

SCOTTISH PROTESTANT VIEW

FREE

SCOTLANDS OWN
PROTESTANT NEWSPAPER

Vol.33 No.8

Summer 2011

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IF THE FOUNDATIONS BE DESTROYED, WHAT CAN THE RIGHTEOUS DO?

The Psalms are said to be rich in experimental knowledge for God's people and contain instruction to help us in almost every situation in our lives. David expresses his fears, but maintains his faith in God and belief that the Lord will yet deliver him in this Psalm. Psalm 11:3 refers to some unknown episode in David's life when such terrible things were happening that may have been shaking the very national and moral foundation of the nation.

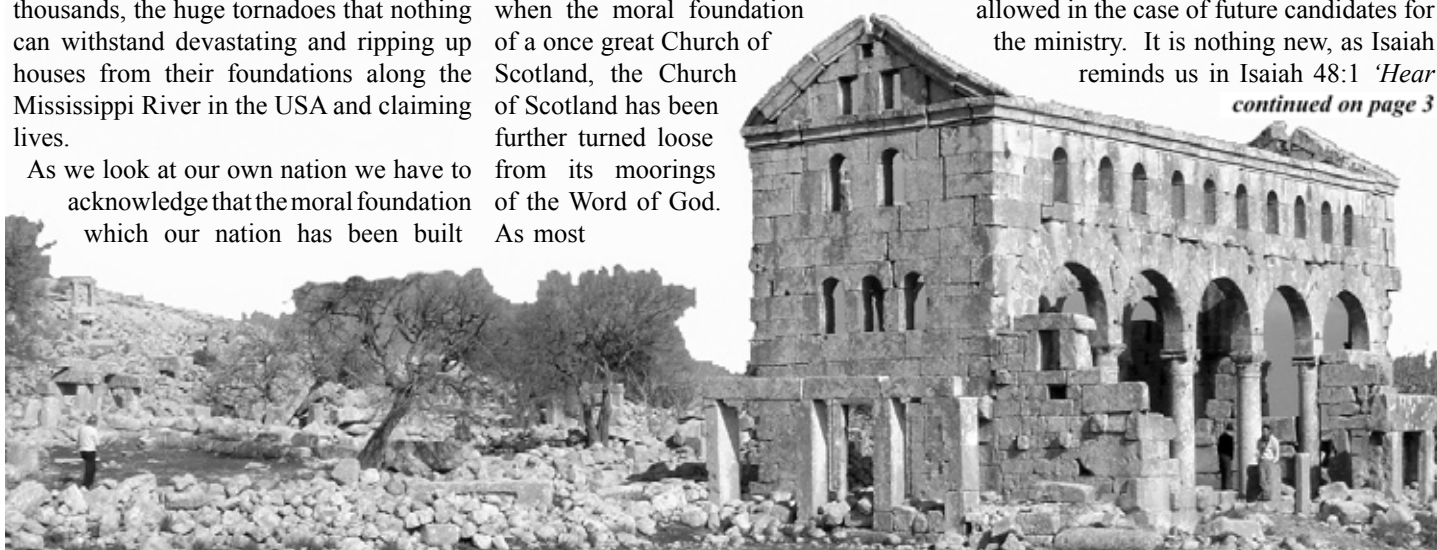
Across the world we have witnessed some terrible shaking in the natural realm within the past year. We think of the earthquake which struck the south island of New Zealand claiming lives and the earthquake and tsunami which struck Japan killing thousands, the huge tornadoes that nothing can withstand devastating and ripping up houses from their foundations along the Mississippi River in the USA and claiming lives.

As we look at our own nation we have to acknowledge that the moral foundation which our nation has been built

on for centuries, the Word of God, is no longer the case. We have cast ourselves off from that foundation and we are now sinking in the sea of the new morality of political correctness. This year has also been a time of intense shaking morally, when the moral foundation of a once great Church of Scotland, the Church of Scotland has been further turned loose from its moorings of the Word of God. As most

readers will know in a vote of 351-294, it was determined that no action be taken against ministers who were in 'same sex' relationships before May 2009 and a commission was appointed to consider whether the homosexual lifestyle be allowed in the case of future candidates for the ministry. It is nothing new, as Isaiah reminds us in Isaiah 48:1 'Hear

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Irish Premier's astonishing attack on the Roman Catholic Church:

'This is not Rome: this is the Republic of Ireland, 2011'

The Irish Taoiseach, Mr Enda Kenny, made an astonishing attack last Wednesday (20 July) in the Irish Parliament (Bail).

The severity of his words continues to cause worldwide reverberations - and moved Roman Catholic Bishop of Dromore, Dr John McAreevey, to acknowledge that his words "accurately reflect the deep anger of the Irish people at the contents of the Cloyne report and underlines the huge challenges ahead for the Catholic Church". The Vatican says it will reply formally to Mr Kenny's speech 'at an opportune moment'.

Mr Kenny, 'outraged' with the contents of Cloyne Report, denounced 'obstruction' by the Vatican in Cloyne just three years ago, criticising the Murphy Commission for not pursuing the Vatican through diplomatic channels to secure vital documents: "The Commission hasn't done this and I don't know why".

But the words which echoed most loudly across the world were these: "This is not Rome. Nor is it industrial-school or Magdalene Ireland, where the swish of a soutane smothered conscience and humanity, and the swing of a thurible ruled the Irish-Catholic world. This is the 'Republic' of Ireland 2011". The words were close to those of the 1688 Bill of Rights and 1701 Act of Settlement.

HORRORS

Kenny unequivocally condemned the Catholic Church: "...for the horrors it perpetrated, hid and denied ... all in the name of God, but for the good of the institution. The Holy See has frustrated

an Inquiry in a sovereign, democratic republic ... clericalism has rendered some of Ireland's brightest, most privileged and powerful men either unwilling or unable to address the horrors of paedophilia. The Cloyne Report excavates the dysfunction, disconnection, elitism, the narcissism, that dominate the culture of the Vatican to this day". PAPAL NUNCIO The Chairman of the Fine Gael parliamentary party, Charlie Flanagan, responded by demanding the expulsion of the Papal Nuncio. Rome subsequently withdrew him. Nineteen paedophile priests had been protected in the County of Cork alone. In one appalling instance of obvious deception, a Bishop - as recently as 2009 drafted different reports for Rome and diocesan records in order to protect a paedophile priest who had raped children.

DEFERENTIAL DRIVEL

Victims reacted with relief at the Taoiseach's robust acknowledgement of the appalling abuse they had suffered from often very senior Roman Catholic clerics, and the hurt and anger many of them still nurse at the way so many clerics appear to have got away with their crimes.

