

# The Young People's Magazine

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**Issued by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland  
Reformed in Doctrine, Worship and Practice**

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*“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” Ecclesiastes 12:1*



***June 2011***

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**Cover Picture:** a Perth church; see page 111.

## The Young People's Magazine

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# The Young People's Magazine

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No 6

## A Fallen Tower

The earthquake which hit Christchurch, New Zealand, on February 22 was not nearly as strong as the one which occurred in Japan more recently. But it did cause serious damage, leaving more than 180 people dead. And the picture of Christchurch Cathedral, with much of its tower demolished and the stones and rubble, lying haphazardly around its base, seems a parable of a church which is badly damaged spiritually.

A quick look at the Cathedral's website makes it clear that the preaching there is seriously out of line with the Bible, which ought to be the standard for all that is said in God's name. The sermon I will comment on has the title, "Act of God?"; it was preached by Rev Lynda Patterson, described as the theologian in residence at the Cathedral. Common as it now is to have women as ministers, it goes completely against Scripture. Paul writes there: "I suffer not a woman to teach" (1 Timothy 2:12). He is not giving a personal opinion, but the mind of God, for Paul wrote his Epistles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus he was kept free from error in doing so; we can be clear that it is God's will that women should not preach.

The rather foolish heading on the home page of the website which leads on to this sermon is: "Act of God Nonsense". The expression, "an act of God", is, as the preacher points out, the language of insurance policies. But she says very definitely: "The earthquake isn't an act of God". She points to what is under the surface of the earth: "Two unimaginably vast slabs of rock floating in the tides of a ball of liquid iron. . . . Sometimes the slabs move, stick and then move again as they did for us" to produce the earthquake.

The preacher accepts that God designed "this globe of molten rock . . . and put it in place"; but she seems to find it impossible to believe that God was in control of the earthquake. Yet the Bible says something quite different. It asks, "Shall there be *evil* in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? (Amos 3:6). *Evil* here does not refer to something sinful, but to what we might call a disaster, such as happened in Christchurch.

We may not be able to understand how an event, such as an earthquake, can be the result of natural forces, yet the God who is in control of everything

always had it as part of His plan for the world. Similarly we may not be able to grasp how someone may decide freely to do something, and yet it happens because God purposed that it should be so. We have to accept what God says in the Bible, even when we cannot understand. Sometimes we may find two statements in the Scriptures which seem to contradict each another, but we can be sure that they are both true because God has revealed them.

The preacher from Christchurch Cathedral also seems not to believe that God may punish sinners. I will not quote the irreverent way she states the view of God which she rejects (besides, she exaggerates; I do not think you would find anyone who thinks of God in quite this way). But those who receive the whole Bible as truth must accept that God will punish for ever those who die as unbelievers. They will also accept that God may in this life punish individuals and communities.

Yet Jesus warns us to be careful. We read of those “that told Him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”. Then He referred to “those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them; think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:1-5). One thing should be clear from this: unless we repent and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, we will suffer for ever for our sins.

The preacher goes on to state: “We have a God who believes in new life, life in all its fullness”. This is true, but it is *He* who gives this new life; and the evidences of new life must go beyond the acts of human kindness that are to be seen after disasters such as the earthquake in Christchurch. The preacher speaks at length about, for instance, “the 20 000 strong student volunteer army who turn up . . . with shovels to dig people’s homes out of the contaminated silt, and to bring in supplies of fresh water”. This is what she calls “an act of God”.

Presumably she means: an act of which God would approve. She refers to Matthew 25:31-41, where Jesus tells us what He will say on the Day of judgement to His sheep, who will be on His right hand. But we should be clear that the *sheep* Jesus speaks of are those who have trusted in Him as the Good Shepherd who died – when He endured, in their place, the punishment their sins deserved. Jesus said, “Then shall the King [Jesus Himself] say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat . . .”. But what does Christ mean by giving

*Him* food? He explains: “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

All the acts of kindness done by the students and others in Christchurch are very much to be commended on the human level. But were they done to the glory of God? Indeed are *we* conscious of doing *anything* to the glory of God? On the Day of judgement Christ will speak of such good deeds as provide evidence that those on His right hand are born again. By giving food to hungry believers they are showing their love to the brethren (see 1 John 3:14), and so showing their love to Christ Himself.

But the preacher in Christchurch Cathedral claims that “Jesus reminds us (in Matthew 25) that faith isn’t about what you believe. Faith isn’t a series of careful statements which you can argue . . . . In the end, I am sure it won’t matter terribly much where exactly you stand on the nature of the Church or the authority of the Pope . . . . Faith is about what you do. Feed the hungry, Jesus says. When people don’t have water, give them something to drink. Throw open your doors to the stranger, look after the sick, visit the prisoners.” What she said may help to explain the command to love one’s neighbour. Yet would it really be wise to throw open one’s doors to every stranger today? Would it be safe?

When faith is explained like this, we might, sadly, feel that not only has the tower of the church fallen, but its foundations have crumbled away very badly also. We must resist such teaching; we must go by the Bible, which teaches that faith does receive its statements, and the more carefully they are stated the better. In spite of what this preacher says, the nature of the Church is important, and it is vital to recognise that the Pope has no real authority over anyone. Significantly she never suggests that anyone has sinned against a holy God, though the solemn fact is that “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23). We need to be forgiven; we need new hearts; our lives need to be changed. And that is possible, through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners. This glorious teaching will be at the centre of the preaching of every man whom God has called to make known the good news about Jesus Christ. It is a solid foundation for every church.

