



NEWSLINE

March 2003

The Tide has Turned

At the recent AAACF Conference members heard an important message from our main speaker, Dr. Clifford Hill. For many years Clifford has been warning of the dangers of ungodly legislation being passed in increasing measure through parliament, and the effect this has been having on society and the church. He has not endeared himself to many people, including some Christians. In the past 18 months he and others have recognised that the dangers he had been warning about were coming to pass and that we were seeing the beginning of judgement in the nation.

Jeremiah in the Old Testament was pilloried by the secular and religious establishment of his day for the message he brought concerning the Godlessness of Israel, yet in the end he was not only proved right but also shared in the disaster and exile that befell the nation. From this backdrop of decline Jeremiah brought the message of hope of the new covenant that is fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Jer.31v.31-34). It was then that God told him to go and stake his claim in enemy held territory by buying a field (Jer. Ch.32). Having completed his purchase Jeremiah uttered these words.

"Ah Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. You show love to thousands but bring the punishment of the fathers' sins into the laps of the children after them". Jeremiah recognised that sovereign acts of God, perhaps contrary to many Christian, and indeed non-Christian expectations, come as a combination of blessing and judgement.

In the west we have witnessed years of increasing permissiveness and political correctness and are now reaping the judgement that comes without favour. We all live in a world of increasing instability, of war, terrorism, family breakdown, financial difficulty and natural disasters. There comes a point when people are so fed up with bad news and fail to make headway with any of their cherished ideals that they begin to yearn for good news. That is the turning of the tide that Clifford and others have seen.

Those who are familiar with many stretches of the coastline around Britain will know that when the tide is out there appears a vista of endless mud

out to a distant sea. When the tide turns nothing much changes, one has to wait until almost imperceptibly little swirls of water begin creeping up to the high water mark. However if we wait until we see those swirling rivulets it may be too late, the tide comes in like a flood and swamps everything.

It is easy to hear a message such as we heard at the conference and latch on with excitement to its catch phrase 'The Tide has Turned'. Yes, it's exciting when we sense that God is on the move, but to take advantage of the tide we have to be prepared, and the question I have been asking myself is 'how prepared is the AAACF and if we are not, what needs to be done?', because without preparation we will be quickly inundated with woes and sink without trace.

The lifeblood, if I can put it like that, of any Christian organisation is not the cosiness of our fellowship or the exuberance of our worship but the flow of new converts. Without people being born again and coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ, churches and fellowships eventually fade away. I have deliberately used the phrase 'born again' because those are Jesus' words which he uttered in the imperative (John 3v.7). Relationship, also, is essential because Jesus tells us that the Father seeks those who worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4v.23). Jesus is the way, the truth and the life and nobody comes to the Father but by Him.

There is no doubt that since 1945 the church in the west has been in decline; Europe is now said to be the least evangelised of all the continents. Out of this general decline there have, of course, been pockets of hope, but generally since the mid 80's there seems to have been an increasing spiritual hardness as the flow of new Christians has dried to a trickle. As a result it may be that the charismatic churches have sought signs and wonders while neglecting some fundamental truths and reformed churches have dug ever deeper into the Word whilst neglecting the Spirit. The AAACF has, I believe, taken the middle road, after all our membership is drawn from all persuasions. It's a difficult path to tread if we are not to lapse into compromise, therefore the Bible and all that it contains remains our benchmark as held in the first article of the AAACF Statement of

Belief . Nevertheless since the 80's we, too, have seen very little growth, and today our numbers are actually declining as long established members retire, leave the industry or die. That may seem brutally frank, but it is true. To continue being frank I also think there has been a tendency to seek out Christians in the workplace and persuade them to join us rather than looking to preach the gospel and make disciples.

This may seem an overly gloomy assessment and to put it in perspective there have been, as one remarked at our annual day of prayer last year, new green shoots springing from a dry and burnt land, and the message of the Conference was about the turning of the tide. So what evidence is there of this?

Recently I have been surprised to receive enquiries about the AAACF seemingly right out of the blue. The outreach last year at Fairford far exceeded my expectations and we plan to be there again this year. One of the main fellowships at London Heathrow holds a well-attended weekly early morning prayer meeting and is becoming increasingly active in staging events to appeal to airline managers and office staff. The chaplaincy at Heathrow is providing valuable support and has arranged work-place related seminars in conjunction with the airline fellowship and with the support of an airline Board Member. There are plans to reach out into the combined operations and crew centre of British Airways with some flying-related 'good news'.

