

Editorial

If you are reading these lines then it is safe to assume you have either bought, borrowed or stolen this magazine. One hopes the latter is not true - though it would at least display an eagerness to get hold of a copy of this pilot issue. Perhaps you are an avid reader, or possibly your curiosity has been aroused by the appearance of yet another periodical which could add variety to the postman's ceaseless delivery of bills!

A new magazine

It is hoped that you will find *Grace & Truth Magazine* a useful and enjoyable addition to your reading list. The aim is to provide:

- a variety of articles to stimulate, challenge and encourage the Lord's people in their Christian lives
- news from the national and international church scene to inform and promote prayer and fellowship
- a children's section to stimulate younger readers to think seriously about the Christian faith
- book reviews to encourage further reading

The theological position upheld by the magazine is that which has come to be known as the 'historic reformed faith': more specifically, the summary of biblical doctrine as found in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith which closely reflects other Confessions of the same era, such as the Westminster Confession (Presbyterian) and the Savoy Declaration (Congregationalist).

Subscriptions

The magazine you hold in your hand is a pilot issue. Whether or not further issues are produced will depend entirely on sufficient interest being shown by readers to make the regular production of the magazine a worthwhile endeavour. We therefore ask readers to register their interest in subscribing to the magazine on a regular basis. *Please don't assume you needn't do this because others will - if you are interested, please let us know!*

Given sufficient interest it is intended that publication of regular issues will begin in January 2001 on a bi-monthly basis: six issues a year. The annual subscription rate will be \$24 incl. postage within New Zealand, and the usual size of each issue is expected

to be at least 32 pages, but will vary depending on the material to be published (this edition is, therefore, somewhat larger than future issues are likely to be).

To assist you in registering your interest in this magazine you should find enclosed a subscription form. If you opt to pay by credit card, your card will not be charged until publication of the first issue. If you choose to pay by cheque, you need not enclose payment with the subscription form as we will inform you by mail or email if publication goes ahead and you may pay the subscription fee at that time. *Please register your interest by the end of October 2000 (it will help us if you register earlier than that!)* - failure to do so may mean that further issues of the magazine will not be produced.

In this issue

Dangers abound for the Christian: many temptations assail us each day, the Devil assaults us with his devious ploys to destroy our faith and old habits cause us to stumble along in our pilgrimage. David Marshall highlights one such danger in the opening article, while David Yan closes this magazine by discussing another.

The Word of God is, or ought to be, a central feature of our daily lives as believers. To read it is both a privilege and a responsibility. William Tyndale's life and labours are reviewed, reminding us of those who gave their lives so that we could benefit from the personal study of God's Word. How different our circumstances would be had they chose personal comfort instead. That God has give us His Word for our benefit is clearly demonstrated by Art Azurdia as he expounds a portion of the Lord's 'High Priestly Prayer'.

While the Bible is essential for our healthy growth as believers, the message of the Bible is to be passed on by us to those who do not yet have faith in Christ. Stephen Turner demonstrates that the true follower of Christ must imitate Him in seeking the lost. And Geoff Thomas writes convincingly of man's need to be freed from the bondage of sin, inviting those thus bound to turn to Jesus Christ as the One who can loose their bonds.

Finally, if you want to know more about the name of the magazine, then turn to the children's pages where you will find a brief explanation.

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The Dangers of Idealism

DAVID MARSHALL

The Christian faith calls us to the highest of ideals. The scriptures use terms such as holiness, perfection and completeness in describing the life we are called to lead. These expressions are applied to us as individuals and as the church. 1 Peter 1:15 admonishes, "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy.'" The apostle Paul described his ministry in these words, "We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ." (Colossians 1:28). Peter says this of the church, "...you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God..." (1 Peter 2:9).

We might therefore conclude that to be idealistic would be one of the supreme Christian virtues. Yet such is not the case. Rather idealism is one of the vices that bedevil the church and our individual Christian lives. The Bible has the highest ideals but is not idealistic. Rather it is realistic. Thus Paul could berate the Corinthian church for their party spirit, acceptance of false doctrine and toleration of immorality and then, with utter sincerity, exhort them in these words, "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58). We might be excused for wondering if these people were even converted, but Paul could see past their waywardness to the working of God's grace in their lives. He would not fatalistically accept their failings, but while continuing to rebuke and exhort them he did not for a moment doubt their salvation or cease to love them. He held an utterly realistic view of both their sinfulness and of their salvation by grace alone.

However Paul's attitude is not easy to emulate. An enduring streak of idealism runs deeply through each one of us. It is but one manifestation of our pride. When it is not constantly mortified it can be very destructive.

Those who have an idealistic view of the church are never satisfied. They see lack of zeal, injustices, factionalism and all the rest and tend to despise the church. At best they retreat into a corner, attending but never fully participating. At worst they stop attending altogether. A bitterness and self-righteousness develops which crowds out the sweetness of the Saviour. We are commanded to "carry each other's burdens" and so "fulfill the law of Christ" and to "encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness." (Galatians 6:2 and Hebrews 3:13). We must never "give up meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25). Above all we are to "love one another deeply, from the heart." (1 Peter 1:22).

An idealistic view of ourselves can be equally corrosive. Since we inevitably fail to meet the rigorous standards laid out in God's Word we can easily become discouraged, perhaps even doubting the reality of our conversion. Some simply conclude that since they cannot live as Scripture says they should they will give up. The Christian life is just too hard. The great saints may succeed but this way is not for ordinary people. The other alternative is to redefine sin so that we are able to live as the Bible requires. This however produces the Pharisaical legalism that Jesus condemned so vigorously. We are not to overlook our failings but nor are we to condemn ourselves. Rather we are to think of ourselves "with sober judgment." (Romans 12:3).

An idealistic approach to finding a life partner has led to suffering, disillusionment and loneliness for far too many. The quest for the perfect partner is a mission impossible. Such perfect creatures simply do not exist.

When parents adopt an idealistic approach to raising their children they tend to one of two extremes. Either they think their offspring are perfect and can do no wrong and so fail to adequately discipline them, or they set such unrealistically high standards that they push them beyond what they can possibly achieve. Either path is a recipe for disaster.

There is no area in this life where we will ever find the perfection we crave. Employers, marriage partners, children, relatives, neighbours - all will "fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). King Solomon exclaimed, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins." (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

*...absolute perfection
and completeness is
found in God alone...*

A realistic attitude is necessary. Paul could take a hard look at himself and yet say, "by the grace of God I am what I am." (1 Corinthians 15:10). He knew that he was not all that he should be, perhaps even that he could be, but gloriously he was not what he had been. He could rest in this, while at the same time he could say, "I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." (Philippians 3:12). When evaluating his brothers and sisters in Christ, with all their imperfections, he could say "being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6). Paul knew the depth of the sinfulness of his heart and the hearts of others. His confidence was not in man, but in God and His grace. He knew that absolute perfection and completeness is found in God alone, and we shall not experience it until we are finally with Him in the eternal glory.

The Ploughboy's Protagonist

DAFYDD HUGHES

Early one morning in October 1536 a man was led out of a castle to an open space near the southern wall of a city in Germany. He was in his early forties and coughed repeatedly as he shuffled forward, clearly unwell and in a bedraggled condition. A crowd had gathered in the clearing. In the centre was a pole surrounded by bundles of brushwood. To this pole the weary man was taken, and to it he was chained. He was not the first nor would he be the last man to be executed and burned for the crime of heresy. But this man's 'heretical' views had compelled him to do something that was turning England upside-down, and for which he would be remembered in centuries to come.

The Early Years

William Tyndale was born about the year 1494 near the borders of Gloucestershire and Wales. Little is known of his early life, though he probably had a grammar school education. In 1508 Tyndale began seven years as a student in Magdalen College, Oxford, graduating BA in 1512 and attaining MA in 1515; he would have been twenty, the minimum age required before receiving the masters degree.

Following a year tutoring in Oxford Tyndale moved to Cambridge where the new teachings from the continent were creating a stir. Erasmus had recently taught Greek in Cambridge while also working on his Greek New Testament. His influence was still to be felt when Tyndale arrived. Indeed, it was through reading Erasmus' Greek and Latin Testament while in Oxford that Tyndale had been converted. At Cambridge he studied diligently to improve his Greek and would probably have come into contact with those eager to discuss the 'new doctrines'. Oxford and Cambridge were the only Universities in England and at this time Cambridge appears to have received the new teaching from Europe more readily than Oxford.

From Cambridge Tyndale returned to Gloucestershire to work as tutor to the children of Sir John and Lady Anne Walsh of Little Sodbury Manor. Here he translated Erasmus' *Manual of the Christian*, a copy of which he gave to Sir John and Lady Walsh in response to the latter's request for proof regarding his view of the Christian faith. It is perhaps significant that at this time Tyndale turned to Erasmus (a Humanist) for assistance rather than to Luther, thus indicating that he may not yet have appreciated the importance of Luther's theology. However, through this, and Tyndale's godly life and witness, Sir John Walsh came to faith in Christ.

During his stay at Little Sodbury Tyndale came into regular contact with abbots, deans, archdeacons, and other doctors and well educated men. He became known as a radical preacher in the area and it was while debating with a man of some learning that Tyndale made the well known statement which marked a turning-point in his life. On being told that the pope's laws were of greater importance than God's he responded, "I defy the pope and all his laws; if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost." Having previously been warned regarding his preaching and disputations Tyndale could no longer remain at Little Sodbury. With the blessing of Sir John Walsh he left for London to seek employment with Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, thereby hoping to avoid being branded a heretic.

Tyndale took with him, he said, "an oration of Isocrates which I had translated out of Greek into English." This is an important hint at Tyndale's scholastic ability. As one Biographer states, "Tyndale... demonstrated through the Isocrates translation that his Oxford experience had helped to make him one of the few very able scholars of Greek and Latin in the country."¹ However, Bishop Tunstall proved to be less favourable than Tyndale had hoped. After a year in London he concluded that nowhere in England could a place be found where the New Testament could be safely translated.

"I defy the pope and all his laws; if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost."

In Exile

Through preaching on occasions Tyndale came into contact with Humphrey Monmouth, a wealthy merchant and one sympathetic to the reform of the church. Monmouth befriended Tyndale, and upon his decision to go to the continent where he might more easily work at translation, Monmouth and other London merchants undertook to sponsor the project.

Tyndale departed London in 1524. It is possible that he spent some time studying in Wittenburg though there is no evidence to suggest that he ever actually met Martin Luther there. Certainly, those first months on the continent would have been busy with the demanding task of translation for in 1525 the New Testament in English was already being printed in Cologne. Disappointment was close at hand however. Tyndale's

opponents learned of the project and raided the print shop destroying most of the work. Tyndale himself escaped to Worms taking sufficient material with him to produce bound copies of most of Matthew's Gospel; this became known as the *Cologne Fragment*. David Daniell comments:

the English into which Tyndale is translating has a special quality for the time, being the simple, direct form of the spoken language, with a dignity and harmony that make it perfect for what it is doing.... In his Bible translations, Tyndale's conscious use of everyday words... and his wonderful ear for rhythmic patterns, gave to English not only a Bible language, but a new prose. England was blessed as a nation in that the language of its principal book, as the Bible in English rapidly became, was the fountain from which flowed the lucidity, suppleness and expressive range of the greatest prose thereafter.²

Tyndale was determined to ensure that the 'ploughboy' would have the Bible in English. Despite the initial set-back of losing his work in 1525, the following year the first printed copies of the English New Testament began entering Britain hidden amongst imported goods.

