

can be found in the life of the believer and yet it will not be fully realized until the end of all things so his peace can be found in the present corporate, political context and yet it will not be completed until the kingdom comes in its fullness.

Peace in a community must not be confused with either stability or complacency. At the time of Christ there was a peace of sorts. It was known as the pax romana – the Roman peace – and was a ‘peace’ established and maintained by force. But this is not peace. To believe that peace can be established by force is an illusion, a scandal. Stability is not peace. Nor is peace complacency and it is a mistake for anyone to claim that peace exists where there is injustice. To do so is reminiscent of the Lord’s condemnation (in Jeremiah) of the greedy and the unjust who proclaimed ‘peace, peace’ while injustice, greed and dissension abounded.

True peace requires justice and so no Christian can live complacently with injustice. There is a significant truth in the statement ‘if you want peace then work for justice’. Reconciliation between groups who have not been at peace is an essential dimension of peace-making.

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## Eight Core Christian Values

# Eight Core Christian Values

by Brian Edgar, Director of Theology and Public Policy for the Evangelical Alliance

This discussion of values is in two parts:

- 1 The value of values
- 2 Eight core Christian values or a society to live by.

## The value of values

It is very common today for all kinds of organisations to nominate their 'core values'. These values do not specify what the organisation does but rather express something of why it does these things and the way it will, or will not, undertake them. Many would consider values-based behaviour to be essential for every organisation today.

But what about an entire society? Are not values important for the whole of a culture? Can a society operate without some agreement on what is to be valued and what is not? Sub-groups and individuals may, of course,

have particular values which are not shared by the group as a whole but without some shared values a society will self-destruct. Apart from anything else, a society needs to have a consensus on the extent to which diversity and different values are to be valued.

Often social values are more implicit than explicit. They are not always articulated clearly and they can change over time. Consequently, they can become confused and fragmented. Modern western society has tended to move in the direction of privatising values and meaning. That is, they are considered to be personal and private rather than shared and public. This is seen in increasing diversity, in what is often called pluralism and in the reluctance to see anyone impose - or even propose - overall beliefs or values for others or society as a whole.

Of course, the idea that it is possible to have a value-free approach to public and social life is not viable. Such an attempt does not mean the abolition of values at all; it is simply the (often un-noticed) replacement of one set of values with another. For example, the ideas that a society ought to treat values as primarily personal is itself a strong social value.

To some extent the focus on corporate and personal core values is consistent with biblical ways of thinking where the issue is never just

became the distinguishing mark of the early Christian community. Properly understood, this is a revolutionary concept. The call to serve one another in love stands in stark contrast to the normal human desire for position and preference. It calls individuals and the Christian community to lay these aside for the sake of Christ and the needs of others.

Service of others is an important value for all social relationships. It counters any notion that life is essentially a competition or that real meaning is found in 'freedom' understood as the ability to do what suits me, or my family or group best. Meaning is found in service rather than in self-centredness.

The issue is to explore ways each part of society can serve others.

## PEACE

*The biblical concept of peace is different in many ways from modern descriptions of it. Peace understood as the absence of war is only one part of a much broader concept that includes peace with God, positive harmony and healthy functioning between people and spiritual as well as material security. Peace is a wholeness, a state of well-being.*

Peace is not merely the absence of

dissension, it is a positive gift, a state of being which comes from the God of peace who has taken the initiative to bring it to the world through Jesus Christ. God cannot give us joy or peace apart from himself, because there is no such thing. The peace which Jesus gives is nothing less than his own presence in our lives. Consequently, his peace can permeate our lives and he calls his people not to worry or be concerned about material things for God knows our needs. Anxiety is a denial of peace.

Jesus' gospel of peace is a peace that the world cannot give and it is wrong to see peace where it does not exist. True peace is salvation, the presence of the kingdom and it is something achieved by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. But the church must not narrow down the message of the gospel of peace to purely inner, personal, private peace. This is no excuse for not seeking to bring peace to the political world. Christians look for opportunities to bring peace wherever possible as it is a social good which indicates that a community is functioning well and in harmony. Christ's peace has many effects and the corporate life of a community, a nation and the world are important and are a focus of God's concern.

