



General Secretary
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Ministry of Women ■

Cults Update ■

Theonomy ■

Pagan Saints ■

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Editorial

There is ample stimulating material for you to reflect on in this new issue of FOUNDATIONS. The articles touch on relevant, contemporary subjects such as the role of women, the cults, theonomy and religious pluralism.

We begin with a report by Richard Myerscough of the BEC Study Conference held earlier this year on the theme of the MINISTRY OF WOMEN in the church. Here is a subject of crucial importance and the study suggests that more exegetical work in this area still needs to be done by us. Stephen Clark provides us with an EXEGESIS article related to this theme, while I have written a CULTS UPDATE which will interest readers. THEONOMY is the subject tackled by Philip Ross in an article which supplies a useful survey of contemporary Reformed approaches to Old Testament law.

The PAGAN SAINTS article written by Hywel Jones represents a major attempt to answer some evangelical scholars who are moving towards universalism and, eventually, religious pluralism. It is part of a larger work to be published next year and details of this will be given in our Spring issue. I hope that the page of CORRESPONDENCE may prompt others to write to us with their response to these articles.

A significant publication of evangelistic sermons from the Old Testament by the late Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones is the BOOK REVIEW which concludes this issue of FOUNDATIONS.

FOUNDATIONS production

Regular readers will be aware of the improvements in appearance and format we have introduced over recent years. Some of this has been made possible by the help of Pastor Nigel Lacey of Stowmarket who has been commercially typesetting the pages on his PC. God willing, Nigel will be moving to Kenya early in 1996 and his help will no longer be available to us.

An increasing amount of copy is now sent on disc to the BEC office, where it is then sub-edited and prepared for typesetting. Only a little is now keyed in from authors' type-scripts. This stage is done on a 486 PC, using *Word for Windows*.

We would be very glad to hear from anyone who has the theological competence and the equipment to take over these tasks from 1996 onwards. The sub-editing and the page making are separate stages but one person could be entrusted with both. If you would like to know more about either of these responsibilities please contact Alan Gibson at the BEC office.

The Ministry of Women

1995 BEC Study Conference

Richard Myerscough

From 27th to 29th March, over 50 delegates gathered at High Leigh to study and debate this important contemporary issue and its impact upon the life of our churches. One gratifying aspect of the Conference was the presence of a number of women, a third of all delegates. This was a first for BEC study conferences and their contribution was invaluable.

The six Conference papers had been circulated in advance, with delegates encouraged to come prepared to contribute to the debate. It was made quite clear in advance that no attempt would be made to produce a closing consensus statement.

This report will summarise the six papers and give a brief resume of the ensuing discussions. No personal assessment of the papers or the Conference will be given, except for a few concluding observations. All quotations are from the study papers, in loc; unattributed quotations are by the author of the relevant paper.

Paper 1: The Makings of the Issue

The first paper was given by Dr Gareth Crossley, of West Park Church, Wolverhampton. Dr Crossley's task was to set the scene for the Conference, illuminating the background to the debate and highlighting those factors which have impacted significantly upon it. We must recognise that as Christians we are not immune to the pressures of secular society but he noted that such pressure may helpfully lead to further reflection upon biblical teaching. Given the continuing secular emphasis upon the emancipation of women, "Our sisters in Christ deserve a thorough-going biblical response consistently held". Four areas that are crucial for an understanding of the makings of the issue were then addressed.

1. Social factors contributing to the influence and strength of the feminist movement.

Six key factors were identified: Advancements in technology; Contraception; Women and paid employment; Cohabitation, marriage and divorce; Violence between couples; Lesbianism and homosexuality. Major changes in attitudes and behaviour in these areas have occurred and "have a marked bearing upon the understanding of the roles and functions of a godly woman".

2. The theological convictions of leading feminists. Although clear-cut distinctions are difficult to make, three strands of feminism can be identified, **Radical, Liberal and Conservative.**

Radical feminism is the major secular feminist perspective to impact on the debate, "with its attack on patriarchy and the commitment to a woman-centred ideology". It is

“a retrograde step”, opposed to the one true God and is anti-Christian. Indeed, Mary Daly states quite openly that, “In its depth, because it contains a dynamic that drives beyond Christolatry, the women’s movement does point to, seek, and constitute the primordial, always present, and future Antichrist”. It is quite evident that “For radical feminists the Bible is irrelevant”.

Liberal feminism is so called because its proponents “reserve the right to select from or add to the Scripture”. McFague proposes a view of God as Mother, Lover and Friend, whilst Ruether uses feminist readings of Scripture to criticise the biblical texts themselves. Dr Crossley commented that “Historic Christianity is turned on its head; to these women heresy becomes orthodoxy”. Elizabeth Fiorenza and Mary Hayter were also criticised for their approach to Scripture.

Conservative feminism, however, is the category that causes most concern, as its supporters “are found within the ranks of evangelicalism”. The common strand in conservative feminist teaching is “the rejection of a unique leadership role for men in marriage and in the church”. The works of Ann Brown and Mary van Leeuwen came in for strong criticism, as did the teachings of Virginia Mollenkott, which highlight “the problem of determining just who is, or who is not, an evangelical”.

3. Myths of Sexuality Acknowledging that “Underlying considerations of the ministry of women are fundamental beliefs about human sexuality” Dr Crossley tackled his third main point. With terms defined, Dr Crossley commented on the biological distinctions between men and women and then explored the area of gender stereotypes.

The common assumption that “males and females differ not only biologically but psychologically and sociologically” has meant that “thinking processes, emotional experience and interactive behaviour have been classified as either ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’”. Listing a number of commonly perceived masculine and feminine traits, Dr Crossley asserted that “Confusion of this kind has been perpetuated in psychology, sociology and theology”.

It was suggested that “The prevalence and power of these fictitious gender conventions are so widespread that it is to be wondered whether they can be redressed. Facts do not necessarily destroy myths.” These myths are being “reinforced in everyday language, the media, education, employment and family life”. However, there are discernible shifts in psychological thinking, with some now suggesting that “many characteristics which comprise masculinity and femininity are socially constructed stereotypes rather than features intrinsic to being male or female”.

The implications of such conclusions for the debate on the ministry of women are highly significant. “No legitimate arguments can be brought to show that a woman, simply because she is a woman, lacks either ability or suitability: psychologically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, or physically. For evangelicals the argument is solely based upon the criterion: what does the Scripture say? Any other basis of discussion is unfounded and will prove offensive to our sisters in Christ.” Failure in this area will only heighten the damaging effects of widespread gender anxiety.

4. Evangelical confusion The study concluded with the picture of a scene of confusion, observable throughout evangelicalism and in differences over both teaching and practice. A final exhortation was given not to lose sight, in the midst of debate, of “the ‘hidden’ contribution made by thousands of godly women” in a variety of ways.

Discussion

A number of Dr Crossley's points were taken up in discussion, but it was perhaps his contention that the only meaningful differences between men and women are biological that received the most attention. Pressed on this point and the results of other studies, Dr Crossley responded that he knew of no study that had shown otherwise. He reiterated the importance of his point, stressing that it showed that the issue was properly a theological one. Some delegates disagreed with the assessment of Ann Brown's work and, although he stood by that assessment, Dr Crossley did agree to some modification of his statements.

Paper 2: A Biblical-Theological Overview

Rev James Maciver of East Kilbride Free Church gave a biblical-theological overview of the ministry of women, with the emphasis on exegesis in order to construct a biblical-theological framework for the whole debate. Three main concepts were dealt with, taking all the evidence together for each concept and not drawing conclusions from isolated texts.

The Image of God

Genesis 1:26-27, 5:3 The image of God in man was not entirely lost in the fall, as seen in 5:3. 'Image' in Gen 1:27 does not consist in the difference between male and female: individuals are made in the image of God (see Jas 3:9 and Col 3:10), and Gen 1:27c is epexegetic of 1:27a,b. These conclusions refute the argument that positions of authority require both male and female to fully reflect the image of God.

1 Corinthians 11:7 Here, the image of God is restricted to man but the woman is not the image of the man for "the controlling word here is *glory* not *image*, the latter being used incidentally and in a way that leads to the idea of glory". Glory here is seen as "bringing honour to" and implies "suitable helper" from Gen 2:18,20. Woman is subservient to man, but "*subservience*, when understood as established by a divinely ordained arrangement, is not the same as *inferiority* or *derogation*".

The Created Order Principle - In Genesis

Genesis 1:26-28 Although these verses deal primarily with male/female equality, v.27 nevertheless shows the beginning of headship in that God deliberately calls the human race 'man' and not 'woman'. This is neither discriminatory nor sexist, for headship does not mean superiority and inferiority but exists "within the area of relationship and role, not ontological status".

Genesis 2:18-25 The account of the creation of woman shows that she "is not a rival, but a complementary partner". Yet, there are differences and they are brought out in the phrase 'helper suitable for him' (*EZER KENEGDO*), where the concept of 'headship' is made clearer. "As 'helper' she is not his equal, but neither does this make her his *inferior*." Their status as head and helper is pre-marriage and is the reason they can proceed to be joined together. Quite evidently, "it is the *creation* order that is foundational, not the *redemptive*".

Genesis 3:16-17 Was headship imposed after the Fall and removed in Christ? Paul

appeals at least twice (1 Cor 11, 1 Tim 2) to the creation narrative for the principle and that is supported by a study of Gen 3:16,17. These verses do not impose headship but seek to regulate the created order that has been distorted by sin. Redemption in Christ does not negate this situation but rather gives an ability to engage in it more perfectly.

The Created Order Principle - In The New Testament

(a) Authority and equality within the church

1 Corinthians 11:3-16 A very difficult passage but the controlling verse is v.3, with its important use of 'head'. 'Head' here does not mean 'source', the emphasis on God and Christ precluding such an understanding. Nor is it referring to an ontological relation but rather to "the relation of God appointed authority in leadership". This is reinforced by Paul by reference to Genesis 1&2.

1 Timothy 2:8-15 "There is no evidence that Ephesus in the time of Paul and Timothy was having to resist a feminist movement". But even if that was so, it would not stop "the prohibitions laid down here by apostolic authority being binding for the church in every generation".

In v.9ff, Paul is indicating the kind of behaviour he expects of women in the church. *hesuchia* in v.11 is understood in the light of *hupotage* and *didaskhein* and means 'silence'. "Submission is the appropriate relation to 'authority'".

There are a number of exegetical matters to deal with in v.12 but a careful study of them shows that Paul's counsel prohibits women from engaging in "authoritative instruction" and exercising authority over a man. The silence he enjoins is to be understood in this context and concerns men and women in general rather than husbands and wives.

Paul is not dealing with a purely local, temporary problem, for he "grounds it in the created order principle in vv.13-15." This conclusion is based on substantial arguments. The whole passage shows that "Within the church and within the home, the created order principle applies".

1 Corinthians 14:34-36 Although this passage makes no explicit reference to the creation narrative, "it does use the term 'the law' as a basis for what is set out". With his appeal to 'the law', Paul is referring to either Gen 2 or 3:16, probably the latter. However, the submission enjoined here originates in creation, not in the post-Fall situation. Hence, "whichever of these two Genesis passages we take ... Paul's injunction here is again grounded in the created order principle".

Galatians 3:28 The context here is all-important. Paul is dealing with "how we come to be accepted with God" and teaches that "universal possession of sonship and the heirship that is along with it...belongs to all who are in Christ without distinction". The main issue is not male/female role distinctions. Racial and social distinctions "are invalid as far as spiritual position in Christ is concerned". The same is true for male/female distinctions but the parallel is incomplete for these distinctions "arise out of God's creation". Any use of this verse to support or remove gender distinctions "is an exegetical intrusion".

(b) Authority and equality in the context of the family

Ephesians 5:22-33 The general principle of mutual submission for church relationships in v.21 is applied more specifically in the succeeding verses.

Wives are to submit to their husbands, a "voluntary yielding in love", which, because it is 'as to the Lord', "actually exemplifies and commends the created order". The husband, correspondingly, expresses his headship by sacrificial love, leading to increased

unity in the relationship. It is clear from this passage that “submission and love, in headship and helpship...belong to the essence of marriage and are rooted in God’s creation order”.

Conclusion “God has given his people a unique equality one with another in the possession of spiritual status and privileges as his adopted family. But within that God has also set various distinctions of gender and role, both within his church and in the family”. These distinctions are “in terms of headship, authority, submission, love and respect”. It should be recognised that “the reversal or denial of such distinctions has not arisen from the Bible itself” but from worldly soil and “To devalue the distinctions is to devalue our personhood, and it is to devalue the goodness and wisdom of God”.

Discussion

There was some discussion over the meaning of *EZER KENEGDO* (‘suitable helper’) and the notions of headship and helpship present in Gen 2. As other points were raised and discussed, Mr Maciver consistently stressed the necessity and value of the biblical-theological approach, with its recognition of progressive revelation within the canon and its treatment of each part of the revelation on its own merits and also as part of the larger whole.

Paper 3 - Women And The Eldership

Rev Reg Burrows, formerly an Anglican minister in Newcastle, dealt primarily with the question ‘May women teach in the church?’ and considered, mainly, the supporting arguments put forward by Anglican and Presbyterian evangelicals.

Mr Burrows began by surveying **Women’s ministry in the denominations**, giving an up-to-date assessment of the situation. Virtually all the mainline denominations now have, or allow for, women elders and ministers.

But **why is the question of women’s ministry a burning issue?** Because of the pressures of feminism, both secular and Christian. Many evangelicals have repented of past chauvinism and are making attempts to redress the balance. Account must also be taken of “the denominational mindset”, whereby there is pressure, perhaps for pragmatic reasons, to remain in the denomination but “staying in means some degree of accommodation to what is going on”. Such pressure can remove objectivity in studying the biblical material.

Having provided **An outline of the debate**, utilising a tabular presentation from the work of Peter White, Mr Burrows then went on to consider in more detail **The arguments used by evangelicals in favour of women teaching in church**, offering a brief exegesis of each passage.

Genesis 1 & 2 Craston’s “rejection of any idea of male headship in these chapters” is serious. Although Gen 1 stresses equality, Gen 2 does emphasise headship through priority in creation and the devolving of responsibilities.

Genesis 3 Dowsett and Craston both see male headship as a direct result of the Fall. Yet to do so is to neglect the quite evident caring headship of Gen 2 and Eph 5.

1 Corinthians 11:2-16 The meaning of ‘head’ in this passage is hotly debated. Higton

and Craston both go for 'source, origin' rather than 'authority' but on the most slender of evidence. It really is a case of special pleading; "'Headship' definitely implies some kind of 'authority', to which submission is necessary". Above all, the passage "*is about the authority structure, the pattern of headship*" and shows how the pattern should be expressed and gives the reasons why it should be expressed. The upshot of this teaching is that "***Authority is symbolised by the head being uncovered. To act as the head, the head is uncovered. To have the head covered is a sign of being under authority***". The importance and application of this for today is that "in the gatherings of the church women should express their submission to man's headship".

1 Corinthians 14:29-35 There are two interpretations of this passage: either it refers to orderly conduct in worship and has no direct bearing on the teaching issue. Alternatively, the passage allows women to pray and prophesy in the assembly but prohibits them from "deciding from Scripture what the truth is for God's people to obey" as this is an exercise of authority.

1 Timothy 2:11-15 The Kroegers interpret this passage in the light of ancient religions as applying to women heretics, not orthodox female teachers. This denies the perspicuity and sufficiency of Scripture; Paul is clearly dealing with a general prohibition. The context offers nothing to support Highton's assertion that Paul was dealing with a purely local problem. Stott and Baker both argue that the prohibition only applied during the apostolic era and that women can teach men today, provided they do so under male headship as part of a team. But this is to rob the teaching of God's Word of its inherent authority. The reasons for women not teaching, or having authority over, men is grounded in the creation order. But women do have a high calling, motherhood, and do not need to aspire to teaching in the congregation for a worthwhile God-given role.

Galatians 3:28 Jewett argues that this verse removes gender distinctions. However, Paul is dealing with spiritual status in salvation. Believers still have to live within the social structures of their day but, although there may be changes to those structures, male headship which is patterned on Christ will not be lost.

