



NOVEMBER 2017

Glasgow RPCS Newsletter



Worship Services:

Lord's Day Morning: 11am

Lord's Day Evening: 6pm

Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 7.30pm

Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

RP  **Global Alliance**

The RP Global Alliance website provides a broad range of useful information on the worldwide RP church. You can access it here: <http://rpglobalalliance.org/>

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Minister's Article

Addressing God in Prayer (Part 1 of 2)

In writing this, I am conscious that it is difficult to address issues of practice in prayer without running the risk of giving offence. However, the requirement upon us is to speak the truth in love and, in the prayerful hope that needless offence will neither be given nor taken, I will try to address a matter that vexes a good number of people: How should we address God in prayer? In considering this question, I don't mean to discuss it in its fullest sense by looking in a more general way at our spirit in prayer and the words which we use — which are, of course, of huge importance. Rather, I want to ask a more specific question: Should we use the old English pronouns ('thee', 'thou' and 'thine') when we address God directly?

Although it might be a 'non-issue' for many, it clearly is not for some and it is recent confirmation of this which prompts this article. Within the last few months, I overheard one person say to another that he could not enter into the spirit of any prayer in which God was addressed as 'you'. On another occasion, I was asked — by someone who was clearly puzzled — why I did not use 'thou' when addressing God in prayer. Clearly, then, it is an issue which needs to be addressed — *but I want to stress as strongly as I can that my intention in doing so is to defend those who avoid using the old pronouns rather than attack those who do.*

Leaving aside those who use the old pronouns out of mere habit or custom, those who wish to preserve their use in prayer *as a matter of principle* tend to use three arguments in doing so. The first, and by far the most common, has to do with reverence. The second has to do with accuracy and the third with giving and taking offence. We only have space to consider the first of these this month.

Argument from Reverence

Advocates of old forms of address in prayer believe that the use of a special pronoun, when addressing the Lord directly, preserves and enhances reverence in worship. Now, we should have every sympathy with the desire to preserve and promote reverence in worship — after all, as far as I can discern, irreverence in worship is a very serious and widespread problem in the 21st century church. However, there are very real difficulties with promoting old pronouns as a means to attain to reverence and we will attempt to outline some of them here.

First, if using a special pronoun in addressing God is important in order to secure reverence

in worship, then we would expect such a practice to appear in the prayers recorded in the Bible itself. In other words, we would expect to find worshippers in the Bible addressing God with the use of a special pronoun used only for that purpose — or, at least, with the use of a special pronoun used only when addressing superiors generally.

Notoriously, however, there are no reverential forms of address involving a special pronoun to be found in either the Hebrew of the Old Testament or the Greek of the New Testament. The pronouns used in these biblical languages are the same, irrespective of whether the person addressed is in possession of a divine, angelic or human nature. It is of little use to side-step the significance of this fact by asserting that reverential pronouns were not in use then. Indeed, they were not — but if using a special pronoun for God, or superiors generally, is an issue of such importance, surely God would have arranged providentially for the Hebrew and Greek languages to have had, and to have retained, such a distinction for our teaching and example in the Bible?

After all, it has long been common apologetic practice to highlight the remarkable suitability of the original languages of the Bible to convey the glorious truths of the gospel. However, such a claim to suitability falls to the ground at once if a separate pronoun is really required for addressing superiors and they do not possess one — particularly, when addressing the Almighty. Furthermore, if it is important at all times, *as a point of principle*, to use distinctive pronouns when addressing God, it remains the case that they do not appear in the Bible. Hence, there can be nothing *intrinsically* wrong with using the same pronouns when addressing superiors and inferiors. It's what we find people doing in the Bible.

