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# The Baptist Ministers' Journal

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The Baptist Ministers' Journal is the journal of  
the Baptist Ministers' Fellowship.

Details of the fellowship can be found  
on the inside back cover.

'The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily  
reflect those of the Editor or the Editorial Board'

# Editorial

In the planning of this issue it was in our minds to attempt a focus throughout on the theme of slavery and freedom, as we join in acknowledging this year's anniversary of the abolition of the Slave Trade. Recognising that this phrase begs a whole range of questions, not least that of the continuing fact of slavery in many different forms throughout the world, we have attempted to set the widest of contexts in the following pages.

Roger Hayden starts from the perspective of the 1807 Act and speaks from the city of Bristol whose wealth was largely built on proceeds of the slave trade, but takes us into questions and challenges for contemporary mission.

The work of CROP, introduced by Hilary Wilmer draws to our attention the horror of enslavement experienced by young women lured into prostitution and the sense of helplessness this brings to their families. As one parent said -

"We talk of international trafficking. We are not saying we should not do anything about that. But look here, they are passing these children from gang to gang just like they are doing with girls brought from abroad. Girls are not seeing money changing hands. That's what is happening".

Members of the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping stand in the tradition of Wilberforce and his contemporaries who campaigned for the destruction of another sort of slavery two hundred years ago.

When Graham Sparkes went on pilgrimage to Bethlehem, he saw something of the results of heritage of bitterness which brings its own slavery, but also signs of reconciliation.

John Colwell, never knowingly uncontroversial, takes a sharp look at the notion of Christendom and challenges to reconsider any easy current orthodoxies about the relationship between church and state, God and the world. As he puts it:

"...in abandoning all that is signified by Christendom might we be in danger both of mitigating the claim of Christ and of misconstruing our own true identity as the Church in relation to the world?"

Where is our confidence to engage with issues of freedom and slavery as those who have been given the right and responsibility to do so?

I am sorry that there has not been room for the Review Section this time, and that will be remedied in the next issue.

We are grateful to Peter Dwyer for his care and consistency in bringing news for our prayers and thoughts in *Of Interest to You* and thank him for his faithful service. For the following issue, please send any news to the Editor.

There are a number of forthcoming changes to the list of Officers, which will be made at the AGM and detailed in the July Journal.

# Set all Free

**Roger Hayden** (Bristol) reflects on a continuing Christian vocation from his context in a city built on wealth from the slave trade.

*'Action is always superior to speech in the Gospels,  
which is why the Word became flesh and not newsprint'.*

Colin Morris, Mankind my Church, p.51

This year the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act on 25 March 1807, passed by the British Parliament 200 years ago, is being canvassed across the media, country wide. In the middle of Broadmead, Bristol, there is currently a £500million re-development scheme, and 18 months ago Bristol City Council decided as part of the new commercial arrangements they would drop the name, Broadmead, and chose as a new title, 'the Merchants' Quarter'. Suddenly Bristol's past 250 year connection with the slave trade was on everyone's lips. Eventually this name was dropped in favour of 'Cabot's Circus', a name just as unlikely to expunge the memory of the city's slaving past. Bristol, a major player in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, with many of its citizens involved, whether they advocated slavery or not, has to face its demons, as does Broadmead Baptist church, where evidence indicates the involvement of its members over the years.

The late Bill Coble, Broadmead pastor in the '70s and '80s, visited Barbados in 1987 to see his son Alan, who teaches on the Island. Bill knew that Edward Terrill, the Broadmead Elder, owned Alleynedale Hall, St Lucy, Barbados, and that his son, William, managed the sugar plantation for his father. Bill found and visited the Hall, which was a typical Plantation House, together with its attached estate, dating back to the Barbadian 'Sugar Revolution' of the mid-1600s. Bill discovered the grounds, buildings and barns were still recognisable at the centre of the Plantation, and saw the old windmill, now devoid of its sails, where the sugar cane was crushed and stored by slave labour for shipment to Bristol. The whole scene gave 'every appearance of the white grandeur of the owners and the back-breaking labour of slaves in the hot sun'.

Bill raised some pertinent questions that have surfaced again in Broadmead in 2007: 'Did any, and if so how much, of the money earned in the Cabbage Tree Plantation find its way to Edward Terrill in Bristol? Was it such money, received from the work of African slave labour, that enabled, or partly enabled, Edward Terrill to provide funds for the Broadmead Church and what became the Bristol Baptist College?' Many Broadmeadians were involved indirectly in this venture just because they lived and worked in the port, building and sailing ships, providing traded items, or working in the Whitsun Court Sugar House, owned by the Broadmead Ellis family, whose warehousing facilities on the Frome, were provided by Terrill, the Ellis's broker, who stored both Ellis's exports and imports. Baptists who worshipped either at the Pithay or Broadmead, were all linked together in the sugar trade.

The earliest evidence of black members at Broadmead is 1646. Terrill makes special mention of Frances, in his Records, a black Ethiopian slave girl who was converted to Christ, and gave a remarkable testimony on her deathbed, which convinced Terrill that the 'dyeing words of a Blackmoore, [were] fit for a White heart to store.' Thirty years later Ann Atkins, 'a dark woman' was converted, baptised and joined the church.

Probably 24 million Africans were captured and enslaved on the African continent, with only ten million people surviving what was called 'the Middle Passage' across the Atlantic in horrifying conditions, and many more not surviving the brutal treatment received in the Americas. The Set All Free programme of Churches Together in Britain calls upon all churches to Act to end Slavery. The challenge is to remember, reflect, and respond. In the city of Bristol there is a strong 'Black' call for the churches to repent of all this. But most Bristolians to-day do not have roots reaching back into the 1800s, let alone the 1660s, and feel repentance is the wrong word. However, the Churches Together in Bristol have combined with the City Council in issuing a unique, credible and honourable statement of regret for the city's involvement in the slave trade. It states :

"We the signatories regret wherever and whenever inhumanity is exercised, but in 2007 we especially recognise the evil of the transatlantic slave trade. We cannot imagine the pain and suffering inflicted upon millions of individuals and families and the significant changes forced upon thousands of communities in Africa, the West Indies and other places by

the slavers of whatever race or faith. 1807 was the beginning of the end of slavery through the passing into law of the Anti-Slavery Bill. We give thanks for those who struggled to initiate this change, and look to a time when slavery of every kind is abolished." This will hopefully enable the city to begin some kind of closure over its past.

Set All Free goes on to ask for a serious addressing of the present manifestations of slavery, bringing to our attention 'Bonded labour' in India, which has existed for thousands of years, where a person's labour is used to pay a debt. Action is needed to fight against child domestic labour in the Philippines; and in other parts of the world, people born into slavery as a result of ethnicity, caste or social status, as in Niger, need help. There is the whole issue of people trafficking for, amongst other things, sexual exploitation. All of these issues are challenges presented by this anniversary, so what are we going to do?

In the 19th century, many Baptists felt that alongside their Carey-inspired passion for taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth, there was a social and political obligation to work for an end to slavery, particularly in Jamaica. In Broadmead, so clearly involved in aspects of the trade, two brothers, Thomas and William Knibb, offered for service in Jamaica with the BMS. Baptised at Broadmead in 1822, the pastor and College President, Dr John Ryland, took as his text, Gal 3.26-8. When Thomas, four years older than William, died after only a few months in Jamaica, 21 years old William agreed to take his place.

Black and white people opposed slavery. One of Knibb's favourite terms when speaking or writing was his concern for 'the Sons of Africa'. Did he find this phrase in Olaudah Equiano's autobiography? Equiano was a former African slave who converted to Christianity and came to England where he was 'well known as the champion and advocate for procuring a suppression of the Slave Trade'.

Knibb and his wife Mary arrived in Jamaica in 1824, alongside a Bristol Baptist College couple, Thomas Burchell and his wife and a Horton Academy, Bradford, student, James Phillippo and his wife. Together they were a powerful mission team. On 1 August 1838 Knibb and his black deacons, along with multitudes across Jamaica, celebrated the end of slavery and the dawn of freedom. On that day,

'A great procession, with portraits of the emancipators - Clarkson, Wilberforce and Buxton amongst others - gathered around the coffin of slavery an hour before midnight....On the plate of the coffin was inscribed "Colonial Slavery, died July 31st 1838, aged 276 years", and on the lower part, the name of "Sir John Hawkins, who first brought Africans into the colonies as slaves"....