Because peace between people is part of the gospel as well as peace in people the political is as spiritual as the private. Just as the peace of Christ

*should celebrate that which enhances its corporate life but not when this is at the expense of other groups or nations.*

Joy is a very important but often neglected social value. It is perhaps an old-fashioned word but it expresses an important principle for individuals, the community of faith and wider society. God does not desire to have a joyless world or dis-spirited people. Joy is not just by-product of other actions and values - it has significance in its own right.

Joy is characteristic of the life of faith. It is a quality of being rather than just an emotion and so although it is related to being happy it is more fundamental than that and can be sustained when happiness is (hopefully temporarily) diminished. God is the fundamental reason for being joyful – joy comes from knowing God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit. Joy also comes from participating in God's ministry in the world and seeing lives being positively changed and relationships enhanced.

Joyfulness should mark the life of the Christian community and all relationships between Christians as they live and work together for the Lord. It is important too that joy be a feature of the life of the wider community. Although it will never be the subject of legislation joy is an essential social value. Society should celebrate that which enhance its corporate life but not when this is at

the expense of other groups or nations.

## SERVICE

*Properly understood, service is a revolutionary concept. The call to serve one another in love stands in stark contrast to the normal human desire for position and preference and all notions of 'freedom' where that is understood as the ability to do what suits me, or my family or group best. The notion of service calls individuals to lay these things aside for the needs of others. It is also an important value for all social relationships. It shows that meaning is found in service rather than in self-centredness.*

The idea of Christian service has no better starting point than the Jesus' willingness to serve humanity by giving up his life in order that others might be saved. As he said of himself, he 'did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' In this and in many other ways, including washing the feet of his disciples he set Christians an example for them to follow. Greatness, according to his scale of measurement, involves being the servant of others.

Jesus intended the community of faith to be radically distinct in this regard. Indeed, selfless service and a concern for the weak and the powerless

what one does but how and why it is done. Previously, from a Christian point of view, a list of core values would probably have been known as 'virtues'. There are however, a couple of differences even though the concepts overlap. Firstly, one has (or does not have) virtues, whereas one holds to values and, secondly, virtues are often (perhaps incorrectly) seen as more individual while values are generally perceived as more corporate. As the intention is to discuss how our society functions it is probably better to discuss 'values'.

What are the 'core values' for our society? This is a profoundly important question. So big, in fact, that there are any number of ways of avoiding it. Sometimes those who have real concerns for the way a society operates find it easier to leave this question aside and to focus intensively on single issues. This can be very important and even helpful but ultimately every decision to act in a particular way needs to be grounded in some overall vision for society.

Another way of avoiding the bigger issue is to agree with the notion that values are essentially personal or at least to be restricted to the life of a particular group. Christians, for example, sometimes assume that their values are for the church alone and they have no expectation that society will adopt them or be interested in them. Apart from anything else it is easier to define those values when

they are for a specific group and it simply means one accepts that there is a considerable gap between community life within the church and the ways of the world.

But there are others who want to bridge that gap between church and world and to bring to society what the church has to offer. They have a conviction that there are values which are not just personal and not just for the community of faith, but which are of value for society as a whole. These values are theologically and biblically derived and they are capable of being explored at various levels of meaning or significance, including in ways appropriate for the wider community. They are principles for life, for relationships, public life and even legislation. The Australian Evangelical Alliance joins with all those who believe that Christian values have relevance for society as a whole. Of course, this still leaves open some very important questions regarding how Christian values are to be realized in society. For some Christians the answer lies in an established, Christian religion whereby Christian faith, values and practices are privileged in law. For others the answer lies in persuasion and influence, the process of demonstrating that Christian values are good values for all.

The articulation of values: It is important to be clear about the reasons for this articulation of values.

- The first is that doing so clarifies one's own decision making process on specific issues. The extent to which there ought to be legislation, for instance, on a number of controversial issues which are of concern for Christians is something to be considered. To what extent do Christian values relate to the needs and perceived rights of others?

- A clear articulation of these principles will also enable other Christian organisations and churches understand the basic principles of the vision and thus comprehend the reasons for decisions about specific issues. They will be better equipped to share in this ministry.

- The wider community will also be better able to understand the rationale behind Christian thinking and make a judgment as to whether they perceive any value in them for social relationships generally.

The aim, of course, is to change ourselves and to contribute to the transformation of society. There are two reasons for that which are not contradictory in any way. The first is that it is for the glory of God. The second is simply that it is because these values are good for all people.

