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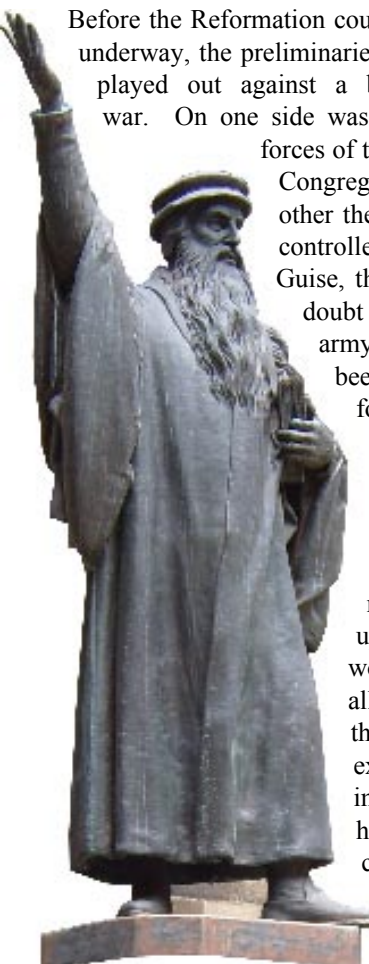
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1560 A YEAR NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN IN SCOTTISH HISTORY

As we enter into 2010 we have much cause for celebration as we remember with great thankfulness to our God the 450th anniversary of the Reformation in Scotland.

By Mr Jack Bell Editor



Before the Reformation could get properly underway, the preliminaries in 1559 were played out against a background of war. On one side was the Protestant forces of the Lords of the Congregation and on the other the French forces controlled by Mary of Guise, the Regent. No doubt the French army would have been formidable foes for the small Protestant force. The Lords of the Congregation therefore resolved to set up Reformed worship in all the places their authority extended. Two important things happened that centred around John Knox, the first being his invitation

John Knox - Protestant Reformer

to preach at St Andrews. This offer he accepted even although he had been threatened with death from the archbishop. The audience received a greater awareness than ever before of the superstitious practices introduced by the Papacy and practiced as true religion. He preached on Christ's cleansing of the Temple and applied it in an up-to-date setting, spelling out in no uncertain fashion the Papal blasphemies and the need to remove them and to get back to the purity of doctrine and manner of life of Christ's Church in Biblical times. This one sermon preached in the Parish Church was followed by a sermon on three consecutive days that determined the Reformation of Scotland would go forward. The magistrates and townspeople assembled and came to a unanimous resolution to set up the Reformed worship in the city. The church was stripped of its images and pictures and the monasteries were pulled down. The example of St Andrews was quickly followed in many other towns including Edinburgh and Glasgow. A second line of action was forced upon Knox. Not only was he a great reformer, but as a great statesman he had deep insights into the politics of Europe. He convinced the statesmen of Elizabeth down in England that the French were also a threat to themselves

and that they could be fighting on two fronts as Catholic Spain would strike at the same time should the French get the upper hand in Scotland. The statesmen agreed to send troops up to Scotland which resulted in the French withdrawing. At the same time Mary of Guise died and the government was passed into the hands of the Protestants.

One cannot over estimate the importance which Knox contributed to the establishment of Protestantism in Scotland and the consolidating of it in England. From the time of his famous sermon in St Andrews, Knox's life was one of incessant labour and where and when he could, he informed his hearers of the nature of the Gospel, explaining the pardon, the purity and the peace it brings to individuals and the stability it would bring to nations. He kindled a fire wherever he went and the light of the Gospel shone all over the land.

The Reformation Parliament met in August of 1560. *continued on page 3*

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The Pope will address MPs

On his Papal visit to Britain next September, Pope Benedict XVI will address MPs in Westminster Hall, according to a report last week in the Daily Telegraph. The chosen site for his address is the place where Roman Catholic martyr Sir Thomas More was sentenced to death in 1535 after publicly opposing the adultery of King Henry VIII and refusing to take an oath attached to the Act of Supremacy making the King the supreme head of the Church in England. Guido ('Guy') Fawkes was also tried there after the Gunpowder Plot.

The Pope's visit will last four days and is being discussed by respective delegations of Whitehall and Vatican officials. A Vatican delegation was in Britain last week. Prime Minister Gordon Brown, on his trip to Rome on Thursday 19 February, invited the Pope to make a state visit. The Pope has also been invited to address some of the nation's leading academics in Oxford on his visit.

MIRACLE'

In July this year, the Pope signed a degree verifying that Cardinal Newman, England's

most famous convert to Rome, had been responsible for a 'miracle' because in Massachusetts in 2001, Catholic deacon Jack Sullivan said he had recovered from a serious spinal disorder after praying to Cardinal Newman. This paved the way for Newman to be declared 'Blessed' at a beatification ceremony next year. Another miracle needs to be found to make him into a saint. Last year Newman's remains were to be moved from the small cemetery where he was buried in August 1890 and placed in an impressive marble sarcophagus in the Birmingham Oratory. But the plans had to be changed when his exhumation found no human remains, only a small cross, clothing and some wood from the Cardinal's original oak coffin. These items together with some locks of his hair, already in the possession of the Fathers of the Birmingham Oratory, were placed in a glass-sided casket in the Upper Cloister Hall at the Birmingham Oratory, with special Masses being held on 31 October and 1 November this year.

The Papal visit is due to begin on Thursday 16 September and will be 'crowned' with a

mass rally in Wembley Stadium on Sunday 19 September where the Pope will beatify Cardinal Newman.

The last Roman Catholic English saints, the so-called '40 Martyrs of the Reformation', were canonised by the Vatican in 1970.

The new Head of the Roman Catholic Church in England, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, made a bad start in his new role in his comments on the gravity of Roman Catholic child abuse scandal in Ireland. There was a furious reaction when he emphasised 'the courage it had taken for religious orders and clergy to face the facts from their past'. Patrick Walsh from the campaign group Irish Survivors of Child Abuse said: "Rubbish is too kind a word for what the Archbishop has said ... It is the verbiage of unreason, and it leaves me cold. What the Archbishop really has to do is take a long hard look at the character and nature of the people he is talking about and ask himself if they are capable of being good."

British Church Newspaper

Scottish Secretary says Pope will visit

Jim Murphy says low-key Papal visit in September will include Scotland in the itinerary

By Ian Dunn

POPE Benedict XVI is coming to Scotland next September but his visit will be a low-key affair, according to the Secretary of State for Scotland Jim Murphy.

