



## Latimer Focus

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*Rev. Dave Clancey*

# Editorial

There's a saying that the only person who likes change is a wet baby. Change is difficult for many of us. There can be feelings of uncertainty, fear, and loss. Life becomes unsettled and it takes time for us to get used to the 'new normal', whatever that may look like. But change isn't necessarily bad. Change offers opportunities for things to improve and be better, and presents us with chances for growth in Christ.

In times of planned change (as opposed to change which is completely outside of our control) particularly in organizations or groups of people, the role of the leader is vital. Leaders offer reassurance and direction, they can identify problems and promote solutions. They can project confidence and manage the pace of change, helping people to navigate all the positives and negatives inherent in change in such a way that the very best outcome is achieved. There's a reason that God calls on us to pray for, and submit to, those in leadership over us in the world (1 Tim 2:2) and in the church (Heb 13:7).

Of course sometimes the change that happens is a change in leadership, which brings about its own fears and opportunities. Will our new small group leader/curate/vicar/bishop be as good as our last one? Will they be better? Or worse? Will they allow more or less freedom, give more or less direction? And what direction will they take us in?

Many of us know these feelings well. In the past few months there has been much change in our Province, and much change in leadership. Our President – Rt. Rev. Richard Ellena – has retired as Bishop of Nelson and by the time of publication the electoral Synod will have been held. One of our Vice-Presidents – Rt. Rev. Dr. Peter Carrell – has recently been consecrated Bishop and installed as Bishop of Christchurch. Over the past six months many ordained Latimer members have resigned as Vicars and planted new churches, creating vacancies in existing parishes. And many lay members have felt it necessary to leave Anglican churches in search of new spiritual homes, and new spiritual leadership. On a much more minor note, the editorial leadership of Latimer Focus is being picked up by Rev. Mark Hood – a member of the

Latimer Executive and minister of the new Redeemer Church in West Christchurch.

This edition of Focus has a theme of leadership running through its pages – both reflections on the past and updates on the present. But it is worth noting, up front, that Scriptural 'leadership' is first and foremost about service; serving the one who first served us (Mk 10:45) as we serve those entrusted to us. Such ministry (for the word 'minister' is (arguably), best translated 'servant') seeks to present God's people mature in Christ through the wise teaching and admonishment of the Lord Jesus (Col 1:28). In this paradigm, Christian 'leadership' is only ever middle-management – any authority, example, instruction, vision, or direction must defer to, and be consistent with, the authority, example, instruction, vision and direction of Christ set forth in his word. It is right that we submit to our leaders, pray for them, and do what we can to ensure their work is a joy, not a burden (Heb 13:17). Above all, let us urge and encourage them to hold firmly to the faith once for all entrusted to the saints, passing on to us what they themselves received (2 Tim 2:2).

For with our leaders, we together sit under the leadership of the great unchangeable one. Unlike us, he never changes. He keeps his word. He does what he says. He is, therefore, utterly trustworthy. But the one who never changes is constantly at work bringing about change. Through the ministry of his word and by the power of his Spirit he is changing us into the image and likeness of Christ. He is at work in his church to change us collectively – as we speak the truth in love – to "become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ" (Eph 4:15). He is at work in us individually, in all things, to be conformed to the image of Jesus (Rom 8:28-29).

We are, of essence, people of change, who await that great change when, in the twinkling of an eye, the mortal will be clothed with immortality, and the perishable with that which is imperishable. Until that day, no matter the changes that happen around us, let us humbly trust that the one who does not change is at work for our good, changing us into the image and likeness of our great leader, Christ Jesus our Lord.



## Getting to know the new Bishop of Christchurch

*The Rt Rev'd Dr Peter Carrell, edited by Rev Mark Hood (Photo: Mandy Caldwell Photography)*

**+Peter Carrell has had a long association with Latimer Fellowship, including serving for many years as a Vice President. We congratulate +Peter on his appointment to serve the Anglican Church in these islands as the ninth Bishop of Christchurch, and we commit ourselves to praying for him and his ministry.**



*+Peter at his Ordination service. Standing with +Peter's wife Teresa and his family, is Bev Goodall (far right). Bev is the widow of Bishop Maurice Goodall, former President of Latimer Fellowship. The photo captures the moment where Bev presented +Peter with a pectoral cross that belonged to Bishop Maurice.*

***At a Latimer Lunch in November last year, (then Bishop-elect) Peter generously allowed us to hold an open Question & Answer session, to enable us to get to know him some more, and to get a sense of his upcoming ministry as Bishop. The questions were submitted to the Latimer Fellowship and were then asked of +Peter through Dave Clancey who chaired the lunch.***

***+Peter has generously permitted us to print the following summary.***

### **CONCERNING PERSONAL LIFE**

Latimer Fellowship: Where did you grow up, and how did you come to know the Lord Jesus Christ?

+Peter Carrell: I grew up in Christchurch in an evangelical Anglican Vicarage with my father (Bishop Brian Carrell) and mother (May). With this background, I knew from the beginning that I had to make my own decision for Christ, and I had a sense that I was resisting Him. In 1971 at a Scripture Union holiday program at Riverton Rocks, Southland, I prayed a prayer of commitment. This proved to be a decisive moment.

LF: Looking back, what were key formative moments in your Christian walk?