The examples of women throughout Scripture John Stott argues that, because women exercised charismatic and informal ministries in the Scripture, they can also be appointed to exercise institutional teaching roles and the burden of proof lies with those against. "There is an unwarranted jump here...To justify the appointment of women preachers on an equal footing with men you must establish that there were such women in Scripture. But there were not".

Not only is there a biblical case to make against those who advocate women teachers, we must also face **Some problems underlying this debate about women's ministry**. The debate is often characterised by weak arguments that arise from the answer that is desired and there is a sense of going round in circles. Scripture is regarded as contradictory or uncertain, destroying any confidence in its perspicuity. In the debate, too much importance is given to academics, leaving the ordinary believer stranded. Great changes in practice are being made on the basis of tentative conclusions from Scripture and there is a failure to understand how general biblical principles operate. It has also been assumed that because an individual has gifts, they must always be used.

How can we **Cut the exegetical knot and get back to basics**? By remembering what the Bible is and what God's purpose is in giving us his written Word. We must remember that the Bible determines "what we believe and what we do" and that it is clear, consistent

and sufficient. We must focus on what Scripture says rather than on what it may mean; we deal with what is written, not conjecture concerning background and so on.

Applying the basic principles to the question of women teaching in church, a number of points need making. The whole of Scripture gives the impression of male leadership; there is a consistent norm of male leaders and teachers in Scripture and the qualifications and regulations for office require men. The exceptions prove the rule; they do not negate it. The issue is not at heart about an old view versus a new one; the lynch-pin for the entire debate is how the Bible is viewed.

Conclusions

Women cannot be part of the authoritative teaching team, nor be ministers or elders. They can, however, pray and make a spiritual contribution to worship but they must not preach to men, not even in a Bible class or Bible study. On the mission field, many women have been used in church planting work yet most have held to the principle of male headship. There is a world of difference between those who have been impelled by the gospel and those who desire what Scripture reserves for men.

Discussion

In discussion, a number of Mr Burrows' points were taken up but the item that received most attention was our approach to the interpretation of Scripture. Mr Burrows reiterated what was clear from his paper, that he favours a plain reading of the biblical text. For others, the issue isn't that simple; other valid questions had to be addressed in studying the Scriptures. It was clear that the hermeneutical issue is at the heart of the debate, even amongst evangelicals who have a high view of Scripture and its perspicuity. Certainly the issue is not easily solved and will not go away.

Paper 4 - A Diaconal Role For Women?

Rev Keith Walker, UCCF Team Leader in Wales, works "in an environment which has been unusually penetrated by feminism". That environment exposes certain problems and tensions with respect to women's ministry, yet his paper was "not simply a reflection of work in a particular context".

In the wider world of the BEC constituency, there is a lack of coherence with respect to women's roles. Too often, the question is only answered negatively and there is real work to do on the positives. Indeed, in the light of changes in secular society, "we may well find that being all things to all people demands that we review church policies to see whether Scripture does indeed require them".

Basic issues The matter is complex, for often those engaged in debate equally hold to a high view of Scripture. There are many problems but two main areas can be highlighted. Firstly, "the NT passages which are relevant are not easy"; secondly, "application to today's church structures" is difficult and "is perhaps more serious". The texts have to be dealt with in their cultural context and responsible application has to be made, without falling into cultural relativism. The way forward is to establish some basic principles.

We need to establish a **biblical definition of ministry** and use the term “in its biblical sense as including all true believers”. This is a concept that many churches urgently need to recover. It is clear that women can and must minister; the only question is “in what ways they may and in what ways they may not”.

Additionally, the concept of ‘**team**’ in ministry needs to be worked out. Some constituencies have been more successful in this and have often included women in their teams without compromising male headship. However, “one of the greatest problems in our constituency is ministerial domination which leads to frustrations amongst both men and women”.

Turning to **basic biblical teaching about gender issues**, some general doctrinal principles can be established. Firstly, “both OT and NT teach that men and women are equal”. Despite the possibility of implicit differences between male and female, there is a basic equality between the sexes in God’s sight. This equality must be asserted “happily and without reserve”. Secondly, “Both OT and NT teach male headship”. ‘Headship’ entails bearing authority and applies equally to home and church.

In applying these general principles, three categories of ministry in the NT are observable: “things which both men or women can do without any danger to male headship; things which both men and women can do, but in which women must take care to acknowledge the principle of male headship; things which women cannot do without offending the principle of male headship”. Much work has to, and can, be done in allocating tasks to categories and “it may be possible to take account of Bible principles and use the gifts of all, including all women, by careful definition of roles and relationships within the church”.

But what of the **possibility of women ‘teaching’**? Clearly, there is much teaching done by women in our churches: in Sunday schools and YP work, by example and through informal conversation. In some social situations, only women can teach; does this mean they should be trained as evangelists?

Considering functions in the church throws into focus the **office/function debate**. “In any organised structure *functions* are attached to *offices*” and offices often carry some degree of authority; however, that authority may not be inherent in the function and therein lies the difficulty. Fung has shown that in the NT function is primary and comparatively little attention is given to office. You do not need to hold office to exercise a gift. The NT “*suggests...that our approach to needs and opportunities need not be trammelled by church structures*”. There is freedom to change these structures “to make space for things to happen”. We must not become fossilised in our structures.

In discussing **Diaconal roles in the NT**, the difficulty is one of terminology. Our traditional use of the word ‘diaconal’ for the meeting of the material, social and physical needs of people as opposed to their spiritual needs is difficult to sustain from the NT. The word is often used in a much more general way.

However, “it is possible...to recognise some expressions of Christian concern in the NT as being diaconal in nature in the historic sense” and women were most definitely engaged in this work. Examples abound: those who met Jesus’ temporal needs, the work of Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla, Phoebe and Rufus’ mother. Clearly, “women did and should engage in diaconal service”.

But should there be **Women deacons**? This is more controverted than women functioning diaconally. The relevant passages are 1 Tim 3 and Rom 16:1. With respect to 1 Tim 3, the context, location, use of 'likewise' and parallel requirements with male deacons all point to women officers. Paul does not call them deaconesses because there is no such word in Greek, hence his reference to 'women'. In Rom 16:1 is Phoebe a deacon or a servant of the church? The grammar supports the former, and "unless one is of the view that a woman deacon is inconceivable or other theological reasons the weight of the case seems to favour the view that Phoebe was one". With major changes taking place in society and in the state welfare system, "we may need a full-scale review of what we conceive deacons to be" and "were diaconates to be reformed in a NT direction we might more readily see the need for women on them".

What of The distinct needs and contributions of women in our churches? Our approach to needs must not begin with the differences between the sexes, that only exacerbates the problem and is not biblical. Consideration of biblical examples, such as Deborah, Hannah, Rahab, helps us to see that some needs are gender specific and some are not. But felt needs change as gender location in society changes. We may disapprove of such changes but we must still deal pastorally with them.

History teaches that women have made "significant contributions to some areas of the church's mission and ministry, and to society". This must be built upon and "we need to ensure that women are well equipped and motivated to be able to minister to each other". In wider terms, elderships need the contribution of senior women to help them in understanding the needs which our women folk present.

A diaconal role for women then? Definitely, and women deacons, and women on ministry teams. We must avoid stereotyping which cramps both men and women. There is much hard work to do, for "we are far too constricted by traditions which are hard to justify from Scripture".

Discussion

In introducing his paper at the Conference, Mr Walker expressed his hope that some of the more practical matters might be picked up and usefully discussed. By and large this was done and the contribution made by the women present was invaluable here. It was also clear that there are churches seeking to think through some of the issues and to effect necessary changes. Mr Walker's support for women deacons was not debated.

Paper 5 - The High Calling Of Womanhood

Mrs Margaret Siddans, a former Bible college tutor, began her paper by acknowledging that all women have a high calling as women but the high calling of the godly woman consists in obedience to all God commands of her. Although women are different from men, the Bible does not speak of inferiority. This high calling can be examined from a number of perspectives.

The woman's relationship to her husband and her personal character (Eph 5, Col 3, 1 Tim 2 & 3, Titus 2 and 1 Peter 3) Within the context of a Spirit-filled life and as an aspect of the mutual submission of all believers, wives are to submit to their husbands.

This derives from obedience to the Lord and is to be with right respect and reverence, being balanced by the self-giving love of her husband. They are to dress and act modestly and adorn themselves with good works. They are to be godly in thought, word and deed, which behaviour may be instrumental in the conversion of an unbelieving partner.

The Bible's high view of marriage presents a clear contrast to secular society. Scripture is replete with teaching on marriage, by precept and example. Everywhere the sanctity of marriage and the faithfulness and godly conduct of the marriage partners are stressed. Marriage is a holy metaphor for the relationship of Christ to his church. Both marriage and singleness are gifts from God; yet each must be seen in the light of the fact that this world is passing away. The marriage relationship can either further or hinder God's purposes of grace in this world - a very high calling. In marriage, the order and purpose of creation is to be reflected in male headship.

The Bible also teaches **The high calling of the mother** and gives many examples of those who fulfilled this calling, for example Eve, Rebekah, Sarah, Elisabeth, Mary and many others. The importance accorded to this calling is quite evident, from the commandment for mothers to be honoured (as well as fathers), to the use of maternal motifs with respect to God himself and to the work of the Apostle Paul. It is a high calling that is in direct opposition to Eve's part in the Fall (1 Tim 2:13-15).

The high calling of the widow is seen in that she "has a high place in the mind of God". He defends them, provides for them and bids them to trust in him. That pattern of care is to be replicated by men as evidence of a religion that is pure and undefiled. The church also must recognise its responsibilities towards widows and honour them through its material support of those without dependants.

The high calling of the single woman is also a distinct emphasis of the scriptural teaching. Injunctions about good works and modest dress are equally applicable to the single lady as to the married. She trusts and submits herself to the Sovereign Lord, whilst being able to pray for a husband if that is her desire. There are numerous ways in which she may use her gifts and abilities to serve the Lord. The high calling of the single woman is given direct support in Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 7:32-35.

Jesus' high view of women is a striking example of the Scripture's affirmation of their high calling. His treatment of them included talking to them, teaching and healing them, allowing them to minister to him and treating them as moral beings. All this was significantly different from the standards of the day.

The woman who professes godliness is to be characterised by **good works**. But what are these good works? Numerous examples can be given, from the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles but the classic passage is an OT one, Proverbs 31:10-31. The passage teaches that "we fulfil our high calling of womanhood as we fear the LORD and use to the full the gifts he has given us for the good of others and for His glory in the home and the community".

It is helpful to study **some biblical role models**, both as examples and warnings. The faith of both Rahab and Ruth in Israel's God, Esther's willingness to be used of God, Elisabeth's blameless life, Abigail's initiative and wisdom, the courage of the Hebrew midwives, all are timely reminders of the high calling that is to be exercised by godly women. Those to learn from but not to imitate would include the wives of Lot, Esau,

Potiphar and Job, as well as Orpah and Sapphira.

It is also necessary to affirm **the high calling of the woman in the public assembly**. In essence, “The godly woman fulfils her high calling by obeying God’s word on the subject”. In particular, that will mean not teaching and not having authority over a man; it will also entail not speaking or “participating actively in the worship service of the church”. Can a woman pray in a mixed meeting? Perhaps Paul did not have a public meeting in mind in 1 Cor 11 when he referred to women praying and prophesying but rather was stating a general principle that was qualified in chapter 14.

None of this teaching regarding a woman’s participation (or otherwise) in the public assembly implies she is inferior to men; rather, it stresses a difference in function, as in the home. Additionally, “If women would relinquish their self-assumed roles in Christian service, God would honour their obedience to His word by raising up more men in leadership positions”. [Mrs Siddans explained that her convictions in these matters had been forged while she was teaching in a mixed Bible College.]

In **Conclusion**, it can be stated that the high calling of women “consists in believing the Lord in His commandments and promises”. By way of an **Appendix**, it was noted that a great tribute is paid to womanhood when the “Scripture speaks of salvation in terms of marriage and child-bearing.” Believers are the Lord’s ‘wife’, and as such can be guilty of spiritual adultery, and “both the Lord and Israel are portrayed as ‘mother’”. Additionally, the Lord’s people are depicted again and again by a ‘woman figure’ i.e. daughter of Zion.

Discussion

During the period for discussion, there was a lengthy debate which centred around the interpretation of 1 Cor 11, particularly the meaning of verse 10. No consensus of opinion was reached on this. Other points were discussed briefly but at least one delegate felt that Conference had missed the opportunity to pick up the meat of Mrs Siddans’ paper and to explore the practical consequences of it.

Paper 6 - Trying To Tie The Threads Together

No-one envied **Rev Mark Johnston** his task of chairing the Conference. Nevertheless he proved an able Chairman and we were most grateful for his efforts over the three days. It fell to Mr Johnston not only to chair each session but also to provide the final paper. His task was to try to tie the threads of the Conference together and in so doing to “affect discussion and comment, not only at the end, but also at the beginning and indeed **throughout** the Conference”. We will give here first a summary of Mr Johnston’s paper and follow this with a summary of his Concluding Comments on the Conference as a whole.

The context of the debate. We are coming “from an evangelical perspective ... controlled by and subject to the *Evangel*, the Word of God”. However, we recognise that there are genuine questions as to how we understand and use the Bible. The debate must be focused; there are at least three levels: the secular, Liberal Christian and Evangelical. Attention must be given to all three but primarily to the last. The debate

itself is often higher than is conceded - it is not just about the nature and role of women but the nature and role of Scripture. We must recognise that "The problem of pluralism is no longer 'out there' in the broad ecclesiastical realm, it is very much 'in here' in the confines of the evangelical community". The result of this is that long established principles of hermeneutics and exegesis are being challenged by evangelicals.

In terms of **handling the issues**, much wisdom, caution and sensitivity are needed. The debate calls for real listening, not making blind assumptions. There is no room here for smugness, for "the conservative and traditional ethos of many of our churches may simply be restraining and concealing a problem that is there at the grass roots". There is a need to "develop the Biblically positive role for our womenfolk" and a degree of repentance and humility over wrong and unbiblical attitudes towards women would not go amiss.

Genuine concerns that women may have must be listened to and evaluated and the extent to which "Christianity has been a factor in creating the current state of affairs" ascertained. It may well be that the feminist movement has been significantly influenced by existentialist philosophy, as suggested by Werner Neuer. Attention also has to be given to the interplay of "practical and theological concerns that have fuelled the female outcry in certain parts of the wider Church" and to which of these factors came first.

The question of **Hermeneutics** brings us to the heart of the debate and to the differences that exist between evangelicals. In moving from God's Word to God's World, there are no short cuts. There must be exegesis of particular texts, controlled by Biblical Theology, framed into Systematic and Practical theologies. The role of Biblical Theology in this process is crucial, allowing us "to gauge the weight given to particular truths at different points in the history of revelation" and thus to avoid "the pitfalls of cultural relativism".

Authority, rule and teaching have been reappraised in many places, with ministry being understood more in terms of 'Servant' than 'Authority'. This impacts on the whole question of women in ministry. A key term here is *kephale*. Conclusions drawn on this issue have wider implications, particularly in terms of secession from, or co-operation with, churches that have women exercising authority.

Diaconal theology in theory and practice is somewhat confused. In theory, there is substantial support for women deacons; in practice, not many churches have them. "Perhaps we need to re-evaluate what we understand by 'ordination'. Perhaps we need to talk about courage and convictions".

Multi-skilled and multi-functional are terms that have been applied to women. Certainly, "We are obliged before God to recognise, appreciate and utilise such giftedness within the Covenant Community". To begin to utilise what amounts to over 50% of the church's human resources, we may have to ask "how far formal ecclesiastical jurisdiction extends".

In **conclusion**, the debate begun must become the debate continued. We need to be seen to be pro-active on such issues, not simply reactive. Male/female relationships are out of step because of the Fall. That makes this issue a part of the outworking of redemption.