None of this happens without vision and dedication, but it does not need an army of people to get it off the ground. The inspiration of one lady

saw a new fellowship being formed at Gatwick, whilst at Stansted an active fellowship has grown up in the last two to three years as the result of the initial work of two men. We have a natural tendency to think in big numbers and equate that with success. In God's economy the reverse is true, which is why Gideon was left with just 300 to fight the Midianite and Amalekite hordes, and the young David slew the giant who was champion at defying the army of the living God, yet later he was reprimanded for counting his fighting men as a show of human strength. As the apostle Paul says 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'

With the tide on the turn we need to ensure we are prepared. A previous conference speaker of ours, David Pawson, in a recently recorded series of talks on the stark future that may face this country under the increasing influence of Islam, used three words as a spur to Christians: reality, relationship and righteousness. We need to grasp the reality and truth of the whole Bible, understand the relationship we can have with Jesus through the Holy Spirit whom He has left as a deposit, and practise righteousness so that our relationship be not marred. Thus prepared we can be confident to do the work needed to secure a place ready to receive the tide of God as it sweeps through the nations.

Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment and the worm shall eat them like wool; but my righteousness shall be forever, and my salvation from generation to generation. (Isaiah 51v 7-8)

Message from Columbia

As we remember in prayer the grieving families of the seven crew members of Space Shuttle Columbia, ages 41 to 48. it is a reminder, once again, that life is brief, and about what matters most. Astronauts **Rick Husband** and **Michael Anderson** made sure this message would not be lost ...

Rick and Michael attended the same church in Houston. Rick was active in the men's ministry and led a "Dads in the Gap" small group. A video he recorded before his flight was played at Grace Community Church during the February 2nd service : "If I ended up at the end of my life having been an astronaut, but having sacrificed my family along the way or living my life in a way that didn't glorify God, then I would look back on it with great regret ... What really meant the most to me was to try and live my life the way God wanted me to, and to try and be a good husband to Evelyn and a good father to my children."

In Anderson's pre-flight video tape he said, "Rick and I both feel we were put on this mission for a reason and we have tried to meet all those challenges with prayer." At the bottom of his 'in case of tragedy' documents Rick wrote a note to his pastor: "**Tell them about Jesus. He means everything to me.**"

Let us not fail to seize this reminder that life is brief and, like Rick and Michael, make sure we are focused on what matters most: Jesus. Glorifying God. Husband. Father. Prayer. Mission.

TBA Quiet Room

For many years British Airways kindly made available one of the offices in the Engineering Base at Heathrow for use by the British Airways Christian Fellowship. With the rationalisation of office and hangar space, the building in which this room is located is no longer in use to any great extent and members of the fellowship now work at different locations around the airport. Many felt it right to formally 'decommission' the room and give thanks to God for His blessings. So it was on 28th November 2002 over 20 squeezed into the room for refreshments and to give praise and thanks to the Lord and to pray for the continued increase of the Kingdom within the airline and at Heathrow. Ron Balcombe looks back at some memories of what God has done.

After completing a 5-year apprenticeship followed by National Service, I rejoined BOAC in 1962. One of the first Christians I met was Reg Lewis who introduced me to the BOAC Christian Fellowship in the headquarters building; subsequently known as Technical Block A or TBA for short. I believe that Maurice(Bill) Payne was one of the early leaders along with Bill Mason, Len Dean and Gus Jones. The room we used for our meetings was quite small so we were not too worried when due to expansion of the adjacent office we were asked to move. We were offered a number of alternative rooms, but settled on room G317, then in need of refurbishment and decoration. The furniture came from various sources and included some dark blue benches from the old BOAC building on the Great West Road. Shortly afterwards Gus Jones, who had been instrumental in procuring the room, went to be with the Lord. His photograph hung on the wall for a number of years.

Many will remember the occasion when there was a great visitation of the Holy Spirit, most who were there stayed longer than the usual lunch break returning to their desks at 3pm, only to receive puzzled looks from their colleagues. On another occasion Selwyn Hughes, best known for his monthly Bible notes Every Day with Jesus, visited as a result of Bill Payne's contact with CWR.