Second, the advocates of old pronouns need to recognise that the practice of using special pronouns as a means of expressing reverence in worship is a relatively recent one in the English-speaking world. Originally, of course, 'thou' was used for addressing a single individual and 'you' for addressing more than one. It is widely agreed by students of English that the introduction of reverential pronouns came into the English language as a result of the increasing influence of French language, manners and customs following the Norman conquest of 1066. What many people do not know, however, is that it was originally the *plural* form of address which came to express reverence. In other words, a custom developed by which superiors came to be addressed as 'you' while inferiors, or 'commoners', came to be addressed

as 'thou'. Indeed, by the time of the translation of the King James (Authorised) version, the use of 'thou' had more or less fallen out of use because it was liable to be perceived by the person being addressed as an insult (as would still be the case today, for example, if one were to address a superior in the Gaidhlig speaking Scottish Highlands with 'thu' – the Gaidhlig equivalent of 'thou'). Some northern regions of England, which had less people in the middle and upper classes, were an exception in that 'thou' continued to be the ordinary form of address whether addressing superiors or inferiors.

So, although early English had no reverential forms, by the 16th century, 'you' had become the reverential form of address and 'thou' the common form of address!

Interestingly, however, early English translations, influenced by William Tyndale, used 'thou' in addressing all individuals (including God) in spite of the danger of being perceived to be irreverent. Indeed, even when the King James Version was in the progress of translation, the risk lay in using 'thou' in addressing God! Clearly, the introduction of such reverential forms must have posed a problem for the translators of the Bible – yet it needs to be marked carefully, by those who make much of reverential pronouns, that Tyndale and his successors in Bible translation chose accuracy and intelligibility in translation.

Incidentally, it is important to note that the use of 'thou', 'thee' and 'thine' in the King James Version of the Bible has *nothing at all to do with reverence*. In that version, 'thou' and 'you' are simply distinguishing singular and plural – as they always had done. For example, Jesus and Satan address each other in Matthew 4:1-10 using 'thee' and 'thou'. This has nothing to do with mutual reverence between Jesus and Satan – it simply reflects that they were both speaking to only one person at the time.

The kind of problems caused by the introduction and use of reverential forms can be highlighted more effectively by its use in the Gaidhlig language. In Scottish Gaidhlig, the plural form of address, 'sibh', gradually replaced the singular form, 'thu', when addressing superiors – irrespective of whether they were superior by virtue of age or official dignity. As far as I'm aware, this rule is still fairly rigidly observed and I would still not address a religious or civil official (or, indeed, someone significantly older than myself) using 'thu', the singular form of address.

Notoriously, however, the situation is not as straightforward as that: remarkable as it may seem, in the Gaidhlig usage, the only superior that may be addressed with the use of the common singular 'thu' is God himself! To this day, Gaidhlig speakers, including the most ardent defenders of addressing God as 'thou' in English prayer, never use the reverential form

of address when they address God in their own native Gaidhlig language — even though reverential forms of address to superiors are still very much in everyday use. So, in their prayers, when they are addressing God in the Gaidhlig language, they reject a current form of reverential address ('sibh') for the more intimate one ('thu') but, if they are praying in English, they will insist on the use of the old reverential pronoun — traditionally and originally reserved for commoners!

Unsurprisingly, although some advocates of using the old pronouns will often go to any lengths in marshalling arguments in defence of their practice, no defence whatsoever — at least to my knowledge — has been mounted for this glaring contradiction in the practice of Gaidhlig speakers who advocate the use of 'thou' in English prayer.

From the above, it is quite plain that the use of the old pronouns — on grounds of reverence — is a relatively recent tradition. But, in fairness, the question then arises whether or not the tradition is a good one which ought to be maintained?

I would suggest that here are several reasons why it ought to cease to be encouraged.

First, unlike many other traditions which are simply not referred to in scripture, this one seeks to impose a practice which, as we have seen, *runs counter to usage in the Bible*.

Second, to bind someone's conscience to the usage of such pronouns, contrary to biblical practice, in the name of 'reverence', is problematic to say the least.

Third, the imposition of such archaic forms leads to distorted and erroneous views with respect to the nature of true reverence itself. Of course, reverence will always strive to clothe itself in appropriate words and works. In speech, it will adopt words and phrases which are not only accurate but which exalt and honour the Lord and the Bible is full of such examples for our appreciation and imitation. But it is neither necessary nor expedient to use archaic pronouns to achieve this end: they lend no reverence whatsoever to the prayer. Indeed, they can lend an *appearance* of reverence — to those who are already conditioned to think of reverence in such ways — and, in some cases (hopefully few) their presence may sadly indicate an attempted *display* of reverence by the person offering the prayer, revealing a desire to be thought of as reverent or spiritually advanced — but the stark fact is that neither their presence nor absence has any bearing whatsoever on whether or not the prayer is reverent. To think that it does so is to confuse reverence with something else, such as respect for antiquity, nostalgia or some other similar phenomenon.