It can be said, with both humility and confidence, that “God’s people have the answer to the problem!”.

Concluding Comments

Having noted in his paper that a failure to reach definite conclusions at a similar conference was “perhaps indicative of an evangelical inability to be consistently evangelical”, Mr Johnston bravely stated that this Conference had not produced a definitive set of conclusions. Nevertheless, there were vital principles to take away.

There is a great need to continue the debate; it is far too important to do otherwise, especially as it affects our understanding of God’s Word. We need to recognise that the debate may partly have come to the fore in our churches because of male inconsistency and failure. There is a need for repentance. A Reformation principle is that the church is to be ‘always reforming itself’. We need to be reminded that our basis for understanding man and woman is theological. Only in Scripture do we find unequivocally how we are differentiated.

In terms of theological method, our presuppositions about the Bible are vital, because where you start from determines where you end up. We must assert that the Bible is harmonious and, despite the difficulties we encounter, it is clear on issues of faith and life. It is sufficient for framing norms for life. The tools of biblical interpretation must always be subservient to the Bible’s own self-understanding. There must be a balance between the pietistic and scholastic approaches to Scripture. Biblical theology must have a prominent place in our thinking.

In terms of instruction and rule, both in the church and in the home, we must learn to distinguish between the formal and the informal, between the church as organised and as a living organism. We must also reaffirm our recognition of God-given structures of authority in the church. The authority and submission inherent in *kephale* must be reasserted, along with the emphasis on sacrificial love on the part of men.

There may well be a diaconal office, as well as a diaconal role for women. Whatever may be thought on this, the church must identify legitimate areas of service and encourage women to pursue them. The church must prize the valuable role of women in marriage, family, singleness and widowhood. We must seek a biblical balance in the roles of men and women.

A Personal View...

What were the lessons to take home from the Conference? That the issue is more complex and more important than we previously realised; that we as evangelicals have a lot of work to do in the whole area of hermeneutics and biblical interpretation; that it is possible to debate an emotive issue with grace and sympathy; that we as churches and families have ground to gain and an example to set in male/female roles and relationships.

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Exegesis 20: Headship in Ephesians

Stephen Clark

An examination of the meaning of *kephale* in Ephesians 5:23

The meaning of *kephale* (= head) is important to the biblical teaching concerning gender. Unfortunately the linguistic expertise required to translate this term¹ is such that some may be left wondering if a definite understanding is possible and, if not, if it is very important. I shall seek to demonstrate that the usage and function of the term in Ephesians 5:23 is such that the meaning of the term in that verse is fairly clear. The implications of this for understanding some controverted texts dealing with gender will then be briefly considered.

Hermeneutical Considerations

1. If possible, one should identify the literary genre of the unit in which a text is located.
2. One should consider whether the text itself indicates that its teaching is not universally applicable.
3. We must guard against reading our prejudices or those of past or present society into the text.
4. The doctrines of common grace and general revelation, together with the impact of Scripture on a society, will mean that some societal and cultural attitudes are more in keeping with Scripture than others and may have been influenced by Scripture. The reverse is equally true.

Text

The text to be exegeted is that found in the Nestle and Kilpatrick edition of *he kaine diatheke*². The manuscript evidence is surveyed by Lincoln³. This reading is followed by numerous commentators and expositors⁴.

Genre

Verse 23 occurs in a section which bears considerable resemblance to “Haustafeln” or household instructions. There is a range of opinion as to the precise nature of Haustafeln⁵ and whether the New Testament contains such at all⁶. However, the following observations are reasonably sustainable.

Firstly, whatever its origins⁷, there was a broadly recognisable literary genre of Haustafeln. **Secondly**, Haustafeln, whether traced back to Plato and Aristotle or Hellenistic Judaism, dealt with the duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and slaves⁸. **Thirdly**, such instructions focused “on authority and subordination within these relationships... Typical of [their] content is the notion that the man is intended by nature to rule as husband, father, and master, and that not to adhere to this proper hierarchy is detrimental not only to the household but also to the life of the state any upsetting of the traditional hierarchical order of the household could be considered a potential threat to the order of society as a whole”⁹. **Fourthly**,

“what appears to remain distinctive in Christian usage is the application of a series of exhortations to different groups within the household”¹⁰. It seems that the New Testament contains distinctively Christian Haustafeln. **Fifthly**, although there is, as we shall see, distinctively Christian content to the Haustafeln, there is a *prima facie* case - in view of the literary genre - for expecting Paul to operate within the authority/subordination framework of Haustafeln and there is therefore a burden of proof resting upon those who wish to dispute this. If we find that this burden of proof is not discharged, the following question must then be addressed: is Paul simply telling Christians to adapt to their culture or is he laying down principles which will always be universally applicable? This is a crucial question for the contemporary evangelical and is essential to proper exegesis of the verse under consideration.

Exegesis

Verse 23 begins with the causal conjunction, *hoti* (= because). Verse 23 is somewhat explanatory of verse 22. Verse 22 lacks a verb which is, therefore, supplied by the participle in verse 21, *hupotassomenoi*. *Hupotasso* is made up of the preposition, *hupo* (= under) and the verb, *tasso* (= to place in a certain order). Thayer gives the following meaning to this compound verb: “to arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, to put in subjection”¹¹. The middle voice in verse 21 means “to subject oneself, to obey”. The verb describes submission, subordination, or obedience in the following: Luke 2:51; 10:17-20; 1 Peter 2:13,18. In 1 Peter 3:1 & 5, the word describes the attitude and behaviour which a wife should display to her husband. Peter uses the term in 5:5a of the submission to be given by the younger to the elders. Some manuscripts have the term in 5:5b to define the mutual submission which each is to offer the other. Paul’s usage of the term is not dissimilar to Peter’s. He uses it in Romans 13:1 & 5 and in Titus 3:1. These examples demonstrate the weakness of the argument which seeks to drive a firm wedge between *hupotasso* and *hupakouo*. *Hupakouo* is the verb used in Ephesians 6:1 & 5 of the obedience to be rendered by a child to its parents and by a slave to his master. But the same verb is used by Peter in 1 Peter 3:6 of Sarah who “obeyed Abraham and called him her master”. Sarah is introduced in verse 6 as an example of the godly women of the past who had been referred to in verse 5 as those who “were submissive to their own husbands”. In verse 5, the verb is *hupotasso* and, in verse 6, it is *hupakouo*. *Hupotasso* had already been used in verse 1.

In Ephesians 5: 21, the participle from *hupotasso* describes the mutual submission which believers are to show to each other in place of insisting on their own rights [cf 4:2 & 3]. This is incumbent on all Christians. This last point notwithstanding, Paul then specifies certain relationships where submission is required of one party within the relationship. These are wives to husbands [v 22], children to parents [6:1-3], and slaves to masters [6:5-8].

A number of considerations put beyond all dispute the fact that the wife is to submit to the husband *in a way that the husband is not to submit to the wife*. **Firstly**, while it is true that fathers and masters are to treat their children and slaves, respectively, with the respect and consideration implied by the submission enjoined in 5:21, children and slaves are commanded to obey their parents and masters but the parents and masters are not commanded to obey their children and slaves but to guard against abusing the subordinate position of the children and slaves. Similarly, the wife is specifically commanded to submit to her husband but he is not specifically commanded to submit to her. It may be

objected that the wife is not specifically commanded to love her husband. The absence of this command in the present passage should not negate this duty on the wife. Thus, it may be argued, the absence of a specific command to the husband to submit to his wife does not negate such a duty, which is entailed by verse 21. Thus, Paul is concerned with mutual submission and, in that context, addresses the specific sins to which husband and wife are respectively vulnerable. For a number of reasons this analysis of the passage cannot be sustained nor, therefore, is an objection sustainable to the exegesis thus far. To begin with, the kind of submission required of the wife is, as we shall see, a loving submission. Love is implied in the command to submit. Secondly, the analysis I am rejecting proves too much: if the command of verse 21 negates the possibility of a specific kind of submission on the part of the wife, it will necessarily negate any other kind of specific submission. What will this do to Romans 13:1 & 5, not to mention Ephesians 6:1-3 and 5-8?

The second consideration which clearly demonstrates that Paul is enjoining a specific submission on the part of the wife is supplied in verse 24. This verse has an "as ... so" formulation: *hos ... houtos*.

Hypotassetai describes the submission which the Church gives to Christ. That word, used in the first clause, must be supplied in the second clause. The wife is to submit to her husband in the same way that the Church submits to Christ. The submission of the Church is a loving submission, not a servile affair. Space forbids a treatment of the nature of this submission. Lincoln has an excellent treatment of the Church's submission as a pattern of the wife's submission¹².

A third consideration should be noted, which reinforces the arguments in favour of the interpretation which has been offered. The specific mention of *idiois* (= their own) in verse 22 indicates that the wife is to submit to her husband in a way in which she is not required to submit to everyone else.

The force of the causal conjunction, *hoti*, at the beginning of verse 23 can now be appreciated. Verse 23 gives the reason for the command of verse 22 and forms the base for the elaboration of this command in verse 24. Verse 23 is thus an indicative foundation for the imperatives of verses 22 and 24. Since those imperatives focus on a kind of subordination, it is impossible to exclude a connotation of authority from the term, *kephale*. While it is certainly true that the husband is not commanded to rule his wife and that the analogy, as concerns the husband's duty, is worked out in terms of care and concern for one's body, this fact must not be allowed to obscure the clear fact that the function of the concept of *kephale* in verse 23 is to ground the basis for the wife's duty of submission. The concept functions in that way since it is an objective reality. Both husband and wife need to recognise this objective reality precisely because it is an objective reality. This objective reality is compared with the reality of Christ's headship of His Church [v 23]. This reality functions in verse 24 as the basis of the Church's submission to Christ. Therefore, inherent in the concept of Christ's headship of His Church is the notion of authority. This does not exhaust the concept of Christ's headship, since His headship of His Church is a particular kind of headship which, at certain points, is necessarily, different from His headship over all [1: 22]. But while the notion of authority does not exhaust the meaning of Christ's headship of His Church, it cannot be excluded from 5:23, without seriously skewing the obligations of wife and Church referred to in verses 22 and 24.

The exegesis offered must now be tested against the interpretation which denies that

kephale, in this passage, implies a specific, corresponding submission. Such an interpretation views the term as referring to “source”. The question must be asked, how is a husband the source of his wife? To this we now turn.

It might be argued that Christ’s headship in Ephesians 5:23 must be tied back to His headship in 4:15. The dominant feature of the head/body imagery of 4:4-16 is Christ’s loving provision for His Church which allows her to grow and mature. Thus her life derives from Him and is sustained by Him. In this case, the husband’s headship means that he is lovingly to care for his wife and that she will truly express herself and develop as he thus cares for her. In this sense, Christ is the source of the Church and the husband is the source of his wife. This interpretation is excellent in what it affirms but is inadequate because of what it omits and what it may implicitly deny.

Ephesians 4, while emphasising Christ’s provision for His Church also emphasises His authority. Thus, verse 8 having referred to Christ’s triumphal ascension, verse 11 stresses the gifts and order which Christ gave to His Church. Verse 11 stresses not only that gifts were given by Christ but also that it was He who gave them. Thus, His gifts were an expression of both His generosity and His authority. Indeed, the very gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:11, while equipping God’s people for the service by which the Church grows and matures [vv 12-15], also express Christ’s authority over His Church. For example, the gift of apostles was the gift of those who exercised a very real authority in the Church, an authority which derived from Christ Himself [cf 1 Cor 14:37; Gal 1:11ff; 1 Thess 2:13; 2 Thess 3:6-15]. That Christ provides for His Church’s life does not negate the fact of His headship over His Church; nor does the fact that the husband is to care for his wife negate the fact that his headship involves subordination on his wife’s part. However, even if one could exclude elements of authority from Christ’s headship in Ephesians 4, which one cannot, the problem would remain that the term functions in 5:23 as the reason why the wife is to submit. If one confined the semantic equivalent of *kephale* to “source”, one would have to say that the referent in the verse carries authority/subordination connotations because it functions as the basis of the wife’s subordination.

It remains to consider whether Paul’s teaching is to be “culturally confined”. The essential point is that the objective reality of headship undergirds the wife’s duty. It is this fact which demonstrates that Paul is not simply telling Christian women not to be subversive. If they were tending that way because of a misunderstanding of their freedom in Christ, he explains that submission is always normative. If he is merely reinforcing, with certain refinements, the prevailing *Haustafeln*, he is giving a theological basis to customs recognised even by those outside the pale of special revelation. In other words, whatever the “*Sitz im Leben*” which we reconstruct as the background to Ephesians, Paul goes out of his way to stress the universality of what he says.

Wider Concerns

The exegesis offered in this study may have relevance to other passages if we bear in mind the following points:

1. Ephesians 5:22-24 does not provide as many exegetical difficulties as 1 Corinthians 11:3-16; 14: 33-36; 1 Tim 2:11-15. Conclusions reached in exegeting clearer texts may assist in exegeting more problematic texts.
2. Some exegetes are hermeneutically controlled in their exegesis of the controverted texts referred to in 1. above by “egalitarian” texts, such as Genesis 1:26-30 and

Galatians 3:28. Foundational to their hermeneutic is the conviction that subordination is inconsistent with the equality specified in these texts and, therefore, the controverted texts cannot express a universally applicable subordinationism. This is how evangelicals equally committed to Scripture's authority can so widely differ in their interpretation. However, once it is grasped that a relatively straightforward passage of Scripture which deals with gender differences within marriage specifically links headship to subordination, the legitimacy of the control factors in the "egalitarian hermeneutic" becomes questionable.

This is not to foreclose exegesis of the controverted texts, nor to say that the exegesis offered in this study *demands* that the other texts be made to yield a "subordinationist" meaning. It is saying that where similar terms and ideas are found in other texts as are found in Ephesians 5, there will not be a compelling reason from "outside" those texts for resisting subordinationism, particularly where the exegesis would be consistent with the subordinationism found in Ephesians 5.

One cannot ignore the following facts. Paul's use of the body analogy in Ephesians 5 traces the analogy back to Genesis 2 and is in terms of the husband being the head. In 1 Cor 11:3-16, Paul similarly refers to Christ's headship, the man's headship, and goes back to Genesis 2 as the basis of gender distinctions. In 1 Cor 14:33-36, gender differences within the Church are discussed in the context of spiritual gifts. Paul calls for *hupotassesthosan* (= submission, coming from the *hupotasso* word group) of the women and goes on to speak of their relation with their husbands. In 1 Timothy 2:11-15, Paul's call for the woman's *hupotage* (= submission) is tied not primarily to the woman's sin but to Adam's primogeniture. It is impossible not to see the connecting links (head, submission, the creation account in Genesis 2) between these passages and Ephesians 5. The connecting links are far more tightly meshed with Ephesians 5 than with Galatians 3 and, as has been demonstrated, Ephesians 5:22 is not culturally confined in its application.

3. Verbal identity, as noted in 2 above, does not always entail semantic equivalence and care must be taken to avoid simplistic comparisons. Thus, Paul is able to use the "one flesh" language of Genesis 2 in a markedly different way in 1 Cor 6:16 from the way in which he uses it in Ephesians 5. Similarly, in 1 Cor 11:3, Christ is expressed to be the head of the man in a way in which He is not expressed to be the head of the woman. In Eph 5, His headship over the Church includes men and women. Account must be taken of the nuanced way in which Paul uses terms to distinguish things that differ. However, this observation may tighten the connecting links between Eph 5 and 1 Cor 11, since Christ's headship over all His Church, male and female, in Eph 5 does not preclude the headship of the husband with respect to his wife.