## Eight core values for a society to live by

Eight fundamental social values have been chosen as particularly important.

- **Grace** – a subversive value! Giving people more than they deserve.
- **Hope** – not a guarantee of immunity from harm but a conviction that God is always present
- **Faith** - the means to real depth in relationships of all kinds
- **Love** – means to love the unlovely
- **Justice** – for all (not 'just-me'). A concept biased in favour of the disadvantaged.
- **Joy** – impossible to legislate for this but an essential social value
- **Service** – meaning is found in service rather than self-centredness
- **Peace** – not just the absence of fighting but positive well-being

Where did they come from? Why are these eight listed? The values as listed identify what ought to be distinctive of Christian faith today. They are listed in order to make explicit what is already implicit, to communicate what is important, and to provide a foundation for further action. Values such as these influence behaviour and action. They also have the capacity to

Christians are called to do justice not only because God is a God of justice but also because God's justice means that they are 'justified', that is, treated as 'righteous' or blameless even when they are not. Forgiveness means being given 'a righteousness that comes from God'. This is not 'justice' as the world understands justice, it is an undeserved act of grace. To be 'justified' in this way not only means that we are treated as God's children and given eternal life but also that we are to 'live justly' and 'do justice' for others in the same way that God has done this for us. Note that Christians do not become justified by living just lives, it is rather that because they are justified they are called to be doers of justice. Too often the act of doing justice has been separated from the fact of being justified.

Although God works for justice in the world it is plain that at the present time many injustices remain. This does not mean that God is indifferent to it human sin and injustice. One answer to the question 'why doesn't God do something about it?' is that he has: not only in sending Christ but also in calling his people to work for justice in the world. Another answer is that the biblical concept of 'justice' also includes 'judgment'. One day God will put all things right and completely remove injustice and all sin from the world and holding back from that action in the present is simply another act of grace.

Justice is often interpreted in terms of seeking rights for oneself or one's own group ('we demand justice') when biblically it is really an action on behalf of others. This does not mean that one has to ignore injustices to oneself but it does shift the focus. 'Justice' is not for 'just me'. This means that Christians will be more keen to protect others than themselves. Globally, there are many serious injustices being done to Christians, often unreported and unknown. Christians will seek justice and liberty for their brothers and sisters but will be committed to justice and liberty for non-Christians with at least as much enthusiasm. Religious liberty and freedom of conscience are essential for society. But recognising the right to believe anything does not mean that everything is good or right or socially helpful.

## JOY

*Joy is a quality of being rather than just an emotion and so although it is related to being happy it is more fundamental and can be sustained when happiness is (hopefully temporarily) diminished. Joy also comes from participating in God's ministry in the world and from seeing lives being positively changed and relationships enhanced. Although it will never be the subject of legislation joy is an essential social value. Society*

emerge from negative feelings that remain entrenched in a person's life as a result of destructive relationships and damaging situations.

Defensiveness, distrust and fearfulness in life's experiences can mean that God is seen as a judge and not a saviour, as angry rather than loving, as demanding rather than forgiving, as a law-maker rather than an a source of strength. Love conquers fear and the emphasis in Christian living must be on God's invitation for individuals and society to be positively transformed. The use of fear as a means of bringing about change runs contrary to the principle of love.

## JUSTICE

*Biblical justice is not even defined by abstract notions of fairness or equality (often interpreted in terms of oneself - 'we demand justice'). It is a biased notion in that it refers to very practical, down-to-earth actions which ensure that the weak, the poor and the socially disadvantaged are cared for, whether they 'deserve' it or not. God always acts justly and he calls on people to do the same.*

While there may be some generally agreed principles of justice (eg that slavery and starvation are wrong) the biblical concept of justice is not defined by concepts determined by the presuppositions of modern, western societies in which values are

considered to be basically private matters. In that context justice tends to be reduced to the attempt to allow everyone to do whatever they think is right as long as it does not hurt anyone else. Justice is thus interpreted subjectively as something like 'equal rights' for everyone and so injustice is largely any attempt to stop someone doing what they want.