Marie Collins, abused as a young girl, said: "Enda Kenny's excellent speech ... said everything I have wanted to hear our Government say for many years. Finally the message has been sent to the leaders of the Catholic Church, both in Ireland and the Vatican, that they must respect the people and the laws of this country. This must now be followed up with ... a thorough investigation of all dioceses."

Andrew Madden, the first clerical child abuse victim to go public in Ireland, was in the Dail gallery for the so-called 'Cloyne debate'. He said: "It was good to be there ... the content and tone was a welcome change from the deferential drivel of his predecessors ... the Irish people appreciate that it goes right to the heart of the Vatican. That doesn't excuse the Irish bishops." Maeve Lewis of the One in Four group, in a thinly veiled reference to the Vatican, said: "I was very surprised at the strength of Kenny's address; I'm absolutely delighted that an Irish Taoiseach had the guts to stand up and clearly state that the laws of Ireland supersede those of any organisation or other state".

DISCORDANT

David Quinn, Director of the Iona Institute, struck a discordant note on RTE radio when he said: "I was not particularly impressed with the Taoiseach's address. He did not give any credit to the current Pope for his handling of the abuse issue ... the Taoiseach has taken an extreme scattergun approach without taking account of the actual facts". He did however call for 'the wholesale resignation of Catholic priests' in order to 'break the link with the past'.

The 'Archbishop-Cranmer' blog described the speech as 'one of the most important in Irish history; it is not quite 1517, but there are distinct undertones of 1534 - of powers once exercised by Popes being appropriated by kings'.

*Belfast correspondent of the
British Church Newspaper*

Three congregations threaten to leave Church of Scotland

Three evangelical congregations of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh have indicated that they are considering leaving the denomination over the issue of gay ministers.

Rev David Court, minister of New Restalrig Church, Willowbrae Road, said it would be "a dereliction of duty" if those opposed to the decision did not take "significant ac-

tion". Equally, Rev Jeremy Middleton, of Davidson's Mains Church, said: "We cannot simply shrug our shoulders and pretend nothing has happened." And Rev Dr Robin Sydserff, of St Catherine's Argyle, Grange Road, said some form of separation was inevitable. Mr Court told the meeting, attended by around 650 ministers and elders, that accepting the Assembly's position was

"not an option for me or my kirk session". He said: "Many of us do not wish to be connected to an institution that so publicly and so clearly rejects the Bible's teaching." And he added: "We may well either be forced to leave or be put out of the Church of Scotland."

*Scottish correspondent of the
British Church Newspaper*

ALL ARTICLES IN THIS MAGAZINE REPRODUCED AS EVIDENCE

Church in Wales Rector Burns Bible Pages

This year being the 400th Anniversary of the Authorised Version (AV) Bible, The Reverend Geraint ap Iorwerth of St Peter ad Vincula Church, Pennal, cut up pages from a Bible to create a piece of "art". He then burnt the remaining parts as a "symbol of all the suffering in the world".

He said the AV revealed a "cruel and vile God" and that he had the support of local people. "I find it highly offensive that people would think I have given my life to serving that type of God and that I would regard the words of the King James Bible as sacred truth. I cut out all the nasty bits of that Bible, the language of which is being celebrated all over the place this year, because I don't think you can separate that language from the God it is representing. I was gobsmacked no programmes or articles are representing the cruelty, revenge and hatred of this version of God."

The "artwork" is mounted on a 9ft by 7ft board.

Mr ap Iorwerth said, "People have told me they turned away from the real message of Jesus because of this God - that this version put lots of people off him as children. My version of God is Jesus, who was pure compassion and unconditional love. The King James Bible should be praised for its language but not for the God it represents

- the two need to be separated."

He said he plans to investigate "how such a cruel God has so prominent a place in national life" and to create a "wall of shame" at the church naming all of God's "cruel actions".

The rector claimed "incredible" support from parishioners.

The Bishop of Bangor, Andy John, said destroying the Bible, or passages from it, would cause offence to many.

He said: "I have therefore written to the Reverend Geraint ap Iorwerth and will be investigating the matter further. There are parts of the Bible that we struggle to understand today because culturally our life is so far removed from that period in which the Bible was written. However, it is not given to us to pick and choose - sometimes the most challenging parts are those which we need to wrestle with most of all."

Source: BBC Wales

Editorial:

One can hardly take in the level of blasphemy the above rector has reached. His attacks upon the Lord and His Word are from the pit of hell. May the Lord deliver this part of the UK remembered for times of refreshing and revival from such. II Timothy 3:13 "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

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IF THE FOUNDATIONS BE DESTROYED, WHAT CAN THE RIGHTEOUS DO?

ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah, which swear by the name of the LORD, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth, nor in righteousness.' The devious were heading in only one direction and that was the Babylonian captivity.

No doubt the natural disasters have been devastating, but what can we say about the church leaders who directly attack the eternal truth of God's word and devastate our society. Having for so long attacked the Word of God from their pulpits, they take advantage of the loss of scriptural knowledge in the pew and get rid of the ancient foundations laid by God.

What can we the people of God do at this time? Like David we can look above to the Lord or His throne, the 'I AM THAT I AM' believing that He is sovereign and that the evil acts of man do not go by unnoticed, but will bring them into account. No matter what happens, right is still right and wrong is still wrong because the character of God is the foundation of righteousness. The call for our National Church to repent must continue, but those who fail to heed the Word of God must be exposed as wolves in sheep's clothing. Hebrews 12:27 'And this word, yet once more signifying the remaining of those things that are shaken, as of those things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

Editor **Mr Jack Bell**

Humanists and gays fear Equality Commission intervention

Humanist and homosexual groups have reacted strongly against the Equality and Human Rights Commission's move to defend religious liberty of Christians.

The commission is intervening in four legal cases heading for Europe, believing that British courts have not done enough to defend the rights of Christians, they include Lillian Ladele - a Christian registrar who was disciplined for her stance on homosexual civil partnerships

But the British Humanist Association says the commission's intervention is "wholly disproportionate". And Ben Summerskill, head of homosexual activist group Stonewall, says he is "deeply disturbed" by the move.

However, the intervention has been welcomed by Christian groups who have long been concerned that equality laws are marginalising Christians.

The commission argues that judges have

interpreted equality laws too narrowly and set the bar too high for Christians to prove discrimination.

Reasonable

The Commission has called for employers to adopt a 'reasonable accommodation' for religious employees - just like they do for disabled staff.