Christchurch Cathedral, with its unscriptural preaching, is only one example out of very many where the foundations have been destroyed. All over the world, churches have departed from the true faith, what God has revealed in the Bible. Let us be thankful if we belong to a church which values the teaching of Scripture. Free Presbyterians, in particular, should prize their heritage, which includes a commitment to the whole teaching of the Word of God. Let all remember especially the Saviour’s call to seek, before everything else, the kingdom of God and His righteousness (see Matthew 6:33).

## Crossing the Line

*Rev K M Watkins*

Let us call his name Nyabuto. The last time he and the missionary spoke face to face was in the missionary's office. When he left the office that day, the missionary feared that spiritually Nyabuto had "crossed a line". A line that he never should have crossed. On this side of the line was the truth of God. On the other side was error. On this side was God's blessing. On the other side was God's displeasure.

Only one month later, Nyabuto found that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). A terrible tragedy occurred. Three children on their way home from school were hit by a car. The children were dead. All three of them. The driver had been busy with his mobile phone and he had not seen them. He did not even have a driving licence. He was driving illegally and carelessly.

Who was the driver? It was Nyabuto, the man who crossed the line in the missionary's office, the line that he never should have crossed. That wrong step brought him under God's anger. Sometimes God punishes sinners by giving them over to foolishness and sin.

What line did Nyabuto cross? He claimed to be a pastor, but when he first came to the missionary, he did not even know if Jesus was God or not. "Jesus is the Son of God", he had said. "Yes, true," said the missionary, "but is Jesus actually God? Yes or no?" Nyabuto had been unable to answer. But as the weeks went by, he came to know the truth about the Deity of Christ – that Christ is God – as well as many other doctrines. He saw that fallen man has no ability to decide to get saved. Rather, it is God who must work in a sinner's heart to draw him to Christ. Salvation is not by works, but by God's grace, through faith in Christ, which is itself a gift from God (see Ephesians 2:8-9). He saw that calling people to the front at a crusade to "give their lives to Jesus" was unbiblical. Faith is something the soul does, not the body. He learnt many things from the Scriptures as God gave him light.

Nyabuto also learnt about the right way of worshipping God. Most churches do not care about that today. They think that they are free to worship in any way they want. They worship in ways that feel good to them. They think that, if they enjoy their worship, God also must enjoy it. How wrong they are! God does not enjoy most worship today, for it is "will worship" (Colossians 2:23) – worship that is according to *man's* will instead of God's will. The only worship which pleases God is that which He Himself requires in His Word. God hates everything else. He hates it with His whole heart.

In the days of Moses, two men brought worship which greatly pleased themselves. But it did not please God. It angered Him so much that He destroyed them in His fiery wrath. What was wrong? “Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not” (Leviticus 10:1). God had not asked for this kind of worship. They did what “He commanded them not”. It was “strange fire” – worship which God had not told them to offer.

Nyabuto began to see that most churches have some of this strange fire, and some are full of it. Musical instruments, dancing and clapping, uninspired songs, choirs and soloists, Christmas and Easter – God has not asked for any of these in the New Testament worship of Christians. Therefore they are strange fire. At first, this sounded very strange to Nyabuto. But as he studied the Bible more, he saw that it was true.

In Old Testament times, musical instruments were never used in worship until Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem. Even then, they were not used anywhere else. The local synagogues did not have them. Everyone went to the temple in Jerusalem three times a year – only there did they see worship that used instruments. Christ, the true spiritual temple, ended the whole of temple worship by destroying Jerusalem in AD 70. With no temple, there is no place for organs, keyboards, drums or guitars in the worship of the Christian church.

God never commanded that Christian worship should include dancing and clapping. God is not the author of confusion, and worship which has some people clapping, others dancing, others praying, others singing, others falling on the ground, all at the same time, is not the worship of the New Testament, which must always be performed “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40).

It is true that the Psalms speak of dancing and clapping, just as they mention musical instruments. But this does not mean that Christians should do these things in worship. The Psalms also speak of burnt offerings and other animal sacrifices. No Christian thinks that he must slaughter animals in church and offer them on an altar! Christ’s coming ended the sacrifices. And dancing. And clapping. And musical instruments. Christians take this Old Testament language spiritually. They trust in Christ’s sacrifice at the cross – this is the burnt offering that they bring to their worship. Their hearts rejoice in Christ – these are the instruments which sound a joyful noise to the Lord.

Nothing but the 150 psalms of the Bible should be sung in worship. Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 speak only of the Book of Psalms when they tell Christians to sing “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,” for, in

the Greek translation of the Old Testament which the churches in Ephesus and Colosse used, these words describe the psalms. Psalm 30, for example, is entitled “A Psalm and Song”. Some psalms are called “hymns” in Greek. Psalms, hymns, songs – these are different names for the 150 psalms. Only the psalms can be called “spiritual” – that is, inspired by the Holy Spirit. Human poetry can never equal Scripture. They are not inspired, and it is sinful for churches to sing man-made songs instead of the Spirit’s psalms. It is “the word of Christ” that must live in Christians as they sing. Songs from the Bible are Christ’s own words in a way that man-made songs can never be. The psalms are the inspired Word of God.

