



Reaching and Serving the Persecuted Church **IN TOUCH MONTHLY**

1 October 2007

If you asked the average person today, Christian or not, “What is the significance of October 31?” the most likely answer would be, “It’s Halloween.” That is a sad commentary on the general ignorance of Christian history. October 31st is Reformation Day. It should rank along with Christmas as one of the most important events in our Christian calendar. The Protestant Reformation nearly 500 years ago laid the foundation for a Christian civilization from which has flowed the greatest freedoms, productivity and prosperity ever known in history. Human liberty, standards of justice and creativity enjoyed in Western civilization today is a direct result of the Reformation. (See page 2)

Triumph out of Tragedy

AFRICA

ITMI’s **Tim** and **Ashley Keller** were two weeks into a field trip in Zambia last month when they received the tragic news that Tim’s 22-year old sister **Amy** had been killed in an automobile accident on a Phoenix freeway. Fifty hours later they touched down at Sky Harbor airport in the Arizona capital, exhausted and somewhat bewildered by the devastating circumstances that had overtaken them.

Four days earlier, when learning of the tragedy, ITMI initiated steps immediately to locate the Kellers in Zambia – not an easy task when dealing with Third-World communications. Family friends in Tucson donated a significant amount of frequent-flyer miles to help cover Tim and Ashley’s return flight.

Bad news is never welcomed. Initial receipt is with disbelief. Then, slowly the words begin to sink in. Reality dawns. There has been a loss

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In the secular unbelieving world dealing with death is a disaster. For a Christian it is a promotion; the first day of Eternity with our risen Savior. Amy loved and trusted the Lord – now she is forever with Him in Glory.

One of Amy’s many friends summed it up beautifully in a letter written on hearing the sad news: “Dear Amy, I read about you in the paper today. They called you Amanda Keller and stated your age, but they left out all the important things. They didn’t say that you were a god-mother, a sister, a daughter, and a friend. They didn’t say that hardly anyone calls you Amanda. They didn’t talk about how hard you worked to graduate from college. They didn’t talk about how much you loved ‘your kids’ [Amy worked with autistic children] or how you



The Kellers arrive in Arizona after 50 travel hours.

know that they can do things that others don’t think they can. They didn’t say that you love pink, Gerber daisies, fruit right off the tree, Christmas, music, your family, or your friends. They didn’t say how proud of your brothers you were or how much you loved being a little sister. They didn’t talk about how you loved *Anne of Green Gables*. It didn’t say anything about childhood tea parties or talking after the lights were out and we

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Reformation or desecration

– How a Hallowed Eve became Halloween –

Christians in many lands will celebrate Reformation Day on the 31st of this month. 2007 marks the 490th Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther nailing his “95 Theses against Indulgences” to the door of the Schloss Kirsche (Castle Church) in the university city of Wittenberg, Germany. The hammer blows were felt all the way to Rome. The theological fire thus ignited spread across Europe.

History is important because it is His story. We ignore or forget it at our peril. We need to remember on October 31 that the Protestant Reformation changed forever the history of Western civilization and quite possibly led to the establishment of the United States of America.

Why did Luther choose October 31 to initiate his attack on indulgences? Possibly because it was a Hallowed Eve in the Church calendar. From the 8th Century the church celebrated All Hallows (All Saints) Day on November 1st to remember its martyrs who had died for their faith in Jesus Christ. It was like a Christian “Memorial Day.”

The night before All Saints Day became a ‘Hallowed Eve’ – a night to prepare for the coming Holy Day. The celebration of All Saints Day signified the triumph of faith over death, and thus gave the people hope for the time when Death, the *last enemy*, would be destroyed.

During the Dark Ages in Europe, Ireland, Scotland and England, pagan Druids honored their dead on October 31st. Celtic settlers held festivals and ceremonies designed to drive off oppressive evil spirits. Autumn, the time of falling leaves and prelude to winter, symbolized the death of nature. Bonfires were lighted to fend off the coming winter spirits. Treats were given to appease their wicked tricks.

By the beginning of the 16th Century true Christianity was virtually unrecognizable. The Church had moved away from its original message of salvation by grace through faith as the gift of God. Our Lord Jesus, Who promised to build His Church and not allow the gates of hell, or Rome, to prevail against it, raised up a succession of godly men to bring the ship of faith back onto God’s intended course.