But Andrew Copson, Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association said that "it is one thing to make the case for reasonable accommodation in matters such as religious holidays, and quite another if the accommodation sought is to allow the believer to discriminate against others in the provision of a service.

John Wadham, legal director at the equality commission said: "Our intervention in these cases would encourage judges to interpret the law more broadly and more clearly to the benefit of people who are religious and those who are not.

"The idea of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate a person's needs has served disability discrimination law well for decades."

The Christian Institute's Mike Judge said: "It will help Christians have more confidence that their genuine concerns are being listened to.

"Obviously, we await the precise details of the legal intervention by the commission, but we are encouraged by the tone of their announcement. It is a step in the right direction.

"We certainly believe more could be done to allow for a reasonable accommodation of religious beliefs in the workplace, and we hope that the courts will adopt a more tolerant approach to protecting religious liberty."

British Church Newspaper

29 July 2011

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Tertullian of Carthage (today's Tunisia) was an early Christian writer, and one of the first to use the term Trinity, stating that God did not consist of one person but rather of three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each consisting of one Substance.

Another famous observation of Tertullian was that "the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church". Ever since the days of the Apostles God's people have suffered persecution for the cause of Christ. Although we have to rely on tradition for our information regarding the death of most of the apostles, we understand that apart from Judas Iscariot, all suffered in the service of the Lord Jesus. We know from the Bible that James was beheaded on the orders of Herod (Acts 12:1-2). Again, we know from the Scriptures that John was imprisoned on the Isle of Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelations. Tradition says he later died as an old man in modern day Turkey, but he was the only apostle to die peacefully.

We now have to rely on tradition for information on the remaining nine apostles:

- Peter is widely believed to have been crucified upside down, some believe this was at Rome
- Philip is also believed to have been crucified
- Bartholomew is believed to have been at Armenia where he was flayed to death by a whip
- Andrew is said to have been crucified in Greece on an X cross
- Thomas, it is claimed, was speared to death in India
- James the son of Alphaeus was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple in Jerusalem
- Matthew was pinned to the ground with short spears in Ethiopia
- Simon the Canaanite was crucified
- Thaddeus may have suffered a cruel and painful death in Persia or perhaps been crucified

The Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was a consequence of them professing their faith. It began during the ministry of Jesus and continued intermittently over a period of about three hundred years until the time of Constantine

when Christianity was legalised and shortly thereafter became the state religion of the Roman Empire. This persecution impacted all aspects of Christian life including the development of the Canonical gospels, Christian theology and the structure of the Church.

Christians were persecuted by local authorities on an ad-hoc basis. Among other things persecution facilitated the rapid growth and spread of Christianity, prompted defences and explanations of Christianity and, in the aftermath, raised fundamental questions about the nature of the Christian Church. Although Christianity became the state religion of the empire in 380 AD, persecution of Christians did not come to a complete halt, instead it switched to those deemed to be heretics. Sadly more material was lost or destroyed regarding particular events during this era.

Tertullian's sentiment was to prove even more true in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries here in our beloved Scotland and throughout the rest of the British Isles.

The Scottish Reformation was Scotland's formal break with papacy in 1560, and the events surrounding this. It was part of the wider European Protestant Reformation; and in Scotland's case culminated ecclesiastically in the re-establishment of the church along Reformed lines, and politically in the triumph of English influence over the Kingdom of France.

The Reformation Parliament of 1560, which repudiated the pope's authority, forbade the celebration of the mass and approved a Protestant Confession of Faith, was made possible by a revolution against French hegemony. Prior to that, Scotland was under the regime of the regent Mary of Guise, who had governed in the name of her absent daughter Mary, Queen of Scots who was also Queen of France. The Scottish Reformation decisively shaped the Church of Scotland and, through it, all Presbyterian churches throughout the world.

However this Glorious Reformation did not come cheaply, there was a price to pay: a high price, a bloody price. The first martyr to pay the ultimate price was a young man of twenty-four, his name was Patrick Hamilton. Patrick Hamilton was a Scottish churchman and early Protestant Reformer in Scotland. He travelled to Europe, where he met several of the leading reforming thinkers, before returning to Scotland

to preach. He was tried as a heretic by Archbishop James Beaton, and burned at the stake at St. Andrews. It was said by a witness of his hastily carried out execution (there was not enough wood on the bonfire which caused more suffering than the usual agonies suffered by victims at the stake) the 'reek of Patrick Hamilton infected all it blew on'.

"I am corn, not chaff." These heroic words of aged Walter Milne have echoed down the centuries to inspire as much today as they inspired those who heard them uttered by the old man who was to be known as the last Protestant martyr of the Reformation. Walter Milne (also recorded as Myln or Mill) was eighty two when he was burned at the stake for heresy outside Deans Court, St. Andrews in April 1558, at the behest of the Roman Catholic Archbishop John Hamilton. When he was sentenced to death, Mr. Milne replied "I will not recant the truth. I am not chaff; I will not be blown away with the wind or burst by the flail, I will survive both."

Walter Milne's death was delayed as they could not procure anyone as a temporal judge to condemn him and the people of the place refused to supply ropes and other materials for his execution. At last Somerville, a domestic of the Archbishop, undertook to act the part of temporal judge, and the ropes of the Archbishop's pavilion were taken to serve the purpose. The death of this martyr brought about the downfall of popery in Scotland. The people in general were so much inflamed, that resolving openly to profess the truth, they bound themselves by promises and subscriptions of oaths, that before they would be thus abused any longer, they would take arms and resist the papal tyranny; which they did.

On the death of England's Queen Elizabeth I, the next in line to the throne was Mary Queen of Scots' son James VI, who was a Protestant and had healthy sons who could reign after him. So in 1603, James VI of Scotland became James I of Great Britain.

On the death of James, his son Charles I was crowned king in 1625. Almost at once he proposed to bring the Scottish Presbyterians into line with the English church and force Episcopacy onto Scotland. When the planned introduction of the "Book of Common Prayer" took place in

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St. Giles in Edinburgh, a lady called Jenny Geddes stood up in the congregation and threw her stool at the minister, shouting out these famous words, “Wha’ daur say mass in my lug?” The congregation erupted and the service had to be abandoned.

and a young teenager, Margaret Wilson, who were martyred in the Solway tied to stakes on the Wigtown sands. The older woman was tied further out in the sands, to allow the young maid to watch, in the hope this would cause her to recant. However even this cruelty could not persuade her to



Jenny Geddes throwing a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh in St Giles Kirk

Many in Scotland refused to accept the Royal decree that claimed the king was the head of the church. There was for them only one head of the church, the Lord Jesus, and signed a covenant to this effect. In doing so many were effectively signing their own “death warrants”, as this began one of the bloodiest periods in Scottish history which is known today as the “Killing Times”.