Opposition continually dogged the industrious translator, to the extent that Bishop Tunstall, through Augustine Packington, bought as many copies of the Testament as could be found and had them burned:

"Who is the Merchant?" said Tyndale. "The bishop of London," said Packington. "Oh, that is because he will burn them," said Tyndale. "Yea marry," quoth Packington. "I am the gladder," said Tyndale; "for these two benefits shall come thereof: I shall get money [from] him for these books, to bring myself out of debt, and the whole world shall cry out upon the burning of God's word. And the overplus of the money, that shall remain to me, shall make me more studious to correct the said New Testament, and so newly to imprint the same once again; and I trust the second will much better like you than ever did the first." And so forward went the bargain: the bishop had the books, Packington had the thanks, and Tyndale had the money.³

Tunstall's desire to burn the Testament therefore gave Tyndale the opportunity to undertake a complete revision of the work and republish it using the Bishop's own money!

William Tyndale was a theologian as well as a translator. From 1528 he published various works in which he "expounded his evangelical theology, with the primacy of the Bible and justification by faith alone at its heart."⁴

Nearing the End

In the remaining years of his life Tyndale was constantly in hiding. He continued his translation work, completing a revision of the New Testament in 1534. He had also begun translating the Old Testament from the original Hebrew, the book of Genesis appearing in England in 1530. Tyndale's care and skill in translating Hebrew was of a similarly high standard to his Greek work. He continued steadily at his task, but his work was cut short with the completion of the book of Chronicles.

In 1535 Henry Phillips arrived in Antwerp where Tyndale was living in the home of an Englishman, Thomas Poyntz. Phillips had been commissioned to arrest William Tyndale, and this he set about doing in a devious manner. Having gained Tyndale's confidence by pretending to be a sympathiser, he led him into an ambush on 21st May 1535. Then followed Tyndale's trial and condemnation for heresy.

The long awaited trial began. Tyndale had been in the castle for eighteen months and now everything was set. A long list of charges was drawn up: "First, he had maintained that faith alone justifies. Second, he maintained that to believe in the forgiveness of sins and to embrace the mercy offered in the Gospel, was enough for salvation. Third, he averred that human traditions cannot bind the conscience, except where their neglect might occasion scandal. Fourth, he denied the freedom of the will. Fifth, he denied that there is a purgatory. Sixth, he affirmed that neither the Virgin nor the Saints pray for us in their own person. Seventh, he asserted that neither the Virgin nor the Saints should be invoked by us." And so the list continued. There was nothing new, either in the charges or the long reams of paper that had gone back and forth between the castle dungeons and the doctors at Louvain. Tyndale had said it all before.

Early in August 1536 the reformer was condemned as a heretic. A few days later the pageant of casting him out of the Church took place.... He was taken back to the Vilvorde Castle and for some unexplained reason remained a prisoner for two more months. Doubtless priests and monks visited him in their droves, all eager to write their names in the register of Roman favour by being the man who forced Tyndale to recant. But this man was a rock and the tired prisoner met his attackers with calm serenity. As well move the castle itself by a drizzle of rain as persuade William Tyndale to recant. His mind and faith were fixed and He whom Tyndale served so faithfully would not leave His servant alone in his hour of need.⁵

Early one morning in October 1536 Tyndale was led out of the castle to an open space near the southern wall of Louvain. A crowd had gathered in the clearing. In the centre was a pole surrounded by bundles of brushwood. To this pole Tyndale was taken, and

to it he was chained. He was strangled and then burned that morning, but before he died he cried a final prayer: "Lord! open the King of England's eyes."

Later that year King Henry VIII held in his hand a copy of Coverdale's Bible. It contained Tyndale's New Testament virtually unaltered and was heavily dependent on those parts of the Old Testament he had been able to complete. "Tyndale's name did not appear on the Bible, and the bishops assured him they could find no errors. 'Then if there be no heresies' roared Henry, 'in God's name, let it go abroad among the people.'"⁶ A year later the Bible received the Royal license and on 5th September 1538 Henry ordered every church in England to display a copy of the Bible in English.

TYNDALE'S WORK

The name of William Tyndale is known throughout the English speaking world in connection with the first printed edition of the English New Testament. This was the fruit of many thousands of hours of painstaking labour by the Reformer. He translated from the Greek text printed by Erasmus while in constant danger of being arrested by

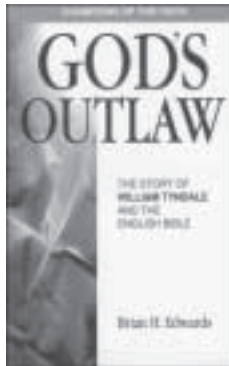
those who wanted such work stopped. Tyndale's contribution to the Reformation in England, while reaching its pinnacle of lasting influence in the translation of the Scriptures, did not end there. Tyndale was a theologian gifted with a perceptive mind and an ability to communicate.

That the Scriptures were important to Tyndale is an obvious statement to make in view of the life and labours outlined above. We look with hindsight and see the remarkable contribution he made to the reformation in Britain; but without the advantage of knowing the results of his work, what were the doctrines that motivated Tyndale to risk execution?

God's Outlaw

by Brian H Edwards

William Tyndale lived in the colourful and cruel days of Henry VIII, when men were burned, racked and maimed for lesser crimes than that of smuggling the Bible into England. When Tyndale set out to provide the first printed New Testament in English he was forced to do so in defiance of the king, the pope and almost every person in authority. Compelled to flee from his homeland, he continued with his work of translating the Scriptures whilst slipping from city to city in Germany, Holland and Belgium in an attempt to avoid the agents who were sent from England to arrest him. His story is one of poverty, danger and ceaseless labour. This fugitive and outlaw gave the English-speaking people their most priceless heritage: the Scriptures in their mother tongue.



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The Place and Authority of the Scriptures

Tyndale believed in the authority of the Scriptures. From the time of his conversion he questioned human tradition and took only Scripture as his guide, believing that the Bible should determine the doctrines, institutions and ceremonies of a church which had come to bear little or no relation to that of the New Testament. Tyndale made quite clear in his *Parable of the Wicked Mammon* (1528) that Scripture was to be the judge of all doctrine. Again, in his *Prologue to the Five Books of Moses* (1530), Tyndale illustrates the value of the Scriptures and states, "So now the scripture is a light, and shows us the true way both what to do and what to hope for. And [is] a defence from all error..."

Sola Scriptura was one of the watchwords of the Reformation and certainly sums up Tyndale's attitude to solving disputes regarding doctrine and practice.

On the basis of their belief that the Scriptures are the final authority in all matters of faith and practice, the Reformers' first priority, in practical terms, was given to the accurate translation and distribution of the Bible. From that moment in 1523 when he had defied the pope and determined to translate the Scriptures, "Tyndale exemplified the Protestant belief that the reform of the church and the salvation of men and women depended upon dispelling spiritual ignorance through a knowledge of the sure word of God."⁷ This could not be achieved unless the Bible was available in a language the people could understand; something which had been accomplished in most of the languages of Europe, with the exception of Britain, by the time Tyndale was in London in the 1520s.

In *The Obedience of a Christian Man* Tyndale argues for an English translation of the Bible and writes, "Will ye resist God? Will ye forbid Him to give His Spirit unto the lay? ...Hath He not made the English tongue? Why forbid ye Him to speak in the English tongue, then, as well as in the Latin?"⁸ Elsewhere he defended his translation of certain words which he had deliberately used to avoid association with the erroneous doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Tyndale strove for an accurate translation and the English world has benefited from his single-minded devotion.

The Importance of Salvation

The thing which motivated Tyndale's work was the desire to see souls saved; this is clearly illustrated in a letter written while Tyndale was imprisoned in Vilvorde Castle. In it, after requesting certain items, he writes, "in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul." This desire lay behind his translation of the scriptures and it is the central theme of at least his first four works.

William Tyndale was not a systematic theologian. His concern was with the practical outworking of salvation: he recognised that God has an elect people and that sinful man is guilty before God, but he did not develop these doctrines. Rather, he focussed on the sinner's bondage under Satan and contrasting freedom to obey the law in Christ. He believed in the reformation doctrines of justification by faith alone and that a sinner was regenerated by the Holy Spirit, but he went further than Luther to emphasize that works would be an evidence of this:

And when this testament [the gospel] is preached and believed, the Spirit entereth the heart, and quickeneth it, and giveth her life, and justifieth her. The Spirit also maketh the law a lively thing in the heart; so that a man bringeth forth good works of his own accord, without compulsion of the law... but of the very power of the Spirit, received through faith.⁹

Tyndale's continued concern was that the Scriptures should be meaningful to the common man and not only to the educated scholar. He wanted the Bible not only to be read, but to be understood and applied to life. He laboured to ensure that the common people of England would have the Scriptures in their native tongue. Having translated and published the New Testament, his earliest works were written as aids to understanding the Scriptures. Indeed, Tyndale was among the first of the English Reformers and in the singular position to marry his writings to the first printed Scriptures in English as they appeared 'hot off the press'. Each of Tyndale's works was therefore of particularly practical value and sought to introduce the true doctrines of the Bible while highlighting the common errors in the church.

CONCLUSION

William Tyndale lived and died so that speakers of English could have the Word of God in their own language. He believed that its message was life-saving and life-transforming. He took seriously Paul's charge to the Romans:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (Romans 12:1-2)

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The Sanctifying Word

ARTURO AZURDIA

God wants a holy people. About this there can be no question. He who is altogether holy desires a people who reflect His own perfection of holiness. And this is nothing new; God has always wanted a holy people. Long ago His word to the nation of Israel was His desire for their holiness: "For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44). In the New Testament God's ambition for His people remains steadfast: "As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pe. 1:14-16).

It is certainly safe to make the statement that God wants a holy people. By itself the statement arouses no controversy, it is not sensationalistic in any sense, it bears no radical overtones. It seems self-explanatory and obvious. Very few, if any, evangelicals would deny the legitimacy of such a statement. Unfortunately, however, great confusion prevails in the minds of many of these same evangelicals with regard to the *nature* of true holiness. While it is accurate to affirm God's desire for a *holy* people, is it equally accurate to affirm God's desire for a *moral* people? Such a question raises a second and more provocative one: *is there a difference between morality and holiness?*

*It is holiness
that God wants
for His people,
not morality...*

The answer is, yes, there is. *Morality* is negative and limited. It tends to define itself externally, and more particularly, in terms of what one refrains from doing. *Holiness*, on the other hand, is more positive and pervasive. To be sure, it effects the externals, but it does not end there. It is more penetrating. Consider some of the distinctions between morality and holiness: the *moral* person abstains from wrong actions... the *holy* person hates the very thought of doing wrong. The *moral* person is motivated by what men perceive him to be... the *holy* person is consumed by what God wants him to be. The *moral* person lives by an impersonal list of do's and don't's... the *holy* person lives by what brings the greatest pleasure to his Heavenly Father. The *moral* person keeps a meticulous record of all of his good deeds, by them expecting to win the favor of God... the *holy* man grieves that nothing he ever does, even for God, is completely free of any sinful or selfish motive. He knows that every blessing he receives from God is solely an expression of His grace. The *moral* person lives by his own definition of what is right and what is wrong, and he delights to impose that definition upon other people... the *holy*

person allows the Word of God to direct his life, and in anything beyond that he relishes in the freedom that Jesus Christ has purchased for His people, and in the differences that freedom allows among those who dearly love the same Savior.