Special meetings were held at Christmas and Easter and often these were used to reach out to colleagues with carol services in the TBA canteen, when Christians from other fellowships joined us, including those who had retired like Bill and Peggy Adams. Maurice Davies, who had invented and made what he called 'Bell Plates' (a modern and much cheaper form of traditional hand bells), patiently instructed us in their use so that we could give a performance; this always seemed to be well received. Gordon Evans and Andy Kennedy gave valuable service on keyboard and guitar. Keith Hammerton came regularly to our meetings from his parish in Harmondsworth and helped man the Christian bookstall in the canteen on Mondays until Fred Bain took over.

A few years ago the Gideons promised the airline a large stock of Bibles intending them to be placed on board each aircraft. Unfortunately this was never done but subsequently every Cabin Crew member was given a pocket edition of the New Testament and Psalms.

John Knight was a faithful leader for many years with Brenda Richardson as secretary, who continued in that role when I became leader until my retirement. I have fond memories of Brenda's well-researched Bible studies revealing her deep love for the Lord Jesus. Doug Foley was a changed man after his conversion and used every opportunity to tell others about his new faith.

A number of us attended St. Peter's Church in Farnborough and the Rector's wife Mary Boddington kindly crafted a pottery chalice and plate for our communion services. The breaking of bread at lunchtime helped strengthen the bond of unity we had for one another. Howard Cole now holds this pottery set for use at Waterside.

The most used item in room G317 was not any of the books in the small library or even the Bible but a simple kettle for the thousands of cups of tea and coffee made for visitors and guests who were welcomed into this little oasis of peace.

I often used to pop into the room first thing in the morning for a time of prayer and Bible reading. On one occasion I found another person already there ahead of me. A devout Muslim had spread his prayer mat in the centre of the room and was in the middle of his morning devotions! For a time both Christians and Muslims vied to use the room but eventually after much prayer and negotiation another room was found for the Muslim community.

When Viscount House closed Andy Moore brought his fellowship over to TBA and the room was then in use almost daily. Since then with the concentration of head office at Waterside and rationalisation of the engineering departments, TBA is now practically empty of any staff and G317 has been decommissioned, but all current members still serve the Lord in pastures new including Martin Taylor as treasurer and co-leader at Waterside, Andy Kennedy at Amadeus and Paul Marriot, recently returned from a sabbatical. I valued the commitment of many long serving members such as Olive Bray, Gladys Edmunds, Keith Armstrong, Barbara d'Orfe, George West and Ron Williams to name but a few and much enjoyed their fellowship over the years.

Room G317 may now be closed to the Lord's use, but He is opening up other doors and venues as part of His continuing purposes.

Thank you Lord for all your blessings past and present, we pray for your blessings to come.

How do you pray the 'Lord's Prayer'?

Brenda Richardson led a meditation on the Lord's Prayer at the 2002 Conference. She began by reading the following prayer spoken at the opening of the Kansas State Senate in the USA. That which is true for Kansas is also true for the whole of the USA, the UK and for many nations around the world.

'Father, your Word says 'woe to those who call evil good' but that is what we have done, we've lost our equilibrium and reversed our values. We've ridiculed the absolute truth of your Word and called it pluralism; exploited the poor and called it lottery; rewarded laziness and called it welfare; killed our unborn and called it choice; neglected to discipline our children and called it self-esteem. We have abused power and called it politics; coveted our neighbours possessions and called it ambition; polluted the air with pornography and profanity and called it freedom of expression; ridiculed the time honoured values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment. Search us, oh God, and know our hearts. Cleanse us and set us free. We pray this on behalf of our nation as well as for ourselves, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Our Father who art in heaven:-

How we thank you, Lord, for the privilege of calling you FATHER; help us always to remember that you are our Father and Friend but that you are not "our mate".

Hallowed be your Name:-

There are times Father when we forget that we are in the presence of a Holy God. Please help us to remember where we are, and to teach our children why you are worthy of our obedience, love and awe; that your Holy Name be hallowed.