Although many Covenanters took up arms and formed an army engaging Government troupes in many battles such as, Kilsyth, Bothwell Bridge, Rullion Green where they not only suffered defeat on the field of battle but also had many atrocities committed against them if they were taken prisoner. Although they were victorious at Drumclog, one of their very few victories, the survivors had to endure life on the run, they were hunted down like common criminals and executed.

Many who, like David Hackston, died on the scaffold had their hands cut off, before being hoisted to the noose. Some were cut down still alive to have their intestines cut out and burned before their eyes closed in death. Some would have their heads displayed on the Nether Bow Port in Edinburgh.

The authorities showed no mercy to anyone who would not bow the knee to prelacy, neither age nor gender. This is most evident in the case of the two Margarets, Margaret MacLauchlan an old woman of around 70

deny her Lord and Saviour.

Fear of Catholic tyranny, and public anxieties were raised when Charles II died on 1st Feb 1685 leaving no legitimate heir. This meant that the crown would pass to his brother, James, Duke of York, whose conversion to Catholicism had become public knowledge in 1673.

Popery meant more than just a fear of Catholics and the Catholic Church. It reflected a widely held belief in an elaborate conspiracy theory, that Catholics were actively plotting the overthrow of church and state.

The Anglican campaign against James II’s religious policies went no further than passive resistance. But a number of English peers went further and made contact with James’ sister Mary who was married to the Dutch leader, William Prince of Orange. Parliament agreed that William would rule as joint monarch with his wife Mary, rather than act as merely her consort, and on 13th February William formally accepted the throne.

However, before they were offered the crown, William and Mary were presented with a document called the Declaration of Rights, later enshrined in law as the Bill of Rights, which affirmed a number of constitutional principles, such as the illegality of prerogative suspending and dispensing powers, the prohibition of taxation without parliamentary consent and

the need for regular parliaments.

Since the signing of the Bill of Rights, we here in Britain have enjoyed our religious freedom. However, as explained in previous paragraphs, this freedom came at a cost, a price was paid and paid in blood. Even in William’s famous victory over James at the Boyne cost the lives of brave Protestants.

We must never take this wonderful gift of religious freedom for granted and while we enjoy our glorious liberty let us remember that throughout the world, men, women and children still suffer for the cause of Christ. Some believe that in the last hundred years more have died in the cause of Christ than in the previous 1900. All over the world people still pay the price for following Christ Jesus.

North Korea, with most of its nation living in desperate poverty, suffering malnutrition and food shortages, has one of the world’s most repressive regimes, with the government controlling many aspects of daily life. Everyone must adhere to the official ideology of Juche (self-reliance), which has almost the status of a religion. Christians there live under constant threat of imprisonment, torture or public execution if their faith is discovered by the authorities.

In Afghanistan the people had to endure five years of Taliban rule, who imposed a very extreme interpretation of the Islam than any of the classical schools of sharia. Although the Taliban were ousted by an American led invasion in 2001, progress towards stability and protection for minorities is painfully slow. The Afghan constitution states that Islam is “the religion of the state” and that “no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of sacred religion of Islam” Although it also guarantees religious freedom, most Afghan Muslims seem to believe — in line with Islamic teaching - that the death sentence is appropriate for those who leave Islam. We here in Britain send not only financial aid to this regime, but also our young service men and women who daily risk their lives in support of an Afghanistan government which might have them publicly executed if they dared to share their faith with Afghan citizens.

The freedom of religion and worship has been won for us at a great cost, and comes to us with a great responsibility. Some one once said, “For evil to triumph, all it takes is for good men to do nothing.” If we as Christians do nothing, then secularism will take control. If secularism takes control, then apathy will ensure that nothing prevents further persecution of Christ’s true church.

Robert Bamford

LIVING SAINTS

On Sunday 1 May, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims (perhaps up to one million) gathered at St Peter's Square in Rome for the beatification ceremony for the late Pope John Paul II, as a result of which he will now be known as "the Blessed John Paul". His wooden coffin was exhumed from the crypt in St Peter's Basilica and was kissed and worshipped by several cardinals and other senior clerics as it was taken to St Peter's Square. A phial filled with his blood was on display at the ceremony for veneration by the faithful. The Vatican said the blood, which had been stored in a Rome hospital since his death in April 2005, had been kept in a liquid state by an anti-coagulant that was added when it was taken from him.

During John Paul's funeral there were demands for the late pope to be made a saint immediately. Proof of a miracle is needed for beatification and a subsequent one for full elevation to "sainthood". It was claimed that an intervention by John Paul II from beyond the grave led to the recovery of a French nun from Parkinson's disease, and it was on the basis of this "miracle" that the beatification ceremony took place.

When Polish Cardinal Karol Jozef Wojtyta became Pope John Paul II in 1978 (following the very short reign and suspicious death of John Paul I), he assumed all the powers and authority of the papacy. He asserted that he was "Vicar (substitute) of Christ" and "pastor of the entire Church". In certain specific circumstances, when defining "a doctrine concerning faith or morals to be held by the whole church, he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals" (First Vatican Council). During his long pontificate, he created some 480 "saints". And yet, ironically and tragically, he died without any assurance of salvation and not knowing where his soul would be after death. In his own eyes and that of the Roman Church, he was not a saint when he died and, indeed, has not yet achieved that status. The decision on that matter will be taken by his successor, Benedict XVI who, we presume, is not a saint either!

Such utter darkness and confusion is almost beyond description and belief. If even the pope, who purports to represent Christ on earth, cannot be assured of sainthood and heaven, what hope is there for the many millions of devoted Roman Catholics? And what further evidence do we need to prove that the religion of

Romanism is the antithesis of Biblical light and truth?

Let us travel back in time to the days of the Apostle Paul and meet with some pilgrims in Rome to whom he has written and whom he longs to see. These pilgrims had no faith in men or organisations but in Jesus Christ alone. They were pilgrims on their way to heaven. When the time came for them to die, their souls would immediately be with Christ for all eternity.

In his mighty and meaty Epistle to the Romans, Paul takes some time, as part of his introductory comments, to introduce himself as a called apostle and as someone separated unto the Gospel and to explain what this Gospel is. And then in Romans 1:6-7, he makes it very personal to the believers who live in Rome, and he salutes them as "beloved of God, called to be saints".