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- 1 See, for example, Gordon D Fee 1 CORINTHIANS, Eerdmans 1987, p 502, n 42
- 2 British and Foreign Bible Society, London, 1958
- 3 Andrew T Lincoln, EPHESIANS, 1990, Dallas, Texas, p 351
- 4 e.g. Lincoln, op cit; William Hendriksen, EPHESIANS, London, 1972; D M Lloyd-Jones, LIFE IN THE SPIRIT, 1973, Edinburgh
- 5 On Haustafeln, see E G Selwyn, THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST PETER, London, Macmillan, 1947, pp 419 - 439; J P Sampley, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH, Cambridge, 1971, pp 17 - 25; Lincoln, op cit, 356 - 361

- 6 Wayne Grudem, 1 PETER, 1988, Leicester, p 42; N T Wright, COLOSSIANS & PHILEMON, 986, Leicester, pp 146 & 147
- 7 On origin of Haustafeln, see Lincoln, op cit, pp 357 - 359
- 8 ibid, pp 357 - 360
- 9 ibid, p. 358
- 10 ibid, p. 361
- 11 THE NEW THAYER'S GREEK - ENGLISH LEXICON, Jay P Green, 1981
- 12 Lincoln, op cit, p 372

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Stimulating the ministries of women

During the discussion at the 1995 BEC Study Conference, *The Ministry of Women*, Pastor Mike Daly gave the following examples of how women are encouraged to contribute to the life and fellowship of Great Whyte Baptist Church, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire.

1. A group of mature women meet to discuss the application of Titus 2:3-5 under the chairmanship of the pastor. They compile a list of issues which are better not handled in a mixed congregation, e.g. women in evangelism, in-vitro fertilisation, etc. They write papers on these subjects, discuss them with the pastor and hold 'seminars' to discuss them with younger women in the congregation.
2. They are encouraged to use their musical gifts in the church.
3. A list of 'diaconal' (=non-eldership) tasks is made. All women are asked, '*Would you like to do something for the Lord?*' All women in the church are asked; it is not limited to those with an office and no-one subsequently filling such a role becomes a 'deacon' for life.
4. Some are involved in visiting believers for pastoral fellowship. If a disciplinary visit is made by the pastor to a lady, he usually takes with him an older lady or a married couple. They are encouraged to do 'sick visiting' of women and families with children.
5. Suitably gifted women conduct Discipleship or Baptismal Classes for younger women. Women teach children in the Mothers & Toddlers context and in Sunday School.
6. Women are asked to show hospitality at home for fellowship and evangelism.
7. Some are assisting in the local Christian Bookshop.
8. Women are welcome to attend and participate in Church Members' meetings.
9. Some mature women are consulted over matters which the pastor initiates.
10. All are expected to exercise a ministry of prayer, privately and corporately.
11. They are urged to correspond with missionaries, to promote the support of women missionaries and to liaise with them.

Cults Update

Eryl Davies

On 18 November 1978 in the forests of Guyana, 913 members of the **People's Temple** cult committed suicide on the instructions of their leader, the Rev Jim Jones. Brought up by God-fearing parents in Indiana, Jim Jones seemed a likeable person. By 1965 Jones and his church were accused of fraud and promiscuity so they later moved to California and eventually to Guyana with the intention of setting up a Utopian socialist commune. It was in 1970 that he announced to people that he was the successor divinely chosen to lead people to God. Using sex, blackmail and violence he finally coerced his followers to commit suicide; men, women and children lined up to drink orange squash mixed with cyanide. News of the Jonestown massacre shocked the world but since then the growth in the number of cults has continued at an astonishing rate. The tragedy of Jonestown 1978 is by no means an isolated event.

Early in 1990, for example, a cult leader in the United States was arrested near the Mexican border for the ritual killing of an Ohio family of five. The cult leader, Jeffrey Lundgren was a former Sunday School teacher and guide in the Reorganised Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Ohio, a breakaway from the Mormon Church. Or do you remember the Waco disaster? On 28 February 1993, four United States FBI agents were killed as authorities raided the **Branch Davidian** cult headquarters in Waco in Texas. It all ended in even greater tragedy on 19 April when the compound burned to the ground after US agents launched an assault using tanks and tear-gas. At least eighty five cultists died, including the founder David Koresh, a self-styled 'Messiah'. Koresh, his real name was Vernon Howell, gained the leadership position quite deceitfully in 1986. In 1979 he had been expelled by the Seventh Day Adventists; some months after visiting Jerusalem in 1985, Koresh announced that he was the Messiah. His background was extremely unhappy; the illegitimate son of a fifteen-year-old girl, he was later abused by his stepfather.

During 1993 the **Family of Love** or **Children of God** were investigated in countries like Argentina, France and England. In France, for example, twenty one cult members were charged with inciting children to perform sexual acts. The English headquarters and country house are located in Dunton Bassett in Leicestershire where 'free-love' is allowed between consenting adults and children over the age of sixteen.

On 5 October 1994 forty eight cult members of the Canadian based **Order of the Solar Temple** were found dead in Switzerland in two separate locations. The cult leader was Luc Jovret, a forty six year old homeopathic doctor who had recruited his members from among civil servants in Quebec. Jovret thought the world would end by 2000 AD and that, prior to this, there would be wars and plagues. Jovret spoke continually about the magic of fire, of catastrophe and ruin.

The cult problem, however, is not confined to the West. Eastern Europe is now overrun by a multitude of cults from the West but some are also indigenous. For example, in the Ukraine, **Maria Devi Khristos** claimed to be the reincarnation of Christ and to have a mission to save mankind; she also predicted the end of the world in mid-November 1993.

Her followers exceeded 150,000, most of whom were brainwashed and isolated from friends and relatives. Or think of China. In the summer of 1992, police in rural north-east China stopped a hundred cult members from committing mass suicide. They had been told that the end of the world was imminent and that, if they jumped off the cliff, they would go to heaven immediately. There are also examples of some cult members killing their own children in order to emulate the Old Testament story of Abraham and Isaac while some drowned in rivers vainly expecting an 'ark of salvation' to be lowered from heaven to rescue them.

In Korea, a Christian-based group prophesied that the end of the world would occur in late October 1993. I was in the country at the time; it was an anxious period as thousands of people resigned their jobs, sold their homes, waited in vain for the end of world history. Some were arrested by the police for disturbing the peace and threatening national security. Later in February 1994 a prominent Korean theologian, Tak Myung-Hwan, was murdered for speaking out against the cults. He was brutally beaten outside his apartment in Seoul. Previously he had received many death threats and survived several attempts on his life including a car bomb in 1985 and a stabbing in 1992. About three hundred and fifty cults in Korea claim Christian affiliation, involving an approximate two million members.

Jim Morris, Director of Overseas Ministries of the *Overseas Missionary Fellowship* reports that, "Asia is witnessing a flurry of religious cult activity." He warns that, "their appeal cannot be dismissed, because their followers are many and not all are from the fringes of society."¹ A theology lecturer in Singapore explains that, "the punishing pace of life and the relentless push towards materialism means many people experience a vacuum in their lives. They seek answers and relief in various ways. Cults and New Age groups are invading the marketplace and promising to meet people's deepest needs."² In Japan, new religions and cults are growing at a phenomenal rate. The Japan Evangelical Missionary Association has listed at least twenty new religions in Japan. Research indicates that at least half of the members in these new religious movements are young and in their twenties. One such cult, **Aum Shinrikyo** (Supreme Truth) was linked with the sarin poison nerve gas attack on five Tokyo subway trains which killed ten people and left nearly six thousand ill, some in a critical condition, in March 1995. This militant quasi-Buddhist cult teaches that the world will end in 1997; it claims to lead people to mystical experiences through practices said to include swallowing water and vomiting it up in order to 'purify' their bodies.

The cult problem is certainly international as well as contemporary. Apart from also being on your doorstep or in your area, the cults are beginning to exploit information technology. For example, a large American anarchist group is targeting Internet users in order to promote murder and the eating of human flesh. The group is called **The Cult of the Dead Cow**. The cult world provides an enormous challenge for Christians and churches today.

Questions

Why do people join these cults? A brief consideration of David Koresh's **Branch Davidians** in Waco, Texas may begin to help us towards finding answers to this question. At the outset, it is acknowledged that there are difficulties in studying the Waco phenomenon. For example, most of the cult's members have died so we cannot interview them and discover their own reasons for joining the Branch Davidians. Again, it is

difficult establishing the reliability of the sources of information which are available especially through the media.

Samuel Henry, whose wife and children died in the Waco fire, declared in THE GUARDIAN (20 April 1993): 'I can't understand it. I just can't understand how my family got themselves involved in this'. Nicholas Gilbert asks: 'Why should people choose to follow a rock-guitar, high-school drop-out who carried Messiah business cards and peppered his preaching with overt sexual references?'³ He argues persuasively that 'we can go a long way' towards answering this question by examining Koresh's exploitation of existing interpersonal bonds and ties in communities where he recruited. Numerous cult researchers have observed, especially in relation to the Moonies, that 'close ties' with a member of a cult are crucial in encouraging individuals to join. This is confirmed by the evidence that British recruits to the Branch Davidian cult had a 'double bond' with those who recruited them, namely, through family relationships and also their common links or background with the Seventh Day Adventists. Researchers like Lofland and Skonord⁴ suggest six different types (motifs) of conversion: intellectual, mystical, experimental, affectional, revivalist and coercive. The last four types seem more appropriate to Koresh disciples. It seems that curiosity was a major 'reason for people going initially to meetings held by Koresh but pressure to attend was not significant'. Koresh certainly exploited 'affectional' bonds and the social network while his stirring, dramatic and apocalyptic speeches were influential later in the recruitment process. Opinion is divided among sociologists and psychologists as to whether he used 'brainwashing' techniques or not and it is uncertain to what extent Koresh used physical force in his recruitment drive. Gilbert argues that Koresh used behaviour control rather than mind control in the conversion process.

Our discussion can be widened at this point to consider the appeal and 'charisma' of cult leaders. It is not true that all cults depend on the charisma of their leader. For example, the Watchtower Society does not any longer have one individual leader who stands out with charismatic leadership powers. On the other hand, many cults have leaders whose authority is almost absolute; their charisma and leadership are key factors in promoting their organisations. What is this '*charisma*' they have? It is extremely difficult to explain and the term has a wide range of meanings. Frequently there are personality qualities which attract people to the leader; he is often able to inspire others with awe, display self-confidence and even suggest some control over fate or claim to possess exclusively some infallible knowledge of what is going to happen in the future. Usually there is an ability to generate excitement and make oneself the object of rapt attention. These factors relate to what is called a neurophysical explanation of charisma. The macro-sociological/contextual explanation locates charisma within an essentially relational context especially as a quality of a relationship between the cult members and their leader. The psycho-analytic explanation goes further and seeks to identify and explain why factors of social change contribute to this special relationship. For example, feelings of anxiety, guilt, insecurity and conflict can be produced by domestic and social changes. Individuals can then seek to resolve these feelings by appealing to an 'ideal' figure. Or does charisma flow out of a particular framework of social relationships in which both sides attribute value and status to one another? If so, the leader tries to live up to the image while others, appointed to assist, work to improve his image even further. A sociologist, Bryan Wilson, offers this explanation and illustrates it from his study of Moses David, the former leader of the Family of Love.

While it is difficult to explain adequately the charisma of cult leaders there is a warning for us. In a cult, generally one person stands out and claims to be 'special' and makes extra-ordinary claims for him or herself. To what extent has this type of leadership been encouraged in Christian circles?

Non-violent cults

Christian Science has been in decline in the United Kingdom since its peak of probably 30,000 active members in the 1930s. The cult now uses smaller buildings, receives less media attention and is dominated by older middle-class women; its membership fell to 12,000 in 1987 and to 9,500 in 1995. The **Children Of God** cult, renamed as **The Family Of Love** lost its leader, David Berg, when he died in November 1994. Berg had previously changed his name to Moses David but he does not seem to have expressed any repentance for his erroneous teachings, writings and immorality. In October 1994 the British Criminal Injuries Compensation Board awarded a teenage girl £5,000 after having been abused by members of the cult from the age of three. Another cult leader who died, possibly because of Aids in 1990, is Rajneesh; his movement has since been renamed Osho. The **Divine Light Mission** now operates under the title **Elan Vital**. The UK CHRISTIAN HANDBOOK 1994/1995 reports: 'The previous instructors have left, except for Maharaj Ji. The group is no longer considered a religion and has renounced its Hindu connections... Presentations take place to give knowledge...'⁵. Today the **Christadelphian** movement is divided into a number of groups. The main world-wide group is known as the Central Fellowship with approximately 40,000 plus members. Other smaller groups include the Berean Fellowship, the Dawn Fellowship, Old Paths, Advocate and Servants of Christ. Divisions within Christadelphianism have arisen due to differences over subjects such as the inspiration of the Bible, the atonement, eschatology, church discipline and the practical life. Concerning justification, their general view is that faith, baptism and works are all part of man's response with each aspect being necessary and contributory. They have always denied the personality of the Holy Spirit but vary in their account of the Holy Spirit. The social, corporate life of the community approximates to the more exclusive Brethren groupings.

Discussion continues as to whether **Seventh Day Adventism** constitutes a cult. Several Adventists have written to me in recent years providing useful evidence that they accept unreservedly central doctrines such as justification by faith alone. Their formal statement is: 'This faith which receives salvation comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified...'; it adds further that justification is 'the divine act by which God declares a penitent sinner righteous'. This was further explained to me by an Adventist minister: 'When this declaration takes place the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer... justification is by faith alone and does NOT have anything to do with work or merits...'. These statements are unambiguous and, if embraced by all members and ministers, show us that Adventists formally embrace this key Reformational doctrine of justification which, as Calvin observed, is 'the hinge on which all true religion turns'.

Have you heard about the **Cooneyites** or 'Go-Preachers'? They arrange Gospel Mission Tents in different areas without any consultation with local churches. A recent REACHOUT TRUST newsletter⁶ refers to this kind of mission in a rural area near Leyland in Lancashire some months ago. Based on Matthew 10:7, they go from place to place, usually in groups of two, preaching their message. Preachers are expected to

renounce all possessions, including property, and accept the ideal of poverty. They are usually unmarried and supported by their house fellowships which have between 12-20 members led by an elder or bishop. The movement is more episcopal in terms of church government. Sadly, they are exclusivist in their attitude towards other Christians and churches. They are secretive about their movement and do not publish a magazine or books for sale. Gordon Melton thinks they 'are Trinitarian and orthodox in their view of Christ and salvation. Rebirth is the result of faith in the Word of God and proclaimed by a servant',⁷ that is, a preacher in their movement. Melton's summary of Cooneyite teaching, however, is questionable. For example, W M Rule studied this movement in detail some decades ago and interviewed several people who had formerly been Cooneyites.⁸ Rule reports that they believe the Bible is a 'Dead Book' until it is 'made to live' through one of their own preachers. Former members reported that they had rarely heard the blood of Christ preached. The movement appears to claim that the work of Christ is not yet finished and misuse the words of Acts 1:1 '... of all that Jesus *began* both to do and teach...'⁹. Their claim to be exclusive is cultic and Christians need to beware of this movement.

David Burnett claims with justification that 'one of the most surprising movements of recent times has been the growth of Paganism and witchcraft within Western societies'.¹⁰ An academic journal refers to 'the modern occult revival'¹¹ taking place in the areas of Paganism, ritual magic and witchcraft. In the United Kingdom, the repeal of the witchcraft law in 1951 was significant in encouraging the pagan movement to surface, recruit and publicise its ideas in various ways. Did you know that there is a large mail order company (called *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*) specialising exclusively in the occult with many thousands of customers? A large occult shop, called *Mysteries*, was opened in London in 1982 and it is claimed that trade doubles every six months. There are about a hundred different occult magazines and the largest occult publishing company is the *Aquarian Press*. An extensive Occult Census commissioned in 1989 in the UK revealed a conservative estimate of 250,000 witches/pagans with many more hundreds of thousands who dabble or are interested in occult and pagan rituals/practices. The majority of people participating in the Census were under 40 and 67% were attracted to neo-paganism before the age of eighteen. Pagans claim that they embrace religious beliefs and practices which are much older than those of Christianity. They also insist that they are different from Satanists. It is not easy to explain what paganism is although three central teachings commonly shared by pagans involve the Earth goddess, polytheism including the 'horned god', and then a 'transpersonal psychology' with a view of man's nature strongly influenced by Carl Jung. Paganism is a 'diverse, pluralist and developing tradition...' in the UK and Burnett identifies 'four major streams'¹³: these are Wicca, Pagans, Magicians and Satanists. A degree of interaction often takes place between these streams.