I say these things through sad personal experience: for a good ten years of my (now thirty-five years) Christian experience, I thought it was right to use these pronouns and, to my shame, I could hardly countenance their neglect by others. To be fair, I believe I had reason: the only prayers I was exposed to which addressed God as 'you' were, frankly, shallow prayers where true and deep spiritual thought was conspicuous only by its absence. These were prayers in which people bent over backwards to show their 'intimacy' (over-familiarity) with God and which often consisted, largely, in endless and repetitive thanksgiving. To my mind, then, there was a close and obvious connection between shallow irreverence in prayer and the neglect of the old pronouns — and, again, perhaps there often was such a connection: some of these people, eager to 'modernise' prayer and to make it 'easier', less 'stuffy' and 'formal', were very quick to reject the archaisms. So, for me, it was an open and shut case: old pronouns and reverence went hand-in-hand. That lasted until I went to Canada in 1993 and discovered older men praying with wisdom, discernment, spiritual experience and reverence — without archaic pronouns. Suddenly, it became apparent that reverence and archaic pronouns were not connected in the way in which I had thought after all.

Fourth, when reverential forms began to be used in the English language, they were consistently used to express reverence *wherever it was due*. They were never used in addressing God alone. For this reason, all those who believe in reverential forms should apply them consistently when addressing all superiors including, parents, elders, ministers and civil magistrates. To begin to insist on applying a pronoun to God alone is hard to defend from the label of 'will-worship', a practice which Paul so strongly rebukes in his letter to the Colossians: that is, the practice of devising forms of worship *which we think* will be more acceptable to God but which God has not required us to use. It is dangerous ground indeed.

All this should be enough to demonstrate that there is no need to use the old English pronouns in order to be reverent in prayer.

The second and third arguments have to do with *accuracy* and *giving and taking offence* — we'll look at these, God willing, next month.

Rev. Kenneth Stewart

Spotlight On...

Youth Fellowship



On a biweekly basis — after the Lord's Day evening service — our young people, from S5 upwards, meet for fellowship in one of their homes or at the manse.

These youth fellowships are informal gatherings with a simple format. Over some tea, coffee and food, we discuss the points brought before us in the preaching of the Word that Lord's day. Our minister has been preaching on the book of Daniel recently, and it has been a blessing to discuss the great example Daniel and his three friends set in responding to the pressure of King Nebuchadnezzar. They were young men in a foreign land — seeking to impose its own culture upon their minds and suppress God's truth — yet they stood firm. Christians face similar pressures in our own land today, which can be accentuated in the contexts of school, university or the early years of working life. We hope and pray that, by the Spirit's help, the preaching of the Word and fellowship over it will be better equipping our young people to deal with these challenges.

We should all be thankful that God has not left us to ourselves, despite our sin. By His grace, we can boldly approach the throne of grace in prayer and have communion with Him. Furthermore, He has also granted us brothers and sisters in Christ to help us on the narrow path which leads to life. When David was in the forest in the Wilderness of Ziph, knowing that 'Saul had come out to seek his life', Jonathan went to him and 'strengthened his hand in God' (1 Samuel 23:15-16). If we are strengthened in our faith — in our own personal relationship with God — we will correspondingly be a means of strengthening to those around us. We pray this to be so, not just regarding our youth fellowship, but more generally, the fellowship of God's people as a whole. Pray that we, like Jonathan and David, would 'walk in the Light as He is in the light' and so 'have fellowship with one another' (1 John 1:7).

Insight into...

Dugald Buchanan's 'Spiritual Songs'

By Donalda Macleod

Dugald Buchanan was a Gaelic poet, born in Perthshire in 1716. He is known to have been a teacher and a catechist in the district of Kinloch Rannoch and often taught the people from the Word of God.

There was a particular need for spiritual teaching at that time, as the country was rather unsettled after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745.