God has not asked choirs and soloists to sing to the church. Worship is not for people’s entertainment, but for God’s glory. The texts in Ephesians and Colossians tell everyone in the church to sing, not just a select few. “Let us exalt His name together” (Psalm 34:3).

Christmas and Easter have no place in Christian worship, for God has nowhere in His Word spoken of these special days. Yes, the birth of Jesus is in the Bible – but not an annual birthday celebration on December 25. Yes, the death and resurrection of Christ are in the Bible – but not a commemoration of them each year at Easter. The feast days of the Old Testament, like Passover and Pentecost, were all fulfilled in the coming of Christ, and the New Testament puts nothing in their place. After Christ’s resurrection on the first day of the week, the Lord’s Day is the only recurring special day for Christians.

Nyabuto was seeing from the Word of God that much of the worship in churches today is not commanded; it is like the strange fire of Nadab and Abihu. God was giving him light. But that day in the missionary’s office, he turned his back on the light. He said that he would not come to the missionary’s church. The missionary asked, “But what about the worship of God? What about the things you have learned of the Biblical way to worship the Lord?” Nyabuto replied, “But I like to rejoice”. He meant that he wanted to return to his Pentecostal ways of worship. He chose those unbiblical ways of worship, not because they are required in Scripture, but because he enjoyed them. Pleasing himself was more important than pleasing God. “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:2,4). Instead of submitting to the worship that God commands in His Word, he returned to the worship invented by men. That was the line he crossed! He refused the light. That is very solemn. To reject God’s Word is to reject God Himself.

Unlike Nyabuto, the missionary understood the story of Cain and Abel. Both brothers worshipped. But one was accepted and the other rejected. Why?



Cain worshipped in a way that pleased himself, but Abel in the way that pleased God. Cain thought that he could worship God however he wanted. But Abel knew that he had to worship in the way appointed by God.

Cain did not like it when God rejected his worship. God told him that, if he did rightly, he would be accepted. Did Cain take that warning to heart? No. He crossed the same line as Nyabuto. He refused to submit to God's way of worship. God showed His displeasure by leaving Cain to his own wicked heart. Cain killed his brother Abel. Then "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" (Genesis 4:16), never to speak to God again. Cain is now in hell. Which is where he belongs. For ever.

Before Cain became responsible for the death of Abel, he crossed the line by rejecting God's way of worship, preferring his own way. History repeats itself. Before Nyabuto became responsible for the deaths of three children, he also crossed the line by rejecting God's way of worship. Like Cain, he chose his own way of worship – the way that made him happy.

Many today love their dancing, clapping, musical instruments, man-made songs, Christmas and Easter so much that they refuse to listen to the Bible which tells them to depart from these abominations. Such people are crossing a line, a line that they should never cross. On the wrong side of that line are terrible things – the displeasure and anger of God. On the wrong side of that line, Nyabuto now has "innocent" blood on his hands. He is still alive, and may yet repent of his rebellion. No such opportunity was given to Nadab and Abihu. No such opportunity was given to the three children who were sent into eternity without any warning, because of his carelessness.

Nyabuto wanted to "rejoice". Is that the way you speak about worship? Would you attend a church that does not care about God's rules for how He should be worshipped, as long as people enjoy themselves? Be careful that you do not cross a line that you should never cross.

There should be joy in Christian worship. But it must be a joy that comes from spiritual fellowship with the Lord through reverently submitting to His will, not a carnal joy from things that please the flesh, like dancing and the rhythmic beat of worldly music. Spiritual rejoicing can only come from doing what God has commanded. Abel knew all about that joy. Cain did not. Neither did Nyabuto. Do you?

There is a better way than the way of Cain and Nyabuto. It is the way of Abel. Do not worship in the way that, although it makes you happy, does not please God. Instead, worship in the way that pleases God, the way that He requires in His Word. Then you can really rejoice! Because then your worship will be acceptable to the Lord. "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28).

# Moses: God's Faithful Servant

## 7. Moses and Christ

*Rev D A Ross*

The article in last month's Magazine focused on the difficulties Moses faced when the Children of Israel challenged his leadership. Most of the time he reacted with remarkable meekness, but not quite always. It was only because of God's grace that he was so often so patient, in the face of such opposition. This is the final part of a paper given at last year's Youth Conference.

**F**inally, let us note that Moses – and indeed much in this period in the history of the Church – was a type of Christ. Moses as a type of Christ is only a tiny picture of the infinite Saviour. Yet these types serve to teach us much about Christ. Moses said about Him: “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken” (Deuteronomy 18:15; see also Acts 7:37). This is indeed an enormous subject but we will mention some points briefly.