Mr Murphy, who Prime Minister Gordon Brown has tasked with organising the papal visit, told The Tablet magazine that ministers had drawn up an itinerary of public Masses and ecumenical functions for the September 16 to 19 visit.

However the Vatican has rejected suggestions of an open-carriage procession and banquet at Buckingham Palace.

Visit details

Pope Benedict is likely to stay at the Apostolic Nunciature, the Vatican's diplomatic mission, in Wimbledon in southwest London when in England, the magazine reported.

"It's a unique constitutional arrangement as the Pope is head of a faith and the head of state," Mr Murphy, who is a Catholic, said. "The official title is Papal visit with the status of a state visit." Normally state

visits include banquets and gold carriages but the Vatican doesn't want that."

Pope John Paul II was the last pontiff to visit Britain, in 1982, and was received at Buckingham Palace by the queen, who is the titular head of the Church of England. He was the first Pope to make the trip for 450 years.

Scottish itinerary

Mr Murphy confirmed that the Holy Father would spend three days in England before heading up to Scotland for a one-day visit, where he was likely to meet up with the queen at Balmoral.

The minister said the English and Scottish bishops had drawn up an itinerary that had been passed to papal officials in Rome. "It's a pretty imaginative mix of public Masses, ecumenical events and other functions," Mr Murphy said. "Obviously, however, it's up to the Vatican to make the final decision on it."

The Pope's visit has yet to be officially confirmed by the Vatican but the Prime Minister's spokesman said in September

that he was 'delighted' at the prospect, saying it would be a 'moving and momentous occasion'.

Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews have been discussed as possible locations the Pope may visit in Scotland. Alex Salmond has suggested he could address the Scottish Parliament, the university of St Andrews are keen for him to help mark their 500th anniversary and the possibility of an open air Mass at Hampden Park in Glasgow has been raised.

Cardinal O'Brien has said he is 'delighted at the prospect of a visit to Scotland by Pope Benedict XVI.'

"The Scottish Bishops look forward to greeting the Holy Father in what would be the first state visit to this country by a reigning Pope," he said.

Mr Murphy made no suggestion that the Pope would visit Ireland in the wake of the Church abuse scandal there and such a visit is understood to be unlikely.

Scottish Catholic Observer

1560 Continued from page 1

It abolished the Pope's jurisdiction, forbade under certain penalties the celebration of the mass and rescinded laws that were in favour of the Roman Church and that were against the Protestant faith. It also endorsed a new Confession of Faith for the Church of Scotland. This was the first key document of the early Reformation. It was drawn up by Knox and five other Johns. It was drawn up in a mere four days and although the document was rather short

it placed emphasis upon the supremacy of scripture, affirming that scripture is sufficient to instruct and make perfect the man of God. The six Johns also worked on the other essential work of the early Reformation, the First Book of Discipline. This was an attempt to build a completely new society with very advanced notions of public welfare and education. The Book of Discipline owed much to what Knox had learned in Geneva. A system of poor

relief was to be introduced on a scale virtually unknown in Europe and there was to be a school in every parish. In 1560 two sovereign states that had been at enmity with each other resolved their differences while maintaining their essential separate identities. The revolution had triumphed with English aid and Knox's inspiration, but no doubt a higher hand was at work. So 2010 calls for thanksgiving and celebration.

JESUS CHRIST EXALTED OVER MANSON'S SATAN

– Flashback to 2009

On Tuesday the 15th of December, 20 members of Zion Baptist Church picketed the Marilyn Manson concert at the Carling Academy.

This is the fourth time that we have upheld the lovely precious name of our Lord at his concerts. As well as displaying our message on placards and banners, we

also displayed the Word of God, gave out gospel tracts and entered into conversations with the mainly Gothic audience. Some will claim that they follow the music and that the lyrics are harmless fun. I am in no doubt that something more sinister is involved and that Manson and many of his followers take themselves very serious and

the message he proclaims. I took a copy of his lyrics to the protest in case some one disputed our claims, but I could never mention publicly or print the blasphemous filth that he has written. Believe me when I tell you that the evil spirit of Satan emanates from his lyrics. He is a self-confessed Satanist and a member of the church of Satan. I have a certain amount of material recently downloaded from the internet. His recent album, 'Holywood' blasphemes Christ's death on the cross and he opposes everything that Christianity upholds. Let us pray for these Mansonite followers that God will save them and deliver them from a certain destruction.

By **Mr Jack Bell** Editor



Members of Zion Baptist Church protest against the Marilyn Manson concert held at the Carling Academy, Glasgow.

ANGLICAN BISHOP WRITES AGAINST ROMAN CATHOLIC IDOLATRY

I feel no hesitation in affirming that idolatry never yet assumed a more glaring form than it does in the Church of Rome at this very day. And here I come to a subject on which it is hard to speak, because of the times we live in. But the whole truth ought to be spoken by ministers of Christ, without respect of times and prejudice. And I should not lie down in peace, after preaching on idolatry, if I did not declare my solemn conviction, that idolatry is one of the crying sins of which the Church of Rome is guilty. I say this in all sadness. I say it, acknowledging fully that we have our faults in our own church: and practically, perhaps, in some quarters, not a little idolatry. But formal, recognised, systematic idolatry, I believe we are free from at all events. While, as for the Church of Rome, if there is not in her worship an enormous quantity of systematic, organized idolatry, I frankly confess I do not know what idolatry is. To my mind, it is idolatry to have images and pictures of saints in churches, and to give them a reverence for which there is no warrant or precedent in Scripture. And if this be so, I say there is idolatry in the Church of Rome. To my mind, it is idolatry to invoke the Virgin Mary and the saints in glory, and to address them in language never addressed in Scripture except to the Holy Trinity. And if this be

so, I say there is idolatry in the Church of Rome. To my mind, it is idolatry to bow down to mere material things, and attribute to them a power and sanctity far exceeding that attached to the ark or altar of the Old Testament dispensation, and a power and sanctity, too, for which there is not a tattle of foundation in the Word of God. And if this be so, with the holy coat of Treves and the wonderfully multiplied wood of the true cross, and a thousand other so-called relics in my mind's eye, I say there is idolatry in the Church of Rome. To my mind, it is idolatry to worship that which man's hands have made, to call it God, and adore it when lifted up before our eyes. And if this be so, with the doctrine of transubstantiation, and even the elevation of the host in my recollect, I say there is idolatry in the Church of Rome. To my mind, it is idolatry to make ordained men mediators between ourselves and God, robbing, as it were our Lord Jesus Christ of His office, and giving them an honour which even Apostles and angels in Scripture flatly repudiate. And if this be so, with the honour paid to popes and priests before my eyes, I say there is idolatry in the Church of Rome. I know well that language like this jars the minds of many. Men love to shut their eyes against evils which it is disagreeable to allow. They will not see things which

involve unpleasant consequences. That the Church of Rome is an erring church, they will acknowledge. That she is idolatrous, they will deny.

