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Those whose knowledge of Tom is solely through his many publications may tend to think of him solely as a theologian and academic. I wish to focus on his life as a minister and pastor and particularly on the background of his early life, student days and war years because most people will not be aware of these formative influences on him and his theology. Inevitably I will be writing from the perspective of a brother and sharing some more personal reminiscences.

Of the six children born to our parents, Tom was the second oldest, and I was the youngest. As such, Tom was over eleven years older than I. Our family was closely knit: there was always a strong bond of love and trust among us. Despite the age gap, I always felt close to Tom, more particularly as I grew up and entered the ministry. We inevitably had much in common, not least in our theological outlook. Tom, James and I continued to discuss and share each other's theological concerns throughout our adult lives.

As a family we were blessed with godly parents. Father was born into a farming family in Scotland. He was a minister and for forty years a missionary in China. Mother also had felt the call to missionary work. They met and married in China. All six children, three sons and three daughters, were born in China.

Every day our parents gathered the family together for worship and study of the Word of God. God's presence and the need for prayer were very real in our home. It is not surprising therefore that Tom from his earliest years believed in the Lord as his personal saviour. He believed profoundly what Jesus said to Nicodemus, "no one can see (or enter) the Kingdom of God unless he is born again" (John 3.3). Nonetheless, he knew of no time in his life when he did not believe or trust Christ as his saviour. Likewise from his earliest years he felt God was calling him to serve Christ for the advancement of the Gospel. For many years he hoped to become a missionary like our father and take the Gospel to the Chinese. In his early



teen years during the summer vacations from school he accompanied our father in journeys through the mountain valleys of West China and shared in the distribution of portions of Scripture to the peasant Buddhist farmers. This helped to confirm his desire to become a missionary.

It was later when Tom was at University and began studying theology and learned the importance and need for a theology that was truly biblical and grounded in the person and work of Christ that he felt a call to study and teach theology. He never, however, lost concern and support for missionary work and for evangelism, and he integrated his call for evangelistic work with a vocation to preach, first and foremost, to theologians!

China, in the years when our parents were missionaries, was a turbulent country. West China, where they worked, was ruled by warlords, who had their own armies. They fought, killed, and plundered at will. Some were not so bad as others. Following the Russian Revolution of 1917, communist atheistic literature and military weapons were pouring into China and fell all too readily into the hands of the different warlords, increasing unrest and making the country dangerous.

Despite the civic unrest, however, China was a good and exciting place for children to grow up and enjoy experiences and a freedom generally denied to children in the West. Father, for his work, kept a horse, Prince, and a mule, Billy, which were much loved by the family. Each day Tom and my three sisters rode or galloped three miles to school. One missionary friend expressed concern to our mother about Margaret, the youngest of the three sisters, having to hold on at the back of the mule when it was galloping. However, they never fell off! Father complained that after Tom started to ride the mule, it would no longer walk and preferred to gallop! Tom became an accomplished rider and years later, when he was minister in Alyth, and when James, three others, and I were camping with him, I can remember him riding a horse bare back, with our luggage, four miles up the glen where we camped.

Our Chinese summers, spent in the valleys of the high mountains with their wild beauty, treacherous mountain paths, often beset with bandits and robbers, were likewise exciting. The constant sense of danger made the family rely continually on God. Prayer was a very important part of our life

and there was always joy and thanksgiving over answered prayer. Prayer meant much to each member of the family.

In 1927 West China was in a state of civil war with many riots and killings. The family saw people have their heads whipped off by swords in the streets. A missionary friend of our mother was beheaded in the street near our home in Chengdu. There were riots outside our house, with agitators threatening to break in and kill the family. The British Consul ordered all British subjects to leave the country, as he could not guarantee their safety. Hence, in 1927, the family returned to Scotland. The family's journey by boat down the Yangste to Shanghai was eventful and dangerous. Sailing through the gorges of the upper Yangste bullets were hitting the steel balustrade behind which the family were sheltering on deck. God, however, in answer to prayer wonderfully preserved the family. They reached Shanghai safely and, later, Scotland.

After a short period Father returned to China alone for his last missionary tour as he felt that his largely pioneering work in the mountains was not over. Mother remained in Scotland in order to provide a Christian home for the family and to try and ensure that the family grew up within the Christian Church, each with a strong personal faith in Christ.

Our parents were to find that as God had wonderfully protected the family in China, so he was to continue to preserve and guide them all, Tom not least, throughout the years ahead.

For Tom, life was more eventful than for most of his contemporaries. He greatly enjoyed his studies in Edinburgh University, first in classics and philosophy for the M.A. degree and then in theology for the B.D. degree. He worked extremely hard and was a wide and prolific reader. The university librarian apparently had never met a student who borrowed so many books. He often returned home with an entire rucksack full. He read far beyond the books prescribed for his particular study. Some years later, shortly after Tom had entered the parish ministry, a university professor, not knowing that I was Tom's brother, said to me, "Tom Torrance is a mine of learning."