He refers to "all that be in Rome" (v.7) but it is obvious that he is not writing to all who live in Rome, the vast majority of whom were pagans. He is writing to all

believers in Rome, irrespective of their background, status or class.

In verse 7, Paul highlights three characteristics which mark out this group. First, they are loved by God, second they have been called by God and, third, they are called saints (for it should be noted that the words "to be" in this verse are in italics and therefore not in the original). Let us consider these hallmarks of a believer.

I. LOVED BY GOD

The city of Rome, like many cities past and present, was not a place where genuine love was in abundant supply. There was plenty of immorality and lust, but very little love. The people to whom Paul writes were, in all probability, those who had lived openly sinful lives, but they had been changed radically. How did they make this change? Was it by deciding to reform their lives and become "good living"? No, it was because they were loved by God! They didn't love God but He loved them. Believer, meditate

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St Peter's Square, Rome 2011. Giant Banner of Pope John Paul II

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much on the love God has shown to you, for such love lies at the very heart of the Gospel. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Such love is made all the more amazing when we realise that we did not deserve anything other than God's wrath.

In Ephesians 2:1-3, Paul describes the condition of believers before they were saved. They were "dead in trespasses and sins" and, he says, "in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others".

This is a frank description of the condition of an unsaved person. There is nothing in us that makes us attractive to God. On the contrary, everything about us would justify God's wrath against us.

But Paul does not stop after his description. He goes on to say, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" (Ephesians 2:2-3). Aren't those wonderful words? We were slaves to Satan, "but God" loved us and provided the way of reconciliation and salvation.

Never forget that God's love for us does not begin after we start to love Him, but before. This is confirmed in 1 John 4:10 - "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins". (Propitiation means making peace by sacrifice with one who is offended). We can say with the hymn-writer, "How helpless and hopeless we sinners had been, If he never had loved us till cleansed from our sin."

The extent and intensity of God's love is further illustrated when we consider how it reflects His love for his Son. In the mount of transfiguration, God speaks from heaven and says, "This is my beloved Son". Christ, in his high-priestly prayer in John 17 asks his Father that believers might be "made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me". John 17:23

Believers in Rome were under constant threat of arrest, imprisonment or being fed to the lions. They were a hated and despised minority, but they were beloved of God. Dear reader, if you are a believer, you must always take comfort from God's love. Paul told the Roman believers that, in the face

of persecution and attack, they were "more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39).

"O the deep, deep love of Jesus, vast, unmeasured, boundless, free!

Rolling as a mighty ocean in its fullness over me! Underneath me, all around me, is the current of Thy love Leading onward, leading homeward to Thy glorious rest above!"

II. CALLED BY GOD

Because we are "dead in trespasses and in sins" (Ephesians 2:1), we are uninterested in and unaware of God's love toward us. In Romans 1:6, Paul refers to the believers as "the called of Jesus Christ".

Throughout our Lord's earthly ministry, he called people to follow Him. He said "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). We have been called by God who, although we are sinners, loves us! Christ said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).

In Matthew 22:14, Jesus says that "many are called, but few are chosen". This confirms that there are two different types of call, a general call and an effectual call. All are "commanded" to repent, but many fail to do so. A believer is one who is "called". As we have seen in Ephesians 2:1, we were "dead in trespasses and sins" and yet, by the power and work of the Holy Spirit, we responded to God's call. Jesus called his friend Lazarus to arise from the dead and "he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44). This is a very profound illustration of the new birth. We were bound and held captive by spiritual death but, at the call of God, we "came forth", our chains were broken and we were free.

There is a deep mystery about the effectual call of God, and it reminds us that our standing as believers is because God loved us and called us to Himself.

In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul makes a number of interesting observations about the call of God. He notes that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"(v.26). He states, "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (v.18). "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks

foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God".(w.23-24). Believer, rejoice today that, in His love, God has called you "out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

III. SAINTS OF GOD

Because we are beloved of God, and have been called to saving faith in Christ, we see now that we are "saints". This is an important and greatly misunderstood word and, in his commentary on Romans 1, Dr Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, "Unfortunately we have allowed Roman Catholic teaching to rob us of this word. It is curious the way in which a false teaching can persist throughout the centuries...and yet all of us, Protestant Evangelicals, still tend to think of saints as some unusual, exceptional people...But it is wrong. It is unscriptural. According to the teaching of Scripture every single Christian is a saint. You cannot be a Christian without being one". The Greek word for saint is "hagios" which means holy, or devoted or consecrated to God. It is applied to any thing or person set apart to the service of God, For example, it relates to the temple, the sacrifices, the utensils in the temple, the garments etc. of the priests, and the priests themselves. It was applied to the Jews as a people separated from other nations, and devoted or consecrated to God, while, by contrast, other nations were devoted to the service of idols. It is also applied to Christians, as being a people devoted or set apart to the service of God.

No matter how we try, we can never become holy by our own efforts. Many have tried but failed. We are sinners and the only way we can be made holy is by the righteousness of Christ becoming our righteousness. In Romans 1:18 to the end, we have a vivid description of a fallen depraved world. Paul gives a similar example in 1 Corinthians 6 to describe the way in which sinners live, and he says, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God". (1 Cor 6:11).

Yes, we were all guilty sinners, but God loved us, called us and we become saints because we have been washed and sanctified by God. We are "holy", but only because God has made us holy. Contrast this Biblical teaching with the gross errors of Rome! As Martyn Lloyd-Jones says, "the whole process is the exact reverse of Roman Catholic representation".

As believers, we rejoice that we have been loved by God and called by Him to be saints. Our standing as saints is eternally

continued on page 8

continued from page 7

secure for it is not based on our vain efforts or the equally vain efforts of other men and women on our behalf either during our life or after we have died.

If you are trusting in Christ alone for salvation, you can rejoice that you are a saint, but you must also seek to live a godly sanctified life of the saint as an example to others. Because we have been “called saints”, we are also “called to be saints”. We therefore have a duty’ and we should have the desire, to live as saints. The Apostle Peter puts it like this is 1 Peter 2:9 - “ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”. And he goes on in v.11 - “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”. As strangers and pilgrims, we are on our way to our eternal home. It is a struggle for we are often beset by attacks from Satan. As the hymn-writer rightly says,

*“I’ve wrestled on towards Heaven,
against storm and wind and tide,
Now, like a weary traveller
that leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening,
while sinks life’s lingering sand
I hail the glory dawning
from Immanuel’s land”*

And, as you battle on, you know that one day you will see the glory dawning from Immanuel’s land. What a glorious Gospel that we guilty fallen sinners should be beloved of God and called to be saints. This Gospel, in its God-honouring clarity and certainty, stands in sharp contrast to the falsehoods and uncertainties of Romanism. And yet, there are those within liberal and ecumenical Protestant churches who would minimise the differences between truth and error and encourage closer relationships with Rome. If we have been set free in Christ and trust in him alone for salvation, let us steadfastly resist and oppose Roman Catholicism. Let us “stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”.