As God called Moses to deliver the Children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, so the Father sent Christ to deliver sinners from the slavery of sin and Satan. Moses led the people out of Egypt across the Red Sea and on to the Promised Land; this points to the Lord Jesus Christ, who leads His people towards heaven above, and finally into it. It was Moses who received the law from God to proclaim it to the Church and explain it; so it is Christ, the Prophet of the Church, who by His Word and Spirit makes it possible for people to understand the doctrine of Scripture. It was Moses who brought more fully before the people the way of atonement from sin; but not only has Christ revealed this wonderful doctrine, He Himself is the offering to God for the sins of the people (Hebrews 10:12).

When the Children of Israel sinned against God, it was Moses who, again and again, came between them and the righteous indignation of God. He wrestled in prayer, pleading with God to forgive them, so that they might be brought back into God's favour. Listen to him, for instance, as he prays, “Pardon, I beseech Thee, the iniquity of this people according unto the greatness of Thy mercy, and as Thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word” (Numbers 14:19-20). This sets Christ before us as the One who ever lives to make intercession for His people. Moses also interceded for them when they lacked water and other bodily needs, thus pointing to Christ as the fountain from which all our needs can be supplied, for it is through Him that we receive all temporal and spiritual blessings.

Many other points could, I am sure, be made to show how Moses was

indeed a type of Christ, but we must remind ourselves of the rudeness of the Children of Israel to Moses, their lack of trust in him, the insults they poured on Him, their readiness to stone him, their attempts to depose him, the fearful enmity they showed without reason – all this despite what Moses did for their sakes, out of love to them, longing for their real good. He was remarkably patient toward them. This is only a slight shadow of all the wickedness done against Christ, and His longsuffering towards hell-deserving sinners; yet multitudes were to receive His love and pardon and to be His people eternally.

Do we belong to this people? If we are, we will give clear evidence of it by humbling ourselves before God; we will confess our dreadful sins and plead for His mercy and pardon through Christ Jesus.

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## John Knox: His Life and Greatness

### 3. Scotland Reformed

*Rev D W B Somerset*

The purpose of this talk at last year's Young People's Conference was to give an outline of the life of Knox (1514-1572). Last month's article focused on the years when he was an exile from Scotland. During that time he laboured first in England and then, after the death of Edward VI, in Europe, particularly in the cities of Frankfurt, Geneva and Dieppe.

**6. The Reformation 1559-61.** These years were the most exciting period of Knox's life. After all the delays, Knox finally returned to Scotland on 2 May 1559. Several of the Protestant ministers had been summoned to appear before the Queen Regent, Mary of Guise, in Stirling on May 10, charged with entering the office of the ministry without authority, and Knox at once resolved to appear with them. The ministers received a false assurance from the Queen that their trial had been dropped, but then when they failed to appear they were all condemned and outlawed in their absence.

On May 11 Knox preached in St John's Church in Perth on the idolatry of the mass. The congregation was quietly dispersing when a priest defiantly uncovered an altar to say mass. A boy complained that this was wrong after a sermon exposing the evil of idolatry, and the priest struck him a great blow. The boy threw a stone at the altar, which happened to break an image. Then the "rascal multitude", as Knox called them, destroyed all the images in the church and then went on to sack the three friaries in the town. Thus was Perth reformed.

From Perth, Knox proceeded towards St Andrews, intending to preach there. Archbishop Hamilton of St Andrews sent Knox a warning message.

In the margin of his *History*, Knox puts a note: "The bishop, his good mind toward John Knox", and next to this he records the message: "That in case John Knox should present himself to the preaching place in his town and principal church he [the Archbishop] should gar [arrange for] him to be saluted with a dozen of culverines [muskets], whereof the most part should light upon his nose". The Reformers were uncertain what to do, but Knox was determined to continue to St Andrews and in the event there was no opposition. He preached in St Andrews and that town was soon reformed as well. Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and other towns rapidly followed suit.

The Reformation continued to advance, with various crises and setbacks, until the Treaty of Edinburgh on 6 July 1560. This marked the withdrawal of the French troops from Scotland and the triumph of Protestantism. The Reformation Parliament met soon afterwards, abolishing papal authority and the mass on 24 August 1560. But, before this, Knox had been engaged in perhaps the most important work of his life. This was deciding what the form of the new religion of Scotland was to be: how was the worship to be conducted; what was the creed of the Church to be; how was the Church to be organised; and what was to be her relationship with the state?

These are fundamental questions, and obviously others besides Knox were involved in them, but there is no doubt that he was the principal figure. He was being asked to do something that no one had done before. Calvin had been in a similar position, but only for Geneva, which was a small city. The French Reformed Church was deciding its form of government at that time – but that was as a persecuted minority in the nation, and it did not involve the King and Parliament. But Knox was called upon to decide for a victorious church and for the whole nation.

The question of worship was easy. They simply adopted the *Book of Common Order* from Geneva, with minor alterations. The *Confession of Faith* too was rapidly drawn up by the "Six Johns" (Knox, Willock, Winram, Erskine, Row, Spottiswood) and was ratified by Parliament on August 17. It was along the lines of other Reformed Confessions but it has its own vigour which is typical of Knox. The *First Book of Discipline* too was prepared remarkably quickly, and the suggestion is that Knox had a draft copy of the French *Book of Discipline*, which was being prepared when he left France in 1559. There is a considerable similarity between the two documents. These various decisions all launched the Church of Scotland in a thoroughly Reformed direction, and that was the greatest achievement of Knox's life. In December of that year the first General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met and began the work of implementing the programme that Knox had drawn up.

