



Latimer Focus

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Rev. Dave Clancey

Editorial

We live in an age of self-promotion. From mainstream media who feed us a steady stream of who-is-doing-what, to the individual promoting themselves via social media, we live in a time when so many long to be noticed and admired and become famous.

But let's be honest, what has changed in recent times is not that people's hearts have suddenly become more concerned about others noticing us, but rather that the means by which that heart can make itself known have changed. Any of us now, with the right equipment (a phone and an internet connection) and the right knowledge (slightly harder to describe!) can promote ourselves to the world.

Self-promotion sits very uncomfortably with many Christians. We've been raised with the truth that Christian joy is found through Jesus first, others second, and yourself last. Indeed, didn't the Lord Jesus tell us that whoever would be great must be servant of all? In an age of self-promotion there is something radically counter-cultural about not pushing ourselves forward, not being concerned that everything is interested in us.

And yet, there is a place for a form of self-promotion in the Christian life. The apostle Paul was happy to promote himself, after a fashion. Imitate me, he told the Corinthians (1 Cor 4:16). Whatever the Philippians learned or received or heard from Paul, or saw in him, they were to put that into practice (Phil 4:9). His promotion of self was only because he himself was seeking to see his life transformed into the image and likeness of Jesus. His concern was for the glory of Christ to be manifest in the lives of those who would submit to Christ, and he wanted to be a walking example of that.

Do you have a 'Paul' in your life whom you are modelling yourself on? Paul had men and women around him who travelled with him, worked with him, loved and served the church with him, and who modelled their lives on his. He lived in a way that others could not only hear the gospel from his lips,

but see it in his life. And people did see it, and followed his example. There's a saying that the gospel is as much caught as taught, and that certainly was the case for those who were around Paul. Who is someone who you seek to learn from, someone who you observe and model and ask questions of, someone who you try and live like? Like Paul, they won't be perfect (indeed, one of the things you should be learning from them is how to seek repentance and ask for forgiveness), but they will be someone who is setting you an example. Look for them. Pursue them.

There's a saying that the gospel is as much caught as taught, and that certainly was the case for those who were around Paul. Who is someone who you seek to learn from, someone who you observe and model and ask questions of, someone who you try and live like?

But Paul wasn't simply a passive example - he actively sought out those to train and disciple. There are a number of examples of discipleship in this edition of *Focus*. It's a vitally important aspect of our Christian lives, and I wonder if for many of us it's something that we just 'assume' will happen. But that which is assumed is quickly forgotten. Paul didn't assume - he urged people to imitate him, and sought out those to be with him so that they might be trained and learn how to imitate him. The greatest example of Paul's discipling work was with Timothy. Timothy was Paul's right-hand-man; he was like a son to him. And Paul invested time and energy and emotion into him, equipping and training him to lead

**Who could you seek to be an example to?
Who could you actively and deliberately come
alongside and read the Bible with, pray with,
share in Christian service with?**

God's people. We're not apostles, and not all of us are equipped to train people who will lead churches. But each of us can and should be seeking to train and equip and help others in their walk with Christ. We should be encouraging others to come and imitate us as we seek to imitate Christ. As above, this will start and end with a life of repentance and faith. A Christian calling someone to imitate them should never be arrogant, for a Christian is someone who is first and foremost one seeking to be transformed to be like Jesus by the power of his Spirit. Who could you seek to be an example to? Who could you actively and deliberately come alongside and read the Bible with, pray with, share in Christian service with? However you do it, be a Christian who consciously looks to train and equip others to keep on following Jesus. For in this we are not promoting self, but promoting Christ, who transforms his people.



Churchman Editorial: A Post-Truth Way of Life?

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Gerald Bray

A few weeks ago the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary announced that their international word of the year for 2016 is 'post-truth'. They were obviously prompted in this by recent political events in the United Kingdom and the United States, where a referendum (in the former) and a presidential election (in the latter) were won by egregious liars who fed their respective publics with industrial amounts of misinformation, including fake news—and got away with it. But as the analysts of this phenomenon quickly realised, it was not the lies that won the day, so much as a widespread indifference to the facts that allowed the untruths to be expressed with impunity. There was no shortage of people in either country who pointed out that voters were being seriously misled, but the response of many was that they did not care. For reasons that had nothing to do with objective fact, they turned their backs on truth, honesty and common sense, and instead took a plunge into the unknown that their opponents regard as irresponsible, if not downright mad.

These were not isolated or aberrant events but part of a wider social trend that has come to be labelled 'post-truth'. Hence the new word in the Dictionary. But of course, the thing itself is much older. The desire to believe a lie is as old as humankind, as the creation story in Genesis reminds us. Adam and Eve could not possibly have become like God, but they wanted to—and that was what mattered. That things turned out differently was inevitable but it was too late to go back, and we have all had to live with their folly ever since.

In a more restricted sense, what the Dictionary is now calling 'posttruth' has existed and flourished in the Church of England for nearly two centuries. It was in the great age of reform in the 1820s and 1830s

that a small and unrepresentative group of churchmen started to panic. In their eyes, the compact between church and state that had dominated England and Ireland since the Glorious Revolution was coming unstuck, and the Church was being subjected to secular forces that were alien to its mission. Few though these distressed churchmen were, they were committed to rescuing the Church by making it great again, and it was the conviction that they knew how to do it that gave them their power. In their eyes, it was in the medieval period that Christendom had reached the heights of glory, a lost paradise that had been shattered by the Protestant Reformation. Only by eliminating that could their vision be realised, and they set about their seemingly impossible task with a determination sometimes bordering on fanaticism.

The Tractarian movement, as it came to be known from the series of ninety tracts that these zealots produced, was essentially an exercise in what we would now call 'post-truth' propaganda. In the fantasy world they created, the Reformation was not so much attacked as ignored—it had never happened. The Church of England had always remained faithful to its medieval heritage, and even the Thirty-nine Articles were compatible with pre-Reformation theology. That odd claim proved to be a step too far, and in the ensuing outcry, John Henry Newman, the author of Tract 90, left the Church and became a Roman Catholic.

Some of his friends followed him, but many stayed in the Church and continued the work of hollowing it out from within. A recognizable pattern soon developed. Committed Anglo-Catholic clergy would defy the law by introducing ritual practices that were officially not allowed. Those who opposed them would be driven to seek legal remedies, which in

some cases included imprisonment for the offenders. That allowed the Tractarians to portray themselves as martyrs and gained them some sympathy with the wider public, which was largely indifferent to (and often uncomprehending of) the issues at stake. What difference did it make, many bystanders wondered, what a clergyman wore or what ritual acts he performed during public worship?

Although their success was limited, they proved that a determined minority could get its way by flying in the face of facts, by creating propaganda that portrayed them in a highly misleading light, and by taunting a leadership that they knew was too afraid to do anything to stop them.