In the latter part of Romans 1:7, Paul greets those who have been loved by God and called to be saints, and say: to them, “grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ”. That, praise God, is the portion of the true saint.

*Printed with kind permission
from the Ulster Bulwark*

Are Catholics Christians?

While one analyzes Catholicism in the light of biblical faith, one reaches an irrefutable answer; the outcome must also be carefully investigated. Many Evangelicals will be dismayed that such a question need even be asked. Moreover, the question will be totally abhorrent to those in ecumenical movements as “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” and “Christian Churches Together”. Thus, in this article the Christian response to the effects of the incontestable answer are clearly outlined.

I ask that you respond to this important article by your prayers and by forwarding it to others.

I request also that, if possible, you place it on your website.

Yours in Jesus Christ and His Gospel of grace,

RICHARD BENNETT

The Catholic Church presupposes itself to be Christian. Nothing could be further from the truth; yet, the Catholic Church has been ardently promoting that image, particularly since the close of Vatican Council II in 1965. A primary, non-negotiable goal of Vatican Council II was to lay the groundwork and to establish the rules and parameters for a multifaceted, ecumenical outreach. Evangelical Christians, now called “separated brethren,” rather than “heretics,” are the primary target of Catholic ecumenism. The goal is to draw them into the Roman Catholic fold. Thus, in the 1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church, the word “Christian” occurs more than 100 times in these official teachings. Buzzwords such as “dialogue”, “ecumenism,” and “social justice” are being used under the guise of promoting Christianity to advance the Roman Catholic agenda.

Assurances to Evangelicals Negated

Evangelicals are assured that Catholics who believe in the incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are true Christians, even though they misunderstand some of the “technicalities” regarding salvation. Such reasoning is negated by the fact that Catholicism differs from biblical faith— not only on minor details, but more importantly on what is

essential to salvation.

The most dangerous aspect of Catholic Church doctrine is that it appears to be based on the great, indispensable truths of God’s revelation. In reality, however, the blatant fact is that Catholic doctrine denies essential, biblical doctrines by what it affixes to biblical truths. For example, while Catholic doctrine holds that in the Godhead there are three distinct Persons worthy of the same worship, it adds divine adoration for Mary by addressing her in prayer as “the All Holy One.” The exact words of the official statement are, “By asking Mary to pray for us, we acknowledge ourselves to be poor sinners and we address ourselves to the ‘Mother of Mercy,’ the All Holy One.” Another example is the fact that the Catholic Church demands that the worship, which is due to the true God, is to be given also to their Communion element. Thus, she officially declares,

“There should be no doubt in anyone’s mind ‘that all the faithful ought to show to this most holy sacrament the worship which is due to the true God, as has always been the custom of the Catholic Church. Nor is it to be adored any the less because it was instituted by Christ to be eaten.”

These two official teachings of the Church of Rome show that the divine worship due to God alone is being given to Mary and to the communion element.

Then the essential doctrine of man’s redemption by Jesus Christ is totally different in Papal Rome from what it is in the Bible. The Scripture declares that sinners dead in trespasses and sins are “by grace” “saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” This Scripture shows that God directly saves sinners by His grace alone through faith alone. However, the Catholic Church introduces the necessity of her sacraments and consequently states,

“The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. ‘Sacramental grace’ is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament.”

The sacraments that are declared to be indispensable negate the biblical doctrine of man’s redemption. With these explicit

examples of the Catholic Church's negation of essential biblical truths, the Papacy's official doctrine and teaching on all the major topics of biblical truth needs to be carefully examined.

The Basis of Truth

The first topic to address is, "What is the basis of truth?" In other words, what is the norm by which we can know truth? The absolute standard set by the Lord Jesus Christ is the fact that "the scripture cannot be broken." The Lord also declared the truth of God's Word by saying, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." From this statement we understand that God's Word not only contains the truth, but rather, it is truth itself. The Holy Scripture is the source of the believer's standard of truth. Since Scripture alone is inspired, it alone is the ultimate authority, and it alone is the final judge of all human tradition and reasoning. Accordingly, the commandment of the Lord states, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Thus, in His written Word, the absolute authority of the Lord God is totally sufficient for all the believer's needs, as outlined by the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Lord rebuked the Pharisees because they placed their human tradition on the same level as the written Word of God. Thus, the Pharisees corrupted the people's understanding by confusing them in regards to God's Word as the very basis of truth. Jesus declared to them, "[You are] making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered."

In spite of this clear standard of truth, the Catholic Church declares her own standard of truth. She begins her reasoning with the following words,

"Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other". "And [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God, which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit."

The fact is that no "tradition" transmits in its entirety the Word of God. This task is solely that of the Holy Spirit. First, in an exclusive sense, the Scriptures are the composition of the Holy Spirit; as stated by the Apostle Peter, "holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost". The Holy Spirit is fully fitted for this work because He is "the Spirit of truth." He has perfect knowledge of the truth because He

is God, one with the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit reveals the truth of the written Word to believers. For this reason the Lord Christ Jesus said, "He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Thus, the Holy Spirit perfectly transmits the Word of God in its proper fullness.

Having equated her "Sacred Tradition" with Sacred Scripture, and stating that her tradition transmits the Word of God in its entirety, the Catholic Church reaches its conclusion with the following words,

"As a result the [Catholic] Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, 'does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.'"

This statement is a formal denial of the sufficiency of Scripture and a repudiation of its unique authority. For a church, claiming to be Christian, to affirm her equal love for tradition as she does Scripture is to make Scripture of no unique value. It is like a husband who declares that he loves his wife and at the same time states that he also loves equally the woman across the street. Such love would be adulterous; so also are Papal Rome's "equal sentiments of devotion and reverence." Such a declaration is tantamount to a rejection of Scripture and unfaithfulness to the God of Scripture.

Catholicism, however, does have a standard for truth that is taken to be absolute. It is not the unqualified authority of God in His written Word; rather, it is the authority of a man, the Pope of Rome. For Catholics, the ultimate authority lies in the decisions and decrees of the reigning Pope. This is seen in their official teaching which states,

"The Supreme Pontiff, in virtue of his office, possesses infallible teaching authority when, as supreme pastor and teacher of all the faithful, he proclaims with a definitive act that a doctrine of faith or morals is to be held as such."