Biblical justice, however, is a more robust notion. The kind of justice that the Scriptures present is not even defined primarily in either selfish terms or by abstract notions of fairness or equality. Biblical justice means very practical, down-to-earth actions which take place to ensure that the weak are protected from abuse, that the poor have what they need, that the stranger in the land is shown hospitality and that the socially disadvantaged are cared for. Even when this means giving them what they do not 'deserve'! God's justice is gracious.

Because God determines the content of justice it is known through the teaching of Scripture. This does not mean that in our complex world that every just action is easily read off one biblical text or other but it does mean that Christians constantly remain alert to justice as defined by God. God is just and will do what is right. His standards are the measure for people to follow and they are seen, in particular, in the person and the work of Jesus.

inspire and encourage.

These are biblical values. An initial review of biblical social values produced a list of over 100 biblical values! Eight of them were selected. This was not a random process. The Bible itself nominates some as being of greater significance (eg 'faith, hope and love; 'the greatest of these is love'; 'do justice' etc) and some are more relevant than others for the cultural context in which we live. These are theologically based values, God is in and through all of them. They are Christological values, they are all demonstrated in the life of Christ.

Note that they are very simple. Some may be disappointed that they are not more innovative! There is really nothing new in this list except the particular selection and their application to the issues of the present, which is always an on-going process. But what would be the value of something entirely new? These values are simple in the sense of being profound. One can do no better than return to what is good and true and right.

Yet they have an 'edge' to them. When contrasted with more popular attitudes and values they start to stand out. In fact see if you don't think that they are, in many ways, culturally subversive values.

They are values that are appropriate for social life. They are not just

'personal' or 'private' virtues or values. They express Christian attitudes that are relevant for a wide range of communal relationships. It is possible to identify 'public policy' with just 'political' policy. but broader, the expression of Christian values into all sections of society.

Some contrasts -

- On social issues we need to do more than just saying 'no' – but also find, affirm and encourage the positives
- We are not just playing politics – there are other areas of life which are not reducible to legislation
- Nor do we want to fall into the trap of just reacting to the immediate and the urgent – but getting ahead to develop and enhance
- Not just the superficial but the deep issues of life and society
- Not just 'doing' but 'being'
- What we do is a lot more than just a call for social responsibility but rather showing a possibility (not just more law but grace!)
- We must avoid being pessimistic and depressing about the state of the world but finding and promoting joy
- We are not just telling others – but being a model of social relationships

- Nor are we another self-centred lobby group defending the rights of a particular (Christian) group (not just protecting the Christian fort even if it is under attack!) but genuinely centred on helping others

- Not a Christendom model but the church as a model, salt and light for the world

## GRACE

*Grace is one of the most radical and subversive principles of life. It means giving people more than they deserve irrespective of the cause of their need and without regard to national, cultural or religious boundaries. Those who live by grace know themselves as forgiven and act out of the humility that comes from that knowledge. Grace is far more than the vague notion of tolerance. It means living joyfully according to a possibility rather than a demand or an obligation.*

When the Christian concept of grace is applied to the way a society lives it becomes one of the most radical and subversive principles of life. It is the idea that we are prepared to give to others what they really do not deserve. In other words there is such a thing as a free lunch! And a lot more besides!

This concept begins with the totally undeserved gift that God gave to the world in Jesus of Nazareth. In his life and death Christians see God at work. Jesus told stories about grace that have a powerful message. There was the father who welcomed the wayward son home again and the employer who made sure that even the late-coming workers got a full day's pay. In answer to the question about how often someone should be forgiven the answer was 'not seven times but seventy times seven.' In

## LOVE

*The meaning of life is to be found in God's unconditional love known in Jesus Christ. Without love nothing else really makes sense. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it seeks the good of the other. It is contrary to all selfish, self-centred attitudes. Love is more than an emotion, and it is not merely 'liking'. It involves choosing to love the unlovable, including one's enemy. The opposite of the love is not hate but fear.*

Hinduism has karma, Islam has law, Buddhism the eight-fold path and secularism has self-improvement, but Christianity dares to say that salvation and the meaning of life is to be found in God's unconditional love known in Jesus Christ. Love is the answer to the most fundamental questions of human existence. Without love nothing else really makes sense.

God did not need to create the world in order to be able to love. Love already existed in the divine community of Father, son and Spirit. God's love is shown in the sending of Jesus to share our humanity and to suffer the consequences of human sin and die in order to overcome its power. This is the model for all Christian love. The most fundamental characteristic of this eternal love of God is that it seeks the good of the other. It is the opposite of any and all selfish, self-centred attitudes.