## The Influence of Friends

*Rev G B Macdonald*

There is a famous saying that goes along the lines of, “Show me who your friends are, and I will show you who you are”. The friends we choose and the company we keep are often a reflection of ourselves. If our friends are worldly, if they are not interested in the things of God, then we need to question our own level of interest in these important things. Naturally, we should be friendly to everyone, but we should be careful about the company we keep and, especially, about our closer friendships. It is a basic human desire to make friends and to build relationships with others to the point of a settled friendship. But we must understand that our friends influence us, either for good or evil, just as we influence them.

God’s Word has something to say on this important subject. Proverbs 13:20 states, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed”. This reminds us that friends and companions do have an influence on us; so it is important for us to be aware of this and to be careful about the company we keep.

Wise friends will have a good influence; subconsciously we learn from them, as they speak to us and as we observe their reaction to events. But the opposite is true if our friends are foolish. If they are careless about God’s law, if they have little or no interest in the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ, if instead they are deeply interested in such things as the latest fashions and pop music, there is a grave danger that we will learn their ways. When Israel mixed with the heathen, they learned of them their ways (Psalm 106:35). They left off worshipping God, and turned to serve idols. What a tragedy! And what a tragedy it is when young people, raised under the means of grace, leave off these things in case their friends disapprove of them or mock them!

The verse from Proverbs reminds us that we should choose our friends carefully. If, on reflection, we feel they are only an influence for evil we should be willing to part with them and seek better company.

There is a Chinese proverb that says, “A man should choose a friend who is better than himself. There are plenty of acquaintances in the world, but very few real friends.” The best friends are those who love your soul and have a prayerful concern for your spiritual welfare. It is never the number of friends you have, but their quality, that is important. Jonathan was a good friend to David; he spoke up for him when his father spoke evil of him, and warned him when his life was in danger. We should all desire good friends,

but above all we should seek Christ, who is the friend “that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24).

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*For Junior Readers*

## “God’s Fog”

During the Second World War, the British armies were nobly supported by troops from New Zealand, Australia and Canada who risked their lives crossing the oceans to come and fight with the Allies in distant Europe.

One Canadian division was to cross the Atlantic in a convoy of liners. Great secrecy surrounded the details of their departure because of the danger from German submarines. They were always on the lookout for any opportunity to sink Allied shipping. But, somehow, the Germans found out about the convoy and announced, in a broadcast in English, on their propaganda radio that they knew the names of the ships and that not one of them would succeed in reaching Britain.

The captain of one of the ships in the convoy was a Christian. He went to his cabin and went on his knees and prayed. He told God the danger they were in and he committed his ship and crew to the Lord’s care and keeping.

The next day, the voyage started and the ships left their port in Canada in bright sunlight. No sooner were the ships out of the harbour than they entered a dense fog. It was so thick that the ships could not even see each other. It made sailing both dangerous and difficult.

For three days and nights the fog continued. During this time they were aware of the enemy submarines not far from them. As the captain said, “They had been lying in wait for us and failed to find us in God’s fog”. He was thankful for the protection the fog gave them. He saw it as a kindness from God, an answer to his prayer for safe-keeping.

On the fourth day the fog cleared, but in the afternoon they got reports of two more submarines ahead. In the Lord’s kindness they got past them in the darkest hour of the night without anything happening. As more submarines were reported, the Admiralty (the Royal Navy headquarters in London) sent a radio message telling them to change course. Even after they did what they were told, they found more enemy submarines ahead of them. But once again a fog came down and closed around them until they were 40 miles beyond the danger spot. Then it cleared altogether.

On the sixth day the convoy reached the port in the United Kingdom to which it was sailing. No harm had come to any man or vessel during the whole voyage. On board the ship of the Christian captain, 200 officers and

men attended a thanksgiving service. Together they publicly thanked God for keeping them safe. They were convinced that God hears prayer. They were also convinced that He controls the weather and had been their “refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

*J van Kralingen*

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## Australia / New Zealand Youth Conference

*J van Praag, Chairman*

The Australia and New Zealand Presbytery Youth Conference for 2011 was held at Winmalee Christian Conference Centre, in the Blue Mountains, about 80 kilometres from Sydney, from January 11 to 13. The centre proved very suitable and the general feeling seemed to be that this centre should be used for future conferences. It was air-conditioned and the food and facilities were of a high standard. The conference was well attended, with over 30 young people present, some coming from as far away as Queensland, New Zealand and Singapore.

Rev E A Rayner delivered the first paper, “The Christian in Contemporary Society”. He highlighted the difficulties faced in today’s society, with addictions, alcohol, entertainment and the internet. Satan, the god of this world, seeks to promote more and more the idea that there are no absolutes; so standards drop and people do not ask what is right or wrong.

The young folk split up into groups of six to consider the issues raised and discuss them. They did so in light of Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things”.

Mr Rayner posed the question put by Moses to the children of Israel: “Who is on the Lord’s side?” He noted that the Lord’s people always were pilgrims and strangers on this earth. There was good discussion, with many of the young people getting involved.