As the clock struck the final note of midnight, Knibb cried out,

**THE MONSTER IS DEAD!  
THE NEGRO IS FREE!  
THREE CHEERS FOR THE QUEEN!**

There was a great burst of cheering and then the congregation sang

*Restor'd the negro's long-lost rights  
How softened is his lot.  
Now sacred, heart-born, dear delights  
Shall bless his humble lot.*

The coffin was then buried, along with a symbolic chain, handcuffs, and iron collar. The flag of FREEDOM together with the British Union Jack was then raised, and a tree of liberty planted.' (Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects*, Polity Press, 2001, pp 117-118)

Long after his death William Knibb was granted Jamaica's highest civic honour, the Order of Merit. It was in 1988, on the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery, and at that time only one other non-Jamaican and no white man had shared this honour.

One challenge arising out of this story from our past is whether we still challenge our people to 'life-time' service through BMS World Mission. Knibb, Burchell, and Phillippo all went to serve, not expecting to return, but to identify fully with black slaves, proclaim the Gospel, and to demonstrate in their midst a Christ-like concern. How often do we challenge our congregations from the pulpit to heed God's call to full-time service, overseas or at home? Why is it that the average age for training a minister is 36, which means that most ministry begins when a person is nearly 40 years old? William Knibb was dead by the time to-day's average minister starts! Was I really so unusual to have done my National Service, been trained for ministry, and began at 25?

The March/April edition of *World Mission* titled 'Christians making a difference', opens up the theme of 'modern day slaves: trafficked, exploited, ignored.' BMS is concerned

to discover the shape of Baptist World Mission to-day, and Alistair Brown challenges our churches to find people who will go long-term, so that those who are trapped by persecution, poverty, sickness and sin may be released.

Are Christians prepared to accept the challenge of communicating the Gospel across the world, however difficult the political, economic and theological difficulties? When Knibb, Burchell and Phillippo went to Jamaica they worked in an openly hostile situation. Writing of his treatment by planters, politicians, and most Anglican clergy, Burchell was profoundly shocked. 'No Englishman, except a missionary, would be treated with so much contempt.' Phillippo experienced total disdain by Jamaican whites, and wrote: 'I was treated with superciliousness and contempt.'

This was balanced by the vital encouragement of the black community, where missionaries fed on 'the hunger for the Gospel' among the slaves; so different, said Burchell, from those 'frozen congregations' in England. There was an insatiable appetite for missionary preaching in Jamaica, and Burchell was just one who longed to 'tread Jamaica's shores, to mingle with their swarthy people, and to unfurl in their midst the banners of salvation'. The numerical evidence of thousands of converts, year on year, was not only a statement of fact, but a call to others to come and serve. Do British Baptists see the worldwide situation as an encouragement to join in Mission? Knibb and his colleagues believed that the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus could alone humanise and free the 'sons of Africa' Knibb saw the new Jamaica as a country

to be governed by black people, and encouraged them to work for this with local congregations giving black people responsibility for leadership, as they became local property holders and good citizens. He was clear, only Christianity could transform the barbarism, superstition and heathenism of African Jamaicans.

In her book, *Civilising Subjects* [Polity, 2002] Catherine Hall, Professor of Modern British Social and Cultural History at University College London, provides a 'vivid account of how empire impacted on the metropolis, while the home culture shaped colonial development'. Her comparison of Dissenters in Jamaica and Birmingham offers a fascinating understanding of the 'shape of mission' at home and abroad, as Birmingham Baptist Mission supporters at home and missionaries in Jamaica worked out their calling. Phillippo said it was vital to discover the 'Jamaica of the mind' and it is vital still if the Gospel is to have contemporary relevance.

There is more to modern mission, whether in Islamic Britain or Pakistan, than proclaiming the Gospel. Steve Chalke is calling for 21st century Christians to have a 'multi-issue, holistic, Christ-centred, activist, politically engaged, robust approach to mission, public life and the ongoing battle against injustice and poverty'. Are there such people in our churches to-day, and how do ministers challenge them?

I end on a personal note. In *The Times* on 20 January 2007 there was an obituary for Presbyterian minister Bruce Kenrick, aged 86. He founded the Notting Hill Trust [1963] and Shelter [1966]. After theology at Edinburgh

he went to Princeton, and worked at the week-ends in the East Harlem Protestant Parish, among the urban poor, drug addicts and the homeless. His doctoral thesis, *The New Humanity* [1958] was commended to a generation of Bristol students by Len Champion, who always challenged his students to make sure theology shaped the mission of the church. Kenrick wrote *Come out the wilderness*, [1963], to demonstrate how the new humanity theology had shaped the East Harlem project. He said: 'The Church must suffer and be crucified with those it seeks to serve. It must keep on being crucified even though the nails bite deep and the hope of resurrection is obscure.'

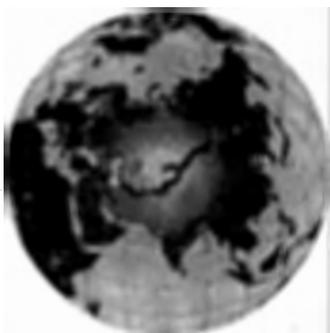
He undertook such a practical theological approach in Notting Hill, London. To help the homeless poor he first mortgaged his own house,

then bought a derelict house which was then renovated and let to poor families – it was the start of buying houses at auction, renovating them and housing the poor. He was 'a founding member of the awkward squad – his passion, his inability to hear the word No, was the bed-rock of successful campaigning and it still defines Shelter' was the verdict of a Shelter staff member on Kenrick.

Kenrick claimed that Christian vocation has three closely intertwined strands, identification with Christ, with the Church and with the world. Is not this the time for Baptists to re-discover and propound a properly integrated 'incarnational' theology within our churches? It will require a deeper understanding of the Christian doctrine of man than currently shown among us, and such a renewal will begin in a changed pulpit ministry.



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Further information about the work of the Baptist Men's Movement and its auxiliaries can be found on our websites or from:  
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email: [bryan@cameo-it.co.uk](mailto:bryan@cameo-it.co.uk)

# Freedom is coming – but all are not yet free

**Hilary Wilmer**, Leeds, raises some sharp issues in the ongoing sexual exploitation of children and young people by pimps and traffickers: introduced by the Editor.

*The anniversary year of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act has rightly prompted focus on contemporary forms of slavery and human trafficking. Many churches marked a 'Stop the Traffik' Sunday in March, with a variety of events, prayerful and reflective action.*

*There will have been unexpected moments of enlightenment for many – such as members of the congregation who realised for the first time that they had been giving hospitality and friendship to a young woman who herself had fled a 'trafficked' background, and the low key recognition in another place of the deeply hidden prejudice which surfaced when organisers of a drama were taken to task for casting one of their 'nice young people' in the role of a prostitute.*

*Initiatives to bring freedom to the oppressed depend so much on the passionate conviction and persistence of a few, until a whole movement of people catches up with those uncomfortably enlightened ones. Prior to Moses' moment of anger with the Egyptian task-master came the risk-taking of a couple of Hebrew midwives, both hinge-moments in the movement of slaves to freedom which was effected despite his later anger and frustration with a God who seemed not to provide him with very committed followers.*

*Jesus' manifesto in Luke 4.16-20 is an oft quoted text, and congregations are exhorted to join in with his work of bringing freedom to the captives, but church history bears eloquent witness not only to the few who risk everything to stand on the side of the enslaved and oppressed, but also to the many whose concern is limited to a weekly hymn or chorus-fest.*

*Hilary Wilmer, an active Baptist Christian and a member of the Baptist Union Council, is closely involved with the organisation CROP – the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping. As Hilary shared with me some of her thoughts and reflections on her engagement with CROP she responded to the question, "Why CROP and what is it?" -*

CROP was founded by Irene Ivison whose 17 year old daughter Fiona was coerced into prostitution by a pimp and murdered by a punter at the age of 17. After Fiona's death, Irene was contacted by many other parents whose children had been drawn into like situations of distress and tragedy, and so began a network of mutual support, mostly by telephone.