In the end, although the ritualists lost most of the court cases in which they were involved, and although the pope dashed their hopes by declaring Anglican orders ‘null and void’—in other words, there really had been a Reformation as far as Rome was concerned—the Anglo-Catholics managed to carve out a niche for themselves within the establishment. The irony was that in doing this, their desire to restore the Church to its primitive glory resulted in the collapse of its internal discipline. But although their success was limited, they proved that a determined minority could get its way by flying in the face of facts, by creating propaganda that portrayed them in a highly misleading light, and by taunting a leadership that they knew was too afraid to do anything to stop them. Their opponents, mostly Evangelicals but including many liberal churchmen as well, could (and did) protest all they liked, but they were privately derided and publicly ignored. Even the recent book by Jeremy Morris, *The High Church Revival in the Church of England* (Brill, 2015), while it acknowledges that the Anglo-Catholics did not have everything their

own way, says virtually nothing about the opposition they faced, and makes no attempt to present their antagonists’ arguments in a serious way. For Dr Morris, as for Anglo-Catholic historians and apologists in general, Evangelicals did not (and still do not) exist. In their eyes, the Reformation never happened, and whatever went on the sixteenth century can be ignored or explained away as an ‘emergency’ with no lasting impact. For them, Anglo-Catholicism and Anglicanism have merged into one—the declining fortunes of the one are the declining fortunes of the other.

The counter-factual world that Anglo-Catholics created somehow manages to survive in books about Anglicanism in spite of the onslaughts of secular historians who have comprehensively debunked it, and it is the natural forerunner of the post-truth universe in which the Church of England now finds itself. The presenting issue today is not ritualism but homosexuality, but otherwise the current scenario is a re-run of what happened 150 years ago. Now, as then, a dedicated minority is determined to impose its agenda on the wider Church. Its leaders are strangers to the truth and will resort to the most extraordinary propaganda in order to gain sympathy. They present themselves as modern-day martyrs, victims of persecution by an unloving group of legalistic Evangelicals who cannot accept their presence in the Church. The Evangelicals can try to counter this with the facts—neither the Bible, nor reason, nor the tradition of the Church supports the gay agenda, and the homosexual lobby does not have a leg to stand on. By every objective measure, the Evangelicals are right, and if truth mattered, that would be the end of the argument.

But there, of course, comes the rub. Truth does not matter, either to those who are advocating the homosexual agenda or to many of the bishops who are expected to apply the Church’s discipline. Like their nineteenth-century predecessors, they are often privately unsympathetic to the radicals

and one or two have been brave enough to take action against them, but on the whole they run for cover. Either they say nothing at all, or they invent phrases like ‘good disagreement’ which ends up meaning that right and wrong can happily co-exist. And why should that not be so, if truth is of no importance? I say the world is round, you say that it is flat—so what? What practical difference does it make? As the purveyors of ‘good disagreement’ would say, the important thing is that we must get along with one another, and if the facts get in the way, then so much the worse for them.

Not so long ago, reasoning of that kind would have been greeted with incredulity and rejected. There was a time when Christians of all churchmanships wrote books to prove that the Bible is true, that Jesus really did rise from the dead, and that the Word of God speaks to the needs of the modern world. Those who disagreed with that either kept quiet, sought academic posts where they would be free to express their doubts, or left the Church altogether. But times have changed. In 1963, the late John Robinson, then suffragan bishop of Woolwich, was rusticated to Cambridge for his unorthodox opinions. But in 1984, David Jenkins was consecrated bishop of Durham in spite of widespread and very public protests against his open mockery of Christian teaching. After he passed away, he was praised as ‘a great Christian’ even though, by his own admission, he was not a believer at all. The sad fact is that the truth died before he did, and nobody cared.

All of this helps to explain the nature of the current crisis which the Church is facing over homosexuality. We are not considering how we should relate pastorally to those who identify in that way, despite what some people claim. There has never been any appetite among the orthodox for persecuting those who feel same-sex attraction, and we do not intend to start now. We cannot swear that no homosexual has ever been mistreated by the Church, but if some have, it has not

been the result of dogmatic persecution by Evangelicals. On the contrary, they have often been in the forefront of ministering to homosexuals and many have done what they can to help them, without betraying their confidence. In the nature of the case, this cannot be publicised with specific examples, but we know that it is true and it needs to be said. The courage of those who have identified with Living Out and with True Freedom Trust is good to see and their witness ought to be better known and respected than it is.

We cannot accept a situation in which some people approve of wrongdoing and are allowed to practise it, in spite of the teaching of the Bible and the universal Church.

But if homosexuals should not be persecuted, neither should the lifestyle now commonly associated with them be sanctioned as acceptable, even for those who feel attracted to it. Homosexual practice is a sin in the eyes of God and Christians must avoid it, however ‘natural’ it may seem. We are all sinners and fall short of the divine glory, but that is no excuse for tolerating sinful behaviour in our midst. The Apostle Paul told the Romans not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of the inner mind (Romans 12:2). Having the right attitude does not by itself solve every problem, but it is the essential starting point. We cannot accept a situation in which some people approve of wrongdoing and are allowed to practise it, in spite of the teaching of the Bible and the universal Church. There has to be a single standard embraced by all, and those who cannot accept that ought to resign from their ministry. This is not to condemn them but to exercise godly discipline, without which the Church cannot fulfill its mission.

GAFCON-UK has recently published a list of people and circumstances in which the disciplinary rules of the Church have been ignored. Not so long ago some of the people on that list would have protested that they had been unfairly singled out, but not anymore. What we find now is that some people who have not been criticised are openly protesting that they have been overlooked! They are proud of their sin and want it to be broadcast as far and wide as possible. Clearly they believe that they have sufficient support behind them to cancel out the GAFCON statement, and we may be certain that they will not give up until they have obtained satisfaction. How right are they to think this?

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Here we enter the realm of the unknown. It is probable that most of the secular media will support their cause, but they may also conclude that the Church has a right to defend its 'backward' policies and that those who are more 'enlightened' would be better off outside it, just as the opinion-formers in the media are. The bishops will be divided in their response, but if past performance is any guide they will be asked to maintain a silent neutrality. What that means, as we know by now, is that the majority will say nothing while one or two mavericks will loudly attack the doctrine they are sworn to uphold and may even 'conscientiously' ignore it in practice. Others will keep quiet in public but subvert the rules when nobody is looking—upholding the letter of the law while denying its spirit. If this judgment sounds harsh, we can only reply that it is happening already, and GAFCON (to its credit) has had the courage to say so.