There are many reasons why people become pagans. For some, it is a matter of following the traditions of their parents and even grandparents. Others are attracted by the movement's genuine concerns for ecology and valiant, often well-publicised, endeavours to protect woodlands and the countryside from developers. Paganism also provides a 'spiritual' base for various forms of feminism. Just as significantly, the movement offers a positive alternative to a secular society where materialistic, impersonal and non-spiritual values dominate. Pagans are also disillusioned with churches and Christianity. The denial of the miraculous and spiritual powers by church leaders and a

more cerebral approach to Truth serve to distance pagans from Christendom, as well as a seeming indifference to ecological and social issues. Professing Christians, too, appear to be inconsistent and lacking radical, biblical discipleship. Believers as well as churches need urgently to repent of sin and live more obediently as well as zealously under the lordship of Christ. The challenge to Christians is enormous. At the same time, people including pagans must hear the Word of God and be directed to the one, true, living God who alone is able to meet man's deepest needs.

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A revised and expanded edition of the author's book TRUTH UNDER ATTACK, dealing with cults and contemporary religions, has just been published by Evangelical Press, 368pp at £9.95, ISBN 0 85234 341 8.

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There is no need for the cults because everything they offer, and more, is given in Christ. They have no right to exist. . . if you feel He is not enough, and that you must turn to the cults for help or aid or assistance; if you say that he needs any help or assistance, you are denying Him, you are insulting Him. It is the 'wiles of the devil'. This faith, which has supported and strengthened and blessed the saints throughout the running centuries, and which has stood every conceivable test, is enough. You need not turn to some new-fangled idea that only began last century or this century. Go back to the 'Old, Old Story,' which is ever new and ever true.

D M Lloyd-Jones, THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE, p 145-6

Reformed Theology and Theonomy

- some comparisons

Philip Ross

The purpose of this article is to examine the differing views on the OT Penal Code within Reformed circles.¹ This issue is one which has been hotly debated in the American church over the last few decades with the rise of Theonomy in Reformed circles and beyond - with many charismatics and baptists being attracted to the movement². Theonomy has also gained a foothold in the UK with the propagation of theonomic views in a regular magazine.³ Theonomists and their opponents have brought disharmony and schism to the church making it an issue which requires attention. Furthermore, rising crime keeps law and order on the political agenda, making the teaching of the Bible on civil justice especially relevant.

Discussion in this article will be restricted to the differences in the views traditionally held by Reformed Christians and those held by Theonomists. Particular consideration will be given to the relevance of OT penalties in the modern nation state, with adultery being taken as an example. As the penal code is part and parcel of OT law, it will be necessary to consider the wider issue of the relevance of OT law as a whole. Differences will be highlighted in the following areas: Law in covenant theology, law and fulfilment, the underlying principles of Mosaic penology and its contemporary relevance.⁴

Comparing traditional Reformed understanding of the Mosaic civil code with theonomic thought is not a straightforward task, due to the diversity within Reformed thinking itself.⁵ However, there are certain aspects on which Reformed thinking has taken a consistent line - a line consistently different from that of Theonomy. Before focusing on these differences it should be pointed out that theonomic covenant theology is not a total perversion of Reformed covenant theology. There is more *agreement* than *disagreement* between the two. Nevertheless it is this disagreement which results in different conclusions on OT law.

Axiomatic to theonomic covenant theology is Bahnsen's assertion that "We should presume that Old Testament standing laws⁶ continue to be morally binding in the New Testament, unless they are rescinded or modified by further revelation."⁷ He outlines the basis for this axiom in "Continuity Between the Covenants on the Law" (Chapter 15 of BY THIS STANDARD).

He argues that "God's law is perpetual in its principles" and is not only a Mosaic institution. The law can be seen in the pre-lapsarian order, the patriarchal period and the Mosaic administration. The law in all these periods reflects the immutability of God. Hence it is not to be abrogated unless the NT specifically commands it. On a superficial level there seems to be little difference at this point between Bahnsen and Reformed theology, with similar language being used by Reformers and Federalists. However, Bahnsen's use of "law" is ambiguous. When the Federalists spoke of law in this way they generally were referring to natural law and not biblical law as is the case with

Bahnsen. They saw continuity between law in the covenant of works and in the civil law, on the basis that natural law was enshrined in the civil law. The Westminster Divines did not appeal to the civil law on the grounds that it was still binding. Rather they were making indirect appeal to the perpetual principles of natural law, recognising that the Mosaic civil law was an infallible interpretation of natural law, being uncorrupted by depraved human thought. It therefore appears that while the Federalists saw pre-lapsarian natural law enshrined in post-lapsarian civil law, Bahnsen sees the entire post-lapsarian civil law enshrined in pre-lapsarian natural law. This leads to the conclusion that the civil law itself is the unalterable law of nature which is written on the heart of man (Rom 1:18-21).

Bahnsen asserts that the “law given through Moses served the Abrahamic covenant of promise, rather than being antithetical to it.”⁸ While the majority of covenant theologians would agree that the law served the promise, few go so far as to deny that there is no antithesis whatsoever. However, when Bahnsen goes on to assert that “the Abrahamic promise ... serves the purposes of the Mosaic law” he is more seriously out of alignment with Reformed theology.⁹ The implication in these statements is that the promise was at points subservient to the law or at best equal. Whilst Reformed theology has indeed upheld the “works” principle in the Mosaic covenant, law was always understood to serve the promise and never the other way round. To suggest that the promise serves the law implies that the law has the goal of redemption in itself. Although faith and works are inextricably linked in biblical theology, the law serves the promise. It is the promise itself which has the goal of redemption. Furthermore, in Reformed thought the principle of inheritance by works in the Mosaic era is especially typical of the work of Christ, which fulfils the law and achieves eternal rest for the people of God in the heavenly Canaan. In other words, just as the children of Israel had to obey God’s law in order to enter Canaan and remain there, so Christ had to live in perfect obedience in order that he and his people might enter eternal rest.

Law and Fulfilment

Theonomic exegesis does not stress that the kingdom of Israel was typological both covenantally and ethically. This situation is largely brought about by their view that church and state were separate in Israel. Bahnsen asserts that the “alleged merger of church and state in the Old Testament is simply based on little familiarity with Old Testament realities as presented in Scripture.”¹⁰ He is correct to see a distinction between cultic and state activities, but it does not necessarily follow that the cultic functions equal the church in both old and new administrations, whilst the state of Israel is the same as any other state. Reformed theologians do recognise continuity between Israel and the church, but the church continues from Israel as a theocratic nation (seen for example in the king having both cultic and civil functions), not just from the cultic function of Israel. The result of the theonomic division of church and state is that the unique covenantal setting of the civil law is barely recognised. Hence, it can easily be uprooted and replanted in any culture.

Reformed thinkers and theologians place a different emphasis on the pedagogical function of the law and the nature of its fulfilment in Christ. Bahnsen’s normative perspective¹¹ brings him to see the letter of the law as having abiding relevance on all nation states. He does not see its pedagogical role as unique to Israel. Rather its pedagogical function is individual and continuous, convicting the believer of sin and

bringing him to seek Christ.¹² This position is similar to that of William Tyndale and Robert Dabney who, like theonomists, tended to view the law outside its redemptive-historical context. Their understanding is based on a popular and often romanticised misinterpretation of Galatians 3:24, which suggests that the preaching of the gospel consists of thundering the law at sinners and then calming their fears with the sweet promises of the gospel.¹³

The majority of Reformed theologians see the law as having a special pedagogical role in redemptive history. Galatians 3:24 is understood to speak of the law as a means of showing Israel her sin and bringing her to look for the consolation of Israel.¹⁴ Therefore the coming of Christ brings the cumulative fulfilment of the law a stage further forward and abrogates that particular tutelary role of the law. Calvin understood this abrogation in the sense that "it is not to believers what it formerly was; in other words, that it does not, by terrifying and confounding their consciences, condemn and destroy."¹⁵ Karlberg shows that Puritan Tobias Crisp held a similar view: "With the coming of Christ at his incarnation, the full manifestation of God's redeeming grace to sinners terminates the need for the pedagogical use of the law in the history of redemption."¹⁶ **It is the theonomists' failure to understand this that brings them to affirm the continuing validity of the law in its every detail.**

Differences in the understanding of fulfilment also surface in relation to the penal code itself. Reformed writers see the penalties as being typical of God's judgment on sin in the substitutionary work of Christ and the final judgment. Like the sacrifices, the penalties were parabolic in character serving the pedagogical function of bringing the spiritually minded to look for a penal substitute. The penalties had the principles of reconciliatory restitution and retribution at their core. Christ bore that penalty for his people. Those who reject Christ will spend eternity suffering retribution and seeking to do the impossible task of paying restitution to an offended God. While theonomists do point out that principles of divine justice are embedded in the law, they do not highlight the principle of typology, bringing them to argue that Mosaic penology is the standard for today's state.

Vital to Bahnsen's case for the "abiding validity of the law in exhaustive detail" is his exegesis of **Matthew 5:17-19**. Gordon is correct when he states that "if Bahnsen cannot make his case from this text, his case is not made."¹⁷

Bahnsen argues that *ton nomon* cannot be restricted to the moral law, but that it covers the entire Mosaic code. The next phrase, *tous prophetas*, is understood to refer to all non Pentateuch books, but not to predictive prophecy, only "the ethical standards of the entire Older Testament."¹⁸ He continues with exhaustive discussion on the meaning of *plerosai*, reaching the conclusion that *plerosai* stands in opposition to *katalusai* (abolish) and therefore means "confirm". To prove that his translation is not a theonomic peculiarity he calls Calvin to his defence.

Bahnsen finds further support for the theonomic thesis in the verse 18. Jesus did not merely "confirm" the broad principles of the law but every jot and tittle. Indeed he could do little else, for the law in all its detail will stand till the end of days. He argues that the final phrase should be translated "till everything comes to pass" and suggests that the translation "until all is fulfilled" is a perversion. The reason for his antipathy to the latter translation is that it can be interpreted as referring to the work of Christ rather than the *parousia*.

Bahnsen's gives the impression that the Reformed tradition since the days of Calvin

supports his exegesis of this passage and his conclusions. However, both Bahnsen's understanding of the nature of confirmation and the conclusions he reaches differ from those of Reformed theology.

First of all, his understanding of *tous prophetas* is markedly different. Although the scope of the phrase "law and prophets" may vary in scripture, Bahnsen engages in the eisegesis of which he accuses others,¹⁹ when he restricts the meaning to "ethical stipulations".²⁰

The pivotal argument for Bahnsen is his assertion that *pleroo* should be translated "confirm". Apart from the fact that his translation cannot make sense without reading "ethical stipulations" into "prophets", Vern Poythress has shown that the semantic evidence he presents is weak and that the standard lexicons are correct in supplying "fulfil".²¹ Whilst Bahnsen's claim that Calvin and others spoke of Christ confirming the law it is clear from their overall theology of law that they were not saying what Bahnsen is saying. This can be seen when Bahnsen quotes from Calvin and Vos where both are referring to the entire covenant rather than the law itself.²² Furthermore, the quote²³ from Calvin shows that he uses confirmation in the sense of fulfilment or evidence of true prophecy.

The Underlying Principles of Mosaic Penology

Theonomists and their opponents are agreed that undergirding biblical penology is the divine principle: "I will do with you as you have done" (Ezek 16:59; Obad 1:15). This manifests itself in the *lex talionis*: "life for life ..." (Ex 21:23-25). It is this *lex talionis* principle of "perfect legal reciprocity" which is seen in Mosaic penology. Harsh punishments seen in other Ancient Near Eastern states such as cutting off hands for striking one's father²⁴ or a nurse's breast being cut off over contractual disagreements²⁵ are not found in biblical penology. Nor were there different standards for rich and poor.²⁶ Restitution is the main outworking of this reciprocity. This is clear in cases of both accidental damage and theft (Ex 21:33-22:15). In the case of accidental damage where no harm was intended, single-fold restitution is required, with the damaged animal or goods being replaced. In the case of theft two-fold restitution was the common penalty. Single-fold restitution would not bring justice. If the thief simply returns the stolen property he suffers no loss. It is not done to him, as he sought to do to his victim. Justice is only done when he experiences the loss which he sought to inflict on another. In situations of serious theft when the animal stolen is necessary for life, restitution is four or five-fold, reflecting the gravity of the offence.²⁷ The same principle is seen in capital punishment for murder. Although perfect justice cannot be achieved in time, as the murderer cannot restore the life he took, he can be made to suffer as his victim suffered. Mosaic penology did not exist simply to administer pure justice. It served to restore harmony and peace to the community. Van Ness points out that *SHILLUM* (restitution) was to bring *SHALOM* (peace), for justice and righteousness bring peace (Is 32:16-18). OT justice did not give the criminal pariah status, it reintegrated him into society. Its ultimate aim was the reconciliation of individuals.

The Contemporary Relevance of the Penal Code

Having considered the approaches of various sectors of the Reformed community to OT law in general, it is now possible to discuss the penal code itself.

The theonomic belief that the civil code, "even its jots and tittles, has contemporary

obligation” makes it inevitable that theologians will argue for the abiding validity of all Mosaic penology. Bahnsen does not believe that the Mosaic penalties allowed for any commutation. If they were just in Israel, they are just today - moral absolutes do not change.

Vern Poythress argues for a more flexible approach. Following the Reformed tradition he views the laws from both a normative and situational perspective. Hence he sees the death penalty as valid for crimes such as murder or “wholesale violation of parental authority”.²⁸ However, penalties for false worship or Sabbath breaking were unique to the situation of Israel as a holy community, of no relevance to the modern state.

In his discussion of the Mosaic penalties in Hebrews,²⁹ Dennis Johnson does not go as far as Poythress. He concentrates on the typological aspect of penalties, seeing the antitype in church discipline. He believes that the “justice of these sanctions is specially qualified by the covenant bond”.³⁰ He apparently views the penalties only from the situational perspective.

Case Studies

Most of those holding to the traditional Reformed position would concur with the theonomic view that OT law could be of benefit to contemporary Western society. Both camps could agree that it would be of benefit to society³¹ and prisoners³² if restitution were to be used instead of imprisonment as a punishment for theft.³³ Similarly, few would object to the argument that biblical standards of evidence should be adopted. Mosaic law insisted that two or three witnesses were necessary before anyone could be put to death (Num 35:30; Deut 17:6; 19:15). English law allows for conviction on the basis of only one piece of evidence (Scottish law requires two). If the biblical principle had been followed some of the best known cases of wrongful execution in British legal history would never have occurred.

Agreement, however, is not reached so easily in every case. Whenever a theologian declares his belief in the continuity of Mosaic penology in the case of adultery, someone objects: “But what about the woman taken in adultery?” (John 8:1-11). Bahnsen believes that it strengthens rather than weakens the theonomic case, as Christ upholds the law demanding two or three witnesses (Deut 19:15), of which there were none after the departure of the accusers.³⁴

The implication in the question: “But what about the woman taken in adultery?” is that Christ abrogated the death penalty for adultery. This is by no means clear and Bahnsen’s arguments are not unreasonable. Dan McCartney in his contribution to *THEONOMY - A REFORMED CRITIQUE* does not argue that the penalty was abrogated but that Jesus shows his typical concern with heart application of the law.