Sadly, Irene died in 2000, but since then her vision and persistence has

flourished through the development of CROP as a campaigning and supporting organisation.

At its formation in 1996, all the work was done by volunteers, and has developed along two main strands:

- initially that of supporting parents often completely alone in their misery, bewildered, feeling guilty, misunderstood, angry, powerless, with the particular pain brought by

social isolation and the impossibility of speaking freely about what is tearing their lives apart;

- but also that of working at exposing and highlighting the role of the pimp. More recently we've drawn the parallels between international trafficking - recognised as abuse - and exactly the same methods used by pimping networks in this country, which target and groom any child, usually female, from any social background. The paper 'Prostitution as a business', at the end of my comments here, was written a couple of years ago, but describes it really well.

Parents and families affected come from right across the social spectrum and whilst others are working on international trafficking, CROP is nationally the only organisation working with the parents and affected families.

One thing I think is quite significant is that largely because of the work of CROP the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre in Sheffield has one of their offices looking at internal trafficking.

At present we have two part-time parent support workers and one policy and research worker, and have just been awarded £340,000 Lottery funding over 5 years to pay for a national parent support development coordinator and a half-time administrator

The plan now is to work in a new way – we can't cover the whole country but are doing considerable work in Yorkshire and Lancashire, and other projects with the girls in other parts of the country. The new coordinator will recruit and train volunteers for parent support groups and peripatetic support

and telephone support.

None of this will show speedy results, for it is a slow business, working not only with the victims but also to bring their plight into the public consciousness. We are trying to develop a postcard campaign to raise awareness of these completely hidden issues which people don't see and don't know about.

It is still often implied or suggested that women who take the vulnerable path of prostitution do so as free agents – but there are too many unexplained gaps between an apparently idyllic childhood and drug dependent street life. Investigating these is likely to unearth the sort of grooming activity which subtly removes the ability to take free choices and establishes an existence controlled by the pimp.

The summer holidays are a particularly attractive time for predators, an opportunity to connect with children at a loose end between primary and high school.

I think of one family whose daughter at the age of 14 was taken to Wales for a w/e and made to 'service' 42 men in the course of one week-end. In this instance there is a court case pending, but this is unusual because the vast majority go unreported. Taking action often involves physical threats to whole family, and a high proportion of parents have had property damage, windows smashed and worse.

As you ask about the highs and lows of my involvement with CROP, I mention just two.

One would be the high spot when, at a national conference where David Blunkett was main speaker, he met the parents over a private lunch and listened to what they had to say. He

was heard to say as he left – “I’ve met all these parents and I’ve nothing to say to them”. Lack of easy words can be a sign of real listening.

From that conference, this form of slavery got on the political agenda in a new way, and through making it possible for the parents’ stories to be heard, there came a prostitution consultation and a more co-ordinated

approach.

A particularly low moment, though, was when we didn’t get a Victims Fund finding: mainly for the reason that we are not working with the ‘front line’ victims. Here was a complete lack of understanding that when young women are coerced and their lives destroyed the whole family is a victim.

*Slavery still comes in many guises, and a removal of freedom of movement and freedom of choice, and exploitation for financial or material gain still damages many victims, including numerous and hidden young people and their families in this country.*

*Some may feel that this and the following pages are not ‘theological’ and thus misplaced in this Journal. I would suggest that to take steps to understand any issue or circumstance is to begin to think theologically about it. (HS)*

## Prostitution as a Business

### Parents speak out:

“We talk of international trafficking. We are not saying we should not do anything about that. But look here, they are passing these children from gang to gang just like they are doing with girls brought from abroad. Girls are not seeing money changing hands. That’s what is happening”.

### Prostitution as a Business

While not all underage girls enter prostitution through criminal networks, many do. CROP has identified a highly organised and profitable web of crime through offering family support to parents and children abused through prostitution. CROP has a dual focus unique amongst voluntary organisations: to find ways to address the criminal activities of those perpetrating widespread abuse of girls in the U.K. today, and to offer family support to parents and children abused through prostitution.

Knowledge of criminal networks first emerged as a result of CROP research undertaken four years ago as part of a Home Office study on prostitution. As awareness of traditional methods operated by pimps grew, the work

of CROP identified increasingly sophisticated and extensive grooming and pimping operations. This knowledge base continues to expand as new families contact CROP for assistance. Networks of men formed around a central core of male relatives of various ages can be described as commercial firms. They are in the business of making money and girls are the work force. Their business strategy is to identify, groom and pimp a growing number of underage girls.

Grooming for prostitution starts with identifying girls in various locations, such as shopping malls, schools, leisure facilities – any location where informal interaction is possible. For the girl the first stage is fun and often begins with boys of the same age or not very much older than she is.

Depending upon the location, the role boys play may have direct oversight by older men in the organisation, for example in shopping malls where the man in charge of the boys identifies who to approach, talk with, invite to go for a can of coke and end by suggesting meeting in town. When the contact is made in town and a relationship begins to be established, the girl is introduced to a man, often described as a relative, a few years older than the boy. The process is the same in other locations, although oversight and direction of the boys may be less obvious. In schools boys in the same classroom undertake the same role, and after contact is made girls are introduced to a man described as an older brother or cousin sitting in an impressive car at the school gates. Boys play a very important role in establishing initial contacts, which enables girls to be passed upwards in the criminal network.

The next stage has an exciting beginning. During the first part of this stage the grooming aim is to make the girl more accessible to the next male and his influence. This is a skilled operation. The young man to whom she has been introduced begins by showing a great interest in the girl. He takes her out in his car, which may be parked at the school gates, and possibly she enjoys the envy of her friends, and on to clubs and other venues she would not normally experience until older. Cigarettes, alcohol and drugs become part of the experience. He gives her a new name, for example from Ann to Cecilia, as part of acquiring a new identity. He gives her presents, including a mobile phone if she does not have one, and maintains constant contact with her

through verbal and text messages. She finds this very flattering and becomes convinced he loves her.

By inducing feelings the girl experiences as love, he can begin to encourage isolation from family, friends and school. The vulnerability of girls is age related, with grooming usually beginning between 12 to 14 years, a time of relative inexperience. At this age it can be difficult to believe, or even think, that his attention and interest may not be genuine. Older girls are likely to be more savvy and less trusting, which explains why the early teenage years are the best for introducing grooming for prostitution. Sexual experience is unlikely to start before 13 years when legislative punishments for sex with a minor are less and girls are expected to make a formal complaint. From the point of view of the criminal prostitution business once a girl reaches the age of 13 years the criminal justice system offers valuable support for their activities, however unintended that may be.

Achieving a break with her parents may take time and effort, but he has prior experience of the process while her parents do not: how to turn to his advantage responses such as family rows, parental attempts to discipline, to restrict the amount of time spent out the house and, if parents know him, in his company. His efforts can end with the girl permanently moving in with him or someone else or asking to be accommodated by the local authority, often alleging parental abuse. The pimp instigates the move, as moving away from the family home into local authority accommodation or elsewhere increases his access to and over her.

During the time of traumatic break from the family, friends and school, the grooming process begins to develop threatening aspects. If not before, girls will be introduced to alcohol, drugs and criminal or pseudo criminal activities to further their entrapment. For example one parent reported that, "they took her in the car to get cash from the machine and asked her to hold a credit card. Then they said it is a stolen card and we have drawn two grand on it and now your fingerprints are all over it. 'If the police come you will be in trouble'. A 13 year old would believe it". Other threatening strategies include taking incriminating photographs of girls who may or may not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

When a girl's complete isolation from her family, other supporters and previous life is achieved, or well on the way to being achieved, he then can begin to introduce her into prostitution. This may start as a request for her to help him out of a temporary financial problem by having sexual relations with another man, or a demand that she have sex with other men as she has to pay him back for the drinks, mobile phone, lifts in his car, and presents, or group rape. Whatever tactic is used to gain her acquiescence to sexual activity with another man or men, once achieved the pimp then has the control he needs to enforce her continuation in prostitution.