+PC: To name just four: One was moving from Dunedin to Christchurch, into Bryndwr parish (St. Aidan's), with good mentors. Another was getting involved with the Christian Union at Canterbury University. A third was being disciplined by Derek Eaton and others when I lived in Cairo; and a fourth spending three

years back in Dunedin, studying at Knox Theological Hall and worshipping at St Matthew's Church.

LF: What led you to ordained ministry? (paternal pressure!?)

+PC: A number of people assumed I'd follow my father. And when I moved to Knox, they were saying things like, 'Oh so you'll be a minister then?', but at that point I didn't have such a conviction. It all changed one night in the Highfield vicarage, Timaru, thanks to Paul Hammond prompting me.

LF: What do you see as the role of a bishop?

+PC I think we need to move away from the metaphor of 'fire-fighter' that someone recently suggested to me! In particular, I see the role of Bishop containing a mixture of oversight and foresight. Oversight meaning as shepherd to God's people and pastor of the pastors. With the Bishop's involvement in oversight groups such as Standing Committee and the Church Property Trustees, comes the privilege of seeing the bigger picture. At best, the Bishop is helping connect people and ministries at this big picture level to enable good ministry outcomes.

The role also contains an element of foresight: of looking ahead to where the church needs to go and being prepared to make decisions in the present that move such a direction. This seems especially relevant at this juncture in the life of the Anglican church in NZ and the western world, where church attendance is not growing etc.

### **CONCERNING GSTHW 2018 MOTION 7**

LF: Has the change brought about by Motion 7 had the effect of diminishing the Formularies (which state marriage is between a man and a woman) by allowing the blessing of same-sex unions?

+PC: Possibly. I think we need to assess what "diminish" means over the course of time eg, over 5-10 yrs. We also need to ask ourselves whether exalting our formularies has the

effect of diminishing the worth of people in our church.

LF: I understand that you don't like the charge that M7 permits "false teaching" - but if you believe the orthodox/evangelical position, how does Motion 7 not allow false teaching?

+PC: I think the wording here is tricky. M7 permits two different views and one of those views thinks the other is false, so logically, M7 permits false teaching. But I have said that I don't like the charge that M7 means 'the teaching of this church' is false.

Either way, I think the true/false teaching contrast can be applied and then criticised; but generally most of our church is comfortable with the understanding that on a matter of difference in human sexuality there are different views in the church and these are permitted to co-exist within the one church (as, indeed, other strongly different views are permitted to co-exist).

However, I think the pastoral implications are even more important. Increasingly, as I continue to reflect and to discuss what has happened through 2018, I am becoming more and more convinced that our response to homosexuality ought to be as a pastoral matter and not a doctrinal matter. The question before us is not whether we are tolerating false teaching but whether we accommodate different responses to the complexity of human sexuality. We handle the remarriage of divorcees not as a matter of doctrine, but of pastoral practice. If it were a matter of doctrine we would not, like Roman Catholics, remarry divorced persons. But in fact, many of us do remarry divorcees. Jesus' and Paul's teaching is remarkably clear on these matters but we Anglicans have generally accepted that we cannot reasonably apply that clear teaching in the reality of our world.

LF: In terms of the blessing of same sex marriages and the future course that this initiative is likely to take, do you have a red line that you will not cross? Is there a

point which is too far away from Scriptural authority that you would feel you need to separate/lead the Diocese out of the voluntary compact, either: a) with regards to doctrine in general (Christology, exclusivity of Christ etc), or more specifically b) regards sexuality and marriage?

+PC: Yes, I do have a line. No, I am not going to spell out in a verbal statement what that red line would be! I think if I were pressed on this point, (and if there were moves to go further than same-sex blessings), I've said I believe we've gone far enough as a church and my intention is to say, 'this far and no more'.

LF: Would you accept a candidate for ordination, who states from the outset that they are not prepared to bless a same-sex marriage and that they will agitate and teach that the church is wrong to permit such blessings to occur?

+PC: I want to answer this very carefully: I am absolutely prepared to accept a candidate who is not in a position to accept same-sex marriage. I am not prepared to accept someone who would agitate in the Diocese in the direction of further disaffiliation. Such a move is now beyond our bounds: it's too difficult and painful, and if a candidate signalled this, I would have to decline.

It's worth saying: The polity of our church has now changed. This means future candidates for ordination and incoming clergy considering appointments will need to signal, probably in writing, that they understand, accept and will minister within the new polity. The key word here is agitate. We can't support a situation which is agitating against the new polity within a parish. This is not to silence debate, which can absolutely still occur through our Synodical processes. It is simply to say, we have a new environment that we need to work within. Otherwise we face ongoing, painful disruption at the parish level, and we can't support that. We have to build for our unity and accept our differences within this new polity.

LF: An observation is that things in NZ have been remarkably friendly (as opposed to in dealing with this matter in other provinces). Why do you think this is so?

+PC: One reason is, we've been disturbed to see how unfriendly this matter has been handled in provinces such as North America. Another is, we're a small country and we know each other closely. At the same time, not every conversation has been easy. I've had some tough conversations as have others.

LF: Where did the impetus for the Motion 7 change come from?

+PC: Not from any one group. Mostly from sympathetic clergy and lay leaders especially in Auckland and Waipapu and Dunedin who have wanted to take up this cause in the name of justice. Over a long period of time the church has said, in effect, 'there is something here that is right and proper concerning affirming gay and lesbian Anglicans in our church'.

LF: If in future General Synods there is a motion to go further and permit same-sex marriage, would you support that?

+PC: I'd vote against that.