Both positions have weaknesses. Arguments concerning Christ’s attitude to the law are a major irrelevance. Until the veil of the temple was torn, all old covenant laws still stood.³⁵ How could Christ have abrogated the penalty of the law before he had fulfilled it and changed its role in the inauguration of the new covenant with his blood? In order to atone for sin Christ had to live in complete conformity to these laws and could only uphold them (e.g. Lk 5:14). The theonomic argument that Christ upheld the laws no more supports their case than it would to argue that Moses did. On the other hand, the anti-theonomic Reformed argument that Christ was concerned with heart obedience does not support the Reformed case. Christ, like Jeremiah (Jer 4:4) and Moses (Deut 10:16), was simply pointing out that God wanted religion of the heart and not only external

conformity. The question therefore remains: "Should adulterers be put to death?" In considering whether any Mosaic penalty is essential to the "general equity" of the law, the Reformed interpreter asks: "Is this penalty unique to the situation of Israel as the covenant people of God, or is it normative for all nations at all times?" In certain cases the penalties are clearly situational in view of their primary religious significance (Ex 31:12-17; Deut 13:5). Other penalties such as the death penalty for adultery (Lev 20:10; Deut 22:21-24) are not so simply dealt with.

This penalty may seem harsh to the contemporary Christian whose values have been shaped by a society which treats adultery as "a silly indiscretion" (John Major on Tim Yeo's affair). But at the heart of this law is the principle of "a life for a life". Someone who commits adultery with a married woman violates the closest relationship which two humans can have. Marriage makes two people one flesh (Gen 1:24). If that relationship is penetrated by a third party, the joint existence and life of the married couple is so destroyed that the destruction of the adulterers is a just penalty.

This issue might appear to be complicated by the Mosaic allowance of divorce for immorality (Deut 24:1-4), but this is not the case. Gary North provides a cogent argument that the frequent pleonasm "he shall surely die" could be relaxed if the victim so desired. He sees the principle of victims being allowed to show mercy as a human reflection of a God who shows mercy.³⁶ The fact that the Mosaic law allowed for two possible outcomes in the case of adultery points to an inbuilt flexibility; what North calls "victim's rights". Death was the maximum penalty; the minimum was mercy on both parties.

There is no reason why this penalty should be seen as entirely situational. Most modern states do not have any law against adultery but allow divorce in the case of marital infidelity. In terms of Mosaic law this is not unjust. Nor would it be unjust for a state to allow capital punishment in the case of adultery, unless the state failed to allow for "victim's rights". Clearly theonomists would happily see the death penalty for adultery. Others who hold to the Reformed position hesitate. Poythress states: "I believe that there is room for debate on this matter."³⁷ In any case it is unlikely that any Western nation would allow for such a penalty. Nevertheless states could enact laws which serve to protect the sanctity of marriage and make the consequences of adultery disadvantageous for sexual infidels.

Conclusion

This examination of contemporary Reformed approaches to the OT penal code has compared both the theonomic and traditional arguments. Two things stand out:

First, the theonomic claim to be standing in the Reformed tradition is false. It has been demonstrated that theonomists differ from Reformed divines in many areas. Indeed Calvin would consider their views "perilous and seditious", "stupid and false".³⁸

Another feature of the debate is that while Reformed theologians have often been successful in disproving certain tenets of theonomy, they have failed to show how their own framework works in practice, *THEONOMY - A REFORMED CRITIQUE* being an example. The only recent Reformed work which has given proper consideration to the practical outworking of Mosaic civil laws is Poythress' *THE SHADOW OF CHRIST IN THE LAW OF MOSES*. Perhaps the reason why Reformed writers are so hesitant at this point is that they are afraid of the conclusions which might be reached.

Ultimately, the difference in practice between theonomists and Reformed theologians

can be reduced to their understanding of “general equity”. It is a popular misconception that theonomists wish to apply every case law in a wooden, literal way. Essentially the difference is that theonomists see every civil law as still standing, putting 20th century individuals under obligation to work out the “general equity” of every law and enforce it today (i.e. one hundred OT laws equals one hundred laws today). On the other hand, Reformed theologians do not hold to such strict continuity and seek to apply the “general equity” of the entire *corpus juris*. This means they may find the same “general equity” in ten Mosaic civil laws and apply that in establishing one or fifty civil laws today.³⁹ Even this difference in practice is not as great as is popularly imagined. In seeking to extrapolate the “general equity” of specific laws there is much agreement. The real differences are to be found in the heart of the theological frameworks. Until this is understood little progress will be made in resolving the theonomy debate.

References

- 1 The article consists of extracts from a larger piece of work A SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY REFORMED APPROACHES TO THE OLD TESTAMENT PENAL CODE AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE MODERN STATE. *Copies are available from the author.*
- 2 One example of this is Tom Brewer a frequent contributor to THEONOMY-L (a theonomy discussion list on the Internet) who signs himself off as “Baptist Irritant”
- 3 CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIETY - previously CALVINISM TODAY
- 4 Further discussion of these issues, New Testament Law Citations and eschatology can be found in A SURVEY ...
- 5 For a succinct overview of the history of Reformed thinking which demonstrates this diversity see Mark Karlberg’s article: ‘Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant’ in WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL 43, 1980, pp 1-57
- 6 He uses this expression to distinguish between laws which were enshrined in the Mosaic code and commands which were only relevant on one specific occasion
- 7 Bahnsen, Greg L, BY THIS STANDARD, Tyler, Institute for Christian Economics, 1985, pp 345 -6
- 8 *ibid*, p 146
- 9 *ibid*, p 147
- 10 *ibid*, p 287
- 11 Vern Poythress helpfully points out in his contribution to THEONOMY - A REFORMED CRITIQUE that theonomists’ exegesis is strongly influenced by their emphasis on the normative perspective. This perspective presupposes continuity in time and space, making the civil law normative for all ages and all nations. This is the opposite of intrusionist exegesis which is controlled by the situational perspective, presupposing discontinuity in time and space as a result of Israel’s special relationship to God. Israel is seen to be the type of which the consummate kingdom of God will be the anti-type. The Mosaic code was an intrusion of ethics from the heavenly kingdom, into the typological kingdom. Traditionally Reformed covenant theologians have combined both the normative and situational perspective, enabling them to recognise that whilst the civil law has abiding principles (“general equity”), continuous in space and time, it served the unique purpose in God’s covenantal dealings with his people of leading them to

Christ. Hence, according to Reformed theology only the “general equity” of the civil law was a standard for all nations.

- 12 Bahnsen, Greg L, BY THIS STANDARD, Tyler, Institute for Christian Economics, 1985, p 197 Bahnsen, Greg L, THEONOMY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS, Nutley, The Craig Press, 1977, p 271
- 13 For an example of this approach at its worst see Schenk, L B, THE PRESBYTERIAN DOCTRINE OF CHILDREN IN THE COVENANT, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1940 who gives the following quote from Gilbert Tennent which shows how this understanding of the law affects practice:
“Conversions, which are not preceded by a Work of the Law, are either in general, strong workings of the Fancy and Affections, mov’d in a natural way as in Tragedies; or the common Workings of the Spirit as in time Believers, and stony ground Hearers; or a Delusion or Satan!” p 64
- 14 For a contemporary Reformed interpretation see: M Silva’s comments in NEW BIBLE COMMENTARY, 21st Century Edition, IVP, 1994
- 15 Calvin, John, INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, Book II, VII, 4, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1970
- 16 Karlberg, Mark W, ‘Reformed Interpretation of the Mosaic Covenant’, WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL 43, 1980, p 29
- 17 Gordon, T David, ‘Critique of Theonomy: A Taxonomy’ WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL 56, 1994, p 28
- 18 Bahnsen, Greg L, THEONOMY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS, Nutley, The Craig Press, 1977, p 50
- 19 *ibid*, p 78
- 20 see Gordon’s helpful comments on the prophets as “executors of the Sinai covenant” ‘Critique of Theonomy: A taxonomy’, WESTMINSTER THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL 56, 1994, p 29
- 21 Poythress, Vern, THE SHADOW OF CHRIST IN THE LAW OF MOSES, Brentwood, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991, pp 363-377
- 22 Bahnsen, Greg L, THEONOMY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS, Nutley, The Craig Press, 1977, pp 56-57
- 23 “By these words [Matthew 5:17] he [Christ] is so far from departing from the former covenant, that on the contrary, he declared that it will be confirmed, and ratified, when it shall be succeeded by the new.”
- 24 cf: Pritchard, James B, ‘The Code of Hammurabi’, ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969, p 175, Law 195
- 25 *ibid*, Law 194
- 26 *ibid*, Laws 203-5
- 27 the reasons for the greater amount of restitution are a matter of dispute. See: Poythress, Vern, THE SHADOW OF CHRIST IN THE LAW OF MOSES, Brentwood, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991, pp 128-9 and p 383, n6 and Van Ness, Daniel W, CRIME AND ITS VICTIMS, Leicester, IVP, 1986, pp 190-191
- 28 Poythress, Vern, THE SHADOW OF CHRIST IN THE LAW OF MOSES, Brentwood, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991, p 189
- 29 Barker & Godfrey, THEONOMY - A REFORMED CRITIQUE, Michigan, Academie Books, 1990, pp 171-92
- 30 *ibid*, p 190

- 31 In 1993 the British taxpayer spent £1,288,300,000 on the prison system - £28,117 (avg) per prisoner per annum. Figure from THE PRISON SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 1993/1994, HMSO, London, 1995
- 32 In the UK 43 % of male prisoners lose their partners and families. See: 'Relational Justice - a new approach to penal reform', INSIGHT, Cambridge, Jubilee, 1994
- 33 For the description of the principles which undergird the prison system see: Van Ness, Daniel W. 'The Development of the Penitentiary', CRIME AND ITS VICTIMS, Leicester, IVP, 1986
- 34 Bahnsen, Greg L, THEONOMY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS, Nutley, The Craig Press, 1977, pp 231-2
- 35 This is of course a much debated area. Some argue from Matthew 19 that Jesus changed the law on adultery and others that he abolished the Mosaic divorce laws. Mark 7:1-23 is another passage which, it is argued, proves that Jesus changed laws relating to unclean food. However, Jesus could not change the law since he explicitly stated: "I did not come to abolish, but to fulfil." Fulfilment is different from abolition and could only be achieved in Christ's being treated as unclean on Calvary. Although Mark 7:19 may create some perplexity for the Reformed exegete, he recognises that "all things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves" and that Scripture interprets itself. Hence the clearer idea of fulfilment takes exegetical and theological prominence. For more detailed discussion of Mark 7 see: Lindars, Barnabas, (ed) LAW AND RELIGION, Cambridge, James Clark, 1988. Also see: Schreiner, Thomas, THE LAW AND ITS FULFILMENT, Grand Rapids, Baker, 1993 Schreiner does not make clear whether he believes the laws were abolished before or after Calvary.
- 36 North, Gary, TOOLS OF DOMINION, Institutes for Christian Economics, Tyler, 1990, pp 300-309. Bahnsen is "not yet convinced" commutations were allowed. See: THE LAW, THE GOSPELS AND THE MODERN CHRISTIAN: FIVE VIEWS, Strickland, Wayne G (ed), Michigan, Zondervan, 1993, p 136
- 37 Poythress, Vern, THE SHADOW OF CHRIST IN THE LAW OF MOSES, Brentwood, Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991, p 215
- 38 Calvin, John, INSTITUTES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, Book 4, 20, 14, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans. 1970
- 39 Greg Bahnsen confirmed in conversation that as far as he was concerned, my understanding of this difference is correct.

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If laws need to be luminous and definite in secular societies, where only temporal issues are concerned, and such laws have in fact been bestowed by Divine bounty upon all the world, how should he not give to Christians, His own people and His elect, laws and rules of much greater clarity and certainty by which to adjust and settle all issues between them?

M Luther, THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL, p 126

PAGAN SAINTS !

Hywel Jones

Some evangelicals are arguing for the view that at least some unevangelised people will be saved without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In this article we examine one aspect of that case, perhaps the most important of all, namely the biblical evidence claimed for it.

General Approach

Clark Pinnock has made a significant contribution to the study of the relationship between Christianity and World Religions. Having outlined some thoughts in article form, he has recently presented a fully worked out position on this pressing subject. His book is entitled *A WIDENESS IN GOD'S MERCY* but its sub-title is *The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions*. It is his conviction that the time has come for evangelical theologians to re-appraise their position on this matter and to adopt a more positive approach towards those of other faiths. He claims that the Bible presents such an outlook.

Pinnock's general approach and basic principles are in accord with those of Peter Cotterell in his book *MISSION AND MEANINGLESSNESS*. Negatively, he rejects the thinking of radicals like the late Bishop J A T Robinson, of pluralists like John Hick and inclusivists like the Roman Catholics Karl Rahner and Hans Kung. Positively, he adopts the view which regards General Revelation and the illumination of the Logos (Jn 1:9) as pointing strongly towards salvation by their means.

He uses a number of texts in support of this positive outlook. In addition to the well known passages in Acts 14 & 17, he refers to Deuteronomy 4:19 (see p 101). This verse explicitly prohibits Israel from worshipping the sun, moon and stars, describing them as "things which the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven". Pinnock regards this prohibition as applying *only* to Israel but he also deduces from the latter part of the verse that: "*With liberality* Yahweh permitted the nations to worship *him* in ways not proper for Israel to do" (italics ours).

The Deuteronomy text does not require the inclusion of the italicised words to exegete it. There is no suggestion in it that the nations were either worshipping God or that their worship met with divine approval. Pinnock reads that out of the verb "apportioned" which simply records the fact that in the divine administration of mankind the nations were left to practise idolatry. The same can be said about Pinnock's comment regarding Naaman (2 Kings 5:18). His interpretation goes beyond what Scripture actually says. He writes: "*God allowed* Naaman ... to worship in Rimmon's temple because of the delicate circumstances he was in" (italics ours). In point of fact there is no mention of God doing anything. Elisha's words "Go in peace" do not amount to a divine permission and Naaman himself knew he was doing wrong in what he proposed.

Two verses from Acts are referred to next, namely 14:16 and 17:30. They say much the same thing in different words, describing a divine sufferance of the thoughts and ways of the nations and not a saving pursuit of them on the part of God. Pinnock writes: "God overlooks the times of human ignorance (Acts 17:30) and passes over former sins (Romans 3:25). Is it possible that we have made God out to appear stingy? Should we

not rather be thankful for the wideness of his mercy?"

He seems to be understanding these verses, certainly the Romans reference, as being tantamount to divine forgiveness, whereas all they declare is that God did not intervene in judgment during the period stated and for the reason given. Postponement of judgment is not the same as pardon for sin.

Pagan Saints

Our main objective is to focus attention on one subject area of Pinnock's book. Though it is subsidiary to his main concern, it is not unimportant to his case. Because of its sustained use of Scriptural data it is, arguably, the corner stone of his whole argument. The title of this article "*Pagan Saints!*" indicates what that subject area is.

Without the exclamation mark, the title is actually taken from Pinnock's book. A "pagan saint" is someone who has faith but who is neither a member of Israel nor of the Church. He or she is not to be thought of as the equivalent of the "noble savage" in the romantic and liberal tradition of the nineteenth century in the western world. By this striking juxtaposition of adjective and noun Pinnock is drawing attention to something *in the Bible* which, he is convinced, has not generally been recognised. He calls it "the much neglected biblical theme" of "the holy pagan tradition".

In discussing this tradition, Pinnock does not dismiss the fact that a deceptive and corrupting influence is exerted in and by many religions, thinking of religions in the objective sense as sets of beliefs and related practices. This he traces in an unambiguous manner to Satan's activity. He does not mince his words on this subject despite the fact that, in the process, he criticises a christian religiosity as well (see pp 86-92). But though he rejects the idea that somehow all religions are valid ways to God, he does say that in the cases of Melchizedek and Jethro, both "pagan priests", that "their religions seem to have been vehicles of salvation for them", adding immediately "But it is not safe to overgeneralise from these cases" (p 107). We will consider these later.

It is in relation to "religion" in its subjective sense that he conceives of this holy pagan tradition. He finds it to consist of "faith, which is neither Jewish nor Christian, which is nonetheless noble, uplifting and sound". He gives these examples of it in Scripture: "believers like Abel, Noah, Job, Daniel, Melchizedek, Lot, Abimelech, Jethro, Rahab, Ruth, Naaman, the Queen of Sheba, the Roman soldier, Cornelius and others" (p 92). Of these Pinnock declares: "(They) were believing men and women who enjoyed a right relationship with God and lived saintly lives, under the terms of the wider covenant God made with Noah".