During this time parents and other family members experience conflicting feelings. "Its like – sometimes I could have knocked down our daughter. Sometimes we blamed her. We felt she wanted to be with these people." Blame alternates with despair, tears

and temper at not being able to stop their daughter from being abused. "We all used to sit down to eat and then the car honking and she used to run and we did not know when she would be back." Schools too, could blame the girl and worry about the school reputation. "They said she is old enough. She has got to learn to take the consequences of her own behaviour." Police too, could blame the girl and the parents for choosing or allowing her to choose a life in prostitution and could refuse to become involved. "Every single thing – no matter what we said – they just did not want to know – THEY JUST DID NOT WANT TO KNOW". Blaming the victim also took more collusive forms such as returning underage girls to flats where sexual abuse was known to take place.

In the third and final stage pimps pursue a number of strategies to control the girls they have inducted into prostitution. These include alternating affection with violence and abuse, illegal drugs and other criminal activities. His violence and that of the men who pay for her become accepted as inevitable and her obedience to her pimp's demands is seen as the only way to reduce physical and sexual harm. As can happen with domestic violence, the violence and abuse becomes a regular event that the girl resigns her self to. The same question, 'why doesn't she leave?', may occur to those who have not lived through this experience. Girls explain their inability to leave in different ways. One mother said, "I recall her saying, 'It's like as if he is inside me, controlling me and telling me what I am allowed to say or do and what I am not allowed'" and another parent said, "Mum! He has brainwashed me so that I cannot leave

him ever. I am like his possession.”<sup>1</sup>

Violence from criminal prostitution businesses can include emotional abuse, rape, threats to and attacks on parents, siblings and other family members. Class A drugs are likely to be involved at an early stage as drug addiction makes girls more amenable and desperate. Drugs are often embraced as a coping strategy. A girl is likely to regard her controller as a boyfriend, rather than acknowledge the reality of the situation. Even as he continues with his violence and abuse, a girl may continue to view him as her boyfriend as he sells her the drugs she now desperately needs. Prostitution becomes the only way to earn enough money to pay for her daily use of drugs.

Pregnancy is another strategy that extends his control whether the result is an abortion or a child. Through pregnancy he gains control not only over her sexual performance, but also over her reproductive life. If the result is a child her need to earn increases and he may subject the child to actual or threatened abuse, including kidnapping or child abduction, in order to obtain more money from her. If the result is an abortion, he resolves what she may see as a problem, earning her gratitude. If she wants the child, but he insists on an abortion, his control is extended. For example, CROP encountered two girls in one year who had been subjected to forced abortions carried out by medically unqualified associates of the pimp resulting in horrific physical injuries. In defining and exploring vulnerability to pregnancy amongst 13 to 18 year old girls, induction into prostitution requires greater attention by health

authorities and other agencies.

Statutory agencies can be unaware of these processes and unable to distinguish the early grooming stages from normal teenage courtship, as the first point of contact involves local boys around the same age of the girls and both are from the same area. Their contact may seem harmless, even when older young men later become involved. Similar age and locality may have a significant impact on statutory agency involvement, for example social services. If child protection investigations by social services occur, meetings focus on individual girls. Usually there is no arena for meetings in which information and concern about the boys and men can be shared and grooming networked businesses identified. Policing too, can be influenced by similarities of age and locality as the extent of the criminal network is not immediately obvious, given that police forces are organised locally through a divisional structure and a headquarters that covers only part of the operational area of the criminal prostitution business. These criminal networks may extend over different police force areas. The organisational head of the criminal network is hidden from view with possibly three or more layers to the criminal organisational structure.

Criminal grooming and pimping businesses can involve many girls while in comparison the number of men is relatively small. The boys and men may be associated through sub-networks. Only the men at the centre of the business know everyone who is involved; boys, men and girls. Men in criminal pimping networks also have the added advantage of guidance, if

needed, by those above them in the organisation. These younger men may report to another much smaller layer of men and ultimately to an older male relative, the firm's managing director. Boys are also learning the business and after leaving school may be able to participate at the next level.

As CROP works from the ground up, tracing the connections is hampered by the men's use of different names as well as the slow and patient way in which information is of necessity gathered from girls and parents. Parents who are desperate to protect their daughters may know only a small part of what has happened and is happening to their daughter and possibly more than one daughter. Girls too have networks of siblings and friends through whom criminal grooming and pimping networks can make contact with new girls. For statutory agencies, a full network analysis needs to incorporate both in order to identify vulnerable girls and the members of the business.

Criminal prostitution businesses have support from other commercial organisations. Taxi firms play an important role in all the geographical areas where CROP works. Girls in prostitution are taken to different locations, both indoor and outdoor venues. The youngest girls are unlikely to be seen on the street as they may attract attention from the police who monitor the street scene. Girls are taken to different cities over

a wide area of England; a practice best described as trafficking. Indoor locations may be organised by the criminal prostitution firm or by others more external to it. The supply and sale of drugs is another area of linked, but possibly separate criminal business interests – as is pornography.

CROP has identified a highly organised and profitable web of crime. Girls are exposed to levels of violence, torture, and abuse that most professionals cannot conceive of. As a result of the intricate grooming and control methods, the extensively organised business and the tendency of society to blame the victim, the plight of the majority of girls goes unrecognised by statutory authorities that have the role and duty to protect them. As a result the business continues to make good profits with little interference. One parent concludes that, "The issues of the human rights of the child and parent's rights to family life without any conflict, and the right to psychological support have no value".

CROP Annual Review 2005  
<http://www.crop1.org.uk/>

1 Brainwashing is described as having five major components: isolation, control, uncertainty, repetition and emotional manipulation. Immaturity is of major assistance in achieving brainwashing and all these elements are evident in grooming. See Kathleen Taylor (2005) *Brainwashing: The Science of Thought Control*, London, Open University Press.

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**THEFT OF METAL ON THE RISE**

I'm sure some of you have either had the misfortune to suffer a loss of lead off the church roof or know of a church in the area who recently has.

Driven by demand in China, the international price of copper and lead has broken all records over recent months. Prices for Zinc, nickel and aluminium are also at their highest since 1996. This has led to an increase in the theft of copper and other metals in all areas of the country.

What can your church do to prevent itself becoming a victim ?

- Be vigilant! Churches need to be vigilant in order to reduce the risk of metal thefts from church roofs and other parts of buildings for which they're responsible. Areas where work is underway need to be kept secure and ladders removed overnight. Security lighting can also minimise the risk.
- Any suspicious activity should be reported to the police. You should also inform other churches in your area to put them on their guard.
- Top tips include making friends with your neighbours – they're the very best people to keep an eye out. Tell your neighbours when contractors will be visiting your church and encourage everyone to alert those connected with the church if they see workmen on site unexpectedly.
- Make the thieves' job more difficult – consider using "anti-climb" paints.
- Don't be afraid to dial 999.
- Finally, it is worth checking your policy to see if you have cover for theft of metals. If this is not the case and you wish to consider adding this then please call Baptist Insurance Company on 0845 070 2223 for details.

Baptist Insurance have a team of surveyors available to assist on matters of security and should you need help please do let us know.

Yours Sincerely  
Paul Bayliss  
Survey Manager

# Pilgrimage to Bethlehem

**Graham Sparkes** (Didcot) joins an ecumenical delegation to Palestine.

Whatever tranquil images appear on our Christmas cards, the little town of Bethlehem is a place that is neither still nor peaceful. It is caught up in the continuing cycle of violence and poverty that afflicts so much of the Middle East. It is a living symbol of the division, conflict and despair that scars Israel and Palestine in particular.

In the days leading up to Christmas, four church leaders made a pilgrimage to Bethlehem accompanied by those of us responsible for the planning and preparation – the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Westminster Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the Rev David Coffey Free Churches Moderator, and Bishop Nathan Hovhannisian the Primate of the Armenian Church of Great Britain. The visit was born out of a desire to stand in solidarity with the small, beleaguered community of Christians in that part of the world, to bring an assurance of our concern and prayers, and to draw attention to the suffering faced by all the inhabitants in that town.

It proved to be a remarkable ecumenical witness. Central to the pilgrimage was, of course, the times of prayer and reflection, as we shared the last few days of the Advent journey in places that echo with the sound of the Christmas story. There was a deep sense of unity and togetherness, as relationships deepened and we drew on our various traditions to give new meaning to familiar words of scripture. Much of the rest of our time was spent visiting members, representatives and leaders of the different church traditions in the Holy Land, listening to the stories they had to tell and sharing their fears and hopes. Without fail we were warmly and graciously welcomed.

