

FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

**REPORTS OF
STANDING
COMMITTEES
OF SYNOD**

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REPORT OF THE RELIGION AND MORALS COMMITTEE

Convener: Rev. W. Weale

INTRODUCTION

OVER recent months national and indeed international news has been dominated by the banking crises and the collapse of money markets. Sadly, few make any connection between this and the virtual collapse of truth and morality and the fact that when a people favoured with the Gospel depart from God the results can only be catastrophic in every way.

The following report highlights our sad condition as a national and cannot but lead us to the inevitable conclusion that God has a controversy with us and that our only hope is to turn to Him in repentance.

The Church of Rome relentlessly pursues the extension of its false worship throughout the world, holding millions of souls in bondage, and the more we see this must increase our prayer for the fulfilment of the Word of God and hope that the day may be sooner than many anticipate when shall be heard the words, "Babylon the great is fallen"; "I the Lord will hasten it in his time". "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

RELIGION

This section of the Report is an attempt to identify some of the characteristics of our times in which we seek to uphold and profess the Biblical Christian religion.

1. THE RELIGION WITH WHICH THIS REPORT IS CONCERNED

The religion with which this report is concerned is Biblical Christianity which variously is called Augustinian, Calvinistic or Reformed Christianity. It is wrong to speak of traditional Scottish Calvinism as Fundamentalist. Christian Fundamentalism is a relatively modern American religious phenomenon which embraces doctrines which the Free Presbyterian Church does not endorse. For a sum of the main doctrines of Biblical Christianity and its practices, one is directed to those documents which form the Constitution of our Church. The religion with which this Report is concerned is both inward and outward. Both of these aspects arise from a saving relationship between the living God and rational man, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

Christianity is a spiritual religion that retires from the glare of public view. However, for good and wise reasons, outward visible ordinances and an outward visible profession of religion is required by the divine Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. The harmony of the inward and outward aspects

of the spiritual and practical obligations of Christianity, is expressed by the Saviour when He says in Luke 10:27: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself."

The outward aspect includes the Holy Scripture, the inspired and infallible revelation of the will of God for our salvation. *The inward aspect* includes the belief of the doctrines of grace, on good grounds, in an intelligent, experimental and practical way. It is a believing which has a filial fear in respect for the threatenings of God's Word; a full purpose of and endeavour after a new obedience in respect of its commands and trust in respect of its promises.

The outward aspect includes the form of worship, *the inward aspect* includes the reverence, trust, love and obedience wrought in the heart towards the God worshipped; with a strong affection to God's people within, and an affectionate longing with regard to the happiness of those without.

The outward aspect includes the preaching of Law and Gospel: setting forth man's ruin, the need for Christ's redemptive work and the Spirit's regenerating and sanctifying work. *The inward aspect* arises out of these and includes a genuine sorrow for sin and turning from it with "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

The outward aspect includes the visible nature of the Church's witness as the Kingdom of Christ on earth: her teaching, practice and government, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. *The inward aspect* includes the invisible work of the Holy Spirit on the souls of men.

The outward aspect includes a call to arms against one's own sin as an enemy; *the inward aspect* can be compared to a life-long struggle in the strength and whole armour of God. *The inward aspect* is a deep reverence for the one God, subsisting in three glorious co-eternal Persons, who reveals Himself in the economy of the covenant in such a way that we love the eternal Father with a filial love; the eternal Son who became our Kinsman Redeemer, and the eternal Holy Spirit as the well-spring of our spiritual life; *the outward aspect* is a holy walk regulated by the law of God our Father, received from the hand of Christ our Mediator, pursued under the sweet constraints of the tender love of the Holy Spirit our Comforter.

Sadly, this religion, from the womb of the morning of regeneration, the fruit of Christ's eternal vigour or youth, which was admired on account of the beauty of both imparted and infused holiness, is lightly esteemed in our day. Many of the places where the goings of our God and our King were seen, felt and heard, have been invaded by other unfamiliar powers.

2. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR TIMES

1. Pantheism. Our times cannot be understood unless we appreciate that this religion is professed while all around is the mist of Pantheism. Those who follow the true religion draw light, life and comfort from the upper springs of God's transcendence. To excellent things we attribute eminence. To the best of

all things within their own class we attribute pre-eminence. To God's being and attributes we attribute transcendence: "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?" (Isaiah 46:5). The true religion also draws from the nether springs of God's nearness. Though God is transcendent in His Being He is very near to His creatures: "In Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Furthermore, in a very special way, He is very near to His people spiritually: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

A wrong view of God. But the pantheists deny the transcendence of God, and they have a very erroneous view of the nearness or immanence of God. The Bible makes a distinction between the Creator and the creation. Pantheism does not. The name "pantheism" is made up of the Greek words for "all" and "God". The principal idea intended by the word has been expressed in the following ways: "God is the soul of the universe"; "God is everything and everything is God"; "All that there is, is God". God is spoken of, by the Pantheist, as an impersonal "force", the "energy" in the universe.

A wrong view of man. Pantheism leads to the deifying of man. When one Pantheist was interviewed on television she informed her viewers that, "Each soul is its own God. You must never worship anyone or anything other than self, for you are God," she said.

A wrong view of the creature. Everyone who understands the mandate given to Adam to "replenish the earth, subdue it and have dominion" (Genesis 1:28) over it will own that we have a responsibility towards God's creation. That is quite a different thing to the Pantheistic veneration of "Mother Nature" or "Mother Earth" and the idea of the earth as "God's body". Treating nature as a divine entity to be venerated with religious worship, is not Christianity, it is Pantheism.

Influence of Pantheism. The Secretary General of the United Nations addressed the 1992 Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro: "To the ancients the Nile was a god to be venerated, as was the Rhine, an infinite source of European myths, or the Amazonian forest, the mother of forests. Throughout the world, nature was the abode of the divinities that gave the forest, the desert, or the mountains a personality which commanded worship or respect. The Earth had a soul. To find that soul again, to give it new life, that is the essence of Rio" (quoted in *Does God believe in Atheists?*, by John Blanchard, page 37). It is astonishing to contemplate the influence of Pantheism when men of such high office and influence publicly endorse it. Another indication of its power to influence national leaders is the amount of "Green" legislation that has been passed to conform to international treaties. Northern Ireland's Environment Minister, has articulated what many have suspected when he said that the furor about global warming was like a "hysterical pseudo-religion" disseminated by an "insidious propaganda".

In one form or another, under one name or another, dreamy Pantheists have wandered in a pagan wilderness wherein there is no way, for a long time. Paul spoke of some, "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and

served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Romans 1:25); Moses spoke of the tendency of fallen man to this idolatry, and warned Israel of the need to keep from such things as encouraged it, “lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them” (Deuteronomy 4:19).

2. Atheism. Present day religion cannot be understood unless we appreciate that it is professed while all around is the bitter frost of Atheism. The word Atheism has a Greek origin which is found in Ephesians 2:12: “That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” The word atheism points to a person who is “without God” (for more on the subject see “Atheistic Fundamentalism” in the 2008 report).

The intellectual climate in which true religion is professed in our day is one in which men women and children, by decades of indoctrination, are strongly inclined to the notion that atheism is clever and religion is for the weak-minded. Some so-called Christians would generally agree, saying that knowledge belongs to science and not to religion, and faith and feelings is the realm in which religion is most comfortable. We would fail to understand our times if we did not recognise the deceitfulness of this claim.

We can illustrate this by a common, confused distinction that is often made by atheists (and gullible Christians): that evolutionary science is evidence based, whereas the science of those who deny evolution is faith based. The research of thousands of respected scientists, who believe in God the Creator, exists as irrefutable evidence that that statement is wrong. It would be more accurate to say that, in the one, there is an assumption that there is no Creator; in the other, there is an assumption that there truly is a Creator. The notion that the atheistic assumption is brilliantly clever and that the believing assumption is ridiculously stupid is the result, not of honest and reasonable observation but of blind prejudice and institutionalised unbelief. Despite the bluff of popular atheists some leading academics will confidently assert that the assumptions of evolution and atheism are based on a great leap of blind faith. In public debates between himself and atheists, Dr. John Lennox (Lecturer in the Philosophy of Science at Oxford University) has repeatedly challenged his protagonists with this charge. The scientist L. H. Matthews, FRS (1901-1986), writing the Introduction to an edition of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*, seems to confirm this view: “. . . evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory”. He then asks “Is it then a science or a faith?”.

