



HADDINGTON HOUSE JOURNAL

Volume 9

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Christina Lehmann, E. Edward MacDougall, Stuart Olyott, Gabriel Statom, Carl R. Trueman,
Jack C. Whytock, Alistair I. Wilson

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1. The journal will seek to provide students, laity and ministers with an annual publication to develop their minds and souls through in-depth articles and reviews reflective of the theological basis and ethos of the Trust.
2. The journal will seek to keep readers informed about new books or other publications and thus to be a means of encouraging their stewardship of time and money.
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4. The journal will endeavour to highlight, by way of articles, reviews or book notices, works to assist students in their studies and others in their ongoing training.
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6. The journal will include one article or review devoted to the theme of theological education.
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Editor's Preface

There is still something wonderful about having a matter in print form to hold, read, go back to many times and to find permanently in a library collection. I think of this each time another volume of the *Haddington House Journal* goes to press. It excites me because I see a ministry through print as reaching beyond the moment. There is an impact which is not always easy to assess. Thus, before these journals “leave home”, we pray that God will use them for His special purposes in training and teaching.

I have had some ask me about the reading audience of our *Journal*, and I am pleased to tell you that it is increasingly an international audience. This greatly encourages me. Some of the articles I use with students in classes I teach overseas, and in this issue I believe there will be at least two that I will incorporate in student reading. Also, I believe Dr. Kohl's article, “Radical Transformation in Preparation for the Ministry”, will be of particular interest to many of the leaders in colleges around the world involved in training and educating the next generation of Christian leaders.

Thanks once again to all who contribute in many ways to the writing, peer review, development and distribution of our *Journal*. I believe there is a strong missiological and practical focus to this year's *Journal* and particularly want to encourage all student preachers and pastors to read Dr. Stuart Olyott's article, “Boring Sermons – and How *Not* to Preach Them!”

We send this volume in prayer that the Body may be edified.

J. C. Whytock,
Editor

Radio Message: Word of Hope, Psalm 23

Ewen Edward MacDougall*

**Rev. "Ted" MacDougall was born November 19, 1935, in Charlottetown, PEI. He was the minister from 1962 to the time of his death in March, 2003, for the Free Church of Scotland, Eastern Charge, in PEI. In the early years of his ministry, starting in 1968, Ted was also involved in the work of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, for which he latterly served as Atlantic Divisional Director. In 1979 he teamed up with radio producer-announcer Loren Fevens to broadcast the gospel message, "Word of Hope". This programme reached countries around the world via short wave radio, including Lebanon, West Africa and the former Soviet Union.*

This week we will consider one of the most famous portions of scripture in the whole Bible – the Twenty-Third Psalm. Let's get our Bibles and turn to the Old Testament. We will read the psalm first and then go back over it in detail. Reading from the first verse of the Twenty-Third Psalm (KJV):

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. ² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. ³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. ⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. ⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

This beautiful psalm is by far the most popular of all in the Bible. The Lord's Prayer, or the Our Father, is the only other scripture that surpasses it in being well known. It is called a Psalm of David and has

its origin from the “sweet singer of Israel”, who himself was a shepherd as well as a king. It is an interesting perspective because it is a sheep’s-eye view of God. We know that this is a common biblical theme, as the people of the Lord are called “the sheep of His pasture”. This theme is fulfilled in the coming of Christ who calls Himself the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep.

It is interesting that the shepherd theme in its attractiveness finds a source in classical literature. A part of ancient Greece was called Arcadia and was known for its gentle, pastoral landscape populated by simple, shepherding people. This simple lifestyle was idealized and picked up later in the Romantic period. It became a poetic image popular in paintings and other works of art. This was part of the quest of the period for peace of soul by returning to the simple things of life. People are not above this today, but there is so much poverty and privation in the world it is difficult to idealize it. Our media make it hard to be wealthy and ignorant.

The peace they sought in classical and ancient times, and even down to the present, was a very illusive thing. To truly find it, we have to go back to the land of Israel and a shepherd boy singing to his God. The God of the universe has uniquely revealed Himself to the house of Israel, and the peace that mankind has sought over the centuries is to be found in a spiritual knowledge of Him. This psalm comes out of the life experience of David and is far more profound than the Arcadian dreams of the Romantics.

Let’s begin our look at the psalm and consider verse one: “The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.” In the New Testament Jesus declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd and calls us to come to Him. This means that if we really want to know the Lord as our Shepherd, we have to come to His final revelation in Christ, the Son of David. The Messiah, or Christ, was prophesied to come to the earth and lead His people like a shepherd.

Let’s turn to Isaiah chapter forty and verse ten in our Bibles and read some of the prophecy. Reading from verse ten:

¹⁰ Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. ¹¹ He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

The Christ is come and calls us to come to Him, so that when we believe on Him, we can truly say: "The Lord is my shepherd." The wonderful knowledge of the Christ is saving in its content. We are given eternal life and the inheritance of the kingdom of God. This is the peace that we have been looking for. That means we can truly say: "I shall not want."



Verse two: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters." Tender green pastures are not so common in the Middle East that they are taken for granted. In a dry land a well-watered pasture is a choice blessing for sheep. The faithful shepherd always plans the journey with his sheep so that they will get tender pasture to feed upon. So with our souls the Lord has provided grace and mercy and food through His Word to take us on our journey through life. There is no higher calling than to be able to feed the people of the Lord through the Word of God and the sacraments.

Another figure is shown to be the quenching of the thirst. Jesus reveals Himself to the woman of Samaria in the Gospel of John, chapter four, and speaks of Himself as being able to give her the water

of life, or living water. This is without question an oblique reference to the River of Life which was lost to man when he was banished from the garden of paradise. The Lord is thus able to lead us to the River of Life and enable us to drink of it. We can find the fulfillment of this in the last chapter of the last book of the Bible, Revelation. In the Twenty-Third Psalm, the still waters are the still waters of a river like the Jordan. Sheep cannot drink out of a rushing river any more than we can drink out of a gushing fire hose. The Lord brings us to the still waters of a river backwater so we can drink.

Verse three: "He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." It is clear now that the food given to the sheep is on a spiritual level, for the soul is restored. God alone can do this, for in our natural state our souls are sick through sin. They are empty and without nourishment. God alone has provided this in the coming of Jesus Christ. In other words, Jesus is the fulfillment of this psalm and portrays a multiple role in that fulfillment. For example, He is the Good Shepherd as well as the Messiah, the Son of David, heir to the throne of Israel and heaven. He is also "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world...". He is thus the final Lamb of sacrifice and can Himself say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." Moreover He is the food for the sheep as the Bread of Life and the Source of the River of Life. He brings us His peace as the peace that passeth understanding and so fulfills the rest for the soul that was the desire even of the Romantics and the Greek poets. God leads us in the paths of truth and righteousness, for His name embraces the final absolutes of truth and goodness and love.

Verse four: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." To get to the quiet river valley in Palestine, it was necessary to descend El Ghor, a precipitous way often called the Valley of the Shadow. The shepherd went ahead of the sheep just as Christ has gone to death before us and now leads us through the pathway. We need not fear death if we have a true knowledge of Christ, for He promises He will neither leave nor forsake us.

The rod has been interpreted as the protection against anything that would hurt the sheep, while the staff is a symbol of deliverance and support. The shepherd's crook so often seen is of just the right size to go about a sheep's neck without choking it to free it or lift it from danger. This is a comfort to the sheep. So the Lord is able to deliver us from sin and to protect us against spiritual enemies.

Verse five: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over."

The sheep are fed while the silhouette of the wolf is plainly seen against the rising moon. Yet they are safe...Jesus says that no man is able to pluck them out of His hand. He is our great Defender.

Paul's letter to the Romans says in chapter eight, "If God be for us, who can be against us." And again, "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." He did the same for Israel in the wilderness journeys while their enemies surrounded them. So also He does for us as believers in Christ.

The anointing of the head with oil has been interpreted as fulfilled by the anointing of the believer with the Spirit of God. Every Christian should pray to be filled by the Holy Spirit. The oil was put upon the head of the sheep by the shepherd to heal any wounds that might have been received during the day. In a far deeper way, the Holy Spirit is our Comforter and Healer of wounds upon the heart. By His filling us, we are given peace and joy and love that overflow our personalities and become a blessing to others. We are given power to overcome sin and the temptations of our daily life. Truly the cup runs over as the Lord anoints His flock.

Verse six: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Goodness and mercy have been likened to two sheep dogs that constantly follow the flock and keep it in line at the Shepherd's orders. It is an apt illustration, for the goodness and mercy of God truly follow us all the way through our lives and are a great blessing. They hold us together when we might wander and then lead us back to the Shepherd.

So we have come to the end of the Shepherd's Psalm. It is of little use to us to read this psalm or even to memorize it unless we truly seek the Lord as our Shepherd and our Guide. Let's not leave this to another time, but even now as we listen to the broadcast, let us call upon Jesus to come into our hearts and forgive our sin. Then we will be as the Scripture says, sheep who have gone astray but have now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. May God bless the Shepherd's Psalm to our souls today.

Dear Heavenly Father, bless us today as the sheep who are returning to the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Guide us by the Spirit to pray and come to Him. In Jesus name, amen.

Boring Sermons – and How *Not* to Preach Them!

Stuart Olyott*

**Stuart Olyott, born in Pakistan in 1942, was brought up in Asia; Chester, England; and West Wales. He has held pastorates in London, Liverpool and Lausanne and is currently Pastoral Director of the Evangelical Movement of Wales. Dr. Olyott conducted two homiletic seminars at Haddington House, Charlottetown, on October 28, 2006. We trust that what follows will allow you to “listen in” to the first of these. Despite some editing of the transcription, we have retained the informal, spoken English and interactive style, as his seminar was in part a living demonstration of some of his points. In addition to the normal use of italics, vocal contributions by the participants are also italicized.*

We are going to talk about preaching. This is not because we are all preachers, not because we all should be preachers, not because we all want to be preachers, but because all of us here believe in the importance of preaching. Otherwise there would be no reason for us to be present. Preaching and God’s cause on earth are like conjoined twins. What happens when one twin dies? They both die eventually. That’s the way it is. When preaching dies, the cause of God dies. You can prove that from Scripture and from history. And when the cause of God dies, preaching dies. The two are so intimately joined together that you can’t separate them. So anybody who is interested in the cause of God on earth will be interested in the cause of preaching, even if they are not preachers. It’s something we will all be interested in if we care about God’s cause in this world.

In approaching the subject before us, I am going to ask you to consider thirteen points:

Number 1: Reflect on when you last switched off

We are talking about boring sermons. Can you please tell me if you’ve never heard a boring sermon? Honestly, is there anybody here who has never heard a boring sermon? No one? And that’s the way it

is, isn't it? So what do you do when you're bored? (This is an interactive session, so please chip in with your replies.) Some of you switch over, you switch channels, don't you? The sermon is boring; the preacher is going on and on. So you switch to another channel. What do you think about? Sometimes it's your grocery list. In my wife's case it's the roast potatoes. Did she turn the oven on high enough or too high? Will the potatoes be burnt when we get back? People who don't switch over, switch off. We have an old saying in English, "Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits." And that's what some people do. They just sit. The preacher is preaching and that's all they're doing. They're breathing, their vital life functions are continuing and that's all you can say.

Now what else happens when you're bored? How do you actually feel when you're bored? *Restless*? Yes, some people do. *Tired*? Yes, some people actually sleep when they're bored. *Discontented*? Maybe even angry. And what do you really want when the preacher is boring? You want real spiritual meat, or want to go home or just want to be out of there. Boredom is a terrible thing. Think of it, there is only one infallible Book. A man is opening it; he is proclaiming it, and as he proclaims the only infallible Book in the world, people are bored. I think that that must border on sin.

What else caused you to switch off or switch over? Just think of the last boring sermon you heard. *Repetition*. Yes – so you say to yourself, "He's said that already", and you go off on another channel, or you just turn off. What else? *A monotonous voice*. There is actually a group of Particular Baptists in England who believe that it's essential to be monotonous. In every sermon they speak in a monotone all the time and aren't allowed to look at anyone or show any particular expression. Well, their churches are dying. Yes, a monotonous voice. What else? *You can't hear*, Yes; anything else? *No passion*. So you feel that the words are coming out, but that the man isn't in the message. And so we could go on.

Now, if you would just reflect on *what* caused you to switch off, or *when* you switched off, really you don't need the rest of this seminar. Just by that process of analysis, you will become a more interesting preacher.

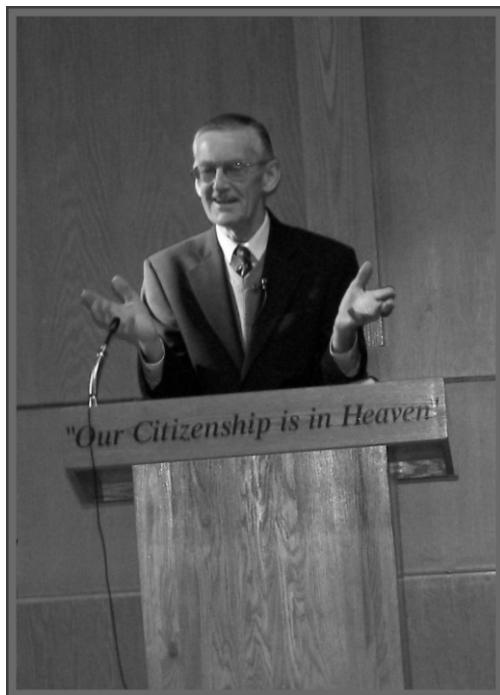
At this point I have to say something. There is a difference between a critical spirit and a critical faculty. God commands that we have a critical faculty. In other words, God commands that we weigh up what is right, what is wrong; what is better, what is worse; what is helpful, what is unhelpful. All the time we are to put everything through our mental processes in the light of His Word and to make a judgment

about what is best and what is less helpful. That is commanded. So I'm encouraging you to exercise a critical faculty while you listen. But there is such a thing as a critical spirit. A critical spirit is where you actually degrade, diminish and despise the preacher because he's doing what he's doing or not doing what he should be doing. You're belittling him in your mind; you're looking down on him. That is sinful. He has probably prepared and prayed and is doing the best he can in good conscience. When we listen to preaching, we must be very careful to exercise our critical faculty but not to do it with a critical spirit, because we don't want to belittle any of God's servants or dishonor any praying man in the world.

Number 2: Learn communication skills

Our next point: learn communication skills. There are ways of getting through with words, and there are ways of not getting through with words. For example, "three blind mice" is better than "a tertiary number of visually impaired rodents". One phrase is understood immediately and one is not. Our forefathers used to put it like this: "There are efficient modes of preaching the gospel, and inefficient modes"¹

So there are ways of getting through with words and there are ways that stop our words getting through. Do you agree with that? So why is it so? It is because of the way that the human soul has been constructed. And who constructed it? Well, God did, of course.



¹ The quotation is from Henry C. Fish (1820-77) of Newark, New Jersey, in his article "Power in the Pulpit", which appeared in *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (1862). This article was later reprinted as a booklet (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, not dated) where the quotation is on p.2.

The point I'm trying to make is that the fact that some speech gets through, while some does not, is because of the way that God has ordered His universe. In other words, communication skills are God-given. Now the moment I say that in Wales, the audience rises in uproar. Someone immediately says, "What about 1 Corinthians 2:1-5? Doesn't Paul say there that communication skills don't matter a straw? They don't count at all. How can you say that communication skills should be learned when Paul says he doesn't use them?"

Let's look, then, at 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 right now. This reading is from the New King James Version, North American edition:²

¹ And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. ³ I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

"There you are", say the objectors, "Paul just relied on the Holy Spirit. He didn't care at all about communication skills, so why are you going on about this?"

How would you answer that? Well, first of all we note that Paul's paragraph is a very good example of skilled communication. But, for the Greeks, the point of communication skills was to attract public admiration. People would sit there and listen to the speaker and say, "Did you notice the way he pronounced 'Mesopotamia'?" Greek rhetoric was designed to make sure that you were admired or respected. The whole point of Christian preaching is, of course, to make sure that Jesus Christ is admired and respected.

The other thing about Greek communication skills was that they were manipulative. It is possible to speak in such a way that you get people to comply, not because they want to but because you've manipulated them. Now, excuse a little bit of drama here, won't you? Here is a little child of three or four who is disobedient. Do you know that you can get this child to do more or less what you want? Do you know that if you speak very softly and kindly to this child, then shout

² *The Holy Bible, New King James Version*, Copyright 1982, by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

harshly at him, then speak very gently to him again, and just continue alternating in that way, eventually he will break? This was precisely the technique used by the Gestapo in their interrogations during the Second World War. Eventually the child will break and will comply. He will do what he's told, not because he's an obedient child, not because he wants to obey, but simply because there are ways of talking which are manipulative.

What Paul is saying is, "I renounce all that. That's dishonest. I don't peddle God's word. I don't draw attention to myself, but to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. When I speak, I actually speak in weakness, in fear, in trembling. I speak in such a way that if you're converted, then it's obvious that the Spirit of God has done it." But Paul does not say that he renounces communication skills. He renounces the sort of oratory that was around at the time.

I would like all preachers to learn good communication skills. How would you learn them? *Practise them*. Yes, but how can I practise them if I don't know them? *Listen to good sermons*. Yes, we are actually back to number one in reverse, aren't we? Certain sermons switch you on, don't they? So, especially if they're on tape or video or DVD, why not listen to them again and ask, "What was it about that sermon that got through so well? Is there anything I can learn about communication?" That's one way of learning communication skills. What's another way of learning them? *Study how Jesus did it*. Yes, he was the epitome of good communication. *Ministering like the Master*³, a little book I've written, has a chapter on how our Lord communicated in the Sermon on the Mount, and He has some very clear principles in mind. How else could you learn communication skills? *Study them*. How? Where would I get the books from? When I'm travelling I stop at airports and stations and places, and I look around for books on communication. Yes, some of them are nonsense, but some of them are not, and most of them are a mixture. I like reading books like that. While others are reading great big books on the details of Puritan theology or on subjects like neo-Platonism, I confess that I am usually reading on how to get through!

Are there any other ways of learning these skills? When you're speaking in public, there are times when you're conscious that you are getting through, and there are times when you're conscious that you are not. It's like street lights. Do you ever see the street lights going out one at a time? That's what sometimes happens when you're preaching.

³ Stuart Olyott, *Ministering like the Master: Three Messages for Today's Preachers* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2003).

You see people's eyes glazing over – that one, then this one, and then this one. Soon one of your hearers nods off, and you realize that you're not getting through. Just by analysing your own preaching, in fact, you can learn communication skills. But they have to be learned! And frankly, in most seminaries, but not all, they are never even mentioned.

Number 3: Be Expository

Be expository. Let the Word of God do the work. I love to see a congregation being confronted by God's Word. Now what are some of the pictures which God's Word uses when it speaks about itself? *A sword*. Just think of that! It pierces right through, doesn't it? Please suggest some more. *Light*. Let it shine. It gets through. It sheds light. Do other pictures come to your mind?. *Bread*. It feeds. *Life*. Think of that. *Hammer* – some things can't be broken any other way, can they? Any more? *The gentle dew falling down* – refreshment. So let the congregation be confronted by the Word of God itself.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I live in Wales. In Wales there is almost no expository preaching left. This is what tends to happen. A brother stands in the pulpit. (Please remember what I said about a critical spirit and our critical faculty. Here I am trying to exercise my critical faculty.) A brother opens the Bible in the pulpit, and he tells you what he sees in the passage. That is not exposition! Take the story of Naaman. Do you know the story? The preacher tells you that he sees someone who's got leprosy. Leprosy resembles what? Sin. This person looks for a cure, and he finds it in Israel through God's word. He's told to wash and be clean and out he comes. We're sinners, we need cleansing, God's Word tells us how to get it. We simply have to obey God's Word. When we obey God's Word, we're wonderfully cleansed in a way that we can never even begin to imagine. And that's how the sermon goes.

THAT IS NOT EXPOSITION! In Luke 4:27 Jesus uses 2 Kings 5 to tell us that the real meaning of the passage is not that. You could certainly use the passage to *illustrate* cleansing, but that is not exposition. The point is that, apart from a small minority, the people who are called the people of God have rejected Him. From completely outside the people of God comes a man who enters into all their covenant blessings by simple faith in the word of God. He actually goes back to his homeland with two sack-loads of Israeli earth. A believer who is a Gentile is grafted into Israel and becomes a member of the true Israel, whereas the physical Israel has rejected God and proves itself therefore not be the true Israel. That's Jesus' lesson. That's why

the passage is there. Exposition is telling the people why the passage is there and what it is actually saying – not what the preacher sees in it. So we need to be expository.

I was brought up in churches that used the old King James Version. It's a wonderful version, isn't it? It was translated in 1611, but most people who use it are using the 1769 revision. When I was a boy, expository sermons went like this. The preacher opened his Bible and read a passage filled with words like "didst", "doest", "dost", "fain" and "wouldst". Now, please understand that I am not mocking that honoured version at all. It's a great version. But in expository sermons, the minister would read from the Scriptures in Elizabethan English and then explain the passage in modern English. That was all there was to it. So all he had done was to translate older English into modern English, which he then called exposition. Exposition is not that! Exposition is telling people what the passage means and what it means to them. And when the hearers go out of the church, they say to each other, "Do you know, he didn't say anything that wasn't in the passage. Do you know, everything he said came from the passage or by implication from the passage. Do you know, he preached the passage." And there's a power, a unique power in the Word of God, isn't there? Try it with children. Tell children a story about a railway. Go on, make one up. Now tell them (just as it is) a story out of the Bible, and notice the difference. There will be something compelling about the second which was missing from the first. I repeat, exposition is letting the Bible loose, telling people what it means and what it means to them.

So I'm pleading with you to be expository. Preach the Bible in such a way that you stir up thought and so that your hearers go away thinking about the passage – whether that passage be very small, small, medium or large.

Number 4: Use Story

Use story. What is a story? *It's an illustration.* Not all illustrations are stories, though all stories are illustrations. *An event.* An event or events are one of the two ingredients of a story. What's the other one? People, personality. The personality could be a fox, but you give it a personality. It could be a bat. It could be a tree. It could be a person. The event could be real or invented, as could the personalities. But you've got to have a personality and you've got to have an event to have a story. Tell me a short story in two words. "*Jesus wept.*" That's the shortest story you could ever possibly tell, isn't it? When we say "Jesus", of course, our minds are flooded with all sorts of meaning. But

there's the person. "Wept" – we all know what that means. There's the event. Of course, there is a lot more that we want to know now, isn't there? Why was He there? Why did He weep? But that, nonetheless, is a story. It has all the elements of a story.

All the world loves a story. This is true at every stage of history, in every generation, and of every language group, culture and age group. Everybody loves a story. Tell me why. *It's interesting.* But what's so interesting about a story? If I just say, "Fellow humans, please listen to my peroration", it's not half as interesting as a story is. *You can identify with a story.* You can put yourself into it, or your imagination allows you to be a spectator. What else? *You actually live what you're hearing.* Yes. Everyone loves a story.

Name me some preachers who have used story. *Jesus!* Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God Himself, almost all His teaching is story. Nathan the prophet, "You're the man." That was the conclusion of the story. What a story! Tell me some preachers who used or use story. *Spurgeon.* Yes, he was a powerful nineteenth-century Baptist preacher in London, and virtually every line you read of Spurgeon has a picture in it. It's very hard to find a line without some form of picture in it. Constantly he reverts to story. Anybody else? *Billy Graham.* I know that he uses stories, because I can remember some that I heard from him when I was a young man. Some of them were very funny, and all of them were helpful.

Have you ever heard of John Chrysostom, "Golden Mouth", the great preacher of the fourth century?⁴ He constantly told stories. And what about Christmas Evans?⁵ Some people believe that he was the greatest Welsh preacher who has ever lived. Guess what day of the year he was born on. Yes, he was born on Christmas day. He was quite a brutal young man, and in a fight he lost an eye. (Do you notice that this is a story? Has it made you interested?) Shortly after that he was converted and became a preacher, but actually he was a pretty boring preacher. His doctrine was sound, his exposition was solid, but his manner was rather dull. Listening to him was like trying to eat meat

⁴ John Chrysostom (345?-407) was the most popular of the Greek Fathers in the Church and an extraordinarily powerful preacher. After years of denouncing sin in both the Church and among the civil authorities, he eventually became Archbishop of Constantinople in 398. He died as a result of a forced march imposed on him by the Empress Eudoxia.

⁵ Christmas Evans (1766-1838) was a Baptist preacher whose name, until recently, was a household word in Wales. He was largely responsible for the evangelization of the Isle of Anglesey, off the north coast of the Principality.

without cutting it up. The problem was that Christmas Evans didn't know what to do about it. Then one day he heard a little, tiny hunchback called Robert Roberts. This little hunchback stood up and preached exactly the same sort of solid material, but he used story. From that moment on Christmas Evans was set free, and he became the John Bunyan of Wales. If you ever get a chance to read any of Christmas Evans' sermons, do it. You will see how again and again he teaches everything from the everlasting covenant to our final entry into glory after our safe acquittal at the judgment seat, and he does it all by means of narrative. It is wonderful! He used story. There is always a way to picture what we have to say.

How could you learn to be a story teller? *Have children?* Yes, because if you have to explain things to children, sometimes difficult things, story is often the way. But not always. An eight-year old once asked me to explain to him the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility, although he didn't use those terms. You can't do that with story. But story is the usual way of teaching children. Have children around you and start talking to children. You'll have to use story to get through to many of them on many subjects.

How else can you learn to tell stories? *Read good stories.* Where are the best stories? *In the Bible.* How much of the Bible is story? Go on, give a guess, a fraction. I should think well over half of the Bible is story. It's quite amazing. Doesn't that speak for itself?

Our Lord told stories. He talked about things that happened at home and things that happened at the synagogue or at the temple. He talked about everyday objects and everyday experiences. He told stories that related directly to people's experiences. He didn't tell stories about talking animals, though there are two talking animals in the Bible. He didn't tell stories about fairies. I'm not saying that we should never read fairy stories, but He didn't use that in His preaching. But He did tell stories that tuned in directly to the experiences of the people. So you've got to know your people, haven't you? If you are preaching on Prince Edward Island, it's no good telling stories about leopards prowling about the hut, is it? Now what troubles me about many preachers that I meet is that they tell stories from 16th century Geneva, or 19th century London, but never seem to be able to tell a story about an exploding airbag or a cellular phone or a satellite or a Pepsi-Cola vending machine. Somehow they seem to be more tuned in to how one of Spurgeon's church members managed to sell some ducks than they are to the twenty-first century world in which God has called us to live. I want to plead with you then: please use stories that the people in front of you can relate to.

Number 5: Ask Questions

Number five is “ask questions”. What is a question? *It is a request for information*, yes, or for an opinion. What happens to you when the preacher asks a question? *You start thinking*. You give a response. In listening to preaching, it is generally expected that the congregation will remain silent and that there will be no vocal responses to questions. But they still give an inside response. What happens then to the sermon? Instead of becoming a monologue, it becomes...*a dialogue*. And you gave me all those answers by means of questions!

Why don't preachers use more questions? *They don't understand preaching?* Well, maybe. If you're a preacher and you see the lights going out (remember that? click, click, click as they go out?), there's a surefire way to get the congregation to life again, and that's to ask them a few questions. I have a friend who is not very good at this, so he just has one question which he asks. If he has really lost the congregation, he comes round in front of the pulpit and says, “Excuse me, but when was this church started?” It always works, but of course if you preach regularly in the same church, you'll have to vary that!

How many of the preachers that you know actually engage their hearers with questions? So whose example are you going to follow? Will it be that of the preacher whose monologue style pours volumes of information into passive ears, or that of the preacher who teaches precisely the same truths by means of questions?

Whose example are you going to follow? There is always a way to put what you have to say in question form. Let's take a simple statement like. “The door is brown.” For myself, I would prefer to say, “What colour would you say that door is?” Everyone would turn and look and say inside themselves, “It's brown.” I would then say, “Yes, it's brown.” This approach teaches the same information but stimulates more response, doesn't it?

Let's try one. “When Paul and his missionary team arrived in Europe, they didn't preach in Neapolis but went straight on to Philippi.” Now teach that same information by use of questions. Try it. How about this: “When Paul came to Europe, did he come alone? No, he had a missionary team with him. And where do you think they docked? It was at a town called Neapolis, right by the coast. But they didn't stay there. Do you know why? Nor do I. So where was the next nearest place which was truly important? It was Philippi, which was a colony, and they set out for it at once.” This carries the same information, doesn't it? But I think it's a little easier for most people to grasp.

Let's try one more. "As our Lord crossed the lake, He saw Capernaum." Put as a question, this sentence would go like this: "What did Jesus see as He crossed the lake? Capernaum. Now some of you are saying, 'What on earth is Capernaum?'" There it is again; we have taught the same information, but we have done it with more effect simply by using questions.



The Bible contains lots of questions. How long would it take to read Matthew 5, 6 and 7 out loud, that is, the Sermon on the Mount? Probably fifteen minutes, or if you're slow like me, twenty minutes. How many questions do you think there are in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Have a guess. Well, the correct answer is that it depends on your translation, because question marks didn't exist in the original Greek. But in our modern versions there are nineteen or twenty. Now here's an easy one. On average, how many questions did our Lord use per minute? Yes, one question per minute. What's interesting about the Sermon on the Mount is that our Lord uses single questions, and then suddenly He starts using a couple, and nearer the end He's got two or three together in clusters. Remember that in His preaching, our Lord, the Son of God, used about a question a minute.

How long does your pastor preach for? Forty minutes or maybe thirty? Next time you hear him preach, just note down how many questions he asks (exercising your critical faculty, but shunning a critical spirit!) Get a piece of paper, and every time he asks a question put a little tick. Just do it once or twice, and then say, "Pastor, your score today was three. Pastor, there has been an improvement – thirteen." Just do it for three weeks, please. I think that would be enough. You don't want to kill the man!

Number 6: Keep eye contact

Next we talk about eye contact. Now we are in the West. If I were speaking in Africa, I might say something a little different about eye contact, because in certain parts of the world, as you may know, when an inferior meets a superior, it is extremely arrogant for the inferior to look the superior in the eyes. But we're not in Africa; we're in the West. What effect does it have on you when someone who's talking to you doesn't look you in the eyes? *It's rude*. Yes, and what happens to you? You turn off or you turn over. I once played table tennis in the school library. That wasn't a great offence, was it? But it was against the school rules. There were no bats, so we used books. There was no net, so we used books. There was a table, though it wasn't quite the right dimensions (note, this is a story!) The result of playing tennis in the library was that I was summoned before the headmaster. Now, our headmaster was a pretty frightening figure. He wore a long, puffy, black academic gown – enough to terrify anybody – with a big hood which was bright red at the back, and he wore one of these mortarboards. He would walk down the corridor with a cane – and I don't mean a walking stick, but an implement that leaves a mark on a child's posterior. He was a terrifying figure. Because of my offence, I was told that I must appear before him at two o'clock in the afternoon to answer to him for having played table tennis in the library. I had never been in his study before, and it was extremely frightening. In due time the secretary ushered me in, and there, to the right, was a cane rack. Behind the desk, facing me, was the headmaster in all his finery. I stood there, doing the best I could to look like a penitent child, and he started speaking. But he didn't look up. He told me what a terrible fellow I was, but he still didn't look up. He told me what punishment I would have to bear, but he still didn't look up. Then he told me to go, and I went. During the whole proceedings, he never saw my face once. What was the effect? I was never scared of him again. I could walk down the corridor, and he didn't know it was me. He had no idea that the Olyott he had spoken to in his study was that fellow walking the other way. I lost all respect for him. And what happens when a preacher doesn't look at the congregation?

Do you know that it is only women who have ears, even though they are often hidden? Do you know that men and boys don't have ears? Well, they have ears, but they're only for decoration. Do you know that to speak to a man or a boy you have got to speak into his eyes – because that's where his hearing is? The reason why many boys and men switch off during the sermon is because the preacher never

looks at them. My mother would say to me, “Look at me when I’m speaking to you!” And I did! She knew that she wouldn’t get through to me any other way. Do you ever go to the bank and the teller is there. She just had another customer, and another, and now it’s your turn? You stand there, and she’s waiting to hear what you have to say but is not looking up. Does that ever happen to you? For myself, I just stand there. At last, after a long pause, she looks up. Now you have met her, haven’t you? You are finally in touch. And, by the way, you get better service!

We don’t feel we’ve met people until we’ve looked them in the eye. And if the preacher doesn’t look you in the eye, you don’t feel that you have connected, do you? One of the reasons that people are bored is because the preacher doesn’t look at them. Those who believe that they have got something really important to say look at those they are talking to.

In some of our Welsh churches we have galleries, and the galleries aren’t only to the right and left and in front of the preacher, but behind him as well. Do you know who sits in the gallery behind him? The people who don’t want to be seen by the preacher. One of the most astonishing things for them is when the preacher turns around, looks them in the eyes and speaks to them directly! That wakes them up.

Are any of you school teachers? When Johnny is misbehaving, isn’t the first thing you do to tell him to look at you? Then you’ve got him. Why are some preachers embarrassed to look at the congregation? *They feel intimidated*. Yes. Or perhaps they are unnecessarily bound to their manuscript, which is, of course, why sermon notes should never be written out in full – but that is not our subject today. It may be that they are afraid that they’ll be distracted and lose their thought. In this case we can say that they are more concerned about getting the sermon *out* than getting it *in*.

How would you help a young preacher who has a problem with eye contact? What could you tell him that would help him to get over his embarrassment at looking people in the eyes? Give me a few tips, please. *Look over their heads?* Well ... yes. Just as long as he doesn’t *preach* over their heads, that’s okay. If he is really embarrassed, a simple trick is not to look people in the eyes, but to look at the top of their noses. They will never know that that is what he is doing, and he won’t be embarrassed again. Is that deceitful? I don’t think so, and it will get him out of the bad habit of not looking at people.

I’m half way through, and want to speed up a little bit now. . . .

Number 7: Use *spoken* English

Do you know the differences between rugby and soccer? Do you know the similarities between them? *Both games require a ball.* Yes, and both involve lots of kicking. *They are team sports.* Are there any other similarities between them? *There are goals.* They are different shaped goals, but there are goals. *There's a referee.* *There are two teams.* *There are lines.* There are plenty of similarities, aren't there? Now, ladies and gentlemen, spoken English and written English also enjoy lots of similarities. But is rugby soccer? Tell me some of the differences between them. *The shape of the ball.* In rugby you can carry the ball in certain circumstances. *Rugby has more contact,* and so on. So there are lots of differences, aren't there?