In the evening some more young folk came along, after their day’s work, to hear Rev G B Macdonald deliver a most informative and interesting paper entitled, “Evolution a False God”. He referred to Isaiah 46:5-7: “To whom will ye liken Me, and make Me equal, and compare Me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place,

and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove: yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.” Mr Macdonald showed how those that promote the false idea of evolution push it as something that ought to be believed. In their discussions, the various groups noted the strong movement in schools, universities and workplaces for the support of evolution. Some observed that the teaching of creation was not allowed at their school.

The next morning, Rev J van Dorp gave a paper on “Conversion – What Is It?” Mr van Dorp began by saying that everything tires quickly, whatever it is, unless that one thing is *all*. He gave a quotation from the book, *Looking unto Jesus*, by Isaac Ambrose – that Christ is all for time and eternity, for life and death. He asked, “Are we serious about our desire for conversion? Do we pray? Do we persevere? Are we importunate? Have we seen something of our sin and the need for a spiritual change?” He went through the five points of Calvinism, which led to some very serious discussions in the smaller group meetings.

The historical paper was given by Mr C MacKenzie, on “The Progress of Christianity in the Colony from 1800 to 1830”. Mr MacKenzie highlighted the faithful ministers who were first sent to Australia, and the difficulty of their task in those early days, when they faced opposition from the convicts as well as from the government. He pressed on us the need to remember our Christian heritage and consider how far we as a nation have let things slip.

In the evening it was again Rev G B Macdonald's turn and he gave a paper on “Christian Contemporary Music – Rock Music in the Church”. It proved most interesting and enlightening. He showed how contrary it was to the worship required in Scripture. He noted that the rhythm was irreverent, many of the lyrics unscriptural and it all had a very worldly flavour. A very lively discussion followed, which continued well into the evening.

The next morning, following breakfast and worship, we travelled to Penrith to catch a train into Sydney. Beginning at Sydney Cove, the landing place of the First Fleet, Mr H Optland conducted a historical tour through Sydney, pointing out a number of places that were mentioned by Mr MacKenzie in his paper the previous day. Arrangements had been made to enter St Phillip's Church of England, named after Governor Arthur Phillip, which was the first stone church building in Sydney. There Mr Rayner conducted family worship, which included the singing of Psalm 121. After this we went off for some lunch before parting to return home.

During the conference, there were plenty opportunities for other activities, such as bush walking. All the young people left with a very positive outlook and several expressed the wish that the conference could go on for an extra



day with several more papers, or that we could have the conference annually. These are proposals that the Australia / New Zealand Youth Conference Committee will consider at its next meeting. The Committee was very pleased with the level of input by the young folk themselves. We pray that it may prove profitable for all present – with fruit following which will be to the glory of God.

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*For Younger Readers*

## **The Old Minister and the Thieves**

John Kant was an old man. He had been a minister for many years. He lived in a place called Krakow. That was where his church was and where he preached.

He wanted to visit once more the place where he grew up. There he would see many of his relations and his old friends.

Before he set off, he asked God to take care of him. It was a long journey, especially in those far-away times when there were no cars or buses or trains or planes. If you wanted to travel, you had to walk. But, if you owned a horse, you could ride on it.

John Kant did have a horse. So one day he rode away from his house. He was starting his journey to see his friends. As he rode along slowly through the dark forest, his horse carried him out into an open space. He looked up and saw a group of bad men in front of him. They had swords and knives. They were dangerous.

The men were thieves. They wanted all his money and everything else he had. They took away his purse, which was full of silver coins. They took away a gold chain, and a book with a silver clasp. And they took his horse.

Then the leader of the thieves asked him: “Is this everything? Have you given us all you’ve got?”

The poor frightened minister told them that he had nothing left. He had given them everything; so he thought. The poor man still had a long way to travel. He would now have to walk all the rest of his journey. And how could he buy food or anything else, now that he had no money? And it would soon be dark.

Yet he was thankful he was still alive. I am sure he thanked God

for that. I am sure too that he asked God to help him and to give him everything that he needed.

Then suddenly he felt something hard knock against his legs as he walked. It was something in the hem of the gown he was wearing. Soon he realised that there were gold coins sewn into the hem of his gown.

He had forgotten all about them. They were put there so that they would be safer. Now he would have plenty of money to pay for somewhere to stay and to buy food to eat.

Then he remembered what he said to the thieves. He told them that he had given them everything. He did not feel comfortable. Did he not tell them a lie?

So what did he do? He turned round and went back to the robbers. He told them: "I told you a lie just now. I did not mean it, but I forgot I had this." And he offered them the gold coins.

But the minister did not really tell a lie. A lie is when you say something wrong and you know it is wrong. John Kant did say what was not true, but at the time he was sure it was the truth.

God was good to him. The thieves saw that this was a really honest man. They were ashamed. None of them would come to take the gold coins. No one said anything.

Then one man gave John Kant back his purse. Another gave him his gold chain. Another came with his ring. And another man brought him his book with the silver clasp. Last of all, someone led his horse along to him, and the men helped the old minister to climb up on the horse.

Only now did anyone speak. The thieves gathered round the minister and asked him to bless them. He prayed to God, asking Him to bless those wicked men.

Probably he prayed that God would change them so that they would give up their sins and start to do what is right. And he probably asked God to make them believe in Jesus Christ. God is able to change the most wicked of people.