Paul Ehrlich (1932-) (Professor of Biology, Stanford University) and L. Charles Birch (1918-) (Professor of Biology, University of Sydney), in an article entitled “Evolutionary History and Popular Biology”, which appeared in *Nature*, Vol. 214, 22nd April 1967, page 352, stated, “Our theory of evolution [is] outside of empirical science. . . . Ideas, either without basis or

based on a few laboratory experiments carried out in extremely simplified systems, have attained currency far beyond their validity. They have become part of an evolutionary dogma accepted by most of us as part of our training.” H. S. Lipson, FRS (1910-1991), who was Professor of Physics, University of Manchester, said: “Evolution became in a sense a scientific religion; almost all scientists have accepted it and many are prepared to ‘bend’ their observations to fit in with it.”

Though respected academics witness against the atheistic evolutionary hypothesis, the greatest testimony is that of God’s Word. The Bible says that Atheism is folly. “The fool hath said in his heart [that] there is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

Darwin’s Anniversary. It is 200 years since Darwin was born. It is 150 years since he published *The Origin of Species*. The Bible presents a Theistic explanation for the origin of life. Darwin presented an Atheistic explanation for the origin of life. Science and theology are different things but they are both from God and lead back to God. The famous Isaac Newton said that scientific discovery was like thinking God’s thoughts after Him.

Theology observes, interprets and formulates the theological principles and laws it finds in God’s revelation of Himself. Is it simplistic to suggest that if science would restrict itself to the observation, interpretation and formulation of the principles and laws it finds in nature, then the unnecessary conflict between theology and science would end? As theology has nothing to do with what is not given by revelation from God, so science should take nothing to do with what is not observable and testable in nature. In a letter written by Dr. Colin Patterson, Senior Palaeontologist at the British Museum of Natural History in London, the following is said about the hypothesis of evolution: “It is easy enough to make up stories of how one form gave rise to another, and to find reasons why the stages should be favoured by natural selection. But such stories are not part of science, for there is no way of putting them to the test.” The same sentiments are expressed in another way by another scientist who called evolution a fairy tale for grown-ups.

The evolutionary speculation – the cornerstone of modern biology – is not, in the understanding of its most famous advocate, scientific. According to Charles Darwin his theory is merely an idea – a hypothesis. Darwin, in a letter, written in 1858, to a colleague regarding his book, *The Origin of Species*, wrote, “You will be greatly disappointed [by the forthcoming book]; it will be grievously too hypothetical”.

Dr Behe, Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University (USA), says that he once fully accepted the theory of evolution but that he began to doubt that the evidence pointed to a gradual evolution. He came to recognise that there was evidence that life could not have evolved in the way propounded by a gradual evolutionary hypothesis. He has shown how no biological system could ever function unless all the components were present and working together, according to their design, which is impossible by the hypothesis of the slow, gradual evolution proposed by Darwin.

3. INDIFFERENCE TO THE SCRIPTURE WITHIN THE CHURCH

The inevitable eventual effect of eroding a foundation is the collapse of the building that stands on it. The Word of God is the foundation of the Christian religion. By denying the foundational importance of the Word in the Church the collapse of Christianity is inevitable.

Truth substituted by Feelings

Where there is true religion there is spiritual feeling. The Word of God, powerfully applied to the soul by the Holy Spirit, is the source of true spiritual feelings and experiences. We judge our religious experiences by God's Word. Much modern religion makes experience the benchmark of religion, not the Word the benchmark of experience.

Dr J. G. Vos (1903-1983) traces the ignorance of the letter of the Word of God among those professing the true religion to an emphasis on religious feelings, and a neglect of the teaching of the Word of God. He points out that ignorance of the Truth is not only common but that some modern Protestants despise knowledge: "He prefers to be ignorant"; "He fancies knowledge to be worthless in the sphere of religion"; "There exists today an indifference to truth, an intolerance of truth, even an antipathy to truth in large sections of the Protestant Church." This he attributes to the influence of those who made the religious consciousness of man, rather than the Bible, the source of their theology. Another author informs us of an attitude within the Church which is opposed to doctrine and the defence of the Truth: "Ours is the 'Age of Aquarius' in which rational argument is deemed not only impossible but religiously indecent."

Doctrine substituted by Values

A Creed or Confession such as the *Westminster Confession of Faith* is a sum of what a church believes to be the foundational teaching of the Bible. In many quarters the foundations of the Christian religion is expressed by Creeds which identify, not the leading doctrines of the Bible, but some vague ideas or values. The modern creed is something like, "I believe in honesty", etc. Christian values are an essential element of the Christian religion. They are of the utmost importance for a well ordered society. A shift, however, from Biblical doctrines to vague values is a shift from religion on evangelical grounds to an idea of a religion on ethical grounds. Again, values are legal and therefore weak through our weakness. Vos points out that, to say that "my religion is just: goodness, truth and beauty" does not make one true, good and beautiful. What is more, if values are not interpreted in the light of the Holy Scripture then they are not Christian values.