Spoken English is not written English. Written English is not spoken English. Spoken English uses short sentences. Why? It is because the spoken language is not like a video recording; there is no rewind button. If I come to a long paragraph in a book and I don't get it the first time, I can read it again, can't I? And then I can read it yet again, if I need to. But in a spoken sentence, I can't do that. If someone is at the front speaking, I can't interrupt and say, "Excuse me. Can you say that again?"

Spoken English uses ordinary words, very ordinary words. Why? In order to be clear. The spoken language has got to be understood straight away. If you're reading a textbook and you come to a word you don't understand, you can re-read the sentence until you get hold of it. But you can't do that with spoken English. In addition, spoken English uses lots of repetition. What would happen with a book if you found lots of repetition? You'd put it down and think you'd wasted your money.

Now here's a more difficult point: spoken English uses mostly the active voice. "I hit the dog" is the active voice. "The dog was hit by me" is the passive voice. Spoken English prefers the active voice. Now can you see the preacher's problem? Preachers read. They read a lot. They are always at it. They read books, articles and websites. With all this reading in mind, they then write notes. At last, when they come to preach, they end up speaking in *written* English...and bore people. You've got to keep the style spoken. The Church of Jesus Christ is an oral society, not a written society, not a literary society. Almost nothing should be written in the Christian Church, almost nothing. I said *almost* nothing. What should be written? God's Word, and we can manage with little else.

The style has got to be conversational – not aloof, not distant, and certainly not made up of shouting and bawling, except just occasionally

to make a point. Have you ever listened to a preacher who shouts all the time? What happened to you? You tuned out. In fact, with many modern young people, when they hear a preacher shouting they start looking for the TV remote control. They feel that they ought to have some sort of control over the volume, and when they discover that they haven't, they are overcome with a sense of frustration. We've got to use spoken English, and spoken English is the language that is usually used between friend and friend.

How can you learn spoken English? *Speak*. Yes. How can I learn not to use written English in the pulpit? *Don't use a manuscript. Get to know your people*. Any other tips? *Stay away from technical words*. Yes, don't normally use any words which ordinary people don't use in ordinary life.

When I speak to ministerial students, I make them do little exercises. For example, I make them explain something to me in words of one syllable, because in spoken English ninety percent of the words only have one or two syllables. This doesn't apply to French and certainly doesn't apply to Welsh, but it does apply to English. Avoid long and unusual words. "Marmalade" should be the longest word used in the pulpit, apart from the word "syllable" that I have just mentioned! So what are we to do with a word like "justification"? Explain it. There are certain technical words that we have to use if we are going to properly teach the faith, but we must explain them. This does not alter the fact that *spoken* English is to be our language whenever we preach.

Number 8: Take care of your voice

Sometimes when I'm in church, I look at the preacher and he's not singing any of the psalms or hymns. There he is at the front, leading the service. Everybody else is singing, but he is just standing there. Sometimes I ask such preachers, "Why didn't you sing the psalms and hymns today?" The normal reply is, "I was saving my voice for the sermon." We have three words to describe that answer – "stuff and nonsense". The very best thing you can do if you're going to preach is to sing the hymns and psalms and to sing them with a full voice. In this way you warm up the instrument. Be like those who play the horn, cornet, trumpet or trombone; warm up the instrument. Get your voice's lubrication flowing to prepare it for the preaching that follows. What's good for singing is what's good for speaking, and what's good for proper speaking is what's good for singing. Sing the hymns! That's one way of looking after your voice.

Another thing that lots of preachers do is to hide in their pulpit a glass of water. (Here Dr. Olyott pulled out an almost empty glass from behind the pulpit of the church where the seminar was being held.) This is actually a very bad sign, isn't it, because this glass is almost empty, which suggests that last Sunday's preacher drank from it. If he drank it after the sermon, then full marks to him. But if he drank it during the sermon, he should be severely reprov'd, because a commandment all preachers should respect is – *never drink water!* This rule runs contrary to popular wisdom but is extremely important. Why is that? It is because God made your voice to be self-lubricating. I listened to a preacher recently who's been preaching for forty years. He's a very good preacher, a very experienced preacher. He led the service with a beautiful voice that made the building resonate. Then just before he preached, he drank a whole glass of water. What happened for the first ten minutes of the sermon? He coughed and spluttered and croaked. Of course he did, because he had washed away all the natural juices which God had given him, and it took ten minutes for his voice to recover. What do you do if you feel dry as a preacher? I mean physically dry. You keep going, because basically it's just a sign of nerves, and your voice will self-lubricate. It will be okay. Just keep going. Look after your voice.

Now let's look at the mouth. Here are the teeth, at the front of the mouth. Here's the roof of your mouth. Here's the tongue. Is the picture clear? When we speak English (and this doesn't apply to every language), we should feel the top of the mouth near the front vibrate or resonate. If we don't, it is because we are speaking incorrectly. How could you learn to do that? It's easy, ladies and gentlemen. What you do is hum. You do it with your mouth shut. Starting on Monday, you go round the house humming a hymn tune. You do it until the family is tired of it. After about Wednesday, you mix some sung syllables into the humming. Later on, you start saying words with your humming. By Saturday you will probably be speaking properly. When you go into the pulpit next Sunday, hopefully that little place behind your top teeth will vibrate or resonate like the hum, and you'll never have voice strain again.

Breathing is another point. Have you ever heard a preacher who keeps stopping every couple of minutes to catch a breath because he can't breathe properly? What effect does he have on you? You're so irritated that you switch off. It is essential that we learn intercostal diaphragmatic breathing. This simply means that when we sit down in a chair and breathe in, our tummy should fill up and stick out; and when we breathe out, our tummy should recede and go in. Many preachers do

exactly the opposite; and because they do exactly the opposite in their day-to-day life, they continue the bad habit when they stand in the pulpit. As a result, they run out of breath very quickly indeed. When we breathe in the tummy rises; when we breathe out, the tummy goes in. If it doesn't, practise, practise and practise again, until it does!

Can you do anything else to help look after your voice? You can start your preaching at the right pitch for you. Have you ever heard a preacher who starts out like this (in a high, falsetto voice...), but it's not his natural voice? After a few minutes, what happens to his voice? It runs out. (Then in a super bass voice...) On the other hand, you get these other preachers who start out very low and are basically incomprehensible. Everyone of us has a natural pitch, and you don't discover it in the shower. You discover it simply by lightly tapping your sola plexus while you talk and continuing to do this until you discover the note that's comfortable for you. That is the note on which you need to start every sentence. You didn't expect to hear this sort of thing this morning, did you? But if you take heed to it, you will never have voice trouble again.

Number 9: Remember that *less* means *more*

When I had been married about nine months, I was ill for quite a long period. After several weeks of total rest, I remained too ill to preach but was now well enough to go to church. It was a very strange experience. After the preacher had been speaking for what seemed quite a long time, I would give my wife a little nudge and gently whisper, "How long has he been going now?" She would say, "Shhhhh, ten minutes." "How long now?" "Thirteen minutes." I never knew sermons were so long until I had to listen to them. I made up my mind that if I ever returned to the pulpit, I would preach less in each sermon but that more would stick.

And this is what happened. Instead of preparing my sermons on a piece of paper the long way (portrait), I prepared the first draft across the length of the paper (landscape). I made three columns. The first column was headed "State", the second column "Illustrate", and the third column "Apply". In the first column was written the message, that is, all the main truths that had to be preached. In the second column, for every main truth that had to be said, there was an illustration. In the third column, for every main truth taught and illustrated, there was an application. In this way I found that I could preach shorter sermons, but that more would remain in people's minds. Before my illness I had been preaching fifty to fifty-five minutes of uncut roast beef. I believe

it was good food, but the people couldn't swallow it. After my illness I was able to put a bit of sauce on it and some vegetables, spices and anything else that was necessary. That's the way I've prepared my sermons, at least mentally, for years now – state, illustrate, apply. My average sermon went down from fifty to fifty-five minutes to somewhere around thirty-five minutes, and I found that the folk retained far, far more.

State	Illustrate	Apply
1. AAAAAAAAAA	aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa	<i>aaaaaaaaaaaaaa</i>
2. BBBBBBBBBB	bbbbbbbbbbbbbbb	<i>bbbbbbbbbbbbbb</i>
3. CCCCCCCCCC	ccccccccccccccc	<i>cccccccccccccc</i>

Isn't it good when people stop you on the church porch and say, "I wish you'd gone on longer!"? Otherwise, do you know what happens? They shake your hand, they look you in the eye and they say, "Lovely." That basically means, "It was so boring and so long that really I can't think of anything nice to say to you!"

Young men, you don't have to say everything you discover in the study! You should always discover much more in the study than you will ever preach. You select from what you've discovered in the study to serve the big idea of the passage, and you preach the big idea of the passage from the material that serves it. When you return to the same passage at some future date, you may decide to preach a different big idea, so on that occasion you would preach the material which serves *that* big idea. In preaching on the Prodigal Son, you might focus on God's joy over receiving a sinner. That would be the big idea, and all the material would be preached with that in mind. But in preaching on the Prodigal Son later, or elsewhere, you might preach on the broken heart and repentance of the prodigal; that might be the big idea. And so all the material you preach serves *that*. You don't have to preach everything you discover. Otherwise you'll preach like that great man who preached on the book of Job for forty years. I have heard that when he started he had eight hundred hearers and that when he finished

he had eight. Undoubtedly those eight knew the book of Job rather well. I don't know what happened to the others.

Number 10: Be the slave of structure and logic

Structure means that the sermon has an introduction; then it goes somewhere, and you can see where it's going and where it's been; and finally you tie everything up in a little bag and give it to the hearers to take away with them. That's what structure is. Between the introduction and the conclusion are a number of points that flow in logical sequence.

Let's try a little exercise. Give me the third line. "All sailors wear blue trousers. John is a sailor. Therefore....*John wears blue trousers.*" The logic is clear to us all.⁶ Now some sermons I listen to go like this: "All sailors wear blue trousers. John is a sailor. Therefore blue is beautiful." And the congregation thinks, "Where on earth did that come from?" Now, that can't be right, not if you're going to leave a compelling message in people's minds. You've got to be the slave of logic or you will lose your congregation.

I visit a lot of farms. Every farm I know has a broken ladder. It's all right going up a broken ladder. You go up the rungs one at a time. But try coming down! Have you ever done it? You come down one rung, two rungs, and then suddenly you've fallen through. It's dangerous. Some sermons are like that. The first rung seems okay, the second rung seems okay, and the third rung isn't there and you fall through. You end up lost and bewildered.

Number 11: Be *in* the message!

In Britain we have postmen who come to our houses. We don't have mailboxes. We have a slit in the door which we call a letter box. Be careful with the letter box, because there may be a dog on the other side. This being so, the postman always pushes the letters through, but never his fingers, in case they get bitten. Some preachers are like that. They have a message. They bring it to you. They push it through, turn around and walk away.

That's not preaching! Preaching is coming with a message, climbing through the letter box and arriving with the message inside your person. The Bible is full of this. It says, "If you reject the person, you reject the

⁶ This simple piece of logic is known as a *syllogism*. It is a deductive inference by which a conclusion is derived from two propositions, known as *the major premiss* and *the minor premiss*. What is interesting is that its logic is plain to all, even to those who have no training or experience in this area.

message. If you reject the message, you reject the person who brings the message. If you accept the person who brings the message, you accept the message. If you accept the message, you accept the person who brings the message.” You can’t distinguish the preacher from the message. Many preachers forget this, so they’re quite content just to give the message and not to give anything of themselves. You can listen to some preachers for ten years and not know them any better at the end of that time than at the beginning. That’s not the way it is in the Bible, nor is it the sort of preaching that impresses young people. Young people detest sham. All young people detest sham. They detest all forms of insincerity and humbug. They want to know that this man is *in* the message that he’s preaching.

This does not mean that the preacher has to be a shouter. I came home at the end of an afternoon’s visiting and found that the family was already sitting round the meal table waiting for me. You always feel a bit guilty when that happens. I sat down and looked across at our oldest boy and noticed that his eyes were shining. I thought, “That’s a bit suspicious. He’s fifteen. I have never seen his eyes shine like that before.” Throughout our meal I kept looking at him. Do you have secret signals in your family? I sent a secret signal across the table to my wife: “What’s wrong with him?” She signaled back, “I don’t know.” “Is he in love?” “Don’t think so”, came the answer, invisible to all but myself. Then I had the awful thought – is it drugs? What happens if he’s on drugs? How do I deal with this? Do I accuse him of being on drugs and then find that I’ve got it wrong?

“Alex, could we have a man-to-man talk after supper?”

“All right, Dad.”

So up to his bedroom he went, and I had fifteen minutes before I went up to join him. What would you have done in those fifteen minutes? You pray, and then you walk up and down and think, “How am I going to say this? If he’s on drugs, do I say this, this and this? If he’s not on drugs, do I say this, this and this? And how do I say it? Do I shout at him? Do I not shout at him? Do I punish him?” It’s all going through your mind. When you think you’ve got it right and with a good conscience before God, up the stairs you go and you sit on the bed with the lad and talk with him quietly. And he knows that the *whole of you* is in that message, doesn’t he? That’s because it is. There’s no shouting or bawling, but there’s deep calling to deep and spirit calling to spirit. The boy knows that it’s not just words, but that it’s *you*, dealing with him;

that there's the action of your soul on his soul. That's what it means to be *in* the message.⁷

Number 12: Assault the conscience

Next, assault the conscience. Everyone will wake up if you assault their conscience. Too many preachers are saying, "Here's my message. I've got to get it out of me. I've just got to get it out!" instead of asking, "What do I want to happen next?" What I want to happen next is that the exposition of Scripture will move people to think great thoughts about God; that it will cause sanctified people to become more sanctified; and that it will transform unconverted people into converted people. *The sermon is nothing in and of itself! It is a means to these ends.*

As a preacher I have to remember that I am not a sermon maker. The moment I become a sermon maker, I should leave the ministry. I'm a *saint* maker, and I do it through preaching sermons. This means, of course, that the sermon's target is always the conscience, so that the life of every hearer is changed.

Now I have a problem, and hopefully you're going to help me. If you preach to five hundred, it's very easy to speak bluntly to people. But I preach in Wales, and I preach to a lot of congregations where there are only five or six people present. I find it very, very hard to be blunt, really blunt about sin, known sin, when there is only a handful of people in front of me. Could you help me, please? I don't have any trouble with a big congregation. Nothing holds me back at all. But with a small congregation, for some reason or other, I find that it is very, very difficult to assault the conscience. Could you give me some help on that one?

I find that there is really only one thing that helps me – that is to remember that my life is getting shorter every moment. There's a little bit of sand in the hour glass, but my life will soon be done, and then I shall be at the judgment seat answering to Christ alone. If I ever lose that thought when I'm preaching, then I lose all my power to speak bluntly to people. The only thing that has kept me going through the years is to remember that at the last I shall answer to Him and not to them. What's important then is that I should please *Him*, even if this means offending others. So I must speak to my hearers bluntly. I am called to address their minds and stir their emotions, but my target is always to be their consciences.

⁷ It seems unfair not to give you the outcome of this story! The fact is that we never discovered why his eyes were shining in such a way on that day.

Number 13: Conquer God before you start

Last of all, conquer God before you start. On Wednesday, 5th October, 1859, a Welsh preacher called David Morgan woke up very early. Later that day he wrote in his diary, “I awoke about four in the morning remembering everything of a religious nature that I had ever learnt or heard.”⁸ After days of wrestling in prayer, something extraordinary had happened to him. For the next two and a half years he travelled widely and preached with unusual power. It is calculated that between 1858 and 1860 over one hundred thousand people came to Christ in the little principality of Wales, vast numbers of them through the preaching of David Morgan and a friend. One night after those wonderful years he went to bed like a lion and woke up like a lamb. For the rest of his life he remained a perfectly normal minister whose ministry was blessed with a constant trickle of conversions, but he never saw again what he had witnessed in 1859 and 1860.

Why am I telling you all this? One particular sermon of his resulted in the instantaneous conversion of many hundreds of people. Someone asked him, “David Morgan, where did you get that sermon?” He replied, “Come and see.” He took the enquirer into his study where there were a few books, a piece of carpet on the floor and a window looking out on to the hills. He said, “As the moon came up through that window, I was on my knees asking God for his blessing. At last, when the stars disappeared in the light of dawn, I felt some personal conviction that God had given me a message that he was going to bless. That’s where I got that sermon.”

That’s an interesting illustration, isn’t it? Before he preached it, David Morgan had a personal conviction that God was going to bless his sermon. Something similar happened to John Livingstone at the time of the Kirk o’ Shotts Revival in Scotland. Church history is full of similar incidents. The point is this: there is such a thing as waiting upon God, pleading with Him and dealing with Him. Our forefathers called it “conquering God”. I don’t know whether that’s the right expression. But, ladies and gentlemen, there is an intimate connection between prayer and blessing, blessing and prayer. There really is. The apostle said, “We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). I wouldn’t want anything, anything, anything I’ve said this morning to give the impression that we can ever manage without the blessing of God. Therefore, in all our preaching, we must

⁸ See Eifion Evans, *When He is come: an account of the 1858-1860 Revival in Wales* (Bala: Evangelical Movement of Wales, 1959), 45.

seek it. And when the blessing of God is on a sermon, even if all the rules are broken (and sometimes they are!), nobody will be bored.

(Note: many hundreds of Dr Olyott's sermons can be accessed in MP3 format by going to www.knowyourbiblerecordings.org)

From “Out of Africa” – A Global Christian Perspective

Jack C. Whytock

Introduction

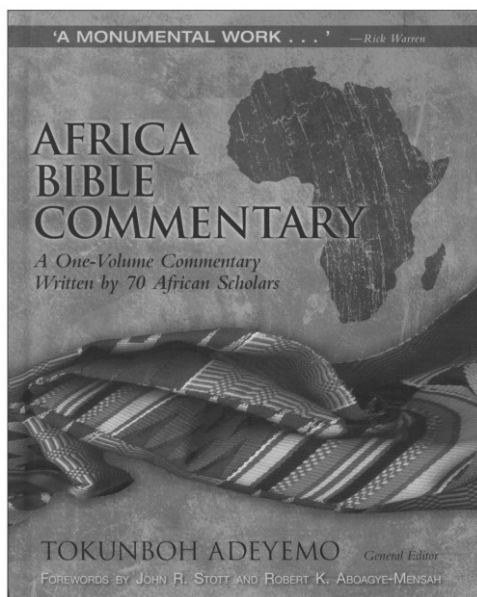
The following article has several purposes. My chief goal is to inform the reader about select contemporary Christian literature which mainly comes “out of Africa”.¹ I want to assist western Christians to see that they need to be more aware of the shifts which have and are taking place demographically in the Christian world.² It is very easy for us in the West to read everything published in the West and forget that there is a wider corpus of Christian publishing beyond the West. This is my primary purpose, and therefore the first three sub-points deal with: *Africa Bible Commentary*, African theologians and Rwanda. This brief article is my acknowledgement of the African Christians’ contribution to the whole body of Christ. I also have an agenda to alert all western Christian workers who may be travelling to Africa of material they could read to learn more about Christianity in Africa or about Africa in general. Finally, I have included a regional descriptor to help address matters of higher education in Africa as well as to provide a brief glimpse into some political matters relative to Africa over the last fifty years. The last two sub-points – Regional Africa: Anglophone, Francophone and Lucophone and Contemporary African Politics: 50 Years of Independence – deal with these matters.

¹ I have always enjoyed the phrase “out of Africa”. Most believe it can be traced back to Pliny the Elder, who likely first used it, and of course more recently it has been made popular in the book by Karen Blixon and subsequent movie.

² Readers may be aware of the seminal writings of Philip Jenkins which speak of this “shift”. See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Rise of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), and Philip Jenkins, *The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Africa Bible Commentary

The year 2006 will be remembered in African church history because of the release of *Africa Bible Commentary* (ABC). I will always recall being taken to a Christian bookshop in Nairobi in October, 2006, and seeing available for purchase this long-awaited volume.³ How delighted I was to have a copy in my luggage to take home and read. All Christians live in the Bible and in their local/national/continental world. Thus we all must apply the Scriptures



to the context of our place of daily life. Failure to do so makes the Bible irrelevant. True, some may over-contextualize and lose the balance of Scripture. That can be a real problem. However, I do not believe that is the case here with ABC, where I find a proper contextualization in applying the Scriptures is the goal.

Africa Bible Commentary is “a one volume commentary written by seventy African scholars” under the general editorship of Tokunboh Adeyemo and represents a first in publishing. As John Stott writes in the foreword, “A publishing landmark...Its foundation is biblical, its perspective African, and its approach to controversial questions balanced” (vii). All contributors are from Africa and write with the goal of meeting the needs of African pastors and students and offering African insights “into the biblical text that transcend Africa in their significance”.

This book has been published in Nairobi by WordAlive Publishers and in the rest of the world by Zondervan Corporation, with the copyright held by the ABC Editorial Board, Association of Evangelicals of Africa. Generally the NIV has been used for quotations.

³ Thank you, Dr. Chung of Grace Bible College, for taking me to the bookstore!

The layout of the book has the normal features associated with such large volumes: general introductions, guidelines for using the *ABC*, abbreviations and contributors. One striking point about the contributor list, which I had not noticed until a brother pointed it out to me, is that there is no contributor from South Africa; from southern Africa, yes, but not the nation of South Africa. Nationals from Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Benin, Madagascar, Congo, Tanzania, Sierra Leone, Angola, Malawi, Mali, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Namibia, Zambia, Central African Republic, Chad, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Burkina Faso and Uganda were involved in this project. I would encourage all who pick up this book to read through this list of contributors – what a wonderful learning experience to read of the work of God’s people across the mighty continent of Africa.

Each book of the Bible is dealt with by a single contributor with the exception of Genesis, Deuteronomy, and 1 and 2 Samuel, which each have two authors. I have been reading portions for about four months now and find it in general to be exegetically accurate, applicatory and very acceptable. I found the work done on the Gospel of Mark by Victor Cole to be of consistently high quality. Like any collection with this number of writers, it is difficult to maintain stylistic unity and purpose. For example, the commentary on the Gospel of Luke I found more thematic in approach. I could make exactly the same overall comment upon the *Bible Speaks Today* series – some volumes are more exegetical than others, some more thematic in approach and some attempt to blend or steer between the two. So it is with the *Africa Bible Commentary*.

I believe all readers will also greatly benefit by reading the nearly one hundred separate articles interspersed throughout the commentary. In this regard the style is reminiscent of many popular study Bibles today which contain interspersed thematic articles. These range from articles on debt (779), female genital mutilation (37), persecution (1564), refugees (321) and street children (1240) to taboos (159) and witchcraft (374). Needless to say, right here one can learn much about Africa and Christianity. We are grateful to our African brothers and sisters for sharing so much with us in these articles to help Christians in other parts of the world grow in our understanding of African Christianity.

The book concludes with a glossary, which, although only five pages long, covers many key terms. If all readers study these terms, their Bible reading will be enriched. Two or three well-placed maps would have enhanced certain sections of the commentary; for example,

the seven churches in Revelation or the Bible lands of Jesus' time on earth.

It has often been said in missiology that missions should strive for the "three selfs" in indigenous churches – self-propagation, self-support and self-government – but to these must be added a fourth, "self-theologizing". There is certainly a need for this development. I see *Africa Bible Commentary* as a very positive move in this direction, whereby the indigenous leaders are writing commentaries for the Church, and not only for the African Church. All of us can benefit from this volume, with its fresh insights, easy-to-read style and balance of mind and heart engagement. Though its primary audience is African pastors, students and laity, it is hoped that the whole world will be blessed.

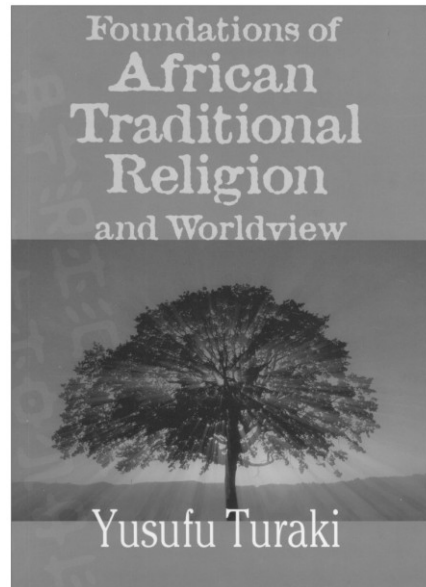
Students of the Bible and of Africa should also be aware of two other books which apply the Bible's teaching directly to the culture of operation and do not just try to treat everything through western eyes. Wilbur O'Donovan's two books, *Biblical Christianity in African Perspective* and *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa* would be excellent books for all Christian workers preparing for ministry in Africa or to refugees in the western world. O'Donovan writes as an evangelical Christian with thirty-five years of experience as a missionary in Nigeria and Ethiopia. The latter book, *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*, covers many topics which can now be found in the new *Africa Bible Commentary* topical articles. Since O'Donovan's book is now out of print (© 2000), the *ABC* will serve as a helpful read to all unable to locate the O'Donovan books.

In *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa*, O'Donovan briefly picks up a theme to which one needs to become sensitive – "urban Africa". There are several complexities of urbanization in Africa: many urban centres pre-date the Colonial period; many have expansive informal settlements; many are dealing with increasing secularization and its challenge to modern evangelism; many wrestle with the place of ethnic/tribal churches; and an additional recent theme, many newer urban centres face the challenge of the loss of the traditional African value of respect for the elderly. A new phrase I have heard many times now is "Out of urban Africa" as a parody on Karen Blixon's *Out of Africa*. O'Donovan raises the theme of urban Africa in his *Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa* (52-53) in his effort to "discuss and analyze some of the immense difficulties confronting modern Africa from a biblical perspective". Thus it is essential to include books like *ABC* or O'Donovan's in one's reading before commencing work in Africa.

African Theologians

I really wonder how many times western Christians have read a book or article by an African evangelical theologian. For all our talk about globalization, internet communication and travel, I think many of the reading lists in western theological curriculum still have not moved very far in including living, non-western theologians. My plug has been given that we do need to be willing to make some adjustments here.

One writer and one book to start with would be: Yusufu Turaki’s *Foundations of African Traditional Religion and Worldview*. Turaki was one of the theological advisors for the ABC and has taught in Jos, Nigeria, and in Nairobi, Kenya. This book combines the modern subject of worldview studies with an application of this lens to African traditional religion. It is a very helpful approach for western Christians who have been taught the language of worldview studies. Here are the twelve chapter titles:



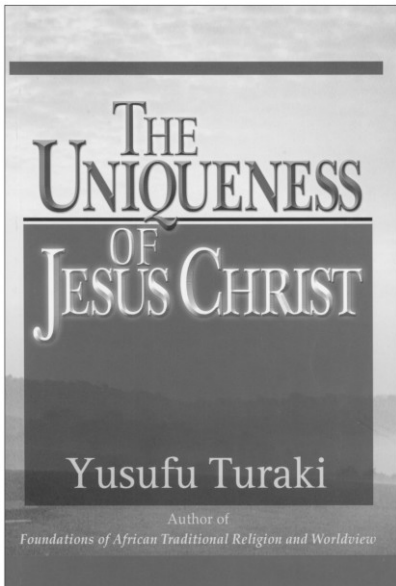
- Defining Religion
- African Traditional Religion
- Fundamental Theological Beliefs
- Fundamental Philosophical Beliefs
- Fundamental Ethical Beliefs
- The Supreme Being
- Gods, Divinities and Spirits
- Communication with and from the Spirit World
- The Acquisition of Power
- The Exercise of Power
- Being Human
- The Meaning of Life

There is no doubt that Turaki’s book will be read alongside or even replace some of J. S. Mbiti’s books, such as Mbiti’s 1975 *Introduction to African Religion*, or E. B. Idowu’s 1973 work, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. I am certain that Turaki’s book will become a

new textbook for many African colleges; and since it is so concise (128 pages), what an excellent primer for any going to Africa as missionaries, short or long term.

Turaki's other book on Christology is a delight to read. Here is the development of "self-theologizing". This book, *The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ*, began in the classroom in the 1980s when Dr. Turaki was teaching in Jos, Nigeria. Some of this material has been presented in lecture format at other locations, including Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi.

Turaki's goal is to develop "a biblical basis and foundation for presenting and proclaiming Jesus the Messiah as the only valid, authentic and unique Saviour of the whole world and the mediator between God and man." It is more than a Christological study, as one will find sections on the implications of the theology of who Christ is. Chapter six, "The Mission of the Church", chapter seven, "Christianity in the Midst of Cultural and Religious Plurality", and chapter eight, "Uniqueness of Christ in the Context of Plural Cultures and Religion" take the subject of Christology and apply it in many very engaging ways. To speak of being reconciled in Christ



does have implications for the mission of the Church (pp. 89-98). I am very encouraged and blessed to see such books being published from "out of Africa". They are a real blessing to all who are interested in the worldwide Church.

Rwanda

The *Haddington House Journal* receives many books to review, some of which I may not at first instance select to read. There was one that came in during the last year that I was not at first drawn towards. Perhaps this was because the book was about Rwanda, and after seeing the movie "Hotel Rwanda", released in 2004, I was not sure if I could stomach reading a book about the 1994 genocide in that country. Also, reading a few clips from Roméo Dallaire's *Shake Hands with the Devil*,

I was unenthusiastic about the theme. However, after reading Meg Guillebaud's *After the Locusts: How costly forgiveness is restoring Rwanda's stolen years*, I began to think differently. Rays of hope began to be kindled in me once again.

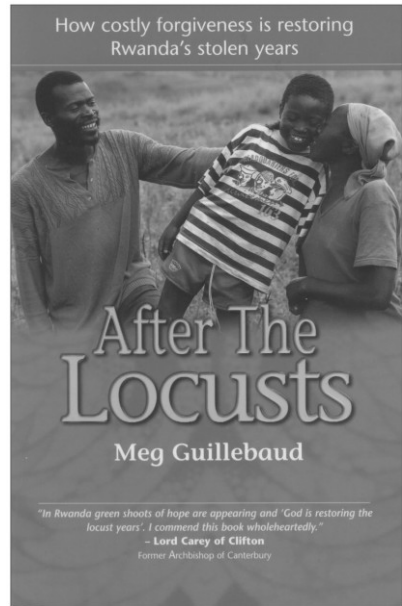
The Guillebauds are one of the missionary family dynasties of Africa. Meg comes from the third generation, and her nephew continues to be involved in African ministry. They represent a name amongst Rwandan Episcopalians and the Church Mission Society (CMS), with roots in Rwanda and Burundi, reaching back to 1922. Harold Guillebaud (the grandfather) helped translate the New Testament into Kingarwanda and is buried in Burundi.

In Meg's other book on Rwanda, *Rwanda: The Land God Forgot?*

(2002), she describes the genocide of 1994. *After the Locusts* is the story of living with the aftermath and the whole human desire for revenge, yet the call to forgive. Here is Rwanda, 1995 onwards:

In 1995, Rwanda in many ways resembled a field after the locusts had left. It was still green with an incongruous beauty, but ugly scars of war were everywhere, and a smell of death. Despair and devastation was visible in every face. Tales of horror poured from every new visitor. The church, too, was thoroughly demoralised after its failure to stand up for the right. Many churches had been scenes of dreadful massacres; many church leaders were in exile, fearful to return and face implication in those terrible events; and their people felt that they had lost the right to speak words of healing and peace in the dreadful aftermath of the genocide (pp. 9-10).

What follows in this book are stories of many Rwandans struggling with how to deal with repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. The author introduces us to several Christian agencies working for healing and reconciliation in Rwanda. Interspersed through the stories and



descriptions is the author's developing theology of forgiveness and reconciliation, which I think culminates on page 164:

As Christians we are called to be peacemakers, and have been entrusted with the message of reconciliation. It is possible, though difficult, to forgive someone who has not confessed his crime and asked for forgiveness, but true reconciliation is impossible without movement on both sides, confession and repentance on the one hand, and forgiveness on the other.

I am aware of some strange things in this book, yet sometimes it is the least expected books which really force you to think well beyond your normal parameters and to gain insight. Yes, the reading list at the back of the book "is all over the map", yet if one finds the thread in *After the Locusts*, one is greatly enriched. (I believe the author should have been more objective and discerning with several entries included in her bibliography, as some may actually contradict her thesis.) Meg summarized this book in an interview: "It's a theological reflection on forgiveness. It's a book on forgiveness with illustrations from Rwanda."

If one really wants to prepare for work in Rwanda or South Africa, here is a book with which to start. It comes "out of Africa", through the missionary eyes of a western family long connected to Africa. I think the bottom line for all who read this is that it's not just about Rwanda, it's really about each of us.

Regional Africa: Anglophone, Francophone and Lucophone

For the purpose of modern missions and education, Africa can be divided into the following four main regional groupings: Anglophone Africa, Francophone Africa, Lucophone Africa and Arabic Africa. Africa is simply so large and diverse, sixty-one countries/territories at a recent count, and it is complex in terms of its linguistic realities. Are there any ways of developing a linguistic strategy by region? Yes, there are, and if one starts to identify some unifying linguistic structures to this vast continent, these help in developing modern, educational missions strategy.

Anglophone, or English-speaking, Africa embraces an incredibly large population group – 350 million – and includes areas in west, east and southern Africa. Francophone, or French-speaking, Africa has a population of over 184 million. Lucophone, or Portuguese-speaking,

Africa has a population of almost 32 million.⁴ Although lower levels of the educational structure often employ regional languages, higher education in each of these three regions is conducted in one of the three major languages, thus allowing higher level theological education to be conducted through three main common languages. This has strategic significance for both theological education and missions. Naturally all three of these linguistic groupings are “left-overs” from the colonial period in Africa, and we find Portuguese speaking Africa importing many theological works from Brazil. A recent change in South Africa is that all universities must teach in English, not Afrikaans. Again, in terms of higher education in Anglophone Africa we can immediately see the significance.

Contemporary African Politics: 50 Years of Independence

There is a sea of current books on African politics. I recall the first book I ever read on African politics in the early 1980s. It was short, 166 pages, yet it stirred my mind and heart for the people of Africa. It is now 2007, and I have had many opportunities to learn more about Africa first-hand since then, yet I confess I find it so very difficult to attempt any meaningful summary about contemporary African politics. In part this is because it is a continent with sixty-one countries and territories, and generalities are dangerous! Therefore I have decided to limit comments to a few words on my most recent reading on African politics, Martin Meredith’s *The Fate of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair, A History of Fifty Years of Independence*. The author is an Englishman who lived in Africa, where he was a foreign correspondent/reporter. He was there for fifteen years – the years of independence – and he describes his work as a foreign correspondent as “often related to wars, revolution and upheaval.”⁵ So it is in part “out of Africa”. Today the author is a research fellow at St. Antony’s College, Oxford, and widely viewed as one of the world’s most knowledgeable men on modern Africa.