In 1517 an intenerate Dominican monk, Johann Tetzel, toured Europe selling “indulgences,” to pay for the Pope’s extravagant living and to build St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome. The indulgences allowed the buyer to break Church rules concerning fasts, marriage and adultery. This papal salesman *extraordinaire* prompted Luther to protest the unethical fund-raising tactics of an apostate Church.

Luther’s love for the Word of God and his dedication to truth led him to challenge the entire religious and political authority of the Holy Roman Empire. Rejecting the notion of papal infallibility and ecclesiastical totalitarianism, he championed the principle of *Sola Scriptura* – the Bible

alone is our ultimate authority.

When summoned to Worms in April 1521 by the recently crowned 21-year old Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Luther stood before a stunning array of political and ecclesiastical big wigs. There was no opportunity for debate or to defend his doctrines. He was asked two questions: (1) to confirm that the publications on the table were his and (2) whether he would recant and declare them heretical. He acknowledged that the writings were his. When pressed by the court, in Latin, to recant, Luther responded in German: “Unless I am convinced by Scripture, or by clear reasoning, that I am in error – for popes and councils have often erred and contradicted themselves – **I cannot recant, for I am subject to the Scriptures I have quoted; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. [] Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. So help me God. Amen.**” The rest is His Story.

Dr. Peter Hammond notes: “By translating the Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew into the common tongue and making it widely available to both nobles and peasants, Luther championed universal education and literacy, the Priesthood of all Believers, freedom of conscience And religious liberty.” These were the basic building blocks put in place by our Founding Fathers years later at the birth of our Nation, the United States of America.

Sola Scriptura eroded the foundations of ecclesiastical and political totalitarianism. Instead of the prevailing “*Rex Lex*” (the king is the law), the Reformers championed “*Lex Rex*” – the Law is king! No one is above God’s Law. Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. The Protestant emphasis on the Priesthood of all Believers led to the concept of representative republics and democratic forms of government. It fostered freedom of religion and freedom of conscience which led to freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of association and all the other out-workings of political and social freedom.

The social implications of the Reformation were enormous. It’s easy to forget how much we owe to the courageous Reformers of 500 years ago, who risked their lives and laid their liberty on the line that we might have the Bible in our own language, our freedom to worship God plus our educational opportunities which have led to extraordinary scientific achievements. That is the real significance of October 31. Don’t be tricked into forgetting this magnificent treat.

Bill Bathman – Tempe, Arizona

Dear Team,

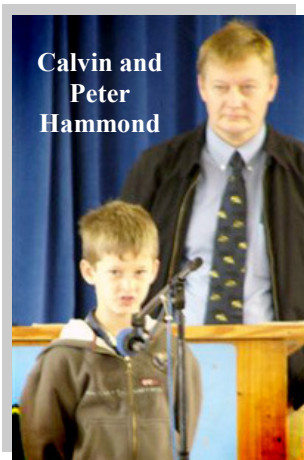
We have focused this month on the Protestant Reformation which began on October 31, 1517 and changed the world forever. Few people realize that the first Bibles, printed in English, rolled off the presses in Germany and had to be smuggled into England in bales of cotton from Holland. William Tyndale, the translator, was later burned at the stake for this 'crime.'

Historian Dr. **Peter Hammond** notes, "Most of the languages of the world were first codified and put into writing by Christian missionaries. More schools and universities have been started by Christians than any other religion, nation or group. Christian Reformers and missionaries have succeeded in bringing about the abolition of slavery, cannibalism, child sacrifice and widow burning [India]. Those countries which enjoy the most civil liberties are lands where the Gospel of Christ has penetrated."

Another great Reformer and soldier of the faith has been promoted. Dr. **D. James Kennedy**, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, passed away peacefully at his home in Fort Lauderdale in the early hours of 5 September. He changed the world in his 76 years. He will be missed.

Steve Evers and I drove down to Tucson on September 16 for the Memorial Service of **Amy Keller**. She was **Tim Keller's** 22-year old kid sister. It was a victorious occasion to celebrate the dedicated life of a very special young lady. It was interesting to see how many attendees wore pink – Amy's favorite color. There was standing room only at 6pm in the 450-seater Church. The service took us through all the seasonal celebrations of the Christian calendar. There were personal testimonies of how Amy had touched so many lives. Tim gave a powerful and positive word about his sister's faith and challenged those present to think about their own relationship to Jesus Christ – making God's plan of salvation abundantly clear.