One example of the insidious effect of replacing doctrine with values is found in the current favourable attitude to homosexuality within society and the church. When "values" lose their Biblical context, things like homosexuality cease to be a sin in the eyes of many and begin to be a right. In *The Homosexual Agenda*, a book with the subtitle "Exposing the Principal

Threat to Religious Freedom Today”, the authors give a very alarming picture.

The homosexual agenda is to make that lifestyle which is unacceptable in Biblical terms acceptable in the terms of modern “values”. It has been very successful. Homosexuality is not only accepted as an appropriate way of life by many people but such a view is promoted in our schools. Homosexual activists present homosexuals as a subculture oppressed by the teaching of the Bible. They are portrayed as victims of oppression. They hitch a ride on the back of historic causes that have moved millions to act. Parallels are drawn between victimised homosexuals and down-trodden slaves. Decent people, motivated by so-called decent values, the majority of whom are not homosexual themselves, rally to support the “injured class”. The person who describes homosexuality as sinful is viewed as a part of a “dark force of oppression”: the modern equivalent of a supporter of slavery who has no regard for the rights of his fellow men. Those who support the “rights” of homosexuals are portrayed as the custodians of liberty: they “believe in fairness”. People are appalled when newspaper propaganda informs them that there is an “oppressed sub-culture” in the Western world. Demands are made for the special protection of “the victimised”. The result is that not only those who have no religion but those who have a religious system based on supposedly Christian values, support that conduct which the Bible condemns. Many liberal churches further the homosexual agenda. The authors of *The Homosexual Agenda* say that some churches seem to exist for no other reason than to promote homosexuality. Those who oppose them are portrayed as uneducated, while the liberal churches are enlightened and thoughtful.

When contextless “moral values” and “religious feelings”, adrift in a misty sea, take the place of the historical Biblical fact of redemption and the doctrines, practice and experience that flow from it, then the whole face of Christianity changes. One grave by-product of this situation is that the Muslim is appalled at what happens in a so-called Christian land; he scoffs at the religion that has less and less moral influence on its people; he reproves a worldly, secular, all inclusive church; and he feels justified in seeking the conversion of the world to the political and religious ideals of Islam.

4. POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

In our day, the profession of faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is made in an atmosphere which makes many afraid to express their views on religious matters. If there is not yet a law against declaring the sinfulness of homosexuality, there is an intolerance of it. The tragic case of Harry Hammond, assaulted for condemning homosexuality and then charged for causing an offence (while the assailants were not charged) and later dying in hospital is known to those who have read previous reports. While some heads of Muslim states, who criminalise Christian worship in their own countries, receive state welcomes to the UK and some of those who advocate the Islamisation of the West are permitted to enter the UK, one man, who has warned about the danger posed to our religious and political freedom by Islam, has been forbidden entry.

The reason for the exclusion of Mr. Wilders from the UK was that he had articulated the fears that many have about Islamism. He was excluded because it was feared that Muslims would be offended, resulting possibly in civil unrest. He has stated that there is a direct link between the Koran and Islamic violence. His various statements present a view that as Nazism posed a threat to our freedom in the middle of the 20th century, now Islamic ideology poses a threat to our freedom in the 21st century and insists that it is most irresponsible for Governments not to address it.

Do we really live in a land which on one hand insists on the right of Jerry Springer to stage a gross and blasphemous play, though thousands of offended Christians respectfully petitioned against it, and on the other hand, one which denies entry to a man because his appeal in respect of our liberties might offend Muslims? But that is only one illustration of the utterly unbelievable madness of “political correctness”. A British Christian woman, living in the UK has been struck off the list of foster parents because a Muslim girl she cared for converted to Christianity. A child in a British school in the UK was censured for speaking about eternal realities to a Muslim school mate. Her mother, a secretary in the same school, was accused of professional misconduct when she communicated her misgivings to Christian friends.

“Britain seems to have become a country ruled by fear. A country where civil servants cancel Christmas celebrations to please Muslims . . . where Sharia Courts are part of the legal system. . . . Where a primary school cancelled a Christmas nativity play because it interfered with an Islamic festival . . . where a school removes the words Christmas and Easter from their calendar so as not to offend Muslims . . . where a teacher punishes two students for refusing to pray to Allah as part of their religious education class . . . where elected members of a town council are told not to eat during daylight hours in town hall meetings during the Ramadan” (from the text of the speech Mr. Wilders was not permitted to deliver to the House of Lords).