Not long ago most living in and around Bethlehem were Christians; now the number has dwindled to 26% of the population. And the lack of visitors due to the continuing conflict leaves many families struggling to survive. The social and economic pressures are immense, together with the struggle to keep hope and faith alive.

To journey to Bethlehem is to enter occupied territory. Huge Israeli settlements built on confiscated land dominate the approaches. Check points and watch towers control access. A wall twenty four feet high makes it a virtual prison for the Palestinians who live there. Surely the most painful moment on the pilgrimage was to make this entry into the town where Jesus – the liberator and the peacemaker – was born. We did so with the conviction that, in the end, all walls that divide must fall, and that many more Christians need to visit Bethlehem as a sign of our refusal to submit to the empires of this world.

No doubt all of us who went there brought back special memories that gave the pilgrimage meaning and significance. I shall remember meeting Mitri Raheb, the director of the Lutheran International Centre in Bethlehem. He spoke of the invasion of Bethlehem by the Israeli military in 2002 and how, following the destruction that took place, the Centre collected the broken

glass from the streets and began to make little glass angels – symbols of the way God can create beauty out of pain and brokenness.

I shall recall the moment we paused in Manger Square for a few moments of prayer before entering the Church of the Nativity. Having encountered the many signs of power and oppression, we heard the words of Isaiah 9 declaring that the child who is born to us at Christmas is the one on whom authority rests, and that his authority will grow continually. The political implications of the gospel could not have been clearer!

And I shall always hold in my heart the experience of visiting the St Vincent Creche, and holding in my arms a two week old baby that had been abandoned on the streets of Bethlehem. Just one helpless, innocent victim of the violence and despair that has destroyed the lives of so many in that part of the world.

In reality, of course, the Bethlehem of Jesus' birth was no less traumatised and broken. The Christmas story may be sanitised for our cards and our nativity plays, but in truth it is marred by tragedy. A refugee family has to flee for their lives to Egypt and Rachel is heard crying for her children, murdered by Herod. Both now as then there is the urgent need to seek peace with justice for the sake of that town, and to pray with words written by a friend in preparation for our pilgrimage:

*God who brought life from chaos,  
light from darkness,  
and hope from despair.  
Be with us -  
in the separate silence of security -*

*as we must dare to hear  
the voice of weeping.*

*Be with us -*

*in the wasteland*

*of human brought grief -*

*as we must take the risk of empathy.*

*God pour your spirit upon us -*

*that we do not turn away from chaos,  
darkness or despair.*

*Here in this place,*

*may we incarnate your presence -*

*and discover*

*Your life*

*Your light*

*Your hope.*

*And in your courage*

*May we become your peace. Amen*

The prayer of the pilgrims, of course, is more immediately and concretely the prayer of those whose lives and livelihoods are focussed permanently in that region. One organisation that embodies such hope is an organisation supported by Christian Aid of which I am a trustee. It is called 'Parents' Circle'. 'Parents' Circle' is an organisation for bereaved Israeli and Palestinian families committed to working towards reconciliation and peace. It has about 500 members, both Israelis and Palestinians, all of whom have lost a close relative in the violence. It brings them together to hear one another's stories, to share anger and pain, and to discover how much they have in common. They say that if those 'who have paid the highest price by losing a child can sit in a room together and talk then politicians should, can and must be able to'.

It also runs a phone-line that connects Israeli and Palestinian callers. By dialling a four-digit number, any Israeli can talk to a Palestinian, and any Palestinian can talk to an Israeli. 'Parents' Circle' hoped the phone-

line would appeal to a few hundred people who wanted to talk peace. Within a few days of the first adverts for the service appearing almost 6,000 people had called to get connected to the other side.

Let me tell two stories.

### **Rami Elhanan**

"My name is Rami Elhanan and I am a 56-year-old graphic designer whose family has been living in Jerusalem for seven generations. I am a Jew, and an Israeli, but first of all I am a human being. My life evolves around a special day in the Jewish calendar – the festival of Yom Kippur.

Thirty-one years ago I was a reserve in a tank company during the Yom Kippur war. We started the war with 11 tanks and ended with three. I lost some of my best friends in the Sinai and came out of the war a very bitter young man, determined to detach myself from everything political. I was going to look after my own business and my own interests so I concentrated on my family and my career. Twenty-two years ago on the eve of Yom Kippur a young girl was born in Hadasa hospital. We named her Smadar – the grape of the vine from the Song of Solomon. My wife and I happily lived in this bubble we had built until the 4th of September 1997 when our bubble was blown to pieces.

It was Thursday afternoon and it took place in Ben Yehuda Street in Jerusalem. Two Palestinian suicide bombers blew themselves up killing five people, including three little girls. One of them was my 14-year-old Smadar.

In the beginning you hope the finger will not turn to you this time round. You find yourself running in the streets,

between police stations and hospitals, and then later that night you find yourself in the morgue and the finger is pointing straight at your eyes. And you see a sight you will never be able to forget. And then you go home and the house is full of thousands of people - this went on for the seven days of Jewish mourning. Then on the eighth day they all go home and you are left alone. You have to wake up, look in the mirror and decide: "What are you going to do with the rest of your life? With this new unbearable pain you have?"

There are two options. The first is the natural one. You are so angry that you want to get even – you're full of hatred, rage and revenge. But after a while you start to think why would killing someone else bring back my baby? Why would causing someone else pain make me feel better? It doesn't. And you start to think of the other option, which is much harder and more difficult. The option of trying to understand what would drive someone to do this.

It took me a year to reach this option. I met a large man wearing a kippur and we started talking. You know how you tend to put people in drawers and stereotype them? How a kippur-wearer is automatically an "Arab-eater" and a "fascist"? That man was Yitzhak Frankenthal, the founder of Parents' Circle. He had lost his son in a Hamas attack and created this organisation for crazy people who have lost children but still want peace. And I remembered he was one of the thousands who had come to my house during the mourning period...

At first I was furious with him...how could he expect me to talk of peace

after what had happened? But he wasn't insulted. He asked me to attend a Parents' Circle meeting. The people who attended the meeting were living legends - I saw Yakov Gutterman, a Holocaust survivor who had lost his son in the Lebanon war - one of the first bereaved parents to stand in front of the Ministry of Defence with a sign saying "Murderers." And Ronny Hirshenson, who has lost two sons in this conflict.

Then I saw the many Palestinians arriving. And I remember seeing an old Arab lady in a black dress and carrying a six-year-old child in her arms. I am not a very religious person or a great believer, but from that minute on my life was changed. And from that moment on I decided to devote my life to going from person to person and conveying this simple message: "It is not our destiny to forever die in this Holy Land." We can once and for all break this cycle of violence and we can do it through dialogue and not through violence.

You can use that power to create more pain, or to create hope. By dialogue and reconciliation I, together with my Palestinian friends in the Forum, will bang our head against this wall - we will bang our heads against this wall until we put cracks in it. And one day it will fall.

Ours is the only organisation on earth not seeking new members. We started with ten families and then that became dozens and now it is hundreds. This number keeps changing every day because becoming a member of the Forum is a very difficult decision to make. After a long and sleepless night you have to wake up and say "Today I am going to make peace, not war."

We don't knock on the doors of people who have lost children and say "Hi, I'm your friend..." You have to be very sensitive, delicate and compassionate. It happens very, very slowly. People are very hesitant at the start.

I think the wall is a tragedy. It is like a drunk looking for a coin under a streetlamp. We need hospitals and schools in Israel, not walls. If someone is angry enough, no wall on earth will stop him. You have to eliminate the reasons for the anger. Especially if you are building the wall on the land of the person who is angry. They will go over the wall, under the wall - they will find a way. People talk of terror attacks having decreased because of the wall but this is not the case. One death is painful enough. Why are many deaths considered worse than one death? If the occupation continues, the wall will not help because when you push someone into a corner, beat them and humiliate them, they will bite back.

Our blood is the same colour and our pain is the same pain. Our tears are just as bitter. If we who have paid the highest price possible but can still talk to one another, then anyone can.

