

# Death of the Editor of the *Testimony*

## A brother “beloved . . . and faithful”

THE APOSTLE PAUL commended Tychicus as “a beloved brother and faithful minister of the Lord”. This will be our abiding memory of our Brother Tony Benson, who fell asleep in Christ on 14 May, aged 66.

Tony served as the Publishing Editor of the *Testimony* for twenty-nine years. In this role he has been a faithful minister of God’s Word, warning, exhorting and encouraging the magazine’s readers to delight in God’s law, to seek first God’s Kingdom and His righteousness, and to lay hold on eternal life.

From 1969 until he became Publishing Editor, Tony edited the *Youth* section of the magazine, and his early articles showed him to be a diligent student of Scripture; the series “Discussing Luke’s Gospel”, which ran for two years, gave promise of many more helpful articles to follow. Tony also demonstrated considerable knowledge of both archaeology and history, and his regular contribution of expositional articles gave evidence of his mature grasp of Scripture. A much appreciated series of his articles was published in 1983 as the book *Stormy Wind Fulfilling His Word*.

Tony’s interest in archaeology, seen more recently in the “Out of the earth” reviews, has kept *Testimony* readers up to date with the world of archaeology. His knowledge of history, coupled with careful study of the Word, enabled him to write many helpful articles on prophecy, and equipped him also to run the *Prophecy* section of the magazine effectively.

The role of Israel in the purpose of God led Tony and his wife Sister Mary to visit Israel on a number of occasions. His first-hand knowledge of the Land provided valuable insights that enhanced both his appreciation of Scripture and his articles. Readers will remember the photographs he took in Israel which he often published to illustrate what he wrote.

Tony’s thoughtful Publishing Editor’s column showed an awareness of the world in which we live, the requirements of ecclesial life, and the relevance of God’s Word to everyday situations. He guided the magazine through both easier and more difficult times, and allowed the discussion of different views without compromising fundamental doctrines.

It is perhaps difficult for those not directly involved in producing a monthly magazine to appreciate the inexorable demands that each month brings for the publisher. In cheerfully meeting the regular short-term deadlines Tony was also alive to the longer-term needs for the production of Special Issues and Basic Bible Principles inserts, and alert to the need to maintain a balance of articles to keep readers’ interest. All the pressures were borne uncomplainingly, even during the last eleven years, when the lymphoma that finally took his life was active and being treated. He met his publishing responsibilities even during his recovery from aggressive chemotherapy, revealing a selfless attitude that is an example to us all.

Tony would readily acknowledge the support he received from the magazine’s Section Editors and from the Publishing Committee; but he was helped especially by his wife, Sister Mary. Their mutual commitment has long illustrated the Divine wisdom that provided a help-meet for Adam, thus setting the pattern for marriage now, and also providing a picture of the oneness of mind and purpose for disciples with the Lord Jesus that will find fulfilment in the Kingdom. This co-operation enabled the smooth transition from the printer assembling and printing the magazine to it being completely set up before being sent to the printer for printing and despatch. The result was a significant control of costs for the magazine and improved quality of production and presentation. But the technology that made this possible also raised the workload for both Tony and Mary.

One might think a Publishing Editor’s duties enough. But Tony led a very active ecclesial life at Norwich, being Recording Brother for a number of years, speaking regularly, and supporting campaigns, both in the UK and Holland. Tony wrote in his last Publishing Editor’s column, “. . . much good work is still done, both ecclesially and inter-ecclesially. We should do this as well as we can, but what matters in the end is not how other brethren and sisters regard it but how our Master regards it, and this we shall one day discover”. May it be that, when the Master comes, he also will be pleased to say “Well done” about all the labour from which our Brother Tony now rests.

*The Editors and the Promoting Committee*