of mother, teacher, as well as her preparations for becoming a pastor's wife. This is certainly a time of learning for her also. She has been blessed by the Seminary Wives group that meets monthly.

The girls, as they grow up without family for a time. They miss the family, but they are doing well here, and it has certainly brought us together as a family more.

Our family's health. We have been blessed with good health. While we are insured, healthcare is a very expensive exercise here. Pray that the Lord would continue to bless us with good health.

Homeschooling. As mentioned above this is a new venture for our family, and is not always easy. Give thanks for the children's eagerness to learn.

The students, here as well as in other Reformed Institutions. It is a blessed time, but also quite an intensive time.

The Seminary here. For the Professors as they teach us, as well as the staff who do a fantastic job in keeping this institution running. The Seminary relies heavily on financial donations. Pray that the Lord would continue to graciously provide.

**Albert and Hanneke Couperus**