Kinloch Rannoch. The monument is inscribed: 'In memory of Dugald Buchanan, the Rannoch schoolmaster, evangelist and sacred poet.'

Buchanan was also involved in the preparation of the 1st edition of the New Testament in Scottish Gaelic.

For a number of years, he kept a diary in which he recorded his private thoughts and spiritual experiences. The songs, published in Gaelic in 1766, are not short compositions — the longest one, entitled *The Day of Judgement*, contains 127 verses.

I have personally profited from reading these spiritual songs in Gaelic (a deeply expressive language) over the years. Some time ago, I was delighted to discover an English translation which enables more people to appreciate the truths which impressed the mind of this Christian man.

Below are a few excerpts which may whet someone's appetite to read more — either in English or Gaelic!

THE GREATNESS OF GOD

Oh what is God or what His name?
 Even angels do not know aright.
 He dwells in light of dazzling flame
 Beyond the reach of thought or sight.

It's from Himself his being flows;
 His attributes are infinite;
 His uncreated powers repose
 Upon His self-sustaining might.

He ne'er was young, nor shall be old;
 His life through all the ages runs; His
 changeless years can ne'er be told;
 Or measured out, by changing suns.

A PRAYER

But Oh! Wilt Thou Thyself abase
 To hear an earthly worm like me
 Beneath Thy footstool, who can see
 But dim reflections of Thy Face?

Thanks to the God of grace, who gave
 A Saviour such as this to me;
 My ransom in His death I see,
 The price he paid my soul to save.

THE DAY OF JUDGEMENT

Lord elevate my earthly thought
 And loose my tongue, that all abroad
 I may declare, as mortal ought,
 The greatness of the Day of God.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

The sufferings of my Saviour
 I celebrate, and sing
 Of the birth and meek behaviour
 And dying of the King.

Oh, wonder most inscrutable
 That human tongue can name—
 The Eternal and Immutable
 A suckling child became!

THE SKULL

As I sat by the side
 Of a grave, I espied
 A ghastly grey skull on the ground;
 I mournfully scanned its form in my hand
 And sighed as I turned it round.

Thy face shows not now
 Whose cranium wert thou,
 If monarch or noble rich
 Alexander the Great is in the same state
 As his poor slave that died in a ditch.

But when Christ shall appear
 To his faithful ones here,
 To gather them up to the skies,
 They shall hasten to meet
 The approach of His feet
 As swift as a strong eagle flies.

RP Global

Read about the recent organisation of a Reformed Presbyterian church in India (sources: www.anugraharpc.org; RP Global Alliance, www.rpglobalalliance.org)



Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Fellowship was recently set up in Bangalore, India. 'Anugraha' is the Sanskrit word for 'grace' and a fitting name for the church — with its focus on being 'a community of grace in Bangalore, eager to share the message of grace — the gospel.'

Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan currently serves as the interim-pastor of Anugraha Reformed Presbyterian Church. In 2002, Venkatesh came to saving faith in Jesus Christ through a student ministry at his college. Sensing God's call to pastoral ministry, he pursued his M.Div at Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA. In 2016, he completed his studies and was ordained as a minister of the gospel. Venkatesh is married to Sarmishta, who is currently pursuing certification with the Association of Certified Biblical Counselors. Pastor Gopalakrishnan is supported by three elders in a temporary governing body.

At the start of October, the church welcomed its first group of members as they took their membership vows. Pray that the Lord will enable His people to grow in grace as they seek to sow the seed of the gospel in that corner of His vineyard — may all the honour, glory and praise be to Him alone.



Reformation

There has been much reflection within reformed circles in recent days on the pivotal figures and landmark events of the Reformation — namely Martin Luther's posting of the 95 Theses 500 years ago. This article asks a pressing question: 'Would We Actually Want Reformation Today?'

(source: Reformation Scotland, www.reformationScotland.org)

The Word of God is the only rule for reformation. Yet what do we mean by that? Anthony Burgess (1600-1663) explains how the Word of God has a supreme role in the work of reformation. Burgess lived during a time of reformation and was a member of the Westminster Assembly. He ministered in Sutton Coldfield and wrote many valuable books. Sadly, these have been comparatively neglected. The following is an updated extract from one of his sermons preached before Parliament. He shows that reformation is difficult perhaps even discouraging work but it is also an absolute priority that God blesses.