Today is the 8th of May. Sixty years ago was the end of the Second World War. My father is an Auschwitz "graduate." Sixty years ago they took my grandparents to the ovens and the civilised world stood by and never lifted a finger. Today, while these two crazy peoples massacre each other, the free and civilised world is not only standing aside but supporting one side [Israel] almost unconditionally. You being here and not standing aside is a message of hope for us.

Standing aside is a crime. You cannot stand aside when you see someone

being beaten up and killed. All I ask is when you go back to your country, please amplify this voice of hope here. Please amplify this voice of sanity."

### **Ali Abu Awad**

"I come from a village called Beit Ummar near Hebron and I lost my brother in 2000.

That year I had been shot by an Israeli and had gone to Saudi Arabia for treatment on my knee. After being in the hospital there for a month I got a call from my brother who told me our brother Youssef who was two years older than me had been killed by an Israeli soldier.

They had shot him as he was returning home and there was a checkpoint at the entrance to our village. He got out of his car to stop children throwing stones at the soldiers and the soldiers started throwing stones at his car. He tried to talk to them but one of the Israeli soldiers told him he had no right to open his mouth and if he didn't stop he would kill him. Youssef was shot at point blank range - the gun was 70cm from his head.

Youssef left behind a son, a daughter and a wife. When I heard the news I thought it was the end of my life. He was not just my brother. He was also a father, a friend, everything. We had thrown our first stones together during the first intifada, we had been in prison together. We had always been part of the conflict but we had not experienced this kind of pain. I didn't want to come back home and see Youssef's children. To cross the checkpoints and see the settlers. I couldn't imagine talking to soldiers again. I closed myself off from the world and didn't want to talk about the conflict. Until a bereaved Israeli

couple phoned my brother and said they wanted to meet with us. I couldn't imagine there were Israelis who were ready for peace. I thought "They are the strong ones in this conflict - what could they possibly need from us?" I wondered why they wanted to talk - they had an independent state, why would they want to risk anything? We invited them to our home and it was the first time I had seen Israelis not as soldiers or settlers and without a gun in their hand. It was the first time I saw the pain of the other side. I realised they wanted us to see each other as human beings and then I became involved in Parents' Circle.

There was a thought in my mind - "I think we have to know each other - us two peoples." It is difficult to kill someone you know. We were killing each other and had become part of the cycle of revenge because we were not living as humans. We were giving politicians the opportunity to use us as a ball in their match. We have to do our duty, and that duty and mission is to achieve peace. I have to stand up in my society with all the suffering that my people endure and say "Do not use my pain to show us as criminals..." No army in the world can stop the Palestinian violent reaction - only the Palestinians themselves can do that. I also believe that all the violence in the world cannot give us an independent state unless Israel decides it. Israelis have to understand that peace for them would mean continuing their lives but for Palestinians, peace would mean we can start living.

Palestinians need to realise that the Israelis themselves must decide whether they want to know us or not. When you are ready to understand

my pain, I will be ready to understand your pain. We Palestinians have a just case, but sometimes we are a very bad lawyer! But through the Families Forum, I have found my lawyer. And he is not a suicide bomber or a politician, but the other members of the Forum. They can understand my pain because of the high price they have paid. Both people are sick of this conflict, and tired of it. Recently I visited Al Aqsa, the military wing of Fatah in Nablus.

Even those who are still fighting till this day have signed up to the Palestinian Authority because they have realised fighting is not bringing a solution. There are just 500 families in this organisation but we believe we can change both sides. "

(Part reviously published in Abingdon Churches magazine, Milton Keynes Cornerstone magazine)

## In defence of Christendom: the claim of Christ and the confidence of the Church

**John Colwell** (London)

I will be surprised if some readers progress beyond the title of this paper. To attempt to defend Christendom is foolishness surely; as viable and as potentially popular as the attempt to defend pornography or paedophilia? Overwhelmingly in contemporary reflections on the nature of the Church and its relatedness to society, both popular and academic, the term 'Christendom' serves effectively as a swear word, a shorthand means of summarising all that ought to be repudiated in Christian history; a naming of the Church's apostasy in its appropriation of violent coercion and its abandonment of paths of peace; a fatal and incomprehensible confusion of the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world. Nor is this distancing and dismissal merely a recent phenomenon: since the Reformation the term 'Christendom' has served to define that against which radical reforming groups

sought to define themselves. During the Nineteenth Century, for instance, the Brethren movement (both in its connexional and its independent forms), defining itself as the true and restored Church (rather than as the sect which it seemed to be to other eyes) named as Christendom not just the 'established' Church but also all historic denominations which it likewise deemed to be 'fallen', compromised, and beyond renewal; Christendom represented all that should now be rejected and from which true disciples of Christ should separate themselves.<sup>1</sup> Previously the various and diverse streams of Anabaptism had named as Christendom all that had preceded them, the Church of Rome but also the Magisterial forms of Protestantism deemed to be only partially reformed. The Church was perceived to have fallen, to be apostate beyond hope, and God was now making a new beginning, restoring his true Church in

the pristine image of the New Testament disciples.<sup>2</sup> Of course, some Anabaptist streams and individuals, as later some Brethren streams and individuals, were more moderate in their dismissal, but the movements were united in their wholly negative employment of the word 'Christendom'.

And in our contemporary context this repudiation of Christendom surely is doubly justified and appropriate. In the first place, a history vitiated with crusades, pogroms, persecutions, inquisitions, and imperialism is repugnant to a society that promotes toleration and plurality. Do we not have an obligation, at least to our Jewish and Islamic neighbours, to expose and to repudiate this embarrassing history of cruelty and coercion? But in the second place and practically, the era of Christendom has passed: the Christian Church simply is no longer the dominant and determining voice within our society; this nation is no longer a 'Christian country' (as if such an entity were possible); increasingly legislation is rooted in other supposed foundations than that of the Christian Scriptures; increasingly the Christian Church is relegated to the margins of national life. And in so many respects this marginalisation of the Church is to be welcomed: relegated from spheres of influence and political power, the Church can focus simply on being the Church; on being an alternative community and culture within a society that is increasingly diverse in its cultures and commitments; on reminding the world precisely that it is the world.<sup>3</sup> Is it not the case, after all, that an increasingly secular society, divesting itself gradually of even the trappings of formal religion, ends confusion and promotes spiritual clarity? In such a

context nominal Christian commitment loses its attraction. In such a context that which is authentically the Church is more likely to emerge, albeit on the margins of society.

All of this may appear attractive, commendable, and beyond serious dispute but it ought not to be received without qualification: can so much of Western Christian history be so thoroughly dismissed as faithless; in abandoning all that is signified by Christendom might we be in danger both of mitigating the claim of Christ and of misconstruing our own true identity as the Church in relation to the world?

The confession that "Jesus is Lord" is often cited as the earliest and most basic Christian confession – this may or may not be an appropriate understanding of the significance of the claim but, whatever the status and liturgical manner of the claim, it represents the irreducible confidence of the New Testament: "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2.36). Neither can the claim be reduced as merely of religious significance in an immediate Jewish context: "[a]ll authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me... go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28.18f.). The confession of Jesus' Lordship was never merely an expression of personal commitment but was always politically significant: this Jesus is "Lord of lords and King of kings" (Revelation 17.14); his resurrection and ascension imply universal authority. And whatever significance we may accord to these claims of the New Testament, this was certainly the manner in which the claims were interpreted by those with political authority: "[w]e have no

king but Caesar” is the response of the chief priests to Pilate, rejecting the perceived claims of Christ (John 19.15); and in recognition of the rival claims of Christ, as represented by the early Church, the Roman Empire (quite understandably) began to persecute Christians as undermining the claims of the Emperor and Senate.

From the very beginning, then, the claim of Christ’s Lordship was perceived, at least by the Church’s opponents, as public rather than private, as political rather than merely religious. And this perception by its opponents is, of course, reflected in the New Testament: to this Jesus every knee will bow;<sup>4</sup> and perhaps even more pertinently, the Pilates of this world have no authority except that which has been given from above.<sup>5</sup> As Oliver O’Donovan observes in the course of his sustained and compelling response to criticisms of Christendom: secular authorities have been in serious trouble since Jesus rose from the dead; his rising marks their end both in the sense of their termination and in the sense of the revealing of their authentic goal and mediated authority; the most pressing danger for the Church is not that of illegitimately appropriating to itself such secular power but rather of according to such secular power a legitimacy and significance that it no longer possesses.<sup>6</sup> Secular powers in the main may be ignorant of this ‘end’ of their authority in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it is and remains the task of the Church to remind them of such, to proclaim publicly and therefore politically that Jesus is Lord.