- **J C Ryle (1816-1900) first Anglican Bishop of Liverpool.**

WHAT A CONTRAST!

The current Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, responded with delight to indications that Pope Benedict XVI may visit Britain in 2010. "Some time ago, following similar invitations from Roman Catholic bishops and the British Government, I personally expressed my hope to Pope Benedict that he would accept the invitation to visit Britain. I am therefore delighted to hear today that there is every possibility that the Pope may indeed visit Britain in the course of the next year. I'm sure I speak on behalf of Anglicans throughout Britain, in assuring him that he would be received with great warmth and joy."

By contrast, Williams' illustrious predecessor, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, burnt at the stake by the Church of Rome for denying the unbiblical teaching of the mass, said as he was about to die, 'And as for the pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy, and Antichrist with all his false doctrine'.

Ulster Bulwark January-March 2010

...a tower too high.

Switzerland has banned the building of minarets after Swiss voters supported a referendum proposal. More than 57 per cent of voters and 22 out of 26 provinces voted in favour of the ban.

The bid to ban minarets was proposed by the Swiss People's Party [SVPI which is the largest party in the Swiss Parliament. It says minarets are a sign of Islamification. Martin Baltisser, the SVP's general secretary, told the BBC, "This was a vote against minarets as symbols of Islamic power." Supporters of the ban claimed that allowing minarets would signify acceptance of Sharia law which is incompatible with Swiss democracy. The Vatican condemned the Swiss ban on minarets as a "blow to freedom of religion." The Conference of Swiss Roman Catholic Bishops criticised the referendum result, saying that it "heightens the problems of cohabitation between religions and cultures".

Amnesty International agreed saying the vote violated religious freedom in the European Convention on Human Rights [and what of the human rights of the majority of voters?]. The Swiss Government also opposed the ban, warning that it could damage Switzerland's image in the Muslim world.



JESUS KING OF KINGS NOT QUEEN OF HEAVEN

Hundreds of protestors demonstrated in Chisholm Street outside the Tron Theatre in the centre of Glasgow on Tuesday evening, 3rd of November.

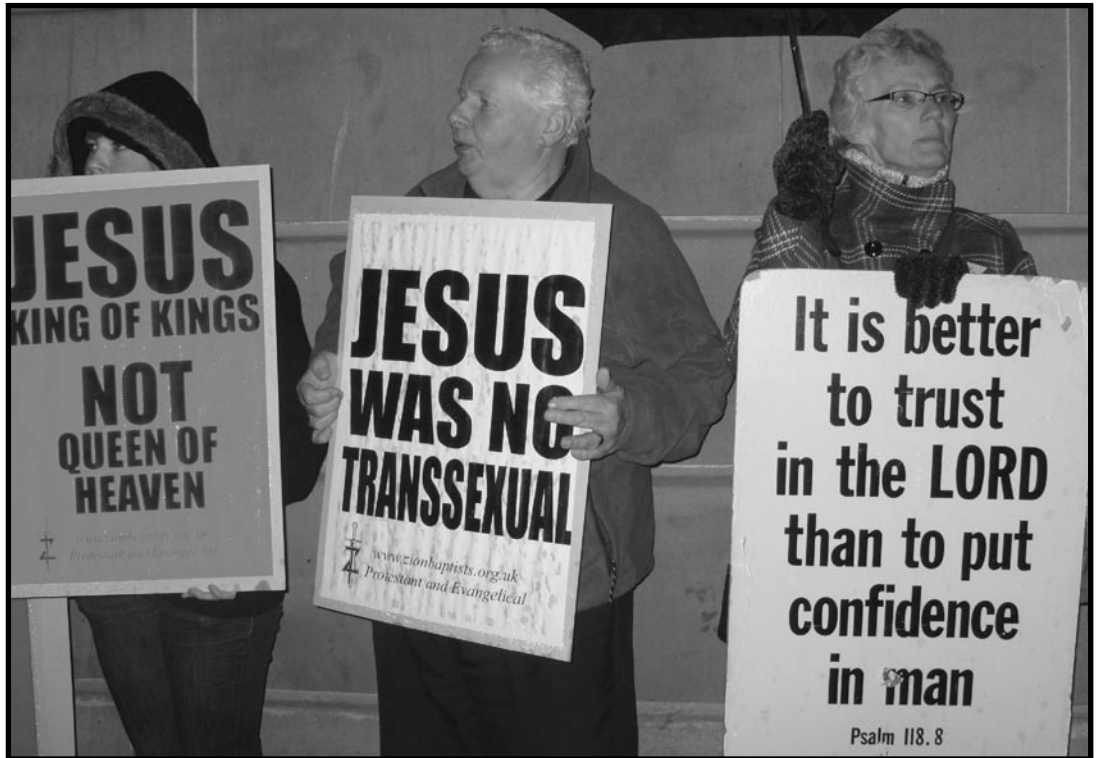
The protest broke generally into two groups. The largest group was made up of Roman Catholics who had come to say the Rosary of Reparation led by several priests.

Thirty members of Zion Baptist Church plus some other evangelicals distanced ourselves from the large group as we did not want to be identified with the unscriptural veneration of Mary.

Our protest was to show our disapproval of a production that portrayed Christ as a transsexual.

The play was staged as part of Glasgay, an arts festival that promotes the gay lifestyle and which was supported by city council quango, Culture and Sports culture.

Jo Clifford who wrote the play said, "I think it is very sad that the protest was



Members of Zion Baptist Church protest outside the Tron Theatre

made by Christians who have difficulties with gays and transsexuals".

As the leader of the Zion protest let me say that it was the blasphemous portrayal of Christ that brought us out in the first place and that herself and any of her gay friends

are welcome to come to Zion Baptist Church anytime.