Stated simply, an impassable chasm exists between morality and holiness, and the most obvious historical illustration of this is that which existed between the moralists of the first century, the Pharisees, and the incarnate Son of God. The former were the embodiment of morality. The latter was the personification of holiness. To confuse the two is to cheapen the depth and breadth of true Christian religion.

This brings us to the pressing issue at hand. We are living in a day when a large percentage of evangelicalism is *morality*-driven rather than *holiness*-driven. Many actually believe that the greatest need of the hour is a resurgence of a moral majority. Yet, in addition to the misunderstanding of the nature of true holiness, such an aspiration displays great weakness at two critical points.

First of all, it belies a superficial diagnosis of humanity's dilemma. "Man is not suffering from a corruption that touches every part of his constitution as a man," it implies. "He has simply made unwise moral decisions." Can it be of any surprise, then, that Spirit-produced regeneration is often confused with socially-induced reformation?

*...and this is especially
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significant way.*

The problem with this, biblically speaking, is that sinful actions grow out of an unholy heart, and morality as such, *even when it is in the majority*, does not possess the power to transform an unholy heart.

Secondly, the longing for a national morality fails to recognize the undeniable fact that throughout history the God of the Bible most often accomplishes His purposes

through a holy minority rather than a moral majority. *It is holiness that God wants for His people, not morality, and this is especially the case at those crucial moments in history when He desires to advance His kingdom in some significant way.*

It is my contention that the most poignant illustration of this fact is found on the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ as He speaks to His Father on the night before His death.

Establishing The Context

By the light of the Judean moon, Jesus and His disciples begin their final journey to the place where He will be betrayed by the kiss of a friend. As it was, His evening had already been quite busy: He had washed the feet of His disciples, He had unmasked and dismissed the betrayer, and He had instituted the sacred supper as the sign of the

new covenant. Finally, after the singing of a hymn, Jesus and His men leave the Upper Room, and somewhere prior to their entrance into the Garden of Gethsemane He lifts up His eyes to heaven and begins to pray.

In the first five verses of this prayer Jesus Himself is the object of His own intercession. Beginning in verse six and extending through verse nineteen, Jesus turns His attention to pray for His disciples. This particular section of His prayer can be subdivided into two halves: in vv.6-11a Jesus justifies the intercession He is about to make on behalf of His men; then, in vv.11b-19, Jesus proceeds to set forth the three specific requests that concern them. Our purpose here is to consider the third request as it appears in vv.17-19. It is a request for sanctification, and it can be summarized as follows: *Jesus prays that God the Father would set apart His people by the means of the Word of God for the accomplishment of a particular purpose.*

As God the Father had sent the Lord Jesus Christ to earth for a particular purpose, so too Jesus was now commissioning His men to a particular purpose. To be sure, these purposes were united in the same objective: the salvation of God's people. However, the respective responsibilities to be borne in the accomplishment of that objective were very different. The distinctive mission of Jesus was now immanent: to accomplish the work of redemption at Calvary. The distinctive role of the disciples would begin later at Pentecost: to proclaim the redemption that Jesus had secured. But before either of these two particular purposes could be accomplished something needed to happen, both in the lives of the disciples and in the life of Jesus Himself. They needed to experience what Jesus refers to as *sanctification*. It is to an understanding of these words that we now turn our attention.

The Meaning Of This Request: “Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.”

In order to enhance a more thorough understanding of this statement, four helpful questions may be asked of it.

Question 1: What does Jesus mean by the term *sanctify*?¹

The New Testament and the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) frequently employ this term to mean: “the dedication of something or someone to the exclusive service of God; being set apart for or dedicated to God in a special way and for a particular purpose.” Consider the following illustration.

During our first Christmas season as a married couple some dear friends invited us to dinner. They had decorated their home in warm and festive tones, but we especially took notice of their Christmas china. Driving home that evening my wife and I decided

that instead of purchasing a Christmas tree we would select a pattern of Christmas dishes and begin the process of purchasing them, place-setting by place-setting and piece by piece. Eventually, over the next several years, we had assembled an entire set of this Christmas china.

To be sure, these dishes were not of the most elegant sort, nor were they of the most costly quality, but they have come to possess a great deal of sentimental value to us. Consequently, we do not use these dishes every day. Our children are not allowed to “play house” with these dishes. We do not use these dishes on other occasions throughout the year, however important those occasions may be. To use these dishes in such a way would be to “profane” them. Except for a few special dinners during the Christmas season, these dishes are very carefully packed into cardboard boxes and placed on a high shelf in our garage so that no one can access them without a ladder and a very long reach. These are “sanctified” dishes, set apart in a special way and for a particular purpose.

Spirit Empowered Preaching

by Arturo G. Azurdia III

One of the great dangers that face today's preachers and their congregations is an over intellectual approach to preaching, leading to a loss of the vitality which must accompany careful exposition.

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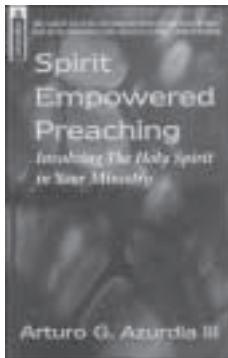
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From a non-religious perspective this illustrates, in part, one of the meanings of the word *sanctify*: the dedication of something or someone to the exclusive service of God; being set apart for or dedicated to God in a special way and for a particular purpose.

When God established His covenant with the people of Israel He set forth specific prescriptions that were to precede their activities in worship. For example, Aaron and his sons were to be sanctified or “consecrated” (Ex. 28:41-29:9). This religious act did not infer that these men were experientially holy, nor that any actual holiness had been conferred upon them in the

act of sanctification. Certainly the irreverent sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, illustrate that this “sanctification” had no immediate relationship to actual holiness (Lev. 10:1-11). The emphasis of this sanctification was functional, not experiential. These men were set apart for and dedicated to God in a special way and for a particular purpose, namely, to serve God as priests. The garments they were to wear while carrying out their priestly functions were to be sanctified (Ex. 29:21). The tabernacle, and even the priestly furnishings inside the tabernacle were to be sanctified as well (Ex. 40:9). All of these examples serve to illustrate one of the common meanings of the term “sanctify,” that is, being set apart for or dedicated to God in a special way and for a particular purpose.

There is a second usage of the term “sanctify.” The authors of the New Testament frequently use it to refer to “the ongoing, progressive conformity of the believer to Christlikeness.” Anthony Hoekema defines this aspect of sanctification as:

...that gracious operation of the Holy Spirit, involving our responsible participation, by which He delivers us as justified sinners from the pollution of sin, renews our entire nature according to the image of God, and enables us to live lives that are pleasing to Him.²

Consider the usage of the term in the following passages: “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely...” (1 Th. 5:23). This does not refer to the act of being set apart in a special way and for a particular purpose. It refers to the progress of spiritual renewal in the life of a Christian, of ongoing, progressive conformity to Christlikeness. When the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews speaks about the purpose of God’s fatherly chastisement, he says, “He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness” (Heb. 12:10). Here the word for “holiness” possesses a closely-knit etymological relationship to the term for “sanctification,” resulting in the conclusion that God’s discipline of His children produces a greater measure of experiential holiness, or in this context, the ongoing conformity of a Christian’s character to that of his Heavenly Father.

To summarize, the term *sanctify* is often used to mean: “to be set apart for or dedicated to God in a special way and for a particular purpose.” It is also used in reference to: “the ongoing, progressive conformity of the believer to Christlikeness.” Each context, therefore, must determine the intended meaning.

What makes John 17:17 so interesting, however, is that the two usages of the word *sanctify* appear to fuse together. In other words, when Jesus says “Sanctify them in the truth” He not only means, “set these men apart in a special way and for a particular purpose” (a purpose He defines in the next verse), but He also implies, “renew these

men in accordance with the image of God.” Such is an appropriate inference when one considers the stated means of this sanctification: “Sanctify them *in the truth*.” D. A. Carson summarizes helpfully at this point:

Jesus' followers will be “set apart” from the world, reserved for God's service, insofar as they think and live in conformity with the truth, the “word” of revelation (v.6) supremely mediated through Christ... the revelation now embodied in the pages of this book. In practical terms, no-one can be “sanctified” or set apart for the Lord's use without learning to think God's thoughts after him, without learning to live in conformity with the “word” he has graciously given.³

William Hendrikson adds:

More fully stated, the verb here employed means to set apart from the world by actual sanctification of life, so that in heart and mind, in thought, words, and deeds, one begins to live more and more in accordance with the law of God. This sanctification can take place only if the entire personality is desirous of being governed by the truth...⁴

Therefore, when Jesus uses the word “sanctify” in this context He intends for its dual usage to converge. That is to say, His desire for these men is that they be set apart for a specific mission which would necessarily include a progressive conformity of their character to the truth.⁵

Such continues to be the case today. The Head of the Church is still pleased to send His servants into the world. One can hear the echo of the Apostle Paul: “And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?” (Ro. 10:14-15). But, it might be asked, where specific individuals are concerned, how can we know that Jesus Christ has been the Sender? Quite simply, if God has set apart a man for a divine purpose the verifiable evidences of it will most assuredly be present in the character of his life. The contrary is also true: an unsanctified man is an unsend man. When these two aspects of sanctification converge in a man's life they equip him to fulfill the commission that Jesus Christ has set forth.

Question 2: What is the instrument used to accomplish this sanctifying work?

The answer to this is simple: “Sanctify them *in the truth*.” The phrase “in the truth” bears an instrumental force, thereby rendering it more appropriately, “by means of the truth.” So as to leave no room for confusion, Jesus defines this “truth” by which sanctification will occur: “Thy word is truth.”

The Holy Scriptures are the efficient instrument of sanctification. Holiness of life is produced by the means of divine revelation. This is the instrument that effectually qualifies a man for use in the Master's service. No other source will accomplish this work. At this critical point there can be no room for any competitors in the thinking of the disciples.

For example, the legalistic inventions of the Jews would not accomplish the work of sanctification. Nor will their modern-day moralistic counterparts. Moralism may initially restrain, but it will never sanctify. The *sophia* of the Greeks would not produce sanctification in the lives of these men. Nor will their modern-day psychological counterparts. Psychology may initially relieve, but it will not sanctify. The ecstasies of the mystery religions would not effect sanctification in the disciples. Nor will their modern-day charismatic counterparts. Ecstatic experiences will most assuredly produce excitement, but they will never sanctify. One instrument produces sanctification in the people of God: the sacred Scriptures.

Furthermore, note that in establishing the efficacy of the Scriptures Jesus does not say, "Thy word is true," He says, "Thy word is *truth*." That is to say, Jesus uses the noun "truth," not the adjective, "true." "Surely this is an insignificant semantical difference," one might suggest. But such is hardly the case. "Well," one might continue, "isn't it legitimate to contend that the Bible is true?" Of course it is. But the Bible is more than true. *The Bible is truth itself*. Were Jesus to say, "Thy word is true," a clear thinking person might wisely respond, "On what basis can You claim that the Bible is true? What is the standard of measurement against which the truthfulness of the Scriptures might be tested?" To merely assert that the Bible is true is to imply that there is a higher standard of truth to which the Bible itself must conform. But when Jesus says, "Thy Word is *truth*," He is not only making a case for the reliability and accuracy of the Bible, He is contending that the Bible itself is the ultimate definition of what is true, and that every other claim to truthfulness must be measured against it. What is the purpose of this standard of truth? To produce sanctification in God's people.