Not too long ago Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, provoked some reaction to his reflective claim that

he would be answerable to God for the war in Iraq: commentators in the secular media were quick with the retort that British Prime Ministers were directly accountable to Parliament and to the British electorate; that such expressed piety could, in practice, serve to obscure and to undermine this political accountability. But whatever the motivation for Tony Blair’s claim, and however it might be construed or misconstrued, the claim is both primarily and ultimately correct: a British Prime Minister, just as a first-century Roman provincial governor, has no authority other than that mediated by God, albeit in the former case a mediated authority itself mediated through the British electorate. Just as Pilate was answerable ultimately, not to Caesar and the Roman Senate, but to God for his capitulation to mob pressure and for his craven concern for his own position, so Tony Blair is answerable ultimately, not to Parliament and the British electorate, but to God for the initiation and prosecution of a conflict which, contrary to Tony Blair’s assertions at the time, seems to fall far short in every respect of the traditional criteria of ‘just war’. At the time of the Allied ‘blanket’ bombing of Germany, George Bell, then Bishop of Chichester, protested publicly and persistently. Those Christians who joined marches protesting against war in Iraq acted appropriately, reminding a British Prime Minister and a British Parliament, not just of the claims of justice, but of an ultimate answerability to God. And would that the voices of prelates and other church leaders had been heard more clearly and persistently at the time in protest against aggression so lacking in international support, initiated on the basis of questionable intelligence,

so costly in civilian casualties, and so lacking in any clear, achievable, and sustainable goal.

The fundamental error of historic Christendom, then, was not its affirmation of the Lordship of Christ in relation to secular powers and authorities but its fatal failure to recognise and to represent the distinctive character and manner of Christ's Lordship, its failure to take note of the manner in which Lordship, sovereignty, majesty, power, and authority are systematically deconstructed in the pages of the New Testament. On the numerous occasions his disciples were uncovered squabbling over who should have priority, Jesus confronted them with the example of a child, told them that in God's kingdom the greatest would be the least, and demonstrated his own Lordship by washing their feet. Though on a single occasion he takes a whip and clears the Temple, Jesus counsels us more generally not to resist evil, to love our enemies, to pray for our persecutors.<sup>7</sup> And when, in Revelation, John is informed that "the Lion of the tribe of Judah... has triumphed" he sees "a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain".<sup>8</sup> Similarly, later in the vision, the "dragon and his angels" are overcome, not by military might but "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony".<sup>9</sup> Paul owns the "weapons we fight with", as "not the weapons of the world",<sup>10</sup> but too easily, in the age termed 'Christendom' and still, worldly weapons prove beguiling. The error of Christendom was not its confession of Christ's universal Lordship but its fatal and blasphemous misapprehension of the manner of that Lordship.

But, as Oliver O'Donovan rightly indicates, the contrasting error that we now court in our ill-defined repudiation of Christendom is that of conceding an independent and discrete secular authority, thereby disowning the universal authority of Christ and the significance of his resurrection. One key characteristic of the age we term the Enlightenment – and, in this respect, post-modernity is more properly recognised as late-modernity – is a radical individualism expressing itself in the assumption of a radical and sustainable disjunction of the private from the public, the religious from the political, the sacred from the secular. And the Western Church, to a significant degree, has acceded to this disjunction and thereby has apostatised, effectively disowning the universal and public claims of its Lord. This supposed disjunction, of course, is the reason underlying Western society's incomprehension of the phenomenon of radical Islam, a faith for which, in the main, this Western disjunction of the private and public is similarly incomprehensible. It is the nature of religious confession, as faith in God, to be universalistic in its claims; the Enlightenment marginalisation of religion to the sphere of the merely private rests upon an elementary misconstruing of the nature of religion, or, at least, of the nature of Islam and Christianity. This is what renders multiculturalism problematic: culture is neither spiritually nor ethically neutral; distinct cultures derive from distinct religious and ethical commitments, and such religious and ethical commitments tend to be universalistic in their assumptions and claims. Contrary to Enlightenment optimism – rightly dismissed by Stanley Hauerwas as "hope without truth"<sup>11</sup> – there is no

religiously neutral, rational foundation for political and ethical reasoning; rationality is culturally rooted in the practices and self-understanding of distinct communities.

The issue, therefore, is not whether religion is inherently public and political rather than merely private, nor whether politics is inherently, albeit often inadvertently, religious; the issue is rather the manner in which religion is political, or, more basically, the manner of religion – and this is where Christendom, in the main, failed so fundamentally and fatally. Professor O'Donovan argues that Christendom occurred because the Church was effective and successful in its mission<sup>12</sup>– and although this interpretation of history can (and perhaps should) be qualified, it cannot be entirely dismissed. But when, for whatever series of reasons, the Church found itself in the place of political influence and power, it generally succumbed to the temptation to act coercively and violently.

Politics, of course, even in its most benign form, is inherently coercive in some respects: it is appropriate that Government restricts my freedom to speed or to pollute the atmosphere, just as it is appropriate for Government to protect the vulnerable and to legislate against abuse, violence, theft, and extortion; it is appropriate for Government forcibly to restrain some for their own protection and for the protection of society – and in a society that honours personal freedom, such constraints and restraints will be judiciously minimalised and circumscribed. But as soon as we speak of a society that 'honours personal freedom' we

have made a religiously distinctive assessment: not all societies honour personal freedom – or, at least, not all societies honour personal freedom to the same degree and in the same manner; that specific societies honour personal freedom in a specific manner derives from religious commitments, albeit sometimes unconscious or residual religious commitments. And if such honouring finds widespread (though not universal) acceptance, this is not an outcome of a common, religiously neutral, rational foundation, it is rather the outcome of what is usually (and, in some respects, unhelpfully) termed 'common grace' – this world remains God's creation whether we acknowledge it as such or not, and God's Spirit breathes through all creation and all men and women whether we acknowledge it or not. And if such honouring fails to find universal acceptance this is not merely an outcome of an inadequately liberal education but rather an outcome of this world's fallenness; an outcome of the fact that this world, and we within it, are not yet as God ultimately intends.

In some respects, therefore, Christendom was appropriately coercive: the Church with political influence and power – or political power shaped by Christian commitment – appropriately bans child sacrifice, appropriately (and eventually) legislates against slavery, against child labour, against sexual, physical, and mental abuse, against the abuse of animals and the abuse of the environment. But political power shaped by authentic Christian commitment will also be characterised by hospitality, the welcoming and defending of the other; will be characterised, not merely by a rejection of aggressive

violence, but by an active commitment to peace-making; will be committed to truthfulness and faithfulness in all its dealings; and though appropriately coercively restraining with respect to certain practices, will repudiate all coercion with respect to the convincing of others concerning its own faithful commitments. Such repudiation, of course, courts the risk of reinforcing an Enlightenment disjunction of faith and practice – the mutilation which is female circumcision is an expression of religious and cultural commitments – to legislate against a practice is to coerce conviction; absolutism here, as elsewhere, is unattainable. Perhaps the best to which we can aspire is to coerce against that which seeks to coerce others – and to apply the same stricture to the implementation of our own convictions (though that which does and does not constitute coercion can similarly be disputed). This commitment of itself is insufficient to resolve all dilemmas – to coerce against abortion in all circumstances is, at least in some circumstances, to coerce against the well-being of a mother – but a repudiation of coercion other than with a view to prevent coercion may be an appropriate first step in an exercising of political influence that is coherent with Christian commitment.