GAFCON-UK and its supporters will doubtless think that it is necessary to continue to fight for Biblical principles at the intellectual level and they are right to do so, but they should be under no illusions that this tactic will cut any ice with their opponents. This is where the reality of the post-truth universe kicks in. There may well be people who agree with the arguments put forward, or at least accept that they are consistent, but who will then conclude that it makes no difference. Whatever anyone says, the real issue (as far as they are concerned) will be determined by their notions of 'love' and 'compassion'. In other words, whatever the homosexual lobby wants, the homosexual lobby will get, because that is the 'loving' response to them. Anything less than that will be an expression of 'homophobia', a useful smear word that can be applied to anyone who tries to defend the truth. The official reply of the Church of England will be that the orthodox defenders of its doctrine are right in most of what they affirm, but that their appeal to such things as Lambeth Conference resolution 1.10 has no legal force and that the application of discipline lies with the bishops.

This is, in fact, what William Nye, the Church's secretary-general, has recently stated in his reply to the GAFCON representations. In practical terms, this means that little or nothing will be done to arrest the current trend towards acceptance of this particular form of immorality within the Church, and that attempts to change that by legal means will be frustrated. Defenders of orthodoxy must also be prepared to point out that offering pastoral sympathy to homosexual people does not mean that cathedrals should host Gay Pride events, or that bishops should go out of their way to participate in events of that kind. That gives an air of approval to something that the Church does not sanction and those in positions of authority ought to make sure that they do not give the wrong impression in such matters.

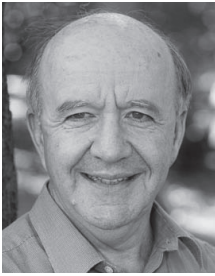
Of course, we must accept that Evangelicals are not perfect and can be inconsistent in their application of Biblical principles. Here we are more vulnerable than we perhaps realise and we must be prepared to repent and mend our ways. One obvious area of weakness is the way that we are often prone to excuse a heterosexual sin like divorce and remarriage, despite the fact that this was explicitly condemned by Jesus himself (Matthew 19:9). We must be sincere in our desire to uphold the discipline of the Church even if we find it awkward or disagreeable at times. If a cause is right, then it must be pursued in the right way, within the structures available to us. In fairness, Evangelicals have usually done their best to be law-abiding, though they have often been unwilling to stand up and be counted when their principles have been flouted. Here the witness of the bishop of Maidstone is to be applauded, and we must hope that others will follow his example. We do not have to resort to the tactics employed by our opponents, but we should not simply stand back and let them walk all over us either. If a bishop attacks GAFCON publicly, and some have, he should be called out on it and made to realise that he cannot say whatever he likes with complete impunity.

Meanwhile, Evangelicals must continue to contend for Truth—not just the truth (in the sense of a set of facts or propositions) but Truth as a concept, with objective content that is expressed in Scripture and in the teaching of the Church. We have not invented this Truth, nor have we configured it to suit ourselves, despite what some of our critics may say. We are open to correction if it can be shown that we are wrong, but in this case the evidence from both the Bible and the laws of creation is too overwhelming to be denied. The pseudo-spirituality of the homosexual lobby must be challenged—praying about sin before committing it is no excuse for carrying on regardless. Those who have adopted the habit of using the language of Zion to justify

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themselves in this way must be exposed and their abuse of pious-sounding language must be condemned for the hypocrisy it is.

Standing up to be counted will not be easy, but then, carrying the cross never is. What is at stake here is far too important for us to remain silent. The Bible warns us that those who build their house on the sand will come to a bad end, and there are plenty of examples from history, both inside and outside the Church, to prove the truth of that statement. The post-truth world into which we have stumbled cannot survive for long—it is not a way of life. The Old Testament prophetic books are full of warnings about the impending destruction of Israel because it had forgotten God, and we are seeing the same thing now happening in our midst. Rich and privileged as no generation before us has ever been, we have succumbed to the big Lie in both public and private life. The truth is that Western society has by and large rejected God, and the Church will not escape its impending destruction. When Jerusalem was finally taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the temple was not spared—the priests went into exile with the people and Solomon's glory was laid in the dust. This is the fate that awaits us, and it may come sooner than we think. May God grant us the strength to be true witnesses for him in this our crooked generation, and may he have mercy on us all.



Rev. Dr Peter Adam

Discipleship and the New Testament Church: An interview with Peter Adam

Before retiring in 2011, the Rev. Dr Peter Adam was the Principal of Ridley College, Melbourne, having previously been the vicar of St Jude's, Carlton. He spoke with Malcolm Falloon about what discipleship looks like in the local church setting.

What does discipleship mean?

Most people use it, at least in Australia, to mean one-to-one discipling. One of the striking things about the New Testament is that Jesus tells his disciples to go and 'make disciples', but the language of 'making disciples' is not used after Pentecost. In Acts, Christians are more often described as 'believers' than 'disciples', and the Apostle Paul doesn't describe his own ministry as 'disciple-making'. Paul actually has a variety of ways of describing what we mean by discipleship, but he doesn't use the word.

What words, then, does the New Testament use in place of discipling in Matthew 28?

Interesting, there is a connection between 'make' a disciple and the idea of 'following' Jesus. Paul does pick up the language of 'following'. In Colossians 2, Paul writes, 'as you received Christ Jesus as Lord continue to walk in him'. Here 'to walk in him' is equivalent to 'follow him'. He continues, 'built up and strengthened in the faith as you were taught, with thanksgiving'. So here, the idea of 'walking' is linked to being 'strengthened in him'. This idea of discipleship is a bigger theological idea than just learning. It is not just walking *after* Christ, but walking *in* him, which is a much deeper idea.

So, whereas we might think of discipling as learning facts, and implementing them, Paul has a deeper view of making people Christians, which is that God does the transformation on the inside, which is then worked out in their life. So in Colossians, for example, it is that you are in Christ, you walk in Christ, you have died and been raised with

Christ, therefore you put to death what is wrong and you put on what is right. That's the structure of Colossians.

So in a parish setting, what is it that pastors should be wanting for their people when they get up to preach?

Well, Paul says in Colossians 1:28, 'Him we proclaim warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we might present everyone mature in Christ.' That's a pretty good description of the process, I think. But it's also important to say that that statement is not just about bringing *individuals* to maturity, it's about bringing the *church* to maturity.

One weakness, I think, of evangelical preaching in the past has been that we have preached for *individual* conversion and *individual* maturity, but not *corporate* maturity in Christ. So, if you hear the command 'love one another', and you apply it to yourself as an *individual*, you might think that as long as you're loving other people in the church, then that's fine. But if instead you think, 'No, this is a vision for the *church*. This is what the *church* is meant to be like!', then you can't rest until others also have become loving people as well, and your whole church is marked by loving people. So it's more challenging actually. It means that we have to ask ourselves, 'Am I praying that our church is a loving place? Are we appointing leaders who will exemplify that loving and encourage others to love? Colossians 3 - 'So let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, not with ever longer sermons, but as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.' That's discipling.



