



Winter 2017 Edition



REFORMATION
— 500 —

1517-2017

PROTESTANT
ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Reformation 500 Celebrations

A visit to Berlin and Wittenberg

In November 2016, I accepted the privilege to join the council of the Protestant Association and the opportunity to oversee the renovation of the property in Main Road, Mowbray. On the 19th May we officially launched *The Book Shop*, *The Members' Library* and *The Work Shop* with encouraging support from our partners, team and community of friends and family. In alignment with the 500 year anniversary of the Reformation, we chose to use the celebration as a central theme for our membership programme, our design choices and branding in the new store.

Thanks to a providential turn of circumstances due to a business trip to Berlin, I was able to make the pilgrimage to Wittenberg on Saturday 27th May with a few friends. We were treated to some wonderful weather for our visit to the birthplace of the Reformation, also known as Lutherstadt. There were a series of exhibitions around the town to commemorate the journey of the celebrations around Europe, installations for contemplation and reflection, as well as a memorial to the plight of refugees.



Five Sola Flower





The walk around Wittenberg was centred around the Castle Cathedral, of which Luther famously nailed his 95 Theses to its doors. After hundreds of years it remains a breathtaking structure and in comparison to the rest of the quaint town, dominates its skyline. Despite how impressive the cathedral was, we were collectively struck by the serenity of the whole experience by being there. What we found most inspiring were the hundreds of people that attended the various events in Berlin and Wittenberg. We attended a Taizé service in the beautiful Berlin Dome and completed our evening listening to a free concert by the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and both venues were filled people sharing their faith through prayer, music and song. I felt that Martin Luther would have been satisfied to see that his work and effort has touched so many peoples' lives over time and space, recognising the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, living it out in peace and freedom in many parts of the world today.

Soli Deo Gloria!



*Written by
Colin Habberton*

“The most potent weapon with God is His own Word.” Augustus F. Tholuck, on Psalm 132:11 “The Lord has sworn” Quoted in Spurgeon’s Treasury of David.

Florence Nightingale

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910) was the great reformer of nursing and health care during the 19th Century. She was born of British parents in Florence, Italy. Her father was a wealthy landowner and educated his two intelligent daughters, Parthe and Florence, himself. Florence, however, was not drawn to a conventional social and domestic life, but to relieving the suffering of the sick and needy.

God's Call

When she was 16 and her sister Parthe 18, they were presented at court and introduced into society. Florence was tall, slender and pretty and soon received two offers of marriage. But a year later, though she did not think of herself as being very religious, she had an encounter with God who called her into His "service". She pondered what this might mean and at last asked a friend (Dr Howe): "Do you think it unsuitable and unbecoming for a young Englishwoman to devote herself to works of charity in hospitals and elsewhere as Catholic sisters do? Do you think it would be a dreadful thing?" He replied: "It would be unusual in England... but act on your inspiration." 1) So she decided to become a nurse. Her sister was angry, and her parents were horrified. How could a gentlewoman do such a thing? For in the 19th century hospitals were smelly and dirty places, and most nurses were immoral drunks.

But Florence was not discouraged. She started studying health care reports. She went to Germany to train at the Institute of Lutheran Deaconesses in Kaiserswerth, (founded by the Reverend Theodor Fliedner during the Industrial Revolution). When she returned to England, she briefly ministered to "Sick Gentlewomen in Distressed Circumstances."

Crimean War

Then, in 1853, the three-year Crimean War broke out between Russia on the one hand, and Britain, France, Turkey, and Sardinia on the other. The latter alliance fought in support of the Ottomans which territory (which included the Crimea) was increasingly swallowed up by Russia who aimed at making it a protectorate. It turned into an ugly war, which claimed 200 000 deaths. One eyewitness reported: "As the year waned and winter began to close in upon us, the army suffered greatly, worn out by night work, by vigil in rain and storm, by hard labour, in the trenches, they found themselves suddenly reduced to short allowance..." 2) It had become a "war of notoriously incompetent international butchery."