In an increasingly secularised society overt Christian political influence inevitably is restricted if not opposed; the Church increasingly is marginalised. Though a majority of those questioned in Britain still own some form of belief in God, and though Christianity in its various guises still embraces more adherents than other faith communities, the creeping marginalisation of the

Church is a matter of fact, the age of Christendom has passed. The question for the Church is whether this marginalisation is to be welcomed or passively resisted; whether Christian commitment is accepted as private or persists in its public and political claims; whether the promise and invitation of the gospel is local and sectarian or universal; whether Jesus is merely my Lord or truly Lord. The argument of this paper is that to conspire with this marginalisation is to deny Christ, is to apostatise just as fatally as the Church apostatised in the era of Christendom, albeit conversely.

As has already been acknowledged, perhaps the most beguiling siren voices conspiring with this marginalisation welcome such in the cause of clarity: the demise of Christendom militates against nominalism; the Church, liberated from political influence and pretence, can focus on being the Church in its distinction from the world, reminding the world precisely that it is the world and not the Church. Precedent and succour for such separateness is usually gleaned from the witness of sixteenth and early seventeenth century Anabaptists who, though vilified and brutally persecuted, embraced and promoted a radical separateness from secular authority in the quest for purity of faith and faithful discipleship. The term 'Anabaptist' was coined by the opponents of these groups and applied indiscriminately to quite diverse streams of radicals, sometimes with little more in common than the practice of 're-baptising'. If commonality amongst the mainstream of Anabaptist groupings can be identified at all it is generally recognised as expressed in the Schleithem Confession of 1527,<sup>13</sup> an expression

of the commitments of the 'Swiss Brethren' that was to gain wide assent and was taken by Calvin and others as indicative of Anabaptist distinctives. The Confession is unambiguous in its dualism and sectarianism: the Church is perceived as over against the world as light is opposed to darkness; Christian commitment is attested by radical separation from the world and its structures – hence a repudiation of oath-taking, of the bearing of the sword, of participation in the Magistracy; hence a commendation of strict church discipline, to be enforced by the 'ban'.

It is often too readily assumed that this early Anabaptist witness, together with its radical separatism, is determinative for an English (or British) Baptist history and heritage yet the influence of continental Anabaptists even on English General Baptists can be (and has been) disputed.<sup>14</sup> The roots of English General Baptists – and certainly the roots of Particular Baptists – are to be traced primarily in British Puritanism, in a tradition of dissent rather than in a tradition of radical separation. In a context of post-denominationalism, when so many who worship in Baptist churches remain unaware of Baptist history and tradition (apart from the obvious commitment to Believers' Baptism) a distinctive tradition of dissent, once shared with Congregationalism, is barely understood and too easily confused with a tradition of separation. Nor is this confusion merely a recent phenomenon: if Gnosticism is the most persistent Christian heresy we should not be surprised to discover its characteristic dualism resurfacing over and again in our history, reinforced variously by expressions of Hyper-

Calvinism, by notions of Idealism and Romanticism, by the influence of the Brethren movement and the Pentecostal movement, and more recently by some expressions of the charismatic movement. Through each of these influences a notion of the world's otherness and a corresponding notion of the Church's separateness have been emphasised; the Church is conceived as over against the world rather than on behalf of the world; rescued from out of the world rather than sent as a transforming presence within the world; Christian involvement in secular government is discouraged (or, at least, not actively encouraged). Such separatism cannot comprehend how William Kiffin can hold a commission in the Parliamentary Army, how he can serve as a Member of Parliament and later as an Alderman of London, how he can even advance a vast sum of money to a King.<sup>15</sup>

A tradition of dissent, therefore, is not characterised by a radical separation of the Church from secular society (nor, incidentally, by any necessary rejection of all formal liturgy) but is rather characterised by a refusal to accept the claim of the State – be it the pretentious claim of a Monarch or of the English or Scottish Parliament – to legislate for the life and worship of the Church, to appoint prelates, or to prescribe liturgy. In some respects, therefore, it is not at all surprising that Dissenters have often found themselves grouped together with Catholics in periods of toleration and periods of disfavour, restriction, and oppression. But welcomed and affirmed or otherwise, Dissenters (like Catholics) traditionally have shown little reluctance in seeking involvement and influence in government: the

well-being of society is too important to be abandoned to the forces of secularism (or Anglicanism); the claims of Christ demand rather than deny involvement. The tradition of Dissent, then, far from advocating a religion-less State (as if such an entity were possible or conceivable), actively sought to influence the State religiously and resisted (for the most part passively) the marginalisation of its witness. That which distinguishes Dissent (for the most part) from the form of Christendom it opposed (and that which distinguished Dissent from Catholicism, similarly for the most part) was a commitment to religious liberty. Notwithstanding its common and unreflective usage, absolute freedom is incoherent both conceptually and practically – a commitment to religious liberty must be (and has been) qualified by all the limitations noted already in relation to coercion and non-coercion (and more besides), but it is this commitment to religious liberty, rather than a commitment to radical separation, that is distinctive of Dissent.

One source of confusion in these respects has been the habit of speaking of the separation of Church and State when that which is intended is this principle of religious liberty rather than a commitment to radical separation. Nowhere is this confusion more evident than in understandings of the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America, a constitutional establishment of religious liberty that derives both from the Puritan roots of a tradition of Dissent and from an Enlightenment assumption of the disjunction of belief and practice, of the private and the public (a confusion currently

demonstrated by constitutional arguments concerning the insertion of the phrase “one nation under God” in the pledge of allegiance).<sup>16</sup>

As is the case with all truly theological questions, an understanding of the relationship between the Church and the State derives from an understanding of the nature and will of God. Is God divided or is God simple and therefore undivided? Does God have two words, one word for the Church and one word for the State, a word of grace and a word of law; or does God have but one word, the word of the gospel, for both Church and State? Or, to misquote the Apostle: is God the God of the Church only; is God not the God of the nations also?<sup>17</sup> Is God the Saviour of believers only, or is God “the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe”?<sup>18</sup> And since God and God’s purposes are undivided ought we not to think of the Church as on behalf of the world rather than over against the world; as a means to an end rather than as an end in and of itself? And how can the Church fulfil its calling as a means to an end if it conspires together with its marginalisation and glories in its diminishment?

This, of course, is not the first time in the history of Western Europe that the Church has found itself marginalised, deprived of political influence, and supplanted by paganism.<sup>19</sup> That early medieval period we term ‘the Dark Ages’, with the Roman Empire in retreat, with Germanic tribes sweeping through Western Europe, found the Church, which had gained significant political influence since Constantine, robbed of that influence and power and facing again the threat of violent persecution. But the Church

thus confronted did not acquiesce in passive retreat: this was the age of the rise of Western monasticism and of the Celtic missionary movement. From bases of confident intentional communities the Church confronted pagan powers with the gracious claims of the gospel. And the society that was shaped by their witness was a society that would not have comprehended contemporary divisions of private and public, of religious and political, of sacred and secular; the gospel story was recognised as embracing all of life and shaping all of life. And even if some of their methods and some of their outcomes can be and should be faulted, their underlying confidence in the claims of a universal Saviour shame our resigned and resigning generation.

1 Roger Shuff, *Searching for the True church: Brethren and Evangelicals in Mid-Twentieth-Century England* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005), pp. 1-8.

2 See, for instance, Bernhard Rothmann, 'Restitution' (1534), quoted in *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, ed. Walter Klaassen (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1981), 330-333, p. 330.

3 See, for instance, Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* (London: SCM, 1984), p. 99.

4 Philippians 2.11.

5 John 19.11; cf. Romans 13.1.

6 Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the roots of political theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 241.

7 Matthew 5.38-48.

8 Revelation 5.5-6.

9 Revelation 12.7-12.

10 2 Corinthians 10.4-6.

11 Stanley Hauerwas, *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between* (Durham: Labyrinth, 1988), p. 211.

12 Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations*, p. 212.

13 Michael Sattler, 'The Schleithem Brotherly Union' in Yoder, J. H., *The Legacy of Michael Sattler* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1973), 28-54.

14 B. R. White, *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Baptist Historical Society, 1983), pp. 21-29.

15 Michael A. G. Haykin, Kiffin, Knollys and Keach: *rediscovering the English Baptist Heritage* (Darlington: Carey, 1996), p. 48.

16 "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

17 cf. Romans 3.29.

18 1 Timothy 4.10.

19 For this parallel see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: a study in moral theory* (Duckworth, London, 1985<sup>2</sup>), p. 263.