This Synod has repeatedly spoken against the observation of Christmas. We are at a strange pass, however, if Christmas celebrations are to be curtailed for fear of Muslims. The unavoidable frightening inference is that the fear of Islamic displeasure is a more effective deterrent than the fear of God’s displeasure is.

There is a chilling side to the paradoxical values which, in the name of toleration, expose us to the dangers of extreme ideologies and make it difficult for us to speak out freely against them. We cannot understand the state of religion in our day unless we acknowledge that it is professed in an atmosphere of a dubious freedom introduced by political correctness. We live in a time which has successfully removed the profession of true religion to the periphery of what is acceptable and has made the publication of its teaching difficult.

5. SECULARISM

Present day religion cannot be understood unless we appreciate that it is professed while all around a rapid process of secularisation is taking place.

Many writers speak of Secularism as a definable world view or philosophy. Vos: "Secularism is that view of life which regards life as a whole as non-religious. . . . God does not matter. . . . God has no meaning for the ordinary everyday life of man." Having described such a godless outlook on life, Vos makes the astonishing statement that, "Secularism is the internal dry rot of the churches". "In secularism nothing is transcendent. Secularism is concerned with the here and now. It does not speak of the unseen and eternal, only the seen and temporal. Secularism is a conscious rejection of the Christian view of life. Reason is the judge and umpire even of God and His Word. While it has to admit that religion is a part of life's fabric, it is regarded as an activity for the deluded. It is classed as a pastime, or as entertainment. At best, the churches are charities. The secular mind thinks of the Christian as one in need of enlightenment or education to deliver him from the shackles of an old superstition."

But Secularism is not just indifferent, it is intolerant of Christianity. The *Daily Telegraph* carried a piece on the marginalisation of Christianity in the UK, in which we are told that public sector workers now risk being sacked if they talk about religion in the workplace, under "equality and diversity" rules. New NHS guidelines state that doctors and nurses face harassment charges if they are accused of "preaching" to colleagues or patients, while a draft code of practice for teachers could be used by schools to discipline those who discuss their beliefs with pupils. Caroline Petrie, a community nurse was suspended without pay for two months after she offered to pray for an elderly patient. Latest figures show that courts dealt with 600 cases of workplace discrimination on religious grounds in the year to April 2008, up from 486 two years before. A relationship counsellor was sacked after he refused to give therapy to homosexual couples. Both have been unsuccessful in their claims for unfair dismissal. A correspondent in the same newspaper observed how a totalitarian ideology "obliterates the distinction between areas of private judgment and of public control" (*Daily Telegraph*, 18th February 2009).

One is frequently shocked by the illiberal almost totalitarian accent with which our secular society can speak against religion. Those who publicly condemn homosexuality might be required to undergo "diversity training" or they may need "educating", presumably with a view to teach them not to think for themselves. Joe and Helen Roberts were questioned by the police because they complained about their local council's "gay rights" policy. The Bishop of Chester was investigated by the police for suggesting that homosexuals need not be homosexuals.

The church is viewed as another secular organisation. The church is a society of human origin in the eyes of a secular world. The concept of two jurisdictions within a nation (Christ's spiritual jurisdiction and the ruler's temporal jurisdiction) has long been forgotten. The concept of "co-ordinate jurisdiction and mutual subordination" (the view the Covenanters had of the Biblical relation) between church and state is a laughable concept in a secular age.

R. C. Sproul (1939-), who is well known in some circles for his writings on Christian Apologetics, said, "The impact of secularism . . . has been

cataclysmic, shaking the very foundations of the value structures of western civilization. The Judeo-Christian consensus is no more; it has lost its place as the dominant shaping force of cultural ethics.”

We have tried to show the thorns amongst which true religion seeks to grow in our day. These are the fruitless trees of the wood. Christ is the fruitful Apple Tree amongst the trees of the wood and may He continue to be so to us, the Chiefest and only One, among the ten thousands of barren, proud contenders. “Enter in at the strait gate,” said the Saviour: an exhortation worthy to be plainly declared and cordially received, being based on that solemn and infallible observation: “Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Though the Committee cannot endorse all that is written by the following sources and authors, this part of the report could not have been written without their help: Blanchard, *Does God believe in Atheists?*; Christian Institute, Various Pamphlets; Craigs, *The Homosexual Agenda*; Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*; Mullen, *The Dark Side of the Moral Consensus*; Online Bible (Answers in Genesis), *The Quote Book*; Sproul, *Classical Apologetics*; Vos, *Crossroads*.