This particular book, *The Fate of Africa*, is very much a narrative history of particular countries in Africa. As such, it is free of extensive footnotes and allows the reader to have an easier read. One may not

⁴ *Overseas Council International Strategic Plan 2001-2010* [Updated 2003] (Indianapolis: Overseas Council International, 2003). I am grateful to Dr. Manfred Kohl for sharing this resource with me.

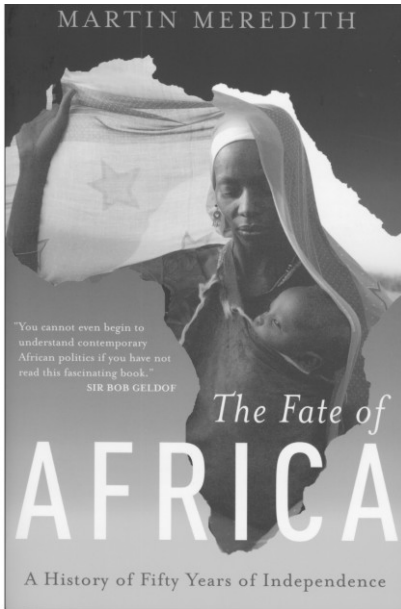
⁵ Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa: From the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair, A History of Fifty Years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), no page number, “Author’s Note”.

agree with all the author's perspectives, but certainly one cannot criticize the readability. (Chapter notes at the back of the book are very minimal and focus on suggestions for further reading.)

Meredith commences with an excellent introductory chapter (pp. 1-14), which could easily be a stand-alone essay. There is just so much packed in here. It appears to be an embodiment of one man's whole lifetime of study, reflection and commentary.

The book is divided into four parts with several chapters in each.

The unfortunate thing is that none of the four parts is titled – a small matter, yet in my estimation, one that detracts from the goal to be accessible to readers. Part one (pp. 17-137) is about early leaders and focused countries: Kwame Nkumah, Ghana, the Suez Crisis, Algeria, Jomo Kenyatta and the Mau Mau Rebellion, the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Nigeria, Sudan, Rhodesia, Angola, Mozambique, and South Africa and apartheid. So it does appear that the author is more or less working chronologically. Allow me to select only one chapter, chapter seven, "The White South" (pp. 116-137), to make a very cursory comment. Meredith summarizes South African apartheid politics with great ease for the amateur



reader. I am amazed by his skill in précis writing – few can do this so well. After South Africa he moves to Rhodesia, then to Angola and Mozambique. For some reason I found his section on Rhodesia just “fell off” in mid-stream, perhaps because he had aroused my interest so much that I wanted more. You then have to work your way through the index and trace Southern Rhodesia/Zimbabwe chronologically through other parts of the book.

Part two (pp. 141-328) moves more into an overview of African independence and the immediate aftermath. This is more thematic and covers a much broader canvas than part one. Here economics, education, labour, ethnicity, nationalism, etc., are addressed together with narrative history on the Biafran War and the rise of Idi Amin in Uganda and Bokassa in the Central African Republic.

Part three (pp. 331-440) deals with Ethiopia and Mengistu and the famine of 1984, Muslim/non-Muslim divides in Chad and Sudan, AIDS, economic decline, “democracy”, and Nelson Mandela amongst its topics.

Part four (pp. 443-688) concentrates upon African events from 1990 to 2005. Others have commented that here there is much that is depressing: the Algerian conflict, the Rwandan genocide, and the world of Liberia, Sierra Leone and modern Nigeria. Chapter thirty-one is devoted to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, chapter thirty-three to Zimbabwean disruption and chapter thirty-four to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission on South Africa, or the “new-Africa” and her renaissance. The final pages of this chapter (pages 681-688) present a very sobering reflection on the current situation, that in the hands of man, all is not well. Here is where, as a Christian, I wished for this book to incorporate my basic premise. I serve the sovereign God of the universe, and that gives me a perspective where I do not hope in man’s ingenuity to solve this world’s problems. I see the heart of the issue rather as men are sinners in need of redemption. In other words, my Christian worldview of a sovereign God, a depraved humanity, a Redeemer and grace colours my reading of world news. If you are seeking such a perspective, you will be disappointed with *The Fate of Africa*. However, this is not to say that I have not found this book beneficial.

So, readers, if you have time for only one book on contemporary African politics, I highly recommend *The Fate of Africa*, not because it is published by one of the Christian publishing houses and will conclude with a Christian viewpoint, but because it paints a fifty year overview of modern Africa. No one should be involved in work in Africa without reading it. I am not usually in the habit of quoting pop stars, but I do agree with Irish pop/rock singer, Bob Geldof, “You cannot even begin to understand contemporary African politics if you have not read this fascinating book.” The book is large, 752 pages. It contains several black and white photographs and some fine sketch maps.

Summary

My first goal was to help readers become more sensitive to the reality of the place of modern Africa in today’s global Christian context. I am firmly convinced that we need the whole Church. We are impoverished if we neglect to read about, listen to and learn from the

whole Body. I encourage all to learn from each other. I thank my brothers and sisters in Africa for all they have taught me.

I close with this little biblical vignette “out of Africa”. Psalm 126 has been a favourite of mine for many years. Verse five is one I have had on my wall since 1981, “Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy.” Readers can do their own background study here, but I want to share what my African brothers have shared with me. Would you grind the last few seeds you have to make flour when you are in a drought or would you hold them from immediately being used to feed your children and instead plant them in the soil in faith that a harvest will come? The parents who decide to plant those few precious seeds cry because their children are hungry, but they have faith. They sow them as seed, literally crying with deep tears, but they believe they will reap “with songs of joy”. Just the other day I read the following by Glenn Penner, Chief Executive Officer of The Voice of the Martyrs, quoting Philip Jenkins:

Philip Jenkins in his new book, *The New Faces of Christianity*, describes how he was discussing this psalm with some West Africans who were from an agricultural society not unlike the biblical one in which this psalm was originally written. They pointed out that the psalm must have been written when times were very hard and food short, a situation which these West Africans could identify with. They pointed out that the people “would have been desperately tempted to eat their seed corn but resisted the temptation because they knew that, if they did that, they would have nothing to eat” (*The New Faces of Christianity*, Oxford University Press, 2006: 73). Jenkins quotes a traveler to the Middle East in the 1850’s, W.M. Thomson, who witnessed this in his observations: “In seasons of great scarcity, the poor peasants part in sorrow with every measure of precious seed cast into the ground. It is like taking bread out of the mouths of their children; and in such times many bitter tears are actually shed over it” (*ibid*).⁶

⁶ Glenn Penner, “Sowing With Tears”, February 17, 2007. <<http://www.persecution.net/weblog.htm>> (March 2, 2007).

I need my African brethren as I minister. Together may we “go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, and return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with us”.

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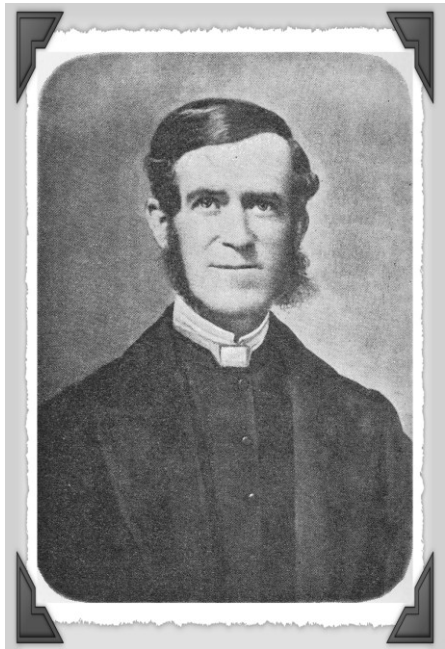
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John Geddie and the South Pacific: Timeless Mission Principles

Jack C. Whytock

Prince Edward Island, on the Atlantic coast of Canada, is often referred to, somewhat romantically, as “The Cradle of Missions” in Canada.¹ Unfortunately, while it may be quaintly discussed, little contemporary relevance is found. There was a day, however, when such a title was appropriate. That was during the time of Rev. John Geddie and his contemporaries.

My purpose in this lecture is to use Geddie as the central thread for all which follows while allowing several important missiological matters to be raised in the course of what otherwise might be viewed as a biographical lecture. The study will commence with the theme of the preparation both of the man and of denominational structures for mission. The second aspect of such preparation rarely receives



attention. From here we will proceed to the call of Christ to the islands; then to Geddie’s methods and his perspective on conversion – faith and practice. We will conclude by addressing final applications and contemporary challenges.

¹ I am uncertain who actually first coined this phrase, “The Cradle of Missions”, in reference to Prince Edward Island. The Island is somewhat shaped as a “cradle” in the ocean, and I take “cradle” to mean a place of new life, hence for a new endeavour – foreign missions.

1. The Theme of Preparation: the Man and the Church Family

John Flavel correctly defined providence as comparable to reading Hebrew – it is read backwards (at least from the perspective of a native English speaker reading Hebrew). And so it is with the life of John Geddie. We have the distinct benefit of reviewing his life after the fact, and from this perspective we can see how God prepared the man.

John Geddie was born in Banff, Scotland, in 1815 to parents who served a key role in Geddie's preparation for unusually blessed missionary service. (What a place for our consideration – the home from which God has each gospel worker come.) His parents belonged to the evangelical movement of Scottish Christianity at the beginning of the nineteenth century. His mother came from Secession Presbyterians, the free-offer preachers; and his father was converted through the preaching of the Haldane brothers and was a Congregationalist while in Scotland. Thus, ecclesiastically the Geddie home was decidedly evangelical and spiritually acquainted with God's work of revival. We also know that his father, a clockmaker, was a man of reliability and conscience concerning his debts. He was led to emigrate to Nova Scotia partly because of poverty. Thus John Geddie was only one year old when he came to Nova Scotia with his parents. Many feared that the small lad would not live. (Even as an adult, John was only 5 feet tall.) Yet he survived the journey, and his parents dedicated him to the Lord's service at this early age.

The family went to Pictou, Nova Scotia, in 1816 where they quickly became involved with one of British North America's leading evangelical Presbyterian ministers, Rev. Thomas McCulloch. The following year proved to be significant in Nova Scotia as the two Secession branches, popularly known as Burghers and Antiburghers, united into one church, the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. It was a thoroughly evangelical body, which had overcome some of the ecclesiastical squabbles of the past. It proved to be a rich environment spiritually for the Geddies. John's father became an elder and a leader in the mid-week prayer meeting. He also kept abreast of foreign missions conducted by the London Missionary Society (LMS), in which the Seceders in Scotland were also active. He shared letters with his family from LMS missionaries to the South Sea Islands about the gospel work there. (What an example for fathers – going to prayer meetings, praying, reading to their children, filling their souls with a passion for Christ and missions!)

Pictou was blessed with one of the best dissenting academies in Nova Scotia. Students were sent there from across the region and even

from the Caribbean to sit under the “headmaster”, Thomas McCulloch. John Geddie took his education there, following a classical arts and sciences curriculum carefully modeled upon the University of Glasgow, McCulloch’s *alma mater*. Then, at age nineteen, he commenced his theological studies in the Theological Hall of the Pictou Academy. McCulloch, the sole professor, not only taught theology but was also the conduit of information for the missions literature he received from his “agent” in Scotland, Rev. John Mitchell. While in the theological hall, Geddie formed The Students’ Missionary Prayer Meeting, although he was the youngest student there. At an early age he possessed an unusual vision and zeal, and by the age of twenty the marks of spiritual preparation for his life’s calling were already evident.



Combined with this was the training received through the help he gave his father making clocks in Pictou. We will see the importance of this later – sound learning and solid spirituality combined with a wonderful practicality in his upbringing and his approach to life. The development of all these traits was preparing him for his future ministry.

John Geddie was licensed in 1837 at age twenty-two and spent the next twelve months supplying vacant pulpits while continuing to help his father. In 1838 he was called to Prince Edward Island to New London and Cavendish. Almost immediately he began a missionary prayer society in these congregations, and he started collecting money to be sent to the London Missionary Society. I believe this young

preacher may have been mentored by an elderly retired minister in his congregation, Rev. Pidgeon, who many years earlier had been sent to the isolated villages of Prince Edward Island as an LMS missionary. So often, when we look back, we can see that God has put us alongside the right encouragers! I believe this is exactly what happened in New London for this young minister.

Next came a wider influence, reaching out to other Island churches, as he began prayer meetings and received collections for missions. These were novel ideas in the villages, but he received the support of his ministerial colleague down the road in Princetown (Malpeque), Rev. John Keir. In 1840 these Island churches jointly collected over £17 and sent it to the LMS. Then Geddie went a step further – he appealed to the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia to start her own foreign mission work. This idea was viewed with much suspicion. After all, how could just thirty-five congregations embark on such a plan! Only the Moravians, it was said, had ever undertaken such a thing. In essence, the church courts “smiled” at his proposal. Nonetheless, Geddie was planting the seeds, and in 1843 the idea of a foreign mission of the thirty-five churches was put forward at the Synod by Geddie’s ministerial neighbour. The Synod sent the proposal down to the three presbyteries for their consideration and asked them to report back the next year. In 1844 only the PEI Presbytery sent back a positive report, including a full document explaining why. (I suspect it was composed by Geddie and Keir.) I quote it here in part:

The motives which impel to action...are numerous and weighty. The glory of God calls us to it. The command of God calls us to it. The reproaches of those who have gone down to perdition unwarned calls [call?] us to it. And last, not least, the spiritual deadness that prevails among our Churches, which is, perhaps, a judicial retribution for the indifference, which we have so long shown to the spread of the Gospel, calls us to it....²

The motion was put before the Synod of 1844, and it passed twenty to fourteen. A Board was appointed, and immediately work was begun

² R. S. Miller, *Misi Gete, John Geddie: Pioneer Missionary to the New Hebrides* (Tasmania, Australia: The Presbyterian Church of Tasmania, 1975), 14. I have inserted several direct quotations into this lecture from Miller’s book, which is chiefly a primary source document of Geddie’s journal and the best book available on Geddie’s missionary vision and work.

by corresponding with missionary societies to obtain information in order to find a field of service. The 1845 Synod heard that the Board was ready to proceed to “select a field, and negotiate with candidates,” and the vote this time was thirteen to twelve. Later that year, the South Pacific was decided upon as the field of service, specifically the islands of New Caledonia. Next a missionary was sought. As none was forthcoming, John Geddie offered himself together with his wife, Charlotte. His congregation at first refused to release him, no doubt in part being convinced of the fool-heartedness of the location! It took two meetings before they would agree to let him go.

After his resignation, Geddie commenced an interim period of training – one not set up by a missionary training institute but by himself. He obtained an old printer and learned typesetting by printing a sermon, “The Universal Diffusion of the Gospel”, taken from Revelation 14:6. This was widely distributed. No doubt Geddie learned both how to be a printer and how to educate folks about gospel work! (Quite ingenious, I think. You need printing/typesetting skills for the field – learn them before you go.) Next, he studied medicine for several months for reasons he himself explained:

A knowledge of medicine is valuable to missionaries, not only on their own account and that of their families; if judiciously employed, it may be the means of gaining them favour in the eyes of the nations. If I can be instrumental in doing good to their bodies, I know nothing more likely to open up a way of access to their souls, and furnish an opportunity of recommending to them that Divine Physician, who alone can heal the soul from the malady of sin.³

His next practical training was to learn about house construction and boat building. It would all be necessary, as he would not be able to take a team of labourers with him. Often when the LMS sent a team to a place, such as to the South Seas, they included not only ministers but also a carpenter or a bricklayer. Thus Geddie was preparing himself somewhat in the style of an LMS team. His preparations reflected a careful sensitivity to the needs of the future mission on the South Sea Islands.

Now his youthful reading of geography and missionary life in the South Pacific was being shown to have had a remarkable purpose – the preparation of a missionary. But in July of 1846 the final test came

³ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 16.

when the Synod met to formally recognize his appointment. The debate was intense. Finally when the vote was taken, only two voted against it. Years later one of the ministers who voted against it confessed on his deathbed that this was one of the great errors of his life, and he requested that such word be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Geddie! (We do not always have complete unanimity within the Church, and these trials from quarters where we least expect them can be our greatest burden to bear. How difficult it is for Christians to admit the wrong decisions they have made. We can only applaud this man's confession.)

The final step was to secure a ship's passage to the South Pacific for himself, his wife and his two young daughters. We find a striking and revealing feature in the final farewell services in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In addition to one of the Synod ministers, there was also a leading Baptist and a leading Wesleyan Methodist minister speaking. Thus, the sending forth of the Geddies was a matter of interest not only for the Presbyterians, but also for other evangelicals across the Maritimes. As they set sail on November 30, 1846, Geddie's parting comments were:

In accord with the Redeemer's command and assured of His presence, we are going forth to those lands where Satan has established his dark domain. I know that suffering awaits me. But to bear the Redeemer's yoke is an honour to one who has felt the Redeemer's love.⁴

With such realism, only the love of Christ could offer sufficient motivation to go forth!

The trip seemed to go on forever! First they traveled to Boston and from there had time to visit New York and New Jersey. Wherever John Geddie went, he stirred up folks for the call of missions. He met with different mission boards, the Senate of Princeton Seminary and various preachers. His last North American service was in Newburyport, Massachusetts, where he preached from the pulpit built over the bones of George Whitefield. Finally they boarded a whaling boat, departing from Newburyport on January 28, 1847, having to cut through the harbour ice while leaving. Whaling ships were certainly not noted for their pious atmosphere; yet, undeterred, Geddie held Sunday services, began a Bible class and taught the uneducated cook to read and write.

⁴ Eugene Myers Harrison, "John Geddie, 1815-1872, Messenger of the Love of Christ in Eastern Melanesia," p. 2, <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/biogeddie.html> (September, 2005).

What a man for redeeming the time, ever the ambassador of Christ Jesus!

The ship did not reach Cape Horn until April 23rd and did not manage to clear the Cape until May 13th! From there the Geddies made it to the Sandwich Islands, where they spent seven weeks. These weeks proved to be another segment of the training course in Geddie's preparation. He delivered letters to the missionaries there, tasted of their hospitality, met with the natives and observed the state of their new-found faith.⁵

There was one final element yet to be added to his "training course" before reaching the final destination. This was gained in going to Samoa. Here his general learning and language studies intensified, as Samoa had a resident LMS missionary, Rev. A. W. Murray (Geddie had read Rev. Murray's reports while living on Prince Edward Island!), and a LMS medical missionary, Dr. Bullen, with whom Geddie stayed and from whom he learned much about tropical diseases. Within five months Geddie was preaching in Samoan. Thus these few months on Samoa proved invaluable. In addition, a "Conference" of missionaries was organized where they discussed the best place for the Geddies to begin working in the South Pacific. A wonderful harmony between the senior LMS missionaries and the church missionary, Geddie, prevailed in determining the best way forward. A good arrangement was settled upon whereby the Geddies would labour with the LMS missionaries in commencing a mission on the islands of the New Hebrides.⁶

While in Samoa Geddie undertook some printing and bookbinding for the LMS, and at the same time he trained a Samoan believer to use the press after his departure. It is an encouragement to read of the unity, cooperation and love amongst these believers. I wonder how we fare in comparison today?

The relationship of John Geddie to the church he pastored and to his Hebridean LMS connections raises several significant missiological questions concerning the work of the missionary societies in conjunction with denominational missions. First, was it not really the missionary societies, some denominational and some not, who were at the forefront of the modern missionary movement? Yes. Was there not a very close, cooperative understanding amongst many Bible-believing Protestants of the time? Yes. We should be careful, then, to give credit where credit is due and not ignore much of the truth of this aspect of missions. Today some church historians and Christian leaders

⁵ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 25.

⁶ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 26.

completely ignore the real history of the role of the missionary societies in missions in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Instead, a quick dismissal is made of “para-church” groups. To do this is to ignore the obvious historical contributions of previous generations.

Second, as this particular mission developed, it became more denominationally controlled; however, this appears to me not to have been by conscious effort. In fact, it would appear that the transfer of control was a non-issue. Furthermore, the Church was essentially “brow-beaten” into its task of missionary effort because of the Society inspired work. I believe the position of John Geddie supports my thesis that the societies pressed the Church to move forward. In addition, I fail to find any clear articulation of attack on the London Missionary Society or its work by any of the great names associated with the South Pacific Mission in its time – names like Geddie, Inglis and Paton.

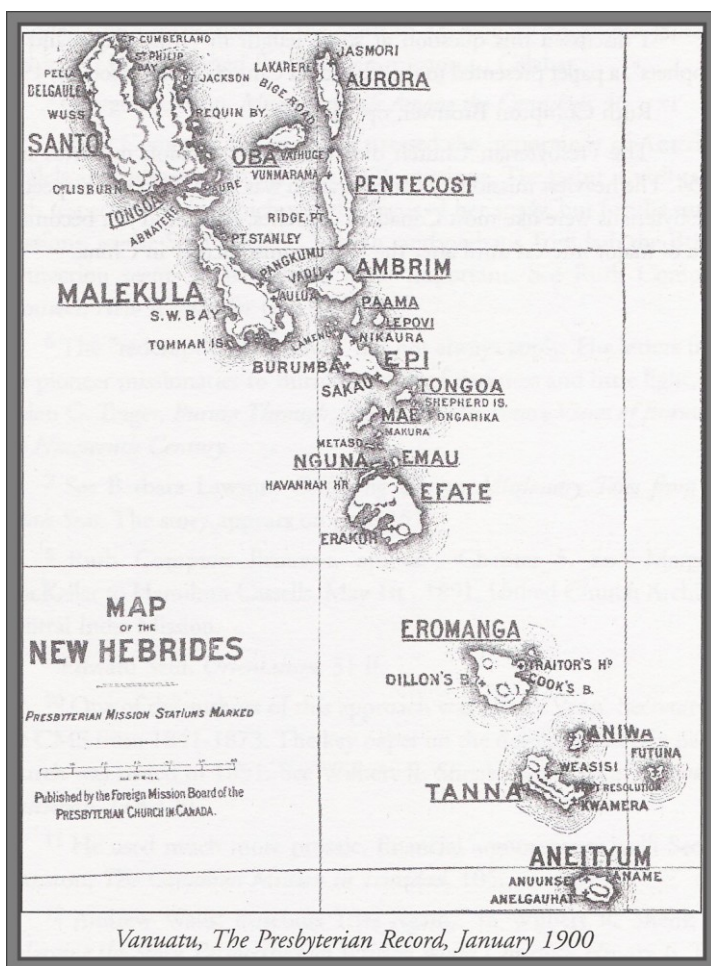
2. The Call to Christ and the Islands

I now want to present a picture of life on the South Pacific Islands in 1848 at the time when John Geddie commenced his labours there. We will then examine universal principles in mission work and church life which I believe this picture forces us to consider.

Geography

The region of the South Pacific to which Geddie went has been called by various names – South Pacific Islands, Oceania, Pacific Islands, Polynesia, etc. It consists of 1,500 islands. These can be divided into three main groupings: Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. This lecture *technically* concerns the Melanesian group of islands. These are north of Australia and include the island groups of Fiji, Santa Cruz, New Guinea, New Hebrides (Vanuatu), New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands. These islands range in size from New Guinea, the second largest ocean island in the world, to the very small rock islands which may not be inhabited year-around. The islands are populated by a vast array of tribes. Captain James Cook’s written reports about the discovery of many of these islands stimulated evangelical Protestants in Britain in the 1790s to seriously consider evangelization there. This specifically led to the formation of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1795, whose stated purpose was to evangelize Tahiti “or some other of the islands of the South Sea”. I want to emphasize this point because John Geddie and John Paton were not the first missionaries to these islands; rather they built upon soil tilled by the LMS.

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe--as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. (1 Cor. 3:5-9, NIV)



The Morality of Tribal Life

Christianity came into conflict with numerous aspects of tribal custom and religion. One conflict was in regard to the wives and young children of a deceased husband/father. Women lived in degradation among the heathen as well as in superstition and false spirituality concerning the after life.

If the husband died before his wife, the “wife was immediately strangled to death so that her spirit might accompany his to the next world, and any children too young to take care of themselves suffered the same fate as the mother. If there was a grown son, he was expected to perform the act of strangulations.”⁷

Let me illustrate by a story from May, 1852. John Geddie was on another island preaching while his wife, Charlotte, had remained behind on their island, Aneityum. A father on Aneityum, whose son and daughter had recently become Christians, had died. They feared for the life of their mother, a non-believer, so they got other Christians to help them save her.

The woman was adamant that she should die and protecting her meant taking her bodily from her first refuge and depositing her in another. She escaped from that one as well and the Christians surrounded her in her new refuge until her husband’s body had been, as was the custom, buried in the sea, and she was out of danger. [The woman later challenged Mrs. Geddie:] “Why did you save my life and not let me be strangled when my husband died? Who is to provide for me and this child?” Mrs. G[eddie] told her she was strong and able to work....⁸

The woman eventually became a Christian and repeatedly thanked Mrs. Geddie for saving her life.

Cannibalism proved to be another tribal custom practiced on most of these South Pacific Islands. This was not just the execution and eating of white foreigners; it occurred as well within the tribes and between tribes.

The natives confessed that they considered human flesh the most savoury of foods. It was considered proper to eat all the

⁷ Harrison, “John Geddie,” 4.

⁸ Geoffrey Johnston, *Missionaries for the Record* (Belleville, ON: Guardian books, 2005), 31-32.

enemies killed or taken in war. It was a common occurrence for chiefs to kill some of their own subjects to provide a cannibal feast, if the bodies of enemies were not readily obtainable. The missionary [Geddie] knew a man who killed and ate his own child!”⁹

John Geddie tells of Yakanui, a chief on Aneityum who was known as the greatest cannibal on the island, coming to visit him. This chief had killed and eaten many of the children in his district, to such an extent that there were few left. Yet he was attracted to Geddie. He was subdued, a fear came over him and the school established by Geddie in his district continued on. It was said the people were able to sleep again at night.¹⁰

Others gave their lives before cannibalism was extinguished. Among these were three who answered Geddie’s pleas for more missionaries to help him in the labour there. These three went forth from Prince Edward Island – Rev. and Mrs. George N. Gordon, and later Rev. Gordon’s brother, Rev. James D. Gordon – and all three were murdered by the cannibals. The blood of the martyrs marked the advancement of the gospel! A few short years later, those same murderers surrounded the mission house to protect the next missionaries from Nova Scotia, the Robertsons, because they were to be likewise murdered by other tribal members. What a transformation – from cannibal murderers to Christian protectors!¹¹

Sexual customs and practices among the darkened heathen on the South Pacific Islands were very degraded and corrupt, as Geddie and others discovered. There was almost no sexual moral code. One place this was reflected was in the inability of the missionaries doing translation work to even find a word for adultery in translating the seventh commandment. Their customs included such things as men and women, boys and girls bathing together naked and with all kinds of fondling practices; men sleeping with any woman whenever they pleased; and when a man was sick, his wife sleeping with his brother.¹² The reality of unfaithfulness being so rooted in the culture and not being viewed as sin posed great difficulty in the Church. Celibacy of single workers was a concept mocked and not understandable to the

⁹ Harrison, “John Geddie,” 4.

¹⁰ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 193; Harrison, “John Geddie,” 6.

¹¹ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 249.

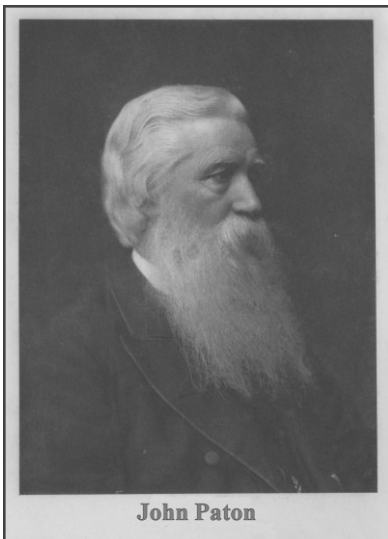
¹² Ruth A. Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 220.

natives. Unless one sees Jesus as Lord of sexuality, the lord will be pleasure, not God.

And here we see a universal principle in missions addressed in Acts 15:20, “Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.” This surely settles the matter. In the first century, as Gentiles were converted and brought into the church, sexual immorality in their culture was addressed and forsaken, for they were now a new people called to holiness. This is not a new issue. Acts 15:20 was about mission work in the first century, Geddie’s work in the New Hebrides in 1848-1872 was about mission work, my labour in Canada is about mission work and your labour wherever you may be is about mission work. That work must also teach and set the Council of Jerusalem decision before all converted people.

3. Geddie’s Methods

John Geddie developed a plan whereby Aneityum would be his base island, which it proved to be from his arrival at the end of July, 1848, until the time of his death in 1872. First he needed more help. He sent letters to the Presbyterians in Nova Scotia and in Scotland to send out helpers. Likewise, he sent letters to the LMS asking for their assistance.



John Paton

Slowly more workers arrived. The first of these was John Inglis, who joined Geddie from Scotland in 1852, followed by John Paton in 1858, who also responded to Geddie’s pleas.

In Geddie’s strategy for his work, we note several key factors. First, he was diligent in the evangelization of his island, Aneityum. He did this in part by frequent tours around the island, itinerating both to have personal conversations with the natives and their chiefs and to preach. These itinerate tours often put him in danger from spears, clubs and stones; he was hurt several times, but he persevered.

Another integral part of his evangelization strategy was the development of schools around the island. It was essential to teach the natives to read to enable Bible translation to be of value. Upon his

arrival Geddie had immediately set to work to master the native language and reduce it to writing; by December, 1849, he was able to report:

An elementary book has lately been issued from our Mission press. The book numbers twelve pages, and about 2,000 copies have been struck off. I have expended much time and care on this little book, and it has been subjected to so many revisions of my native pundits, that I hope no material errors will be found in it. In this little book I have inserted some thoughts on the following subjects: – God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Angels, Adam and Eve and the Fall, Sin, Salvation by Jesus Christ alone, Death and Eternity. The printing of this little book has given a fresh impulse to our scholars, and all are anxiously pressing on, that they may soon be able to read it.¹³

Geddie also formed communicants' classes which allowed him to give in-depth training on a more intimate level. Note his journal entry for 14 February, 1854, six years after landing on Aneityum:

Met today with candidates for admission into the church. Made arrangements to meet weekly. Nohoat [a chief] and Nimtiwan [an old warrior] are among them. I trust that both these men are influenced by love to Christ in their desire to profess him. Their outward conduct, so far as I know, is good, but God only can judge the heart. I fear to admit any who would bring dishonour on Christ and his cause, and yet I fear to keep the children's bread [Lord's Supper] from any of X's people. May I enjoy divine guidance in all things relating to the Saviour's cause.¹⁴

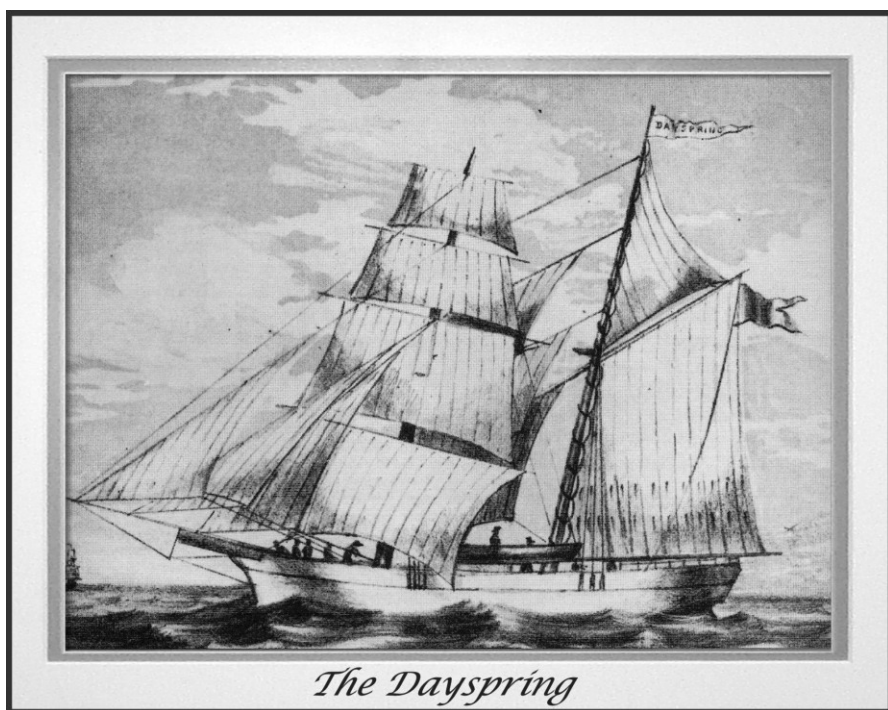
The schools and classes were for both children and adults. Generally Geddie found the women and boys the best students. These schools were initially led by lay-teachers (in addition to Mrs. Geddie) who were from other South Pacific Islands and had been trained by LMS workers. The lay-teachers were Polynesian but from different tribal groups from those on Aneityum. Therefore, although they did not know the language, they had a closer cultural identification with the natives. This

¹³ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 62-63.

¹⁴ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 176-177.

employment of other native teachers, and later missionaries, allowed larger areas to be reached and the single missionary, Geddie, to carry on and oversee a far more effective ministry. However, from Geddie's perspective, this was to be a temporary measure. He was grateful to have other natives from neighbouring islands labouring here, but his goal was to see the island natives raised up and trained as teachers and ministers to their own people.

As the work advanced on Aneityum, Geddie moved forward in his



missionary strategy and began going to adjacent islands. However, transportation often proved difficult, as the mission initially had to rely upon the LMS boat, the *John Williams*. Again, he would leave native lay-teachers to commence schools and Sunday services in the new places. This was like a bulwark of evangelistic beginnings. Eventually Geddie was able to secure a ship – the *Dayspring*, built primarily by money raised by Sunday Schools and sent out in 1863 from Nova Scotia. The vessel indeed provided a tremendous aid for this mission in the New Hebrides.

These native workers likewise needed on-going training, and this, too, was Geddie's work. He would have them give a short message at

services/meetings and give feed-back. We find an illustration from his journal entry of Feb. 13th, 1854.

Spent this day in visiting some of the outstations. Went first to Iteg, and examined the school. The attendance was good and the natives seem to improve. Went next to Imkalau where many of the people are still heathen. Nohoat, Topoe, Nimitiwan and other natives were with me. It was some time before we could collect the people. Those who did not wish to see us hid themselves in the bush. Some of them were discovered by our party who went in search of them and were persuaded to come & listen. One man was spied out on a tree.