Rev Jeremy Clark: A Tribute

The Reverend Jeremy Clark, born, educated and ordained in Christchurch, died on 27 January 2017 in Exeter, England aged 50.

Rev. Michael Hewat

He leaves behind his English-born wife Catherine and four surviving children. When diagnosed with terminal melanoma in October 2014 he was team rector of a group of churches in Exeter. Just two months later his eldest son Ben was struck down with a rare and untreatable virus. He died at the end of April 2015.

Many Latimer readers will know - or know of - Jeremy, either as a fellow worshipper at St Barnabas', Fendalton; student at St John's College '92- '94; curate at St Stephen's Shirley ('95- '96); or through his inspirational blog site *Tracing the Rainbow Through The Rain* (which was runner-up to the blogger of the year at the UK's Premier Digital awards last year). More than 300 family and friends attended a thanksgiving service for Jeremy at St Barnabas' on 10 March.

Jeremy committed his life to Christ when he was 19. He spoke of Bishop Max Wiggins as the man who disciplined him and had the greatest formative influence upon him. From Max Wiggins he became acquainted with the life and work of Canon William Orange, who became the subject of a research paper he did at St John's.

Jeremy stood out at College as a person ideally suited to parish ministry. He loved God and he loved people - and others knew it. In the words of his son Joshua, if you criticised someone else to Jeremy you received a gentle rebuke: God loves them and Christ died for them. He was genuinely humble and embodied Christ's spirit of fullness of grace and truth. It is no wonder that he was greatly loved by those whom he shepherded in parish ministry.

As well as being a gifted teacher and preacher, Jeremy was an irrepressible evangelist. At St John's he got frustrated that - while it was called the College of St John the Evangelist - it was more like the College

of St John the Divine. His response was to head down to Glenn Innes on a Friday night and preach the Gospel to anyone who would listen.

Having had to take early retirement from parish ministry shortly after his diagnosis, Jeremy spent no time wondering what to do with whatever time he had left. Writing in April 2015, around the time of his son Ben's death, he blogged:

With my illness, I feel an increasing call to stand at the gates of death and testify to what I believe, know and experience, finding that there are so many people around, both in church and not, who have little confidence - certainly no excitement and joyful anticipation - in facing their own life's end.

Jeremy stood out at College as a person ideally suited to parish ministry. He loved God and he loved people - and others knew it.

He and Catherine accepted a number of engagements to speak at churches about their loss of Ben and their own journey with Jeremy's cancer. Jeremy also accepted an invitation to be a mentor and support to a group of evangelical ministers in Exeter. This ministry he continued to perform, along with disciplining a couple of young men (as Max Wiggins had him), until no longer physically able to do so.

In June 2016 he wrote:

In a curious way it seems that the tumour is a kind of strange badge of a new ministry into which Father God has called me and Catherine as we share our story with others. That in God's different economy of things, rather than being a

Jeremy's faith and ministry were never triumphalistic. He spoke often over the past 30 months of his rediscovery of lament, and the strength he drew from the great old hymns and prayers of the Church.

ministry 'limiter', this cancer – and even losing Ben, as utterly painful as that continues to be – has opened up a whole vast array of opportunities to both know and testify to God's amazing grace, his timeless enduring promises, the profound hope and strength he gives through Christ when the night seems at its darkest and the days can seem utterly devoid of light.

Jeremy's faith and ministry were never triumphalistic. He spoke often over the past 30 months of his rediscovery of lament, and the strength he drew from the great old hymns and prayers of the Church. But like the apostle Paul, he knew the difference between grieving in despair and grieving with hope.

Just four days before he died, when Joshua went to visit him in hospice, he heard Jeremy sharing his hope in Christ for what was probably the last time – with his nurse. The next day she told Joshua she had hardly slept the previous night, she had been so affected by what he had said.

Bishop Wiggins and Canon Orange would no doubt be proud of this good and faithful disciple, who finished the race well. I, and many others, have good reason to thank God for his faithful witness.



David Thompson

Proverbs 17:27-18:2, Hold Your Tongue

The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues. An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels. Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

The tongue is a powerful, powerful thing. Our words can have a significant effect. And it is far easier to have a destructive effect with our words than a positive one. To correct an old saying, “Stick and stones may break my bones, but words can always hurt me.” Physical pain may always be more painful to us at the time, but we have this uncanny habit of being able to forget the particular sensation that hurt us. Words, however, are harder to forget. Spoken with the right malice and offence, and words will stay with someone for the rest of their lives. Words break friendships, start wars, abuse victims, and forge deep and lasting memories.

Now in our culture and context, I don’t believe that it is just the tongue that we should be talking about here. We live in a world where we love to find ways of communication that avoid actually having a proper conversation. We can have a phone call and so miss all the facial expressions and body language. We can send a text or write an email, avoiding all tones in speech as well. We can post on Facebook or the myriad other social networks, and pretend that there’s someone out there listening to us, who can acknowledge that they care at the click of a button, often without actually reading what you have said. And in this context the destructive power of words can be seen all the more.

It is too easy to be rude to someone you don’t actually have to see face to face. It is easier to blurt out an opinion in front of people you aren’t physically relating to on a day-to-day basis. And it is far too easy to be misheard when people cannot actually hear you, but are only reading what you have written.

As in every age of history, we need to learn wisdom about how to use our words and how to harness the power of the tongue. And this is where our reading in Proverbs 17:27-18:2 comes in.

HOLD YOUR TONGUE

“The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues.” Hold your tongue. Often the wisest use of your tongue is not using it at all.

Why is it important for us to hear this? Why is it wise and good for us to hold our tongues? In those two verses it is simply assumed that restrained speech is a characteristic of the wise. So much so that if a fool was to shut up, people would consider him wise! But why is that?

Proverbs 18 goes on to discuss different situations involving speaking and not speaking, such as quarrels (18:1), self-promotion (18:2), gossip (18:8), and debating (18:17). But one concept links all these together: how we view ourselves.

It is pride. Pride cannot stay silent.

Pride says that you are the centre of the universe; you are the most important person in the room. Therefore it is important to the proud that they are seen to be right, to be seen as better than others, to be seen as knowledgeable and well-informed. It is important to the proud to be laughed with rather than laughed at. Pride wants to be served by friendships, rather than to serve friendships.

So it is good for us to hold our tongues because it is an act of humility. It reminds us that we are not God, we are not the centre of the universe, and we need not control what other people think of us. And yet it can seem such a risky thing to do: Not speaking means that you risk people thinking that you are wrong or ignorant about something. You are risking being thought of as lesser than somebody else. It takes great self-control to hold our tongues.