1. The Standard of Reformation

Reformation in Doctrine

A sound faith is the soul of religion; it's like the sun in the sky or like the eye in the body. Wrong believing and wrong living go together. Hymenaeus and Philetus made shipwreck of both their faith and of a good conscience (1 Timothy 2:17). We cannot build any confession of faith without quarrying the materials from this mountain. Error and heresy have no enemy like Scripture. We may be as orthodox as possible in our doctrine but if we do not believe these things because of Scripture, it's a merely man-made faith. A merely human faith is based on education and human tradition and comes far short of divine faith.

Reformation in Worship and Church Discipline

An orthodox Church without good discipline and pure worship is like a field of corn without hedges. What a beautiful Church we would have, if the commands of Scripture were respected. Everything done in worship without God's Word is doing we "know not what" (John 4:22). The basis on which we allow one aspect of worship which is merely from our own will will be the same grounds for more. In Church discipline and order, a profane man should be as rare in the Church as a blazing star (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5:11).

Reformation in Christian Living

We are warned by the Scriptures as to our outward life (Psalm 19:11). The Scriptures are the

antidote against sin. A young man may cleanse his ways by them (Psalm 119:9). Many do not consider this use of Scripture, they dare not have any other doctrine than Scripture teaches, yet they dare to live another life. In the same way that you believe as it is written you must live, fear and joy as it is written.

Reformation in our Heart and Conscience

Scripture differs from all other rules and laws. They only bind us outwardly but the Scriptures reach to the heart and conscience; “the law is spiritual” (Romans 7:14). The law can even doth convict even a self-admiring Pharisee. When this sunlight shines, it uncovers all the hidden thoughts of the heart all those moths, that otherwise would not be seen.

It is a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12). Human eloquence does not terrify the conscience, but the Word of God does. It makes the heart cry out, “I am overcome, overcome”. It’s true that God makes use of human eloquence, but all must be subordinate to the Word. As God is the Father of spirits, so the Word is a word of spirits. Although the whole world may threaten, the heart bears itself up if the Word comforts; if it threatens, the heart is discouraged.

The Benefit of Honouring Scripture

The rule of Scripture is opposed by tradition and the reasoning and opinions of men. Most often it is opposed by appeal to majority opinion. Many never consider what the Scriptures direct but believe, worship and live as most others do. God has explicitly forbidden us to “follow a multitude to do evil” (Exodus 23:2).

If we honour Scripture as supreme we will be:

- (a) secure and steadfast in our way; (b) holy and spiritual in our life; (c) at peace (Galatians 6:16); (d) derided as strict; (e) thought strange; and (f) hated.

In order to benefit from Scripture in this way, we need to:

- (a) be in it frequently; (b) pray for spiritual understanding; (c) be humble and meek in submitting to it; (d) love God’s truth.

2. Things that Hinder Reformation

Complacency

There is complacency in thinking that there is no need for reformation. This was the case with the Laodiceans; they thought they were full and rich (Revelation 3:18). Many Churches would have been more pure and reformed if they had not thought themselves reformed enough. It

may be so with individuals as Paul says, I had not known sin, had not the Law said, thou shalt not lust. A Church may say, I had not known this to be an abuse, this to be error, had not the Scripture manifested it.

Pragmatism

This makes men vary their views and conscience according to changing considerations. What is good theology for them today is error tomorrow; today's reformation is to them tomorrow's disorder.

Sinful Moderation

How hard it is not to accept a lame and half Reformation? People think we must pass over many things and proceed gently. The rigour of God's Word is an altogether different thing to this. There is a lawful moderation but this is different from sinful moderation.

The Love of Earthly Things

In Haggai 1:2-10 we find that the people's concern to build their own houses made them neglect building the temple of God. In order to satisfy their covetousness, the Pharisees interpreted Scripture in a false way. If people would rather lose their God than their wealth or part with their religion than their riches; how can they promote God's cause or make way for Christ's coming? When men can delight more in the glory of their own houses than in the spiritual beauty of ordinances or have more joy in their hearts by increased wine and oil than in God and His ways – it is no wonder so few make way for Christ. Gregory Nazianzen thanked God he had anything to lose for Christ's sake.