Nohoat almost lost his patience when speaking to these people, said if it were not forbidden, he and his brother chiefs would punish them for adhering to their heathenism, his address was good in other respects. Topoe and Nimitiwan spoke much to the same effect. The addresses of Topoe are always good, for there is so much of Christ in them. I said a few words also and told the people that I hoped soon to visit them again.¹⁵

These native teachers also began to model the Christian life to the natives, which in itself was critical to the advance of the gospel among the heathen on these islands.

Bible translation work was another very important facet of John Geddie's missionary work, as was the printing of hymns and catechetical materials for instruction. As early as Nov. 16th, 1848, Geddie could report:

For some days past I have been engaged in putting our printing press in order. I have already struck off some copies of our first hymn in this language, which the poetical genius of Mr. Powell [LMS fellow missionary] has furnished; two others are in the press...I expect next week to strike off some sheets of alphabets, syllables and words for our schools. The teachers at the several out-stations are waiting anxiously for these, that they may commence their work of teaching."¹⁶

¹⁵ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 176

¹⁶ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 42-43.

By the end of the first year, Geddie's work on a catechism in the native language was far advanced and translation of Scripture had commenced.

Before leaving Geddie's methods, it should be said that he was a man who took great care to nourish himself spiritually while abundantly busy feeding others. I believe this needs to be underscored as critical to Geddie's approach. True, his reading often had the additional benefit of helping the natives, but blessings are usually two-fold. In perusing his "Journal", one finds constant reference to his meditative reading:

Feb. 8th

The reading of a precious tract this evening and translating the closing verses of Matt. xi suggested some precious and profitable thoughts. May not this be a device of Satan to alienate my heart from invitations to come to him. I will take him at his word, and venture my all on him. None ever yet perished who touched the scepter which he holds out to sinners.¹⁷

Feb. 12th

Finished reading the life of Felix Neff today. I feel humbled when I compare my labours in the Redeemers cause with that of other men. Had the Aneiteumese a Neff what a great work might have been done among them. I cannot suppress the thought at times that I am occupying a place that might be far better filled by others. As far as I know my own heart I love the missionary work and would not be happy out of it, but it is far too honourable, too spiritual, too heavenly for me. I think however that I am in the way of duty, and I will labour according to my ability and leave the result to God. The Master whom I serve can accomplish his own gracious purposes by the humblest means.¹⁸

4. Geddie's Perspective on Conversion: Faith and Practice

The first year or two of ministry was very slow. At the main station where the Geddies lived, the average Sunday attendance the first year was ten, mainly women and children! The second year the average attendance rose to forty-five, and the third year the average was eighty.

¹⁷ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 175.

¹⁸ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 175-176.

The fact needs to be borne in mind that these records are of the main or central station. There were other outlying stations that were developing as Geddie ministered.

We can see through the following statements that Geddie was far from despondent: “Though our trials have been great, yet our progress as compared with that of other missions has been encouraging, and we see much in the past history of the work to awaken thankfulness to God whom we serve.”¹⁹ And again:

...The attendance for the last five or six weeks has been about eighty. Should things progress in the same ratio, there is reason to anticipate a brighter day for this island, at no distant period. Many of the natives have abandoned their superstitions, and are now earnestly enquiring what they must do to be saved...

The little party who have abandoned their superstitions are objects of deep interest, and awaken our most anxious solicitude. How very peculiar and perilous is their situation! They have not yet any portion of God’s word in their own language, and on verbal instructions, communicated very imperfectly to them, they are entirely dependent for their knowledge of saving truth. May Israel’s Shepherd feed them and keep them!²⁰

Geddie began to have some applications for baptism, and this also brought him great encouragement. Rather than immediately proceeding, he first consulted the missionaries of the London Missionary Society for their opinion. Geddie was recognizing the role of the LMS in this region and believed that, “as Salvation does not depend on baptism delay in my peculiar circumstances may be the best course”.²¹ A delegation of LMS missionaries did arrive and fully confirmed Geddie’s judgment that these candidates for baptism should be baptized. How wonderful to see such a testimony of labouring together!

In reading the record of Geddie’s first four years of missionary ministry, one is led to conclude that this was very much a preparative period of ministry. Geddie was faithfully labouring and carefully establishing what constituted true Christian belief and ethic. In

¹⁹ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 75.

²⁰ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 75.

²¹ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 89.

addition, it was not just the natives that needed the gospel; it was also sorely needed by the white traders. In Geddie's words: "The awful depravity of the traders among these islands must be witnessed to be known. Their wickedness is one of the greatest barriers to the extension of the gospel on this island. *The licentiousness of the natives is less than that of our own countrymen*"²² (italics mine). There was no doubt in Geddie's mind that these traders were a source of great discouragement. They engaged in promiscuous sexual relations with the native women, were often drunk, cheated people of sandalwood and tricked young boys into traveling with them, often never to return.

Missionaries are hated by most of [the?] white men who frequent these islands. The grounds of this dislike are our exposures of their licentious and abominable practices. But He who is for us is greater than those who are against us. The cause of Christ will triumph at last notwithstanding all the efforts that are made by the heathen and our own countrymen to arrest its progress. It is sad to think that men from Christian lands should be among its worst opposers.²³

Allow me to make a contemporary application. Western business or secular aid workers labouring in a nation alongside of western missionaries often represent two totally opposite worldviews and lifestyles. At times this can become confusing to the nationals.

Today conversion is "taboo" in most historical assessments of nineteenth century missions.²⁴ The new interpretation revolves around seeing the "natives" as moving from polytheism to monotheism. This is true, but it fails to deal with heart and moral transformation. Slowly Geddie's mission turned into a large-scale "people movement", and it is exactly with this for which much of modern scholarship has little sympathy. An awakening amongst a large group of people is viewed as a shift in theistic belief. I see no evidence from Geddie or in this people movement that developed in Vanuatu that this was anything other than a general spiritual awakening. Geddie and others describe it as "the working of the Lord".

²² Miller, *Misi Gete*, 89.

²³ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 67.

²⁴ Those interested in this theme of conversion in mission, both individual and people group, should read the recent interview article on Andrew Walls which is included in the Select Bibliography on page 50 at the end of my article "From 'Out of Africa' – a Global Christian Perspective".

Geddie's message clearly gave prominence to vital gospel truths: sin and grace, the Fall, God's love, the atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of a new heart, the doctrine of salvation and the necessity of a holy life.²⁵ In Geddie's message and ministry there was a unity between faith and practice. (See page 63 and my comments on sexual teaching.) It was not legalistic, but balanced. It was also a ministry which discerned that western, white worldviews were not entirely representative of Christianity.

V. Lessons to Learn From

- The Lord raises up key individuals as leaders to awaken the Church to her great missionary mandate. They challenge the excuses and theology that cause others to fail to take up this mandate. They have a vision in their hearts for the fields of this world and are prepared to persevere amidst the ridicule of the Christian community. They are prepared to work patiently to stir the Church to her calling. We need young leaders to be raised up once again with such a passion. Let us pray.
- Missionary team conflict is not a modern problem; it is an old problem. One must not gloss over the missionary team conflicts which arose in the South Pacific. We must not just read biographies and autobiographies without probing and asking some difficult questions. I have yet to find any evidence that Geddie ever used "gunpowder" or guns to advance his ministry. Geddie and John Paton, however, did have some serious words about this issue. There is a growing opinion that Paton may have been less than judicious in some of his methods. The first man in print may not have all the answers. We need to consider carefully the methods of all the "greats" of the missionary enterprise of the nineteenth century and be prepared to drop our romanticizing. For all of this, Geddie sets before us the humble, catholic spirit – more easily identified than emulated.
- All too often the employment of native lay-teachers has been underestimated in missionary methods. Geddie's use of these native lay-teachers was critical to the advancement of the gospel in the South Pacific. They were the "bridge-head" for John and Margaret Paton on Tanna. Sometimes our desire to assess everything by our modern structures as superimposed upon

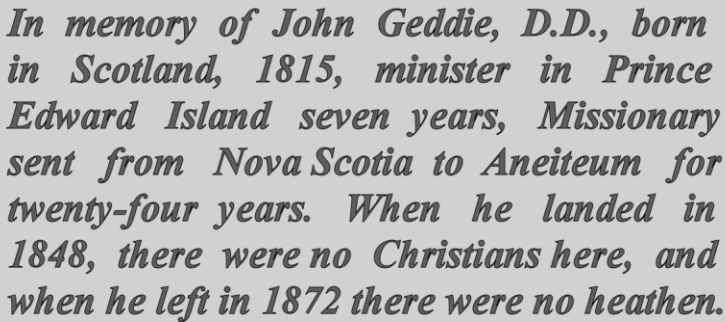
²⁵ Miller, *Misi Gete*, 337.

historical missions fails to give prominence to structural methods which must be recognized and commended, even if they do not quite fit *our* neatly packaged structures.

- I will not re-summarize here the prominence which Geddie gave to vital gospel truths. This is not always easy to achieve, but I sense that Geddie concentrated on the prominent gospel themes. I see no indication that he attempted to add to the gospel.
- Geddie never became a world-wide missionary statesman like John Paton. He lived much more “in the shadows”. Each has his place in the history of Christianity. One is a foot, the other the mouth. I sense that John and Charlotte Geddie, pioneer missionaries, have been forgotten by the wider Church. They can teach us so much.
- John Geddie represents a missionary who bridged the “divide” between the great missionary societies and the Church emerging out of her slumber. Failure to recognize the tremendous role played by these societies is to be less than accurate with the story of modern missions. The Lord works in wondrous ways His will to perform.
- I am ever amazed how an individual has a country or location placed upon his heart and it becomes his singular burden. This happened with Geddie while he was on Prince Edward Island when he read of Rev. A. W. Murray’s visit to Aneityum. And so began a burden for that island while Geddie lived on an island literally on the other side of the world. I still believe in the call of God and the burdened heart. I realize it may be out of fashion to say such today.
- There is something about Geddie’s character and personality which one finds coming through continually. Some would call it love, but I think it is much more than that. There was a manner toward people which often disarmed those to whom he ministered, a humility in his manner towards the natives which they sensed. He possessed a “common sense” towards people and ministry. There was a fire and a passion for people in his whole carriage. Church planting and missionary endeavour always work through real people. God does use personality, and

some individuals have that evangelical, bridge-building manner which is used in kingdom extension.

This short study of John Geddie is more than a biography of a missionary. Principles in mission, church planting and kingdom work can be found as we examine his life, and from such we can all learn and benefit wherever we are called to labour around the world in our day.



In memory of John Geddie, D.D., born in Scotland, 1815, minister in Prince Edward Island seven years, Missionary sent from Nova Scotia to Aneiteum for twenty-four years. When he landed in 1848, there were no Christians here, and when he left in 1872 there were no heathen.

A tablet behind Geddie's pulpit in the church in Anelcauhat, Vanuatu, and also on the church wall in New London, Prince Edward Island.

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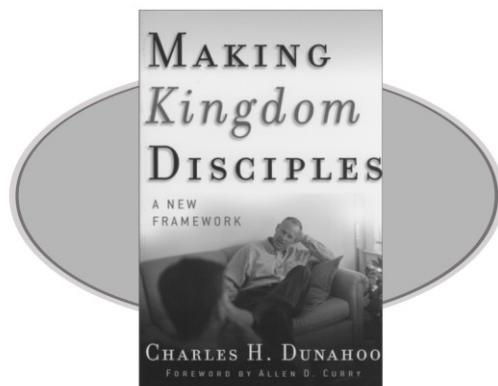
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A Didactic Review of Dunahoo's *Making Kingdom Disciples*

Occasionally in the Haddington House Journal we include a didactic review. The following is such a review, which may be used for teaching purposes if the book under review is not available for all to read. This book by Charles Dunahoo joins discipleship together with a Christian worldview emphasis with the goal of encouraging a deeper understanding of the second aspect of the great commission; namely, bringing converts to maturity.

Editor



***Making Kingdom Disciples: A New Framework.* Charles H. Dunahoo. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005, 249 pp. ISBN 0-87552-640-3**

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:19-20). The command of making disciples is clear and it is one that must be undertaken by the Church with all seriousness. William Hendriksen comments on this passage by saying, “The term ‘make

disciples' places somewhat more stress on the fact that the mind, as well as the heart and the will, must be won to God."¹ This premise is in total agreement with what Charles Dunahoo is promoting in his book *Making Kingdom Disciples*. This book explores the discipling process by bringing forth a biblical model of a disciple who has the Lordship of Jesus Christ impacting every aspect of his or her life. To impact the world we must know the world, and to know the world we must be in the world, but to be in the world we must not become the world. This may seem to be an impossible task, and yet Mr. Dunahoo simplifies this process without taking away from it. He also exposes many of the dangers and roadblocks that face God's children in the process of making disciples. The examples of people such as Paul are also brought forward to show us the proper method of how to reach those around us without altering the foundation or the message that God has given us.

Kingdom Disciple

A kingdom disciple is someone who thinks God's thoughts after him and applies them to all of life.² This may seem self-explanatory but it seems that many are not living a lifestyle that is guided by our Lord Jesus Christ seven days a week. Without the Lord, though, man is fragmented in his religious walk and is not capable of completing his main objective of a Christian's existence. This main objective is to live a life that knows, understands and applies God's Word to all of life.³ This is crucial in order to become a Christian who is transformed into the likeness of Christ by living in continual service in the Kingdom of God. Christ is the key and the centre of such a worldview, and it is based completely on God's truth.

1 Peter 1:14 states, "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." Mr. Dunahoo's belief that one must be a disciple who surrenders all areas of his life to God is in complete agreement with this scripture. For as Abraham Kuyper stated, "There is not a square inch within the domain of our human life of which the Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does

¹ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary, Matthew* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1973), 999.

² Charles H. Dunahoo, *Making Kingdom Disciples, A New Framework* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2005), 5.

³ Dunahoo, 11.

not say 'Mine'".⁴ We must not separate faith and life. In order to avoid this, we must have a Christian worldview that starts and finishes with God and we must use His inspired text as our guide.

The Kingdom of God

All disciples must realize that they are members of the Kingdom of God as well as the church. No one denomination is in charge of this kingdom, for Christ is King and Ruler; therefore all professing Christians, regardless of denomination, are allowed access through Christ into the kingdom. The Great Commission gives clear direction in this process of making a kingdom for our Lord. Charles Dunahoo rightly points out that, "The people of God were not in isolation from, but in the world's midst to serve and represent their King, subduing and bringing it under obedience of his rule."⁵ This commission is for laypeople as well as church officers, for it requires a wide range of vocations to affect all areas of a nation and culture. This gives all of Christ's people importance and place in his kingdom, and it shows that all disciples' lives must include the following: theology, mission and ministry.⁶

A Christian Worldview and Life View

A disciple's goal is to link Christian belief with Christian living. The Reformed faith offers a good base, for it is an easily understood and logically ordered system that teaches the whole counsel of God.⁷ If we are to instruct others on the whole counsel of God, we must first know sound doctrine, and here the Bible becomes our rule and guide to knowing what must be believed. In 2 Timothy 3:16 we read, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." Mr. Dunahoo spends ample time on the need for Scripture reading and on the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures in the life of a kingdom disciple.

The author also stresses that if our knowledge of God is wrong, so is everything else that follows.⁸ He also believes the reason that most

⁴ Abraham Kuyper, *Souvereiniteit in Eigen Kring. Rede ter Inwijding van de Vrije Universiteit* (Kampen: Kok, 1930), 32.

⁵ Dunahoo, 48.

⁶ Dunahoo, 39.

⁷ Dunahoo, 78.

⁸ Dunahoo, 86.

do not understand the Bible properly is because they do not understand the workings and implications of the covenants that God has made with His children. God has communicated to us through covenants, the two main ones being the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Under the covenant of works, man did not keep his side of the bargain, and therefore man was brought into a state of spiritual death and darkness. Our Lord Jesus Christ rescued us from this spiritual death by meeting all the requirements of the covenant of works, therefore restoring man's relationship with God. There are still the following two requirements of man under the new covenant: the covenant must be accepted by faith and we must be reborn and consecrate ourselves to God.⁹

As mentioned before, faith and obedience are conditions of the covenant of grace. The underlying principle of a covenant is that both parties are in a relationship requiring a loving commitment on both sides. If one breaks this covenant, the other is not obligated to fulfill his commitment any longer. This is why a disciple must be taught the implications of what it means to be included in a covenant and what would be required of him. The Calvinist position has always maintained that both grace and law are included in the gospel of Christ.¹⁰ A proper knowledge of the law is essential here, for it was not established to start a relationship with God but rather as a template to maintain a relationship with God.

The church is a major part of a believer's life, and a proper view of the church is essential. Acts 2:47 states, "And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." The church is the training ground for future soldiers of Christ. This is where their sword is sharpened, as we read in Proverbs 27:17, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." The Church is the Mother¹¹ of the believer, the place in which we hear the Word, where the sacraments are administered and where discipline is practiced to help us to grow. This is why all Christians should attend a church that is Bible believing and one which has trustworthy instructors (Heb 10: 24-26). Mr. Dunahoo points the believer to the church for the critical role that it plays in disciple making. He believes it is crucial, for it guides Christians to understand the truth and how then to apply it.¹²

⁹ Dunahoo, 93.

¹⁰ Dunahoo, 102.

¹¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4.1.1.

¹² Dunahoo, 98.

Knowing the World

Charles Dunahoo believes that the following three things must be emphasized in a disciple worldview: we must understand the Word of God, we must be philosophically aware of our particular culture and we must apply the truth to our specific circumstance.¹³ This is an area where we may discover why Christianity does not have an impact on the nation and culture. The area of modernity offers many obstacles for the Christian worldview to move forward and have an impact on this society. With some understanding of the culture and with a thoughtful starting point, we may remove these obstacles and have an impact on those around us.

Not all is safe or beneficial for a Christian, but it is God who appoints the time, place and culture in which we are born and live (Acts 17:26). So Christians must, to the best of their abilities, without sin, learn and study the culture by which they are surrounded. Then they must find a way to deliver the gospel in a way that is palatable and understandable to those to whom they witness (I Corinthians 9:22). As Mr. Dunahoo states, "Know your world! Know your audience!"¹⁴

Generations

One way in which to learn about the culture and how to impact it is to learn about the generations contained in a certain society. In North America there are currently four major generations: the Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millenials. This means the delivery of the message of Christ is to be brought forward in diverse ways so that it is appealing to all target audiences. In order to deal with this, the author took time to discuss the differences between these groups and also to list the distinctives of each. A proper understanding is vital, for all generations see and act differently in the way that their "personal grids and filters"¹⁵ process the information that is laid before them.¹⁶ To not pay attention to this is very dangerous, for as it states in the book, "We need all generations coming together to produce the kind of covenant family that will survive the pressures, dangers, and consequences of today's often degenerate and demoralizing world."¹⁷ It seems that this is what John was intending to do by listing fathers, young men and little children in his first epistle. (I John 2:13)

¹³ Dunahoo, 117.

¹⁴ Dunahoo, 158.

¹⁵ Dunahoo, 21.

¹⁶ Dunahoo, 156.

¹⁷ Dunahoo, 168.

Postmodernism

Os Guinness stated in one of his lectures that “modernity is both our greatest threat and our greatest opportunity today.”¹⁸ What he meant by this is that Christians may get caught up in this worldview and lose themselves in the process; but if it is understood properly, it could be used as an effective tool in the disciple making process. Modernism has spawned a whole generation that has disdain for anything conservative or old. The newer the better seems to be the mantra of this group, and it makes the discipleship process all the more difficult, but not impossible. Mr. Dunahoo states, “As Christians we cannot simply evangelize people with the good news of the gospel. We have to disciple new Christians with a biblical world-and-life-view.”¹⁹ We must meet this culture on its ground and teach without wavering. However, there are five dangers of this culture which must be avoided by Christians: pluralism, privatism, individualism, relativism and technism.²⁰ Christians are confronted with these daily, and we must endeavor to handle these false perspectives without becoming immersed in them.

Biblical Models

The author then takes us to the story of Paul’s ministry in Athens, recorded in Acts 17. Here we see a biblical model of what he has discussed previously. As mentioned before, God places us in a location in order to perform His will and purpose. Paul shows those of us who are in the twenty-first century how to proclaim the gospel to a people who may not have heard it before. He starts by finding a reference point with the Greeks. This was possible because Paul had knowledge of the situation into which he had entered. Charles Dunahoo states,

To zoom in on Paul’s ministry: he believed that he was in Athens on a mission to preach the gospel. He prudently realized that how he did that in Athens had to be different from how he did it in other places such as Antioch, where the people knew the Old Testament Scriptures, or in Corinth, where there was a mixture of Hebrew and Greek culture.²¹

¹⁸ Dunahoo, 121.

¹⁹ Dunahoo, 125.

²⁰ Dunahoo, 126.

²¹ Dunahoo, 178.

It must be made clear at this point that Paul did not change the truths of his message, only the delivery of the message. There are two important facts that must be understood in order to have a proper delivery: (1) We must be certain about the basics of our Christian faith without wavering, faltering or capitulating to the enemy. We must not compromise the truth. (2) We must be students of our culture in order to frame our message in the most meaningful way for our audience.²² This was the way that Paul handled himself while preaching the gospel in the Bible, and it will still work if properly applied in this day and age.

Dunahoo also draws the reader's attention to the book of Ecclesiastes, which shows clearly the difference between those of the world and kingdom disciples. We are confronted with only two choices of living – above the sun (as believers) and under the sun (as unbelievers). The author defends his view of a kingdom disciple by showing how the unbeliever chases the wind, while the believer chases God.²³ Solomon shows that without a Christian worldview, where all thoughts and actions are under subjection, there is only hopelessness and despair. Dunahoo states, "God's model and method for making disciples is all-inclusive. It requires developing a Christian mind and heart for the things of God with an ability to operate on a day-to-day basis from a Christian world-and-life-view perspective."²⁴ This shows the proper understanding from a biblical foundation.

In the final section the author spends time looking at the life of Abraham. The reason for this is to show the necessity of reading the Bible as a book of the covenant, seeing that it is essential for kingdom disciples.²⁵ Dunahoo suggests that to understand the covenant is to realize that this life is unified and will eventually come to an end. He states, "Our religion, our faith in God, touches every area of our lives and therefore the lives of others as well."²⁶ This is biblical and is foundational to a proper understanding of the way we live and the purpose of our lives. As the author suggests, such understanding will keep us away from a moralist or legalist interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, two thought processes that have plagued Christians since the beginning.

²² Dunahoo, 183.

²³ Dunahoo, 191.

²⁴ Dunahoo, 204.

²⁵ Dunahoo, 207.

²⁶ Dunahoo, 208.

Abraham's life gives us a glimpse of the covenant of grace in action, and it also gives us a glimpse of the coming Messiah. The promises from God kept Abraham safe and away from harm. This was evident from the encounters with Pharaoh. Abraham's story shows us God's sovereignty in all areas of our life; He will not be thwarted in His purpose. The key point as Dunahoo states it is, "it was not about Abraham; it was really about God",²⁷ and "life takes on a new meaning when we realize that life is not about us."²⁸ This is simple and foundational and yet so easy to misunderstand or forget.

Charles Dunahoo has challenged modern Christians with a biblical worldview which, if heeded properly, should produce effective "kingdom disciples" who in turn should impact the world around them. Christians must not lose sight of their purpose in this life, which is to promote and develop the Kingdom of God. This goes so much further than just a fellowship of believers in a community and nation; for the kingdom is not confined. It includes all believers in all nations, belonging to all denominations. Christians must allow their light to shine in all areas of their lives in order to have an impact on the nations in which they live. They must state the message of the gospel in a way that will be understood by all if they want to be effective in reaching all segments of the population. The dangers and stumbling blocks should also be studied, for this will allow Christians to explore solutions which may prevent their brothers and sisters from unknowingly becoming prey to the philosophical thoughts of the day. Examples of living a lifestyle that has every thought and action in subjection to God should be taken from heroes of the faith that are found in the Holy Scriptures. They are still showing believers, just as effectively as in times past, the way to walk that is pleasing to God. The Christian community as a whole owes Charles Dunahoo a thank-you for the work that he has done in producing such a clear exposition of a biblical Christian worldview.

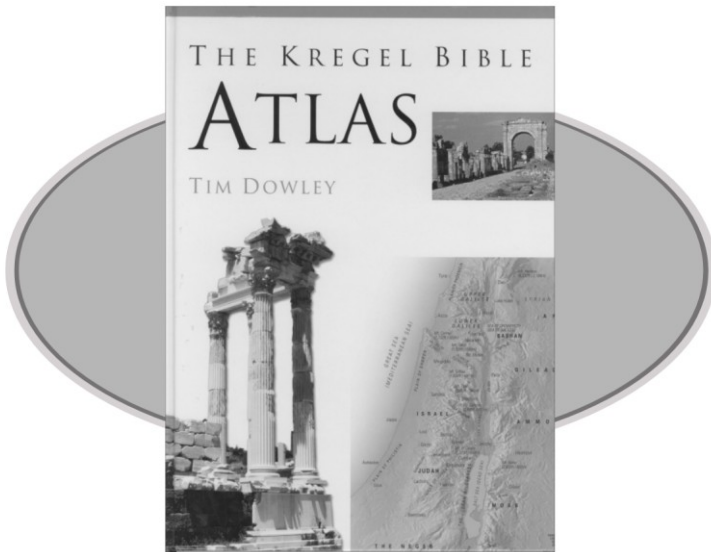
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²⁷ Dunahoo, 217.

²⁸ Dunahoo, 218.

Book Reviews

***The Kregel Bible Atlas.* Tim Dowley. A worldwide coedition by Angus Hudson Ltd., London. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003, 96 pp., hc. ISBN 0-8254-2467-4**



At last an affordable, accurate and readable atlas with super photographs and maps for Christians to gain tremendous insight into the Scriptures! I was introduced by a student to this fine, little atlas as a valuable resource for colleges in the developing world. It is suitable for the whole world, and I encourage readers in any country to consider this excellent publication.

The book is divided into four parts: “The Lands of the Bible”, “The Old Testament”, “Between the Testaments” and “The New Testament”. I am convinced many Bible colleges in the developing world can use this for several courses, such as Old Testament and New Testament

introductions or surveys. I tested it out for a New Testament Introduction class in Africa and found it very helpful.

Few atlases can combine three things well: written commentary, good pictures and illustrations, and high quality maps. *The Kregel Bible Atlas* manages to do all three, no doubt due to the writer and compiler's knowledge and abilities. Tim Dowley has traveled extensively in Turkey, Israel and the Bible lands; and this book clearly reflects a seasoned and knowledgeable writer. He is also the editor of the noted *Baker Atlas of Christian History*, not to mention several other resources, and he appears to have a good understanding of the visual cultural age in which we live. Yet this is not just a carefully crafted visual work, but in addition the written commentary is so highly informative that it helps open up much of the Scripture. The text truly complements the maps, illustrations, photographs and charts.

The author provides a good starting point with his first map of "The Fertile Crescent" and starts us with a fine geographical study of this area and a more concentrated study on Palestine (pp. 4-16). Great to see proper geographical reference to the Rift Valley and the Dead Sea. A good understanding of the geography of Palestine will help Bible reading – just think of Psalms and so many of the allusions. Then with this geographical basis, the author takes us into part two, "The Old Testament", starting with Abraham's journeys and then proceeding basically chronologically through the remainder of the Old Testament and Palestine after the Exile.

I find myself being shy to pass any critical comments but will venture one or two. It is standard to have maps of Paul's three missionary journeys, but since Dowley appears to have taken a decided view (p. 87) that Paul was released from custody in Rome "and resumed his travels", a fourth map would have helped the reader quickly locate some places he names with this thesis. I also felt the commentary section on "The Fertile Crescent" needed expansion.

Part three, "Between the Testaments" (pp. 59-64), is most interesting and starts with Alexander the Great. (Better connection here could have been made.) The section on the Maccabean Revolt is good and is sufficient for such a survey.

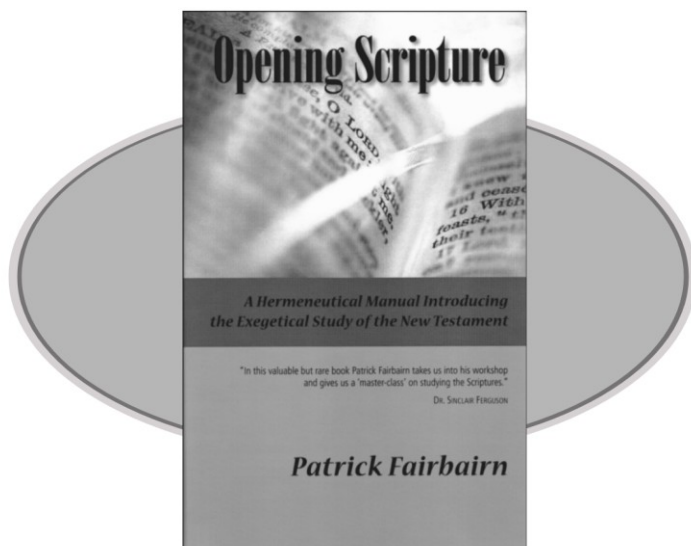
The section on the life of Jesus is well done and could be useful to an adult Bible Class leader. The material on Paul and the spread of Christianity is excellent. There are two maps (pp. 90 and 91) on "The Spread of Christianity by A.D. 100" and "The Spread of Christianity by A.D. 300", both with good resolution and colouring.

Thank you, Kregel, for making this fine and affordable Bible atlas available. An excellent companion to this volume is Kregel's newly

revised and updated *St. Paul, the Traveler and Roman Citizen*, by William M. Ramsay (see book notice, p. 111). This classic work has been updated by Mark Wilson and includes modern illustration and archaeological photographs. I am delighted to see an evangelical publishing house producing these high quality study materials. All who love geography, history and the Bible will benefit from these.

Reviewed by Jack C. Whytock

***Opening Scripture: A Hermeneutical Manual Introducing the Exegetical Study of the New Testament.* Patrick Fairbairn. Birmingham, AL: SGCB, no date, 480pp., hc. ISBN 1-932474-51-X.¹**



Patrick Fairbairn² was one of the last biblical theologians of the nineteenth century to be moving forward with the study of hermeneutics based on the inspiration and authority of the Word of God. He contributed classic studies on Typology, on Prophecy and on The Law. He wrote commentaries on Ezekiel and on The Pastoral Epistles. By the time of his death in 1874, evangelical biblical scholarship had descended into in-fighting as liberalism made its inroads into what were previously orthodox seminaries and denominations. The conservative wagons were circled, the polemics begun, and years wasted until the middle of the last century, when evangelical scholarship, leaving the liberals to their own thoughts, again came into its own.

¹ This book is a reprint of the 1858 edition, by T & T Clark, of Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual or Introduction to the Exegetical Study of the New Testament*.

² For more information on Fairbairn see *Haddington House Journal*, Volume 6, 2004, 110-116.

It is these years which the locusts have eaten which give Fairbairn's works their freshness and relevance. Even though his style is decidedly Victorian, his thoughts are surprisingly up to date because discussions have only recently – comparatively speaking – been taken up from where they were left in his day. Fairbairn has clear and balanced opinions on preaching Christ from the Old Testament; on the Old Testament, New Testament and present uses of the Law; and on understanding the place of Israel and features of the millennium in the prophetic portions of Scripture. He speaks to issues which are hotly debated in Reformed circles today.

This book is the last of Fairbairn's major works to be reprinted. It has three parts to it:

- 1) Discussion of facts and principles bearing on the language and interpretation of New Testament Scripture.
- 2) Dissertations on particular subjects connected with the exegesis of New Testament Scripture.
- 3) The use made of Old Testament Scripture in the writings of the New Testament.

One of the reasons why it has not been reprinted earlier might be that it is really three books rather than a book in three parts as each part easily stands on its own. The first gives an introduction to the Greek of the New Testament and the ground rules of New Testament interpretation. It is this section which most matches the original title of the book as a hermeneutical manual. After a description of the language of the New Testament, which is not substantially different than the conclusions reached by more recent writers, there are sections dealing with, among other things, the interpretation of parables, figurative language, the relation of the Old Testament to the New and the Analogy of the Faith.

The second part contains word studies and exegetical essays. It is doubtful that they could be called an introduction to the exegetical study of the New Testament, and given their style, there are other writers whose essays would be better models to follow. However, the content of these studies makes them highly recommended reading for anyone engaged in the exegesis of the New Testament. Fairbairn's study on the *baptizo* word group is both edifying and entertaining. The findings of his essay on *diatheke* are corroborated by that of Leon Morris³ writing one hundred years later. His articles on the names of

³ Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 65-111.

Christ, the genealogies of Christ, angels and Hades are informative, thought provoking and marked by moderation.

The third part lists the Old Testament passages quoted in the New, noting the manner of their citation and the mode of their application. In the first section of this part, Fairbairn divides these quotations into four categories: those which match the Hebrew Old Testament exactly, those which match the Hebrew but have differences which do not alter the sense, those which match the Septuagint and those whose source is not clear. Notes are attached to each quotation helpfully explaining the manner of its citation. Roger Nicole says of the second section:

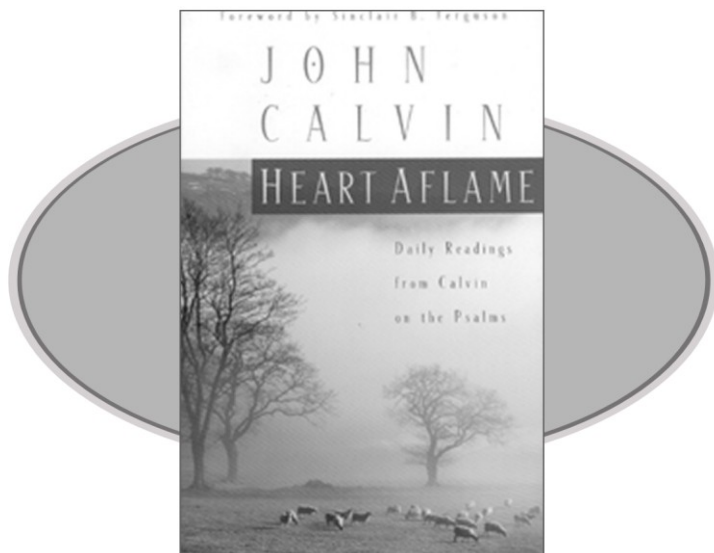
In a second section Fairbairn discusses singly a number of quotations, some nineteen of them to be exact, in which the meaning of the Old Testament in its context does not seem to have been properly considered in the New Testament usage. Here again Fairbairn comes forth with extremely helpful comments in which he supports the practice of the New Testament writers in every case. It is high time that in the midst of controversies in which all kinds of accusations are leveled against the use of the Old Testament by New Testament authors the painstaking work of Patrick Fairbairn and his monumental scholarship be once again taken into consideration. I am sure that those who read his volumes will find themselves amply rewarded.⁴

Opening Scripture is no less thorough a study of its subjects than any of Fairbairn's other works. It is, however, a book which will interest different people for different reasons. The last part on its own is worth the price of the book simply because there are not many other in depth studies of the Old Testament quotations in the New. The dissertations in the second part will be of interest to students of the New Testament when the subject treated is before them. The first part is as good a summary of its subject as is available and should be required reading for all students entering into a study of the New Testament. As this book is only in print once every one hundred and fifty years, it is recommended that the interested reader obtain his copy soon.