John Kant then rode away on his horse. He was very thankful to God for taking care of him once more. We should always ask God to take care of us wherever we go.

# Scripture and Catechism Exercises 2010-11

## Names for Exercise 2

**Senior Section:** *Auckland:* Amy Thomas. *Barnoldswick:* Robert Ross. *Bulawayo:* Nozihlobo Bhebehe, Prudence Chibonda, Khulekani and Sithandazile Dube, Sukoluhle Khumalo, Sazisani Moyo, Pink Ncube, Nonhlanla Nkomo. *Chesley:* Jacob Zekveld. *Dingwall:* Andrew Macleod, Ruth M Macleod. *Edinburgh:* Eilidh and Catriona Logan, Isla Macdonald. *Gairloch:* Rachel Mackenzie, Mairi Wyatt. *Gisborne:* Finlay Cramp, Anne-Marie Geuze, Heidi, Herman and Trudy Haringa, Kirsten van Dorp. *Glasgow:* Kate Gillies, Ruairidh Macleod, Peter Macpherson. *Grafton:* Cameron White, Chloe van Dorp. *Haywards Heath:* Hannah Woodhams. *Holland:* Jelle Bakker. *King's Lynn:* Joanna and Matthew Wiltshire. *London:* Amy van Kralingen. *Longcot:* Lucy and Ruth Cooper. *Luton:* Stephen Kingham. *Queensland:* Mary Brigden. *Sengera:* Paul Lumumba. Collins Mirieri, Finlay Mogari, Solomon Ogoti, Joan Ombura, Ondari Onang'o, Godfrey Ondieki, Hesbon Onsongo, Dick Ontiri, Eric and Mary Onwong'a, Gideon Ratemo. *Sidcup:* Lucy Turnbull. *Stratherrick:* Ewen Fraser. *Trowbridge:* Joanna Broome. *Vatten:* Cameron Rose. *Zenka:* Singazi and Velani Moyo.

**Intermediate Section:** *Auckland:* Lachlan McCrae. *Barnoldswick:* David J Martin, Rebecca Ross. *Broadstairs:* Edward Martin. *Bulawayo:* Kelly and Melisa Dube, Natash Makwezwa, Blessing Mlozi, Maria Maphosa. *Connecticut:* Rachel, Rebecca and Sarah Mack. *Dingwall:* Graham MacLeod, Finlay Murray. *Edinburgh:* Daniel Macdonald. *Gairloch:* Donald Mackenzie, Catherine Wyatt. *Gisborne:* Muriel Cramp, William Haringa, Emma van Dorp. *Glasgow:* Callum Macpherson. *Grafton:* Jackie Cameron, Abraham Wallis Lockyer, Alexandra van Dorp. *Holland:* Gerben Bakker, Nathalie MacDonald. *Kyle:* Nathan Whear. *London:* Andrew Munns. *Longcot:* Samuel Cooper. *Queensland:* Rachel Brigden. *Sengera:* Josinah Aboki, Dennis Mochamo, Christine Mosoti, Joseph Obiye, Josephat Ogoti, Griffin Okioja, Vane Omweno, Stephen Onyancha, Moses Orange. *Sidcup:* Jemima and Jeremy Turnbull. *Staffin:* Neil A Matheson, Carey Ross. *Stornoway:* Iain Boyd, Cirsty Gillies. *Sydney:* Keith Marshall (1 & 2). *Tonbridge:* Heidi Playfoot. *Vatten:* Jayne-Anne Fleming.

**Junior Section:** *Aberdeen:* Sarah Somerset. *Auckland:* Rita de Bruin (1 & 2), Jarrod Jago. *Barnoldswick:* James Ross. *Bulawayo:* Melisa and Thandazani Dube, Mitchell and Yvonne Makwezwa, Prisca Nelloru. *Chesley:* Samuel Zekveld. *Chippenham:* Rosie Salkeld. *Dingwall:* Uilleam Murray. *Edinburgh:* Annabelle Macdonald. *Gairloch:* Andrew Mackenzie. *Gisborne:* Hannah Geuze, Annika van Dorp. *Glasgow:* Kenneth Macpherson, Emma Norris. *Grafton:* Joshua Kidd. *Holland:* Samantha MacDonald. *Haywards Heath:* Joseph Woodhams. *King's Lynn:* Susie Wiltshire. *Kyle:* Sarah J Whear. *London:* Sam Munns. *Mbumba:* Sandulelo Khumalo, Yolande Masina, Mbiko, Langelihle and Gugulethu Masuku, Bublebethu Mhodi, Rebecca Mknwananzi, Isabel Moyo, Nobuhle Mpfu, Rosemary Mpoko, Abigail Ncube, Sithandweynkosi Nkiwane, Zibusiso Sibanda. *Ness:* Kathryn Ferguson, Johan MacInnes, Joanna MacLean. *North Tolsta:* Mairi Campbell. *Point:* Isla MacDonald. *Sidcup:* Joseph Turnbull. *Snizort:* Sarah Macleod. *Singapore:* Nehemiah Chai Yong. *South Harris:* Cameron Macleod. *Stornoway:* Aimee Macleod, Ryan MacSween. *Sydney:* Anna van Dorp (1 & 2), Duncan Marshall (1 & 2). *Tonbridge:* James Playfoot. *Wisconsin:* Calvin Smith. *Zenka:* Amanda Chakanyuka, Melisa, Simesihle and Sithengiswe Dube, Sandisiwe Masuku, Brandon Mathenjiswa, Nomusa and Sandisiwe Ncube, Nobulelo Ndlovu, Sindiso Nyathi.