We will now consider two situations when we should hold our tongues, which appear in the following two verses, Proverbs 18:1-2.

THE QUARREL

Let's now think about different situations when we might hold our tongues, as they are presented to us in the verses that follow in Proverbs 18. First, the quarrel: "An unfriendly person pursues selfish ends and against all sound judgment starts quarrels."

Hold your tongue, or pick a fight. Here the person who starts a quarrel is described as an "unfriendly person". Literally, they are someone who separates themselves from others. That is what is happening when you start a quarrel – you are isolating yourself and risking the friendship. Why? It is for their own desires. They are 'pursuing selfish ends'. Pride starts the quarrel.

Now a quarrel will be started because someone most likely feels wronged about something. Perhaps they have been spoken wrongly about, or are owed money, or have been disadvantaged in some way. No one likes to be wronged. We all want to right those wrongs and we all want justice. This verse says that "against all sound judgment" they start quarrels. They pick fights unwisely. Why is this so unwise? Going back to Proverbs 17:14, we see why: "Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out."

You may remember seeing footage of the Clarence River after the major earthquakes

in November last year, and how earthquake debris had blocked up the river. In the following afternoon the dam burst, where the water height had risen to a massive 15 metres. Imagine being one of the 6 kayakers who were on the river that day, seeing the torrents of water flooding down the valley. (Thankfully they were safe having abandoned their kayaks and moved to higher ground). Imagine the noise and the sheer unstoppable force of the waters rushing down.

Quarrelling is unwise because you cannot control the consequences. That may seem counter-intuitive, because quarrelling can happen for the very reason of trying to take matters into your own hands. But the wisdom of Proverbs says that the consequences are uncontrollable. You might be trying to defend your honour before a few people, but in the end lose it in front of many. You might be risking one friendship, and in the end lose many. You have no control over the retaliation, over the thoughts and impressions of those around you. You have no idea about the repercussions. So, Proverbs 17:14 says, "drop the matter before a dispute breaks out". And the New Testament would agree. In 1 Corinthians 6:7, when speaking about lawsuits within the church, Paul says, "Why not rather be wronged?"

To pride that sounds like madness. How can we let it go? How can we allow others to think that we're wrong without knowing the truth? How can we allow someone else to hurt us in some way and not punish them for it? But remember, pride is a distorted view of self. Pride says that you are God, and you are the centre of the universe. Therefore you are the judge, and you are the one that all must serve. But we are not God! We are not the centre of the universe. And we are not the judge. God is much better at being God than we are. He cares about justice and will see it done. He knows who is right and who is wrong. He cares about our friendships. The wise thing to do, therefore, is to be humble and to hold our tongues.

SELF-PROMOTION

Now to verse 2 and the second example: Self-promotion. “Fools find no pleasure in understanding, but delight in airing their own opinions.” Some particular faces may come into your minds when you read that – whether from politics or sport, or your workplace or family. But how might we ourselves be challenged by this proverb? Where are we in danger of happily delivering our own opinions and thoughts before actually listening to anyone?

This is quite a challenge, particularly as we consider it within the context of two regular features of our church life: the small group, and the morning tea. If you are reading this, then it is quite likely that within a small group you are someone who likes to hold fort and ‘air your own opinions’. This may be because you do not like awkward silences and are nobly trying to fill them! But we need to check our motives. Are we speaking to impress or dominate? Do we become impatient when we think people are being slow to get “right answer”? Is our forthrightness putting others off?

Pride says that you are the most important person in the room and that you should be heard. Wise humility is ready to not be heard so that others might get the chance to speak.

Now for the situation of morning tea after our church service, and the conversation we find ourselves in. I must admit that I am not brilliant at small talk, or real talk for that matter. I am not quick to find things to talk about with people, and I struggle to think of things to say. That is, until people start asking me questions about myself! Conversations go OK when people ask me questions, because then I have something to say as I answer them. However, this invariably means that we have spent the whole conversation talking about myself and things related to me. Far too often I forget to reflect those questions back on to the person I am speaking with. I deeply regret this,

because not asking people about themselves and how they are can be a sign of uncaring laziness and pride. So I need to learn to hold my tongue, and use it more effectively.

THE POWER OF JESUS

This is a big challenge, and a lot of time has been spent on negative application, as in what we shouldn’t do. How can we think positively about this? We have thought about the power of the tongue. Now let us finish by considering the power of the ears, and the power of Jesus.

Remember the power of the ears – you can do an awful lot of good by holding your tongues and listening to someone. More importantly, however, remember the power of Jesus. Jesus is the one person who actually lived out these proverbs perfectly. He held his tongue, even when he was insulted and abused, and his silence meant being wrongfully convicted and sent to his agonising death. He knows what it is like to fight those temptations.

We can try and follow that example, but we will never do it as perfectly as he did. The great news, however, is that he did it for us. Jesus did not demand his own personal justice, because he wanted to suffer in our place. He did this so that we could be forgiven for every offensive, hurtful, insensitive, rude, argumentative, proud thing we have ever said, and will ever say, and now by his Spirit Jesus works in us to change us. If I look at myself I won’t find much encouragement or hope that I will speak better. But if I look to Jesus, I see the one who died in my place, who has given me his Spirit. Remember the power of Jesus, and look to him. Ask him to work in you and to give you self-control, and rest in the assurance of his forgiveness for every wrong thing you have ever said or will say.



Rev. Malcolm Falloon

The Treaty of Waitangi: a sacred compact or a thing most treacherous?

Can Waitangi Day be a celebration that brings New Zealanders together? Or will the events of 1840 forever be a touchstone for division and conflict?

Partly, it depends on how the meaning of the Treaty of Waitangi is understood. Is it a “sacred compact” or “a thing most treacherous”? The point of contention is the relationship between the first two articles of the Treaty, and in particular, how the Māori phrase *kāwanatanga katoa* (sovereignty/government) in the first article relates to *tino rangatiratanga* (chiefly authority) in the second. In the first, *kāwanatanga katoa* was ceded by Māori to the Queen, thus bringing New Zealand within the realms of the British Empire. While in the second, *tino rangatiratanga* was to be retained by Māori and protected by imperial power. For some, the tension between the two articles is insurmountable. They argue that Māori rangatira who signed the Treaty could not have understood its terms in the way the British intended, and indeed, may even have been deliberately misled. In my view, however, their arguments fail to convince, and a more coherent and satisfying account can be gathered from the historical context.

The weight of evidence suggests that the British Government were indeed sincere in seeking the full and free consent of their Treaty partner.