⁴ Roger Nicole, *Standing Forth* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2002), 87.

David Douglas Gebbie is a regular reviewer for this Journal. Rev. Gebbie is a native of Scotland and was educated at Glasgow College of Technology and the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. Before his induction to the Presbyterian Reformed Church (PRC) in Chesley, Ontario, he served Free Church of Scotland charges in Raasay and Achiltibuie and pastored the PRC's congregation in Portland, Oregon.

***Heart Aflame: Daily Readings from Calvin on the Psalms.* John Calvin. Foreword by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1999, 378 pp., paper. ISBN 0-87552-458-3**



In his foreword to this book, Sinclair Ferguson immediately points out that it is quite rare and unusual to use the writings of John Calvin as a part of one's daily devotional readings. However, this collection has made Calvin's *Commentary on the Psalms* very appealing to those who have a desire not only to learn more about the Psalms but also to understand more about a man with a rich biblical understanding and a remarkable spiritual intelligence.

The book is organized into 366 daily readings and uses excerpts from Calvin's commentary on all 150 psalms. More time is spent on some psalms than on others in the daily readings. For instance, the 176 verses of Psalm 119 are divided into 21 daily readings. Each daily reading averages 300-400 words.

This book is a noteworthy resource for studying the Psalms and should be read in conjunction with the corresponding reading from the Book of Psalms itself. Calvin vividly described the Psalms as "an anatomy of all the parts of the soul". Ferguson states that "in these pages you will find the Spirit-inspired biblical anatomy of the Psalms

and the hands of an outstanding physician and surgeon of the spirit. Reading them on a daily basis can hardly fail to bring you spiritual health and strength.” (p. vi)

The daily readings generally highlight one or two verses and then proceed to offer teaching upon them in the way a pastor might present in an expositional sermon. For example, the first reading is from Psalm 1: 1-2. Calvin here elaborates on “Blessed is the man”:

The meaning of the Psalmist is that it shall be always well with God’s devout servants, whose constant endeavor it is to make progress in the study of his law. He teaches us how impossible it is for anyone to apply his mind to meditation upon God’s law, who has not first withdrawn and separated himself from the society of the ungodly. It is necessary to remember that the world is fraught with deadly corruption, and that the first step to living well is to renounce the company of the ungodly, otherwise it is sure to infect us with its own pollution. (p. 1)

The insight that Calvin draws from these four simple words have great implication that even an advanced Christian might not see. This makes the daily reading a far better guide for Bible study than is generally available in the average devotional.

Commentaries such as Calvin’s on the Psalms are most often used for in-depth study and exegesis by theologians and pastors or for quick reference in a seminary library. However, this book of daily readings makes Calvin’s exposition more accessible to the average Christian reader.¹ With this in mind, the publisher informs us that he chose to use the NIV translation of the Scriptures except for cases where Calvin’s argument required the original wording. He also reworked Rev. James Anderson’s English translation of Calvin’s commentary on the Psalms, originally published in 1845, updating it into modern English.

In Calvin’s commentary we find evidence of his own love of the Psalms, as expressed in excerpts from his July 1557 preface to the book:

I have been accustomed to call this book, I think not inappropriately, “An Anatomy of all the Parts of the Soul”; for there is not an emotion of which any one can be conscious

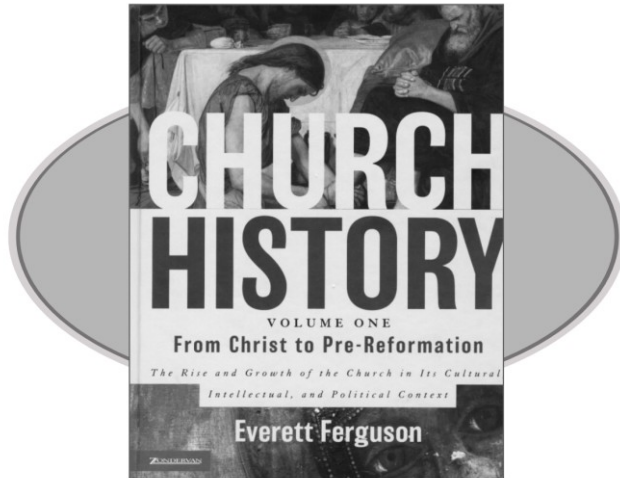
¹ Compiler’s preface, ix

that is not here represented as in a mirror. Or rather, the Holy Spirit has here drawn to the life of all the griefs, sorrows, fears, doubts, hopes, cares, perplexities, in short, all the distracting emotions with which the minds of men are wont to be agitated. (p. x)

The Reformed heritage of faith has continually sought after counsel for spiritual guidance from the book of Psalms. This book serves as an excellent resource and devotional guide for daily insight into the Psalms. Words cannot adequately express the inspiration which comes from this book of the Bible and how powerfully the words can penetrate the hearts of sinners. Calvin also very eloquently teaches from the Psalms the traits that believers of Christ should exemplify on a constant basis. As a person who did not grow up with the regular exposure to the Psalms, I have benefited greatly from reading this daily. *Heart Aflame* is a helpful, Bible-based devotional that will give Christians an opportunity to study the Psalm in a very concise yet thoughtful manner.

Reviewed by Gabriel Statom. Dr. Statom is the Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church, Lake Wales, Florida and is a graduate of the University of Mississippi, Florida State University and The Institute for Worship Studies.

***Church History Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation.* Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005, 544 pp. ISBN 0-310-20580-8**



It is well known that most recent biblical scholarship takes a decidedly skeptical attitude toward the Bible's historical accuracy. Unfortunately, it is less well known, but equally true, that most scholarship about the history of the Christian Church is also quite skeptical, in ways that I will explain below. In the midst of such academic skepticism, this book, whose author is a noted and prolific scholar of the early Church, comes as a breath of fresh air. In this review, I would like to discuss four major ways in which I think this book is a significant improvement over other textbook-level surveys of the early and Medieval periods, and in the process, I will also have occasion to point out what I see to be the major problems with other books of its genre.

First, Ferguson is obviously sympathetic to the way the Church has understood itself. During the time period the book covers (NT times to A.D. 1300), the Church clearly saw itself as the guardian of the truth it had received from God through Scripture and as the holy opponent of those who would distort the Christian faith. In spite of this, most contemporary historians tend to disregard the way the Church told its own story, to regard “orthodoxy” as an arbitrary idea, and to overemphasize the significance of competing versions of the Christian

faith. The not-very-well-concealed agenda behind such treatments of Church history is to “prove” that there was not a single kind of orthodox Christianity, but rather, that there were many “Christianities,” many versions of the faith that were – in the eyes of modern relativism – all equally good. Such an agenda seems, to a greater or lesser degree, to pervade recent books on the period, but Ferguson’s work is dramatically different. Rather than treating Gnosticism as a viable alternative incorrectly suppressed by the Church, Ferguson writes of a clear *consensus faith* held by the Church, on the basis of which Gnosticism was found to be wanting (p. 98). Discussing the formation of the New Testament Canon, Ferguson does not try to argue that the Church *decided* (arbitrarily) which books belonged, but instead argues correctly that the Church *recognized* which books carried divine authority (p. 121). Against the prevailing view that “tradition” dominated the theology of the early Church, Ferguson points out that in the minds of the Church fathers themselves, their dominant task was simply to interpret the Bible correctly (p. 225). And perhaps most noteworthy in our current political climate, Ferguson points out – again, correctly – that during the Crusades the Christians were *not* more brutal than the Muslims were (p. 417). These are just a few of many examples one could give to demonstrate that Ferguson is willing to take seriously the way the Christian Church has told its own story.

Second, as he discusses the development of the Church, Ferguson is able to show the importance of context without unduly condescending to the attitudes of early and Medieval Christians. To many contemporary historians, the fact that people in earlier eras were influenced by their context becomes an excuse for discounting the ideas of those earlier periods. *They* were bound by their context, so *we* need not take them seriously. In contrast to this sort of attitude, some conservative thinkers tend to ignore context altogether and to paint the picture of earlier times as if it were nothing but a clash between the unalloyed truth and complete falsehood. Ferguson does not fall into either of these traps, but instead, he is able to describe the influence of the Greek and Latin mindsets on the branches of the Church, without thereby implying that one need not take one or the other seriously. He sets the tone for this careful treatment of context at the very beginning, by discussing “three concentric circles of influence” on the world of Christianity: the Roman, the Greek, and the Jewish (p. 27), and he points out significantly that “Paul was spiritually a Jew, legally, a Roman, and intellectually a Greek” (p. 37). Later, Ferguson explains that the legalism of the Western Church was “a wedding of Rome’s legal traditions with the Mosaic law read as applying directly to the

church's institutions" (p. 128). As he moves from the early Church to the Middle Ages, Ferguson summarizes (quite simply, but without undue oversimplification) that Medieval civilization was built on the theology and spiritual practice of Augustine, the culture of the declining Roman Empire, and the customs of the Germanic peoples who conquered that Roman Empire. In contrast, he asserts (equally simply, and accurately) that Byzantine civilization was based on the culture of ancient Greece, the institutions of the Roman state, and the customs of the Near Eastern peoples who had been first Hellenized and then Christianized (p. 286). Through such attention to the varying contexts that influenced the developing Church, Ferguson gives the reader a clear sense of how Eastern and Western Christianity diverged during the Middle Ages.

Third, Ferguson's discussion of Western doctrinal development is excellent. Since most evangelical readers of Church history are primarily interested in the Reformation, one of the major tasks of any early/Medieval survey book should be to help the reader understand the environment from which the Reformation sprang. Unlike many books in its class (in which social and political factors take pride of place), Ferguson's work shows clearly the *theological* development of the Medieval Western Church that made the Reformation both necessary and possible. He traces the idea of the Church as an all-inclusive institution (the forerunner of the Medieval concept of the Church) all the way back to the early third century (pp. 136-8). Ferguson's summary of Augustine's theology (p. 279) clearly lays out the way Augustine's ideas influenced the rise of Medieval theology later. His discussion of the rise of scholasticism in the eleventh century (pp. 422-4) and the shifts within scholasticism in the thirteenth century (pp. 489-90) help to show how dramatically the intellectual climate changed between A.D. 1000 and A.D. 1500. And Ferguson's assertion that in the later Middle Ages, the Church began to regard any lack of submission to its own authority as "heresy" (p. 501) goes a long way toward helping the reader grasp the stifling religious climate that preceded the Reformation. From Ferguson's excellent treatment, it is clear that doctrine, as much as politics and social forces, created the Hydra of late Medieval Roman Catholicism against which the Reformation rebelled.

Fourth, Ferguson's presentation of Eastern doctrinal development is considerably better than is typical in survey books written by Westerners, although there is still much room for improvement. Western books on historical theology tend to depict the Eastern controversies over the Trinity and the Person of Christ as largely

philosophical and terminological debates, in which two distinct schools of thought clashed and then eventually compromised. Such a way of depicting these controversies fails to recognize both the *significance* of the debates (that is, that they were not merely logomachies devoid of any practical interest) and the *degree of consensus* present in the Church (that is, that they were cases of the whole Church opposing a few people, *not* cases of equally-represented schools clashing over words). In contrast to such approaches, Ferguson does considerably better. He recognizes correctly that the Trinitarian Controversy was fundamentally a clash between differing views of *salvation*, one held by Athanasius (and the Church) and the other held by Arius and his followers (p. 205). In fact, Ferguson later argues correctly that *all* the major doctrinal controversies of the early Church may be seen as disputes about what salvation is, who achieves it, and how it is achieved (p. 326). In spite of these improvements, however, I still believe that Ferguson has imbibed too much of the approach to the controversies as clashes and later compromises between equally-represented (and equally-acceptable) schools of thought. This shows up most clearly on page 330, where Ferguson describes the four Christological councils as representing a pendulum swing between the emphases of Antioch and Alexandria. This is pretty standard, but it is at odds with the way the Church has historically understood those councils (as a straight line of development and interpretation of previous councils), and thus at odds with Ferguson's general sympathy for the way the Church has understood itself.

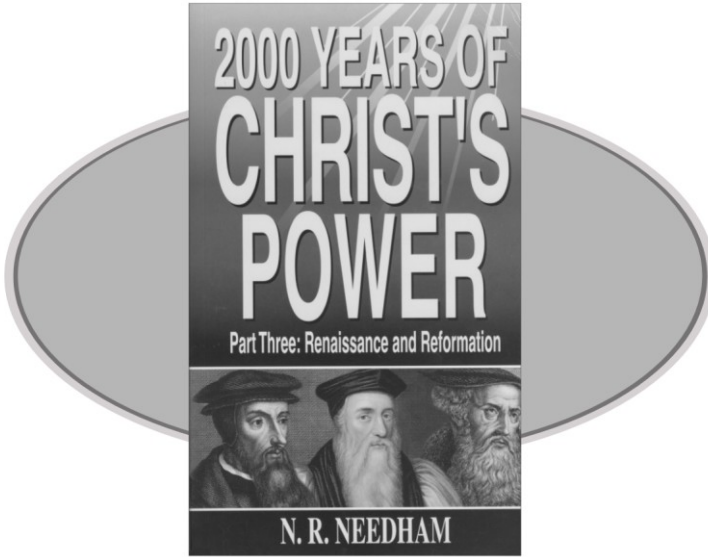
Overall, Ferguson's work is a considerable improvement over other survey-level treatments of the Church prior to the Reformation. As this review has sought to emphasize, Ferguson avoids most of the problems that plague typical survey books of this kind. The balance between doctrinal development, social and political issues, and institutional concerns is excellent. The book is generally clear and readable. And significantly, it is a good length for a book of its scope: At 544 pages, it is considerably more detailed than Mark Noll's *Turning Points* (which is a wonderful book to read but not detailed enough for textbook use), but it is much more manageable than longer, tougher reads such as Latourette's *A History of Christianity*. As a teacher of early and Medieval Christianity, I have found myself changing the textbook for my course every year I have taught it. Now I think I have finally found something suitable for long-term use.

I feel compelled to close with one more criticism of Ferguson's work. There were many places in the treatment of the Middle Ages where I thought that the author was simply presenting an aggregate of

facts, and the cohesiveness that had been there in the early part of the book was somewhat lacking. Thus, I got the impression that he was less able to weave his material together into a coherent story when he was discussing the Middle Ages than when he was writing on the early Church. This is hardly surprising, since Ferguson is an early-Church scholar. But I noted that the forthcoming second volume of the series (dealing with the Renaissance, Reformation, and modern periods) is to be a collaborative work written by John Woodbridge and Frank James III. In light of how much smoother Ferguson's book is on the early Church than on the Middle Ages, it might have been useful for the first volume of the series to have been a collaborative effort as well, with a true Medievalist writing the second half of it.

Reviewed by Donald Fairbairn, the Associate Dean of Theology and Professor of Historical Theology at Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, South Carolina. Dr. Fairbairn is a graduate of Princeton University, Denver Seminary and Cambridge University. He has served as a missionary in the Ukraine and is a part-time Professor of Historical Theology at the Evangelical Faculty in Leuven, Belgium. He has also taught for two Summer Schools at Haddington House in Charlottetown. Dr. Fairbairn has a desire to impart in his teaching "a vision for the world and an understanding of the task of proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in widely divergent cultural situations".

***2,000 Years of Christ's Power, Part Three: Renaissance and Reformation.* N. R. Needham. London: Grace, 2004, paper, 624 pp. ISBN 0-946462-66-6**



This book is the third volume in Dr. Needham's projected comprehensive history of the church from the age of the church fathers to the present day. While Dr. Needham is an accomplished scholar in the fields of church history and historical theology, in these volumes he brings his learning to bear in a manner which is easily accessible to the layperson.¹ In a time where neither history nor the reading of books seem to be a particularly strong part of church culture, the fact that there are books such as these which compress so much valuable information into a such a relatively short compass is to be welcomed by all who have a concern for the church's historic heritage.

Needham's work is divided into nine chapters. He starts off by helpfully outlining the background to the Protestant Reformation in the Renaissance, a movement of cultural renewal which transformed

¹ The author is presently a professor at Highland Theological College, Dingwall, and pastors a church in Inverness. The contents of this book originated as lectures at the Samuel Bill Theological College in Nigeria.

education, scholarship and much of culture in Western Europe from the fourteenth century. Then he deals in some detail with the figure of Martin Luther, without doubt the central theological personality of the Reformation, whose focus on justification by faith as the heart of the Pauline gospel was to have profound influence across the Protestant spectrum. After Luther, he discusses the contributions of Zwingli and Calvin, before spending a chapter examining the rise and development of the so-called Radical Reformation, a term which serves historians as a convenient catch-all for those disparate groups of Protestants who do not fall under the rubric of the so-called Magisterial Reformation of such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin. This Magisterial Reformation was marked by a conscious attempt to forge new alliances between church and state in the wake of the rejection of Catholicism; the Radical Reformers tended to forge paths of reform which were independent from the established state authorities and even, in case of figures such as Thomas Muntzer, in violent opposition to such authorities.

Two further chapters outline the political impact of the Reformation on Europe and the path of reform in England and Scotland, and these are followed by a helpful discussion of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. The final chapter, on Eastern Orthodoxy, is a timely reminder that Christianity was not just a Western European phenomenon, and that Eastern Orthodoxy too experienced its own theological controversies and also connected at key points with the winds of change coming from the West.

A few observations are in order. First, I always find myself slightly irritated by the description of the Catholic Church as engaging in a Counter-Reformation. This makes it sound as if the Church was simply involved in anti-Protestant reaction. In fact, the Church contained numerous people from the fourteenth century onwards who saw the need for reform of some kind within Catholicism. Thus, the sixteenth century really gives examples of numerous types of reformers, some of whom could not be contained within the church (e.g., Luther), some of whom did remain within the church (e.g., Contarini). Needham is clearly aware of this; I simply wish that he had made it clear in his terminology: Catholic Reformation seems to me to be a much fairer presentation of the Catholic reform program.

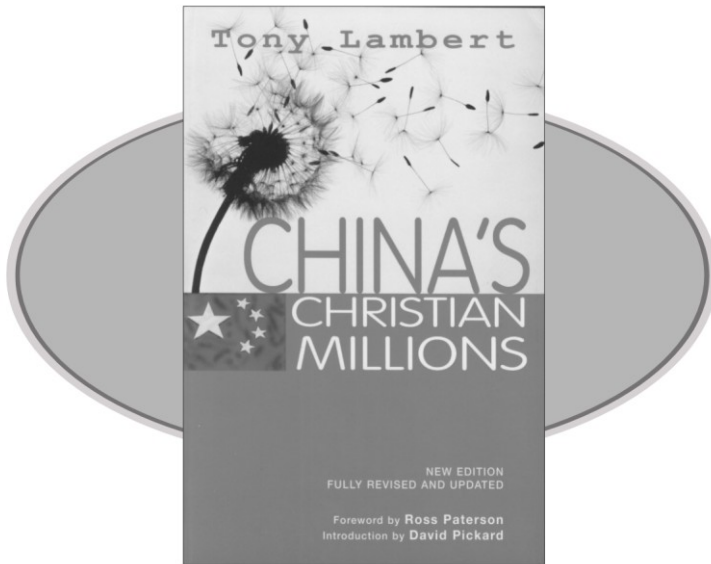
Second, the chapter on Greek Orthodoxy makes the volume extremely useful in bringing attention to this neglected area. If, as *Christianity Today* has recently claimed, the present century could be the century of Orthodoxy, then Protestants are going to need to know more about their Orthodox brethren and be able to connect their history to those of the Eastern churches more effectively if they are going to be

able to make informed judgments on what unites and divides the two traditions. That Needham has managed to do this so thoughtfully at such an accessible level makes the book ideal for use in Sunday School classes or as the basis for thoughtful church discussion.

In short, this book, indeed, this whole series, is well worth purchasing, reading and inwardly digesting.

Carl R. Trueman is Professor of Historical Theology and Church History at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. He has an M.A. from St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, and a Ph.D. from the University of Aberdeen and has previously taught at the University of Nottingham and the University of Aberdeen. He is the editor of Themelios, the journal of the UCCF's Religious and Theological Studies Fellowship. He serves on the Council of Reference for Haddington House.

***China's Christian Millions.* Tony Lambert. Oxford: Monarch Books, 1999/2006, 288 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8254-6115-4**



In *China's Christian Millions* Tony Lambert presents a thoroughly documented, well-balanced and inspiring panorama and analysis of God's work in China over the last thirty years, a movement viewed by some as probably the biggest revival in world history. Lambert is singularly fitted to research and present such a study. Since having begun his Chinese language study in 1965, he has superbly mastered the language, worked in China and visited Chinese Christians in all sectors of the Church and all parts of China, worked with the British Embassy in Beijing and for over twenty years been the Director of China Research for OMF International (formerly China Inland Mission).

In the course of the book, Lambert presents a factual and thoughtful view of both the Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) registered churches and the house church movement, clearly showing the way the Lord is working in *both* of these segments – in spite of a mutual suspicion that often exists between them, the fruit of years of bitter experience, persecution and betrayal. For both Lambert gives documentation of faithful preaching of the gospel, conversions,

baptisms and mighty working of the Holy Spirit, resulting in amazing growth. It was refreshing to read such statements by Lambert as, “At the heart of church growth and revival in China is personal transformation by the living Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. At root, the church, whether house church or TSPM-related, is firmly biblical. The authority of the Bible is taken for granted as a divinely given axiom” (p. 22).

Showing the vitality experienced, he gives the example of a registered church in Beijing where an overflowing congregation of hundreds was streaming out of the first service to make way for an equally large group entering, to worship together with spirited singing, passionate congregational prayer and eager attention to sermons of an hour or longer. He also shows how many in the registered churches are actively taking advantage of their “official” position to reach out in social activism into their communities and nation, effectively breaking down prejudice and presenting a strong witness to the practical power of the gospel.

The house church particularly takes exception to the TSPM position in insisting that Christ is the only Head of His Church and steadfastly resisting government encroachment upon that liberty. In describing the house church movement, Lambert states:

The Chinese house church manifests a robust theology, far from being pursued in an academic ivory tower. It breathes a deep commitment to Christ and his Word and throughout there is a commendable emphasis on practical Christian living. There are important lessons to learn in Western evangelical circles from the way the Chinese Church rejects both legalism and antinomianism. For the Chinese Christians, discipleship is costly, involving “walking the way of the cross” and this shows itself in ardent evangelism. (p. 80)

Lambert gives abundant evidence that the claims of growth in the Church are not the product of inflated figures, including fifty pages of province by province facts and figures in the indices. The Communist government itself admits a twelve-fold growth in the registered church over the last twenty years (p. 38). Looking at this with a longer view, where in 1949 there were around 700,000 Protestants, today the “official” figure is between seventeen and twenty million in the registered church alone. A truer figure, including house church believers as well, is more likely to be around sixty million (p. 19)! And while for many years the Communist authorities tried to deny the

existence of the house churches, their internal reports clearly document them as a real force in China. In fact, so wide-spread are they that the Communists have created a special term for this “revival of unofficial Christianity” – “Christianity Fever”! (p. 57.)

However, not all is “rosy”. Lambert gives a full picture, pointing out the areas of weakness, but clearly portraying the large majority of churches as being very sound theologically and alive spiritually. Yes, there is an element of compromise frequently required of the registered churches in order to retain the opportunity to preach the gospel reasonably freely, and there is the reality of infiltrators and informants. Nonetheless, even within that situation, many pastors are boldly and fearlessly proclaiming the fundamental truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that few evangelical Christians would question. And, true, within the house church movement there is a fringe element that strays beyond the limits into the area of sects or cults, yet Lambert portrays this as a very small minority of the movement. Most proclaim a conservative, evangelical theology, as well as believing in...and manifesting...the power of the Holy Spirit through gifts of the Spirit. Many well-authenticated stories are given throughout the book of miraculous healings leading to wonderful conversions – sometimes of Communist village leaders. Other gifts, including the gift of tongues, are manifested; but the focus of the preaching in the majority of the house church movement remains salvation through the cross of Jesus Christ, and they clarify that such gifts are neither a sign nor a requisite of salvation.

Throughout the book Lambert also traces the reality of suffering and persecution experienced by our Chinese brethren – although not portrayed in order to pull the heart strings. In fact, the Chinese prize the privilege of suffering for Christ and are mindful that without this it is too easy to have a “cheap believism” where counting the cost is far from necessary. As has so often been the case in the history of the Church, the persecution has produced a strength and fire in the Chinese Church and has often provided an unequalled opportunity for witness to unbelievers.

One of the recurring themes throughout the book is the wonderful way that seeds sown prior to 1948 by missionaries, far from dying under Mao Zedong’s terrible persecutions and suppression, went underground to burst forth with tremendous power and vitality when the oppression was to some extent lifted. What a word of encouragement this must be to all who labour in difficult fields of God’s vineyard, seeing little present fruit. Surely God’s word will not return to Him void!

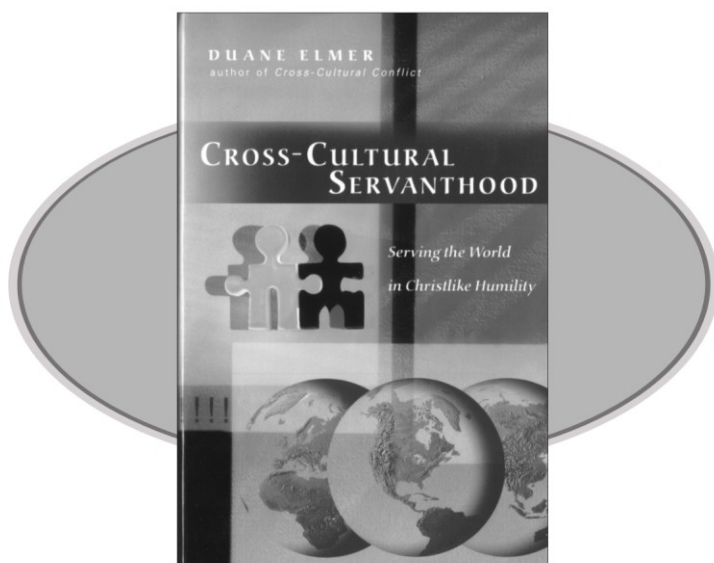
A second recurring theme is the need in both the registered churches and the house church movement for more and better trained pastors and Christian workers. Lambert documents that in Yunnan province in 2005 there were over 800,000 believers in the registered churches with only eighty pastors, and in some places the ratio is even lower. Another significant area of need is a way to reach children. Teaching religion and evangelizing those under eighteen is strictly forbidden, and the majority of Chinese Christians view children as too young to understand or be reached by the gospel. This is a real area for prayer for those who have a burden for the Church in China.

Lambert's book offers a healthy corrective for numerous misconceptions abroad concerning the situation of the Church in China. As well as being an inspiration, possibly more importantly, readers will find *China's Christian Millions* a challenge, and perhaps a rebuke, to those of us in the West where Christianity comes with such a small price tag and shows so little vitality and growth. As Lambert himself puts it:

It has been my steadily growing conviction over more than twenty years that we in the West need to learn from what God has done and is doing in China. In an era of superficial spirituality and spurious movements that have falsely claimed revival, it is vital that we learn lessons from God's people who have experienced genuine renewal (p. 24).

Reviewed by Christina Lehmann. Christina serves at Haddington House, Charlottetown, PEI, as Personal Administrative Assistant and as Registrar. She was born in Ohio, grew up in Pennsylvania and lived in New Hampshire, Bermuda and Carleton County, New Brunswick, before moving to Prince Edward Island.

***Cross-Cultural Servanthood: Serving the World in Christlike Humility.* Duane Elmer. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2006, 212 pp., paper \$15.00 (USD). ISBN-10: 0-8308-3378-1; ISBN-13: 978-0-8308-3378-8**



Duane Elmer, professor of International Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, delivers an engaging and easily read work, full of sage advice and principles for cross-cultural sensitivity. Those preparing to serve in ministry or mission work, either short or long-term, will find this book helpful.

One of the most attractive attributes to Elmer's writing is his humility, which permeates the book as he points out the faults missionaries have historically made, beginning with himself. We get the impression he is still open to learning and growing in the area of cross-cultural sensitivity and in his desire to serve as Jesus has done.

The book is divided into three parts – Part I: Servanthood: Basic Perspectives, Part II: Servanthood: The Process and Part III: Servanthood: The Challenges. The heart of the book is the unpacking of the “process” needed to become a good servant to the people to

whom we minister: openness, acceptance, trust, learning, understanding and finally serving.

The author very clearly writes:

This book is about servanthood, focusing primarily on *relationship* factors and the *adjustment* factors. I believe that most people going overseas are quite well equipped in *task* effectiveness; that is they are technically competent to do the job because most schools and workshops focus on job skills. This book focuses on relational and adjustment competency so that the servant spirit we wish to portray will, in fact, be seen and valued by the local people. All three competencies must be present in the servant for any one of them to be successful (pp. 13-14).

Elmer appropriately and helpfully warns Westerners of a tendency toward ethnocentrism, manifested in a superior and patronizing attitude.

The difficulty is in learning how to help in the best way possible, serving in a way that acknowledges and maintains the respect and dignity of those to whom we minister, while most definitely trying to teach and influence them for positive growth. This is the great tension in which we minister, being a leader while simultaneously trying to be a humble servant. It is interesting that Elmer objects to the perhaps trite term *servant-leader*, pointing out that it is neither explicitly biblical nor particularly helpful. If I understand his reasoning correctly, he is reacting to the fact that almost every Christian leader labels himself as a servant-leader without necessarily exhibiting an iota of humility or servitude. Nevertheless, it seems to me that pure servant-leadership is exactly what Elmer is trying to teach in this book.

The obvious model for us in this regard, as Elmer points out repeatedly, is Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served. He was humble and meek and gave of Himself completely for the benefit of others. Elmer does not nuance the fact that Jesus was also quite direct about sin and was hardly meek with the Pharisees. He scolded Peter for his worldliness (Mt. 16:23) and frequently lamented the disciples' lack of faith. Yes, He has affirmed our dignity, but He has literally come to rescue us. And He is worthy of our worship, because He is the very Son of God, the second person in the Godhead. As with the recently popular WWJD slogan, calls to imitate Jesus are always less than perfect, given His divinity and our humanity.

Although the author explains the necessary steps we must take to serve well in another culture, I found his definitions at times idiosyncratic. For example, he defines serving as “*the ability to relate to people in such a way that their dignity as human beings is affirmed and they are more empowered to live God-glorifying lives*” (p. 146). The author here is using the word “ability” in the sense of “capacity”. And with this in mind, I find it easier to grasp his definition.

My problems with his definitions weren't purely grammatical or syntactical, though. His discussion of the concept of trust baffled me, though I think I understand some of the principles he was trying to convey. Obviously trust is necessary if we hope to maintain and build any relationship. Our ministry will clearly be stymied if the people to whom we minister do not trust us. But some of Elmer's personal examples were unhelpful in illustrating the concept. He relates a story of giving his wife snow tires as a gift, which he thought would invite her to trust him. He says that he learned that more romantic gifts would serve that end better.

The greater confusion for me was when he spoke of the mutual trust between God and mankind. God has eminently proved his trustworthiness, and only the foolish (unregenerate) refuse to trust him. But the author says that God *entrusted* the world to us and that He *entrusted* His Son to us. He says that Jesus' death on the cross was a great act of *trust*. I just didn't catch his meaning. I cannot see how trust works both ways between faithful God and faithless man. As persistent covenant breakers, this is precisely why we need such radical salvation.

Somewhat perplexing to me was Elmer's discussion of the forms of *learning*. He says that we need to learn *about*, learn *from* and learn *with* the people to whom we minister (pp. 93-106). The first of these categories is fairly clear, for we can learn *about* a people and their culture even from a distance. Learning *with* is not difficult conceptually, as we must understand that we all have much to learn from God and each other. But the category of learning *from*, while not difficult in denotation, remained unclear to me in concept in Elmer's demarcation. For me at its best, it seems to be the same as learning *with* others. Elmer, however, sees learning *with* as “the rarest form of learning” (p. 103).

I appreciated the author's discussion of openness and acceptance as steps toward cross-cultural servanthood. Still, these things are much easier said than done. For example, Elmer proposes that we withhold judgment. He says we must develop a tolerance for ambiguity. The steps he suggests are wise and should be helpful: recognition of the judgment, aborting the judgment and discerning whether or not it is an

issue of sin. If it is clearly sinful, we must communicate openly with concern. He suggests consulting a more experienced pastor/missionary when we are not certain. If the difference is merely cultural, he suggests that we appreciate it and celebrate the diversity.

Again, I speak with experience that it is not so easy for some of us to put this into practice no matter how much we are convinced of the necessity. It is possible that such skills could be learned, as I hope I have seen some progress in my own ability to do this. The greater application might be for missions/sending agencies to screen missionaries better for this trait, which might be more innate than acquired. But his point was well made. Awareness of this tendency, followed by the desire to be less judgmental, is perhaps half the battle won.

A number of very good points are raised, and I believe his “how-to” process of becoming a good cross-cultural servant has some merit. He raises many vital issues that we must consider if we are to serve cross-culturally in a Christ-like manner. Unfortunately I found his thoughts were not always clear or well developed. Nevertheless, this book might serve well as a primer for further thought and discussion.

Elmer is the author of *Cross-Cultural Conflict* and *Cross-Cultural Connections*. The present book, *Cross-Cultural Servanthood*, comes highly recommended by leading missiologists Scott Moreau and Paul Hiebert.

Dr. David Galletta serves with the Mobile Theological Training Team (MT3) with World Witness. He has served in Moscow, Russia, for four years and more recently has taught in Africa, Mexico and the Ukraine. He and his family live in Greenville, South Carolina.

“If you ask me what is the first precept of the Christian religion, I will answer first, second and third, Humility.”