The Lady with the Lamp

At the time of the Crimean War, Sidney Herbert was the British Secretary of War. He was a friend of Florence and was painfully aware of the conditions. Nearly every soldier, once wounded, died. In his desire to improve matters, Herbert turned to Florence and appointed her Superintendent of Nursing for English hospitals in Turkey. He asked her to choose a group of nurses and take them to the Crimea. Florence engaged forty, including 10 Catholic Sisters. On arrival they found that the food was mouldy, the water scarce, the hospital filthy and overcrowded.

There were no sheets, no operating tables, no medical supplies. But Sidney Herbert had given her plenary powers, and she ordered at once: bandages, towels and soap. Clothes were washed and floors were scrubbed. Soon the hospital changed. The love of Christ replaced hopelessness. Every night, before retiring, she would go from bed to bed and see that her patients were comfortable. The wounded soldiers called her the "lady with the lamp," and held her in awe. Under her care the death rate diminished by two-thirds.

To God be the Glory

She encouraged her co-workers with Bible Words and much prayer, saying: "Go your way, straight to God's work, in simplicity and singleness of heart." She did not take NO for an answer, neither with herself nor with her staff, and she overcame all obstacles with determination. In answer to the why and how of her motivation she answered: "[I am] a woman of very ordinary ability [who] has been led by God in strange and unaccustomed paths to do in His service what He has done in her. If I could tell you all, you would see how God has done all, and I nothing. I have worked hard, very hard, that is all, and I have never refused God anything."

When she returned to England from the Crimea she was gaunt, sick and exhausted. But now she turned her attention to legislation. For instance, surviving soldiers would receive a pay cut, because they were no longer in danger of being killed. On many issues she pleaded with the Minister of War, who submitted her ideas to Parliament to pass into law.

Queen Victoria invited and visited Florence and discussed military reforms. The Queen of Holland, the Crown Prince of Prussia and the President of the USA consulted her. The King of Portugal asked her to design a hospital. She established a nurses' training school and even proposed reorganization of the War Office. She made nursing respectable and health care accessible to the poor. Drunken "hussies" were no longer tolerated.

Jean Henri Dunant, the founder of the Red Cross, was so impressed that he said: "Though I am known as the founder of the Red Cross, it is to an English woman that all the honour is due. What inspired me was the work of Florence Nightingale." The Lady with the Lamp had become a shining light not only for England but for the whole world. - Soli Deo Gloria.

Footnotes:

1. He was the husband of Julia Ward Howe, who authored the "Battle Hymn of the Republic".
2. Alexis Troubetzkoy, A Brief History of the Crimean War, 1853-1856.

*Written by
Dorothea Scarborough*

"Don't pore over the past! Let it all go! Never mind who frowns if God smiles." Catherine Mumford to her husband to be, William Booth (General) of the Salvation Army.

Calling the Church

“Jesus calls us: o’er the tumult of our life’s wild, restless sea.....” Cecil Frances Alexander (Mrs)

The Lord Jesus still calls Christians in these turbulent times to, “hold fast what you have”. Revelation 3:11 (NKJV). An open Bible cannot be taken for granted – China the unofficial global printer of the Word of God, which it once tried to destroy, still persecutes believers. And the West which is seemingly rudderless, is no longer a safe haven for unimpeded evangelization.

Warning Signals

Meanwhile in South Africa, there is a potential placing of T&C ‘s (Terms and Conditions), on the preaching of the Gospel. While the intended Hate Speech, and Commercialisation of Religion bills may have some credibility, there are warning signals surrounding freedom of speech, and the regulation of the ministry. The CRL Commission should not in its attempts to protect minority religions, undermine the majority Christian population. The Church is indebted to FOR SA in its legal battle to protect religious liberty and freedom of conscience in the beloved country.

The simplicity of the Faith

The 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation (31 October 2017), is not only a reminder of Martin Luther’s nailing of his 95 Theses, but also his later “here I stand”, which he unwittingly made for the whole of humanity. His conscience was captive to the Word of God, the Bible. Thereby, the Papacy, with its spiritual Vatican tollgate between mankind and heaven, lost its power by degrees. However, we continue to stand fast today.