The Colonial Office, in giving its authority to Captain Hobson, had issued written instructions that any treaty signed must have the free and informed consent of Māori. The New Zealand Company, wishing no doubt to protect their schemes for colonisation, declared the Treaty to be merely “a praiseworthy device for amusing and pacifying savages”. The foreign residents of Kororāreka (modern-day Russell), perhaps resentful of losing their lawless freedom, spread rumours among Māori that darker

motives were at play: Britain would seize their lands and make them *taurekareka* (slaves). Yet the weight of evidence suggests that the British Government were indeed sincere in seeking the full and free consent of their Treaty partner.

Hobson drafted the Treaty in English with the help of the British Resident, James Busby. It was then translated into Māori by the Anglican missionary, Henry Williams, of the Church Missionary Society. Hobson also gave Williams the task of explaining the Treaty to the gathered chiefs, telling him that none must sign until they fully understand its terms. Williams was the obvious choice for the job, being an experienced negotiator in the New Zealand context and highly respected by Māori. He also considered it a great honour, for he viewed the Treaty as nothing less than the Magna Carta of Māori: “In the midst of profound silence,” Williams recalled, “I read the treaty to all assembled. I told all to listen with care, explaining clause by clause to the chiefs, giving them caution not to be in a hurry, but telling them that we, the missionaries, fully approved of the treaty.”

There is no valid reason to impugn the motives of Williams: his translation was fair and his explanation was full. But the question remains, did his hearers sufficiently understand what was said to enable them to give their informed consent? His fellow missionary, William Colenso, had his doubts. He remembered raising concerns directly with Hobson: how fragile the agreement, given the limits of Māori understanding, and how vulnerable the missionaries, given the trust vested in them. It was an understanding and a trust put to the test five years later, when nothing stood between a Māori sense of betrayal, and the destruction of the fledging colony, but the fragile text of the Treaty, and the explanation of the vulnerable missionary, Henry Williams.

In January 1845, Hōne Heke had cut down the Kororāreka flagstaff for a third time. Though first to sign, he now rejected the Treaty as “all soap”—smooth and oily, but with treachery hidden beneath. He called on Māori to join him in renouncing British sovereignty. The full military strength of Ngāpuhi gathered at Paroa in the Bay of Islands ready to take up arms against the government. Even Wāka Nene, so influential in 1840, was in two minds as to whether Māori had not been treacherously betrayed five years earlier. Williams went to the hui to answer the charges made against him and to defend the honour of Queen Victoria. He armed himself with freshly printed copies of the Treaty, which he distributed among the gathered chiefs: “I read clause by clause, requesting the chiefs to notice any expressions which favored the assertion that their interests had been betrayed by the Government, or that there was any design to deprive them of their just rights.” He assured them that the Treaty was a “sacred compact” and that the word of her Majesty could not be violated—anything else was, in Williams’s view, “he tino mea kōhuru”, a thing most treacherous.

Williams was in no doubt that Māori understood and accepted his explanation, “for by this explanation alone,” said Williams, “I was enabled to give considerable check to the proceedings of the natives in arms.” Instead of joining Heke, most Ngāpuhi chose to remain neutral. Some, such as Wāka Nene, even took up arms against him. Politically, Heke’s cause was lost before it began. British and Māori troops might have restored order in the north, but the true weapon of Heke’s defeat was the Treaty itself.

So, can Waitangi Day be a day that brings us together? Māori and Pākehā? Indigene and Immigrant? Yes it can, for it is a sacred day—even in an age that has almost forgotten the meaning of the word. Indeed, we can take our lead from the celebrations of the past. In 1963, Sir Turi Carroll, President of the New Zealand Māori Council, welcomed Queen Elizabeth to the Treaty grounds at Waitangi:

So, can Waitangi Day be a day that brings us together? Māori and Pākehā? Indigene and Immigrant? Yes it can, for it is a sacred day—even in an age that has almost forgotten the meaning of the word.

“We gladly offer today, on this anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, to renew the spirit of that compact and, above all, to reaffirm our loyalty to the Crown.” He spoke on behalf of Māori and acknowledged the presence of many descendants of those Māori *tūpuna* who first signed that fragile text. The Queen in reply also understood the significance of her presence as the great-great-granddaughter of Victoria. “Whatever may have happened in the past,” she said, “and whatever the future may bring, it remains the sacred duty of the Crown today, as in 1840, to stand by the spirit of the Treaty of Waitangi, and to ensure that the trust of the Maori people is never betrayed.”



Rev. Michael Hewat

View from Down Under: No Walk on the Water

In the Synoptic Gospels Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ marks a turning point in Jesus' mission, bringing his Galilean ministry to a climax and prefacing the first of his three predictions of his death and resurrection.

Why is Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi so important? On the basis of Matthew's record one might even ask why it was necessary; only recently the disciples had worshipped Jesus in the boat, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God"? (Matt 14.33). What clearer confession did they need to make?

Regardless of the level of understanding the disciples have of who Jesus is after he walks on the water (noting that Luke and Mark's assessment is lower than Matthew's), Peter's confession comes as a result of witnessing Jesus' miracles and hearing his teaching. Given the miracles alone, Peter is stating what should have been the obvious (cf. Jn 10.37f.).

The faith Peter confesses is immediately exposed though by his response to Jesus' first prediction of his suffering and death. The Christ (Messiah) he confesses is one who drives out demons, heals, raises the dead and walks on water; he will not be one to suffer or be killed. Jesus rebukes him in the strongest possible terms. The Christ *must* suffer, and *anyone* who would be his disciple must deny himself, take up his own cross, and follow him.

Applying this to disciples today, it is not hard to be a disciple of Jesus and confess him as Lord when one has the sense of him being powerfully present. That's why large gatherings of believers – especially for worship (but even in synods!) – can be so edifying. Grand buildings, which may at least give the outward impression that God's Church is alive and well, can also be a source of comfort to disciples who find themselves tossed about by the ever-swelling waves of secularism. But what happens when we are parted from our buildings and are deprived of the sense of security which comes from being part of an Anglican Province? How well prepared are we to confess Jesus as Lord outside of the security of those structures?

This is a test we as a congregation have been put to over the past two and a half years. With regard to buildings, by God's grace we have been able to relocate most of our ministries to alternative premises not too far from our old home at St David's and St George's, West Hamilton. But we have been pushed (we believe by God) into spaces and places considerably less comfortable for us. Significantly, our mission has moved from the fringes into the damaged heart of a needy (decile two) community.

With regard to structures, some members were only too ready to leave the Anglican Church, preferring to form an independent church. Most though wanted to remain part of something larger, and preferably Anglican. Affiliation with the Global Fellowship of Confessing Anglicans has enabled us to remain part of a wider Anglican fellowship, but doesn't provide the institutional securities we had as part of this Province. In terms of legal and employment issues, insurances, pensions etc. we have had to set up our own structures. It's been an arduous, expensive and time-consuming process.