LF: What should clergy teach concerning sexual practice? Given that we live in a highly-sexualised world, what is appropriate to teach and what is inappropriate to teach?

+PC: To put this in simplest terms, I would say, 'don't teach it in a sermon'. The reason is, I find sexual matters are so sensitive, that even when we speak carefully, we have no idea who is hurting. If it were to be taught, I'd advocate setting up a well-prepared workshop with other helpers around. My own pastoral experience leads me this way. I would always want to talk up marriage and faithfulness in marriage. But I'm also conscious of wanting to focus on those questions people have, rather than



the 'answers' that I bring. I also want to give people the freedom to make their own decisions and not respond because I said this or that.

If we have to start somewhere, I want to teach that sex is the deepest intimacy between two people, which God has reserved for the greatest commitment between two people and that is marriage.

At the same time, we need to be careful that we cope with human frailty. And for the sexual desires and desires for love and commitment that same-sex attracted people experience. Historically, the church has not had a positive effect on homosexual people when it has suppressed such love. I want to ask: how can we support those couples in the church?

LF: You've said there's an extremely high bar for blessings to take place - could you explain what this means and what things you would be taking into consideration in permitting such blessings?

+PC: The high bar is that blessings taking place in a ministry unit do not diminish the common life of that ministry unit. Right now, in the Diocese of Christchurch very few ministry units fit that criterion and it is difficult to envisage many doing so in the foreseeable future.

### **CONCERNING MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF CHRISTCHURCH**

LF: What are you hopeful about looking forward in the diocese?

+PC: That we can regenerate (grow younger); that we will see new Christians join us. If we have not made such changes to grow younger, then in 15 years time we'll be out of business.

LF: How will you view the disaffiliated Anglicans? Are they authentically and genuinely Anglican or are they just another ecumenical partner?

**"The one core teaching about the church in the New Testament is that the church is one. Anglicanism, authentic and genuine, is always desperate to find ways to reunite the divided churches, praying with our Lord that we may be one."**

+PC: We are in a time in which our understanding of "authentically and genuinely Anglican" is under review. Who decides this? Three things check me easily and readily agreeing that every claimant to being Anglican is "authentic and genuine":

One: something ringing in my ears from our Maori bishops is that in these islands we are authentically and genuinely Anglican not only when we are historically connected to our forebears, the missionaries who established the Anglican church here, but also when we are currently connected in a Gospel and Treaty based relationship with Tikanga Maori - with Te Haahi Mihinare. I do not see that connection being continued by those who have chosen the path of disaffiliation.

Two: Being Anglican is about being church, it is an ecclesiological claim and the one core teaching about the church in the New Testament is that the church is one. Anglicanism, authentic and genuine, is always desperate to find ways to reunite the divided churches, praying with our Lord that we may be one.

Three: I suggest authentic and genuine Anglicanism flows not only from Cranmer but also from Hooker. That is, such Anglicanism is tolerant of difference, eager to flow with differences, not feeling a need to settle them, and certainly not by disaffiliating in favour of one end of a spectrum of views.

I am, therefore, hesitant to use the words “authentic and genuine” of an Anglicanism that has disaffiliated from the Anglican church because disaffiliation implies a lack of Anglican regard for the unity of the Body. But, as I said at the beginning of my answer, what it means to be Anglican is under review and over the next decade there will be clarity.

LF: You have worked in the Diocese for a long time and know it very well. In which specific areas would you like to see new churches?

+PC: To speak of “new churches” in 2018 in Canterbury is to consider first geographical areas where there are no or few churches: housing developments in Wigram, Rolleston, Prestons and so forth. As a Diocese we have thought about these areas, but we have not engaged much, apart from some first steps being taken in Rolleston. Then secondly “new churches” is also about new style churches – churches which emerge from missional communities. (Missional communities are developing in places such as Bryndwr, Burwood and Sumner). Incidentally this emerging movement is not Diocesan led but we can and will bless it as a Diocese.

LF: Following on, what steps will you proactively take to plant new evangelical churches?

+PC: Recruit evangelicals or challenge evangelicals to be church planters.

LF: What place do you see for the Latimer Fellowship in the current Anglican landscape?

+PC: A meeting ground for evangelical Anglicans within and without ACANZP but I notice that most of the Vice Presidents and the President are within and most of the Executive are without!

LF: How can we best be praying for you?

+PC: Daily!

*We thank +Peter very much for his openness and willingness to participate in this Latimer Lunch with his customary joviality and also to permit us to publish the details here – Editor*





# In appreciation of +Richard Ellena

**When Richard Ellena was elected to become the tenth Bishop of Nelson, it seemed to me an absolute no-brainer.**

*Rev. Andrew Burgess*

Sure, there were other candidates, and sure, some people would vote for those other candidates, but it seemed absolutely clear to me that Richard would be elected. The reasons why I was sure he would be elected are interesting here, because I think they inform things that are important about him as a Bishop.

At the time of being elected, Richard was Vicar of the Church of the Nativity, Blenheim. This church had grown very significantly during Richard's time, and especially when his leadership combined with that of another very able person indeed, Rev Mark Chamberlain. Richard led with a clear sense of mission and with lots of passionate self-giving – when I worked with Richard, I found him to be a tremendously hard worker and very committed. Richard is also enormously gifted – highly engaging and also able to utilise his great musical ability. Most fundamental though is this: all these gifts were harnessed in service of the good news of Jesus, and Richard knew very well the difference that had come about for him when the Lord moved him into a biblical and theologically orthodox understanding and life. God's work in Richard's life left him very strongly committed to an evangelical position.