AUGUSTINE

Book Notices

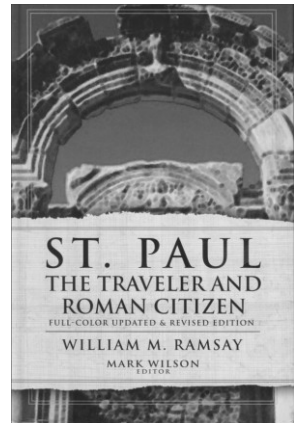
In *Book Notices* we inform readers about works which have been recently added to the Haddington House Library. Most entrants are currently in print, but on occasion we include rare and valuable books we have acquired which students and patrons may want to come and consult. *Book Notices* are made in keeping with our editorial policy; that is, to help our readers in the stewardship of their resources and time. The *Journal* uses the standard abbreviation ‘hc’ to denote hard cover. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) has been included with all books when available.

Biblical Theology

***St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen.* William M. Ramsay. Revised and updated by Mark Wilson. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2001, 319 pp., hardcover. ISBN 0-8254-3639-7**

William Ramsay (1851-1939) is a name which every New Testament student should know. His studies and explorations on Turkey resulted in a profound increase in background knowledge of the epistles and seven churches, and over the last one hundred years conservative New Testament scholarship has been greatly indebted to him for his work.

Ramsay was born in Glasgow and educated in Aberdeen and Oxford. He taught at Oxford before returning to Aberdeen. *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen* was actually one of his more “popular level” books and reached a wide readership, giving Ramsay a reputation as “an apologist for



conservative views in New Testament criticism". He was convinced of the historical incorrectness of the German Tübingen school, centred around such thinking as Acts being a second rather than first century work.

It is good that Kregel Publications is introducing the current generation to this great pioneering archaeologist and biblical scholar. Kregel has now published three of Ramsay's books under the editorship of Mark Wilson, current director of the Biblical Turkey Research Institute. The others include William M. Ramsay's *Historical Commentary on First Corinthians* and *Historical Commentary on Galatians*. It is not easy editing older books, but Wilson has generally done a good job in *St. Paul: The Traveler and Roman Citizen*. He tells us in the editor's introduction (pp. 11-13) what he has removed, which is within reason. Wilson has deleted Ramsay's translation of Acts. Also he has adopted the growing, popular move to transliterate the Greek, helping to make the book marketable to a more general audience. Wilson alerts the reader at the outset that Ramsay did modify some of his views over the years "...as he became more familiar with the Pauline landscape in Asia Minor" (p. 12). Thus I conclude that the editing is not major, but rather is designed to reduce the overall size of the book and to generally make such updates as to conform to modern punctuation and grammatical style.

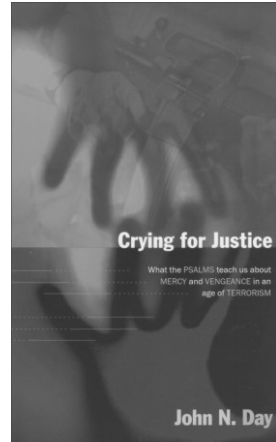
The other update is the modern colour photography and map work. I found this very helpful. Only once or twice did I think the colour digitization lacked precision – not bad considering there are over one hundred colour photographs. Wilson has added fifteen sidebars throughout, which I think should have been signed "the editor". Nonetheless, these are helpful.

The book contains seventeen chapters, starting with "The Acts of the Apostles" and then basically following Paul's life and travels chronologically, with chapters on background interspersed to highlight certain places, eg., chapter three – "The Church in Antioch".

Anyone who has a keen interest in the geography of the lands of Paul's travels will find this a good text to read. Also, anyone who is contemplating a career as a Bible geographer or archaeologist must read Ramsay. The Church is blessed by those who have devoted their energies to such pursuits, and interested young people should seriously consider this field. Bible college libraries will need this book on their shelves. Appreciation is offered to Kregel for giving a new design to Ramsay's classic work.

Crying for Justice: What the PSALMS teach us about MERCY and VENGEANCE in an age of TERRORISM.
John N. Day. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2005, 199 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8254-2446-1

There are some matters in the Psalms that have often confused Christians; such as, Psalm 137: 8-9: “O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us – he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.” Psalm 137 belongs to that group of psalms known as the imprecatory psalms. In recent years there have been a few studies done on these. One popular book from the 90s was James E. Adams’ *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace: Lessons from the Imprecatory Psalms* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1991). In many regards this was a standard book on the subject until John Day’s *Crying for Justice: What the PSALMS teach us about MERCY and VENGEANCE in an age of TERRORISM*, copyright 2005. Now readers clearly have a second book from which to choose, and it is certain the Adams and Day books will be compared.



Day commences with a brief introduction (pp. 9-17), where he offers a short definition of *imprecatory psalms* – “psalms that declare a desire for God’s just vengeance to fall upon enemies”. He discusses modern attitudes and views on these psalms and one quickly discerns that the book is very much a distillation from the author’s 2001 Ph.D. thesis. At times the book retains aspects of a more intended academic audience, and I think this may limit its market appeal. The actual text of the book ends at page 122, followed by endnotes that occupy almost sixty pages. This may make some readers view it as an academic text rather than the popular read suggested by the title.

I do not believe this book will reach a popular level of readership. It is more appropriately marketed as Kregel has done, placing it in its “Academic and Professional” book niche. It is clearly relevant for Bible professors and others to take its themes seriously. I appreciated Day’s stress upon the persecuted church around the world. Day is an ordained

Presbyterian Church in America pastor serving the Bellewood Presbyterian Church in Bellevue, Washington.

J. C. Whytock

From the back cover:

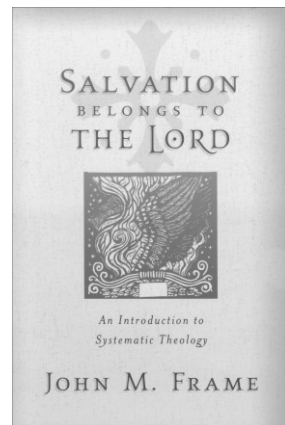
Preachers and teachers who have been at a loss as to how to understand and proclaim [the imprecatory texts of the Old Testament] will find a way out of their impasse by a careful reading of this fine work.

– Eugene H. Merrill

Systematic Theology

***Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology.* John M. Frame. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006, 382 pp., paper. ISBN 1-59638-018-7**

This work comes as the expanded notes for an ITS (Institute of Theological Studies, Grand Rapids, Michigan) course which Dr. Frame produced for the Institute, entitled “Foundations of Systematic Theology”. That course is soon to be released by ITS as one of their new course offerings and is destined to become a very important overview selection. Dr. Frame currently teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, and is the author of the award winning book *The Doctrine of God*. In fact, some chapters of *The Doctrine of God* are summarized in the opening chapters of *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology*.



This book, at Frame’s admittance, is aimed at “beginners in theology, people who are seeking a basic introduction” (p. x). With this in view, the author has tried to explain all technical terms and to maintain more of a conversational tone. It is certainly more demanding than J. I. Packer’s *Concise Theology*, yet the two are very complementary. Frame wants this book to be used as a college or seminary textbook. Its approach is exegetical, Reformed and “focused on the lordship of God and of Jesus Christ” (p. x).

There are twenty-five chapters arranged into two parts, with chapter one being “God, the Lord” and chapter twenty-four taking the reader into Christian ethics, “How Then Shall We Live?” (a title somewhat reminiscent of Francis Schaeffer). Chapter twenty-five is a summation, followed by brief endnotes and a very select annotated bibliography.

The *loci* covered is very standard; there is nothing unusual as to contents. Many will be critical, no doubt, because they will want more depth, while others may be critical that it is too deep! I think it will be interesting to see how this book will be used and if it will displace the use of Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology* and the most popular one-volume systematic text world-wide, Wayne Grudem's *Systematic Theology*. It is still too early to tell. There is no doubt that Frame's writing style is appealing. This may carry the day for many to switch to this as a class textbook.

William Edgar wrote the following for the book's back cover:

John Frame is not only one of the most productive theologians of our day, he is also one of the most lucid. Deceptively so, for behind every sentence in this extraordinary volume lies deep reflection. It is at once vigorously orthodox and sweetly pastoral. We can be grateful for such a powerful and clear exposition of the whole range of theology.

Conclusion – a good overview textbook. Time will reveal what niche it will fill.

J. C. Whytock

Historical Theology

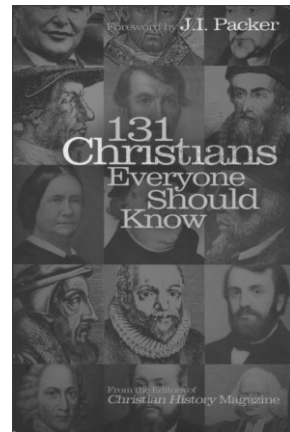
***131 Christians Everyone Should Know.* Eds. Mark Galli and Ted Olsen. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2000, 384 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8054-9040-X**

For some time I have been searching for a paperback book that contains biographical stories of prominent Church history figures. My purpose is to use such a book for a biographical Church history course, almost as a primer course and text, a way to start to introduce people to the history of Christianity where the study of history may not have been a major part of their education previously. I feel I now have something that I will be able to use for this purpose with *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*.

The authors/editors, Mark Galli and Ted Olsen, have a philosophy behind this book; namely, that “history is biography” and that they continually want to ask, “What’s really interesting...”. Many Church history books do not emphasize biography sufficiently to appeal to the general audience, so I give these two fine editors full marks here.

Next, they use the noun “Christians” broadly, because many of these 131 people contributed significantly to the history of Christianity, but not necessarily because they had a full-orbed faith. This is the reality in studying the history of Christianity – it is the study of “the good, the bad and the in-between”.

Galli and Olsen have also endeavoured to separate “myth from history where necessary” (p. xiii) and to determine “the callings which Christians have practiced through the ages”. I thank the writers for stating their philosophy and approach so clearly in their introduction. It is like a preacher standing up to preach and explaining what he is going



to deal with. All then will judge if he delivers. My conclusion – these two authors clearly deliver for their intended audience and within the parameters they have set forth.

Here are the thirteen categories into which they group the various callings of Christians throughout the history of Christianity:

- Theologians
- Evangelists and Apologists
- Pastors and Preachers
- Musicians, Artists, and Writers
- Poets
- Denominational Founders
- Movers and Shakers
- Missionaries
- Inner Travelers
- Activists
- Rulers
- Scholars and Scientists
- Martyrs

Overall I applaud these thirteen classifications for study. I would question one as a category, “Movers and Shakers”, but know in some form the category needs to be there. Each classification receives about ten biographical sketches. It is admittedly extremely difficult to be representative with these ten selections. I do think that, under the last two classifications, the authors should have roamed more widely. But apart from that, they have done an excellent job.

Each sketch includes a graphic timeline, an excellent primary source quotation and then the authors’ very engaging written sketch. An illustration is also included for most. I think a few more illustrations should have been added to enhance each entry which would not have added significantly to the book’s size.

Thank you, authors/editors of *Christian History Magazine*, for preparing this readable book. I look forward to using it as a textbook in 2007 to introduce a new generation to the wonders of Christian history.

J. C. Whytock

***Pages from Church History: A Guided Tour of Christian Classics.* Stephen J. Nichols. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006, 329 pp., paper. ISBN 0-87552-686-2**

The “Guided Tour Series” is a wonderful set of books which introduces readers to noteworthy individuals in Church history. To date, the series includes:

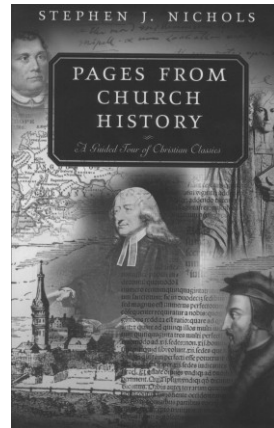
- Heidi L. Nichols, *Anne Bradstreet*
- Stephen J. Nichols, *J. Gresham Machen*
- Stephen J. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards*
- Stephen J. Nichols, *Martin Luther*

This latest one, *Pages from Church History: A Guided Tour of Christian Classics*, is not devoted to just one individual, but rather to twelve from Polycarp to Bonhoeffer. Each entrant receives an average of about twenty pages, usually including an illustration, map or chart. On occasion there is no illustration, for example with Bonhoeffer, which one would have expected to find.

Like *131 Christians Everyone Should Know*, Nichols employs the selective style with a goal to making a vast subject manageable. However, he obviously is much more focused, twelve selections versus 131 for basically the same number of pages. Next, Nichols tries to provide a context from which the reader can start his or her own pursuit of what these famous Christians have actually written. Thus Nichols is writing a secondary source book to prepare the reader to dig independently into the primary source material – a very noble goal and one which I believe he generally achieves.

Since there are only twelve figures from two thousand years of Christian history, I will list them: Polycarp, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, à Kempis, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Edwards, the Wesleys, Carey and Bonhoeffer. All are written with an excellent style; in fact, the whole book has a good publishing style – P&R has come a long way since they first started publishing. All the normal apparatus we have come to expect is there – introduction, bibliography, indices, etc.

It is a pleasure to recommend this book. It fills a niche in introducing the study of Church history to another generation and



would provide a good starting point for a twelve week group study on key writers in the history of Christianity.

J. C. Whytock

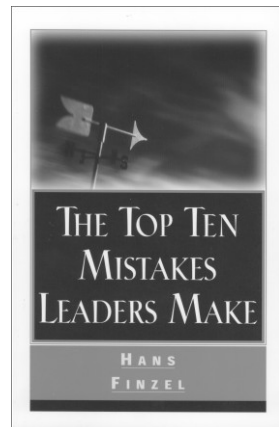
Applied Theology

***The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make.* Hans Finzel. Colorado Springs: Nexgen/Cook Communications, 1994/2000, 200pp., paper. ISBN 0-7814-3365-7**

“In praise of common sense.” This is both my reaction to Hans Finzel’s *The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make* and also my summary of the book. I believe it is worthy of “praise” and appreciation that there are Christian writers who possess a good dose of common sense in leadership.

I have seen the familiar reaction to many popular level books such as Finzel’s: “He is no one I know from my ecclesiastical camp”;¹ “It will lack in-depth theology”; “It is pure business marketing strategy”; and, “We read the Bible to learn about leadership”. With one or more of these preconceived ideas, one can quickly dismiss this book and move over to a recent book on systematic theology. Thus life will simply continue to roll along. I would plead for an alternative – perhaps someone outside of our normal orbit could really speak to us with a fresh jolt of common sense understanding and insight on leadership. With this attitude I believe we as leaders can all benefit from Finzel’s fine work.

Mistake number one dealt with by Finzel is “The Top-Down Attitude: The Number-one Leadership Hang-up” (pp. 21-35). Finzel is blunt, “I believe that the number one leadership sin is that of top-down autocratic arrogance” (p. 22). He goes on to describe this, then offering a contrast with “servant leadership” where he points us to Jesus Christ.



¹ Finzel is president of World Ventare, adjunct at Trinity, Deerfield, and author of *Change Is Like a Slinky* and *Empowered Leaders*.

There is certainly nothing complex to follow in this chapter. Often it can be the simple which can cause us to struggle the most.

Chapter two, or mistake number two, “Putting Paperwork before Peoplework” (pp. 37-52) again should be mandatory reading for every Christian leader. The following “one liners” give insight into this chapter: “In this age of telecommunications and teleconnecting, there is still no substitute for quiet, prolonged exposure of one soul to another” (p. 58) and, “Effective leaders make room for people. Leaving them out is a big, big, leadership mistake.” (p. 49) Again, there is nothing new here – just good common sense basics, but it takes humility in all of us to hear and do.

Finzel’s other chapters on “mistakes” follow a similar style of writing and layout – illustrations, quotations, scripture and his own analysis are written integratively, while he “boxes” significant points. He concludes each chapter with what he calls his “powerpoints” as well as usually outlining some areas for personal assessment.

One chapter which I thought particularly held many perceptive insights was chapter eight, or “mistake eight”, “Missing the Clues of Corporate Culture: The Unseen Killer of Many a Leader” (pp. 133-156). Finzel employs the language of the secular world, “corporate culture”, but it is parallel to that which one studies in the theological world of missiological studies as cross-cultural communications and cultural anthropology. He tries to explain this concept through many illustrations, and I believe overall he succeeds. It is perhaps the most difficult chapter, yet very important, and unfortunately Christian leaders often run shipwreck right here. His comment, “I have found that most Christians still don’t know a lot about the concept” is apropos. The “organizational culture” (p. 136) he speaks of is very much a reality; just violate it and you will see it exists. It is the “unseen meaning between the lines in the rulebook that assures unity” (p. 139). Finzel offers advice to find the culture we serve, etc. His paradigm model I might re-name (pp. 142-143), yet in essence it is valid. Note his distinction between “values” and “beliefs”. You will find it very helpful.

I could say much positively about the other chapters/mistakes: “The Absence of Affirmation”, “No Room for Mavericks?”, “Dictatorship in Decision-Making”, “Dirty Delegation”, “Communication Chaos”, “Success without Successors” and “Failure to Focus on the Future”; yet some things need to be reserved for the readers. I hope I wet your appetite to delve into this book.

This book was originally published in 1994, with the copyright being renewed in 2000 before the present printing. The fact that a 1994

book remains in print in 2007 tells me something. There is an enduring relevance which many continue to find in Finzel's book. An updated edition would enhance the work, but the concepts and principles in this present edition are fully valid and applicable.

Last, how may the book best be used? Pastors, theological students, laity in leadership, do read this book. I think it will be of prime relevance to readers in the Western world. I do not think it would have the same impact for Christian leaders in the non-Western world, although a speaker could extract concepts from it to build a framework for teaching leadership in the non-Western world, using more indigenous illustrations, etc.

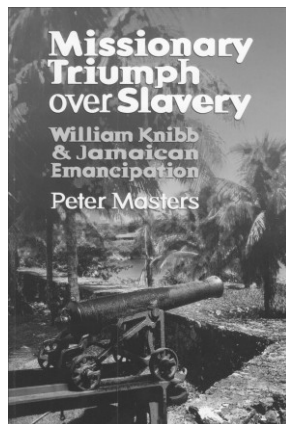
The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make is full of common sense wisdom written in an engaging and plain style, full of good instruction. If it sounds like it is out of your normal orbit of reading, why not give it a read? *Tolle legge*.

J. C. Whytock

***Missionary Triumph over Slavery: William Knibb and Jamaican Emancipation.* Peter Masters. London: The Wakeman Trust, 2006, 51pp., paper. ISBN 1-870855-53-1**

What an amazing little book! This is truly an inspiring read and something to be given out to senior Sunday School and camp children and to be used in Christian schools and with home-schoolers. There is just so much packed into these fifty-one pages. I am amazed at how Peter Masters has so skillfully woven together the narrative of the great life mission of William Knibb (1803-1845), one of Jamaica's pioneer Baptist missionaries.

Knibb needs to be known today alongside a name like William Wilberforce, who in 2007 is gaining international attention with the release of the new movie, "Amazing Grace", celebrating the story of Wilberforce (played by Welsh actor Ioan Guffudd) and the 200th anniversary of the ending of the slave trade in the British Empire.



Masters' book helps us appreciate others who were faithful in spreading correct information about what was actually happening on this Caribbean island.

The author asserts at the beginning that modern historians by and large are adopting a revisionist agenda, arguing that much of Protestant missions was but a handmaiden to imperialistic policy. The story of Knibbs and the Jamaican Awakening is a clear rebuttal to such thinking (p.7).

Knibb and his wife Mary went to Jamaica in 1824 (replacing his brother Thomas, who had died there in 1823). He was a tireless church planter and educator across the island. It appears that Dr. John Rylands was his personal inspiration for the mission and, as is usually the case, Knibbs was a "missionary" before he ever went to Jamaica. The story of his life is incredible to chronicle. Slanders and libels were his constant companion. Imprisonment and threats were a reality. Yet in the midst of all this, the beat of the gospel continued constantly to sound at the centre of his work.

Masters includes extracts from Knibbs appearance before special committees of the House of Commons and House of Lords (1832). These demand close reading because they show Knibb's careful reasoning ability. These pages (31-35) are the most difficult in the book and could be summarized in a class presentation if a teacher so decided.

Knibbs was clearly a visionary following emancipation in 1834 and full emancipation in 1838. He saw what was so desperately needed to help build the society of the freed peoples with wage agreements, free village developments, education and foreign missions. Here there is a tremendous model for much further study. After reading Masters, I think you will be inspired to want to know more. The years of 1838-1845 have become known as the Jamaican Awakening, when an incredible harvest of souls occurred on Jamaica under the instruments of Baptists, Methodist, Moravians and Presbyterians.

Allow me to quote Master's concluding paragraph (p. 51):

William Knibb, above all, was an evangelist. A true lover of lost souls, he was a child of that wonderful and long season of church history, when Calvinists were activists and soul-winners, and when young men proved themselves for the Gospel ministry by street preaching and ragged-school evangelism. Knibb learned his missionary zeal in that golden age, believing that a missionary should never stand still. To such labourers the Lord came down in sovereign mercy and touched their lips to preach an irresistible call of mercy.

This book is tastefully illustrated; has an attractive, colour cover; and is printed on high quality, gloss paper. Churches, buy several and pass them out!

J. C. Whytock

***Betsy: The dramatic biography of prison reformer Elizabeth Fry.* Jean Hatton. Oxford: Monarch Books, 2005, 368 pp., paper. ISBN 0-8254-6092-1**

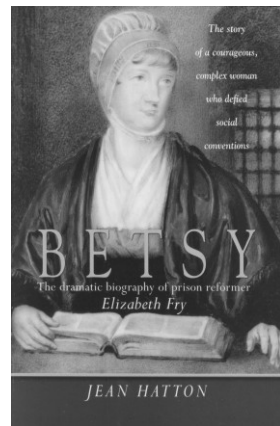
In recent years books on prominent Christian women have been receiving more attention than a generation ago, such as Faith Cook's excellent biography, *Selina Countess of Huntingdon*. Jean Hatton adds to these with *Betsy*, presenting the life of the famous prison reformer of the first half of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845), in many ways a very different person from the Countess.

While digesting this book, I was reminded that as we read Christian biography, we read to learn and to uncover who the leaders were.

In no way does this mean we will endorse all that was done, but we should nonetheless read widely and with discernment. In the history of Christian activism, one of the prominent female biographies to read is, of course, that of Betsy Fry.

Jean Hatton presents a well-researched and full-orbed picture of this very complex person, making significant use of Elizabeth Fry's voluminous journals kept throughout her life. Very sensitive and often deeply troubled emotionally and beset by nightmares from her childhood, Betsy, as she was known to her family and friends, experienced recurring periods of depression, guilt and spiritual uncertainty throughout her years. A far from satisfactory marriage, rebellious children and financial difficulty eventually leading to bankruptcy further complicated her life.

Betsy found purpose and respite from personal difficulties in throwing herself into helping the poor, the sick, the downcast and particularly London's desperate prison population. In addition, she



became a very active Quaker. Although raised within the branch of Quakerism that put few restraints on worldly activities and deportment, following a “conversion” experience, Betsy joined the “Plain Quaker” branch, but with a strong evangelical bent. In this regard and as her fame as a reformer grew, she was also in demand for public ministry, “preaching” and praying. She struggled throughout her long, public life of ministry and reformation leadership with nagging doubts about the neglect of her family that her activities caused and questions raised both by one branch of the Quakers and by her conscience in light of Scripture concerning being a woman with such a public ministry. She settled this to her own satisfaction only late in life, deciding that Scripture also makes clear that one should not “quench the Spirit”, thus she must follow the inner leadings she felt came from God. Needless to say, many of us would find a real problem with her conclusion.

As one reads about Elizabeth Fry, one does conclude that grace was at work, although not in the orderly ways we might hope for. As often in the history of Christianity, we see God using frail vessels and at times unusual means to nonetheless spread His Word and the gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ. Thus, many parts of the book are truly inspiring and thrilling from a gospel as well as a humanitarian perspective. The records given of her “preaching” indicate it to have been very conservative, evangelical and Christ-centred with a clear call for repentance, conversion and righteous living. In addition, her innovative ideas for addressing and reforming the unspeakably filthy, corrupt, immoral and unjust penal and prison system of the day are inspirational, as is her self-sacrifice and tremendous energy and zeal in pursuing change. From leading a throng of women (many from the top echelon of society), eager and inspired by the reform cause and her example, to addressing royalty, nobility and political leaders, Betsy pursued her vision of reformation and was at the forefront of the prison reform that became a reality within her life-time.

She became quite a celebrity in her time, not only throughout the UK but throughout Europe as well, where in later life she was feted by the royalty and high society of several European countries. Everywhere she was enabled to press forward the cause of prison reform as well as numerous other projects to promote the welfare of the downtrodden through government action, distribution of Bibles and other wholesome books, education and the encouragement of Christian standards applied to all walks of life.

As with any biography, the author and his/her views colour the presentation, and Jean Hatton’s portrayal of Betsy is no exception. Hatton is evidently a woman of the late twentieth and early twenty-first

century. The modern psychological approach as well as admiration for equality for women on all fronts is evident throughout. I thought one comment rather telling: “More recently, however, another strand [of Quakerism] had emerged of an extreme Evangelical persuasion bordering on Calvinism...” (267). Such a comment did lead me to suspect that Hatton had less than a clear understanding of either Calvinism or evangelicalism.

So, if you’d like a very revealing look at both the high society and abject poverty of the period, a chance to “rub shoulders” along with Betsy with such as William Wilberforce and Queen Victoria, and a thought-provoking read, turn to Jean Hatton’s *Betsy*.

Christina Lehmann

Academic Articles

Sing a New Song: Towards a Biblical Theology of Song¹

Alistair I. Wilson*

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Introduction

Scotland is a land of song.² Whether we think of the traditional 'mouth-music' of the workplace in the Western Isles, or the Gaelic folk-rock of Runrig; the Jacobite songs of centuries ago, or the contemporary songs of Capercallie; whether songs are sung with friends in the front room around the open fire, on the banks of Loch Lomond in the rain, or in a great amphitheatre or stadium, Scotland rings with strong melodies and haunting ballads.

However, the relationship between the Christian community and the lover of songs has often been a rather uncomfortable one. The church has always had a place (often a beloved place) for songs of praise in its worship.³ The first phrase in the title of this paper is drawn from Psalm 149:1, and I doubt if anyone wishes to object to the singing of the

¹ This article was first published in *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* 22.2 (2004): 196-218. Reprinted by permission.

² In common, of course, with many other countries throughout the world. I trust that readers will contextualise my remarks as appropriate.

³ See the helpful discussion of S. R. Guthrie, 'Singing, in the Body and in the Spirit' *JETS* 46/4 (2003): 633-46 and the literature he cites.

Psalms! However, the church has often been hesitant of (if not simply antagonistic towards) any acceptance of the ‘secular’ music of the culture in which it finds itself. This may take the form of discouraging Christians from being actively involved in performing non-religious songs, or it may extend to a blanket condemnation of all songs that are not Christian in character.⁴

In some cases, it does not take in-depth research to discover good reason for such antipathy. The lyrics of some songs (ancient, as well as modern) cannot be accepted by a Christian because of their profanity, or violence, or blasphemy, or crudity. Yet other factors often have an impact on the views of Christians also. The character of the singer may well be so godless that his or her songs are rejected. Or the venue in which the songs are sung may well cause concern.

However, valid as these latter concerns may be, they can lead to an attitude to song that is governed by association rather than by a biblical understanding of the place of song in God’s world. For some people, this issue may seem of little significance. For others, music is like the air they breathe. I write this paper openly as one who loves songs, and who loves harmony and musical virtuosity and a driving rhythm. However, I too must submit my appreciation of music to the Word of God. The purpose of this paper is to survey some of the important biblical material relating to song, and to draw some conclusions about the validity or otherwise of this significant aspect of Scottish culture.

Before we turn to the primary texts, it is worth making a few foundational comments.

Song is not ‘necessary’

Song is not ‘necessary’ for true and full communication to take place. ‘In the beginning,’ John tells us, ‘was the *Word*’ (John 1:1), not the song.⁵ Yet this ‘word’ brings us a fully reliable exposition of God (John 1:18). In the beginning, according to Genesis 1:3, God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. There is not a hint of musical tone

⁴ One well-known critique of modern popular music is J. Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel* (Darlington: Evangelical Press, 1983). Others from a similar theological perspective have, however, not been so negative in their judgement of modern popular music. See, for example, A. J. MacDonald, *Love Minus Zero* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 1989) 120-34. MacDonald makes frequent reference to another significant book which considers popular music from a Christian perspective, S. Turner, *Hungry for Heaven* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1988).

⁵ Unless stated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the NIV.

in the word that brought the first taste of order to the newly created cosmos.⁶ Yet these facts do not reduce the significance of our subject, but rather serve to highlight the vital importance of a proper understanding of song in the life of the Christian. For, though song was not essential to communication between God and human beings, between human beings and God, or between human beings and other human beings, yet the Father who gives good gifts gave human beings song. Thus, we might say that song is ‘necessary’ because God has given this gift to humans for the purpose of using and enjoying it.

A Fundamental Principle

The words of James alluded to in the last paragraph should perhaps stand at the head of this paper as the fundamental principle in our discussion of the place of song in the life of the believer. James 1:17 reads as follows (in the NRSV):

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

The Greek text reinforces the strength of this statement by placing two phrases in parallel:

Pasa dosis agathe
kai
pan dorema teleion

Each word has a counterpart with substantially the same meaning, and mostly with similar sound. Thus this fundamental text is itself

⁶ Having said this, both Genesis 1 and John 1 display such structure and such careful use of language as to be considered ‘poetic’ in a broad sense of that term. In this paper I do not intend to differentiate strongly between ‘song’ and ‘poetry’. It seems to me that song is simply poetry set to appropriate music and since our access to both biblical songs (which perhaps were sung) and biblical poems (which perhaps were not) is through the written word, it seems unnecessarily pedantic to restrict consideration to texts which make explicit reference to musical accompaniment. For helpful introductions to the way in which Hebrew poetry functions, see P. D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia, 1986); C. H. Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) and G. H. Wilson, *Psalms – Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, 2002). A classic study of the subtleties of biblical language is G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible* (London: Duckworth, 1980).

poetic in character.⁷ The repeated ‘all’ adds emphasis to the thesis that if a gift can be described as ‘good’ or ‘perfect’, then it has certainly come from the Father.

The source of these ‘good gifts’ is the ‘Father of lights’. There is little doubt that this phrase, which is unique in the NT, relates to the creation account.⁸ In Genesis 1:14-18, God creates the sun and moon and stars as ‘lights’ (*phosteres*). The reference is perhaps intended to allude to the fact that God, who created all things, called his creation ‘good’ (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25) and ‘very good’ (Gen. 1:31).⁹ If God created ‘good’ things at that earliest point, will he not continue to provide what is good? The answer is yes, because he is not like the shifting shadows. We may, perhaps, develop James’ statement to suggest that the very diversity of good gifts, which God gives reflects his character as creator. Song, with its endless potential for human creativity, reflects the very character of God, and perhaps may be understood as an aspect of the image of God in humanity.

Having made these initial comments, we now turn to consider biblical evidence from the OT relating to song and singing.

Song in the Pentateuch

While no explicit song-vocabulary is found within the first three chapters of Genesis, Henri Blocher has hinted that Adam’s exclamation at the sight of his newly created wife might best be described as a love song.¹⁰ Adam declares,

‘This is now bone of my bones,
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man’ (Gen. 2:23).

Gordon Wenham notes that this carefully crafted use of language is not an irrelevance, but rather a means of focusing attention on this most

⁷ ‘The words form an almost perfect hexameter’ D. Moo, *James* (TNTC; Leicester: IVP, 1985) 75 n.1. See also P. Davids, *Commentary on James* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 86.

⁸ See Ps. 136:7-9; Jer. 31:35.

⁹ Although the Greek word used by the LXX for ‘good’ (*kalos*) in Genesis 1 is different from the term employed by James.

¹⁰ H. Blocher, *In the Beginning* (Leicester: IVP, 1984) 199. Blocher uses the language of poetry, but the distinction between poetry and song is so minor as to be of no consequence for this study.

precious gift: 'the man's exclamation concentrates all eyes on this woman.'¹¹ In fact, these are the very first recorded words from a human being, and they are poetic!

What is more, this is a 'secular' song! There is no reference to God and no exclamation of praise; Adam only has eyes for Eve! Yet I trust that the very act of describing Adam's 'song' as 'secular' raises grave reservations about that description, which I will return to later. How could we regard this song, sung within the very boundaries of Eden, as anything other than prompted by the Lord?

The canonical location of this poetic outburst is also significant, in that it is pre-fall. The expression of human delight through the medium of poetry cannot be relegated to the world of imperfection found in Genesis 3 and all that follows. Song may be included in all that was declared 'very good'. Blocher helpfully draws attention to the contrast between the sublime poetry of Genesis 2:23 and the vengeful song of Lamech in 4:23-24:

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
 you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:
 I have killed a man for wounding me,
 a young man for striking me.
 If Cain is avenged sevenfold,
 truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold.

Blocher comments that 'Lamech's poetry oozes hatred,'¹² and so highlights for us the fact that, following the Fall, the devices of poetic language (parallelism, assonance, *etc.*) may be employed for both good and evil ends, for reflecting God's character and for denying it. Thus the moral character of poetry or song cannot be judged on the basis of its form, only of its content.

We have begun our survey by drawing implications from texts which are not explicit in their reference to song. Yet we do not lack explicit reference to song in the OT. Although it would be very exciting to be able to recreate these songs authentically, 'relatively little is known about the way ancient music sounded and was performed'¹³ and so we must be content to access these songs through the written word.

One of the most famous songs in the early part of the OT, and, in the judgement of R. Patterson, 'one of the loveliest songs in the corpus

¹¹ G. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987) 70.

¹² Blocher, *In the Beginning*, 199.

¹³ G. H. Wilson, 'Song' in *ISBE* IV:581-84, here 584.

of Israel's earliest poetry',¹⁴ is the 'Song of the Sea' found in Exodus 15. In fact, we find two songs in this chapter, or at least two groups of singers with a developing song. In 15:1, we are told,

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: 'I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'

This song follows immediately after the mighty act of Yahweh's deliverance of his people from the hands of the Egyptians, and is an appropriate response to this act of redemption.¹⁵ It is frequently described as a 'victory song'.¹⁶ The words take the form of a confession of praise on the part of the singers, using, initially, the first person singular pronoun. The song does more than talk about God, however. It recounts the event that has just occurred (thus embedding the event firmly in the cultural heritage of the people of Israel), and also presents the interpretation of the event given by Moses. Thus, while a prosaic description of events might say 'an east wind separated the waters of the sea' (cf. 14:21), Moses is inspired to sing (15:8):

At the blast of your nostrils the waters piled up,
the floods stood up in a heap;
the deeps congealed in the heart of the sea.