It is our view that the above statement needs to be examined. We will do so by looking first at what Pinnock says about covenants, before giving attention to what is actually said about them in the Bible. We might find that some of them really were saints, and not pagans; perhaps others really were pagans who became saints. We do not think that any of them were "pagan saints" in the way in which Pinnock defines the expression.

PAGAN SAINTS AND COVENANTS

A foundational passage for Pinnock's entire theological outlook on this matter is found in the following words:

"According to the Bible, persons can relate to God in three ways and covenants: through the cosmic covenant established with Noah, through the old covenant made with Abraham and through the new covenant ratified by Jesus. One may even speak

of salvation in the broad sense in all three of the covenants. Of course, there is a more complete saving knowledge of God in the new covenant than in the old, and more in the old than in the cosmic covenant, but a relationship with God is possible in the context of all three covenants. In all three, God justifies Jews and Gentiles on the ground of faith, the condition of salvation in all dispensations" (Rom.3:30) (p 102). We judge it to be a sound biblical principle that people can only relate to God in terms of a covenant which he makes with them. But this covenantal connection needs to be treated in a more discriminating way than Pinnock does and so we will draw attention first of all to what he says about the Abrahamic covenant and the Noahic covenant. We also want to consider a covenant which he does not mention. Having done that we think that we will be in a better position to come to some sort of conclusion about what he says concerning individual pagan saints.

The Abrahamic Covenant

It can be seen from the major quotation just included that Pinnock describes the Abrahamic covenant as "old". The New Testament, however, nowhere uses that adjective to describe it. Instead it denominates the Sinaitic covenant in that way (Heb 8:6-13). The New covenant is the fulfilment of the Abrahamic covenant and not its abrogation. By setting them in contradistinction from each other Pinnock makes it appear that they exhibit different ways of salvation, which they do not (see Rom 3 and Gal 3). They are one and the same in essence, in spite of their differences, because they focus on the same promised seed. Consequently, the saints under the Abrahamic and the New covenants are one people, not two.

The Noahic Covenant

As can be readily seen from the above quotation, Pinnock places great emphasis on the Noahic covenant in what he has to say about "pagan saints". He relates to it all the Old Testament figures whom he names. We have two points to make here. The first concerns the **character** of that covenant and the second, relates to the **time of its disclosure**.

We have not rejected Pinnock's claim that the Abrahamic covenant sets out the same way of faith as the New covenant does, though we did highlight the matter of the promised seed as the specific object of that faith, but we want to challenge what he says about the Noahic. In doing this we know we are falling foul of Pinnock's stricture that:

"It is common to interpret the Noahic covenant in a minimalist way and to see it as a covenant only of physical preservation and not of redemption. But surely this is a divine commitment and promise that transcends merely preserving the race from another flood. The promise to Noah prepares the way for the blessing of all nations through Abram a few chapters later. The call of Abram implements the promise made to Noah. Both covenants were universal in scope. For a reader not to see this suggests a hermeneutical presupposition blocking truth out" (p 21).

Pinnock only names Karl Barth in support of his view and it is, at least, arguable that Barth's thinking on this score is coloured by his vigorous opposition to any idea of general revelation or common grace - a vital matter in the present subject. But in the quotation Pinnock admits that many take the view of the Noahic covenant which he himself rejects. It is that view which is being advocated in this article.

To call this view 'minimalist' is to use a tendentious term. In fact all that Pinnock has to say by way of counter to it is that a connection exists between the Noahic and

Abrahamic covenants. But we reply that those who see the Noahic covenant as being limited to “physical” matters - that is to the earth, its seasons, and a fresh beginning for mankind would not dispute the existence of such a link. Indeed, they would argue that a close relationship exists between those covenants which can be set out as follows.

The Noahic covenant, guarantees a stable universe, free from any threat of a global cataclysmic judgement such as the Flood was, even though sin continues to be practised in it. In such a world, the gracious purposes of the Abrahamic/New covenants and the promises made earlier in Genesis 1-5 are worked out throughout time and among all the nations. The view therefore which Pinnock rejects finds no difficulty in recognising and acknowledging a continuity between the Noahic and the Abrahamic covenants which is not merely a continuity of chronological subsequence but also of theological coherence. We think that Pinnock fails to see the important *distinction* between the Abrahamic and the Noahic covenants and that might equally be said to be the result of “a hermeneutical presupposition, blocking truth out”, to use his own words.

The fact of the matter is that no way of salvation for all flesh was made known via the Noahic covenant and no promise of a seed to come was made known to Noah as there would be to Abraham. Pinnock is therefore not correct when he says that “God announces *in this covenant* that his saving purposes are going to be working, not just among a single chosen nation but among all peoples sharing a common ancestry in Noah” (*italics ours*, p 21).

It is difficult to see how Genesis 8:15-9:17, the text regarding the Noahic covenant, can be understood in this way. The whole passage is reminiscent of the Creation narrative in Genesis 1. Abounding sin threatened all that had been made. The Flood was God’s way of beginning a new universe and a new humanity, though within the context of the Fall. Genesis 9:25-27 does have something to do with the outworking of God’s saving purposes among humanity but *that* is not the Noahic covenant.

The only knowledge about God which could be gained from that covenant was that God was a preserver of and provider for the life of all kinds of creatures in spite of his being a most awesome judge of the sin of human beings. The fact that the deliverance of eight people from the Flood is referred to later in Scripture (Isaiah 54:9-10 and 1 Peter 3:20-22) as a type of messianic salvation is beside the point. The matter at issue is what people might have come to know as they reflected on the event of the deluge and its immediate aftermath and not what could be learned from subsequent revelation about it. It is therefore our view that Pinnock makes two general mistakes. The first is that he does not correctly inter-relate the three covenants which he specifies. The second is that he regards his “pagan saints” as having learned more from the Noahic covenant than was actually possible. We will take up the question of where they could have obtained their knowledge when we mention a covenant which Pinnock overlooks.

But Pinnock makes a major blunder when he says that all the pagan saints “lived saintly lives under the terms of the wider covenant made with Noah”. That could only be true if the Genesis record were itself untrue because it records that some of them lived *before* the Flood, for example Abel and Enoch. They could not have lived under the terms of the Noahic covenant. This might also be true of Job and the Daniel who is mentioned in Ezekiel 14 and 18. In addition, Noah himself had a relationship with God before he began to build the ark. The biblical chronology requires that some differentiation be made between the knowledge of those whom Pinnock groups in the category of “pagan saints”. And a question arises as to where those in the group who lived before the Flood obtained

their believing knowledge from. Plainly, it could not have come from the Noahic covenant. From whence then could it have come?

A COVENANT OVERLOOKED

Pinnock's view, as we have seen, is that three covenants have to be considered in relation to God's dealings with human beings. These are the Noahic, the old (Abrahamic) and the new. Though we have agreed with him that a knowledge of God is only possible as a result of a covenant arrangement through which God discloses himself, we do not agree that there are only three covenants to be reckoned with in this regard. We have just seen that some "pagan saints" antedated the time of Noah and we must therefore go back further in biblical history in order to evaluate their knowledge. This means not only that the first eleven chapters of Genesis have to be considered, which Pinnock describes as having been so neglected but, more narrowly, the first six of those chapters which are so distrusted.

We note that Pinnock speaks of a "covenant of creation" or "a cosmic covenant" by virtue of which "the whole world and its peoples belong to God". In addition he refers once to a covenant made with Adam. But he declares that it was also made with Noah. We quote the sentence in which he does that because perhaps the singular noun at the end should have been printed in the plural. "The covenant made with Abram has to be interpreted in the context of the covenant made with Noah and with Adam" (p 24).

If we read "covenants" it would be possible to say that Pinnock recognises that a distinct covenant was made with Adam but as the sentence stands that is not possible. Though Pinnock does refer to Adam as the representative head of all humanity, he does not recognise that a distinct covenant was made with him as such. He does not have anything at all to say about the content of God's self-revelation to Adam and Eve.

Pinnock does not examine the first three chapters of Genesis and that is surely a serious omission. They have relevance to all biblical subjects and particularly to the "covenant" or binding arrangement made with Adam, the representative head of the entire human race. We will review what we believe to be the relevant data. In 1:28 & 2:15-17 we have the record of mankind's duty to God, together with the threatened penalty for disobedience to a specific precept. Chapter 3 records the transgression of Adam and Eve and the effects of that. This awareness of living in God's world as his subjects and of being exposed to death on account of sinful rebellion is the background for the Noahic covenant and for those passages in both Testaments which deal with General Revelation. A point of reference is thus provided, as we shall see, for part of the knowledge of some of these "pagan saints".

But we want to argue that there is a verse in Genesis 3 which is the background to the Abrahamic covenant and to all the subsequent saving self-disclosures of God. It is, of course, verse 15, which promises a male descendant of Eve who would crush the serpent's (Satan's) head though at the cost of having his own humanity (heel) crushed in the process. This has been regarded as the *protevangeli*um, the first proclamation of the gospel.

That promise of a coming seed is something which Adam and Eve believed. Adam confessed his faith by renaming his wife. He had given her the name "woman" to indicate her oneness with him as human. It is a name which speaks of creation. Calling her Eve, (3:20) from the Hebrew for "to live" is expressive of God's promise to deal with the death which has been introduced through sin. In turn, Eve did something similar by her naming of their sons. Cain (4:1) which means "obtained" is linked with "the LORD"

and expresses Eve's belief that the promised seed has already come. Seth (4:25) which means "appointed" is a replacement for Abel and his birth is a testimony to God's faithfulness to his promise over against the malignity of the seed of the serpent. We can assume it is that knowledge of God which informed the faith of Abel, Enoch and Lamech, the father of Noah (see 5: 28-29) They were all of the line of Adam-Seth and not Cain-Lamech and were looking for the one who would undo what sin had done.

Given this information, those individuals should not therefore be classified as "pagan saints" at all, but as belonging to the line which was the precursor of Israel and the church. They were saints, not pagans, because saving revelation had been made known to them. To call them "pagan" saints is to deny that they had received any such saving revelation. They should therefore be removed from Pinnock's list.

Genesis 4:26b ought also to be given due weight even though one would like to have more information about what it refers to. Literally it means "Then began to call on the name of the LORD". An impersonal subject noun needs to be supplied in order to complete the sense e.g. "people". Taking this statement at its face value it describes that public and corporate confession of faith in Jehovah /Yahweh in the context of the worship which occurred in the days of Enosh, Seth's son. It stands in marked contrast to the arrogant self - exaltation of Lamech which is expressed in the previous verses. Did some of his descendants or contemporaries, revolted by his bloodlust, also begin to worship the LORD? We are not told. If they did, they were pagans who became saints at that time.

But should Genesis 4:26b be regarded in this way? Certainly the Divine Name is found in the Hebrew text of this verse. But what weight can be put on that? We have taken it at face value as stating that the people referred to not only knew of the existence of the Name and actually used it in their confession of faith. Not only would the majority of non-evangelical Old Testament scholars disagree with this but even some evangelical ones as well, though not on the same terms. They would all refuse to affirm that the patriarchs knew Elohim as Jehovah, pointing to Exodus 6 verses 2 & 3 as proof.

Exodus 6:2-3

It might appear at first sight that the exegesis of this verse belongs simply to the field of Old Testament scholarship and that it has no bearing whatsoever on our subject. Such thinking could not be further from the truth. A case could be made out for saying that one's view on this matter determines one's view on the question of the salvation of the unevangelised. To show that it is relevant requires a discussion which could be technical. We will try to simplify it because it is so relevant.

In the heyday of the Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch it was axiomatic to regard the statement in Exodus 6:2-3 as meaning that the Name was only made known at the time of Moses and in the Exodus. Consequently, all the references to Yahweh in Genesis were not authentic for the people and the periods referred to. This was the corner stone of the old Documentary Hypothesis and of the evolutionary view of the development of the religion of Israel. Just as Genesis - Deuteronomy was the result of the combination of different sources over a period of time, so Old Testament religion was regarded as a compound of differing religious views and practices - some from the surrounding nations. Obviously this opens the door to a partial recognition of other gods and religions as being valid.

Alec Motyer responded to this in his monograph entitled *The Revelation of the Divine*

Name. Though published over thirty years ago, it was, along with the work of W J Martin, a landmark in evangelical study of the Pentateuch in the United Kingdom. They dealt with the Documentary Hypothesis and defended the Mosaic authorship of the first five books of the Bible and their work is by no means outdated.

After making due allowance for the fact that the biblical writer made references to Jehovah, Motyer showed that in at least 45 out of 116 occurrences, between Genesis 12:1 and Exodus 6:2-3, the term Yahweh (Jehovah) was either used by the patriarchs of God, or by God himself. He then argued that the Hebrew terms in Exodus 6:2-3 did not mean that the Name was completely unknown but that its significance had not been previously disclosed. He presented and argued for the following translation of the verse: "And God spoke to Moses, and said to him: I am Yahweh. And I showed myself to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob in the character of El Shaddai, but in the character expressed by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them". He argued that these verses did: "not deny to the patriarchs the knowledge of the name Yahweh, but only (the) knowledge of the significance of the Name.....These words tell us plainly that what Moses was sent to Egypt to declare was not a Name but a nature".

Certainly Motyer's line of exegesis is much better than the old liberal view which many Old Testament scholars are seeking to move from, without actually declaring it to be wrong. To regard the Name as being previously known certainly precludes the possibility of other gods and religions being approved of in the Old Testament record. But two questions remain unanswered. The first is, what about the pre-Abrahamic period that is Genesis 1-11? Did Noah, Enosh and Adam and Eve for example also know of the Name? Secondly, is it *entirely* satisfactory to say that though the Name was known, the nature which corresponded to it was not? We will return to these questions.

Contemporary evangelical Old Testament scholars, e.g. Gordon Wenham and Chris Wright take a different line with reference to Exodus 6 and the previous uses of the Name. They do not pass over these uses in silence as Pinnock does. What they do is to refer to the distinction between the final editor of the text and the time reference in the text. In the words of Wenham:

"Is this identification of the patriarchs' God with that of Moses a theological assertion by the writer of Genesis, who was sure the same God had spoken to Abraham as spoke to Moses? Or do the statements in Genesis implying that Yahweh revealed himself to the patriarchs correspond to the patriarchs' own conception of the God they worshipped?"

This distinction needs to be clarified in order to be understood. Taking Genesis 15:6 where we read "Abram believed the LORD and he credited it to him as righteousness" and working with the view that this statement is the author's (editor's) report means that Abram was, in terms of his knowledge, believing in El or El Shaddai but not Yahweh. The editor knew that El was Yahweh and so what he wrote was true as a fact, but it was not true as a description of what had gone on in Abram's mind.

When one calls to mind that El was the chief god of the Canaanite pantheon, however, it can be appreciated that such a distinction as Wenham and Wright accept and employ opens the door to an endorsement of syncretism in the biblical narrative. Wright is aware of that possibility and therefore poses the following question: "Are we then to regard the faith of Israel as syncretistic in its origins and early development, and if so, does this constitute biblical support for a syncretistic stance by the Christian vis-a-vis contemporary world faiths?"

He answers this question by defining syncretism and differentiating it from "accommodation or assimilation".

"Syncretism is a conscious or unconscious attempt to combine divergent religious elements (beliefs, rites, vocabulary) in such a way that a new religious mixture evolves which goes beyond the contributing elements. It presupposes that none of the contributing elements can be regarded as final or sufficient in itself. . . It must be distinguished from the modes by which God has communicated his self-revelation using existing concepts and religious forms, but then transcending and transforming them with a new theology. The latter process is usually called accommodation or assimilation. It is quite different from syncretism inasmuch as it recognizes the reality of unique divine revelation in history, whereas syncretism excludes such a category a priori".

We would be happy to leave the matter there if that were the only "danger" inherent in Wenham and Wright's position. This is because we also see in the Bible that God does condescend to make himself known in an alien context only to break that mould by subsequent disclosures. A wedge of grace creates a divide which opens into a chasm with every further divine disclosure. But another question can be raised on the basis of the editor/patriarch distinction. Wright sees this and expresses the question as follows: "Can we infer from the Genesis story that men may worship and relate personally to the true, living God but under the name or names of some "local" deity and without knowledge of God's saving name and action in Christ?"