Let me finish by quoting in full Glasgow's motto. Let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of the Word and the praising of Thy name. **By Mr Jack Bell, editor**

The Polmadie Martyrs who died in the vicinity of our Zion Baptist Church

The Polmadie Martyrs: Robert Thome, Thomas Cooke, John Urie

After the Reformation the lands of Polmadie and Crosshill were feued to Sir John Stewart of Minto and on Blaeus map, surveyed by Pont in 1590, a house is shown at 'Polmadi'. According to a sketch map reproduced by A M Scott in his *Notes on the lands of Polmadie and Crosshill in 1889*, there was, by the end of the 17th century, a village of Polmadie near the west bank of the Polmadie Burn, about 300 yards south of Rutherglen Road. This is now the area between Toryglen Street and Rosyth Street. The plan also

shows Polmadie Loan. The Loan ran west from the village to join the Aikenhead Road, and is today represented by a short remaining stretch of Polmadie Avenue. The purpose of the map is to illustrate an article in which Scott describes the events of 11 May 1685, when on the orders of Major John Balfour and Captain James Maltland, soldiers seized two weavers, Thomas Cooke and John Urie, in Polmadie Village and caught Robert Thome, a land labourer, after a chase through the village. The men were taken along the loan and questioned on their Covenanting beliefs and alleged activities. They were then shot and their bodies taken

to Cathcart, kirkyard for burial. The stone over the Martyrs' Tomb tells the story:

*As soon as they had them out found
They murdered them with shots of guns
Scarce time did they to them allow
Before ther maker ther knies to bow.*

The deed was witnessed by two men at Polmadie Mill. The mill stood on the right bank of the Polmadie Burn on the north side of Rutherglen Road, on the Shawfield Estate. Millcroft Road perpetuates the name of the croft adjoining the mill.

From villages of Glasgow

John Laski (1499-1560)

2010 marks the 450th anniversary of the death of Poland's greatest Reformer, John Laski. He was highly esteemed by Calvin and Melanchthon, a friend of Cranmer and Bucer, and looked to by numerous Reformers.

By Peter Slomski

As a Reformer, John Laski¹ would play a key role in the Netherlands, England and Poland. And yet today he is not widely known.

Early influences

Laski was born in 1499 at the castle of Laski, ninety miles from Warsaw. He received the best of education in Poland and Europe. While he studied, his uncle, also called John Laski (Archbishop of Gniezno and primate of the Polish Catholic Church), was advancing the career of his protegee.

From 1517-1525 young Laski received the positions of custodian of Leczyca, canon of Plock, deacon of Gniezno, canon of Krakow, dean of Gniezno, royal secretary, provost of Leczyca, and provost of Gniezno. To detail these advancements is to understand what Laski would eventually turn his back on.

In his 'travelling' studies Laski made the acquaintance of Swiss Reformer Ulrich Zwingli, who first encouraged him in 'reading the gospel'.² Laski then travelled to Basel, where he met Konrad Pellicanus who taught him Hebrew; Heinrich Glareanus who taught him Latin and Greek; and Johannes Oecolampadius who guided him in doctrine.

Conversion

It would seem, however, that his uncle, hearing of the 'dangerous' company he kept, recalled him urgently to Poland. Laski's heart now began to move away from adherence to the Church of Rome, but as yet he did not sever his ties. He entertained 'the hope that it would be possible to reform the Church of Rome without seceding from its obedience'.³

His uncle demanded that he sign an oath not to embrace doctrines contrary to the Catholic Church. It was 1526, and Laski obliged, signing.⁴ However, he resorted back to the Scriptures, and his soul was revived: 'Can I, by the performance of

the works she prescribes, obtain peace of conscience, and make myself holy in the sight of God?'⁵ His heart had been captured by the crucified Saviour.

In 1536, he was offered the bishopric of Kujawia by Polish king Zygmunt I; an office which opened the way to the primacy of Poland. But he had decided to begin publicly separating from Rome and identifying with the Reformation.

Declining the offer, he resolved to depart from Poland, and went to his monarch to explain himself. 'Dignity no longer captivated him; the cross of Christ and the reproach and persecution of an evangelical preacher seemed to him more desirable [preferring] ... poverty for Christ's sake to the luxurious life of a bishop'.⁶

The Netherlands

From Poland, Laski travelled west. In Louvain he joined himself to a small group devoted to Bible study. There he met and married the daughter of a Louvain weaver in spring 1540.

Marrying was Laski's second momentous resolution in favour of the Reformation. In doing so, he turned his back on the riches and honours the Catholic Church offered. With this he became a marked man, inciting the Roman clergy's hatred.

The Countess Regent of East Frisia, Anna of Oldberg, aware of Laski's abilities was intent on having him reform the churches in her dominions. In 1543, Laski accepted her request to be pastor of the Emden church and superintendent of the East Frisian churches⁷, but with the proviso that he would be permitted to return to Poland, in case he was needed for the Reformation. East Frisia would be the blacksmith's forge where Laski would hammer out Reformation principles for the organisation and discipline of the church.

Throughout six years of reformation, he was beset by numerous personal and ecclesiastical difficulties. And yet, Laski would be successful to the extent that Emden became known as the 'Northern

Geneva'.

For Laski, the foundation of all worship and administration in the churches was the Scriptures. The images and Romish rites disappeared from the churches; the order of the church became Genevan in form; and Romish and Lutheran confusions concerning the Lord's Supper disappeared.

Laski instituted a weekly meeting for ministers for prayer, doctrinal discussion, spiritual encouragement, and help in governing the church.

One grave error of the Reformers was to confuse church rule with civil authority, and this resulted in the persecution of those who dissented. But Laski saw the unbiblical nature of this, and when Duke Albrecht of East Prussia sought Laski's assistance to supervise the churches in his territory, he insisted on complete independence of the church from the state.

Laski's hard work in reforming the East Frisian churches did not go unnoticed; rulers and theologians asked his counsel on church polity. But after the Diet of Augsburg in 1547, the Emperor Charles V forced their return to Roman Catholic rule.

Yet, in the same year, refuge for Laski opened up in England with an invitation from Archbishop Thomas Cranmer: 'We are desirous of setting forth in our churches the true doctrine of God ... We have therefore invited both yourself and some other learned men'.⁸ So Laski fled there from Emden.

England

Cranmer's conference of Reformed theologians failed to materialise, but Laski was nominated by King Edward VI as superintendent of the 'Strangers Church of London', overseeing German, French and Italian congregations in London that numbered around 4,000 individuals.

Their ministers were granted freedom to use their own rites and ceremonies and Cranmer probably hoped that this 'foreign' church would prove a seed of Reformation

throughout Europe, as well as England, with Laski at its head.

Again there were struggles. Both Laski's son and wife died, and he almost died himself. But his influence began to be felt. Cranmer was struggling with Catholic rites, but finally set about reforming the services 'by the goodness of God and the instrumentality of that most upright and judicious man, master John à Lasco' ?