MORALS

ABORTION

The Abortion Act was passed into law on 27th October 1967 and came into effect 41 years ago this year on 27th April 1968. During that time more than 7,000,000 unborn children have been slaughtered, which is a direct violation of the sixth commandment “Thou shalt not kill”. If Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who commanded all the male children of the Israelites to be drowned in the River Nile, and King Herod, who slew the babes of Bethlehem, are ignominiously renowned in history for their murderous acts, how much more the disgrace of this supposedly Christian and civilised nation of Britain murdering millions of children in the womb. Scotland’s share of this killing is over 300,000 unborn children, the number for 2006 being 13,081.

An opportunity was available in 2008 to reduce the upper limit for abortions, presently 24 weeks, during the consideration of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill before Parliament, but even a minor reduction from 24 weeks to 22 weeks was not passed. The majority of MPs who voted to continue the *status quo* certainly have the blood of the unborn children on their hands. It was gratifying to note that plans by pro-abortion MPs to further liberalise the abortion law by bringing Northern Ireland under the scope of the law for the first time were defeated as also was abortion on request for up to 24 weeks, nurse abortion and GP Surgery abortion with completion at home. There were also proposals to jail pro-life counsellors who gave pro-life advice to abortion seekers. A pro-life lawyer said, “The good

news is that 18 months of fighting against the liberalisation of abortion through this Bill is now over and God has delivered us in this battle to hold the ground against the might of the Trade Unions, the medical institutions, the Abortion industry and a hugely pro-choice Parliament is miraculous indeed – praise be to God! However the battle on behalf of the unborn child will continue, perhaps for a lifetime. We will press on until we see the law of this land changed so that the most vulnerable are wholly protected.”

THE HUMAN FERTILISATION AND EMBRYOLOGY BILL

This Bill passed through Parliament on 22nd October 2008. This allows scientists to implant the nucleus of a human cell into an animal egg in order to form a hybrid animal-human embryo, which impinges on the sanctity of human life and, as such, is immoral. These embryos would be destroyed after 14 days, seeming to indicate a feeling of guilt on the part of scientists and legislators. Even worse are legalising (1) The screening of human embryos in order to eliminate those with undesirable genetic features, (2) The genetic modification of human embryos using a cloning technique in order to avoid certain genetic diseases, and (3) Recognising a lesbian couple as the “parents” of an IVF child born to one of them.

MURDER

Scotland’s murder rate is the fastest-rising in Western Europe. Data published by the United Nations (UN) found the number of killings was 2.1 per 100,000 people. Homicides have risen more than a third, making Scotland joint highest in Western Europe with Finland and Portugal. The UN Survey of Crime Trends and Operation of Criminal Justice Systems covered 2005-2006. In Scotland, the murder rate rose from 1.59 per 100,000 to 2.1, an increase of 34%. This rise was the sixth biggest in the world, coming behind Bahrain (73%), Jordan (45%), Tajikistan (43%), Armenia (37%) and Mauritius (34%). Of the 109 killings recorded, 31 were in Glasgow. Between 2005 and 2006 the number of murders in the city increased from 4.49 per 100,000 to 5.34. Almost half the killings were carried out with a sharp instrument such as a knife. Data released by the Scottish Government for 2006-2007 recorded 114 murder victims. Thousands of lethal weapons have been taken off Scotland’s streets during a police crackdown on violent crime. Nearly 3,000 Samurai swords, machetes, axes, knives and daggers have been collected by Strathclyde Police in the last six months. During a series of early morning police raids, with more than 300 violent offenders being arrested, Campbell Corrigan, an Assistant Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police, said, “Some of the items recovered in the last six months are truly terrifying and yet these are the weapons being used by people on the street”.

Every week in Scotland nine children are convicted of carrying knives. Statistics show prosecutions for under-18s carrying offensive weapons, such as meat cleavers, swords and household knives, has almost doubled in less than a decade. In 1999, 281 children were convicted, rising to 487 in 2008.

Earlier this year Ross Anderson, 17, of Montrose was found guilty of culpable homicide after stabbing another teenager to death while on bail. He stabbed Adam Paton six times and is to be sentenced later.

Truly it is written "The transgression of the wicked saith, within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes" (Psalm 36:1).