For me, the tremendous leadership he had shown in growing one of the largest Anglican churches in the country, with lots of genuine mission and outreach involved, his hard work and commitment, and his evangelical conviction made it obvious that the Nelson Diocese would choose Richard to succeed +Derek Eaton.

It is these commitments, and +Richard's character, that I am most grateful for in his episcopacy. +Richard maintained his

**" +Richard's leadership and encouragement – his belief in God and in God's power to enable mission – is not to be downplayed in helping Nelson Diocese keep the task of mission front and centre."**

commitment and worked hard, even though ill health intervened. There is a great deal that +Richard did that I never saw, and no-one could see it all, except perhaps Hilary and +Richard's PA, Anita. +Richard engaged openly, personally, but also fearlessly, in national Anglican settings – he certainly couldn't always 'win', no one could, but he was there, he didn't run away or give way, and he worked hard. Richard worked to stay connected and to offer support to evangelicals across Aotearoa-New Zealand and in the Pacific.

At the same time, he sought faithfully to lead Nelson Diocese in orthodoxy and in genuine mission. Our diocese is no paragon, no shining city on a hill, but in a time when many dioceses in Aotearoa-New Zealand have been in free-fall decline, Nelson has maintained worshipping numbers – growing in some areas and declining in others, but holding across the board. +Richard's leadership and encouragement – his belief in God and in God's power to enable mission – is not to be downplayed in helping Nelson Diocese keep the task of mission front and centre. In the midst of all that goes with being a Bishop – all the meetings, the hassles, the personal attacks even, the pressure to get your head around a dozen issues and the pressure to solve very significant problems – in all that goes on, +Richard still managed to connect into the local community, still managed to engage in outreach and mission himself.

Finally, I am grateful indeed for the support +Richard unceasingly gave Tim Harris and then myself as leaders of Bishopdale College. +Richard strongly carried the vision for a College in Nelson to train and upskill emerging Anglican leaders and folk from many other local fellowships. +Richard's faith in Jesus undergirds his faith in the Church, and that is what +Richard brought to overseeing and supporting the work of Bishopdale. It means a lot to me, to have had that faithfulness at my back.

As I conclude, I am mindful to remember that service in God's kingdom is not a competition – we don't need to be compared to others to be worthwhile. However, I will rate +Richard as a great person and a very brave and faithful servant of Jesus, at personal cost and through thick and thin, and that is worth celebrating and appreciating highly indeed.

*+Richard Ellena retired as Bishop of Nelson on 31 December 2018.*



*Richard Ellena.  
Photo © Christ Church  
Cathedral, Nelson*



# Character is king: as we seek to raise future leaders

**It is not only the church who look for future leaders. Any and every organisation that seeks to pass the baton - be it a political party, local dairy, golf club or school board - has the continual task of recruiting. Even a Growth Group (or small group which meets around God's word and prayer) periodically faces the question: who will be our next leader?**

When faced with the question of recruiting, what are the right criteria to be applying in the search and identification of a possible future leader? What would rule someone out? What would confirm that a person is the right fit?

The Apostle Paul gives us something of a recruiting tutorial in his pastoral letters: 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. He says, 'And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.' (2 Timothy 2:2)

This raises both immediate and longer term questions as we think about future leaders. In the immediate sense, we're drawn to ask what constitutes a 'reliable' (or 'faithful' as the NRSV translates the term) person in practice? If you're on the phone talking to the referee who knows the particular candidate, what questions do you put to them? Do you ask about capacity for work? Getting along with people? Whether they pass on the faith well? Whether they keep the office kitchenette clean? There are many questions that could be asked. Which are the questions to focus on in the moment, when you have a potential candidate?

There is also the longer-term sense: How does a church (or any organisation) seek to operate so as to raise up future leaders for five, ten and fifteen years' time? What ought to get focus and attention today for the sake of leaders tomorrow? Obviously, a prayerful dependence on God is a must in every context. What steps might be taken in addition?

In this article, I argue for the supremacy of character in considering future leaders. Arising from a workshop at a ministry conference, the article is less 'theological treatise' and more 'putting our principles into practice'. I write it thinking about the varied recruiting situations many of us find ourselves in: from serving on boards of nomination, to raising up a children's ministry co-leader, to finding the next Treasurer, or even considering who might serve as a ministry apprentice next year.

Ahead of considering leaders, there is value in articulating two assumptions concerning the body of Christ whom leaders seek to serve.

## **Assumption 1: The inverted pyramid**

Our world positions leaders at the very top of the hierarchy, in some cases high above the clouds. An Otago University longitudinal study shows that 'chief executives were now paid 30 times more<sup>1</sup> than the average wage. The thinking appears to be that the leader is most to be honoured. Anecdotal evidence suggests we might even find such thinking in the church: in one place, I'm given to understand that once the size of a church reaches 3,000 people, the pastor is given a Mercedes-Benz to indicate his special status.

But the Lord Jesus says, "not so with you". On the contrary "whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all." (Mark 10:43-44). While the world has leaders looking down from on high, the Lord Jesus completely inverts that entire scheme, having leaders look up in service of the people of God.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.odt.co.nz/news/national/ceo-pay-increases-five-times-average-rate>

The inverted pyramid of Christian ‘hierarchy’ then, has the pointy end at the bottom (the servant leader) and the wide part of the pyramid at the top (the people of God). In the kingdom of God, the priorities are all different and the values all change. The people of God have been bought with the precious blood of Christ and so the Christian leader’s highest calling is to serve God’s precious people.