The church needs to retain the simplicity that is in Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:3. Through the invitation of a dear Christian brother, in 2015 I attended a Leadership Summit of Willow Creek which is associated with senior Pastor Bill Hybels. Though there were some sincere believers that gave televised talks, I thought I had attended a motivational course, and I felt rather programmed. Its all very clever, somewhat complicated, but little of what the apostle Paul called, “the offence of the Cross” Galatians 5:11.

In an unpublished book, my late principal Rev. Murdo Ross Gordon, likens the Gospel Truth to wells of water. “Even Evangelicals have blocked the wells. They neglect doctrinal preaching, and they have moved to exciting entertainment type of meetings, to attract the crowds”. He advises: “Evangelicals must hold the truth not just in a cold abstract, academic manner but as something warm and moving in their lives”. *Wells in the Desert*.

Jesus calls us to hold fast, saying, “Christian follow Me.”

Written by
Craig Hounsom

“The consideration of being agreed in greater things should extinguish all feuds over lesser ones.” Mathew Henry as quoted by AW Pink.

William Tyndale

A man who denied the world for the sake of God's Word

William Tyndale, the man, was born in England, near the border of Wales, in the 1480's. William Tyndale, the servant of God, was martyred – strangled and burnt at the stake – at Vilvoorde, near Brussels, in 1536. The English-speaking world owes a huge debt of gratitude to him because he played a pivotal role in the translation of a good deal of the Bible. It was largely for this that he was put to death – in addition to his rejection of the false teachings of Roman Catholicism on the priesthood, the pope, and numerous other topics.

Revealed to babes

Tyndale's attitude is well embodied in his response to a Roman Catholic clergyman who asserted to Tyndale that "We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's." Tyndale responded: "I defy the Pope, and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!" Everything that denies or obscures Scripture must go. A churchman reportedly warned Tyndale of the danger of opposing Rome: "Do you not know that the pope is very Antichrist ... But beware what you say; for if you shall be perceived to be of that opinion, it will cost you your life." Thankfully, that did not deter Tyndale!

A sanctified heart and pen

God blessed him and enabled him to translate the New Testament and part of the Old Testament. The work had to be smuggled into England, and the Roman Catholic church burnt it as fast as they could find it. Numerous phrases now common in English such as "my brother's keeper" and "a law unto themselves" can be found in his work. Alas! he was betrayed by a 'friend' and did not finish his work on the Old Testament prior to his arrest and murder. His final words, spoken "at the stake with a fervent zeal, and a loud voice", were reported as: "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes." By God's grace, two years later in 1538, Henry the VIII – no friend of Protestants! – commanded that the Bible in English be placed in all churches to be accessible to the common people. And so the Light of Christ arose in England.

He wrote to John Frith, concerning his translation: "I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would do this day, if all that is in earth, whether it be honour, pleasure, or riches, might be given me."

The Bible a sacred trust

Reader, the Western world was blessed with the Word of God and it made all the difference for nigh on 500 years. But now the West – and much of the professing church in the West – has rejected that Word. The Light that came with that Word will soon depart unless there is repentance. Relish the privilege that you have of God's Word in your tongue, and proclaim Him and live for Him lest he take away the greatest blessing that we have. For those who wish to find out more about William Tyndale, and others who have fought for the faith, see Foxe's Book of Martyrs (freely available online) and *Sketches from Church History* (S.M. Houghton, Banner of Truth).

*Written by
Dr Kenneth Allen*

“....for I knew about the Book,....but I did not know the Book itself”
Dr Henry Frost in “By Faith” by Mrs. Howard Taylor (CIM/OMF)

The Wicked Bible

(Sometimes called “Adulterous” or “Sinner’s Bible”)

In 1623 Robert Barker & Martin Lucas published a Bible in England, since called the “Wicked Bible”, because the little word NOT was omitted in the seventh commandment “Thou shalt NOT commit adultery.