*...the Word of God is
the divinely
ordained means by
which the people of
God are sanctified.*

Consider what the Bible says about its own sanctifying effects: In Psalm 19:7-11, clearly the Word of God is the instrument of sanctification. Again, in Psalm 119:9-11 the Word of God is the instrument of sanctification. Yet again in Ephesians 5:25-27 it is the Word of God that will beautify the Bride of Christ for her wedding day - the Word of God is the instrument of sanctification. While According to the Apostle Paul in 2 Timothy

3:14-17 the Word of God is the instrument that leads to salvation and produces sanctification. Furthermore, in 1 Peter 1:22-2:2 the Apostle stresses that the Word of God is the efficient instrument of both regeneration and sanctification.

Why is it essential that individual Christians read the Scriptures consistently? Why is it important that they discipline themselves to study, memorize, and meditate upon the Word of God? Why is it, in this day of drama and concerts and support groups and holy laughter, that Christians should subject themselves to a steady diet of expository preaching which seeks to draw out the meaning and implications of the sacred text? Why is it essential that the men who lead in a local congregation be men who are skilled in the handling of the Scriptures? The answer to all of these questions is the same: because the Word of God is the divinely ordained means by which the people of God are sanctified.

To be sure, other techniques may initially arouse greater enthusiasm and boost attendance. The problem with this, however, is that it confuses the experience of pleasure and carnal satisfaction with the experience of authentic sanctification. Consequently, the criteria for determining the means most suited to spiritual growth becomes subjective and negotiable. For this very reason, the consistent exposition of the Word of God is a rare experience in our day, while music and drama have become the dominant forms of Christian communication. Moreover, in our dummied-down culture where people have grown accustomed to the pervasive influence of television, church leaders are told that people can only concentrate for a period of about twenty minutes. Therefore, any attempt at effective communication needs to be brief and highly stimulating. Unfortunately, at this point, the evangelical church has capitulated to the culture rather than resist and confront it.

To the contrary, when a pastor aspires to present his people to the Lord Jesus Christ as a pure and chaste virgin he will not trifle with the religious novelties of his day. He will resist the pressure to succumb to the techniques of the culture, which may, when implemented properly, give evidence of a certain kind of success. Rather, he labors indefatigably as a workman in the Word, confident of its instrumentality in the work of sanctification. He prays unceasingly that his people would bring the ravenous appetite of King David to the Scriptures (cf. Ps. 119:11, 14, 24, 97, 103, 127, 129, 131, 164).

Question 3: Of whom does Jesus make this request for sanctification?

Or, to ask the question more simply: to whom is Jesus praying? The nearest personal pronoun appears in v.15, "Thee." Looking back from that point Jesus refers to "Thy word" (v.14), "Thee" (v.13), "Thy name," and "Thee" (v.12). Finally, in v.11, Jesus explicitly defines the Person to whom He is addressing His petitions: "Holy Father."

Why should this be of any concern to us? Why bother with something that seems to be so obvious? The significance of this recognition lies in the fact that while sanctification is brought about by the instrumentality of the Word of God, the actual effectiveness of the Word of God requires a work that only God Himself can produce. To be sure, the instrument of sanctification is the sacred Scriptures. But what is equally true is that God Himself is the Agent of sanctification. The Word of God possesses inherent power, but it is not a power that is independently efficacious. God Himself must make the inherent power of the Scriptures effectual in the experience of a Christian. It is not enough to have the sacred text alone, for the simple reason that the Word of God is not God. The Word is a scalpel, a tool, an instrument. God is the Surgeon, the Craftsman, the Performer. To be sure, sanctification will never happen apart from the Word of God. But the Word of God alone will not sanctify unless God is the One who animates it.

If the experience of sanctification is desired, the Christian must take his cue from the Lord Jesus Christ at this very point: he must beseech the Father for this work. Undoubtedly, this is one of the primary reasons the Apostles devoted themselves to “prayer” as well as “the ministry of the Word” (Acts 6:4). In the final analysis, whether one is giving consideration to the personal reading of the Scriptures, or the hearing of the preached Word on the Lord’s Day, dependence upon the direct and immediate work of God for sanctification is absolute. Standing behind the instrumentality of the Word of God is the God of the Word.

Question 4: For whom does Jesus make this request for sanctification?

Initially, this intercession was made on behalf of His disciples: “Sanctify them.” Does this seem unusual? These were saved men. They had been the direct associates of Jesus Christ for some time. He had already promised that they would perform greater works than He had performed. Soon they would be indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Some of these men would be the human authors of the New Testament. Would there ever be any more eminent saints than they? Nevertheless, they would still be in need of the ongoing work of sanctification. Even a cursory reading of the New Testament makes apparent that God used men who were far from perfect.

This continues to be true to this very hour. Evidences of the need for greater sanctification are replete in the life of every Christian. Though we make great strides in spiritual maturity, we can never forget that the aspiration of sanctification is conformity to the image of Christ. If growth occurs in our lives, then to God be all the glory. But there is still need for greater growth. If we have loved much, then to God’s grace be all the praise. But there still is need for deeper love. If we have served faithfully, then God

will be glorified. But there is still unfinished service yet to render. For every Christian there is a greater faith to express, a deeper obedience to display, a more fervent worship to offer, and a more significant sacrifice to make. While justification is a momentary work, sanctification is a life-work. There will never come a moment in the life of an unglorified Christian when it can be said that he has been sufficiently sanctified. For this reason we can rejoice, that though this intercession of our Lord was initially made on behalf of His original disciples, He then extended its boundaries to include every one of us who have embraced Him by faith: "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word" (Jn. 17:20).

The Reason For This Request

For what reason does the Lord Jesus make this particular request of His Father in v.17? The answer is found in the very next verse: "As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." As His Father had sent Him into the world, He was now about to send His disciples into the world.

In reading the Gospels it becomes apparent that Jesus Christ was very much aware of His divine commission. His redemptive advent originated with the Father. In this chapter alone He speaks to this issue on five occasions (vv.3, 18, 21, 23, 25). The epistle to the Hebrews refers to Jesus Christ as "the Apostle and High Priest of our confession" (Heb. 3:1). Jesus Christ had been officially sent out to accomplish a specific mission, and in so doing He bore a unique authority because of the One by whom He had been sent.⁶

In the same sense, therefore, these disciples would soon be sent out, and Jesus Christ would be their Sender. Of course, the ultimate expression of this commission would not occur until after the resurrection of Jesus (cf. 20:21), and its actual outworking not until Pentecost. However, so confident is our Lord of His own resurrection that He speaks of this sending proleptically. They were to be apostles, men under divine obligation to accomplish a specific mission. It is at this very point that the

The extent to which these men would be effective in the carrying out of their role in the world would be in direct proportion to the degree in which they were sanctified in the truth.

Continued on page 24

Kids'
Corner

What's in a Name?

Dear Readers,

Hello, my name is Dafydd; it is a Welsh name. You probably think it strange, but like the English David it comes from a Hebrew name meaning 'beloved'. Perhaps your name means something too. Like me, you or your parents may have come from another country where a different language is spoken, so your name might also be unusual. Do you know what it means?

Other things than people have names. You are holding in your hands a new magazine; it is called *Grace & Truth Magazine*. Like my name, and perhaps yours also, the name of this magazine has meaning.

I am sure you know what 'truth' is. Your parents expect you to speak the truth; they don't want you to lie or tell tales. If you are truthful then you are honest and you can be trusted. It is a terrible and sad thing when someone cannot be trusted to speak the truth or to do what is right. I hope you are not like that.

The word 'grace' is more difficult to understand. To put it as simply as possible it means that something is good and pleasing. When we say that someone is graceful we mean that they move in a pleasing or attractive way. If you cheerfully do a job for your mother or father, even though it is something you don't really like, we might say that you're doing it with a good grace; we would mean that you're doing it pleasantly instead of grumpily. When a friend treats you kindly though you have been unpleasant to them, we say that they are gracious: they have been good to you when you didn't deserve it. So 'grace' means goodness. It is a wonderful thing to show grace towards others by the way we treat them.



Have you ever filled a glass with milk, juice or water so that it comes right to the very top? When you do that you have to stoop to drink from it without lifting the glass or it will spill. And you can't put a drop more into the glass or it will overflow. The glass is full - nothing more will fit in. The Bible tells us that Jesus is **full** of grace and truth (John 1:14). That means that Jesus is as good as it is possible to be - He cannot be any better than He is. It also means that Jesus always speaks the truth

and does what is right - there is never a time when He cannot be trusted. Wouldn't you like to be like Jesus?

The same chapter in the Bible tells us that Jesus brought grace and truth into the world for us. But what does that mean? We know that people were living like sheep who have become lost. The men who should have been their shepherds to guide them were like blind men stumbling about. No-one understood what God wanted them to do. But Jesus came speaking words of truth that could guide them



back to God. John tells us that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). So anyone who trusts in Jesus can find their way to God and learn how to live as they should.

Just as important, Jesus came to show lost people the grace of God. People really deserve to be punished by God because they have gone away from Him and have stopped loving Him. But Jesus came to take that punishment Himself so that they can be free to serve God as they should have been doing all along. That punishment meant death for Him, but life for others. God's great grace or goodness is seen in that He accepted Jesus' death in the place of others and raised Him from the dead so that He could forever be their Shepherd and King.

Jesus brought grace and truth into the world so that all who believe in His goodness and trust in what He did when He died can be made like Him - full of grace and truth. This is the most important thing in all the world: to be like Jesus Christ. I hope that this magazine will help you to see the **grace** of God in Jesus and to understand the **truth** of all He came to say and do for His people, so that you can become like Jesus too.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dafydd".

For You to Do!

In each of the following verses you will find a name which means something. What does each name tell you about God? (remember that Jesus is God too)

Genesis 22:14

Judges 6:24

1 Samuel 7:12

Matthew 1:21

Matthew 1:23

John 1:29

Kids' Corner

The Sanctifying Word (continued)

primary reason for the request of Jesus becomes evident: *the extent to which these men would be effective in the carrying out of their role in the world would be in direct proportion to the degree in which they were sanctified in the truth.* Their success in Gospel ministry would not be dependent upon their creativity, their abilities to administrate, or their skills at marketing. Their effectiveness would be, in large measure, determined by the extent to which they themselves would experience the life-transforming power of the Word of God.

One can only imagine the tragic results that would have befallen these men had they attempted to engage the world apart from the progressive, sanctifying work of God. Almost immediately they encountered hostility: physical torture, imprisonment, the threat of death. They faced serious doctrinal aberrations, undoubtedly fostered by the Enemy himself, the Father of Lies. Moreover, they were confronted with their own inherent susceptibilities to sin. Their official calling into apostolic ministry did not exempt them from the effects of their own residual depravity, a fact that the New Testament openly acknowledges.⁷

These obstacles to the success of the Gospel were formidable. Yet because of their existence, our High Priest prayed for the grace of sanctification, a work of divine origination whereby God, through the instrumentality of His Word, would progressively conform them to the image of His Son, thus fitting them to accomplish the work He had commissioned them to do.⁸ Success in Gospel ministry would necessitate an ever-deepening understanding of the truth, both cognitively and experientially, along with a resolute determination to proclaim and implement it without compromise.

The Basis For This Request

On what basis can the Lord Jesus bring before His Father this request for the sanctification of these men? Might it be on the basis of the exemplary commitment of these disciples? Such could hardly be the case, especially given the fact that their most notorious displays of unfaithfulness lay in the immediate future. Instead, Jesus could petition His Father for sanctifying grace on behalf of these men because His redemptive accomplishments on the cross would earn it for them. The sanctifying work of the Father would be the consequence of redemptive work of the Son. This is what is meant by our Lord when He says, "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth."