It's fair to say that life's been a lot harder since we were parted from the Province. A small number have found it too hard and departed, but the vast majority have embraced the challenges and been open to what God might want to do in our lives, individually and collectively, as his disciples.

Three things in particular are worth noting. The first is patience. James writes, "Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord... Establish your hearts... Do not grumble against one another... Behold we consider those blessed who remain steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful" (James 5.7-11).

Our greatest impatience has been with inadequate buildings. We now have nine staff shoe-horned into offices for six. There's a constant temptation to grumble against one another, and against the diocese (our former offices not being used for Anglican ministry, nor much else).

Having spent two years trying to find new premises to purchase, without success, we've had moments of impatience with God too. We hear many stories of God's miraculous provision of buildings, and pray earnestly for such an experience, but so far in vain. What's he saying? I believe, "Establish your hearts." This is a long and deep work of discipleship, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. It involves discipline (see Heb 12.1-7).

A second challenge we have increasingly faced is how to disciple people who are struggling to achieve NCEA level 1 or 2 education and read nothing beyond phone texts and tweets. This applies particularly to our youth, most of whom do not come from Christian homes and so have the added disadvantage of no grounding in Sunday school or any Christian culture (including any moral boundaries). Discipleship programmes based on a close reading and study of the scriptures simply don't engage them. Discipling has to be far more relational, with the scriptures being heard rather than read, and imparted creatively through drama and multi-media. As for subtle theological debates - forget about them!

On the positive side, these young people are so hungry for love and truth that they soak them up like sponges. They are a delight to minister to. Perhaps they're not so different from Peter and John and the rest of the Twelve:

Now when [the Jewish Council] saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognised that they had been with Jesus. (Acts 4.13)

This surely is the hallmark of a true disciple: he/she is recognised, even by their opponents, as someone who has spent time with Jesus. And perhaps Jesus' method of discipling was more relational than ours?

The third thing I would note is not a challenge but a new awareness of the Lord's compassion and mercy - of which James wrote. While we have lost the formal support structures provided by the Diocese, repeatedly we have been blessed by unexpected support from other quarters of the wider Church. In many cases those who have encouraged or supported us are facing far greater difficulties than we are. It has been a humbling and moving experience, causing us to be more thankful for what we do have and more mindful of the needs of others.

Our most recent blessing has come in the form of a Kenyan minister and his family who have joined us from Nairobi Chapel Ongata Rongai. Just when we'd almost despaired of finding a suitable associate minister, Steve Maina put us in touch with Tony Ngugi, the leader of a team of Kenyan evangelists who conducted a mission in NZ last October. Tony and his family have now arrived, the fourth Kenyan minister to have answered a call to come to NZ, with another following soon (to Auckland). I don't believe these are isolated callings but the Lord doing a new thing. The Gospel may originally have come to Aotearoa-NZ from England, but it is perhaps to the African Church, where the church is growing fastest, that we need to look for help with re-evangelising this land.

Returning to Peter's confession of faith in Matthew 16, immediately following his rebuke of Peter, Jesus gave his disciples this uncompromising lesson in discipleship: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." For many African Christians, this a daily reality.

To date the highest price any of us have had to pay for following Christ is losing our buildings. There are signs though that tougher times may be ahead for evangelical Christians in the West. The Gospel, faithfully proclaimed, is now deemed offensive to many. If we are to be faithful in discipling others, we must prepare them - and be ready ourselves - to pay a higher price for being faithful followers of Jesus Christ. In this way too, God may use the African church to inspire and instruct us.



Rev. Dr. Bob Robinson

Books Worth Reading

BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AFTER BABEL

Kevin Vanhoozer (Brazos Press, 2016, US\$21.99, 288 pp, ISBN: 9781587433931)

Originally delivered as the 2015 Moore College lectures, there can be no doubting Vanhoozer's own Protestant convictions. The book's title doesn't immediately disclose that this is a theologically acute affirmation and celebration of the Reformation "solas": *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone), *solus Christus* (in Christ alone), and *sola Deo gloria* (for the glory of God alone). Vanhoozer quite quickly moves to Luther's principle of the private interpretation of Scripture. In effect, he asks "What could possibly go wrong" with such an apparently liberating move? Answer: a lot, both then and now; in fact, what can only be called the interpretive anarchy that soon became apparent in the inability of the reformers and their heirs to agree, for example, on the nature of the Lord's Supper. They "resolved" the tension by means of forming new and separate churches. This multiplication has continued so that Vanhoozer can affirm (and decry) the presence of 38,000 different Protestant denominations – almost all caused by forceful insistence on a "new insight" into scriptural truth, privately interpreted. So, the task he sets himself is to respond to critics of Protestant biblical interpretation who say... like Vanhoozer himself to some extent – that it can and sometimes does lead to schism, secularism, and scepticism. The book's subtitle – "Retrieving the Solas in the Spirit of Mere Protestant Christianity" – discloses his method. It is to re-state the five 'solas' as means by which the interpretation of Scripture, and the authority that flows from it, can cease to be divisive and can become constructive and life-giving for the authority, unity, mission and self-understanding of the universal church. Vanhoozer's style is engaging and lively (the Introduction,

for example, is titled "Should the Church Repent or Retrieve the Reformation? Secularism, Skepticism, and Schism – Oh My!"). Other evangelical reviewers note that "Vanhoozer ably proves there doesn't have to be a contradiction between a high view of the church, church tradition, and the Reformational solas" so that this volume becomes a "profound exercise in the most salutary kind of Protestant self-critique." This is a timely and charitably written piece of theological writing. Latimer's British friend, Gerald Bray, writes of it that Vanhoozer "shows how there is still life in these classical formulations and why they should be recovered by the church today. It will be a stimulating discussion starter and will help to shape the evolution of Protestant hermeneutics in the years ahead." This reviewer wishes that we evangelicals in our part of the world were less anti-Catholic in tone and more aware of, for example, the huge doctrinal overlap between us and Catholics – as seen, for example, in the publications of the group 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' (with Jim Packer among the Evangelicals, and all available online) whose publications on Scripture, salvation and even justification, demonstrate this overlap. And the only serious question from me: Is Vanhoozer really sure that the "faith" of the "faith alone" is best translated "faith." Of course "faith" is a thoroughly biblical word but when it translates into the 'easy-believism' of even well-taught Western Christians, surely we miss something. If we put together Jesus' prescription for entering the Kingdom by means of cross-bearing and self-denying *discipleship* with what Paul means by Christ's status as *Lord*, then might not the sola be better expressed as something more like *allegiance* than mere faith? (So Matthew Bates in his recent *Salvation by Allegiance Alone*.)