Thy kingdom come:-

Thank you Father for the wonderful times when we feel your touch; for the opportunities to come together, as at this Conference, to pray and worship, to learn and minister: for outreach opportunities such as at Fairford and Weston, the singing of carols in airport terminals and where fellowships offer themselves as channels for your Holy Spirit bringing others into your Kingdom. Please encourage and enable each one of us. We pray for the leaders of the fellowships within the AAACF and the wider Christian Church in the nations we represent, that you will keep them in the centre of your will and that they will keep you in the centre of their lives.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven:-

Father is this where we fail you, through disobedience? Successive governments have

overtaken your laws; replacing them with those that satisfy our sinful desires, yet how often do we remember to pray for them. We ask you now, dear Lord, to raise up Christians in parliament and make Your voice heard. Restore us Lord, we pray. Thank you for our Queen, uphold her in faith and in wisdom. Forgive us for neglecting to pray for her and her family, of whom many have grieved her heart and yours.

The practise of sorcery and divination is expressly forbidden in your Word and yet the most popular children's books at this time encourage this as does so much on TV and on film where your Name is taken in vain and profanities uttered without restraint. Is this really what we want for our children? Yet as Christians so often we allow and even encourage such indulgence. Have mercy on us Lord, in Jesus' Name.

Give us this day our daily bread:-

Thank you dear Father, that so few starve here in the UK, yet there remain many trapped in poverty whilst the rich get richer and materialism abounds. We think of the millions around the world who do starve, particularly in Africa; Father, we know that as individuals there is little we can do to restore righteousness and justice to this world, but please help us to do what we can. Above all help us to pray and to seek after you, our creator God, for whom all things are possible.

Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us:-

Father, how often do we nurse our hurts and grievances caused by others, often those within our own families? Search our hearts dear Lord, and if any harbour bitterness towards anyone help us to bring it to you for healing and to forgive in love those who have hurt us whether dead or alive, for we have been wonderfully forgiven in Jesus' peerless name and in whose blood the price has been paid.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:-

Father we fear to be put to the test, but when we are, grant us the wisdom, discernment and strength to fight against evil and to honour that which is good whatever the cost.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lighthouse

Matthew Ch.4 v.16

We lived along the East Coast for many years and had the opportunity to see many of America's old lighthouses. I love them. Not long ago we came up over the top of a hill on an interstate and I saw what I certainly never expected to see hundreds of miles from any ocean. It was a lighthouse with a bright, functioning light on top. Obviously, it wasn't there to point any ships in the right direction. Actually, it was part of a church that stands right near the highway. See, this lighthouse is for people!

It seems to me that Jesus intended for every church to be a lighthouse, whether or not they have a lighted tower as part of their building. And He intended for every Christian to be a lighthouse, every ministry.

Tragically, with so many lives around us headed for disaster, there is a terrible lighthouse shortage.

We know that Jesus said that those who belong to Him are "the light of the world." (Matthew 5:16) And Matthew 4:16, our text for today from the Word of God, tells us which direction our light should be pointing. ***"The people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned."*** See, it's the people in spiritual darkness, the people who are spiritually dying who should be the focus of all this light God has given us.

The problem is that often we are content to have all the lights inside the church, shining on those who are already headed for heaven. Meanwhile, we let countless lost people just get another day closer to hell. We do what's easy - we just work with the sheep who are already in - when Jesus said He would leave ninety-nine of those just to go out and find one lost one. But notice - you

have to go out to find them. You can't just stay in the Christian cocoon waiting for someone to stick their head in the door and say, "Excuse me, but is there any light in here?" The lighthouse needs to be out where they are!

We can go to all our Christian meetings, fellowship with all our Christian friends, enjoy all our Christian books and programmes, and we feel like we must be winning. Not when two-thirds of Americans can't tell you half of the Ten Commandments or who did the Sermon on the Mount! Not when the number of people who say they believe in nothing has doubled in the last ten years - and the number of those who are self-declared witches has grown over 1,500% in the past decade. Even in one Bible Belt state, the statistics just came in - two-thirds of the people even there are essentially unchurched!

You have working near you, living near you, going to school with you people who have no idea that what Jesus did on the cross was for them and that He's their only hope! If our Christian subculture makes us feel like we're winning, it's the illusion of winning.

How can we be content to spend all our time with the already-rescued when we are living surrounded by a sea of dying people? How can we say that we are following the One who came, as He said, to "seek and save what was lost" - and not be doing that with all our heart? If you're following Jesus, I'll tell you where He's going. He's always headed for a sea of lost people. That should be where we end up too. Oh, it's bright inside the lighthouse, but it's very dark outside the walls.