As if our nation was not murderous enough as it is, there is now pressure to pass a law for physician-assisted suicide. To date 101 UK citizens have travelled to a special clinic in Switzerland to end their lives where voluntary euthanasia is legal, as it also is in Belgium and the Netherlands. Margo MacDonald, an MSP suffering from Parkinson's Disease, launched a consultation on plans to make assisted suicide legal. She has already said she would like to be allowed to bring about her own death if her condition deteriorates. Under the measures she is proposing, people would be able to ask a doctor to help them end their life. She requires the support of 18 MSPs to progress her Bill. The British Medical Association and Scottish Government are opposed to the proposals. Dame Joan Bakewell, the Government's new Tsar for the elderly, says she supports assisted suicide and thinks the elderly should not be kept alive once they lose their identity. The Word of God is totally opposed to suicide, which is but self-murder as is revealed in the cases of King Saul, Ahithophel and Judas Iscariot, who all took their own lives.

ALCOHOL ABUSE

A Scottish National Health Service study has revealed that 633 children, including 15 under the age of 12 and as young as 8, were taken to hospital casualty units between April and June 2007 after drinking too much alcohol. They had consumed, on average, the equivalent of six pints of lager in the hours before being admitted to hospital. Almost a quarter had also taken illegal drugs including ecstasy and cannabis.

In February 2009 a news report disclosed that in Scotland alcohol-related deaths had now outstripped heart disease as the main cause of death.

ADULTERY

Breaches of the seventh commandment are now so commonplace that they are regarded as a normal way of life and behaviour. Further evidence of this is in the Press reports on 30th July 2008 where it is recorded that there was a surge in cases of Syphilis throughout Scotland. Homosexual and bisexual men were blamed for a huge increase in this and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), hitting a new high between 2006 and 2007. Cases of Syphilis, once thought to have practically disappeared, rocketed by 1,100% between 1996 and 2007. The latest NHS figures show that cases of STIs hit a new high last year. There were 22,906 diagnosis of acute STIs, up 7% on 2006 and 110% higher than 1996. The number of Chlamydia cases was up 435%, while the statistics for HIV nearly trebled, and cases of Gonorrhoea nearly doubled over the 11 years. Last year's figures show that 4 out of 5 new diagnoses of Chlamydia in women were in the 15-34 year age group, while 71% of cases

among men involved 20-34 year-olds. The total attendance at Genitourinary Medicine Clinics in UK in 2006 was 1,800,000, more than double the number in 2002.

Some of these can be related to immigration but the principal cause is the breakdown of morality. People are not usually born with these diseases and, provided they abstain from fornication, adultery and homosexual conduct, they are in little danger of contracting them.

The Word of God has the solution in the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Abstinence before marriage, and total fidelity after, would bring almost to an end these diseases in one or two generations. Unfortunately, the Government response continues to be "more money" and "more sex education" with total opposition to a return to morality.

Even such a sin-hardened nation as the UK was recently shocked when a 13-year-old-boy was claimed to be the father of a baby born to a 15-year-old girl, being only 12 years old when the child was conceived. This news also added to the UK's reputation as Europe's capital for teenage pregnancies.

CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004 – DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SISTERS

Two elderly sisters have lost their battle to enjoy the same tax benefits as same-sex couples who register for civil partnerships. Joyce Burden, 90, and her sister Sybil, 82, have lived together in the same house for years, caring for older family members and now for one another. Concerned that when one of them dies the other will have to sell the house to cover inheritance duties, the sisters have campaigned for decades to have their relationship treated like a marriage for the purposes of tax law. The Civil Partnership Act 2004 allows same-sex couples to register as civil partners, exempting them from inheritance tax. However, the Act prevents partnerships from being registered between close relatives. Before the law was passed it was argued by the Christian Institute and others that it ought to be extended to allow long-term, co-habiting family members to register as civil partners in the same way as same sex couples. This would have made civil partnerships fairer and less like "gay marriage".

The Burdens decided to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights. They claim that the Government was unfairly withholding from them tax rights now available to same-sex civil partners. The Grand Chamber of the European Court ruled that the sisters could not be compared with a married Civil Partnership Act couple, and so no discrimination had taken place.

Joyce Burden said, "If we were lesbians we would have all the rights in the world but we are sisters and it seems we have no rights at all" (*Evangelical Times*, June 2008).