While the former description is entirely accurate, and indeed has its own effectiveness as narrative, there can be little doubt about the impact of the second version on the imagination of the hearer, as there can be little doubt who is responsible for what has happened. This creative interpretation of the act of God in history might be legitimately described as 'poetic theology' or 'theology in song'.

Later in the same chapter, in 15:20-21, we are introduced to the singing of Miriam, and are given a brief taste of her song:

²⁰ Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. ²¹ And Miriam sang to them:

¹⁴ R. D. Patterson, 'The Song of Redemption', *WTJ* 57 (1995): 453-461, here 453. See Patterson's article for detailed analysis.

¹⁵ See B. Childs, *Exodus* (London: SCM, 1974) 248.

¹⁶ See P. R. House, *Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1998) 103. Childs, *Exodus*, 250, prefers 'hymn' although he notes that the 'distinction is not an absolute one'.

‘Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea’.

In this case, the song is couched in terms not of personal confession but of exhortation. Yet there is harmony between the two songs as seen in the carefully crafted refrain: ‘sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea’ (1, 21).

A different type of song is found in Numbers 21.

¹⁶From there they continued to Beer; that is the well of which the LORD said to Moses, ‘Gather the people together, and I will give them water.’ ¹⁷Then Israel sang this song:

‘Spring up, O well! – Sing to it! –
¹⁸the well that the leaders sank,
that the nobles of the people dug,
with the scepter, with the staff.’

This would appear to be a working song,¹⁷ perhaps with a rhythm to keep the pace of digging! R. B. Allen, comments,

It is possible that the song is the nearest we come in the Bible to ‘popular music’.¹⁸

By this reference to ‘popular music’ we should understand music that exists, not to communicate some great truth, but to be enjoyed for its own distinctive character. However, Allen recognises the pervasive theological perspective of the people of God when he continues,

In this song there is a sense of joy of knowing God even though the name of God is not mentioned.

It is this consciousness of living life in the context of a vital relationship with God that will make all the difference to our ability to appreciate the gifts he has given in the world around us.

An interesting reference to a significant song is found towards the end of Deuteronomy in 31:19-30. Yahweh tells Moses in 31:14 that his time as leader of God’s people is almost at an end, and that when he is gone the tendency of the people will be to turn away from God. So

¹⁷ So W. W. Klein, C. L. Blomberg and R. L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas: Word, 1993) 272.

¹⁸ R. B. Allen, ‘Numbers’ (*EBC* Vol 2; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990) 881.

Yahweh instructs Moses to write down a song and to teach it to the people so that

when many terrible troubles come upon them, this song will confront them as a witness, because it will not be lost from the mouths of their descendants. For I know what they are inclined to do even now, before I have brought them into the land that I promised them on oath (31:21).

This song is therefore not a praise song (although the song does conclude with a call to praise in 32:43-47). It has more of the character of a testimony which will be passed on from generation to generation in order to stand against the generation that departs from the ways of Yahweh. Peter Craigie comments,

The song would serve a solemn function; as the people learned the song and took its words upon their own lips, they would be bearing witness against themselves, not only of their commitment to God, but also of their knowledge of the inevitable consequences of unfaithfulness.¹⁹

It would appear, then, that the regular act of taking the words of a song on their lips impressed the message on the people more forcefully and more permanently than prose. The song itself is written in Deuteronomy 32. Craigie points out that this song, unusually for Hebrew poetry, is 'spoken' (31:30) rather than sung.²⁰ C. Wright offers a helpful insight into the powerful combination of themes in this song. He comments,

Verse 4, lustily sung as a chorus, affirms the character of God in repetitive, overlapping parallelism. As the Rock, God is utterly dependable, empty of any wrongdoing, the very foundation of all integrity and justice. Verse 5, not so often sung at all, affirms the lamentable opposite in Israel's case. These people are corrupt, slippery, unstable, warped and crooked.²¹

The juxtaposition of these themes in a single creative composition designed to be repeated again and again by the people of God serves to

¹⁹ P. C. Craigie, *Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976) 372.

²⁰ Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 373.

²¹ C. Wright, *Deuteronomy* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996) 298.

bring before the people of Israel, again and again, from their own lips, the faithfulness of their God and the unfaithfulness of his people. If all of this sounds rather 'heavy' for a song, we should not allow ourselves to miss the impact of Moses words in 32:46-7:

Take to heart all the words that I am giving in witness against you today; give them as a command to your children, so that they may diligently observe all the words of this law.⁴⁷ ***This is no trifling matter for you, but rather your very life;*** through it you may live long in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess.

Songs, we must recognise, are not always a matter of light entertainment!

Song in the Prophets

Judges chapter 5 contains a song which was sung by Deborah and Barak.²² David Gunn writes of this text that,

The song (chap. 5) that crowns the prose account of Jael's exploit (chap. 4...) brings the prose narrative of Sisera's death into focus by wordplay as well as by precise repetition. 'He asked for water – milk she gave' (5:25) distills the irony of the more prosaic 4:19 ('and he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty"; and she opened the skin of milk and gave him some to drink.'²³

The point of the song, then, is not to impart new information to the reader. For Deborah and Barak, the song immortalised a telling moment in the history of their people; for the modern reader, it brings the story to a fitting and memorable climax to the narrative of chapter 4. We should note, however, that the function of the song is not simply literary but it is theological, providing a theological context for this incident from the battlefield, particularly as it emphasises YHWH's disposition towards his enemies and those who love him (5:31).²⁴

²² It is introduced with a similar formula to that employed in Exodus 15:1.

²³ R. Alter and F. Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (London, 1987) 106.

²⁴ For a recent discussion of this passage which is sensitive to its literary and theological contributions, see K. L. Younger, *Judges/ Ruth* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 132-66.

2 Samuel 1:18 makes reference to the ‘Song of the Bow’. David, we are told, ‘ordered that the Song of the Bow be taught to the people of Judah’. In fact, the Hebrew text makes no reference to a ‘song’; it simply records that David said to teach the sons of Judah ‘the bow’. However, it seems clear that ‘the bow’ is a title for the following lament. This view is reinforced when the reader is then informed where this song can be located (‘It is written in the Book of Jashar’).

The lament of David in the verses that follow is very significant indeed, although perhaps it causes preachers some uncertainty as to how to tackle it. It is a lament for David’s dear friend Jonathan, and because of its significance I will reproduce it in full:

Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!

Tell it not in Gath,
proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.

You mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor bounteous fields!
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more.

From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
nor the sword of Saul return empty.

Saul and Jonathan,
beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

O daughters of Israel,
weep over Saul,
who clothed you with crimson,
in luxury,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon your high places.
I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!

Interestingly, as with Adam's song, there are no references to God or to his activities, there are no exclamations of praise, or petitions of prayer.²⁵ And yet only a very shallow reading of this text would allow the reader to come to the conclusion that God had nothing to do with this text. The text is evidence of a friendship lived in the light of God's covenant to his people, and the fact that there is no explicit reference to God does not lessen the fact that this song is indelibly marked with his character. What the reader finds here is a human heart exposed in grief. The depth of friendship is glimpsed. The loyalty of David to Saul, even in the face of persecution, touches the heart.

What is this song? In at least some respects, it is a love song: not in any sentimental way, and certainly not in any improper way as some modern commentators,²⁶ with modern ethical perspectives, would like to suggest, but a love song, nonetheless.²⁷ David can say,

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.

and in doing so he demonstrates the power of a song to say what prosaic words never could. The impact of the song on the

²⁵ See R. F. Youngblood, 'Judges' (*EBC* 3; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 810: 'The poem is strikingly secular, never once mentioning God's name or elements of Israel's faith.' An example of a song of David extolling the character of Yahweh is found in 2 Samuel 22.

²⁶ E.g. T. Horner, *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Philadelphia, 1978).

²⁷ See the helpful discussion of B. T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003) 411-14.

consciousness of the people of Israel may be seen in the fact that when the Jewish hero, Judas Maccabaeus, died in about 160 BC, many centuries after David's time, it was David's dramatic refrain ('How the mighty are fallen!' 1:19, 27) that came to the lips of his family (1 Macc. 9:21).

Perhaps the prophetic books do not appear to be a rich quarry for song, but Isaiah may take us by surprise (as also his original hearers) when in 5:1 he beckons,

Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:

'My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.'²⁸

The lush imagery of this song whets the appetite for more rich metaphor, but it does not take more than a few lines before we discover that this is a love song with teeth! The vineyard produces nothing of value and so will be destroyed. Then verse 7 makes everything plain:

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice, but saw bloodshed;
righteousness, but heard a cry!

Even in these words, the symmetry and parallelism maintain the poetic quality. This passage clearly indicates the power of song to be used as a medium of irony and rebuke.

Song in the Writings

Standing as a majestic opening to the Hebrew 'Writings' there is no overlooking the substantial proportion of the OT that is devoted to the Psalms. These songs of praise to 'the God who rules'²⁹ have been treasured and used by the people of God through the years for several reasons. One important reason for this is that Jesus and the NT writers quote the Psalms frequently, drawing out the messianic implications of psalms such as 2 and 110.³⁰ However, further reasons will include the

²⁸ Klein, Blomberg and Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 224, helpfully demonstrate the use of word repetition in this verse.

²⁹ See the analysis of P. R. House, *Old Testament Theology*, 402-23.

³⁰ See S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken (eds), *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T&T Clark International, 2004).

depth of human experience reflected in these songs, and the beauty of the poetry used by the authors as they were ‘carried along by the Holy Spirit’ (2 Pet. 1:21). Psalm 19 exemplifies the beauty of the language with its personification of creation and its rich metaphors, while, with respect to human emotion, few Psalms can match Psalm 22 in depth of pathos and Psalm 23 is a masterful expression of peace and security.

Psalm 40:3 speaks of a ‘new song’. Van Gemeren is surely right when he argues that this does not necessarily mean that a new composition has been written, but that the saving activity of God (40:1-2) has put every song into a new perspective.³¹ The same phrase in Psalm 33:3 is combined with the exuberance of thankful praise, while it is used in Psalms 96:1 and 98:1 in the context of recounting the mighty acts of God.

Since the Psalms are so familiar and comparatively well-known, I will spend no further time discussing them. However, their significance for appreciating the great gift of song must not be under-estimated, and can scarcely be over-estimated.

One of the most important texts for the purposes of this paper, and one of the most intimidating portions of Scripture to Christian believer and professional interpreter alike, is the Song of Solomon, or the Song of Songs. Surprisingly, the term ‘song’ appears only once in this document, in the title (where the song is described as a *shir* or *asma*).³² However, this is not so surprising since what we find in this text is not an instruction manual on how to sing, or even as we find in other parts of Scripture, an injunction to sing; the whole of this work is an example of a song in action. It is a song that is sung.

In fact, the phrase in the title is ‘song of songs’: this document is the most sublime of songs, the pinnacle of the craftsmanship of the songwriter. Yet the question remains: What kind of song is this?

There is a long tradition in Christian interpretation to treat this work as an allegory of the love of Christ for his people,³³ and there is some biblical evidence to add support to this view in that the NT on several occasions likens Christ to a bridegroom coming for his bride.³⁴

³¹ W. A. Van Gemeren, ‘Psalms’ (*EBC* 5; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991) 318.

³² A good discussion of this remarkable document can be found in I. Provan, *Ecclesiastes/ Song of Songs* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001).

³³ See T. Longman, III, and R. B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Leicester: IVP, 1995) 259-63.

³⁴ Cf. Ephesians 5 and Revelation 22.

However, in the case of the Song of Songs, this approach can only be worked out by a studious avoidance of certain portions of the song.

The most natural reading of the dramatic and sensual language is as a love song (or a collection of love songs) between two married³⁵ human beings who have been gripped by the reality of the words ‘they shall become one flesh’.³⁶ It seems to me that the church’s reluctance to accept that position stems, at least partly, from the conviction that a ‘non-religious’ song has no valid place in the canon of Scripture. Longman and Dillard write,

As can happen in any age, cultural presuppositions biased interpreters against the original meaning of the text and a spiritual, rather than a sexual, interpretation of the Song was the result.³⁷

In fact, an interpretation of this song as a love song between two humans has a hugely significant impact on our understanding of human relationships. In the garden, the disobedience of the first pair led to the devastation of the original wholeness between them. Nakedness without shame (Genesis 2:25) gave way to rather pathetic patchwork coverings (Genesis 3:7) indicating the great gulf that sin had brought between them. The Song of Songs points the way to a renewed wholeness in the relationship between a husband and wife, extending not only into their spiritual life but into their physical relationship also. Paul House points the way to a valid reading of this song when he writes,

Read in isolation, Song of Solomon is artistically and thematically lovely but not particularly theologically enriching. As part of a unified canon, however, as part of an ongoing interactive, authoritative whole, this book confirms earlier teachings about marriage while adding its own unique contribution about pre- and postmarital passions. As part of

³⁵ Longman and Dillard, *Introduction*, 261, write: ‘Nowhere in the book are the lover or the beloved said to be married. Also, although there are wedding songs, no marriage ceremony is explicit in the book. However, the canonical context of the book makes it clear that this poem describing such intense lovemaking between the two requires that we presume they are married. In other words, the Song must be interpreted within the context of the law of God, which prohibits any kind of pre- or extramarital intercourse.’

³⁶ Longman and Dillard, *Introduction*, 259

³⁷ Longman and Dillard, *Introduction*, 261.

the canon Song of Solomon testifies to the one God who created men and women for loving, permanent relationships with one another.³⁸

The Song must be read in the light of the totality of Scripture to have its true impact, and, when read in that light, there is no need to provide the ‘real meaning’ in terms of spiritualising allegory. House points the way forward in appreciating the awe-inspiring beauty of this song, rather than mutilating it in the search for ‘lessons’.

One further piece of literature to be mentioned is Lamentations. This largely unfamiliar document further illustrates the fact that song is not a medium reserved for the expression of joy. The document is carefully constructed according to the conventions of a ‘dirge’ or ‘lament’. Among the characteristic features of the dirge, the contrast between past blessing and present disaster is particularly striking. Thus, Lamentations 1:1 reads,

How lonely sits the city
that once was full of people!
How like a widow she has become,
she that was great among the nations!
She that was a princess among the provinces
has become a vassal.

The expression of heart-rending emotion in Lamentations is quite overwhelming, yet, remarkably, Lamentations clearly demonstrates that it is not an unpremeditated wail but is a composition of astonishing creative artistry. Of the five chapters which compose Lamentations, four are acrostic poems, beginning each successive unit of the poem with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The fifth and final chapter is not an acrostic, but it resembles chapters one, two and four in that it too has twenty-two verses, corresponding to the twenty-two characters in the Hebrew alphabet. Chapter three forms the fulcrum of this delicately balanced composition by modifying the acrostic structure so that instead of successive substantial verse beginning with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet, the author composes a group of three short verses, each beginning with the same character, followed by another group of three verses each beginning with the next character, and so on through the whole alphabet. Anyone who has attempted to write an acrostic poem will realise what mastery of language is required to move

³⁸ House, *Old Testament Theology*, 469.

beyond banal verse. God chose to move his chosen author in such a way that he expresses a broken heart and also a living hope in the Covenant God, through delicate and intricate poetic structure. Interestingly, although modern Christians do not tend to empathise with the sombre tone of Lamentations, the familiar hymn ‘Great is Thy Faithfulness’ is based upon Lamentations 3:22-23, which is the point on which the whole dirge balances.

A Cautionary Note

We have seen the pervasive presence of song in the OT. Yet there is not unqualified praise for those who sing. The southern prophet Amos, sent to proclaim God’s judgement on the wayward northern kingdom of Israel, has typically biting words for certain music-lovers (6:4-7):

⁴ Alas for those who lie on beds of ivory, and lounge on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, and calves from the stall; ⁵ who *sing idle songs* to the sound of the harp, and like David improvise on instruments of music; ⁶ who drink wine from bowls, and anoint themselves with the finest oils, but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! ⁷ Therefore they shall now be the first to go into exile, and the revelry of the loungers shall pass away.

The reference to David in the midst of this prophetic woe oracle suggests that it is not the activity of these people that is condemned, since David is extolled for his skill in music. It is the last phrase of verse 6 that provides the key to the problem – music was more important than the issues of God’s people.

The Function of Song in the Old Testament

We have found songs in each of the major sections of the OT: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. In drawing our survey of OT texts together, we can make a number of comments relating to the function of song in the OT.

- 1) Song is a gift of creative and evocative communication that has been given to human beings by a gracious God whose creativity is reflected in the words of human songs. Thus song may be legitimately used as a form of expression where there is no explicit reference to faith in God.
- 2) Songs are frequently used to express praise and thankfulness to God, yet they are often addressed to other human beings to share in the act of singing. They frequently recount (in vivid and

memorable form) the saving acts of God among his people through the ages. They therefore act as a potent form of education, encouragement and exhortation within the community of believers. Songs may not always be 'enjoyable' but may be the bearers of words of rebuke.

- 3) Songs are neither inherently good nor inherently bad. They may be misused when the form of a song is filled with ungodly content, or when perfectly good songs are used in a way that is unacceptable to God.

Song in the New Testament

Discussions relating to song in the NT have often gravitated all too quickly to the several famous 'hymns' (particularly in Colossians 1 and Philippians 2) and to the (for some) contentious issue of the meaning of 'psalms, hymns and spiritual songs' (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:19). In choosing to pass over discussion of these texts here, it is not my intention to devalue these passages of Scripture – these exegetical questions deserve careful discussion – but it is my intention to indicate that there are a number of texts in the NT that shed light on the value of song, and yet which are too often neglected.

Discussion could well focus on several references to song or singing in the NT documents. For example, Acts 16:25 tells of Paul and Silas singing praise at midnight in the prison in Philippi. Or, turning to Paul, tucked away in the lengthy passage on the proper outworking of the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:15) are the words, 'I will sing praise with the spirit, but I will sing praise with the mind also' which beg for elucidation. James also has a commendation of song, once again in the context of worship, and yet not necessarily in the context of a 'formal' Christian gathering: 'Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise' (5:13).

However, I intend to limit my discussion in this paper to two NT documents where songs are not simply commended or described, but actually reproduced, and clearly identified in the body of the document within which they occur.³⁹

The Gospel of Luke

Luke's Gospel provides a rich vein of biblical material for exploring the theology of song. Luke, distinctively among the three Synoptic

³⁹ Cf R. E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1998) 489.

authors, records several ‘songs’ in some detail in the early chapters of his gospel. Though they are not described with the language of song or singing, it is clear from their structure that they are song-like in character, and it is worth our while taking a few moments to consider them.⁴⁰

The Magnificat (1:46-56)

The overwhelming news that comes by the angel to the young Middle-eastern girl, Mary, does not result in hysterics or dramatics, but results in a song! The song stands in a worthy tradition of the songs of God’s people through the ages, and the character of the song indicates that Mary was well established in the history of her people.⁴¹ Indeed, the personal aspect of the song is very short-lived as the song becomes an expression of confidence in the God who cut a covenant with Abraham. And so the origins of God’s people in an act of God’s grace are identified, confessed and conveyed to those who will come afterwards, by means of one more song. Thus, Mary’s song functions in a very similar way to ‘the Song of the Sea’ and other OT songs by providing theological reflection on God’s mighty acts on behalf of his people. The song, including its poetic mode of expression, is not a quaint reflection on Mary’s personal experience but it is a valid – indeed God-breathed – act of theological interpretation, setting God’s remarkable act of incarnation in the wider context of his covenant commitment to his people through the ages.

The Benedictus (1:67-79)

Zechariah’s song has added poignancy from the fact that it was the first expression that came from a tongue mute for nine months. It is clearly the Holy Spirit who so fills Zechariah in his moment of obedience that he ‘prophesied’ this poetic composition (67),⁴² and so once again we are confronted with the divine choice to communicate in poetic language. As with Mary, Zechariah recognises the part he and

⁴⁰ See in particular, S. Farris, *The Hymns of Luke’s Infancy Narratives* (JSNTS; Sheffield: JSOT, 1985).

⁴¹ D. L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994) 44-45. Mary’s song shares some common themes with the Song of the sea and Deborah’s song. Perhaps it recalls Hannah’s prayer (1 Sam. 2) most closely; a fact which reinforces the need to be sensitive to form and content rather than explicit description in our present discussion.

⁴² J. B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1997) 111, describes the prophesy as ‘Zechariah’s Song’.

Elisabeth play in a much greater drama, tracing God's faithfulness back to his promise to Abraham, using concise and evocative expressions to highlight the significance of what is happening to him and his family.⁴³ Thus, not only *has* God visited his people in the past (68) but he *will visit* (78) in the future act of grace to which Zechariah and Elizabeth's son will bear witness. Yet, we should not so emphasise the theological function of the song that we neglect the context of the birth of the child, John, to astonished parents. This is surely a song that comes from Zechariah's heart, and we can perhaps imagine him gazing lovingly at his son as he begins the second part of this balanced composition with the words of direct address, 'and you, my child' (76) and then alludes in delightfully poetic terms to the new sunrise which John will usher in upon the people of God. The medium of song allows for the combination of rich theology and rich rejoicing in one remarkable exclamation.⁴⁴

The Nunc Dimittis (2:28-32)

The final 'hymn' of Luke's infancy narrative is much briefer than the previous two, and less wide ranging. It is not so obviously song-like, yet it has a literary quality that justifies the description, and in the context of the previous songs is easily recognised as 'the finale in a narrative cycle leading from *promise* to *fulfilment* to *response* of praise'.⁴⁵ Simeon's words are, at the same time, a God-given interpretation of the little child whom he holds in his arms and a personal expression of gratitude for the realisation of his long-held hopes; both a declaration of theology and a personal exclamation of praise. In one of the most potent prophetic utterances of the NT, the medium that is chosen is song/poetry.

Leaving for the moment these masterful expressions of 'poetic theology', we find one other text in Luke's Gospel which might have a bearing on our subject. There is an interesting reference to 'cultural' music in Luke 15:25, where the Elder Brother in Jesus' masterful tale 'heard music and dancing'. This is clearly a description of a celebration, not of a worship event (though the Father would, no doubt,

⁴³ I discuss Zechariah's prophecy against the background of the OT covenants and particularly the 'New Covenant' in my article 'Luke and the New Covenant: Zechariah's Prophecy as a Test Case' in , *The God of Covenant* (Leicester: Apollos, 2005), edited by J. A. Grant and A. I. Wilson, 156-177.

⁴⁴ J. B. Green provides a helpful discussion of the 'structure and role of Zechariah's Song' in *Gospel of Luke*, 112-14.

⁴⁵ Green, *Gospel of Luke*, 143.

have been deeply thankful). While it is tempting to take this text and draw far-reaching conclusions from it, a safer course of biblical interpretation is to avoid placing emphasis on peripheral details in a parable of Jesus. Nothing is said by Jesus, in the text, either to commend or to condemn this manner of celebration – it is simply beside the point. However, it is to the point that there should be rejoicing when the lost are found, and the dead are raised, and the text hints at the place music and song might legitimately take in such celebration.

Revelation

Turning to the final document of the NT canon, the Revelation to John resonates with the sound of song. Only an attentive reading of the text, taking care to note all relevant references, can truly indicate how much of this extraordinary work is couched in the form of song. We might identify the following passages, at least, as relevant: 4:8, 9-11; 5:9-10, 12-14; 7:9-12; 11:15-18; 14:3; 15:3-4; 19:1-4, 6-8. Though these passages are not lengthy, they punctuate the text in a significant manner. Each main vision section incorporates at least one song of praise, and the songs focus on the character of God so as to impress on the persecuted listeners the majesty of the Sovereign Lord. Thus, Wu and Pearson write,

In view of the readers' predicament under imperial persecution, the writer's inclusion of these praise hymns into his vision narratives serves not only to present an exalted view of God and Christ in Christian worship but more specifically to provide a coherent message of comfort to the readers. God, who is the Creator of the universe, is still in sovereign control despite the hardships they are experiencing.⁴⁶

Among the numerous references to song, there are two references to a 'new song' in Revelation – 5:9 and 14:3. Drawing particularly on Isaiah 42:10, 13 and Psalm 149:1, 6-9, Longman argues that the 'new song' in the OT is closely linked to the victory of the Divine Warrior.⁴⁷ Although it is not clear that all references to a 'new song' have this background, Longman's point is appropriate in the context of

⁴⁶ J. L. Wu and S. C. Pearson, 'Hymns, Songs' in *DLNTD*, 524-5.

⁴⁷ T. Longman III, 'The Divine warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif' *WTJ* 44 (1982): 290-307, here 300-302.

Revelation where the various songs extol the Lion-lamb (5:5-6) who is victorious through his sacrificial death, and is declared to be Lord of all. Song is the appropriate means of expressing the hope of certain victory.

A particularly striking passage, in the light of our discussion so far, is found in 15:3-4:

³ And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb: 'Great and amazing are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, King of the nations! ⁴ Lord, who will not fear and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your judgments have been revealed.'

The reference to the 'song of Moses' appears to recall the events of Exodus 15. This is biblical theology at its best, as the Song of Moses becomes also the Song of the Lamb; as the great act of liberation through a parted sea in Exodus is interpreted by the great act of liberation accomplished through a broken body in Revelation. The song that became a reminder of the very origins of a people continues to be the song of a people created by grace. The foundation of the identity of God's people – the character of God himself – is once more declared in song.

This extends to the 'judgements' of God. As Moses' song told of the overthrow of horse and rider, so the song of Moses and the Lamb rejoices in the righteous character of God. Of the full impact of this song, Guthrie comments,

It is intended to be reassuring, but the sense of awe and righteous wrath of God is unmistakable.⁴⁸

The totality of Revelation presents the marvelous image of the singing saints. Those who have most awareness of the wonder of their Creator and Redeemer cannot keep themselves from song, and need not try for songs will ring out forever.

⁴⁸ D. Guthrie, 'Worship in the Book of Revelation' in M. J. Wilkins and T. Paige (eds) *Worship Theology and Ministry in the Early Church: Essays in Honor of Ralph P. Martin* (JSNTS 87; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) 81.

The Function of Song in the New Testament

The character and function of the songs found in the NT are not nearly as diverse as in the OT. The songs which are reproduced in the NT are without exception 'religious' songs, in the sense that they are songs with God, his character and his activity as their theme. However, once again we must protest against this distinction between 'secular' and 'sacred' that comes all too easily to us.

A song with God as its theme is acceptable to the Lord if it brings honour and glory to 'the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb' (*cf.* Rev. 5:13). Exactly the same is surely true of a song that has some other matter as its theme. Likewise, a song with God as its theme may be unacceptable to the Lord if it does not bring honour and glory to himself (*cf.* Amos 5:21-24).

Practical Implications

If the contention of this paper is correct, and we have no biblical authority for distinguishing between 'Christian' and 'non-Christian' songs, or between 'sacred' and 'secular' songs, then we must rejoice in the songs that God has given to us by talented songwriters, and sing them for the glory of God, according to the principle laid down by Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:31:

Whether, then, you eat or drink *or whatever you do*, do all to the glory of God.

Thus we should encourage those who have been gifted with singing talent to use that talent. Likewise, those who demonstrate facility with words and music should be encouraged to direct their talents towards the glory of God, even when – perhaps especially when – their creative productions make no mention of their Lord.

On the other hand, we must be careful not to allow culture to dominate our principles. Let me suggest a controversial area where Scottish Christians need to give some consideration to the implications of a biblical theology of song. Similar issues may arise for people of other nationalities also.

Sports enthusiasts may be aware that over a period of years, the famous and hugely popular Corries song, 'Flower of Scotland', has replaced 'God Save the Queen' as the 'official'⁴⁹ national anthem to be

⁴⁹ That is, the anthem that is played by a band as part of the opening ceremony. 'Flower of Scotland' was already an 'unofficial' anthem long before it was accepted by the organising authorities.

played before a sporting event involving a Scottish national team. There is no denying its marvelous anthem-like qualities: a lilting melody that is simple enough to be carried by the largest crowd, and a simple march-like rhythm that gives the song a dynamism that is captivating. Most of all it has a distinctive Scottish character that takes it to the hearts of Scots as to no others. It is no surprise to me that it quickly overturned ‘God Save the Queen’ as Scotland’s anthem.

However, on the basis of what we have said so far, I have a cautionary note to sound. You will expect, I trust, that it has nothing to do with the singing of the song, as such. The combination of melody and rhythm finds no challenge from Scripture, and indeed the strength of the song would be commendable as an expression of creativity at work. My concern has nothing to do with the idea of an anthem, either. Indeed, we might describe some of the biblical songs as ‘anthems’ in that they are expressions of the nation’s identity. They declare what the nation is, and this is not condemned in any way.

However, I must voice concern at the sentiments of the song. Not the language – there is nothing obscene, blasphemous or otherwise offensive in the lyrics – but the sentiments. This concern does not relate primarily to the recounting of war, or to the actions of those ‘who fought and died for, their wee bit hill and glen;’ there may be true selfless character demonstrated in such dreadful experiences. Particularly, my concern relates to the attitude of the lines that speak of those who

Stood against him
Proud Edward’s army
And sent him homeward
Tae think again⁵⁰

It seems to me that this tends towards a rejoicing in nationalistic victory over another people which is unacceptable for those who confess that Jesus Christ is ‘our peace’, that he has ‘made the two one’ and that he has ‘broken down the dividing wall of separation’ (Ephesians 2). If my reading of the words of the song is in any way on target, and if Paul felt so strongly about the reconciling power of the cross of Christ, then perhaps the Scriptures must be allowed to challenge this song that has become a foundational element of Scottish culture.

⁵⁰ ‘Flower of Scotland’, written by Roy Williamson, one half of the duo ‘The Corries’ who made the song famous.

Conclusion

There is no commandment in Scripture to delight in the blending of voices in harmony, or the intertwining of voice and instrument. For some, there will be no fire kindled by a love song or a poignant ballad. But equally, there is no commandment to abandon God's good gifts, of which song is one. What is rejected in this world must be rejected because it stands against God and his design for humanity, not because some misuse it. William Booth's question (echoed in song by Cliff Richard), 'Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music?' hit the nail on the head, except that it seems to suggest that he does, and that we should do something about it. He doesn't! The Lord God, who made all things well, has all the good music, and all the good songs.

Radical Transformation in Preparation for the Ministry

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Abstract

The ancient question formulated by the North African Church Father Tertullian, ‘What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?’, would today be rephrased ‘What does the training center/academic programme have to do with the church?’ This question must be answered. This article takes an in-depth look at the emphases in current theological education to determine whether future Christian leaders are receiving the best possible training for doing ministry. Improvement requires change, and some major changes are suggested here. Such changes can be achieved only through the Holy Spirit.

Theology needs to be seen as a verb, not just as a noun, if men and women are to be adequately trained for servant leadership of the church. The Lausanne Covenant of 1974 (reproduced in full as an appendix to this article) provides a very unique summary of how theological education should be

integrated into Christian ministry. Theological education must be understood as a process.

Introduction

Nearly a decade ago I published a paper entitled ‘Current Trends in Theological Education,’ which I closed with the following paragraph:

In my position with Overseas Council International I have the unique advantage of observing and evaluating hundreds of theological schools all over the world, and I would like to share three observations regarding very negative aspects that I believe must be overcome:

- A. Theologians within theological institutions like to talk and debate, often with few results. It seems that action or change is to be avoided at any cost.
- B. Theologians within theological institutions like to focus on the past. To plan ahead, to think futuristically, seems to be outside their comfort zone.
- C. Theologians within theological institutions seem to have difficulties with issues of management, fundraising, and outcome oriented assessment.

Revival is not only the result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the past, as recorded in history. A new focus on the essentials must become reality today.¹

Wherever I have presented this material, theological students and pastors in ministry have applauded, whereas theological educators have expressed skepticism or denial. A theologian myself, I can echo the statement of Alan Jones in his article on spiritual formation, ‘I am asking for nothing less than the conversion of seminaries.’²

In the past decade an enormous amount of material has been published on the need for change in theological education. Numerous conferences, seminars, think tanks, etc. have been held on the subject. Various accreditation agencies have made it their premier theme. International workshops for academic deans of seminaries have been organized to discuss curriculum changes. Overseas Council

¹ Manfred Waldemar Kohl, ‘Current Trends in Theological Education’, *International Congregational Journal* 1 (February 2001), pp. 26-40.

² Alan Jones, ‘Are We Lovers Anymore: Spiritual Formation in the Seminaries’, *Theological Education* 24:1 (1987): p. 11.

International dedicated an entire series of its Institutes of Excellence around the globe, attended by hundreds of leaders of theological schools, to reflection on this topic. Out of this series of Institutes came numerous publications, including a five-volume set of books under the series title ‘Transformation in Ministry’ (in Portuguese, *Ações Transformadoras*).³ It seems that a legitimate concern is being recognized and that changes are indeed being considered. We would therefore do well to revisit the ideas expressed in the Lausanne Covenant⁴ and the ICAA Manifesto⁵ with regard to the renewal of evangelical theological education.

In this presentation, I will refer extensively to the two well-known texts on the subject, *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change*, by Robert W. Ferris,⁶ and *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models*, by Robert Banks.⁷ Both textbooks give a good summary of the entire debate and of the material published on the subject, as well as listing numerous practical recommendations as to what and how theological schools should teach. I would like to summarize the material from these texts in the following seven key points. To call attention to the urgency of the situation I will go beyond the “recommendations” of the textbooks to say that theological institutions must change, because I believe strongly that ‘as the seminary goes, so goes the church.’⁸

- 1) Theological education *must* give more attention to the schools’ constituent churches and their needs. In preparing pastors, they must deal with the issues the church faces today and with which they are likely to be confronted tomorrow.

³ Manfred Waldemar Kohl and Antonio Carlos Barro (Organizadores), *Ações Transformadoras* (Londrina, Brazil: Descoberta, 2006).

⁴ *The Lausanne Covenant*. Adopted 1974 by the International Congress on World Evangelization, Switzerland.

⁵ ‘Manifesto on the Renewal of Evangelical Theological Education’, *Evangelical Review of Theology* 8:1 (April 1984), pp. 136-143. Reprinted in *Theological News* 16:2 (April 1984), pp. TET 1-6. Also reprinted in Youngblood, *Excellence and Renewal*, pp. 80-87.

⁶ Robert W. Ferris, *Renewal in Theological Education: Strategies for Change* (Wheaton: Billy Graham Center, 1990).

⁷ Robert Banks, *Reenvisioning Theological Education: Exploring a Missional Alternative to Current Models* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁸ Charles Spicer Jr., founder and first president of Overseas Council for Theological Education and Mission, used this phrase as one of the foundational principles of the new organization, begun in 1975 in the United States of America.