Thus, in practice, the Catholic Church's basis for doctrine is her Pope and what he states to be truth. In other words, this is claimed truth by decree. How ludicrous the claim is when we realize that some popes were declared to be heretics and thus condemned by Church councils.

Salvation by Grace Alone Denied by Catholic Sacramental System

That salvation is by grace alone must be clearly understood. Unredeemed sinners, of whom all are "dead in trespasses and sins," can only be saved by grace alone, through faith alone, because salvation

is "the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." It is God who graciously saves by His unmerited free gift. In total contrast to this, salvation in the Catholic Church is said to come about by "grace" that is merely a "help" with the intention that people will respond. Thus, the Catholic Church officially states, "Grace is the help God gives us to respond to our vocation of becoming his adopted sons. It introduces us into the intimacy of the Trinitarian life." In this view, human beings are presumed to be good enough to respond to the help that God gives to them. According to the Catholic Church, grace is not a manifestation of God's sovereign action in salvation but merely a "help" given to humans that they may respond, should they decide to believe. The Catholic teaching contradicts the very concept of grace. As the Scripture states, "and if by grace, then is it [salvation] no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." God's sovereign action is what is at stake and not uncertain, human response.

The Catholic concept of "grace" denies God's sovereign grace. Therefore, the Papacy needed to construct a mechanism by which Catholics can profess - that they have received grace. The primary tools of their invention are called the sacraments. Accordingly, the Catholic Church states,

"The Church affirms that for believers the sacraments of the New Covenant are necessary for salvation. 'Sacramental grace' is the grace of the Holy Spirit, given by Christ and proper to each sacrament."

This teaching is appalling. In the Bible, salvation is given to an individual by the absolute power of God's grace alone - because in God alone is the power to deliver a man spiritually "dead in trespasses and sins" to being spiritually alive in Christ. However, the Catholic Church adamantly disagrees with the Bible on this primary issue, for it officially claims "man has only been wounded by sin." Thus, her Catechism describes God's grace as a "help" accessible through her sacraments. These sacraments are in turn totally under the control of the Catholic priesthood.

We absolutely praise the Lord God that from Scripture we know His grace is totally His free gift, "wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." In salvation, we are accepted not in any institution, or by partaking of any sacrament, but in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

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One small victory for the Israel Messianic community

The tiny beleaguered Messianic community in Arad rejoiced on 18 July when an Israeli Court Judge acquitted Eddie Beckford of all charges filed against him by the ultra-Orthodox Haredim over an incident in which Beckford attempted to snatch a provocative banner from a Haredi protester.

The judge had warned Beckford he would lose the case if he went to trial, and advised him to plea bargain with the group. When Beckford indicated he was determined to clear his name in court, the judge was angry but after hearing the outrageous claims of the Haredim and seeing a security camera video which clearly showed Haredi aggression, he ruled in favour of Beckford.

In a separate incident in 2007, Beckford was arrested for an alleged assault on a

group of Haredim who were tampering with his vehicle. Without wishing to excuse any form of violence, it should be borne in mind that Beckford had been under a great deal of pressure. In addition to enduring almost daily Haredi persecution as a member of the Messianic congregation in Arad, the black American Vietnam veteran was routinely singled out for abuse, being called a “n****r” and a “b****d”.

After years of systematic provocation in public and outside his home, Beckford finally snapped. A disturbing online video clip shows Beckford beating up an Orthodox man and driving his van at a group of men who had been following him. The Haredim called the police and the anti-missionary organisation Yad L’Achim

brought a criminal charge against Beckford, flying in a special witness from London to ensure their victory in court.

The video footage is obviously edited so that the full context of the incident is obscured but Yad L’Achim claims Beckford entered a guilty plea after the video was shown in court. Beckford, however, claims he was reacting to the theft of his camera and chased the perpetrator.

Yad L’Achim labels Eddie Beckford as the “missionary leader of Arad”. Beckford, however, is a Gentile Christian, and he is not the leader of the local Messianic Congregation. But it serves Yad L’Achim’s purpose to elevate Beckford’s position in order to inflate their own importance.

Israel’s borders and Palestinian

Over the last few weeks, Israel’s borders have been challenged by the professed children and grandchildren of Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon, who have tried to infiltrate Israel’s borders, claiming they “want to go home”.

Although the infiltrators carried no weapons, their efforts to breach the borders was a violent act which involved transgressing national sovereignty, crossing minefields, destroying border markers and barbed wire fences, throwing stones (and in a few cases, Molotov bottles) and disregarding repeated Israeli military warnings that anyone breaching the border would be shot.

International response has been typically hypocritical, castigating Israel for what has again been described as a “disproportionate” response. No countries have come out in defence of Israel’s actions.

Quite apart from the fact that such “peaceful” infiltrators could pave the way for armed terrorists and bombers, what country could suffer the overt, premeditated breach of its borders, even from a friendly country, let alone from countries that have declared

war against them and stated that their goal is nothing less than the neighbouring country’s total destruction?

Jewish refugees

Israel settled her Jewish refugees from Arab countries. But the Arabs nations did not settle the small number of Arab refugees from what was Palestine when the surrounding Arab nations invaded fledgling Israel in 1948. Far from perpetuating the Jewish refugees misery, Israel laboured hard to settle them and provide them with a hope and a future. Why did the Arab countries not treat Arab Palestinian refugees in the same manner?

Israel’s predicament

President Obama has called for peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, to be based on the armistice lines that were obliterated when Israel was attacked again in 1967. The Palestinian infiltrators have shown that they do not accept that basis for negotiations. They “want to go home” - to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, to Haifa and to Joppa, to every thriving city and

township Israel has developed while the Arab nations squandered their oil-based wealth on corruption, oppression and wars against Israel. Their goal is not peace with Israel but peace without Israel - peace that will result from the destruction of the Jewish State.

Israel is between a rock and a hard place. If it defends itself, it risks international censure. If it does not, it ensures its demise.

How would you choose?

Another Turkish flotilla is readying to breach Israel’s maritime border and make it to Gaza via Israeli territorial waters. The flotilla is being organised by IHH, a radical Islamic organisation with known El Qaida connections. Meanwhile, sumptuous supplies flow into Gaza through Israel, and Gaza’s border with Egypt is open. This is but another attempt to delegitimise the Jewish State and raise doubts as to its right to defend itself. Israel has made it clear that it would rather exist censured than be mourned. It would rather be alive and hated than affectionately remembered.