#### **Assumption 2: The power for ministry**

The other surprising assumption is that God willingly employs ordinary people to grow the body of Christ and advance the kingdom of God. It is an extraordinary act of power and grace that God would so come down to our level and entrust the work of ministry to people like us to love, care for, serve and extend his people for his glory. This point reminds us of the true source of gospel power: ‘But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.’ (2 Corinthians 4:7). From these two assumptions we turn to consider leaders.

#### **THE THREE CS**

Given the importance of the body of Christ and the significant bearing a leader’s priorities bring to a church, there is merit in having wide requirements and high standards. It is therefore quite difficult to avoid a job ad (for example, for a new minister) sounding like it’s seeking a super-hero.

One useful way of bridging this challenge is applying the ‘The Three Cs’ as a way for prioritising the non-negotiables alongside what is realistic. The Three Cs<sup>2</sup> are an attempt at summarising key criteria for possible candidates. These being: Character – what a person is like; Convictions – what a person believes; and Competencies – what a person, in God’s strength, is able to do.

It’s a set of summary criteria that accord well with the Apostle Paul’s priorities to Timothy: ‘watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers’ (1Tim 4:16). It is also valuable for a recruiter because it enables breadth of consideration of a person, whilst focusing attention on what matters most. Moreover, in identifying all three, it correctly implies interaction between each – what we do flows out of what we believe; and what we’re like as a person flows out of what we believe about God and ourselves.

While there is much value in exploring each of these C’s, for the purpose of this article, I want to concentrate on the first C, because it is my contention that character is king.

#### **CHARACTER AS KING**

Of all the traits Paul instructs Timothy to look for in recruiting overseers and deacons, his lists are dominated by character traits ahead of competencies. Such a person must be ‘above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money...’ (1Tim 3:2). While the list demands a competency to teach, greater by far is the emphasis placed on selecting someone with beautiful, demonstrable Christian character.

While in this article we’re assuming Christian convictions inform and shape Christian character, the fact that there are three C’s trains us not to assume in practice.

Hamilton argues for character as king, because he says ‘character colours everything’<sup>3</sup>. What a person is like ‘off-duty’ will influence how a person serves when they are ‘on-duty’. While our politicians and world leaders might decry their personal lives as

<sup>2</sup> These criteria are suggested by various people including Marshall and Payne, *The Trellis and the Vine* (Matthias Media 2009) and Hybels, *Axiom: Powerful Leadership Proverbs* (Zondervan, 2008) and more recently Hamilton, *Wisdom in Leadership* (Matthias Media, 2015)

<sup>3</sup> Hamilton, *Wisdom in Leadership*, p47

being irrelevant or off-limits, the Lord inverts such thinking when we see the prominence and importance given to Christian character in the scriptures.

In character, we have the collection of all that a person is: what one values, what one strives to be like, what one seeks to avoid, and seeks after. Character is formed over a much longer time than a particular skill. Where one could progress in how to hit a tennis backhand in an afternoon, it takes a much longer time to learn patience or self-control<sup>4</sup>.

The case for character as king can also be seen in reverse, when a leader does ‘the right thing’ but with wrong motives. In such a case, the rightness of the action is void. The Lord Jesus castigates such hypocrisy when he says, ‘this people honours me with their lips while their hearts are far from me’. (Mark 7:6).

The centrality of Christian character for potential future leaders is evident in the context of suffering for the gospel. Paul writes that Timothy is to ‘Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus’ (2Tim 2:3). While convictions and competencies come into play here, chiefly it’s a person’s character that will enable such persistent endurance.

If we exchange Christian character for the word godliness or piety, we hear Calvin seeking for the same when he writes: ‘I call ‘piety’ that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces. For until men recognise that they owe everything to God, that they are nourished by his fatherly care, that he is the author of their every good, that they should seek nothing beyond him—they will never yield him willing service. Nay, unless they establish their complete happiness in him, they will never give themselves truly and sincerely to him.’<sup>5</sup>

**"The centrality of Christian character for potential future leaders is evident in the context of suffering for the gospel. Paul writes that Timothy is to ‘Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus’ (2Tim 2:3)."**

From Calvin here we again notice that alongside character, convictions are crucial. But for the purposes of this discussion it’s the primacy of character in the selecting of leaders that we’re considering. This has immediate application in the recruitment process. In addition there are implications in the longer term.

#### **GROWING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER?**

Along with the immediate recruiting task, the question of growing Christian character is therefore also an important part of any church’s longer term work of growing disciples.

To this end, we’re faced with the question: How are our churches seeking to grow godly character in our people? Notice that this is both a personal question, how does one grow as a servant to all (cf. Mark 10:43-45) as well as an even more stretching corporate question: how to grow the body of believers in beautiful Christian character? It is also both a specific question (i.e. how does a church grow in, for example self-control?) as well as a broad question, how does a church ‘participate in the divine nature’ (to use Peter’s phrase in 2 Peter 1:4).

At least four points seem relevant for equipping ‘jars of clay’ to be used in gospel service:

<sup>4</sup> Paul’s instructions to Titus demonstrate the point. While older men are urged ‘to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance’, younger men are urged only to ‘self-control’ v6. The implication being young men just need this one thing to work on, while older men are expected to have made progress having more qualities to work on in addition to self-control.