Sinful Desires

People are greatly troubled if they cannot indulge themselves so much in their lusts and their sins. But you should take comfort that Christ endured the contradiction of sinners.

General Opposition

There may be only a few for reformation against many great and learned who oppose it. Luther confessed this was no small trial to him, "are you the only wise person, are all others in error?" But if this had been regarded, then the prophets, Christ, Luther, Calvin, would never have begun any reformation, because the world was against them. Reformations have always been judged impossible things. Luther was told "go and pray in your cell, you are not likely to do anything by commotion". The people rage and take counsel together that Christ may not be exalted on His throne (Psalm 2:1). But this will not excuse us, it is better to endure the rage of people than the anger of God. Better to have the world's frown than God's.

Apparent Novelty

Truth is before error; it is only sin that makes truth new. It shows how much we have apostatised that Christ's ways are considered new. This is now how it was from the beginning. Novelty lies in error and superstition, Sabbath-breaking, neglecting godliness.

Apparent Division

Divisions may seem to arise by it and errors multiply at such times. Many complain about various sects that have arisen but they never blamed those that caused them. This has always been the slander levelled at reformation: so many men, so many gospels. Luther was often told by opponents not to divide the seamless robe of Christ. Do not blame reformation for this (it is the only thing that can remove these things) blame those who caused the divisions.

Outward Trouble and Commotion

This often accompanies reformation. Christ foretold fire and a sword, father against son and son against father. This would happen wherever His pure and powerful preaching was established. He is not the cause of this but rather men's stubborn and rebellious hearts. It is not the doctor or medicine that cause the pain the sick man feels, but rather the disease that has been in him for so long.

Ingratitude

People often do not esteem or prize those whom God sends to deliver them. They were unthankful to Moses and Aaron. This unthankfulness is a gross sin but it ought not to be any discouragement for those who are employed for the public good. Luther tells us how great a trial this was to him. "When I see this (ingratitude) I am sometimes broken with impatience, and seriously resolve unless this doctrine had been already dispersed, I would rather have done anything than declared it to this unthankful world; but these are the thoughts of the flesh".

3. Reasons to Continue in Reformation

But there are many urgent reasons why reformers should go on.

God Punishes Neglect

Because God has punished severely the neglect of any order that He has given to His Church. They may have done much, yet if they have not done completely, he has been angry. This is why you read so often concerning the kings "Nevertheless the high places were not taken away". The judgment on Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire; the breach made on Uzzah should warn reformers against indulging breaking the least of God's commands. Do not think

that you are free to decide how much or how little is to be done for God, you are accountable to God for jots and tittles.

God Hates False Worship

There is nothing more odious to Him than corruption in His Church. What detestable names Scripture gives to idols! Jesus says in John 4 that the Father seeks those that worship Him in spirit and truth. This shows how precious and delightful to God those are that worship Him in his own way. Our Saviour tells the Pharisees that that, which was highly esteemed amongst them as great piety and devotion, was an abomination before God. Let us not do any abominable things!

It is the only way of blessing

It is only in doing the will of the Lord that we are sure of blessing. Blessing came when Jehoshaphat set up those that taught the good knowledge of God. It is true that we may be in the wilderness for a long time and God may permit enemies to prevail because of the sins of His own people. We are always to remember the end of the Lord, observe the ends of all reformation, and you will find them to be peace. It is not the godliness of a godly man that causes many of his sorrows but because he does not have enough godliness. It is not reformation that creates unhappiness in a Church or State, but because we are not reformed enough, we are not willing for this to happen.

God will reform His Church by other means if we do not promote it. It is the greatest honour that God ever put on you. In these matters of God do not consult with flesh and blood. Remember that He is engaged for His truth more than you; you have your lives and wealth to lose, but God has His honour and truth to lose, which is worth more than the whole world.