In sport he joined "the Hare and Hounds" at University and took part in cross-country running. He also played hockey at University. At the same time he found time for evangelistic outreach and led and engaged in various

missions. Evangelism was then and throughout his ministry of deep interest and concern. He was a friend of the American evangelist Dr. Billy Graham and was instrumental in inviting him to lead his last mission in Scotland in 1990.

In 1936, while still a student in New College, Edinburgh, he competed successfully for the John Stuart Blackie Fellowship in Greek (classical, Septuagint, and Hellenistic), which was designed to send students to study biblical languages and archaeology in the Middle East, and for which he had spent a year studying Arabic for use in Middle East countries. When he was awarded the Fellowship, he travelled to the Holy Land with another twelve students. They were allowed to go for two months and had to return in time for the B.D. examinations in May. The John Stuart Blackie Fellowship was designed for a year's study, although Tom was given leave of absence from New College only until September when he was required to return to sit the September B.D. exams. So followed an exciting and momentous period of travel and adventure sometimes in company but more often alone through Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and then Turkey and Greece. With our father's restless, enquiring mind and his own adventurous and courageous spirit and the determination to see and discover as much as possible that was of historical and archaeological interest, he went to many places where others would not have ventured. The Middle East was then as now a troubled area of the world. On occasion, as on the visit to Petra, he had to hire an armed guard. Travelling alone with a donkey and an Arab guide through the mountains of Moab to visit Herod's castle at Machaerus, he was suddenly surrounded by Bedouins armed with rifles. It took some time for his Arab guide to persuade them that he was not a Jew but a Scot. When he returned to Jerusalem after several weeks he found that his friends at St Andrew's Hospice had become alarmed for his safety as they had not heard from him for sometime.

He was not long back in Jerusalem before troubles broke out. The Grand Mufti Hussein had just come back from visiting Hitler and was spreading around his poisonous anti-Jewish propaganda provoking an Arab revolt. The great bulk of our British troops, about 120,000, were in Egypt with only small detachments in Palestine and not enough to quell an anticipated Arab revolt. Accordingly, Tom and some seventy others were asked temporarily to join the Palestine Police. They were duly sworn in, given

a rifle and a police armband, declaring that they were Palestinian police. They were told that if they had to fire they should fire at the knees to disable and not to kill. After several weeks of continuous duty he asked to be relieved of his duties so that he could continue his studies in Syria and Lebanon as well as Palestine. His request was granted and with a police escort he travelled to North Palestine. He was determined not to let the troubles prevent him from seeing and exploring as much of Palestine, Lebanon and Syria as he could. However the flames of anti-Semitism were spreading and he kept running into hostility as he kept being mistaken for a Jew. On one occasion an attempt was made on his life when someone flung a knife that flashed over his left shoulder and clattered on the road. In Jordan while travelling in a taxi with two nuns, the taxi stopped to pick up a Bedouin, who sat next to Tom. Suddenly the Bedouin turned to Tom pointing a revolver and shouting "Jew." Tom shouted in Arabic, "Not Jewish! Scottish!" As the Bedouin hesitated Tom and the driver were able to throw him out of the taxi and drive on. At times he wondered if there were attempts to poison him. In Iraq, however, in an attempt to visit Basra his troubles began in earnest. He travelled by train. An Arab revolt was taking place in southern Iraq between Ur and Samawa, although Tom did not know about it at the time. Iraqi Air Force planes were dropping bombs on both sides of the railroad, attacking the dissident Arabs inhabiting that part of Iraq (the Marsh Arabs). Tom was arrested on suspicion of being a Jewish spy. After questioning he tried to escape and find his way to the British Consulate. He was caught, taken back to police Headquarters. Questioned again, he was refused permission to see the British Consulate and sentenced to death. Mercifully, when one of the "judges" was tempted to believe that he was not Jewish but British, he was released and ejected from Iraq, and put on a train for Damascus. Authorities there were astonished that he was travelling alone.

After Syria, he visited Turkey and Greece, where troubles continued to follow him although not of such a dangerous character as he had to-date experienced. He returned in time to sit the B.D. examinations in September in New College. God was surely protecting him for a purpose.

After post-graduate studies in Switzerland under Dr. Karl Barth he was called to teach in Auburn in the U.S.A. At twenty-six he was the youngest

professor in the faculty. Opportunity arose to teach in Princeton but war was breaking out with Germany and being unwilling to be out of the country in a time of war he returned to the UK. His first desire was to offer to be an army chaplain. Regulations at that time did not allow a minister, without ordination and parish experience, to be a chaplain, so he went to Oxford seeking to complete his studies for a doctorate under Karl Barth in Basle. Called to the parish of Alyth in Perthshire in the spring of 1940, he planned, some time later, to volunteer to be a chaplain in the army. His plans were delayed because of the need for an appendix operation and so it was in 1943 that he joined the army under the auspices of "The Church of Scotland Committee for Huts and Canteens." In the months that followed God protected him again and again in a remarkable way through many dangers.