<sup>5</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion* I.ii.1

**"The 'one-another' language of the New Testament reveals the expectations that Christian relationships are not shallow, but robust, close, open and accountable."**

### ***Commending beautiful Christian character***

As the apostle Peter encourages the church with the knowledge that God has given us his divine power and precious promises so that we have everything we need to grow in godly character. Therefore, he urges the church to 'make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Here Peter brings to our attention various facets of beautiful Christian character<sup>6</sup> and commends us on in striving for greater Christ-likeness with the promise of fruitfulness in the Christian life (v8). We are given this 'effort-ful' endeavour by our Lord.

### ***Open and accountable relationships in the church***

The 'one-another' language of the New Testament reveals the expectations that Christian relationships are not shallow, but robust, close, open and accountable, for example:

- Be devoted to one another in love (Rom 12:10);

- Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Eph 4:32)
- See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. (Heb 3:12-13)
- Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. (1Peter 4:9)

Through such relationships Christian character is forged, when we open ourselves to be servants one of another, with the kind of willingness that permit a brother or sister call us to repentance, or call us on to greater love.

### ***Practising a high bar for Christian leadership***

If we are to seek future leaders marked with growing Christian character, it is all the more obvious that those of us already in positions of Christian responsibility and service will be personally examining ourselves (2 Cor 13:5) and responding to the word of truth which corrects, sharpens and equips (2 Tim 3:16-17).

At the same time, we'll be people who won't turn a blind eye to disqualifying factors. While confronting particular sins is hard personally, it would seem that our churches and denominations find it even harder to address besetting sins in its leaders, preferring rather to overlook than to confront. Paul's charge to Titus for elders to be 'above reproach' (Titus 1:6) ought rather to lead us towards practising high standards with one another, and not shying away from direct questions on occasion.

<sup>6</sup> To which we might add with passages such as Galatians 5 'the fruit of the Spirit' and the aforementioned Pastoral Epistles, especially 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 2 Timothy 2 14-3:5 and Titus 1:5-9 along with Proverbs 31 - an ideal believer.



### *Suffering in the Christian life*

While suffering is not sought, nevertheless it seems to accompany the Christian life. When Paul writes to the Philippian church he goes so far as to say 'it has been granted to you to believe in Christ and also to suffer for him' (Phil 1:29). So worthy is Christ, that to suffer for his name is a privilege!

It's interesting from Romans to see how such suffering leads to a growth in Christian character: 'we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us. (Rom 5:3-5)

Here then are at least four ways, that in the providence of God, he refines Christian character into greater and greater Christ-likeness.

### **CONCLUSION**

Future leadership matters because the Lord has charged us to guard the good deposit entrusted to us (2 Timothy 1:14) by passing on the faith to reliable people who will teach others also. That makes our processes for finding and selecting leaders vital.

We've seen that in the immediate process of recruitment, out of character, convictions and competencies, character is king because character colours everything.

In the longer-term work of raising future leaders we've identified some of the many ways that God by his word and Spirit and through his Spirit shapes, develops and refines Christian character. Which means we're right to welcome teaching, accountability and even suffering for the way God uses such things for his people's good.

In closing, two points of prayer you might bring to the Lord:

1. Ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up and send out workers into his harvest field.
2. Is there someone you can identify at this time, who you might pray for and approach to suggest that they consider some form of Christian leadership and service?



Rev. Andy Carley

## Leadership lessons from the life of Charles Simeon (1759–1836)

**“You know what your problem is? You think the world owes you a living.” I was nineteen when those words were said to me, and they stung. At the time I felt that everything and everyone was against me, but with a few years and little more perspective, I came to be grateful for this tough love from my friend.**

Ours is a world where we crave comfort, and seek as little suffering as possible. So strong is this impulse that we find it alive and well in the church including among the clergy, even when the Scriptures lead us to anticipate difficulties (Phil 1:29). How many Ministers in their private reflections unwittingly expect their labours to be straightforward and sermons readily praised? How many pastors find themselves tempted to step back from the fray in the face of criticism and opposition<sup>1</sup>, thinking “If that’s the way they feel about me, then I’ll just find another church”<sup>2</sup>? We too easily forget the words of James to ‘Count it all joy, my brothers, when you fall into various trials’ (James 1:3).

Charles Simeon, a minister in the Church of England at the turn of the 19th century, was one who was able to endure opposition, counting it joy, for the sake of seeing the gospel advance. His was a gospel tenacity that we do well to remember and by challenged by, even as we face trials of various (different) kinds today.

### EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION

Simeon was born into a reasonably wealthy family in Reading, England in 1759, the youngest of 4 brothers. His father was a lawyer and wasn’t interested in the church, and it appears that his mother died soon

after he was born as she is not mentioned in his memoirs.<sup>3</sup> Much like today, the world in which Simeon lived was in a state of constant turmoil and change. During his life he would witness the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic Wars, all of which must have had an impact on the psyche of the people to whom he ministered.

After boarding school at Eaton, Simeon went to Kings College in the University of Cambridge as a Kings scholar, which provided the accommodation that he was able to remain in for the rest of his life, and a stipend which enabled him to not be concerned about having an income. Over time, and after initial hostility towards him, he became a highly respected member of the college he was elected dean of the college three times, and vice provost once.