The printers were heavily fined by the High Commission and most of the editions were destroyed (though a few remain today).

The Editor thanks Dick Vogel for his reminder of the “Wicked Bible”.

“John Calvin called the Bible the school of the Holy Spirit”. Prof Pieter Potgieter in “Victory – The Work of the Holy Spirit.”

Trans World Radio (TWR)

*Submitted by
Dr. Ben Booyens*

Why Radio? (Why Media?)

Why, in an age when digital video and audio content is delivered to computers via fiber-optic cable or wireless signals, should radio be seen as a critical tool for presenting the Christian faith? Quite simply, because it has the unique ability to deliver its message efficiently, inexpensively and compellingly to the greatest percentage of the world's people, regardless of their economic status, educational level, or geographic location. As of September 2013, there were 7.115 billion people in the world. In 2025 their number is projected to reach 8 billion, and by 2050, 9.6 billion.

TWR has been called by the Lord to reach the multitudes of today's world through mass media, especially in countries where the proclamation of the Gospel is restricted or forbidden. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes, as if they were sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34). One of the signs that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus himself told John the Baptist's disciples, was the fact that "the Gospel is preached to the poor" (John 11:5).

Radio: overcomes illiteracy

Though it may be an easy fact to forget, UNESCO reports that there are 774 million adults (15 years and older) in the world who still cannot read or write. Radio ministry overcomes literacy limitations and gives all people equal access to the Gospel.

Literacy Data for 2011 — UNESCO Institute for Statistics.

Radio: allows for culture-specific programming

Radio ministry takes cultural nuances and differences into consideration when creating content. For instance, the Islamic world is full of cultural diversity, stretching from Africa to Asia. A Sudanese lives in an entirely different setting from a Syrian or someone in Indonesia. Culture-specific programming allows people to find biblical truth in their heart language and distinctive setting.

Radio: reaches those with limited access to technology

Asked if he believed online/digital initiatives would ultimately replace radio broadcasting, TWR's Chief Information Officer Steve Shantz responded: ... I am mindful of the billions of people who will never read content in a Web browser, send a "tweet", or even read an email. If they are fortunate to own a cellphone, it would most likely not have a data plan for accessing the Internet. This demographic majority will be with us for some time, and the most effective way to reach them is through radio.

Solar-powered radios are of particular importance in broadcasting biblical content, because they are able to work even during frequent electricity shortages in the mountainous or desert regions.

The Future Is Here: Radio, New Media and Mission in the 21st Century by William E. Damick and "Why Radio Ministry Is Vital in the Muslim World" from 30 Days of Prayer for the Muslim World (2013).

The Gateway to the Kingdom

“Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Matthew 5:3

Beware of placing Our Lord as a Teacher first. If Jesus Christ is a Teacher only, then all He can do is to tantalize me by erecting a standard I cannot attain. What is the use of presenting me with an ideal I cannot possibly come near? I am happier without knowing it. What is the good of telling me to be what I never can be – to be pure in heart, to do more than my duty, to be perfectly devoted to God? I must know Jesus Christ as Saviour before His teaching has any meaning for me other than that of an ideal which leads to despair. But when I am born again of the Spirit of God, I know that Jesus Christ did not come to teach only; He came to make me what He teaches I should be. The Redemption means that Jesus Christ can put into any man the disposition that ruled His own life, and all the standards God gives are based on that disposition.

The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount produces despair in the natural man – the very thing Jesus means it to do. As long as we have a self-righteous, conceited notion that we can carry out Our Lord's teaching, God will allow us to go on until we break our ignorance over some obstacle, then we are willing to come to Him as paupers and receive from Him. “Blessed are the paupers in spirit” that is the first principle in the Kingdom of God. The bedrock in Jesus Christ's kingdom is poverty, not possession; not decisions for Jesus Christ, but a sense of absolute futility – I cannot begin to do it. Then Jesus says – Blessed are you. That is the entrance and it does take us a long while to believe we are poor! The knowledge of our own poverty brings us to the moral frontier where Jesus Christ works.