ADVENTURES IN EVANGELICAL CIVILITY

Richard Mouw (Brazos Press, 2016, US\$24.99, 256 pp, ISBN: 9781587433917)

Quite apart from celebrations of our Reformation heritage, our Kiwi evangelical equanimity will likely be tested by our wider Anglican church this year; we may even be tempted towards ungracious speech and action. If so, here is a volume by an American Calvinist that would urge us towards what he calls a “convicted civility” when talking with those who oppose our views. Mouw has been President of Fuller Theological Seminary for twenty years and previously taught at Calvin College. For several decades he has been one of the most influential evangelical voices in America. He draws on Scripture, common and particular grace, common humanity, the *imago Dei*, God’s revelation in the world (including contemporary culture, and even interfaith and evangelical-Mormon dialogue) to explain his “convicted civility”. The context and some of his concerns are, of course, American but to read, hear and meet Mouw – as your reviewer has done a number of times – is to meet a Christian public intellectual who is both wise, gracious and explicitly evangelical. The parallels with our NZ dilemmas emerge in the anxieties brought about by encountering or having to live with those who see and believe differently. His book suggests strategies for living with this tension, even as he rejects the mean-spiritedness of some fellow evangelicals. The whole book is written with a graceful clarity.

INTRODUCTION TO WORLD CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Derek Cooper (IVP Academic, 2016, US\$18.00, 255 pp, ISBN: 978-0830840885)

An important side-issue in this 500 year Reformation anniversary is: how much of what flows from it are Western issues that ought not to be loaded onto non-Western churches? Some, of course, are utterly biblical but not all are; think, for example, of the confusion among Maori as Protestant and Catholic missionaries testily disputed with one another in the nineteenth century. This is a small but important reminder that it can be difficult for Westerners to understanding Christianity apart from our own Western context – which is why this book is so helpful. Simply put, Derek Cooper points out that there is much more to the gospel than we Westerners grasp. He offers this reminder by means of a careful retelling of how the church actually grew. Part One, ‘Christianity from the First to the Seventh Centuries,’ has chapters on Asia – because Christianity is, literally, a West Asian faith – then Africa, then Europe. Part two, ‘Christianity from the Eighth to the Fourteenth Centuries,’ follows the same pattern. Then Part Three deals with ‘Christianity from the Fifteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries,’ this time with chapters on Latin America, Northern America and Oceania (a rather short chapter) as well as Europe, Africa and Asia. From part three of the book, we see why global Christianity today lives with the consequences of an expansion that was due both to its spread by Catholic missionaries, and its links with colonialism and trade during the age of global exploration; Protestant missionaries only began to go out in the eighteenth century. In other words, in this retelling of the expansion of the gospel, we Europeans occupy three of the twelve chapters and then some parts of other chapters – a reality that helps release us and others from the assertion that

To read this stimulating account is also to be reminded why a number of the world's non-Western Protestants wonder why the issues that spoke most powerfully to a Eurocentric worldview at the Reformation, then helped formulate an *equally* Eurocentric understanding of Scripture and theology.

Christianity is merely a European religion. One novel but helpful feature of the book is the way it avoids a confusion of historical names and shifting national boundaries by using the UN 'Geoscheme for Nations.' Cooper discusses and then decides not to "arbitrate among rival articulations of what it means to be a Christian" as he defines 'Christian' as "anyone who calls themselves so" (19) – perhaps in spite of his own clear evangelical convictions. If readers quibble at his admission that global religions such as Islam and Buddhism influence the actual contextual expression of the gospel in some places, they might reflect on the ways that assorted Enlightenment biases are often used to frame our usual evangelical explanations of the gospel. To read this stimulating account is also to be reminded why a number of the world's non-Western Protestants wonder why the issues that spoke most powerfully to a Eurocentric worldview at the Reformation, then helped formulate an *equally* Eurocentric understanding of Scripture and theology. There is evidence that the missionary insistence that new churches be "apostolic" often became an insistence that they accept formulations of doctrine in thoroughly Western terms. (For those interested in this last point, see a recent volume by the New Zealander John Flett, *Apostolicity*.)

Latimer's Curate

Discipleship and Holiness are two of the buzzwords that have been part of my life in this 21st Century, but I need to keep remembering something important as I try to grow in these Christian disciplines. Something crucial. Jesus said in John 15:3&4:- *"You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."*

Probably the most important word in those verses is the word 'in'. What does Jesus mean when He talks about us being 'in' Him, and He being 'in' us? Because it seems to me that this is the heart of what it is to be a Christian. Discipleship and Holy Living, or 'being obedient' are important, but a Christian isn't only a person who behaves in a certain way. Not even a person who tries to love his neighbour, or tries to live to the Ten Commandments. Nor is a Christian only someone who goes to church. These things are important in the life of a Christian, but being 'in' Christ isn't being joined to Him in a mechanical way, although we can try under our own power to live that way. We're not attached by a piece of number eight wire screwed on with nuts and bolts, like a Meccano set, so that we obey mechanically. I'm sure we are not to go to church mechanically, but because we *need* and *want* to. Surely we shouldn't mechanically get on our knees at the end of the day saying, "Bless me Lord, bless my family and let me have a peaceful night's rest, Amen."

We belong to Jesus, not to the rules of the church, but His rules. It's not wrong to love the family of God, but that must not become what being a Christian means, that's not 'in' Christ. We shouldn't let ceremonies, ordinances or rituals become a vehicle for us earning our way to Jesus, that's not 'in' Christ either. Although I know some people don't think they've been to church if they

haven't celebrated the eucharist. Being the 'community of the baptised' doesn't necessarily tie us to Jesus, let us not confuse the outward sign for the inward grace. We shouldn't become attached to certain worship services, where there's lot of singing and it's great emotional and clean fun, and think that those experiences are what makes us 'in' Christ.

No, Jesus Himself is the Christian's life. Trusting in Him. Speaking to Him. Being with Him. Day by day walking, talking, being guided, led and strengthened by Him. He is the vine and we must be grafted 'in.' Joined organically and not mechanically. It's a living relationship with Jesus Christ, and we must remain there. Abide in Him. Never forgetting that He has saved us. Never forgetting that any fruit we might bear, He has achieved. To Him be the glory. NOTHING is due to us, it all belongs to Jesus. Without Him, we are as filthy rags.

Cranmer understood this. We may constantly feel that we must prove our worth, but the cross of Christ shatters that lie – and remember who the father of lies is! We may fear that we can never make the changes in our lives that are expected, but the Resurrection of Christ conclusively testifies to His power to make all things new. We may feel rootless and estranged, but Christ has promised to prepare an eternal home for His people, even as He prepares them for it.

The following hymn says it all. It's so easy to understand, so that just as Jesus promised, even a child can understand, I think it's imperative that we do.

*When we walk with the Lord in the light of His Word, what a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will, He abides with us still,
and with all who will trust and obey.*

Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.