How will you ever answer God at the Day of Judgement if He puts an opportunity into your hands and you have not made best use of it? Take your example from David in Psalm 132 when he had vowed to bring the ark back into a suitable place. "Remember David and all his troubles" (literally "in his whole affliction" in all his trouble, fear and concern when God smote Uzzah, and so hindered him in his intended reformation). He would not sleep or eat (hyperbole for the unrelenting efforts he would take for settling the ark).

Conclusion

Reformation is required in our own day, it is an act not just an event. But it is by no means an easy work. There are many challenges but for the glory of God, our own good and the good of the Church we must not only want to see it happen but engage actively in it in our own day.

In the News...

'Campaigners slam Scottish Govt U-Turn on smacking ban'

— The Christian Institute

(source: <http://www.christian.org.uk/news/campaigners-slam-scottish-govt-u-turn-smacking-ban/>)

Campaigners have slammed the Scottish Government for backing a ban on smacking as they revealed a new opinion poll which shows three quarters of parents oppose the move.

Be Reasonable Scotland has demanded a new consultation on the issue as the previous exercise was carried out during the summer when families were on holiday.

The Scottish Government staged a dramatic U-turn on its previous position and confirmed plans to “ensure” the smacking ban proposal in a Members’ Bill sponsored by Green MSP John Finnie becomes law.

Opposition to ban

Be Reasonable Scotland, backed by The Christian Institute and The Family Education Trust, has published polling that shows a smacking ban is not supported by parents or the wider public.

The ComRes poll of more than 1,000 Scottish adults also found that three in four of those questioned thought the ban would not help protect vulnerable children.

When asked to consider the statement, ‘A ban on smacking would likely criminalise reasonable parents while doing little to stop bad parents from abusing children’, 75 per cent agreed, with just one in eight, (13 per cent) disagreeing.

'Manipulative language'

The campaign group heavily criticised the Scottish Government for ditching previous promises not to drop the defence of reasonable chastisement.

It warns that the proposal risks painting thousands of ordinary parents as no better than violent thugs and child abusers, merely for disciplining their children, and leaving them facing fines or jail.

Lowri Turner, a spokesmum for the Be Reasonable campaign, says: "The people calling for this change are using hysterical and manipulative language. They're trying to make out that a gentle smack from a loving mum is the same as beating up your kids. If the Government can't tell the difference then they shouldn't be passing laws about it."

Contact MSPs

In a further statement, Be Reasonable Scotland said: "Criminalising parents for smacking their own children is a gross intrusion on family life by politicians who are totally out of touch with real people. If the Government really want to own this wildly unpopular plan, then the first thing they need to do is hold a proper consultation. Finnie's private member's consultation was ignored by the public because the Government had said it wouldn't bring forward legislation for a ban. They can't be allowed to bring this in by stealth. Now they've U-turned, they need to give the public a chance to say what they think. We urge people to contact their MSPs and tell them not to support Finnie's Bill."

For more information, visit *Be Reasonable Scotland's* website:

<https://www.bereasonablescotland.org/>

Pray that the Lord would protect the family unit from the intrusive attempts of the state — seeking to dictate how parents should be caring for and disciplining their children. Pray that our leaders would come to see the great need of bringing our children up "in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Kids' Challenge

In John's Gospel, Jesus spoke seven 'I am' sayings to describe Himself.

Look up the scripture verses below to find each saying, then match them with the explanation that follows. The first one is completed for you.

Have a think about why Jesus said these things, and what they mean for us.

I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE (6:35)

I AM THE _____ OF THE
_____ (8:12)

I AM THE _____ (10:9)

I AM THE GOOD _____ (10:11)

I AM THE _____
AND THE _____ (11:25)

I AM THE _____, THE _____
AND THE _____ (14:6)

'If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.'

'No one comes to the Father except through Me.'

'He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live'

'and my Father is the vinedresser'

'He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness'

'The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep'

'He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst'

MEMORY VERSE

"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

John 6:35

Visit the links below for further information on:



Our church: www.glasgowrpcs.org



The Scottish RP church: <http://www.rpcscotland.org/>



The global RP church: <http://rpglobalalliance.org/>



Other sources used: www.anugraharpc.org
www.reformationscotland.org
www.christian.org.uk
www.bereasonablescotland.org

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“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:6-7