- 2) Theological education *must* be more mission oriented. The missiological emphasis on bringing the good news of salvation to a lost world and nurturing the believers has to be the primary goal in preparing leaders for the church.
- 3) Theological education *must* put greater effort into spiritual formation as part of ministry skills, teaching – and especially modeling/practicing – servant leadership.
- 4) Theological education *must* focus on training outcomes, on the effectiveness of graduates in ministry. Realistic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of a school's graduates is essential.
- 5) Theological education *must* rediscover the value in practical mentorship. Senior pastors and experienced missionaries are potential mentors, to be considered just as valuable as any of the professors of the seminary.
- 6) Theological education *must* address the needs of the laity at all levels, including professionals, as well as those who could and should be ministering in the marketplace, using recognized principles and designs of adult education theory and methods.
- 7) Theological education *must* start its renewal from the top. The chief executive (rector, principal, or president), with the support of the board, must embrace, promote, and teach the guidelines. The entire leadership of the seminary must learn to be vulnerable in seeking out and adopting new and effective ways of incorporating practical training into the total seminary experience.

From Ferris's and Banks's materials, as well as in numerous other publications, one could in fact add several additional topics for consideration.

1. The Needs of the Church

Overseas Council International has gathered general information on more than 7,500 theological institutions, bible schools, Christian leadership training centers, etc.,⁹ and detailed material on several hundred of these schools – their by-laws, constitutions, core values, mission and vision statements, course catalogs, etc. Nearly all of these institutions state in their legal documents that the purpose of their existence is to help the church by providing trained leadership for the various ministries of the church. Although pastors and mission and

⁹ For further information, write to Overseas Council International, PO Box 17368, IN 46217, USA. This material can be obtained electronically, on a disk, or as a hard copy.

denominational leaders often sit on the board of trustees of theological schools, seldom are they involved in the curriculum design and selection of teaching materials or courses. A conference held recently in East Africa at which pastors, theological teachers, and even regular church attendees met together for several days to discuss the teaching methods, the courses, and the outcomes of theological education is an excellent example that should be imitated everywhere.

In areas of the world in which civil/tribal war is a daily reality, theological schools must equip pastors in the theory and practice of reconciliation and peacemaking. When we know from statistics that HIV/AIDS has affected such a large proportion of the population, the seminary must include courses on how to deal with this pandemic. Given the unbelievably high incidence of divorce, single parenthood, promiscuity, teen pregnancy, violence, domestic abuse, etc., future pastors must be taught in the seminary how to deal with these issues if they are to be effective in their ministry. With more than half of the population in many countries under 18 years of age, and with so many children in AIDS-torn countries having to take on adult responsibilities at a very early age, seminaries must train future leaders to minister to children – in addition to and separately from the formal Christian education/Sunday School programmes. These are only a few examples of the issues faced by churches today and the need for theological schools to respond.

Do we as leaders in theological schools really know what the members of our churches need and what they expect from their pastors? If we do (and we can, given the many questionnaires and surveys that have been conducted lately), are we willing and able to make the necessary changes to meet these needs and expectations? Does your seminary have a required course on peacemaking/reconciliation? A required course on family issues, sex, domestic abuse? A required course on ministry to children? A mechanism to deal with the all-encompassing issue of HIV/AIDS? If we were to make such courses requirements for every student, what other courses currently being offered would have to be dropped, not forgetting that biblical knowledge, church history, hermeneutics and communication, character formation, and other basic courses are essential? Such decisions have to be made in consultation with the “customers” of our constituent churches, not by the “academic circle” alone. Because seminaries are not meeting felt needs, many churches have recently begun their own seminary or training programme for their leaders. This is a trend that should be taken more seriously before it is too late to reverse it.

2. Focus on Mission, Evangelism and Outreach

Statements such as “Teaching theology without mission at its center is useless theory” or “Every theologian should practice evangelism, and every evangelist should focus more on theology” or “Without winning people for Christ, theology does not exist” are, of course, clichés. Nevertheless, the Great Commission of our Lord (Matthew 28.19-20) must be practiced. Evangelism/mission and teaching are two equal sides of the same “Christianity” medallion. Robert Banks clearly states that the problem lies between action and reflection and, even more, between theory and practice.¹⁰ Several partner schools of Overseas Council International insist that required courses in mission and evangelism include door-to-door visitation, giving out tracts, witnessing to unbelievers, etc., as part of their course requirements. If a professor of Mission and Evangelism gets directly involved with his students in winning people for Christ, he provides a model that, when his students become pastors, they will also practice with the members of their congregation to win others for Christ. The Bishop of the Evangelical Church of India, Dr. Ezra Sargunam, believes that every pastor must be a missionary. He requires all students in their theological seminaries be involved in evangelism and church planting before they are permitted to graduate. No student receives a certificate without proof that he or she has started a new church or an outreach ministry programme, with the result that the evangelical church of India (ECI) adds several new churches every week.

A North American foundation underwrites the financial needs for a seminary that includes in its mission course the requirement that all students have six weeks of practical ministry experience in such situations as confronting the reality of post-Communism evangelism in the former USSR, learning from an experienced missionary working with the AIDS-affected church in Africa, or working with street children in a mega-city of Asia. A professor in the Philippines accompanied his Master of Divinity students every week to the slums of Manila as part of his mission course. In Argentina, one seminary developed a mission course focusing on ministry among the super-rich, trying to reach them in their private clubs or gated villas.

¹⁰ Banks, pp. 157-68. Banks gives excellent examples of what different kinds of courses and actions should be considered. He also refers to T. Groome, ‘Theology on Our Feet: A Revisionist Pedagogy for Healing the Gap between Academia and Ecclesia’, in Lewis S. Mudge and James N. Poling (eds.), *Formation and Reflection: The Promise of Practical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 55-78.

A theological institution (leadership/board, faculty, staff, and students) must have as its basic core value bringing the good news to a lost world and equipping believers to build God's kingdom. Mission (evangelism, discipleship, and outreach) is not merely a programme or a department. Mission lies at the center of God's purpose for the church. Bosch writes, 'Just as the church ceases to be the church if it is not missionary, theology ceases to be theology if it loses its missionary character... We are in need of a missiological agenda for theology rather than just a theological agenda for mission; for theology, rightly understood, has no reason to exist other than critically to accompany the *missio Dei*.'¹¹ A new passion for mission is needed. 'Let our hearts be broken with the things that break the heart of God.'¹²

3. Rediscover the Value of Spiritual Formation

Jesus the teacher demonstrated that spiritual formation was essential for preparing his students/disciples for ministry. He took time to help the twelve, both separately and collectively, with their spiritual growth and maturity. Everything Jesus taught he practiced – in every "subject." His teachings on prayer, on serving, on sharing, on stewardship, on worship, etc., were always accompanied by practical demonstration. Jesus was never a mere theorist.

Theological schools have to insist on sound academic training and have measurable goals of achievement, but these should not replace or minimize spiritual formation and character development. Both these aspects have to be emphasized equally. Interviews of hundreds of graduates of seminaries make clear that they received the greatest benefit from personal time spent with their professors discussing spiritual issues, taking time to pray, sharing values and dealing with challenges. Hardly any of these graduates mentioned the brilliant lectures they heard or the outstanding new discoveries or achievements shared with them. A chaplain whose specific responsibility it is to care for students' spiritual needs is no substitute for the valuable personal interaction between a professor and a student as they discuss how

¹¹ Bosch, *Transforming Christian Mission*, p. 494. See also Mark Young, 'Theological Approaches to Some Perpetual Problems in Theological Education', *Christian Education Journal* 2.1 (Spring 1998), pp. 75-87 and O. Costas, 'Theological Education and Mission', in C. Rene Padilla (ed.), *New Alternatives in Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum, 1986).

¹² This was the underlying principle upon which Bob Pierce founded the Christian aid organization World Vision International in 1950.

biblical truth can become personal reality. 'Spiritual formation and ministry skill development,' says Ferris, 'are both renewal values.'¹³

The job description of a professor/teacher should state clearly how much time is to be allocated to meet with individual students to talk and pray with them, and promotion or tenure should be based not only on the number of publications produced or the number of papers presented at academic conferences but also on the depth of personal involvement with students.

It is very encouraging to see theological institutions beginning each academic year with a full day of prayer for their entire community; setting aside a week during the year for spiritual emphasis or a weekend for prayer and fasting; or conducting a spiritual retreat for faculty and staff. Several theological schools have instituted a programme in which graduates serving in ministry can return at regular intervals to their alma mater for several days of spiritual renewal and a time for quietness, reflection, and prayer. Although spiritual formation and character development in the life of a student is difficult to measure precisely, these qualities become very obvious in the behavior of graduates as they serve in ministry.

4. Outcome-Oriented Assessment and Ministry Effectiveness

Overseas Council's overall mission is to help the leadership of non-Western theological schools improve their ministry, to be more effective in their efforts in training leadership for the church. About three years ago the board of directors of Overseas Council International asked the management to reevaluate its entire operation to determine whether we are still being true to this overall mission and to assess the measurable results. Management was asked to perform an outcome-oriented assessment, with all implications of such an assessment. A series of studies was commissioned as part of this assessment. One study evaluated the various aspects of resource development, customer relations, and administration in the United States. Four studies focused on an evaluation of our ministry in each of four countries/regions: the Middle East, Philippines, Brazil, and Ukraine.

In these four parts of the world, we interviewed all of our partner theological schools, using a carefully designed evaluation formula covering the last fifteen years of their ministry. We interviewed board members, leadership, staff, faculty, and students from many schools and analyzed the results. The greatest emphasis, however, was given to meeting, interviewing and evaluating graduates of our partner schools

¹³ Ferris, p. 129.

in order to determine the value to them of their own theological training. More than forty questions were asked (either in written or oral form)¹⁴ with the express purpose of finding answers to the following three groups of questions:

- A. How helpful was your theological training? List the positive and negative elements. Evaluate its educational/academic value. Report on the effectiveness of your spiritual formation, character development, etc.
- B. What was most valuable in your theological training, and what was missing, in the light of the ministry in which you are currently involved? In contrast, what required subjects or courses were of little or no use?
- C. If you had the opportunity to start your theological training today, how would you structure the courses and programmes? In summary, help us to improve our seminary to be of greater help so that your ministry can be more effective.

The responses to these questions were almost identical to those obtained in the Murdock Study,¹⁵ which listed ten essential subjects that should be taught in every theological seminary. In our study, only some of the participants prioritized subjects according to their perceived importance; however, all participants felt that equal emphasis should be placed on these ten subjects:

- 1) Ministry and Spirituality
- 2) Understanding Scripture
- 3) Historic Overview of Christianity
- 4) Evangelism and Mission
- 5) Spiritual Leadership
- 6) Personal Growth and Skill Development
- 7) Theology of Ministry
- 8) Hermeneutics
- 9) Communication
- 10) Christianity and Culture or Christianity and Present Realities

It is time that we make sure that our curricula are based on what is needed for the graduate to enter, or to continue in, his or her ministry, rather than on the “hobbies” of professors, based on their own dissertations and research.

¹⁴ To obtain a copy of this questionnaire, write to Overseas Council International, PO Box 17368, IN 46217, USA. This material can be obtained electronically, on a disk, or as a hard copy.

¹⁵ The Murdock Charitable Trust. The study was conducted in 1994.

Several seminaries have begun to invite alumni who have been serving in churches or missions for five, ten or twenty years to meet with their faculty or the board of directors to give honest feedback as to how theological training could be improved based on their own ministry experiences and effectiveness.

5. The Rediscovery of Mentorship

In the field of medicine, the training programme was changed decades ago to require every student of medicine to be part of a mentoring programme, working in a 'teaching hospital' for up to three years. The student is part of the senior physician's team, visiting patients with the physician, helping to diagnose the sickness and determine the needed treatment. Students even assist in the operating theatre. This same mentoring process is needed in theological education. Some theological schools have now included in their programme 'teaching churches,' where a student is mentored for one to two years under the tutelage of a senior pastor or of a pastoral team. The students (pastors-to-be or missionaries-to-be) learn their future work step by step. They learn from their mentor how to prepare a sermon, how to begin the practice of prayer and fasting, how to engage in a devotional or 'quiet' time, how to handle staff, finances and board meetings, and how to deal with both supportive and critical deacons. They sit in on counseling sessions, participate in weddings and funerals, and so on. They are exposed first hand to all the positive and negative experiences they will face later in their ministry. All these mentors (senior pastors, missionaries, evangelists) are part of the faculty of the theological institution, just as are the professors who teach history, communication or culture.

New research shows that quite a large percentage of students are now requesting official mentorship programmes – guidance and "hands-on" experience in how to do ministry.¹⁶ Within the last decade, several theological schools in various parts of the world have begun to experiment with such a formal mentoring programme. Some schools have even joined together in a unified programme, some with hundreds, others with only a few dozen students.¹⁷ In all of these programmes half

¹⁶ Manfred W. Kohl, *The Church in the Philippines: A Research Project with Special Emphasis on Theological Education* (Manila: OMF Literature, Inc., 2005), p. 55.

¹⁷ The SATE model and other innovations are described in Timothy Morgan, 'Re-Engineering the Seminary', *Christianity Today* (24 October 1994), pp. 54-78.

the courses are taught by seminary professors and half by clergy, church staff members, or leaders of parachurch organizations. Students are individually mentored by their teachers. Under such an arrangement students are watching ministry being done in preaching, evangelism, pastoral care, management, and Christian education. By means of this mentoring process, students come directly into contact with the kind of ordinary men, women, and children to whom they will be ministering on their own following graduation. They learn to listen to them, to understand their needs and their ways of thinking, and to speak their language. In Christian ministry, one has to become bilingual. In the words of Henry Horn, ‘We must learn to live, think, and speak in two completely different languages – the language of the Bible and the language of modern man.’¹⁸

Let me conclude this topic by challenging you directly: Name the two people you are presently mentoring, with whom you personally take time to transfer your knowledge, experiences, and insights. If you cannot name two such individuals, you should immediately identify them and begin now to establish a mentoring relationship.

6. Serving the Laity and Ministering in the Marketplace

The recent trend toward changing theological schools or seminaries into Christian universities is one indication of the need for Christian impact in the marketplace. In this regard, it is important to learn from the historical development of many major universities in North America that began as evangelical theological institutions and, as they developed into liberal arts colleges, lost their Christian emphasis. To add to a theological school curricula several new academic disciplines in order to train social workers, high school teachers, nurses, secretaries, lawyers, etc. based on Christian principles is indeed a much more complicated and expensive undertaking than expected, as many of our partner schools have discovered. It is indeed very important to have training programmes based on Christian principles for these professions, but the provision of such programmes is not necessarily the responsibility of a theological school.

A different approach has been developed by several of our partner schools; namely, having their faculty and staff teach not only in their own theological school but also in secular universities, adult evening programmes, or gatherings of various professional groups. A professor

¹⁸ Henry Horn, *The Christian in Modern Style* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), p. 68. See also Steele W. Martin, *Blue Collar Ministry* (np: The Alban Institute, 1989).

of Christian ethics, for example, offers a course twice a week during the lunch hour at a restaurant in downtown Boston, a large city in the United States. This course is attended by a large group of businessmen, lawyers, and government employees. A professor of counseling gives a series of lectures on Christian principles at the local hospital in Bangalore, India, for all medical staff interested in the subject, again with an overwhelming number of people in attendance. In Nairobi, Kenya, several courses are offered every Saturday morning in several churches on topics geared to professionals. A team of teachers and students in Hong Kong offered a course on Christian commitment, honesty, and responsibility at a hotel right in the middle of the financial district with more people signing up for the course than could be accommodated. These trends are developing very quickly. The Victory Leadership Program in the Philippines offers courses for lay people on subjects relevant to them, bringing clear biblical teaching to bear on the subject matter. These courses are offered simultaneously in fifteen key locations of metropolitan Manila.

The voices of the “priest,” the “prophet,” and the “king” must be heard more clearly in the marketplace. At a recent faculty retreat at one of our partner schools, two days were spent discussing how to understand properly the biblical concept of the priest, the prophet, and the king in our time. During a recent debate between theological educators and business people, a challenging statement was made: “Training pastors to visit people in hospitals when they are ill is well developed, but the concept of visiting business men, bankers, and politicians in their offices or board rooms to speak with them about their spiritual problems and conflicts and to pray with them is still largely undeveloped.” We must have the courage to seek ways to train people so that they are able to be effective in all segments of society. ‘We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos,’ as stated in the Lausanne Covenant.¹⁹

The amount of excellent materials on adult education theories produced in recent years is overwhelming.²⁰ Faculty in theological schools must be trained in using this material, especially in order to reach the professional lay section of our society as part of the ministry of the church. One theologian said at an OCI Institute that his two weekly lectures on Christian principles at the local law school was mission/evangelism work at its core.

¹⁹ *The Lausanne Covenant*, paragraph 6.

²⁰ A catalog of many of these materials may be ordered from the Jossey Bass Publishing House. www.josseybass.com

7. Renewal Starts at the Top but Must Be a Team Effort

At meetings with boards of directors/trustees of our partner theological schools, I have been asked repeatedly “What is the role, or the job description, of the president?” We must recognize that the president (rector, principal, CEO, provost, etc.), who must be responsible for the overall operation of the institution – from staff to finances, from strategic planning to evaluating results – cannot continue to teach courses on a regular basis as a member of the faculty. Such a statement normally creates great opposition, usually from the president himself. Trained as a teacher, a faculty member at the tertiary level, he wants to continue to teach and usually simply adds the responsibilities associated with the presidency to his teaching schedule. The result is that his performance suffers, both as president and as a teacher. Presidents have to learn the difference between being a member of the faculty and being the president, in charge of the entire institution.

The Institute of Excellence offered by OCI for the leadership of all our partner schools around the world was created primarily to help presidents to understand their role as “being responsible for the entire institution” and to learn to become more effective in this role. Training for members of the board is needed as well. Fortunately, in recent years good material has been produced and is available, in a number of languages, for both presidents and boards.²¹ Renewal must begin at the top. If the president and the board are not convinced that the present structure and curriculum must be changed, all efforts are futile.

In the business world, leadership is evaluated and leaders are promoted or dismissed according to the results of their leadership – outcome-oriented assessment. The same principle should apply to the leadership of theological schools and should be reflected in the job description of the president. The president is responsible for his faculty and for his staff, and he should teach and supervise both groups. He should teach the faculty, or facilitate discussions with them, on issues such as core values, improvement of teaching methods, how to add new material, outcome assessment, training students in spiritual values, character formation, team teaching, and even areas such as management of time and resources. If a president requires that every faculty member participate in regular (weekly or monthly) training sessions, including reading in advance the well-prepared material provided, the chances of theological renewal are very high. Equally as

²¹ An annotated bibliography is available from Overseas Council International.

important, a president should teach all other staff – from secretaries to accountants, from public relations employees to computer people – in regular (weekly or monthly) sessions geared to their personal and professional needs. The presidents of some of our schools that have begun such a regular teaching programme for faculty and staff report extraordinary results.

We must strive for more team effort. The board, faculty, and students of a theological school in Africa spent four months working together on a strategic plan in which each of them became a stakeholder. Another school worked on developing core values, receiving valuable input from alumni. Such activity coordination, teaching and leading faculty discussions, is the responsibility of the president, with the support of his board. These activities have greater significance for the school than teaching regular courses to students.

Conclusions

We would do well to reflect once again on the twelve specific points of the ICAA Manifesto: ‘We now unitedly affirm that, to fulfill its God-given mandate, evangelical theological education today worldwide must vigorously seek to introduce and to reinforce contextualization, churchward orientation, strategic flexibility, theological grounding, continuous assessment, community life, integrated programme, servant molding, instructional variety, a Christian mind, equipping for growth, cooperation.’²²

Could the leadership of each theological school set aside a period of twelve months (sooner rather than later) to establish a mechanism for serious evaluation, with the determinant commitment to confirm what is excellent, to change what needs to be improved, to add what is needed, and to cut out what is irrelevant and unproductive?

One approach to the reorganization of a theological school would be a close examination and possible adaptation of Jesus’ theological educational programme. For three years Jesus taught and mentored twelve full-time students (disciples) as well as many more part-timers or just listeners. As a teacher, whatever he taught he practiced himself, with his students. He seldom lectured; rather, he spent most of his time in dialogue and practical demonstration, using everyday issues as they came up as the basis for his teaching. His relationship with his students was sincere, penetrating, challenging, and goal-oriented. A simple imitation of his three years with his disciples might not be appropriate

²²The ICAA Manifesto

for a theological seminary. However, the key subjects he taught should provide guidelines for seminary education today.

One discipline Jesus practiced regularly in the presence of his disciples, that he taught them, and that he emphasized as all-important for their lives was prayer. Prayer was a “required” course, a discipline that penetrated all the other subjects. Jesus also taught and demonstrated service, a second core subject. His entire life reflected a serving attitude, and his students often had to learn this attitude the hard way. Thirdly, Jesus lectured on sharing and giving, more than on any other subject. His emphasis on biblical stewardship was very high on his priority list of discussion topics, and he demonstrated constantly his conviction that everything he was and had and did belonged to his Father. His teaching included personal evangelism. He taught the message of repentance and challenged people to follow him, the Way of Salvation. He sent his students out to do the same, and the great Commission is clearly a directive to evangelism and mission. Jesus also taught extensively regarding management of resources, people, and time. His students had to learn about the significance and beauty of unity without compromising the truth of the divine message about worship as a life style, about holistic and sustainable ministries, about futuristic thinking and strategic planning, a theme carried further by Paul.

To summarize, the required courses taught by Jesus in his “seminary” included prayer, serving, stewardship, evangelism/outreach, management, unity, worship, futuristic thinking, and strategic planning. Could the evaluation of our own seminaries include a comparison with what Jesus did, and a challenge to do the same?

Appendix: The Lausanne Covenant (1974)

Introduction

We, members of the Church of Jesus Christ, from more than 150 nations, participants in the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, praise God for his great salvation and rejoice in the fellowship he has given us with himself and with each other. We are deeply stirred by what God is doing in our day, moved to penitence by our failures and challenged by the unfinished task of evangelization. We believe the gospel is God's good news for the whole world, and we are determined by his grace to obey Christ's commission to proclaim it to all humankind and to make disciples of every nation. We desire, therefore, to affirm our faith and our resolve, and to make public our covenant.

1. The Purpose of God

We affirm our belief in the one eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will. He has been calling out from the world a people for himself, and sending his people back into the world to be his servants and his witnesses, for the extension of his kingdom, the building up of Christ's body, and the glory of his name. We confess with shame that we have often denied our calling and failed in our mission, by becoming conformed to the world or by withdrawing from it. Yet we rejoice that even when borne by earthen vessels the gospel is still a precious treasure. To the task of making that treasure known in the power of the Holy Spirit we desire to dedicate ourselves anew. (Isa. 40:28; Matt. 28:19; Eph. 1:11; Acts 15:14; John 17:6,18; Eph. 4:12; 1 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:7)

2. The Authority and Power of the Bible

We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness and authority of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only

infallible rule of faith and practice. We also affirm the power of God's word to accomplish his purpose of salvation. The message of the Bible is addressed to all humankind. For God's revelation in Christ and in Scripture is unchangeable. Through it the Holy Spirit still speaks today. He illumines the minds of God's people in every culture to perceive its truth freshly through their own eyes and thus discloses to the whole church ever more of the many-colored wisdom of God. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21; John 10:35; Isa. 55:11; 1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16; Matt. 5:17,18; Jude 3; Eph. 1:17, 18; 3:10, 18)

3. Of the Uniqueness and Universality of Christ

We affirm that there is only one Savior and only one gospel, although there is a wide diversity of evangelistic approaches. We recognize that all people have some knowledge of God through his general revelation in nature. But we deny that this can save, for people suppress the truth through their unrighteousness. We also reject as derogatory to Christ and the gospel every kind of syncretism and dialogue which implies that Christ speaks equally through all religions and ideologies. Jesus Christ, being himself the only God-man, who gave himself as the only ransom for sinners, is the only mediator between God and humanity. There is no other name by which we must be saved. All people are perishing because of sin, but God loves all people, not wishing that any should perish but that all should repent. Yet those who reject Christ repudiate the joy of salvation and condemn themselves to eternal separation from God. To proclaim Jesus as "the Savior of the world" is not to affirm that all people are either automatically or ultimately saved, still less to affirm that all religions offer salvation in Christ. Rather it is to proclaim God's love for a world of sinners and to invite all people to respond to him as Savior and Lord in the wholehearted personal commitment of repentance and faith. Jesus Christ has been exalted above every other name; we long for the day when every knee shall bow to him and every tongue shall confess him Lord. (Gal. 1:6-9; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Tim. 2:5,6; Acts 4:12; John 3:16-19; 2 Pet. 3:9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; John 4:42; Matt. 11:28; Eph 1:20,21; Phil. 2:9-11)

4. The Nature of Evangelism

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian

presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. In issuing the gospel invitation we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship. Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his church and responsible service in the world. (1 Cor. 15:3,4; Acts 2:32-39; John 20:21; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 4:5; 5:11,20; Luke 14:25-33; Mark 8:34; Acts 2:40,47; Mark 10:43-45)

5. Christian Social Responsibility

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all people. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of people from every kind of oppression. Because humankind is made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, class, sex or age, has an intrinsic dignity because of which each person should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with humanity is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and humanity, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteous world. The salvation we claim should be transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead. (Acts 17:26,31; Gen. 18:25; Isa. 1:17; Psa. 45:7; Gen. 1:26,27; Jas. 3:9; Lev. 19:18; Luke 6:27,35; Jas. 2:14-26; John 3:3,5; Matt. 5:20; 6:33; 2 Cor. 3:18; Jas. 2:20)

6. The Church and Evangelism

We affirm that Christ sends his redeemed people into the world as the Father sent him, and that this calls for a similar deep and costly penetration of the world. We need to break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society. In the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary. World evangelization requires the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world. The church is at the very center of God's cosmic purpose and is his appointed means of spreading the gospel. But a church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross. It becomes a stumbling block to evangelism when it betrays the gospel or lacks a living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance. The church is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology. (John 17:18; 20:21; Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; 20:27; Eph. 1:9,10; 3:9-11; Gal. 6:14,17; 2 Cor. 6:3,4; 2 Tim. 2:19-21; Phil. 1:27)

7. Cooperation in Evangelism

We affirm that the church's visible unity in truth is God's purpose. Evangelism also summons us to unity, because our oneness strengthens our witness, just as our disunity undermines our gospel of reconciliation. We recognize, however, that organizational unity may take many forms and does not necessarily forward evangelism. Yet we who share the same biblical faith should be closely united in fellowship, work and witness. We confess that our testimony has sometimes been marred by sinful individualism and needless duplication. We pledge ourselves to seek a deeper unity in truth, worship, holiness and mission. We urge the development of regional and functional cooperation for the furtherance of the church's mission, for strategic planning, for mutual encouragement, and for the sharing of resources and experience. (John 17:21,23; Eph. 4:3,4; John 13:35; Phil. 1:27; John 17:11-23)

8. Churches in Evangelistic Partnership

We rejoice that a new missionary era has dawned. The dominant role of western missions is fast disappearing. God is raising up from the younger churches a great new resource for world evangelization, and is thus demonstrating that the responsibility to evangelize belongs to the whole body of Christ. All churches should therefore be asking God and themselves what they should be doing both to reach their own area and

to send missionaries to other parts of the world. A re-evaluation of our missionary responsibility and role should be continuous. Thus a growing partnership of churches will develop and the universal character of Christ's church will be more clearly exhibited. We also thank God for agencies which labor in Bible translation, theological education, the mass media, Christian literature, evangelism, missions, church renewal and other specialist fields. They too should engage in constant self-examination to evaluate their effectiveness as part of the church's mission. (Rom. 1:8; Phil. 1:5; 4:15; Acts 13:1-3; 1 Thess. 1:6-8)

9. The Urgency of the Evangelistic Task

More than 2,700 million people, which is more than two-thirds of humanity, have yet to be evangelized. We are ashamed that so many have been neglected; it is a standing rebuke to us and to the whole church. There is now, however, in many parts of the world an unprecedented receptivity to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are convinced that this is the time for churches and para-church agencies to pray earnestly for the salvation of the unreached and to launch new efforts to achieve world evangelization. A reduction of foreign missionaries and money in an evangelized country may sometimes be necessary to facilitate the national church's growth in self-reliance and to release resources for unevangelized areas. Missionaries should flow ever more freely from and to all six continents in a spirit of humble service. The goal should be, by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand, and receive the good news. We cannot hope to attain this goal without sacrifice. All of us are shocked by the poverty of millions and disturbed by the injustices which cause it. Those of us who live in affluent circumstances accept our duty to develop a simple life-style in order to contribute more generously to both relief and evangelism. (John 9:4; Matt. 9:35-38; Rom. 9:1-3; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Mark 16:15; Isa. 58:6,7; Jas. 1:27; 2:1-9; Matt. 25:31-46; Acts 2:44,45; 4:34,35)

10. Evangelism and Culture

The development of strategies for world evangelization calls for imaginative pioneering methods. Under God, the result will be the rise of churches deeply rooted in Christ and closely related to their culture. Culture must always be tested and judged by Scripture. Because humanity is God's creature, some of our culture is rich in beauty and goodness. Because we are fallen, all human culture is tainted with sin

and some of it is demonic. The gospel does not presuppose the superiority of any culture to another, but evaluates all cultures according to its own criteria of truth and righteousness, and insists on moral absolutes in every culture. Missions have all too frequently exported with the gospel an alien culture, and churches have sometimes been in bondage to culture rather than to the Scripture. Christ's evangelists must humbly seek to empty themselves of all but their personal authenticity in order to become the servants of others, and churches must seek to transform and enrich culture, all for the glory of God. (Mark 7:8,9,13; Gen. 4:21,22; 1 Cor. 9:19-23; Phil. 2:5-7; 2 Cor. 4:5)

11. Education and Leadership

We confess that we have sometimes pursued church growth at the expense of church depth, and divorced evangelism from Christian nurture. We also acknowledge that some of our missions have been too slow to equip and encourage national leaders to assume their rightful responsibilities. Yet we are committed to indigenous principles, and long that every church will have national leaders who manifest a Christian style of leadership in terms not of domination but of service. We recognize that there is a great need to improve theological education, especially for church leaders. In every nation and culture there should be an effective training programme for pastors and laypeople in doctrine, discipleship, evangelism, nurture and service. Such training programmes should not rely on any stereotyped methodology but should be developed by creative local initiatives according to biblical standards. (Col. 1:27,28; Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5,9; Mark 10:42-45; Eph. 4:11,12)

12. Spiritual Conflict

We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil, who are seeking to overthrow the church and frustrate its task of world evangelization. We know our need to equip ourselves with God's armor and to fight this battle with the spiritual weapons of truth and prayer. For we detect the activity of our enemy, not only in false ideologies outside the church, but also inside it in false gospels which twist Scripture and put humanity in the place of God. We need both watchfulness and discernment to safeguard the biblical gospel. We acknowledge that we ourselves are not immune to worldliness of thought and action, that is, to a surrender to secularism. For example, although careful studies of church growth,

both numerical and spiritual, are right and valuable, we have sometimes neglected them. At other times, desirous to ensure a response to the gospel, we have compromised our message, manipulated our hearers through pressure techniques, and become unduly preoccupied with statistics or even dishonest in our use of them. All this is worldly. The church must be in the world; the world must not be in the church. (Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 4:3,4; Eph. 6:11,13-18; 2 Cor. 10:3-5; 1 John 2:18-26; 4:1-3; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; John 17:15)

13. Freedom and Persecution

It is the God-appointed duty of every government to secure conditions of peace, justice and liberty in which the church may obey God, serve the Lord Christ, and preach the gospel without interference. We therefore pray for the leaders of the nations and call upon them to guarantee freedom of thought and conscience, and freedom to practice and propagate religion in accordance with the will of God and as set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We also express our deep concern for all who have been unjustly imprisoned, and especially for our brothers and sisters who are suffering for their testimony to the Lord Jesus. We promise to pray and work for their freedom. At the same time we refuse to be intimidated by their fate. God helping us, we too will seek to stand against injustice and to remain faithful to the gospel, whatever the cost. We do not forget the warnings of Jesus that persecution is inevitable. (1 Tim. 1:1-4; Acts 4:19; 5:29; Col. 3:24; Heb. 13:1-3; Luke 4:18; Gal. 5:11; 6:12; Matt. 5:10-12; John 15:18-21)

14. The Power of the Holy Spirit

We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Father sent his Spirit to bear witness to his Son; without his witness ours is futile. Conviction of sin, faith in Christ, new birth and Christian growth are all his work. Further, the Holy Spirit is a missionary spirit; thus evangelism should arise spontaneously from a Spirit-filled church. A church that is not a missionary church is contradicting itself and quenching the Spirit. Worldwide evangelization will become a realistic possibility only when the Spirit renews the church in truth and wisdom, faith, holiness, love and power. We therefore call upon all Christians to pray for such a visitation of the sovereign Spirit of God that all his fruit may appear in all his people and that all his gifts may enrich the body of Christ. Only then will the whole church become a fit instrument in his hands, that the whole earth may hear his voice. (1 Cor. 2:4; John

15:26,27; 16:8-11; 1 Cor. 12:3; John 3:6-8; 2 Cor. 3:18; John 7:37-39; 1 Thess. 5:19; Acts 1:8; Psa. 85:4-7; 67:1-3; Gal. 5:22,23; 1 Cor. 12:4-31; Rom 12:3-8)

15. The Return of Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly, in power and glory, to consummate his salvation and his judgment. This promise of his coming is a further spur to our evangelism, for we remember his words that the gospel must first be preached to all nations. We believe that the interim period between Christ's ascension and return is to be filled with the mission of the people of God, who have no liberty to stop before the End. We also remember his warning that false Christs and false prophets will arise as precursors of the final Antichrist. We therefore reject as a proud, self-confident dream the notion that humanity can ever build a utopia on earth. Our Christian conscience is that God will perfect his kingdom, and we look forward with eager anticipation to that day, and to the new heaven and earth in which righteousness will dwell and God will reign for ever. Meanwhile, we rededicate ourselves to the service of Christ and of humanity in joyful submission to his authority over the whole of our lives. (Mark 14:62; Heb. 9:28; Mark 13:10; Acts 1:8-11; Matt. 28:20; Mark 13:21-23; John 2:18; 4:1-3; Luke 12:32; Rev. 21:1-5; 2 Pet. 3:13; Matt. 28:18)

Conclusion

Therefore, in the light of this our faith and our resolve, we enter into a solemn covenant with God and with each other, to pray, to plan and to work together for the evangelization of the whole world. We call upon others to join us. May God help us by his grace and for his glory to be faithful to this our covenant! Amen, Alleluia!


For background to this Covenant visit the The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization website:

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