When John Hooper objected to the wearing of vestments, and was refused ordination, Laski stood at Hooper's side, maintaining that enforcing an indifferent practice amounted to a legalistic tyranny. In this he was more like a prototype nonconformist Puritan, who understood that Scripture alone should be a believer's rule.

It was the organisation of this 'alien' church that resulted in Laski's most important and famous work, *Forma ac ratio* (the 'form and rationale' of ceremonies used by the immigrants). In this unique treatise, he dealt in detail with pastoral ministry, the ministry of the Word and administration of sacraments, and the use of church discipline. He constantly emphasised that all must be according to Scripture.

Laski's treatise influenced the German, Dutch and English Reformed churches. At least 35 questions in the Heidelberg Catechism may be attributed to him. It has even been suggested that he was the founder of the Presbyterian model of church government in England (and, to some degree, Scotland).

In Laski's churches, individual congregations were not governed by a single pastor or priest, but by a union of ministers and elders, part elected by the people.

Poland

In 1553 the young King Edward VI died. With the accession of Catholic Mary Tudor, the fires of persecution began. In that dark year, with his new wife, family and associates, Laski set sail from England. He had not forgotten his beloved Poland.

During his two-decade absence, the Reformation had made great progress there, but there was division between Lutherans, Calvinists (Helvetian) and the Bohemian Brethren. The Polish monarch, Zygmunt II August, saw the union of the movements as vital for religious peace in Poland. So he invited Laski back to Poland in 1556.

On his return, Laski came under attack from the Polish Catholic bishops. The king, however, welcomed the humble Reformer warmly and appointed him superintendent of all the Reformed (Helvetian) Churches of Little Poland.

Laski set to work with great vigour, preaching, organising conferences, and holding synods to unite and strengthen the Protestant churches. In addition, he wrote many doctrinal treatises and was involved in the first Reformed Polish translation of the Bible, known as the Brzesc Bible. His overarching vision was to form a national church, founded on the Word of God.

Irenic

At the joint synod of Calvinists and Bohemian Brethren at Wlodzislaw in 1557, on Laski's motion it was resolved to effect a union with the Lutherans. The Lutherans would, however, cause problems. The rise of anti-Trinitarianism was also a constant threat.

Sadly, Laski was not to see the Reformation completed, for within four years of his arrival in Poland he died — on 8 January 1560. Nonetheless, he had left an abiding influence on the Polish Reformation.

What marked him out as a unique Reformer was his kind and irenic spirit. He understood that the reformation and building of Christ's church was not by civil rule or legalism. For him, the authority of Scripture and liberty of conscience were crucial.

It is no surprise then that Laski is regarded as a 'proto-Puritan' and 'proto-Presbyterian'. His model of church government laid a foundation for the Presbyterian form in England. And he was not just a practical theologian, but a pastor who knew the people needed the Word of God.

His heart was for his God and Saviour, and the church of God. But it was also for the people of Poland. Poland is still in need of 'reformation' and the gospel. Who will pick up the torch from John Laski?

Evangelical Times January 2010

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE VOGELENZANG CASE

By Colin Hart

I just wanted to pass on to you some thoughts I had following the wonderful news that Ben and Sharon Vogelenzang have been completely cleared.

Ben and Sharon were falsely accused

Jesus said that people may falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me" (Matthew 5:11). Christian believers can have their reputation undermined by lies. Jesus warned us ahead of time.

Ben and Sharon stand in a long line of believers who have faced false accusations. We thank God that in their case the lies have been exposed. But there will be other cases where this doesn't happen in this life. The 1986 Public Order Act was wrongly used to prosecute the Vogelenzangs. Parliament never intended this law to be used in the way that it was used in Liverpool. If this law is not amended to protect free speech then in the future there could be wholly innocent Christians convicted of breaking it. There is a legal loophole which needs plugging to avoid mere disagreement being turned into a crime.

The price paid

For nine months Ben and Sharon have had the unbelievable stress of a court case hanging

over them. To make things far worse their hotel's major client stopped making bookings. This led to an 80% fall in income. They experienced what has been called economic persecution' In the history of the church this has happened many times before. Ben and Sharon now hope to rebuild their business.

Christians stood by them

Ben and Sharon's pastor and their whole church stood by them. There was tremendous support from many other churches. Some 200 Christians turned out to a special prayer meeting the night before the trial and 50 took part in the organised Christian witness outside the court. It was a real privilege for us at The Christian Institute to help with these events and with funding the defence through our Legal Defence Fund.

Standing by our fellow believers who are ill-treated because of their faith is a clear scriptural principle (Hebrews 13:3) and is specifically commended by Christ (Matthew 25: 34-40). How important it is to do this, when people's reputation is being undermined by false allegations.

The Judge upheld the law

Many Christians were shocked by the report of the case outlined on BBC1 on Tuesday evening. But this report focussed on the

prosecution evidence which had been heard that day. On Wednesday it was the turn of the defence to put their case. By the end of the day Ben and Sharon had been cleared of all the charges against them. We thank God for our prayers being answered and for such a public vindication. The case has been widely reported throughout the UK and overseas.

We thank God that in his common grace we have judges who apply the law dispassionately. How important it is to pray for those in authority (1 Tim 2:1 ~2).

As the judge made clear, criticising Islam is not a crime. The leading case in English law was quoted in court: "Freedom to speak inoffensively is freedom not worth having"

And the Gospel can be an offence when it is shared. Ben and Sharon were absolutely right to calmly say that Jesus is indeed the Son of God.

So far as I am aware this was the first ever case of Christians being prosecuted in the UK for comments about Islam. We will be asking important questions about how this case was ever prosecuted in the first place. In the meantime we give thanks to God that he answered our prayers.

Colin Hart is Director of the Christian Institute

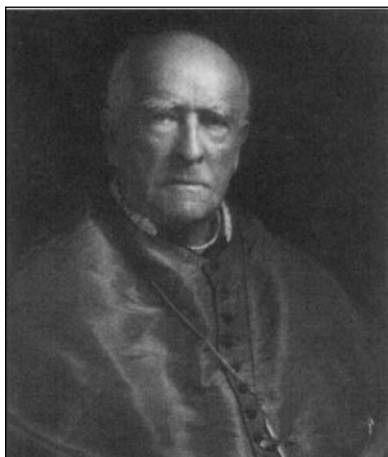
English Churchman December 2009

The altar of secrecy

A second report into child abuse by Catholic priests in Ireland has implicated the church hierarchy in a full-scale cover up

Why was this report such a shock?