- My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers

Editor's Comment:

‘I feel I shall be buried for a time, hidden away in obscurity; then suddenly I shall flame out, do my work and be gone’. So wrote 22 year old Oswald Chambers as he began his long preparation in a remote Scottish town before being thrust into the world as a preacher. He was partially right; after 15 years of public ministry, Chambers died suddenly at the age of 43.’ Christianity Today

I have been encouraged by this particular daily reading of 21 July taken out of “My Utmost....”, from the Aberdeen Baptist preacher's son who was converted under Charles Spurgeon's preaching. The prince of preachers would have said, “amen”! For a writer more known for his application of the Truth e.g. in his call to “abandon” all, we see its basis in the Gospel included here.

Our copy is signed by “Biddy Chambers (Mrs Oswald) August 20 -1947.

“Satan is sure to lay hold of us in a special manner when there is some great work that we have to do.”

Thomas Boston (Rev)

In the News

DR ISAK BURGER RETIRES

Dr Isak Burger was probably the longest-serving church leader in the country: he was elected president of the AFM/AGS of South Africa in 1988 and stepped down in 2016. The new President is Pastor George Mahlobo, and the Deputy President is Japie La Poorta.

Dr Burger was born on 10 May 1951 in Cape Town, but grew up in Pretoria. He did his theological studies and doctorate at the theological faculty and Seminary of the Dutch Reformed Church at the University of Pretoria (TUKS).

The former AFM/AGS leader is one of the founder-members of Christian Television, and his voice is also regularly heard on radio e.g. Radio Pulpit.. As an author his book “The first Five Minutes after Death,” reached unprecedented circulation figures’.

Dr Burger has been serving on various committees, of which one was that of the World Pentecostal fellowship. He was also co-chair of the host committee of the 20th World Pentecostal Conference held in 2004 in South Africa. In October 2010 he was elected vice-chairperson of the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

He places a high premium on a healthy and a fit body, enjoys the gym as well as his annual hunting and angling trips.

Dr Isak Burger is married to Heletia. They have 3 children and live east of Pretoria.

*Written by
Esme de Bruin Hounsom*

“Prayer and temptation, the Bible and meditation, make a true minister of the Gospel.” Luther quoted by Bishop JC Ryle.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Craig

Thank you for this edition. I was particularly pleased to see your tribute to Chris Molyneux. I knew Chris during the late 60s when I was still at school and when he was organist and choir master at St Peter's in Mowbray. He and his first wife, Jenny, were instrumental in introducing me to my husband, Dave, who sang in the Male Voice Choir.

Dave and I went to see Chris and Norma shortly before he died last year and we were able to share a laugh with him and Norma, before he became too weak.

I was gratified that he was still strong in his faith and ready to meet his Maker.

*Kind Regards
Jill Stevenson*

Dear Mrs Stevenson

Thank you for your warm response to the tribute in Easter Reveille to the excellent late Dr Chris Molyneux. The personal comments bear testimony to Chris' many faceted talents, and the impact he made on other lives. It is a sign of a wise man to place all his gifts at the feet of His Lord and Saviour, Jesus. A brilliant and anointed life with a wide perspective flowed out of that in Chris.

It is a privilege to honour his memory in our publication.

In Jesus
Craig

*Thanks, Craig, please keep these coming!
I celebrated 38 years since leaving SA for Japan with OMF International.
Blessings in Jesus,
Dale*

Dear Dale

It is great to hear from my former fellow student. Your faithful long service in Japan with OMF, if my memory is correct, is a testimony to true grit in the face of trials, and the Lord Jesus' faithfulness.

Hang in there, and keep the flag of our King flying in the land of the rising sun.
Psalm 126:5+6.

In Jesus
Craig

This is therefore a temptation to the mind...., to be dissatisfied with God's methods and to embark on a programme of spectacular wonder – working in order to achieve His ends.” PE Nixon in the New Bible Commentary (IVP) on Matthew 4V5-7.