### CONVERSION

Shortly after Simeon arrived at Cambridge, he learned he would be required to attend the Lord’s Supper: the thought terrified him. He later wrote ‘... the thought rushed into my mind that Satan himself was as fit to attend as I, and that if I must attend, I must prepare myself for my attendance there.’<sup>4</sup> So began a work of God to turn Simeon from a concern for his own pleasures to a concern for God

<sup>1</sup> John Piper, ‘Brothers, We Must Not Mind a Little Suffering - Meditations on the Life of Charles Simeon, 1989 Bethlehem Conference for Pastors’. Accessed 15-04-2018, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/brothers-we-must-not-mind-a-little-suffering>.

<sup>2</sup> John Piper, *The Roots of Endurance – Invincible Perseverance in the Lives of John Newton, Charles Simeon, and William Wilberforce* (Crossway 2002) P. 79

<sup>3</sup> Derek Prime, *Charles Simeon – An ordinary pastor of extraordinary influence* (Day one publications, Leominster, UK 2011) P. 14.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, P. 22.

himself. He recorded the events of the following Easter:

In Passion Week, as I was reading Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect — "That the Jews knew what they did, when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering." The thought came into my mind, 'What, may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an Offering for me, that I may lay my sins on His head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer.' Accordingly, I sought to lay my sins upon the sacred head of Jesus; and on the Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on the Thursday that hope increased; on the Friday and Saturday it became more strong; and on the Sunday morning, Easter-day, April 4, I awoke early with those words upon my heart and lips, 'Jesus Christ is risen to-day! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!' From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul; and at the Lord's Table in our Chapel I had the sweetest access to God through my blessed Saviour.<sup>5</sup>

That his conversion came about at all is a testament to God's initiative in drawing people to himself, against seemingly impossible odds. In the early years Simeon didn't get any help or guidance about living the Christian life but evidence for his conversion can be seen in his changed lifestyle as his well-known extravagance gave way to a simplicity of life. His private life was marked by prayer and meditation on the scriptures<sup>6</sup> which prepared him well to the main calling on his life. In May 1782 he was ordained Deacon in the Church of England.

**"His private life was marked by prayer and meditation on the scriptures<sup>6</sup> which prepared him well to the main calling on his life. In May 1782 he was ordained Deacon in the Church of England."**

### **HOLY TRINITY CHURCH AND THE UNWANTED VICAR**

In October 1782 Simeon was appointed 'curate-in-charge' of Trinity Church, Cambridge.<sup>7</sup> There was only one problem, the parish didn't want him. They wanted the existing assistant curate instead, writing to the bishop to tell him so. Simeon was willing to step aside, but Bishop Yorke told him that even if he did decline the appointment he would not appoint the existing curate. So Simeon was appointed and preached his first sermon at Holy Trinity Church on 10 November, 1782, and there he remained for the next fifty-four years.

As you might imagine, the congregation were less than pleased about this and obstructed his ministry at every opportunity... for the next 12 years! For example, the church Wardens refused to let him preach the Sunday afternoon sermon, assigning that ministry, first to their preferred Vicar for five years, then to another for a further seven years. When Simeon started a popular Sunday evening service the church Wardens were having none of it and locked the doors of the church while the people stood waiting in the street. Simeon had to content himself with the morning service, but even then, there was sustained opposition. In the days when

<sup>5</sup> Moule, P. 20.

<sup>6</sup> Piper, Roots of Endurance, P. 83.

<sup>7</sup> Moule, P. 33. In his memoirs Simeon tells us that he had often walked by the church and said to himself, "How should I rejoice if God were to give me that church, that I might preach the Gospel there and be a herald for Him in the University"

pews had gates on them and parishioners could 'rent' their pews, the pewholders stayed away from his services, locked their pew gates, refusing all use of them. To get around this Simeon set up seats in the aisles, all purchased at his own expense. Even parish visiting was obstructed, when he tried to visit parishioners in their homes, hardly anyone would let him in. How many ministers at this point would give up and move on? But not Simeon. He felt called by God to Holy Trinity and let his steady, relentless ministry of the Word and prayer and community witness gradually overcome gospel resistance.

But opposition wasn't limited to those first 12 years. In 1812, after Simeon had been at Holy Trinity for 30 years, opposition reared up once again. But instead of giving up, he endured patiently and in 1816 he writes that peace had come and the church is better attended than ever.<sup>8</sup>

### **OPPOSITION FROM THE UNIVERSITY**

Simeon didn't only face challenges from office holders in the church. Some students arriving for university were so opposed to Simeon's biblical preaching and his uncompromising stand as an evangelical, that they repeatedly disrupted his services. Any students who were converted under Simeon's ministry were soon ostracized and ridiculed by their peers, pejoratively called "Sims". Even the university lecturers made life difficult to attend church, one going as far as scheduling his Greek classes on a Sunday night.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS**

Despite all the years of opposition to his ministry Simeon never lost faith in his calling

to preach the gospel to those who would listen. He devoted himself to teaching and raising up young men for service in the church. He organised regular sermon classes and 'tea parties' for Students in his rooms at the university<sup>9</sup> and is said to have trained over 1100 ordinands, in effect providing the only ordination training in the Church of England at that time.<sup>10</sup> The widespread renewal of the Church of England came about, largely, through the continued flow from Cambridge into churches all over the country.<sup>11</sup>

But the training of young men for ministry wasn't Simeon's only concern. Because of his place in the upper and middle classes of British society he and others he knew in the 'Clapham Sect' were able to influence the government in areas of social reform and the provision of physical and spiritual resources for the poor, both in Britain and overseas. They did this through the establishment of mission agencies such as the Church Missionary Society, the Bible Society, the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and through his involvement with the London Jews' Society.<sup>12</sup>

### **A LONG ENDURANCE**

Considering the trials faced by Simeon we might wonder how he managed to cope.