Until now, the received wisdom has been that bishops and archbishops in the Irish Catholic Church were as surprised as anybody by the avalanche of allegations of sexual abuse that followed the first high-profile prosecution for child abuse of an Irish priest (Father Brendan Smyth) in 1994. But last week, a three-year commission led by Judge Yvonne Murphy, investigating the way the Dublin Archdiocese had handled the issue, concluded that over the past 20 years the last four archbishops of Dublin had known about the crimes of their priests, but had concealed them.



Archbishop McQuaid: ultra-conservative

What sort of crimes?

This May, the full extent of the scandal was spelled out in the five volumes of the Ryan Report, a horrifying catalogue of sexual, physical and emotional abuse meted out to thousands of children who passed through Catholic-run institutions between 1914 and 2000, notably those run by the Christian Brothers (see box). Last week's Murphy Report also contained confessions by abusers (one priest estimated that he had abused a child every fortnight for 25 years; another that he'd attacked more than 100 children). But the inquiry's focus was on the cover-up, not the abuse itself.

What did the Murphy Report find?

That bishops and the Garda (Irish police) colluded to head off investigations of child abuse, and shuffled sex-offending priests from parish to parish, without letting their new congregations know why. Some offenders were promoted. "The Dublin Archdiocese's preoccupations in dealing with cases of child sexual abuse, at least until the mid-1990s, were the maintenance of secrecy, avoidance of scandal, protection of the reputation of the Church and the preservation of its assets," said the report. Rather than being on "a learning curve" about child abuse, as church authorities claimed in the 1990s, successive archbishops had kept the details of allegations against 28 priests in a safe to which only they had the key. As early as

1986, the Archdiocese sought special insurance to protect it from lawsuits arising from child abuse.

How did it get around the law?

Because the archbishops were treated as if it didn't apply to them. For years, senior Garda officers deemed the church to be outside their remit: right up until November 1995, when Archbishop (now Cardinal) Desmond Connell handed over the names

of 17 suspected child abusers, the state allowed "Church institutions to be beyond the reach of the normal law-enforcement processes". In some cases, the Garda even handed over allegations to bishops rather than investigate themselves. In the 1980s, during a criminal investigation of Father Bill Carney - a notorious abuser who preyed on boys and girls at swimming pools - the report found that one of the archdiocese bishops used to visit the officer handling the case, "maybe once or twice a month". And as the Ryan Report noted, the education authorities were no better than the police.

How did they collude in the abuse?

The Ryan Report showed how Ireland's Education Department had aided the abusive culture through infrequent, toothless inspections that deferred to church authority. Inspectors were meant to restrict the use of corporal punishment and ensure children were adequately clothed and fed, but the inspectorate was grossly understaffed, schools were warned of visits in advance, and inspectors rarely talked to the children. And if they did raise concerns, they were ignored. As far back as the 1940s, school inspectors reported broken bones and malnourished children but no action was ever taken, so dominant was the church's influence.

How did it become so dominant?

Partly because of the links between Irish nationalism and Irish Catholicism which rigidified at independence. The bitterness caused by "800 years of oppression", and the sense of unfinished business with Protestant England left by the partition in 1921 between Ulster and the rest of Ireland, gave Irish Catholic politics a siege mentality. That mentality was given institutional support by Eamon de Valera, the leading figure in Irish politics for almost five decades, whose "grand vision" was that Ireland should be a rustic, devoutly Catholic state, where rigidly enforced traditional morality would prevail over materialism or modernism. To that end, De Valera forged a close partnership with John McQuaid, the ultra-

The Christian Brothers

The order was founded in 1802 by a Waterford merchant called Edmund Rice, to educate the children of the poor ("to keep themselves unspotted in the world") and to resist the onslaught of proselytising radical Protestant groups in Ireland. The Christian Brothers were arguably the most important force in shaping the identity of an independent Ireland: seven of the 14 leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising executed by the British, and five of the seven men who formed the first Irish cabinet, were old Christian Brothers boys. Many products of their schools, including Cambridge English don John Casey, have expressed

gratitude for the education they received. Other alumni include actors Liam Neeson and Gabriel Byrne, and bowler Dominic Cork. But they always had a darker side. Critics accuse them of fostering a narrow, exclusively Catholic view of what it meant to be Irish. Conor Cruise O'Brien called their teaching of history "concentrated Anglophobia". "Dreadful human beings," Brosnan calls them. But it's the revelation of systematic abuse meted out in their institutions that has done most harm.

Not long ago there were 1,300 of them in Ireland: now there are 250. There have been no new vocations in 20 years'

continued on page 9

continued from page 8

conservative Archbishop of Dublin from 1940-72, and one of the figures investigated by the Murphy commission.

Where is McQuaid's influence most conspicuous?

In the 1937 Constitution, which enshrined the "special position" of the Church in Ireland, banned divorce and contraception and defined women solely as homemakers and mothers. McQuaid ensured that the Church continued to run the vast majority of hospitals and schools. The committee for banning unacceptable books, set up in 1929, was also retained. (As late as 1976 it banned a family-planning leaflet.) The depth of McQuaid's effect on public life was evident at the funeral in 1949 of Douglas Hyde, Republican Ireland's first president, and a Protestant. Members of the government had to sit outside the church in their state cars during the service, because the church hierarchy would not then allow a Catholic even to enter a Protestant church.

What happens next?

Hard to say. "I am aware that no words of apology will ever be sufficient," said Diarmuid Martin, Dublin's current Archbishop, last week. The Garda commissioner also apologised for the police failure to investigate the clergy, and Justice Minister Dermot Ahern has promised to open investigations into some of the crimes. (Only 11 of the 46 priests mentioned in the report were ever convicted.) "The bottom line is this: a collar will protect no criminal," he said. Priests expressed their regret during Masses across Dublin last Sunday. They were greeted with applause.

Irish bishops await their fate

Pope meets with Irish hierarchy to discuss Murphy Report findings

By Beth Thomson

POPE Benedict XVI has said he is 'deeply disturbed and distressed' by the sexual abuse of children by priests in Ireland as the fate of Irish bishops hangs in the balance.

In a statement issued by the Vatican, the Pope said he spoke on Saturday with Cardinal Sean Brady (right) and Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin about the cover-up of allegations against priests in Dublin Archdiocese as detailed in the Murphy Report.

"The Holy Father was deeply disturbed and distressed by its contents," the statement said.