Amy's internment was in the Memorial Garden adjacent to the church. A thumb-nail moon was partially hidden by clouds and a thunder-storm was building in the desert west of the city. The night sky was repeatedly illuminated by a spectacular array of electrical activity. It was as though Heaven was welcoming Amy home and the fireworks were on her behalf. Afterwards, at the fellowship meal, I talked with Mary Jo, Amy's mom. She was pleased that ITMI has set up a Memorial Fund to help Tim purchase a newer vehicle for his field trips in Africa. I touched her arm and said, "I think Amy would be tickled pink." She smiled in agreement.



In the ongoing parade of heroes as one generation passes, God raises up another. **Peter Hammond** took his 8-year old son, **Calvin** with him on a field trip to Zululand last month. Calvin never meets a stranger. On the 2-hour flight from Cape Town he talked with an Indian lady who was sitting by herself. He asked her if she'd ever heard of the Ten Commandments. When she said, "no" he proceeded to quote them and then went into the Evangelism Explosion presentation of the Gospel and followed by asking if she'd like to pray and receive Christ. "Yes indeed," she said. Calvin also helped his dad with services at a Zulu school and had his first interview on Christian Radio. God is so good!

Yours in His grip,

Bill Bathman

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were supposed to be asleep. Your life cannot be summed up in a paragraph or even a book. You may not be with us anymore but memories don't leave. You are not forgotten.
Love Always, Chancy."

ITMI's Director, Steve Evers and Bill Bathman attended the funeral in Tucson on September 16. Tim and Ashley remained with the family for two weeks before returning to Zambia.

ITMI has established a Memorial Fund to commemorate Amy's life. Gifts will go toward the purchase of a mission vehicle in South Africa to be used by her brother Tim Keller on field trips. Your participation will be an investment in the future and greatly appreciated.

UGANDA

The Dark Continent loses some 23,000 professionals to immigration each year. But the tide flows both ways and ITMI is in the middle. For several years our Mission has been training Ugandan pastors at our **International School of Missions** in Kampala. The following story, recently released by Reuters, points to a contemporary Reformation.

Last month Uganda's Anglican



International School of Missions

Archbishop, The Reverend Henry Luke Orombi, consecrated a Virginia-based conservative American bishop, John Guernsey, who is opposed to gay marriage. He is the latest in a growing number of conservative clerics to leave the U.S. Episcopal Church.

The consecration came three days after Kenya's Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi named two American priests as bishops. The Anglican Church (77 million-strong worldwide) has been split since its 2.4 million-member U.S. branch consecrated Gene Robinson as Anglicanism's first openly gay bishop four years ago. Orombi's service in western Uganda included primates from churches in Latin America, Africa and Asia who support traditional Anglicanism's

tough stance against gay marriage.

Orombi's spokesperson Alison Barfoot said the archbishop had called Guernsey to lead 33 congregations in the United States that will recognize the Church of Uganda's authority. "He's an ecclesiastical refugee," Barfoot told reporters, referring to Guernsey. "We thought the crisis in the Anglican Church would be resolved by now. We expected the Episcopal Church to repent ... but they have prolonged the crisis."

U.S. Episcopalians accuse Africans of invading their turf. Conservative Africans retort that they are merely providing refuge for orthodox believers at odds with liberal views. "This is not about sexuality, it's about Scripture," Barfoot said. "The leadership of the Anglican church has hijacked us to a faith that does not represent Biblical Christianity."

Meantime, ITMI will continue providing sound theological training for Ugandan pastors at our ISM Bible School in Kampala. It's nice to know that we're in good conservative company.

Bill Bathman-Tempe, AZ

For Praise . . .

1. A thoroughly victorious memorial service to remember Amy Keller.
2. God's blessing on Rev. **John Jere's** US itinerary last month.
3. Ugandan pastors receiving sound theological training at the International School of Missions.

For Prayer . . .

1. The Keller family grieving their loss and for missionaries **Tim** and **Ashley Keller** returning to Zambia.
2. Provision of funding for **Charl van Wyk's** upcoming mission trip to the DRC and Zambia.
3. Wisdom to decide if surgery is an option for **Brooke Nungesser** following medical tests, pray also for provision of funding for medical expenses.