When the eternal second Person of the Godhead left the glories of heaven to make atonement for His people He did not surrender His purity or holiness in any way. Rather, He added sinless humanity to His uncompromised deity. Therefore, when Jesus uses the term “sanctify” with reference to Himself He is obviously not speaking of greater growth into holiness. Instead, the emphasis is functional (cf. 10:36): “to set apart, to consecrate, to dedicate to God in a special way and for a particular purpose.”⁹ Consequently, the point of Jesus is as follows: the sanctification of these men, and ultimately, of all true Christians, would be secured by His one act of self-consecration: His death on the cross. This, in turn, would supply the basis upon which He could ask His Father to sanctify these disciples in the truth, thereby equipping them for the work to which He would commission them.

Three qualities of this self-consecration should be noted at this point. *First of all, it is plainly evident that this self-consecration of Jesus Christ was voluntary.* Notice that He does not use the passive voice: “And for their sakes I am sanctified.” Instead, He employs the active voice: “I sanctify Myself.” Jesus Christ was not passive about His cross-work. He was not coerced or manipulated into the work of redemption. No one dictated to Him. No power moved Him. No prayer invited Him. No welcome awaited Him. He came voluntarily (cf. Jn. 10:17-18; Ga. 2:20; Eph. 5:1-2; Ph. 2:5-8; Heb. 7:26-27).

Do you realize the implications of this act of self-consecration? Our Lord willingly set Himself apart to experience the vilest of reproaches and the most degrading of indignities. Moreover, He consecrated Himself as the bulls-eye for His Father’s wrath against sin. And this He did, not for people who were good or worthy or deserving or even *undeserving*. He willingly endured the horrors of the cross for a people who were *ill-deserving*. Moved by nothing other than His own sovereign volition the eternal Son of God sanctified Himself.

Why is there need for such emphasis at this point? Because no other aspect of the atonement so powerfully magnifies the greatness of Christ’s love as does the voluntary nature of it. Had He been forced against His will to die on the cross, there would have been very little reason to wonder at such infinite condescension. But, when it becomes apparent that He approached Golgotha’s terror willingly, we are overwhelmed at the immensity of His love. The immortal words of Wesley come to reflect the exclamation of our own hearts:

He left His Father’s throne above (so free, so infinite His grace!)
Humbled Himself (so great His love) and bled for all His chosen race.
‘Tis mercy all, immense and free; for, O my God, it found out me.
Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, My God, shouldst die for me?

Oh! how wonderful is this love of Christ! Compulsion did not bring Him to the Cross, persuasion did not induce Him to undertake the work of our redemption; but His own love - love to His Church, His bride - bore Him on her soft wings from His throne in Glory to the deepest abasement and suffering on earth. It was love - love to His Church, His people - that moved Him to veil His glory and appear in human form; it was love that led Him through the whole course of His obedience and sufferings, and that brought Him at last to Golgotha's fearful mount of doom. And so far as we are concerned, no other explanation can ever be given of it but free, unmerited, sovereign, boundless love: 'I sanctify Myself.' I do it all Myself.¹⁰

Secondly, it is plainly evident that this self-consecration of Jesus Christ was particular. For whom does Jesus sanctify Himself as a redemptive sacrifice? "And for their sakes..."

For good reason this chapter has been referred to as the "High Priestly Prayer" of Jesus Christ. This ascription is built upon the premise that Jesus is the fulfilment of the old covenant priestly office, an office that expressed itself primarily in the carrying out of a dual work: the making of intercession and the offering of substitutionary sacrifice. In addition, these two priestly functions were co-extensive. That is to say, the people for whom the high priest would make intercession and atonement were one and the same. When the high priest entered into the holy of holies he prayed for the people of Israel, a fact wonderfully symbolized by the breastpiece he wore containing the names of the twelve tribes (Ex. 28:15-21). Moreover, when he proceeded to offer an atoning sacrifice he did so on behalf of the same people: the people of Israel.

*The cross is not
only the
verification
that Jesus has
purchased His
bride, it is also
the assurance
that He will
purify her.*

Without the slightest hesitation, the New Testament sets forth Jesus Christ as the great and ultimate High Priest. He has perfectly fulfilled the dual work foreshadowed under the old covenant: at Calvary He made atonement by the means of a substitutionary sacrifice; at the right hand of the Father He lives to make intercession. But more to the point here, as was the case with the priests of old, those for whom Jesus prays and makes atonement are one and the same. His High Priestly work is also co-extensive.

Consider this with a bit more scrutiny. For whom does Jesus make intercession in this High Priestly prayer? In His own words, Jesus makes clear that He does not pray for the world (in this context, those who were highly antagonistic to Him), but only for those who belong to Him by way of divine prerogative. Stated simply, His intercession

is distinctly particular. For whom, then, does Jesus exercise His second priestly function, that of making atonement? “And for their sakes I sanctify Myself” (v.19).

It is plainly evident that the self-consecration of Jesus Christ was equally particular. Read Mathew 1:20-21; John 10:11, 14-15; and Ephesians 5:25-28. The emphasis of this last passage is not only upon the *enormity* of love that a husband is to display to his wife, but on the *particularity* of it. Should a husband love his wife in a way that he loves no other woman? Absolutely. But on what grounds can such an assertion be made? Paul’s apostolic mandate is justified by the particular love with which Jesus Christ has loved His bride, the Church.

One of the great hymns of heaven takes up the idea of particularity as it relates to the efficacy of the death of Christ: “Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (Rev. 5:9). This redemption was particular, as indicated by the partitive “from.” The word “men” is italicized in the NASB to indicate that it is supplied to give sense to the partitive phrase. It is “men” or “a people” or “some” from every tribe and tongue and people and nation who are purchased by the blood of the Lamb, not all without exception. The “from” must be noticed. The text does not say that the Lamb purchased every tribe and tongue and people and nation, but “men from” such entities.

When Jesus Christ triumphantly exclaimed, “It is finished!” He meant what He said, not just *potentially* for all men, but in *actuality* for His own. To affirm an unlimited atonement is to become susceptible to universalism, because the Bible is explicit concerning the efficacy of the accomplishments of the cross.

Thirdly, it is plainly evident that this self-consecration of Jesus Christ was purposeful. The cross was filled with specific intention: “...that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.” Jesus Christ purchased a full and complete salvation for His people; a salvation that included the work of sanctification.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds (Ti. 2:11-14).

In a text mentioned earlier, Paul sets forth two of the specific intentions of the cross, one immediate and one ultimate, both of which are introduced by purpose clauses: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for

her... [immediate intention] that He might sanctify her... [ultimate intention] that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless" (Eph. 5:25-27).

The cross is not only the verification that Jesus has purchased His bride, it is also the assurance that He will purify her. This is why it is proper to insist that a truly saved person cannot live forever in an unrepentant lifestyle. To allow this is to deny the efficacy of the cross, and it is to make Paul a liar. Sanctification will always follow justification because *both* were secured at Calvary. The purpose of the death of Christ was not merely to keep a group of people from eternal judgment, but to make the bride of Christ beautiful for her wedding.

Concluding Exhortations

Three specific points of application demand our attention. *Firstly, this commission is our commission.* Have you realized that each of the four Gospel accounts contain a distinct record of what has been referred to as the "Great Commission?" The most familiar is found in Matthew 28:18-20. Mark records the words of Jesus as follows: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mk. 16:15). The Gospel of Luke contains a historical-redemptive emphasis in Luke 24:46-48. Finally, in the fourth Gospel, the Great Commission appears in its most brief form: "...as the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (Jn. 20:21). It ought to be noted that even the book of Acts opens with an additional mention of this commission (Acts 1:7-8).

It becomes quite obvious to the reader that the Divine Author of the New Testament allows no confusion at this point. The Great Commission is Christ's mandate to His Church. "But," someone may assert, "this commission was originally given to the eleven. Perhaps some secondary application of this can be made to those whom God calls to a preaching ministry. Nevertheless, this commission was assigned to the original disciples." Such an interpretation fails miserably for several reasons. For the sake of brevity consider the two most obvious: First, it would imply that all of the blessings and responsibilities attached to the Great Commission were also for the original disciples only (the ordinance of baptism in the name of the Triune God, the ministry of instruction, the presence of the glorified Christ, the indwelling Spirit as the source of power); and second, it fails to reckon with the fact that following the appearance of our Lord to some disciples on the road to Emmaus, Luke records that

they arose that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven *and those who were with them*, saying, 'The Lord has really risen' ...And while they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst (Lu. 24:33-36).

To be sure, the original Apostles were a group of men possessing the unique privilege of speaking and writing the Spirit-inspired Gospel. They were endowed with special gifts to authenticate the divine origin of their proclamation. It is also true that, throughout the history of the Church, God has sovereignly called men to the preaching ministry; moreover, that the ascended Christ has given gifted evangelists to the Church. However, these facts in no way diminish the responsibility given to every believer, namely, to be a witness for Jesus Christ in this world. This commission is our commission.

Secondly, *the sphere of our mission is the world.* A brief consideration of church history would indicate that the people of God have repeatedly fallen prey to two errors at this point. The first has been *compromise* with the world. Often cloaked in the guise

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of "winning" the world, the Church has become like the world. The world's values and objectives and attitudes have become those of the Church. Evangelicals have embraced popular culture rather speaking prophetically to it. This compromise, without question, poses the single greatest threat that faces the Church of Jesus Christ at the present moment.

Consider the cultural messages that are before us. For years *Nike* has promoted the all-too-familiar: "Just do it!" (In other words, don't think about it and don't allow anything to stand in your way of doing it). *Burger King* has said: "Sometimes, you gotta break the rules."

Bacardi Black Rum, which advertises itself as "the taste of the night," goes on to say, "Some people embrace the night because the rules of the day do not apply." *Easy Spirit* shoes promises a shoe that "conforms to your foot so you don't have to conform to anything." *Ralph Lauren Safari* celebrates "living without boundaries." And *Nieman Marcus* encourages its customers to relax, because as it says, "There are no rules here."

Has the Church withstood this cultural influence? Not hardly. People from all corners of evangelicalism have been challenging the Church to throw off the shackles of historic Christianity and now say to the world: "You deserve a break today." "Come, and have it your way." "How may we accommodate you?" "What are your felt needs?" "We promise that we will never alienate, convict, offend, or bore." George Barna, a leading voice in the Church Growth Movement, has contended, "It is critical that we keep in mind a fundamental principle of Christian communication: the audience, not the message, is sovereign."¹¹

In his penetrating analysis of this condition David Wells has captured the shallowness of this new medievalism:

Designer religion of the 1990's allows itself to be tailored to each personality. It gives but never takes; it satisfies sinners needs but never asks for repentance; it offers mystery and asks for no service. It provides a sense of Something Other in life but never requires that we stand before that Other.¹²

One of the errors to which the Church has repeatedly fallen prey is the desire for integration with the world. This inevitably results in the occurrence of a great inversion for the people of God: that of being of the world, but not in it.

A second error to which the Church has repeatedly proven susceptibility is that of *withdrawal* from the world. "We will never allow the world to get at us," becomes the attitude. So instead, the Church isolates itself away from the contemporary culture. As it is, many Christians do not have non-Christian friends. Some Christians boast that their places of employment are staffed exclusively with other Christians. A few Christian parents actually believe that the primary aim of Christian parenting is to take whatever steps necessary to keep their children away from any and all contact with the world.