**Upper Primary Section:** *Aberdeen:* Rachel Somerset. *Auckland:* Nathanael de Bruin (1 and 2), Monique Jago. *Broadstairs:* Claudia and Miles Martin. *Chesley:* Joel Bouman. *Dingwall:* Laura MacLeod, Hannah MacKenzie, Alasdair and Donald Murray, Matthew Ross. *Gairloch:* Roddie Wyatt. *Glasgow:* Katie MacPherson, Jessica and Jonathan Norris, Rachel Smith. *Grafton:* Christina Kidd, Rachel van Dorp. *Guildford:* Susanna Risbridger. *Haywards Heath:* Lucy Woodhams. *Holland:* Thaddeus MacDonald. *London:* Claudia and James Campbell, Henry Munns. *Mbumba:* Sizalobuhle Gumpo, Shanaz and Ruth Masango, Sithabile Mphoko, Lyvine Ndlovu, Ntombiyethu Ngulube, Sandile Ngwenya, Rossetter Sibanda. *Ness:* Jonathan Maclean. *North Tolsta:* Anna Campbell, Catriona and Christie Nicolson. *Point:* Duncan J MacDonald. *Sidcup:* Annabelle and Henry Turnbull. *Stornoway:*

Lucienne Doig, Cara MacLeod. **Tonbridge:** Katie Playfoot. **Trowbridge:** Abigail and Daniel Broome. **Sydney:** Calum Marshall (1 and 2). **Wisconsin:** Josiah Smith.

**Lower Primary Section:** **Aberdeen:** Samuel McIntosh. **Auckland:** Abby de Bruin (1 & 2), Daniell and Diana Jago. **Barnoldswick:** Claudia van Essen. **Brighton:** Katharine Hills. **Bulawayo:** Nyasha Ndlovu. **Chippenhams:** Timothy Salkeld. **Dingwall:** Deborah MacLean, Esther and Lydia Ross. **Edinburgh:** Bradley and Fraser Morrison. **Garrabost:** Susanna Macdonald. **Gisborne:** Matthew Geuze Sarah van Dorp. **Glasgow:** Iain and Hugh Macpherson, Louise Norris, Rebecca Smith. **Grafton:** Andrew White. **Haywards Heath:** Abigail and Matthias Woodhams. **Inverness:** Jessica and Victoria Maton. **Kings Lynn:** Thomas Wiltshire. **Kyle:** Mark Wheat. **Livingstone:** Calum and James Murray. **London:** Rachel Campbell, David and John Munns. **Mbumba:** Graduate and Privileged Bhebhe, Faith Dube Lomacawe Maseko, Nokuthaba, Zanele and Zibusiso Masuku, Bhekimpilo Mkhokho, Sibhekisiwe Moyo, Sipathisiwe Mpofu, Trymore Mphoko, Evelyn Ndlovu, Blessings, Mercy, Maolise and Thubelihle Ngwenya, Thabisile and Thamsanqa Sibindi. **Ness:** Catherine Thomson. **North Harris:** Hannah Jardine Cara and Connor Macdonald, Neil Morrison. **North Tolsta:** Ross Campbell, Ruth Morrison, Beth Nicolson. **Sidcup:** Julius and Max Turnbull. **Snizort:** Jonathan Macleod. **Singapore:** Owen Chai Yu. **South Harris:** Jessica Ann Macleod. **Stornoway:** Jamie Doig, Coinneach Macleod, Fraser Macleod Matthew Macleod, Kate and Mollie MacSween. **Sydney:** Hugh and William Marshall (1 & 2), Ezekiel Swinn (1 & 2). **Wisconsin:** Abigail Smith. **Zenka:** Pedina Mathenjwa.

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## Looking Around Us

### Can We Live for Ever?

As the years pass, people are living longer – not everyone, of course, but the average person certainly is. The Cenegenics Medical Institute, in the American state of Nevada, describes itself as “the world’s largest age-management practice”, providing a “unique nutrition, exercise and hormone optimisation” programme. Its purpose is to slow down, if not prevent, the ageing we all experience – at least when the years of youth are past.

It is a symptom of the hope that some people have – especially those who can afford the \$3400 for the initial tests and, presumably, similar sums for the diet, the exercise plan and the drugs – that life can go on indefinitely. But can it go on for ever? “It is appointed unto men once to die” (Hebrews 9:27). God has given us this answer; so we can be sure it is totally dependable.

If God Himself has made the appointment, for everyone, we are bound to keep the appointment. Each of us, sooner or later, must die and our souls enter God’s presence. Then we will either be brought to heaven, if we have looked to Jesus Christ for salvation, or else be sent away to a lost eternity, if we are still in our sins. How necessary to seek Christ at once, for life is so uncertain! And if God spares us to live a long life, we should want to spend every moment of it to God’s glory.

Price 80p