*British Church Newspaper
by the Rev Baruch Maoz in Israel*

Poll: UN Vote Could Spark War

The result of the Palestinian Authority’s bid to win recognition for a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly in September is likely to be war with Israel, according to a survey by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Opinion. The poll showed that 76 percent of Palestinians believe their security forces

must immediately exert control over all of Judea, Samaria (the so-called “West Bank”) and East Jerusalem, even at the risk of open warfare with the Israeli army.

Palestinian officials say at least 116 out of 192 UN member states are prepared to vote for the creation of ‘Palestine,’ which would be the 23rd Arab state. Nevertheless, 62 percent of Palestinians believe the state

won’t be established because the US would veto the move in the UN Security Council.

Israel fears that the UN vote could lead to a Third Intifada (uprising) along the lines of the “Arab Spring,” with hundreds of thousands of Palestinians marching on Israeli checkpoints and Jewish settlements.

Christian Witness to Israel

THE LAST TESTIMONY OF JOHN PATON

John Paton was a 17th century Scottish Protestant who served as a soldier under Gustavus Adolphus in Germany and with the Covenanters at Marston Moor, Rullion Green and Bothwell Bridge. Along with his fellow Covenanters, Paton spent most of his retirement in hiding, but was arrested in August 1683 and tried and sentenced to death for treason. At the scaffold on 9 May 1684, he read the following most challenging and moving testimony to those gathered round:

“Dear Friends and Spectators

You are come here to look upon a dying man...I am a poor sinner, and could never merit anything but wrath, and have no righteousness of my own; all is Christ's and His alone; and I have laid claim to His righteousness and His sufferings by faith in Jesus Christ; through imputation they are mine; for I have accepted of His offer on His own terms, and sworn away myself to Him, to be at His disposal, both privately and publicly; and now I have put it upon Him to ratify in Heaven all that I

have purposed to do on earth, and to do away with all my imperfections and failings, and to stay my heart upon Him... I now leave my testimony, as a dying man, against the horrid usurpation of our Lord's prerogative and crown-right...for He is given by the Father to be the head of His Church... Oh! To be oft at the throne, and give God no rest. Make sure your soul's interest. Seek His pardon freely, and then He will come with peace. Seek all the graces of His spirit, the grace of love, the grace of holy fear and humility.

Now I desire to salute you, dear friends in the Lord Jesus Christ, both prisoned, banished, widow and fatherless, or wandering and cast out for Christ's sake and the Gospel's; even the blessings of Christ's sufferings be with you all, strengthen, establish, support, and settle you...Now as to my persecutors, I forgive all of them...but I wish they would seek forgiveness of Him who hath it to give...Now I leave my poor sympathising wife and six small children upon the Almighty Father, Son and Holy

Ghost, who hath promised to be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow, the widow and orphans' stay. Be Thou all in all to them, O Lord ... And now farewell, wife and children. Farewell all friends and relations. Farewell all worldly enjoyments. Farewell sweet Scriptures, preaching, praying, reading, singing, and all duties. And welcome, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I desire to commit my soul to Thee in well-doing. Lord, receive my Spirit”.



John Paton

ZION BAPTIST CHILDREN'S CLUB

I am writing this at the end of a week when my church held for the first time a Children's Holiday Club – I am very tired, very sore from an injured knee (nothing to do with the Club) but am very joyful and very blessed.

Zion Baptist probably should have held a Club like this before now, but our Sunday School and other youth groups always had a reasonable number in attendance, so I think we just drifted along thinking it would remain like this. However, last year it was brought to our attention that if we didn't add to our numbers in Sunday School, within a few years we would have no Sunday School at all.

The Lord laid it on my heart to bring up at a Church Business Meeting about a year ago the possibility of us having a Children's Club the following year in the hope that we would attract more children into our Sunday School. The Elders gave their approval and the planning started. I suppose I had really hoped that a younger person would have come forward to take over all the planning, but because I had put forward the suggestion perhaps a younger person would have felt they would be treading on my toes, so to speak. I can assure anyone reading this article, that this would not have been the case.

So many months ago I committed everything to the Lord knowing it wasn't going to be an easy task. I started by asking for suggestions from members of my church and I received some and acted on them. I also spoke to others out with our church who were involved in similar Children's Clubs and received some good advice there too.



I found that in the last month or so before the date of our Club the arrangements took over most of my time and housework etc was left to the side. My coffee table and dining table were littered with printed lists of do's and don'ts, pictures for colouring in, pictures for photo copying, cut-out figures, etc etc. My printer ran out of ink twice. I just kept praying no-one would drop in on me.

In the church I was continually running after our members confirming their offers of help and trying to enlist others.

But it was all so worthwhile as I saw the

children come in – not in huge numbers (we couldn't have coped with huge numbers) but many who had never been in a Sunday School before and quite importantly, a number from our local area.

Not having taught children for many a long year, I had forgotten the joy of seeing the delight in their faces as they wholeheartedly joined in with the chorus singing and listened intently to the bible stories. One of the choruses they were taught was to the tune of a well known TV advert. I think many homes will ring with the sound of “King of Kings” whenever this advert appears!

As I draw to a close we have had our first Sunday School since the Club and I am delighted to report that we added to our number, both from the local area and also from members bringing new children with them. I give thanks to the Lord for this for I know that it is He who gives the increase.

Finally my Bible reading for the Monday when the Club started was Isa.66 and the last part of verse 8 blessed me. “Zion when she travailed brought forth her children”. I believe the Lord blessed us. We could have made lots of plans and carried out these plans meticulously, but if we hadn't backed all our efforts with prayer, we wouldn't have had these results.

Peggy Glass

WOMEN'S VIEW

As she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children an untruth. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same.

However, that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard.

Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's

At the school Mrs. Thompson was required to review each child's past records and she put Teddy's off until last. and she was in for a surprise.

Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, 'Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly.'

His second grade teacher wrote, 'Teddy is an excellent student, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle.'

His third grade teacher wrote, 'His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn't show much interest.

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, 'Teddy is withdrawn and sometimes sleeps in class.'

By now, Mrs. Thompson realized the problem and she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when Teddy brought her a present, clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag. Mrs Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one-quarter full of perfume.. But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, 'Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mom used to.'

After the children left, she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded.

By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her 'teacher's pets. Six years went by before she got note from Teddy.

He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in life. Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer. The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, MD.

Teddy Stoddard is the Dr at Iowa Methodist in Des Moines that has the Stoddard Cancer Wing.)

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Tribute website to the founder of this magazine - Pastor Jack Glass 1936-2004

pastorjackglass.com