Obviously this is love is not a weak emotion. It is a powerful commitment to the other. Although God's love involves emotion it is not based on a feeling but on a chosen course of action. Love exists most particularly where it is offered towards those for whom one feels least, such as one's enemies, or where it is reaching out to one who does not, or is not able, to love in return. Love of those who love us is what anyone can do.

Love is, of course, a social value because it can only exist among people but it is important to note that Christian living is not based upon any vague notion of 'love'. It is more precisely based upon the fact that 'God is love' and even more precisely upon the love of God that is expressed in Jesus Christ. A problem emerges when people believe that it is appropriate for them to be an arbiter of what 'the loving thing to do' is. This can lead to justifications for all sorts of behaviours and relationships. But love is only properly understood by reference to God and Scripture. Above all, the love of God is revealed and defined in the self-sacrifice of God in his Son.

Many people assume that the opposite of love is hate. But this is not so. The opposite of the love, security and confidence involved in belonging to God is fear. Perfect love drives out fear. Unfortunately some people, including some Christians live with unhealthy images of God that often

are indeed shown, but it is a realistic assessment of contemporary trends where the immediate and the short-term have gained the ascendancy over long-term faithfulness and commitment.

In faithfulness there is great reward. In many situations choosing to forego some other options and electing to reduce potential choice and increase faithful commitment to others does not diminish the quality of life but deepens relationships and enables people to explore more fully the meaning of their own life and the beauty of the lives of others.

Faithfulness to God is not only a personal matter, it is a central social value for Christians. The opportunity to exercise faith in worship and daily life is critical. While faithfulness in this sense cannot mean disregarding the needs of others Christians take religious liberty to be fundamental and, as part of their own commitment and faithfulness to society, offer the same freedom, under the same conditions of respect to those of other religions.

Faithfulness between members of the church community is important for Christians. There is a unity of faith centred around the one Lord Jesus Christ. Faithfulness within the church means that Christians will regard other Christians as brothers and sisters in the faith.

Faithfulness in family relationships means loving those who are close to us. It is honouring to God and good for society as a whole. Parents are to be committed to the good of their children, children are to be faithful in honouring their parents and faithfulness in marriage is expected of husbands and wives. Because Christians see faithfulness as an important human value in itself and as an image of the relationship which exists between God and his people is given a high value.

Faithfulness in other social relationships is also important because Christians have been called to love all people. Faithfulness is not determined by gender, class, social group, ethnicity or nationality. Fidelity to others extends beyond any such categories and is a way of speaking of the commitment Christians have for the good of the other, whoever they are.

other words, don't bother counting! All this is grace. It means you care for those in need irrespective of the cause of their distress and that you don't just love your family and friends but your enemies as well!

Taken seriously - personally, socially and politically - grace is radical! Grace is not stopped by national, cultural or religious boundaries. It will change the way we relate to people and the way we live in our society. Because grace is, by definition, an undeserved gift offered to someone who is in need it means that in social relationships there is going to be a bias towards those in need. The gospels present Jesus as one who brought good news to all who would listen (the crowds) but especially to those who lived on the periphery of society: lepers, slaves, the demon-possessed, a paralytic, a tax collector, a young girl, and the blind. A life of grace means a life lived with those usually ignored or rejected by others.

Because Christians live by grace they do not believe that a new law is the answer to every social problem! While law can be good it cannot do everything. One cannot, for instance, legislate adequately against bad thoughts! And one cannot have laws that make people generous. It is of the very nature of the Christian gospel that law is powerless to make people do the right thing. It is therefore important that Christians do not try to make civil law do what it cannot

possibly do, that is, eradicate sin and make people good, kind and loving. Living by grace means promoting and encouraging everything that promotes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

God's grace is freely offered to all, but it also invites a response of worship, gratitude and obedience. The responsibility of the Christian in living graciously is to make clear that God is the ultimate source of grace and to offer grace in such a way as to encourage a response to God. The only ones that can be truly gracious are those who have been shown grace. People of grace know themselves as forgiven and act out of the humility which comes from that knowledge. Self-righteousness is not compatible with grace. Those who know the grace of God and who are being transformed by it will also be the most willing to acknowledge that same grace at work in the lives of others. The gracious person does not believe that God is only at work in their life. They will affirm grace wherever it is found.

