Sovereign God

‘There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!’ These words were proclaimed by Abraham Kuyper, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands between 1901 and 1905. We worship a sovereign Lord who is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe.

If only we could see human affairs from God’s eternal perspective we’d know such deep and abiding peace. He is beyond time and space and can never be thwarted by any other power. Many regimes have tried to outlaw Christianity – France in the 18th century and Russia, China, Albania and North Korea in the 20th century. But God has the last say and His common grace is at work in remarkable ways together with His wonderful gift of saving grace. He’s building His church ‘and the gates of hell will not prevail against it’. It’s not for us to see the whole sovereign counsel of God worked out in our lifetimes, but Jesus urged us to pray, ‘Your kingdom come, Your will be done’. We must therefore pray earnestly and work energetically to this end.
Glories of Creation

‘If the distance between the earth and the sun, 92 million miles, was as thin as a sheet of paper, the distance between the sun and our next nearest star would be like a stack of paper 70 feet tall and the breadth of our galaxy a pile of paper 310 miles high. Yet our galaxy is a mere speck in the galaxies of the universe.’

When I read truths like these, described by Tim Keller to illustrate the awesome greatness of God’s creation, I can’t help singing to myself, often out loud, ‘How Great Thou Art’. You may have had a similar response if you were watching the recent BBC series Blue Planet II with David Attenborough plumbing the depths of the oceans to reveal what exists within them. The extraordinary variety and beauty of creation clearly point to the existence and glory of God.

There’s much talk about the Big Bang. Lord Rees, the Astronomer Royal recently wrote that ‘precise radioactive dating now tells us the beginning happened about 13.8 billion years ago … But the fundamental question is ‘what happened before the beginning?’ On this we cannot do much better than St Augustine in the fifth century who argued that time itself was created with the universe. The genesis event is in some ways as mysterious to us as it was to St Augustine.’

Secular humanism in society

The Judeo-Christian beliefs and values on which our country has been founded are being increasingly challenged by the spirit of secularisation – whether that’s in politics, people’s attitudes and actions, or the media. For example, the excellent acclaimed film The Darkest Hour describing the days leading up to the rescue of Dunkirk never mentioned the people’s overwhelming response to the King’s call for a National Day of Prayer at that time! I hope that the enclosed CARE Media Card will encourage and help you to be proactive in responding to what you read, see and hear; your letter, phone call or email really does make a difference.

The secular humanist movement describes itself as ‘non-religious and looking to science, reason, empathy, and compassion to live an ethical and meaningful life’. I phoned the National Secular Society to ask how they differed from the British Humanist Association; the reply was ‘we’re much the same, but more anti-Christian’. Their approach to some issues that concern us as Christians can be aggressive and the concepts of a creator God and the need of sinful humans to submit to Him as Redeemer and Lord are an anathema. They strongly believe the Church should have no role in mainstream society.

However, Jesus called Christians to be ‘the light of the world’ and ‘salt of the earth’ and this involves addressing issues of justice and truth. It’s upholding what it means to be human as God’s image bearers, especially protecting those who are the most vulnerable. We believe that God made human beings to be like Him; the New Living Translation of Psalm 8 says that...
human beings are ‘a little lower than God Himself’ and are charged with the responsibility to be stewards of all He has created.

What it means to be human

That’s what CARE’s work is about – upholding what it means to be human and protecting those who are most vulnerable. We celebrated God’s gracious mercy when Rob Marris’ Assisted Dying Bill was defeated – it would have allowed doctors to facilitate terminally ill and frail elderly people to commit suicide. Our 50th anniversary event last October commemorated the loss of an estimated 8.8 million unborn lives because of the abortions that have taken place in the UK since the 1967 Act. We also reflected on the importance of compassionate support for women affected by abortion. Both Lives Matter – a joint initiative of CARE and the Evangelical Alliance – won the prestigious Public Affairs Award for the best Northern Ireland campaign of 2017. Both Lives Matter is based on research showing that at least 100,000 people are alive in Northern Ireland today who would never have been born if the 1967 Abortion Act had applied there.

CARE has had a pivotal role in seeing legislation passed on behalf of trafficked children and adults and recently launched freeforgood.org.uk to promote Lord McColl’s important new bill on modern slavery. We are also involved with efforts to safeguard those who are exposed to the dangers of online pornography, and campaign for better protection for individuals with serious gambling addictions.

Robotics conference

God built into creation every technological possibility that could ever be devised, so no discovery or invention is a surprise to Him! The robotics and Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) of today are the most recent tools that can help us, or do harm, especially as they could in some cases change our view of what it means to be human. Margot James MP, the new Minister of State for Digital and the Creative Industries is taking steps to ensure there is proper ethical oversight in this area. It’s vital that the Church is involved with this! A recent positive article by the CEO of ABB, a leading supplier of robots for industry, wrote that instead of being concerned they could take control, ‘we must channel our energies into mastering robotics, A.I. and other technologies for better lives’.

Last year, we had thousands of orders for Dr Nigel Cameron’s new book The Robots Are Coming – Us, Them and God and received such positive feedback on how inspiring and helpful it is. It’s still available on Amazon UK or through CARE. On Friday 29 June, we are hosting a conference to explore the theological, ethical, social and practical implications of the advances in A.I. and robotics and to discuss how the Church might respond. It’ll be held at the state of the art Knowledge Centre at the British Library in Central London. If you’re involved in local church leadership or have a particular interest in theology, science and technology do take up the ‘early bird’ price by
returning the enclosed form by 3 May. There are special concessions for students and those retired from church ministry. **Speakers already confirmed include Prof John Lennox, Prof Nigel Cameron, Rev Paul and Christine Perkin, Prof John Wyatt, Richard Sergeant, Jon Cruddas MP, Dr Patrick Dixon and CARE CEO Nola Leach.**

**In God we trust**

Human beings are incredibly important to our God of love, and that’s why Christians have always been at the forefront of caring for others as part of our worship. We know that one day, when all of God’s purposes are accomplished, Christ will wind up history, creating a new heaven and a new earth. I firmly believe we must serve Him and care for others, as if His coming will happen today and yet to plan, as Dr Nigel Cameron says, ‘as if that glorious event were still a thousand years or more in the future.’

**CARE will continue speak up to proclaim what it means to be truly human in a society where this truth is sometimes blurred.** Where human life is being taken, abused or radically changed, we will do all we can to stand for truth and to protect the most vulnerable. Thank you for all your support – through practical engagement, financial giving and prayer. We appreciate you so much!

May God bless you richly,

Rev Lyndon Bowring
CARE Chairman