So many headed for eternal destruction - they desperately need a lighthouse that is out where they are, pointing them to life in Jesus Christ.

Be their lighthouse!

Centre of the Bible

Even if you are not a believer, you should read this. It is very interesting.

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible? Answer - Psalm 117

What is the longest chapter in the Bible? Answer - Psalm 119

Which chapter is in the centre of the Bible? Answer - Psalm 118

Fact: There are 594 chapters before Psalm 118. Fact: There are 594 chapters after Psalm 118

Add these numbers up and you get 1188.

What is the centre verse in the Bible? Answer - Psalm 118:8

Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives?

The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives or that they want to be in the centre of His will, just send them to the centre of His Word. Psalms 118:8!

'It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.'

Now isn't that odd how this worked out? (or is God at the centre of it?)

Annual Conference Nov. 2002

This year's conference was my 9th and AAACF's 12th at the Slavanka Christian Hotel in Bournemouth, UK. The main speaker was Dr Clifford Hill who is widely known for his editorial work for Prophecy Today Magazine, the seminars on Saturday morning were taken by Monty White from Answers in Genesis.

Clifford shared a message the Lord had laid on his heart about 18 months ago, titled "The Tide is Turning". As a Christian sociologist Clifford has been an adviser to the UK government about family breakdown in Britain; for instance in 1998 every week about 5 000 children suffered a family break down and divorce. He has been sounding alarm bells since 1980 but his message appears to have gone largely unheard in Westminster and Downing Street, nor did the nation sit up and pay attention to the Black Monday stock market crash that followed the 1987 Hurricane which levelled 15 million trees. Clifford believes this was a strong warning from the Lord.

Romans Chapter 1 explains how the Lord lets people learn the hard way what leaving Him really brings; an increase in perversion and depravity with just due penalty. Today, sitting in her moral decline, Britain is beginning to get a hunger for the God she has deserted even if she does not yet recognise to whom she should be turning.

Clifford also reminded us of God's prophetic time

clock, Israel, and shared with us a number of testimonies from Messianic believers who have had a personal revelation or visitation by Jesus in that Land. In the last session he and his wife Monica shared their experiences of many trips they have made to the sites of the Seven Churches in the book of Revelation bringing unique insight to the form of the messages for the churches as they refer to many prominent geographical and architectural features that can still be seen as well as the relevance of the messages for us today.

Monty White, our Saturday morning seminar speaker, was an atheist who used to mock Christians at university, but today he heads up Answers in Genesis Ministries in the UK. He spoke on the reliability of the Genesis account of creation in the Bible, even touching briefly on dinosaurs and possible references to these in the Scriptures, for example in the book of Job. He showed how Evolution's 'proofs' had been falsified and concluded by saying; "Believing evolution is like believing that a tornado going through a junkyard would assemble an airworthy Boeing Jumbo Jet!" Monty was accompanied and assisted by his wife Irene.

The AAACF Conference is always a highlight of the year and once again we were blessed by the Lord's presence and the loving atmosphere there.

James Anderson

Dates for the Diary

4th-5th May. May Air Display, Imperial War Museum, Duxford. The Stansted ACF is organising a stand in conjunction with MAF at this show comprising modern and historic aircraft. Helpers welcome, call James Anderson on 07720 167900 or email james@takeleyessex.fsnet.co.uk

6th June. Annual Day of Prayer at Brook Place, Chobham, Surrey. This important day in the AAACF calendar has been well supported over the past two years. Please make every effort to attend, nothing that we do will bear fruit unless we have sought and heard the Lord.

18th-20th July. Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford. This is our major outreach event for which we would like a team of at least 20. Accommodation is provided at the nearby Harnhill Centre for Christian Healing. This is a great opportunity not only to enjoy one of the most comprehensive and spectacular air displays anywhere but to be about the Lord's business of proclaiming the gospel to many thousands of people. It may sound daunting but all who have been before agree it is exciting and most worthwhile. ***All enquiries or offers of help to the General Secretary at the office.***

20th September. RNAS Yeovilton Air Day. This is a new venue for us teaming up with colleagues from Westland Helicopters at Yeovil. All enquiries to the office please.

31st October-2nd November. Annual Conference at the Slavanka Hotel near Bournemouth, details and booking form to follow in July.