The problem with all of this is that the stated sphere of our mission is the world. This should not frighten Christians. It should fill us with eager anticipation. It is a great moment in history to know the Gospel. We are in possession of the sole message that can conquer any perplexity of modernity. Perhaps Charles Dickens summarized it best when he penned those familiar words that are most *apropos* to our own time:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...¹³

This is our day. This is our time. This is our world. We have been commissioned to enter into it with the life-transforming power of the Gospel. We must not lose our nerve at this critical moment in history. The sphere of our mission is the world.

Thirdly, our effectiveness will be determined by the extent to which we are sanctified by the truth. If we are to take our mission seriously, then the most pressing need of the hour is to be sanctified by the truth of the Word of God. To meet the challenges of the world with our own "sanctified" wisdom is to place ourselves in a position of ultimate weakness. Our effectiveness will rest in our conviction to be prophetic, and the conviction to be prophetic will be steeled by our knowledge and experience of the

truth. The need of the hour is the same for us as it was for those first-century men: to be sanctified by the truth of Holy Scripture. It is this that is indispensable to the success of our mission.

This book contains: the mind of God, the state of man,
the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.
Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true,
and its decisions are immutable.

Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.
It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.
It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass,
the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

Here heaven is opened, and the gates of hell disclosed.
Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end.
It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.
It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure.
It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the Judgment,
and is established forever.

It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor,
and condemn all who trifle with its contents.

Notes:

1. It is necessary to say at this point that the purpose for this article is not to attempt a thoroughgoing study of the doctrine of sanctification. Rather, its purpose to consider the meaning of the words of our Lord in John 17:17-19.
2. Melvin E. Dieter; Anthony Hoekema; Stanley M. Horton; Robertson J. McQuilkin; John F. Walvoord, *Five Views On Sanctification*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), pg.61.
3. Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According To John*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), pg. 566.
4. William Hendrikson, *The Gospel According To John*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), pg. 361.
5. In Dieter *et al*, Hoekema cites Eph. 5:25-26 as another example of this dual usage: "Though used in various senses, this word often describes believers' sanctification, as in Ephesians 5:25-26 ("Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her," RSV). In this sense, holiness in the New Testament means two things: (1) separation from the sinful practices of this present world and (2) consecration to God's service. Contrary to popular opinion, therefore, holiness means more than doing certain good things and not doing certain bad things; rather, it means being totally dedicated to God and separated from all that is sinful." pg.63.
6. See G. Abbott-Smith, *Manual Greek Lexicon Of The New Testament*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1981), pg.54; and Colin Brown, ed., *Dictionary Of New Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), vol.1, pp.126-137.
7. The Apostle Peter, though deeply devoted to Jesus Christ and greatly used of God (preaching the Gospel on the Day of Pentecost, introducing the Gospel to the Gentiles, the writer of two epistles, the apostolic influence standing behind the Gospel of Mark), was not beyond the possibility of hypocrisy (cf. Ga. 2:11-14). The Apostle

Paul, arguably the greatest of all Christian theologians, is portrayed on one occasion as intolerant and divisive (Acts 15:36-40). The most effective way to neutralize the Gospel is to put it into the hands of an unholy minister. 8. While it is true that God is the author of sanctification (a work ascribed to each member of the Godhead: the Father in John 17:17 and Hebrews 12:10; the Son in Ephesians 5:25-27 and Titus 2:14; and the Holy Spirit in Romans 15:16 and 1 Peter 1:2), it must also be said that the Bible describes sanctification as a synergistic work, involving the responsible participation of the believer.

9. For the distinction of usages of ἀγιάζω in this context see Abbott-Smith, pg.5.

10. Charles Ross, *The Inner Sanctuary: An Exposition Of John 13-17*, (Edinburgh: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1992), pp.225-226.

11. George Barna, *Marketing The Church: What They Never Taught You About Church Growth*, (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1988), pg.41.

12. David F. Wells, "Our Dying Culture," in *The Formal Papers Of The Alliance Of Confessing Evangelicals' Summit*, pg.19.

13. Charles Dickens, *A Tale Of Two Cities*. (Morristown: Silver Burdett Company, 1982), pg.2.

The Ploughboy's Protagonist (continued)

Tyndale would not allow himself to be conformed to the traditions of his world, but instead was transformed as the Spirit applied the Word of God to the renewing of his mind. His obedience to God meant risking death, and in the end he gave his body as a sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.

The question for us is, what are *we* doing with the legacy left by Tyndale? Do we read the Bible with even half the devotion with which Tyndale translated it? Do we value the Word of God as much as he? Do we consider obedience to the God of that Word more important than retaining the comforts of this world?

Tyndale once said to a churchman, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou dost."

How much of this life-giving Word do *you* know?

Notes:

1. David Daniell, *William Tyndale: a Biography*, (London: Yale University Press, 1994), p.48.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.115-116.

3. William R. Estep, *Renaissance & Reformation*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), p.251. Quoting from F. F. Bruce, *History of the Bible in English*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.38.

4. R. Tudur Jones, *The Great Reformation*, (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1985), p.114.

5. Brian H. Edwards, *God's Outlaw*, (Welwyn: Evangelical Press, 1988), pp.166-167.

6. *Ibid.*, p.169.

7. S. B. Ferguson & D. F. Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology*, (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1989), p.572.

8. John A. R. Dick, "The Pen-and-Ink Wars" in *Christian History Magazine*, Volume VI, No.4, Issue 16, p.25.

9. C. R. Trueman, *Luther's Legacy: Salvation and English Reformers 1525-1556*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p.99.

Following Jesus in Seeking the Lost

STEPHEN TURNER

The title is intended to indicate that following Jesus necessarily involves seeking the lost. In my view there can be no Christian discipleship without evangelism. On what ground can I be so dogmatic? Jesus “came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). I cannot imagine any disciple of His being unlike Him in this all-important regard, for the Saviour lived among the lost and the disciple is to follow in His steps. Any training Jesus undertook must have had as its core element training in seeking the lost.

Jesus is first and foremost a Seeker of the Lost

The conclusion is inescapable. The Gospel accounts leave one in no doubt that Jesus was a seeker of the lost, was a fisher of men.

Look at the various beautiful accounts of His calling His disciples to Him. I would recommend that you look especially at John 1. There you will see a real ‘fisher’ or seeker-Saviour in action. In a supreme moment of humility, John the Baptist releases those disciples of his from being tied to him, and he directs them, as a father would his children, to the One whom he so publicly and spectacularly described.

John 1 must be one of the most attractive passages in the New Testament. It is beautiful to anyone who understands human love and friendship to any depth. But it is doubly so to the person who studies Jesus.

There can be few things more intensely enjoyable than the prospect of visiting the home of a friend or person one would like to befriend. For in the home one sees a person in the place of his true reality and creativity. Jesus knew that. So He invites them to His home. How could these men have declined such friendship extended to them? They could not.

We also see Jesus seeking the lost in those famed incidents of the gospel accounts - the incidents known as the ‘woman at the well’, that of the ‘rich young ruler’, Nicodemus and the one I particularly like, Zacchaeus. These incidents deserve real attention from anyone wanting to study Jesus’ life and ministry.

As with any fisherman He evidences in these incidents patience, careful consideration and application to the task. I love fishing but, sadly, I hardly ever have the opportunity now to get into it. My best fishing days were when I was young, and each summer I would be invited to go out on a number of expeditions with my grandfather, father, an uncle and perhaps a cousin or two. On the Manukau Harbour I learned something of how to catch some of the various fish to be got there. Advice was freely

given as to hooks, bait and the proper use of a rod.

In the four incidents mentioned above one can see Jesus seeking the lost. He might have ignored the woman at the well or been irritated by her confused thinking. He might have been offended by the evident insensitivity of the rich young man's conscience. But the greatest thing in each of these four incidents is that He kept at what He came to do. He sought them, to save them. He was not dissuaded by rude ignorance. In fact, He was enlivened by these encounters. (Look at John 4:32; "I have food to eat that you know nothing about.") Though exhilarated, He nevertheless was prudent in His approach to each person. He understood more than any man that 'fish' leave their natural habitat with difficulty.¹ He made no premature affirmations of belief which we today are so guilty of doing. He outlined the cost of discipleship. And while knowing the final outcome of every encounter, He nonetheless engaged in each conversation with the deepest and most genuine sincerity.

You can also see Jesus seeking the lost in His great public utterances. I am thinking here particularly of such evangelical statements as, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty (John 6:35). "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink" (John 7:37). Then there are His great parables, for example those on the lost things in Luke 15. In fact, Jesus' public ministry is full of support for this point that He first and foremostly was a fisher of men.

But the greatest support of all for the point comes from the cross and its stated goal that He might "give His life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Jesus trained His Disciples to be like Him

Matthew 4:19 is of the greatest possible help to anyone interested in the ministry and goals of the Lord Jesus. It is a summary statement of His purposes for the apostles.

It is, first of all, a *command* to two brothers who were fishermen, "Come, follow me". It is next a *method*, "come, follow me and I will make you...." It is then a *goal*, "and I will make you fishers of men."

For that goal to be realised, the command needs to be obeyed and consequently the method employed. The three aspects are so intertwined as for the first to have the second in view, the second to be impossible without the former being obeyed, and the command and method together having no other purpose in mind than the realisation of the great goal. We might say it is His only goal for His disciples.

These two disciples were fishers, but not of the kind Jesus envisaged fashioning through discipleship. Nor could they be, except by their being with Jesus, and Jesus alone, because no one else can truly be described as a 'fisher of men', except Jesus. He

alone, therefore, is in a position to reproduce 'fishers of men'. And being God, He is able to successfully train His disciples in this art.² How foolish, therefore, for any Christian disciple to not take this command of invitation seriously.

In its simplest sense the command says that the disciples were to be *with Jesus*. In John 1, Jesus replies in answer to the question "where are you staying?", "come and you will see." The comment which immediately follows explains the intentions of those words, they "spent that day with him" (John 1:39). The momentousness of that occasion is apparent in the author noting carefully the time of their visit: "It was about

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transformed
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transform as
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who will obey the
great command...*

the tenth hour." That hour marked the very threshold of their following Christ, the beginning of several years of a unique relationship with Him, which was foundational to their appointment as His apostles (Mark 3:14). They were privileged to enjoy this priceless friendship from the beginning of Jesus' ministry and consequently uniquely placed to give personal testimony to the reality of their intimacy. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life' (1 John 1:1).

What did they see? One who loved the objects of His interest. They saw One who felt the lostness of people deeply, One who was skilled in seeking the lost. In brief, what they saw in Him through being with Him for a few short years, enraptured their hearts for a lifetime of fishing for the lost. They saw love.

It was their obedience to this command which opened the gates to their becoming candidates for training in 'man-fishing', to use Boston's expression. How simple a method, but how universally overlooked by the Church as she falls over herself to compete with other Christian ministries. How complicated her programmes and how remote those programmes are from this divine method for training fishers of men, with its emphasis falling entirely and simply on the Christian *knowing* the love of Christ.

Christ's company, kept and enjoyed, transformed those men and promises today to transform as surely anyone who will obey the great command and treasure the precious and very great promise of its associated method and goal. As I have said, Christ, being God, is both able to seek and save the lost and train His own in that same art.