Book Reviews

IF I HAD TWO LIVES by Dan Vorm

The extraordinary life and faith of Costas Macris

"If I had two lives to live, I would live one life for the people of Indonesia, and the other for the people of Greece."

Costas Macris (1935-2006)

A debtor to the Greeks, (Romans 1:14) – so wrote the apostle Paul to the Romans. Christianity cannot measure the impact of the New Testament, originally given to it in the Hellenistic or common Greek language of our Lord Jesus' days on earth. The Gospel turned the world upside down, and continues today to change lives, thereby bringing glory to God.

Costas and Alky Macris had roots, albeit independently, in the Greek Evangelical churches, somewhat unknown to many outside of Greece. Their paths crossed in a "Divine appointment", and later after both studied separately in North America, ultimately for the mission field, their marriage union would result in a tangible blessing for good in both Western New Guinea, (Papua or Irian Jaya), an island of Indonesia; and thereafter their Greek homeland. The former a chapter of sixteen years with Regions Beyond Missionary Union and Region Wings, Costas' flying dream for logistical air support; and followed in Greece with what was to become Hellenic Ministries.

A feature of this absorbing biography is the simple faith, and high energy of Costas Macris in an unexplored civilization, that became home for him, Alky, and six children. His theological discernment, which saw off the threat of both a ritualistic-based tradition as in Roman Catholicism and the Greek Orthodox churches, and the "social gospel" of modern liberalism, never quenched his flame of love for the wider church.

It was about three or four years ago in Cape Town, that Dr. Nico Bougas introduced me to Johnathan Macris, who has picked up the mantle of his trail blazing father, Costas. They shared their vision for Athens to be a springboard for the surrounding regions to hear of Jesus – a reverse type of Macedonian call, "come over here and help us" (Acts 16:9). As my sister-in-law Bev Livadas is married to Nic who came to SA from Greece, and then to faith in Christ, it touched a chord in my heart. If I had two lives, what would I do with them?

The Editor.

"A truly amazing story of one of God's amazing men." George Verwes of Operation Mobilization(OM).

"Stories of courageous modern-day saints are hard to come by these days, but my friend Costas Macris fits the bill.... Warm and embracing, he saw every encounter as a divine appointment". JONI EARECKSON TADA, International Disability Center.

Book Reviews

CAPTIVE by Diane Wambach

For many years, Diane was a New Age teacher. From her perspective, Christianity was archaic and irrelevant. She was very confident in her beliefs, and enjoyed encouraging others along the same path.

All this despite the fact that she was regularly tormented by a spiritual being. On numerous occasions she sought the help of others whose spiritual paths she respected, including sangomas.

Her life changed completely one day when she opened up to a kindly Christian neighbour who had invited her in for coffee and then prayed a bold prayer. She asked God to release Diane from the grip of Satan. Diane was at first shocked and deeply offended, but miraculously, she soon experienced a clearing of confusion and quickly came to an understanding of the deception of New Age thinking and of its evil origins.

Reading this account of Diane's journey through New Age to the blessed relief of finding the person of Jesus to be the Truth, will leave you in no doubt as to the existence and nature of the spiritual realm. She reveals the (to her) unexpected dark side of a spiritual walk that at first seemed to offer her so much. The tale is harrowing — but to believers in the true message of the bible it should not instil any fear, as we know that greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world — 1 John 4:4.

Rather we can take much from this book in our interaction with those caught up in this web of deceit. Diane's account of her transformational journey is gripping and one that you will not easily put down, once started.

Captive is available from Revival Books at <http://revivalbooks.co.za/index.php/product/captive-by-by-diane-wambach/>

Review by Val Viljoen

“How kindly has God thwarted me in every instance where I sought to
enslave myself! I will learn at least to glory in
disappointments.”

The saintly Robert Murray M'Cheyne.
(Life and Memoirs by Dr Andrew Bonar)

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