DRUG ABUSE

Drug abuse rates (double those in England) are behind Scotland's higher mortality rate. Research by the *British Medical Journal (BMJ)* has found the rate, which is 15% higher than in England and Wales, was not caused by

deprivation as previously thought. The research points to deaths from drugs and drug-related issues such as infections, violence, suicide and overdoses, as being key to the figures. Previously deaths related to drug abuse have been overlooked unless they were from overdoses. Michael Bloor, from the Centre of Drug Misuse Research at Glasgow University, said: "Although drug use is of low prevalence it is bad for you. The mortality rate of drug users is 12 times higher than among non-using Scots of the same age and gender."

The human cost of drug abuse in Scotland could spiral in years to come, warned Fergus Ewing, Scotland's Community Safety Minister, as figures revealed a record number of deaths from heroin, cocaine and other substances. A total of 455 drug-related fatalities were recorded last year, more than double the 1997 figure and 8% more than than the previous year.

Scripturally drug addicts are in the same category as drunkards, as in Galatians 5:21: "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in times past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

YOUTH INDISCIPLINE

This is evidenced in the number of pupils excluded from school. Although the overall number of exclusions was down, there was a sharp rise in those excluded for violence, amounting to 25%, with one child a day expelled or suspended for an assault with a weapon. Official statistics showed exclusions for physical assault were 5,961; 4,831 attacks on fellow pupils and 1,312 on staff.

Exclusions for violence with a weapon increased by 28% in just a year from 286 to 366, despite an 11% fall in the number of children expelled from the classroom. Boys accounted for 8 out of 10 exclusions. Some were suspended on several occasions for insolence, disobedience, and verbal and physical assaults on fellow pupils and staff. The breakdown of traditional family life is no doubt the root cause of the problem, many of the children involved in these figures have no suitable role models or discipline at home. They take their cue from other badly behaved children and have grown up to believe that teachers and fellow pupils are legitimate targets for their appalling behaviour.

The anti-family policies of successive governments have made a major contribution to this given situation. Marriage is undermined by such legislation as the Sexual Orientation Regulation, which favours the homosexual agenda, and policies which leave parents in a two-parent family financially better off if they split up. Successive governments have shown a distinct aversion to having their legislation undergirded by the principles of Christian morality as summed up in the Ten Commandments.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Lillian Ladele, a Registrar with Islington Council in London, refused to carry out same-sex civil partnership ceremonies, on the conscientious grounds of her firmly-held biblical beliefs. As a result, her managers harassed her,

discriminated against her, and threatened her with the loss of her post. With financial help from the Christian Institute she took her case to the Central London Employment Tribunal. It was reported that she wept as she told the Tribunal that her bosses ordered her to perform the ceremonies or face dismissal for gross misconduct. She said: "I felt harassed and victimised. I was being picked on on a daily basis."

The case was decided in her favour, which was a significant victory, not only for her, but also for others in a similar situation. The Tribunal stated that "gay" rights should not be allowed to trump the rights of those with religious beliefs and that the behaviour of her colleagues had "the effect of violating Miss Ladele's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment". It also said that Islington Council "placed a greater value on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-sexual community than it placed on the rights of Miss Ladele as one holding an orthodox Christian belief".

A 14-year-old Sikh girl has won a High Court claim against her school for discrimination for refusing to remove her religious bangle for which she was excluded for contravening their "no jewellery" policy. She said that wearing the Kara bracelet was an expression of her faith.

It makes one wonder why the High Court the previous year found against a Christian girl for wearing a chastity ring which signified that she does not believe in sex before marriage.

Social workers of Edinburgh Council have taken 2 children from their grandparents so that they can be adopted by a "gay" couple. They claimed that the grandparents were too old, being only 59 and 46 respectively. (The children's mother (26) is a recovering heroin addict.)

A leader writer, of 2nd February 2009, writes, "The decision of Edinburgh Council to take 2 children from their grandparents so that they can be adopted by a gay couple is extraordinary, even in an age in which political correctness is regularly placed above common sense". And in the same leader he writes, "Social workers, however, are considered to know best, a notion that would be laughable if it wasn't so tragic in so many cases".

CONCLUSION

Much more could be written in this report but sufficient is recorded to show the continuing downward path of the nation's morals.

A writer in concluding the 1994 report states: "In our witness as a Church we must have a regard to the glory of God in our prayers for Him to revive His cause. 'Thus saith the Lord God: I do not this for your sakes, O House of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen. . . . Thus saith the Lord God: I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them' (Ezekiel 36:22, 37). 'When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer' (Psalm 102:16-17)." This is our hope.