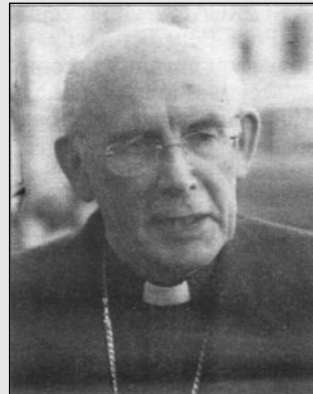
The meeting was also attended by Archbishop Giuseppe Leanza, the Papal Nuncio in Ireland, and the heads of major Vatican congregations. Pope Benedict now plans to write a letter to the Catholics of Ireland.

Decisions pending

The Pope said 'the Holy See takes very seriously the central issues raised by the [Murphy] report, including questions concerning the governance of local Church leaders with ultimate responsibility for the pastoral care of children.'

Bishop Donal Murray of Limerick remained in Rome over the weekend awaiting developments concerning his future, his spokesman said.

Bishop Murray left for the Vatican on December 6 after calls for his resignation began following the publication of the report which criticised his handling of complaints against



clergymen later found to have sexually abused children.

Cardinal Sean Brady had previously said Bishop Murray 'would do the right thing.'

Scandal

A leading Catholic theologian has reiterated his call for the five serving bishops who are mentioned in the Murphy Report to resign. Irish theologian Fr Vincent Twomey, a former doctoral student of the Pope, said that a delay in resignations was damaging the Church.

"The longer they dig their heels in and refuse to resign, the greater damage they are doing to the Church," Fr Twomey said. "They are causing great scandal."

Future for Church

The Catholic Church in Ireland could face significant reorganisation following the meeting between Pope Benedict and senior Church figures in Ireland.

Cardinal Brady said he and Archbishop Martin had had a 'good meeting' with the Pope but added that he was very saddened to 'be back here again

to discuss the painful question of child sexual abuse.'

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Archbishop Martin said the pastoral letter may well call for 'a very significant reorganisation of the Church in Ireland.'

The archbishop confirmed he had written to Bishop Dermot O'Mahony, one of those bishops mentioned in the report.

"I asked him not to carry out Confirmations in the coming year, to distance himself from the International Pilgrimage Trust, which he has done, and I asked that he would not be part of the diocesan administration in any way," he said.

"It is not just a question of heads rolling, I have said very clearly people should assume their own responsibility... It is good to see that has begun with people doing it in public, that is a new thing for the Church in Ireland."

Catholic Observer

**ALL ARTICLES
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WHAT THEN?

When the great plants of our cities
 Have turned out their last finished work,
 When our merchants have sold their last
 yard of silk
 And dismissed the last tired clerk;
 When our banks have raked in their last
 pound
 And paid their last dividend; When the
 judge of the earth says,
 "Close for the night," And asks for a
 balance — What then?
 When the choir has sung its last anthem
 And the preacher has made his last prayer,
 When the people have heard their last
 sermon
 And the sound has died out on the air;
 When the Bible lies closed on the pulpit
 And the pews are all empty of men And
 each one stands facing his record — And
 the great book is opened — What then?
 When the actors have played their last
 drama,
 And the mimic has made his last fun,
 When the film has flashed its last picture,
 And the billboard displayed its last run;

When the crowds seeking pleasure have
 vanished,
 And gone out in the darkness again —
 When the trumpet of ages is sounded, And
 we all stand before Him — What then?
 When the bugle's call sinks into silence
 And the long marching columns stand
 still,
 When the captain repeats his last orders,
 And they've captured the last fort and hill,
 And the flag has been hauled from the
 masthead,
 And the wounded afield checked in, And a
 world that rejected its Saviour, Is asked for
 a reason — What then?
 "And I saw a Great White Throne, and
 Him that sat on it, from whose face the
 earth and the heaven fled away; and there
 was found no place for them. And I saw
 the dead, small and great, stand before
 God; and the books were opened: and
 another book was opened, which is the
 book of life: and the dead were judged out
 of those things which were written in the
 books, according to their works. And the
 sea gave up the dead which were in it; and

death and hell delivered up the dead which
 were in them: and they were judged every
 man according to their works. And death
 and hell were cast into the lake of fire.
 This is the second death. And whosoever
 was not found written in the book of life
 was cast into the lake of fire" Rev. 20:11-
 15.

"He that being often reproved hardeneth
 his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and
 that without remedy" Prov. 29:1.

"For all have sinned, and come short of
 the glory of God." Rom 3:23.

Jesus said; "He that heareth My word,
 and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath
 everlasting life, and shall not come into
 condemnation; but is passed from death
 unto life" John 5:24.

"Being justified freely by His grace
 through the redemption that is in Christ
 Jesus" Rom. 3:24.

*Gospel Tract Publications
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Palestinian Christian Leaders Denounce Israel

In a declaration labeled as a message of
 "faith, hope and love," dozens of Arab
 Christian leaders denounced Israel as the
 obstacle to peace and rejected the biblical
 link between the Jews and the Land. The
 document, titled "A Moment of Truth,"
 was published by regional leaders of the
 Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran,
 Anglican and Baptist churches.

"We, a group of Christian Palestinians,
 after prayer, reflection and an exchange of
 opinion, cry out from within the suffering in
 our country, under the Israeli occupation:'
 read the statement. "Today we have reached
 a dead end in the tragedy of the Palestinian
 people."

Israel was solely blamed for the situation.
 Among the reasons peace has not been
 achieved: the security "wall," the settlers,
 checkpoints, the jailing of Palestinians, and
 Israeli control over Jerusalem's Old City.

Like their Muslim counterparts, the

Christian leaders said suicide bombings
 and other terrorist attacks against Israelis
 are legitimate resistance: Israel justifies its
 actions as self-defense...In our opinion, this
 vision is a reversal of reality. Yes, there is
 Palestinian resistance to the occupation.
 However, if there were no occupation,
 there would be no resistance"

The statement also blasted Evangelical
 Christians who base their support for Israel
 on the Bible: "[Jesus] came with a new
 teaching' [Mark 1:27], casting a new light
 on the Old Testament ... [and] themes such'
 as the promises, the election, the people of
 God and the land ... We declare that any use
 of the Bible to legitimize or support political
 options and positions that are based upon
 injustice ... transform religion into human
 ideology and strip the Word of God of its
 holiness, its universality and truth. We
 also declare that the Israeli occupation
 of Palestinian land is a sin against God
 and humanity because it deprives the



UNHOLY ALLIANCE: Palestinian Lutheran
 Bishop Mounib Younan (left) and Muslim
 Sheikh Taysir Al-Tamimi protest against the
 security fence

Palestinians of their basic human rights,
 bestowed by God."