The success of the method could be said to have been breathtakingly immediate. Look at Levi's banquet which he promptly put on. Look at his guest list and aim (Luke

5:29). And then consider John 1:40-45 and the 'first thing' Andrew and then Philip did once they had respectively met Jesus. These men evidently immediately perceived in Christ a genuine love for others. They learned in a day that He was a friend of sinners and welcomed their company.³

Following Jesus and Fishing for Men now

Just as one necessarily will bear fruit through abiding in the vine (John 15), so one will as assuredly be a fisher of men through following Jesus. Evangelical activity is of the essence of Christian discipleship. A follower of Jesus does not strain to be a fisher of men. He *becomes* one by virtue of association with the chief fisher. Consequently a Church need not labour at challenging people to seek the lost. A Christian disciple will be what Jesus is.

There is a corollary to this point. *Success* in fishing is as equally certain as the activity of fishing itself for the true Christian disciple. Here the parallel passage in Luke 5:1-11 is of help for it advances on Matthew 4:19. Jesus gives a command which is obeyed with spectacular results: "they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break" (Luke 5:6). There is then the important note made of Simon Peter's awe and consequent confession of personal sin and deep unworthiness of Jesus' presence. It is important to note that what follows is said in this context. Then Jesus said to Simon, "don't be afraid, from now on you will catch men" (5:10). A believer may expect success in evangelism when he has such a heart without which there is no true Christian discipleship. While Matthew 4:19 does not explicitly state such an assurance as is seen here in Luke 5, the inference of the same success may be drawn from it. Can there be His promise of being made fishers of men without His also promising the prospect of successful fishing?

Having made this point, I would not by any means wish to leave the reader with the impression that the Christian disciple need not consider how fishing for men can best be done.

The genuine fisherman will study the matter of fishing and perhaps even read on the subject as it relates to fish types, seasons, equipment. In the same way, the Christian fisher of men will be studying *Jesus*, His dedication to the task, His heart for the lost, His ingenuity in addressing the matter of sin and salvation. The Christian will be concerned as well to study *the people* with whom he is brought in contact, their culture, their relative acquaintance with biblical truth, their questions. The follower of Jesus will never stop studying His Master, nor those for whom His Master came to seek and to save.

It is of fundamental importance that the disciple learn to speak of the One he follows.

I am referring here to the need for expressing personal gratitude, love and trust in Jesus. I want to emphasise this need because I feel here so much contemporary evangelism is deficient and mistaken. If you study the various materials written in brief as a help for the evangelist, they err seriously, presenting an imbalance with too much fact and insufficient personal testimony. I don't deny the importance of fact. After all, the Christian faith is grounded in historical fact. But people are misled if they lose sight of Jesus' recommendation to the demon-possessed man in Mark 5:19. True evangelism, in the style of Jesus', is the recounting of the love of Christ, grasped and known.

The genuine follower of Jesus cannot ignore those words which so famously describe His ministry: "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a *friend of tax collectors and sinners*" (Luke 7:34, Matthew 11:19). It would be quite wrong to omit the first half, for it throws light on His friendship's attractiveness and successfulness and the reasons for the same.

So much fishing is in name only. It's not for real. The 'fishing' is in pools where no fish are to be found. Much of my summer fishing, what little there is of it, is of this kind. For years I've been fishing 'off the rocks', as we say here, and I know we're not likely to catch anything, let alone get a bite. And my children stand around, hopeful and trusting. At least the scenery is beautiful when fishing off the rocks on the Manukau

Harbour. But we should be in a boat! With less fish these days one needs to be going further out.

Perhaps the follower of Jesus is too dependent on the preaching in the chapel for his fishing for these sinners. I hasten to add here that I really believe in preaching Jesus to the lost, in Church. Regular time should be set aside for it. It is a task deserving the keenest study and effort. If it is not done regularly and in the mode of Mark 5:19, then we should neither expect the congregation to help in gathering hearers, nor should we expect success.

The Art of Manfishing

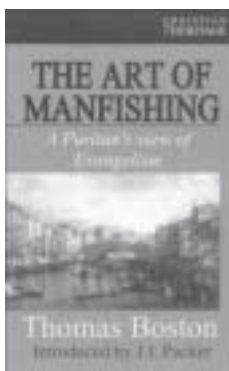
by Thomas Boston

Thomas Boston was a 'Scottish Puritan'. He had a sensitive spirit but also a first class mind. A man with a retentive memory but also a way with words, he always thought best with a pen in his hands, writing out ideas and arguments as they came to him. This is a classic explanation of the Puritan approach to evangelism that is also an encouragement for anyone explaining the gospel to someone else.

"The 'scribble', so Boston tells us, was published in 1773. Since then it has been hailed by evangelicals as a masterpiece on ministry... The idea of a beginning preacher of 22 producing a spiritual masterpiece is startling, do doubt. But Boston was an unusual man." - J. I. Packer.

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Becoming Free¹

GEOFF THOMAS

One of the most disturbing sentences in the entire Bible is this: *The Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin* (Galatians 3:22). Imagine it! The planet we live on is one great prison and everyone held down on it by the force of gravity, and having to breath its air and drink its water to live, is a prisoner. The Queen is a prisoner. Mike Tyson is a prisoner. Bill Gates, the richest man in the history of the world, is one too. And Madonna. The children who consider themselves to be 'wardens' in any role-play are in fact prisoners too. So is the one who has got to play the part of the 'prison governor'. Bosses and management, white collar and blue collar

Following Jesus in Seeking the Lost (continued)

But ought we to see the Church meeting as the 'pool' in which 'tax collectors and sinners' are to be found? Ought we not rather to see this public meeting as the place to which people are brought, who first are met by Christian men and women engaged in their ordinary occupations and movements, in the neighbourhood or at study or work? This is where 'tax collectors and sinners', the rich young men and the fearful Nicodemuses are to be found. Did Jesus find them in the temple? No, most often He found them in their homes.

But is the Church recognising this? If we were to answer for the Reformed Baptist churches in New Zealand we might feel we have to say, no, she isn't. She's expecting far too much of her preachers in a certain sense and hoping for a congregation of the lost, while doing little and perhaps nothing in most cases to gather them.

The secret to successful evangelism in the Church now lies in the obedience of the individual Christian to His command, 'follow Me'.

Notes:

1. Thomas Boston, *The Art of Manfishing*, (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 1998), pp.33ff.

2. *Ibid.*, p.24.

3. The unique and altogether helpful book in understanding this relationship of the disciple and Christ, and His purpose for the disciples, remains A B Bruce's, *The Training of the Twelve*, (first published 1871). The alternative title throws light on its contents: *Passages out of the Gospels Exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus Under Discipline for the Apostleship*. This book has recently been reprinted and is available from Grace & Truth Publications, P.O. Box 8979, Christchurch, NZ. www.grace-truth.rbc.org.nz

workers alike are in chains. Karl Marx was also bound in more profound ways than he ever realised when he described men as being in chains. His diagnosis of a captive proletariat simply did not go deep enough. Those who boast of being free-spirits are in fact prisoners. What are they free from? They are 'free' from keeping their marriage vows; 'free' from being sober; 'free' from self-control; 'free' to abuse drugs; 'free' to lie and steal. The country-singer says, "Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose." That one single person in the world who is most offended by what this verse in the Bible is saying - maybe that is you - is still a prisoner, though an outraged, protesting one. The Word of God is not prepared to make any exceptions: *the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin.*

How are you a prisoner? In this, that you can only do what you want to do. That is the confinement within which you must live your narrow little life. You want to be free of God, and you are. You want to have nothing to do with the Bible, and you have it. You will not pray, and you do not. You refuse to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and you do not. You will not go to a gospel church and you never do. You are so restricted to that unreal world where the prisoners do not acknowledge their Creator, his Son Jesus Christ nor his Word, the Bible.

Who has got you imprisoned? That sentence tells us it is 'sin'. A few questions will prove it. When sin says, 'Don't think about God!' do you obey? Yes. When sin tells you to spend your life ignoring the Bible what is your response? You ignore the Bible. When sin tells you not to consider the death that is coming up to you nearer and nearer, what do you do? You say to yourself that thinking about your certain death is morbid, and so you live as if one day you were never going to die. But you are, and by the time you have read these words you are that minute nearer to it than when you started - if sin will let you read one word more. When sin tells you to change the direction of the conversation when a Christian is talking to you nervously and humbly about someone she calls her 'Saviour' - what do you do? You obey sin, even though the words you may hear are the most beautiful life-enriching words anyone can hear - words like these - 'When the Son of God - Jesus Christ - makes you free you will be free indeed.' Sin tells you then to think automatically, 'That is religion'. Sin wants you always to say to yourself, 'I have settled that long ago', but you know that you have never read one of the Gospels all the way through. Mark's Gospel takes just an hour to read, but the prisoners of sin never read it. Sin

*There is
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women
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entire lives in
chains...*

will not allow them. Every prisoner ignores Christianity because of prejudice. But sin says, "Call your prejudices 'freedom'". But you are not free to read the Bible, nor listen to sermons, nor think seriously when someone talks to you about Jesus Christ, nor pray to God very earnestly and continually, 'O God, if you exist, let me know you for myself as the living God!' Because you are a prisoner to sin.

Read these words of Taki who writes a column called 'High Life' in the *Spectator* each week and ask yourself if this is written by a free man or a slave: "My mother who died last week, was a true Christian. She forgave those who transgressed, starting with my dad, who sure did transgress. She never retaliated, always forgave and forgot, and prayed for her husband's soul until the end. Some modern thinkers among you might see her as a fool, a doormat, even a victim. She was nothing of the kind. She knew she could not change my father because human nature simply does not change. She made the best of it, and my dad treated her like the saint she was... My mother's death last week made me feel awfully guilty, however. Looking at her for the last time while she was being lowered to sleep forever next to my dad, I wished he hadn't been as promiscuous as he was. I guess the same thing goes for myself, but, like him, I can't help it, and don't really want to help it!"² Taki the slave. 'Be promiscuous' said sin to his father, and his dad obeyed. 'Be promiscuous' said sin to the son, and Taki obeyed.

What can Jesus Christ do for you? He can make you free from the prison of sin. He can free you from loneliness, depression, anxiety, guilt and fear of death (sin is saying to you now, 'Only words: pay no attention'). The real living Jesus Christ whom we learn of in the Bible rose from the dead (read the narratives yourself), and now is Lord over death and sin. He is willing to become the Lord of those who come to him and who ask him very earnestly that he become their Lord, deal with their guilt and deliver them from the power of sin.

Find freedom. There is something desperately undignified in men and women created for freedom living their entire lives in chains while boasting to one another of their liberty, and saying, 'Poor deluded followers of Jesus Christ! What slaves they are to loving God with all their hearts and loving their neighbours as themselves.' 'Yes,' we say, 'and in that happy service we have found the meaning of being free.' Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to make you free. Plead with him. Who knows? He may have pity on you and give you your first experience of liberty.

Notes:

1. This article first appeared in the August/September 2000 issue of *Grace Magazine*, UK.
2. Taki, "High Life" in the *Spectator*, 15 August 1998, page 48.

News

Reformed Baptists in Wellington

A Wellington Reformed Baptist Fellowship began meeting in February 2000 on Thursday nights, having bible studies based on the 1689 Confession. Its aims are to work toward the establishment of a local Reformed Baptist church, and to seek to promote biblical truth in the wider Wellington region.

The core of the group currently consists of 6 enthusiastic adults (3 couples), and they have a wide range of contacts, both interested Christians and non-Christians. To facilitate these contacts, they started in June to have a 'gospel' meeting on the second Sunday of each month when they invite people to meet them, and hear a testimony, an evangelistic message or video. A number have come along. Please pray that the meetings would promote interest - especially among non-Christian contacts. Also pray for wisdom as the group seek to determine their future direction (eg: advertising, starting more regular Sunday meetings or not, etc.)