His first appointment was as padre in a Combined Operations Unit with an invasion force sent by Churchill on an ill-fated operation to capture the Greek islands of Cos and Leros and establish a base from which to strike at the Germans occupying Greece. The British discovered in time that the Germans had got wind of the impending invasion and mercifully the operation was called off, for otherwise casualties would have been horrific.

His next appointment was as chaplain to the 10th Indian Division, which included a British Brigade. He was with them for the next two years in Italy until the end of the war. Tom always felt that his best work was at the front line, where soldiers were under the greatest pressure and were more open to the Gospel. With his insistence of endeavouring to be with them, whenever possible, in the most forward positions, his life was miraculously spared many times when others with him were killed or wounded. On one occasion they entered a set of farm buildings behind the German lines. When their presence was discovered, one by one the soldiers with him tried to escape and were killed. Tom waited until dark and returned safely. On another occasion when they were being shelled by enemy fire, they sheltered in a ditch. Tom's helmet was touching the boots of one soldier in front while his boots touched the helmet of the soldier behind. Both the soldier in front and the soldier behind were killed. He was unscathed. As chaplain, Tom was given his own army truck. Normally he slept in it. One night he chose to sleep outside behind a wall. That night a German shell passed through his

truck penetrating where normally his head would have been. Time and again he felt his life was spared as if a higher hand was protecting him. To his own surprise, he was never wounded, when so many around him were either killed or wounded. He escaped, with a few small shrapnel pieces, which in time worked their way out through the skin.

With Tom, at the end of the war, as with so many others, there arose the question, "Why am I alive? Why was my life spared when so many good people, and many Christians, perished?" He believed that God had wonderfully protected him and that God had a purpose for his life. At the end of the war in Europe I received a letter from him when I was in India serving with the 14th Indian Division. In it he expressed the thought that God had preserved his life for a purpose. Following the end of the war a chaplains' conference had been arranged to take place in Assisi in Italy. Tom was invited to participate as a speaker. He travelled there a few days early in order not simply to spend time in preparing his address but in order to spend time in prayer and thanksgiving to God and in order to re-dedicate his life to God for the furtherance of the Gospel.

Tom had a vivid sense that God had some purpose in sparing him through so many successive dangers. The Lord said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I chose you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1.5). Paul, the aged Apostle looking back over his life, said, "God . . . set me apart from birth and called me by his grace" (Gal 1.15). Tom felt there were echoes in his own life of what Jeremiah and Paul had said and that was why God had spared him.

His pastoral work as a chaplain at the front line, talking and ministering to soldiers who were wounded and dying, had strengthened his conviction, if it needed strengthening, of the need to preach Christ and the message of the cross. It persuaded him, more than ever, of the weakness and futility of a liberal theology, which he felt had nothing or little to offer to men who were dying. They wanted to hear that God is what we see in Jesus, a God who loves, is present with us in our suffering, and forgives and redeems us. Often in his lectures to students he mentioned the lessons that he had learned as a chaplain on the battlefield.

He felt that God's hand had been upon him in the way that he directed his studies at Edinburgh University, first in his studies for an M.A. degree particularly in philosophy under Kemp Smith and A. E. Taylor and then in theology for his B.D. degree. Certain professors, particularly at New College, had an immense influence in directing his academic interests. Professor Daniel Lamont, an evangelical and former mathematician and scientist, deepened his interest in the relationship of theology and science. Professor H. R. Macintosh, in the chair of systematic theology, helped to give him a solid biblical and Christological foundation. Both our parents also had a deep influence upon him, spiritually and theologically, introducing him and each of us while still at school to well known works of some of the great Reformers, such as, Luther's commentary on *Galatians* and his *Bondage of the Will*, Calvin's *Institutes* and a great favorite, particularly of our mother, Robert Bruce's *The Mystery of the Lord's Supper: Sermons on the Sacraments* (ed. T. F. Torrance). Tom always called our mother "the theologian of the family" and our father the "evangelist." Mother gave Tom *Credo* by Karl Barth. That was Tom's first book by a theologian who came to have a great influence on his life and theology. H. R. Macintosh encouraged him in reading Karl Barth's theology.

Looking back over his life Tom was very conscious of the hand of God, sparing his life over early adventurous years, guiding the direction of his life and helping and blessing his work as minister of the Gospel as pastor and teacher.

Following his death, several ministers, who were his former students, contacted me to express their sympathy. What they remembered most about Tom, even more than his theological learning, was his pastoral care. They said that whereas they were very grateful for all that Tom had taught them, they were especially grateful for what he had done for them and for their families as a pastor, friend and spiritual guide.

Tom also had a rich sense of humor, although he could be confrontational when arguing points of doctrine, which he passionately believed. As his brother, I will always look on him first and foremost not as an academic but as a loving, caring, pastor, friend, and brother. When I had occasion to telephone him, we sometimes talked for an hour. On these

occasions, or when visiting him, he almost invariably asked at length about each member of my family and grandchildren and assured me that he was praying for them. I, with members of his family and others, give thanks to God for him, not only for all that we learnt from him but also for the many rich memories of his life.