Many will recognize this declaration as
 thinly disguised Replacement Theology. It
 disputes the right of the Jews to lay claim
 to biblical promises since they are either
 no longer valid or have been transferred to
 "the Church" BY RYAN JONES

Israel Today - January 2010

Laying down your life for those who despise you

On Tuesday 20 October two Taliban suicide bombers blew themselves up at the International Islamic University in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital. One attack took place at a two-storey cafeteria for female students where around 400 young women were having lunch, yet only three of them died. Why were there not scores more killed in such a crowded environment?

The next day the reason emerged. It was the deliberate self-sacrifice of a Christian man that had saved the lives of the Muslim girls.

The bomber approached his target wearing a black burqa, the all-enveloping head-to-toe garment. This caused suspicion, as none of the students covered themselves to such an extent.

Mohammed Shaukat, a Muslim, intercepted the bomber, who took out a gun and shot him. As Mohammed Shaukat fell to the ground, a Christian called Pervez Masih

rushed forward to grapple with the bomber and managed to hold him at the cafeteria entrance, preventing him from going right inside the dining hall. There the bomber detonated his explosives, killing himself, Pervez, and the three students. "There would have been dozens of deaths had the suicide bomber not been blocked by Pervez Masih," commented Saifur Rehman, a senior security official at the university.

Pervez was a day labourer. Like so many poor Pakistani Christians, he had to hire himself out afresh each morning, but was often working at the university. "He was very simple and, by nature, he was quite different from other workers in the university," said the contractor who employed him daily.

Our brother, despised by the Muslim majority and discriminated against because of his Christian faith, recognised the danger and could have run from the scene to save

himself. But he did the opposite. This poor, simple and lowly Christian knowingly gave up his life to save the lives of the Muslim students.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13). Yet our Lord Himself went further than this, laying down His own life on the cross not only for those who loved Him, but also for those who hated, despised and persecuted Him. His disciple Pervez followed the example of his Master, giving his life to save not his friends, but those who looked on him with nothing but contempt.

At the beginning of a new year, let us find new inspiration to walk closely with the Lord through the glorious example of Pervez Masih.

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo
International Director

BARNABAS AID

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2010

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Hello Boys and Girls,

As we are all having very cold weather just now I thought I would turn your thoughts to warmer times, perhaps last summer when you went on holiday or even a day trip to the seaside. When you were there did you have a good time digging in the sand and building castles? But you may have found it is almost impossible to build castles with dry sand and so you had to use wet sand..

Perhaps you built a very elaborate castle with towers and walls and even a moat and you brought water from the sea to fill up the moat, having fun running back and forward with your pail full of water, However, when the tide started to come in it was hard work to stop the water breaking down the castle.

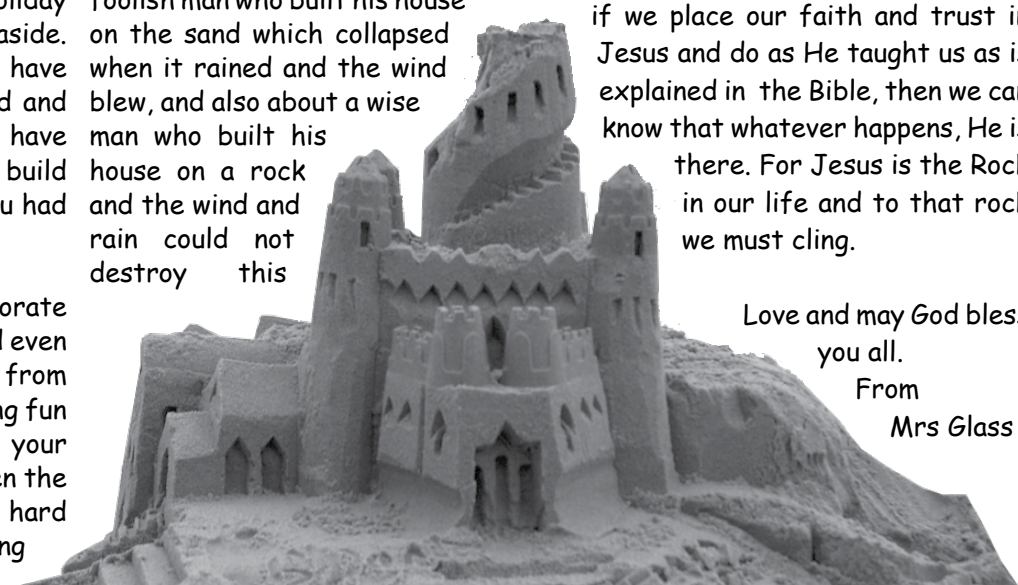
In the end, despite all your efforts, the tide came right in and your castle collapsed.

Jesus told His disciples about a foolish man who built his house on the sand which collapsed when it rained and the wind blew, and also about a wise man who built his house on a rock and the wind and rain could not destroy this

house. You can read about this in Matthew 7:24-27. Jesus meant that if we just rely on what we can do, then like the sand castle, when things are difficult, we will fail. However, if we place our faith and trust in Jesus and do as He taught us as is explained in the Bible, then we can know that whatever happens, He is there. For Jesus is the Rock in our life and to that rock we must cling.

Love and may God bless you all.

From
Mrs Glass



WOMEN'S VIEW

I am writing this in January when we are experiencing difficult weather conditions all over our country – I have been shut indoors for many days both due to snow but also with a dreadful cough. (I know I am not alone in this)

All around people are complaining – not enough grit being put on to our road, not enough help for the elderly and housebound.

No doubt some even blaming God for the severity of the weather, but how many gave thanks to God when we were enjoying lovely sunny days?

The truth is that as a nation we seldom prepare for what could happen, never prepare for emergencies and we're caught out time and time again.

The Bible gives us good advice on practical things.

Proverbs 6:6 tells us to "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:"

v.8 "Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." Why didn't we stock up on grit during the summer?



Proverbs 31 speaks of what the Bible calls a virtuous woman and although some things mentioned do not apply today, there is much that does.

v.18 "...her candle goeth not out by night."

v.21 "She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet." – perhaps this was

a warm cloth.

v.27 "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." – a personal message for all of us, but also for our Government.

I would like to bring in a spiritual challenge here. Perhaps many who read this will say that you have prepared for winter in your home – you have a stock of candles in your home in case of power cuts, there are extra tins of food in your cupboard and warm clothing for your children, but I would ask you are you prepared for death and what happens after death? The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Are you ready for this.? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved"

May you think on these things.

M.Glass

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