

## Editor's Notes

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An unavoidable delay in the appointment of a new Editor for Foundations means that these introductory comments will be unusually brief – although this does provide me with a further opportunity to thank Ken Brownell, on behalf of the Editorial Board, for the superb job of work he has done for us over recent years. We very much hope Ken will continue to provide us with his excellent book reviews in subsequent issues.

The contents of this current edition reflect concerns familiar to any pastor, battling to feed, guide and protect his flock in the first decade of the 21st century. Stephen Clark brings his legally-trained mind to the 'The Doctrine of the Lesser Evil'. Pastoral problems are not solved simply by identifying relevant scriptural texts, nor by ticking the right boxes in a flow chart. Much prayer and heavenly wisdom are required as increasingly complex issues are faced on a regular basis. Biblical commands and principles need to be ranked in context if God-honouring answers are to emerge – and fragile human beings are not to be hurt without just cause. This article provokes much thought in a neglected area.

Most of us need to be more aware of popular Islamic apologetics and the ways in which they are employed to combat biblical truth. Anthony McRoy brings his considerable expertise to bear on this and related topics in the second part of his survey of 'The Theology of Arius'. Virtually every heresy and false teaching can trace its roots back to the first three centuries of the Christian era. Once again, we are shown the vital importance of a grasp of the struggles of the early Church for our contemporary situation. Ignorance here may easily force us to

concede ground which should never be given up. Mike Plant takes us back to the nineteenth century debate between two American Presbyterians on the nature of 'The Call to the Ministry', which was stimulated by a shortage of men coming forward for the work. Faced with a similar situation in the UK today, the radically differing views of Thornwell and Dabney are echoed in contemporary discussions. Affinity sponsored day conferences on the subject last year. The necessity of an 'immediate' call resonates more with traditional non-conformity, whereas the Anglican evangelical emphasis lies far more on the assessment of relevant gifting. How this historic difference is resolved must have an immense bearing on recruitment to univocational ministry in coming years.

Another issue that sometimes causes constituency divisions along the same kind of lines relates to the nature and delivery of preaching. In his article 'Preaching that Persuades', Kieran Beville argues that emotional engagement with a postmodern congregation is essential if what Aristotle called the *ethos*, the personal integrity, of the preacher is to be conveyed. The apostle Paul is constantly 'imploring' and 'beseeching' in his gospel preaching. Not much of that going on today in Reformed pulpits! Certainly, whether for cultural or other reasons, the art of holy persuasion is dying – if it's not dead already. Any articles that help us address such a crucial matter are gratefully received.

It is always good to welcome biblical studies to the pages of Foundations, and I found Chris Kelly's short outline of Mark's Gospel to be particularly fresh and stimulating. Anyone who has preached through any of the Gospels should have been struck

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by their structural sophistication, often missed by the general reader. But it is perhaps surprising to find such apparently new and compelling insights, which beg much further study.

Alistair Wilson brings this edition of *Foundations* to a fitting close with a stimulating list of suggestions for further reading in New Testament studies. The *New Perspective on Paul* is ever with us and one or two of the useful titles reviewed might easily be otherwise missed. I like Dr Wilson's parting advice to spend our time and money wisely when it comes to Christian literature. I trust you will continue to consider *Foundations* a wise investment. And, if you do, why not recommend it to a friend?

Finally, it may still not be too late to book for the next Affinity Theological Study Conference, which will take place at High Leigh Conference Centre, just north of London, from 4th-6th February, 2009. The subject is 'The End of the Law?', and the effects of differing covenantal positions will be explored. Speakers include Bob Letham, Doug Moo, Paul Helm and Michael Horton. As always, the event is a true conference, with attendees reading the papers beforehand. Space is limited and there is already considerable take-up. You can find further details, and place your booking, on the Affinity website.

Jonathan Stephen  
On behalf of the Editorial Board.