Visitors to/through Wellington are warmly invited to visit or join with the group. Any Reformed Baptists who may be considering shifting to the Capital for work are certainly encouraged to do so and are welcome to become involved!

Meetings are currently held at 7:30pm on Thursdays and 5:00pm on the 2nd Sunday of each Month at 153B Tirohanga Rd, Harbour View, Lower Hutt.

To contact the fellowship:

Tel.: (04)970-4663 or (04) 586-5828

email: cgood@i4free.co.nz

or david.goldsmith@xtra.co.nz

Further details and the latest news about the WRBF can be found on the internet at: <http://www.rbc.org.nz>

Theological studies in South India and Sri Lanka

Each year Stephen Turner, pastor of North Shore Baptist Reformed Church in Auckland, travels to South India to lead a series of studies. This year there were about twenty-one men in all, together with a few others who participated in occasional sessions. The routine established in previous years was followed: meeting together five times each day to study by reading and discussing the opening twenty to thirty pages of four books. This year they were *The Art of Manfishing* by Thomas Boston; *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* by John Piper; *God's Way not Ours* by Lloyd-Jones; and Derek Prime's *Pastors and Teachers*. The first was by far the most arresting while the second had the deepest effect.

These studies are a small contribution to the church in South India. Stephen is not interested in assembling a greater number of men, even if they could be found. Their having to be proficient in English narrows the field of selection. However, he hopes to make a lasting impression by the grace of God on the hearts and minds of a few men, most of whom are young pastors or theological students. Over the nine visits he has made thus far, he has met with fifty young men.

Following the days in South India Stephen flew to Sri Lanka for his third visit there and was once again overwhelmed by the extraordinary efforts the six men made to meet with him in Kandy for the three days they were together. Studies were a similar format to those in South India, but due to the shorter time were concentrated on the Boston and Piper books.

Book Reviews

Discovering Christ in Ruth

Donald S Fortner

Evangelical Press

Paperback 138 pages ISBN 0-85234-435-X

G&T price: \$20.95

We all like a good love story with a happy ending; perhaps this is why the biblical book of Ruth is one of the most popular of the Old Testament books. Don Fortner shows how this is more than a story of two lovers, more even than an example of God's wonderful providence for two women suffering hardship. It contains within its four short chapters an amazing picture of the redemption that God has provided in Jesus Christ; a love story that can transform the lives of those who will leave the land of their birth and swear allegiance to a new King and people. In nineteen easy to read chapters, Fortner ably draws out the timeless lessons of this book, adding a new dimension to an old and well loved story. Readers will not be disappointed!

In the Grip of the Druids

Beth Coombe Harris

Mayflower Christian Books

Paperback 209 pages

ISBN 0-907821-07-3

G&T price: \$14.95

This is an interesting story set in Britain in the second century AD, when the Romans occupied much of the country and brought a measure of peace and stability. However, in the further corners of the land the Druids maintained a tight grip on the people, ruling them with fear and

requiring total submission to the point of demanding their children as human sacrifices. With the Romans came the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and this is the story of how two Devonshire children, Venissa and Aleric, begin to question the cruel religion they have grown up with. They discover in the tales of a travelling storyteller a message of hope for the forgiveness of sins and peace with God. While many like Venissa and Aleric welcome this news, the Druids seek to tighten their grip, and Venissa's family is targeted to set an example to the village. Exciting fiction, the story is nevertheless full of historical fact and gospel truth; children and adults alike will enjoy this book.

Guidance and the Voice of God

Phillip D Jensen & Tony Payne

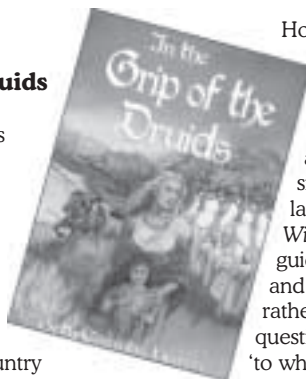
Matthias Media

Paperback 150 pages ISBN 1-875245-66-9

G&T price: \$17.25

How do I know the will of God for my life? - how will He guide me?

These are the perennial questions asked by new (and not so new) believers time and time again. Jensen and Payne take a similar line to Gary Friesen in his larger work, *Decision Making and the Will of God*, showing that God's guidance comes through His Word and is based on applying principles rather than receiving specific answers to questions like 'should I marry Jane?' or 'to which university does God want me to go?' This is a helpful book, though the arguments are not so thorough as Friesen's and at times leave the reader feeling that more should have been said.



Innocent People Do Suffer

(Job 4:7-8)

DAVID YAN

Some months ago I was stunned to read of a leading police officer who admitted he knew of innocent people in prison. Innocent people do suffer. Job was such a case. As we read the early chapters of the book we see that when Job was first afflicted he was steadfast. Then he weakened somewhat. Job's three friends claimed that he was suffering because of wrong he had committed.

Their idea was clear enough. It may be described as retribution, that is, the idea that innocent people do not perish whereas those who do iniquity will reap iniquity (Job 4:7-8). On the basis of their idea Job's friends concluded that his immense suffering was because of immense sin. They wanted Job to own up to this great sin but Job insisted he was innocent. Hence the tension between Job and his friends.

Retribution essentially means that you reap what you sow. In Job's case his friends claimed he was reaping affliction because of his sins. Their idea was partly true since the Bible does teach that a man will reap what he sows (Galatians 6:7). But the failure of three of Job's friends was that they assumed every calamity was God's act of retribution, rather than accepting that He might have some other purpose in sending suffering.

They refused to heed the pleas of an innocent man which was a terrible thing to do. They failed to see God's higher purposes in allowing the innocent to suffer.

Their idea of retribution can be disproved. First, it is disproved by life itself. The fact is, evil people do sometimes get away with their crimes and in fact do very well in life. Conversely, innocent people sometimes suffer through no fault of their own. The psalmist saw all this clearly and bemoaned the fact (Psalm 73:3, 7, 12).

Their idea of retribution is further disproved by the human sense of justice. Have you ever had cause to say "it's unfair"? We all have an innate sense of fair play and justice. This sense of justice disproves Job's friends' idea of retribution, for if all suffering is because of wrong-doing we would not feel outraged when innocent people suffer. According to the theory there would be no suffering if the sufferer had not done evil. In New Zealand there is a well-documented case of a man who was sent to prison for murder. But many people felt there had been a miscarriage of justice and fought on behalf of this man who was eventually released. Our sense of justice, I say, disproves the idea of retribution presented by Job's friends.

Their idea is further disproved by the very experience of these three men. At the

end of the book of Job the Lord told them that his wrath was roused against them for they had not spoken the right things (Job 42:7). What were they told to do? They were to go to Job and make an offering for their wrong-doing. Observe carefully that they were not punished for their evil. Therefore, their very acquittal disproved their theory.

Their idea is also disproved by the lives of Job and Jesus. Both these men were innocent. Yet both suffered. It seems to me that the complete and final answer to the idea of these three men is the life of Jesus. Eliphaz had asked "whoever perished being innocent?" (Job 4:7). The answer is, Jesus Christ. Jesus was innocent. Remember Judas Iscariot, how he felt remorseful after he betrayed Jesus? And why did he feel remorseful? It was because he saw that Jesus had been condemned (Matthew 27:3) and he knew Jesus was innocent. His conscience was pricked but it was too late.

Where does all this leave us today? Well, we must avoid making judgments about people who are suffering before we know all the facts. It is easy to cast judgment on people who we think are suffering because of their sins. We read of civil wars and how people neglect and abuse their land. Subsequently there is famine, death, and the mass movement of human population affecting the innocent as well as those whose actions led to the calamities. We may be tempted to think, "serves you right." But who are we to judge? Do we not realise that the reason why we in New Zealand are not killing each other and experiencing the consequences is that God restrains evil? Let us not pre-judge people who are suffering, whether it is famine, pestilences, AIDS or anything else - some may be reaping what they have sown, but others may be innocent 'victims'.

When people are afflicted unjustly the last thing they need to hear is condemnation. Let us show compassion to those who are suffering. Let us lead them to Christ, the innocent one, who suffered, the just for the unjust. Jesus came into a fallen evil world. He did not come to condemn it but sought to save it by his love and mercy. We do well to emulate him.

Finally, let us thank God for the gospel of Jesus. It is the final reproof of retribution as Job's friends understood it. We are all sinners deserving of death, yet if we believe the gospel we escape eternal punishment. We the wrongdoers are set free. Jesus has been punished in our place. He took punishment for us. We are guilty, yet go unpunished. He was innocent, yet he suffered. Calvary is the full and final answer to Eliphaz's question, "Whoever perished being innocent?" (Job 4:7). The answer is, Jesus. "Where were the upright ever cut off?" (Job 4:7). The answer is - at Calvary.

Thank God for the gospel. Jesus the sinless, perfect Son of God suffered in the place of sinners. All God's wrath fell on him and we who believe him are forgiven. This is a message worthy of consideration and acceptance.

SPECIAL OFFER

FEED MY SHEEP

Preaching the Gospel in a
Postmodern New Zealand Society
by John A Haverland

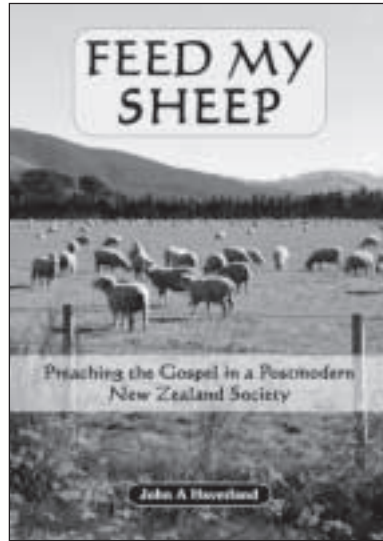
Paperback 312 pages ISBN 0-9582145-1-4

R.R.P. \$29.95

usual G&T price: \$24.95+postage

PREPUBLICATION PRICE
\$23.50 incl. postage

To be published late October 2000



This is a book about preaching specifically written for the New Zealand context, though the analysis also applies to other countries in our western world. Pastors will find this useful as it provides them with a theology of preaching and encourages them to devote themselves to this task. New Zealand Christians will also benefit from this book as it outlines some important features of our history as a nation and analyses key characteristics of our present society, illustrating these with historical and contemporary examples. The book provides many practical suggestions and applications for communicating the Christian faith in a postmodern New Zealand context.

Feed My Sheep is a plea for preaching - for sound, exegetical, expository preaching. It is also a plea for *relevant* preaching that explains where we have come from and where we are, and that applies the truth of God's Word to the situation around us today.

John Haverland grew up in Christchurch, has pastored a church in Auckland and is presently the pastor of the Reformed Church of Bishopdale in Christchurch.

Available from Grace & Truth Publications, P.O. Box 8979, Christchurch, NZ
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The articles in this magazine reflect the body of biblical doctrine summarised in the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith. Contributors are allowed reasonable freedom in the exposition of those truths; the editors do not necessarily endorse every view expressed.

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Please see the editorial on the next page for details of how you may register your interest in subscribing to *Grace & Truth Magazine*.

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Cover Picture

In 1535 William Tyndale was captured and imprisoned at the Castle of Vilvorde near Brussels. He spent the remaining months of his life in confinement and was executed by strangulation and burning early one morning in October 1536.