In answer to that question Wright points out that God's self-disclosure to Abraham "in terms of divine names" which he would have already known "in no way implies that all Abraham's contemporaries who worshipped El in his various manifestations, and with the seamier side of his mythology, thereby knew and worshipped the living God". Wright sees God's relationship with Abraham as being based on an act of divine grace and not on a disclosure of divine names.

So far, so good, we may think. The caveats which Wright introduces should prevent anyone from deducing that what is being claimed is that all gods are (ultimately) one and the same and that all religions are ways of salvation. He also denies that all will be saved. But there are two loopholes or possibilities which are left open by the denial that the divine Name was known prior to the Exodus.

Wenham points out the first which is that the pre- Mosaic era was much freer and more benign than the Sinaitic in terms of its view of other gods and religions:

"This distinction between the El revelation of Genesis and the Yahweh revelation of later times is more than a verbal contrast. The exclusiveness, holiness, and strictures of the God of Exodus is absent from Genesis. Though the patriarchs are faithful followers of their God, they enjoy good relations with men of other faiths. There is an air of ecumenical bonhomie about the patriarchal religion which contrasts with the sectarian exclusiveness of the Mosaic age and later prophetic demands".

Something is being felt for in this statement for which there is no evidence in Genesis. There is not a hint of patriarchal involvement with Canaanite religion in that book.

Secondly, if the patriarchs did not know the name Yahweh then it becomes possible to argue that just as they knew (the true) God savingly, without knowing the name Yahweh, so may others be saved today, without knowing of the name of Jesus Christ. Wright concedes this possibility and includes in it those like Noah and Enosh, Adam and Eve, that is those who lived before Abraham. Here is the beginning of the contemporary divide

among evangelicals between those who adopt only a christocentric view of the way of salvation and those who also take an epistemological view. The former see salvation as being only in Christ, but the latter also see faith as necessary.

But we are not prepared to accept this understanding of Exodus 6:2-3 and of the faith of the men and women who lived before Moses, including those who antedated the patriarchs. We do not think that Joshua 24:14 with its reference to the other gods which were served by the fathers of Israel before the era of bondage means that they served El not Yahweh. The statement can quite acceptably refer to the gods which were served prior to Abram's call. We submit these two reasons for this conclusion.

- 1 It seems to us that Motyer has demonstrated that the Hebrew of Exodus 6:2-3 does not *demand* the view that the Name was unknown before Moses.
- 2 The uses of the Divine Name in Genesis 12-50 and in 1-11 (though Motyer does not mention those chapters) can be taken at their face value, because being so few, they do not provide evidence that they were the result of reading back subsequently given revelation. Had the writer been so motivated the likelihood is that he would have used it more often.

The view we therefore propose is as follows. We begin with Motyer's position that Exodus 6:2-3 refers to the disclosure of the *meaning* of the name rather than of the name itself. The name Jehovah was not unknown prior to Moses. Was his mother's name not Jochebed, which is a compound of an abbreviation of the name Jehovah?

Even so it was primarily as El or El Shaddai that the patriarchs knew God. That name came to the fore in their times because Jehovah wished to stress his ability to transform his people (the three patriarchs were named or re-named by El Shaddai) and to perform his promises alone. El Shaddai means "God Almighty" and points to divine omnipotence. It provides a rich background for the disclosure of what was implicit in the name Jehovah, the use of which consequently declined in that period.

However, we wonder whether Motyer overstates the contrast by using the name/nature distinction. Was it the case that prior to Moses and the Exodus *nothing* of God's nature was known which corresponded to the name Jehovah? Have we not seen that Adam, Eve, Enosh, Lamech, Noah and even Abraham knew something of that nature? Does not that evidence point to there being *some* connection in the minds of people between the Name and the promise of a coming deliverer? In turn, does this not indicate *some* knowledge of a "saving God" existing and surviving to *some* degree within that line of descent marked by the names Adam, Abel, Seth, Enosh, Noah, Shem and Abraham?

In one place in his monograph Motyer admits that something of the nature which corresponded to the Name was known to Abraham. In a remarkably powerful and spiritually perceptive piece of writing, he says:

"But, as so often in the Bible, the light which will shine in fullness only at some future date is too strong wholly to be restrained from earlier ages, and here and there breaks through in hints and suggestions which are only appreciated when at last the moment of unveiling comes. Once in Genesis such a beam of light fell. When Abraham, on the mountain, found that God had indeed provided a sacrifice, and when he offered the ram in manifest substitution for his son, then, for a brief second he caught and expressed the truth, 'Yahweh sees, Yahweh provides'. Here only is the divine name elaborated in pre-Mosaic religion, and Yahweh is declared to be the God who meets his people in their extremity, when the chosen seed is at the point of extinction, and Himself provides the redemption price".

But then Motyer goes further and this is what we have been arguing for in claiming that Genesis 3:15 and the name provided in embryonic form all that would be subsequently unfolded in Scripture about salvation. Motyer writes movingly as well as brilliantly:

“The mountain top scene could hardly be expounded even in this detail except that the full light was later unveiled, and God showed His nature. The exodus is, on a large scale, what Mount Moriah is in miniature. The same God who provided the ram provided also the Passover Lamb. There is no further truth about God ever to be revealed; even we, who have been permitted to see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, see only the truth of the exodus - ‘his exodus which he would accomplish in Jerusalem’ - and when, in God’s mercy, we meet the Lord in the air, it will be to discover that once again God has done that which his name declares: He has gone down to Egypt to redeem His people: for this is His name for ever, and this is His memorial unto all generations”.

This background therefore accounts for the knowledge of the “pagan” saints before and up to Noah and makes it impossible for them to be regarded as “pagan” on Pinnock’s original definition of that word which was “an outsider”. They were insiders in terms of the circle to whom revelation was vouchsafed. They were indeed saints.

All this is certainly relevant as the informing context for the knowledge of so-called “pagan saints” in the pre-diluvian period. But it is also to be remembered with reference to what followed after the Flood. Noah and Shem knew of it and Japheth too. It did not die out with the Flood. It would therefore have been transmitted to posterity, diminishing in some families as time passed because of the increasing effects of sin, but being augmented in others by the onward unfolding of special revelation. In those years up to the pre-Sinai era, to be outside the covenant line was not *ipso facto* to be destitute of *all* knowledge of the El who was Jehovah.

Works referred to:

C H Pinnock, A WIDENESS IN GOD’S MERCY, Zondervan

P Cotterell, MISSION AND MEANINGLESS, SPCK

G J Wenham, ESSAYS ON THE PATRIARCHAL NARRATIVES, IVP

C J H Wright, The Christian and Other Religions, THEMELIOS, Jan 93

J A Motyer, THE REVELATION OF THE DIVINE NAME, Tyndale Monograph

Dr Hywel Jones MA is Principal of the London Theological Seminary

The Christian idea of the responsibility of knowledge is rooted in the notion that God is there and that he speaks. He is therefore the one with both the first decisive word on life - in creation - and the last decisive word - in judgement. Thus human life is essentially responsible, answerable and accountable. Such responsibility of knowledge is the silent assumption in many basic doctrines. Sin, for example, is a deliberate violation of the responsibility of knowledge - human beings become responsible where they should not be (playing God) and refuse to be responsible where they should be (denying guilt). This responsibility of knowledge is also embedded in the root meaning of many biblical words. For example, the Hebrew word ‘to know’ includes the meaning ‘to care for’. The idea is that ‘knowledge of’ something is ‘power over’ it, ‘responsibility to’ it, and ‘care for’ it.

Os Guinness, FIT BODIES, FAT MINDS, p 148

Correspondence

My thanks for Gary Brady's article **What is the Conscience?** (Issue 34). We seldom (if ever) use words with their derivation in mind. 'Conscience' is for us, merely a name used to describe a part of mental activity which is common to us all. We know what we mean, but we never think in terms of 'joint knowledge' when we use it. Whilst there must have been a group of people who first coined the term it does not follow that they succeeded in accurately defining the conscience or even that they understood it. It does not even follow that they understood it. It seems to me that etymology is a poor basis for definition. Maybe it would be better to start with Romans 2:14-15, to which Gary draws our attention.

I appreciated Gary's mention of syllogisms - they are helpful in describing the relation of decision to conscience. However, conscience is not as purely rational as the Puritan syllogisms suggest. Sometimes false inferences (minor premises) can be made from valid major premises. We have all met those Christians who have a problem with assurance, and whose thinking goes something like this;

God's people know His voice and obey His commands (John 10),	<i>Major Premise</i>
I have knowingly disobeyed Him,	<i>Minor Premise</i>
Therefore, I cannot be one of God's people,	<i>Conclusion.</i>

Another area which Gary does not cover is the relationship between temperament and conscience. Why are some people more prone to the prompting of the conscience than others? And what happens to the conscience at regeneration - Christians still suffer at times from 'dormant' consciences. Thanks again for a helpful article and for the magazine as a whole.

Tim Atkins, Rugby

Response from Gary Brady

It is good to receive Tim's positive response to my article on conscience. My paper did not attempt to deal with the issues he raises. It must be borne in mind that conscience, like every other faculty in man, is marred by the fall. In Tim's example a properly formed syllogism falls down because its minor premise (corresponding to conscience proper) is in error. Conscience proper can also be variable, corrupted, intermittent or simply unable to cope with complex issues. Other problems arise when the major premise (corresponding to the moral record) is at fault, eg when a person does not know God's Word. Even when both major and minor premises are correct the sinner may fail at the third stage and draw a wrong conclusion, eg 'This does not apply in this circumstance'. Natural conscience is not useless but it is unreliable.

At regeneration every part of conscience is transformed. God's Word itself is written on the heart, conscience proper now gains an unmatched sensitivity and the renewed mind not only thinks clearly but looks to the blood of Christ for cleansing. Evangelicals today do not give enough attention to the place of conscience in conversion. Let them ponder Gurnall's words, 'If faith be a jewel, a good conscience is the cabinet in which it is kept'.

Book Review

Old Testament Evangelistic Sermons

D Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Banner of Truth, 1995, 268 pp, £12.95, hardback

This book is a most welcome addition to the published works of the late Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones ; it should be read by all preachers as well as by thoughtful believers and unbelievers. The value of the book is enhanced by Iain Murray's useful and stimulating introduction on 'The Evangelistic Use of the Old Testament in the Preaching of Dr Lloyd-Jones' (pp vii-xxxii). He reminds us that the 'Doctor' was primarily an evangelist. While 'at least half of his preaching was evangelistic' yet 'only a fraction of that preaching has so far been published' (p viii). Murray acknowledges that publishers are 'partly to blame' for the misconception that Lloyd-Jones' preaching was expository and aimed primarily at believers. A second reason is Lloyd-Jones' 'opposition to features of modern evangelism' which in turn led some to question his commitment to evangelism *per se*.

There are twenty-one sermons in the book, fifteen of which were first preached in his first pastorate in South Wales and the rest delivered at Westminster Chapel. These sermons exhibit 'a sound structure' and principles which are 'logically argued' (p x).

For his evangelistic preaching, the 'Doctor' mainly used single texts 'likely to bring to mind the necessity of salvation' (p xi). It was a strongly held conviction on the part of Lloyd-Jones that evangelistic preaching should exist '*as a special category of preaching*'; indeed, gospel preaching was for him the main part of

preaching. Murray, rightly in my view, insists that 'today there is a need to re-establish the recognition that the type of sermon most likely to be used to aid the non-Christian is not the same as one intended for those who already believe'. Lloyd-Jones maintained that there 'ought to be a distinct difference in the approach of the preacher when he is speaking to the unconverted'. One reason for this is the need to hold the attention of unbelievers and 'to break into the world where they are' (p xii). A second and more important reason is that the evangelistic sermon is 'much narrower in its intention than one addressed to Christians'. The unbeliever 'needs only one thing : he needs to be convicted, to be humbled, to be brought to an end of himself'. While 'all preaching ought to be *more* than teaching', adds Murray, 'in the case of evangelistic preaching it is imperative. It *must* reach the heart and the conscience or it will fail' (p xiii).

Concerning Lloyd-Jones' evangelistic sermons, Murray informs us that in Aberavon 'approximately a third of his texts' were taken from the Old Testament while at Westminster Chapel the percentage was 'only slightly lower' with about 430 Old Testament texts. Murray then provides two reasons why Lloyd-Jones attached such importance to the Old Testament in his preaching, firstly 'because he saw the neglect and near disappearance of the Old Testament as a powerful influence in contemporary Christianity' (p xiv) and, secondly, he 'viewed the disuse of the Old Testament as serious because, being an essential part of divine revelation, such neglect is bound to have far-reaching practical consequences' (p xvi). One practical consequence of the

disuse of the Old Testament relates to the special purpose of the Old Testament, namely, that it 'demonstrates at length and in detail that man is in a condition from which only a divine Saviour can deliver him... men need to know that it is the Creator of the universe, the Lord of the nations, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, this God and no other, who so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son' (p xvii). Lloyd-Jones claimed that 'the importance of keeping your eye on the Old Testament emerges here in the whole question of evangelism and revivals' (p xix). What preaching Lloyd-Jones heard from the Old Testament in his youth was 'sentimental and moralistic'. The 'key' to his own preaching from the Old Testament, Murray concludes, is that 'it came out of his own experience' (p xxii).

Helpfully, Murray pinpoints for us Lloyd-Jones' understanding of the 'chief emphases of the Old Testament'. The **first** is that, 'Scripture reveals sin in its true nature'. The 'Doctor' distinguished carefully between 'moralising preaching' from the Old Testament and 'true evangelistic preaching'; the former deals with sin only 'in terms of its symptoms and secondary features' while the latter focuses on the 'essence of sin, the true seriousness of sin... in terms of a wrong relationship and attitude to God himself'. From the historic fact of man's fall, 'the whole human race stands alienated from God' (p xxiv). Two deductions are constantly made by Lloyd-Jones from this foundational point, namely, that 'sin must never be preached as though it were *primarily* a matter of actions' and also that, 'until a person comes to know the truth about himself he can never approach the Gospel in the right spirit'.

A **second** main emphasis for Lloyd-Jones is that 'Scripture reveals the absolute futility of life without God' (p xxv). It may

surprise some readers to discover that for Lloyd-Jones 'the Gospel itself is not necessarily the main subject in true evangelistic teaching, rather the main subject must often be truth which brings home to men and women their need of the Gospel'. This is how he viewed much of the purpose of Old Testament history and, writes Murray, 'he never had a problem in moving from an Old Testament character to his own day'. Old Testament history of nations also declared for Lloyd-Jones 'the same lesson' of man's inability to deal with his problems. Murray interestingly observes 'only one difference' between his earlier and later preaching : 'In his later ministry he made more direct use of the supporting testimony of modern non-Christians to show the emptiness of all human expectations'. The **third** emphasis in his evangelistic preaching from the Old Testament is that 'above all else, the Old Testament is a book about God' (p xxvi). This emphasis, of course, runs contrary to the modern critical view of the Old Testament. The glory, sovereignty, holiness, wrath and power of God are key doctrines clearly taught in the Old Testament.

The twenty-one sermons included in this volume are placed according to their Biblical sequence and are wide-ranging in representing Old Testament Scripture. These texts are : Genesis 3:8-9; 32:24; Exodus 3:3-5; Judges 18:7, 28; 1 Samuel 5:1-4; 2 Samuel 12:13; 1 Kings 1:41; 2 Kings 5:1, 8-16; 2 Chronicles 10:8; Job 9:1-2; 21:14-15; Psalm 107; Isaiah 8:6-7, 22:8-14, 35:7; Jeremiah 17:9, 10, 14, 30:18, 19; Zechariah 8:19. And all these sermons are interesting and challenging. Buy the book and, if you are a preacher, urgently review your evangelistic preaching in the light of these pages.

Dr D Eryl Davies

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