Pluralism and tolerance certainly have their rightful place, but they are concepts that can be used to suggest that many wrong and unhelpful things should be tolerated. In this way our society has substituted the vague notion of 'tolerance' for genuine grace. Rather than 'calling a spade a spade' there is a tendency to call a sin

a valid option. If there is no sin there is no problem, no guilt, no regret (and no need for forgiveness!). It's a way of sweeping the real issues in human life under the carpet. Jesus insists that we should accept no inferior substitute for grace and forgiveness.

## HOPE

*Hope is not a guarantee that bad things will not happen nor is it simply positive thinking or looking on the bright side of life. Hope is the conviction that God has gone into the future before us and will always be with present with his people. Hope is an encouragement not to overlook the many good and positive aspects of life and to be prepared to take risks, not presumptuously, but in humility and prayer, confident that God is still at work.*

What does it mean for an individual or a society to have hope? It means that people are able to look beyond immediate problems and threatening scenarios and have confidence in God as the ultimate reality. Hope is not a guarantee that bad things will not happen but it is a conviction that God has gone into the future before us and will always be with us.

There are many aspects of our world that can cause people to despair. People worry about the threat of war, poverty, terrorism, environmental

disaster, the spread of viruses such as SARS and AIDS and the way technology like genetic engineering may be used. Of course, in many parts of the world many of these are not future projections but present realities. There are also many individual, personal problems that lead to despair of the future. Hope means having a realistic attitude towards the state of our world. It is not possible to deny either the present problems or the disastrous possibilities. But on the other hand hope tells us not to be overwhelmed by them and also encourages us not to overlook the many good and positive aspects of life. Hope sees many good things and people all around and is aware of God being at work in the world.

Christian hope is not just a subjective attitude, not simply positive thinking or looking on the bright side of life. It means having a trust in God and believing that God is the Lord of All, is in control and is at work to bring about the future that he wants. Because of that Christians can persevere though problems and wait expectantly. Hope encourages us to take risks, not presumptuously, but in humility and prayer, confident that God is still at work. Christians will not simply view the world negatively but will see the hand of God at work, will believe that positive change can take place and will be enthusiastic about the world in which God has placed us.

'May the God of hope fill you with all

joy and peace as you trust in him.' (Rom. 15:13)

## FAITH

*Faith is an attitude of trust in someone you can rely on which mirrors the commitment that God has for his people. It involves commitment, fidelity and trust and thus stands in contrast to many common attitudes to relationships as short-term, conditional and uncommitted. Faith deepens relationships and enables people to explore more fully the meaning of their own life and the beauty of the lives of others. It is an important element of all kinds of family and other social relationships.*

Christians believe that faith is an important social value that is grounded in the faithfulness of God. God is faithful, first of all, to his own nature in the sense that he does not alter in terms of his commitment to love, mercy, justice and compassion. God is also faithful in terms of his relationship to people. God's love is constant and lasts forever and through it people are called to a response of faith.

What does it mean for people to be faithful? Unfortunately, some think of faith as being opposed to reason as though faith means believing what you know isn't true or, perhaps optimistically, hoping (without any real

justification) that something might just turn out to be so. But faith is not like that at all. It is an attitude of trust in something that you know, or more precisely, in someone you can rely on. The focus of Christian faith is Jesus Christ, he is the one in whom Christians trust and this really defines having faith. It is so central that Christianity became known as 'the faith' and, by extension, other religions were known as 'other faiths'. Of course, faith is not the central concept in other religions and it is something of a mis-application of a term that is specifically distinctive of Judeo-Christian belief. This is not to say that other religions do not have some element of 'faith' or that there is not some general sense in which 'faith' can be used as a term for various religions, but when given its full meaning it is really a distinctive term which refers to the relationship believers have with the God of the Bible.

Christians have faith in God through Jesus Christ and this attitude extends to other human relationships that are to mirror the commitment that exists between God and believers. Faithfulness is thus an essential component of many social relationships. At the present time however, in our society faithfulness is under-valued. Commitment is lacking in all sorts of relationships. This should not be taken as an overly negative criticism as there are many places where fidelity and commitment