#### *A deep sense of calling*

He believed that, first and foremost, he was accountable to God for his care of those around him, whether they liked him or not. Simeon certainly wasn't timid when it came to addressing the rights and wrongs of the congregation. Ultimately, he wasn't concerned about what people thought about him as they weren't the ones who'd given him

<sup>8</sup> Piper, 'Brothers, We Must Not Mind a Little Suffering - Meditations on the Life of Charles Simeon, 1989 Bethlehem Conference for Pastors'. Accessed 15-04-2018, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/brothers-we-must-not-mind-a-little-suffering>.

<sup>9</sup> Prime, P. 71

<sup>10</sup> M. Warren, 'Charles Simeon' Churchman Vol 92 No 2 (London, Vine Books Ltd 1978) P. 112

<sup>11</sup> Paul A Carr, 'Are the Priorities and Concerns of Charles Simeon Relevant for Today?' Churchman Vol 114 No 2 (Watford, Church Society UK 2000) P. 164

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, P. 164

his task, he'd been commissioned by God, not them. They were, however, his responsibility, and he wasn't about to give up on them at the first sign of opposition or trouble.

### ***Dealing with criticism in person***

When criticised, Simeon didn't withdraw feeling sorry for himself, brooding over what he might say to his opponents, instead he dealt with it by refusing to listen to rumours and sought to speak to those who oppose him face to face. These days, our first response is often to resort to emails or social networking sites to bolster our defence, thus driving each other into our respective corners. Not that this spared him from years of criticism, 'but it was surely one of the means God used to overcome the opposition in the long run.'<sup>13</sup> And at a time when many were leaving the Church of England to join the non-conformists, it was Simeon who provided a moderating voice, urging his fellow clergy to show kindness to those who oppose them.

### ***Not a lover of money***

Although by some measures a wealthy man, Simeon ensured that money never had any hold over him. Modelling biblical principles, he lived simply and gave all his excess income to the poor of the community - thus ensuring that his enemies no foothold when it came to lifestyle and wealth.

### ***A sustaining devotional life***

But perhaps the greatest habit that Simeon developed was a deep personal devotional life in his times spent alone with God. He got up at 4 am, whatever the time of year, and devoted the first four hours of the day to private prayer and the devotional study of the Scriptures. One who stayed with him wrote of this saying "“Never did I see such consistency and reality of devotion, such warmth of piety, such zeal and love... Here was the secret of his great grace and spiritual strength.

Deriving instruction from such a source, and seeking it with such diligence, he was comforted in all his trials and prepared for every duty.”<sup>14</sup>

## **WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM SIMEON FOR TODAY?**

Whenever we look for inspiration from the past we do well to consider the different times we live in. At the same time, sharing as we do in the period after Pentecost and ahead of the Lord's return, there is great overlap and therefore plenty to learn from the example of one who long-endured. From Simeon, I offer six reflections to help us count it all joy, when we face trials of various kinds:

- i. **Seek a devotional life that stirs up your love for God.** Seeking to know God with warmth, piety, zeal and love takes time, space, diligence and persistence. Such love and instruction yields grace and strength and comfort.
- ii. **Desire the godly life, shunning worldly passions.** Let nothing of the world have a hold on you. Live as simply as your circumstances permit, and hold earthly things lightly, whether they be material possessions or worldly passions.
- iii. **It is the Lord God you serve.** Whether in a regular job, or serving as a ministry leader, remember that it is God who called you, God who establishes you in the work, and God who will sustain you through suffering. Popularity isn't necessarily a sign of faithfulness to God. Prefer always to please God, not man.
- iv. **Keep true to God's Word and teach the people faithfully.** God's word is productive, even on the hardest of soils. Consider Simeon: 15 hard years, 1100 ordinands trained. The numbers don't matter. The effect of the word of God is what counts. We all have Bible ministry

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Moule, PP. 66-67.

opportunities, whether over a cup of coffee, in small groups, or from a pulpit. Work to hear God's word consistently.

**v. Love your neighbour – and your enemies too.** Handle issues personally, humbly, contritely, graciously. Be pastorally aware, seeking to love the person. Be theologically gentle, seeking to love the person into the word of God, rather than away from it.

**vi. Be mission minded.** Have a vision for evangelism, mission, training and social action. Tell people about Jesus and recognise the needs of others, doing what you can to help.

Count it all joy, my brothers and sisters, when you fall into various trials, being spurred on by the gospel tenacity of a man like Charles Simeon.

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# A new Anglican structure in 2019

**It is fair to say that it has been many decades since the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ACANZP) has seen anything like the upheaval caused by Motion 7, passed by General Synod/Te Hinōta Whānui in May 2018.**

*Rev. Dave Clancey*

Since then, members of six ministry units (including clergy and parishioners), from three different dioceses, have formally voted to disaffiliate from the Province. Another four clergy have resigned to start church plants, and other clergy have resigned their licenses. Additionally, an unknown number of Anglicans have felt they have had to leave their churches because they cannot, in good conscience, remain within existing structures. The effect on dioceses and remaining parishes has been immense, and there is grief about the pain and disruption that has occurred.

Those who have disaffiliated (and the new churches planted), as well as those who are considering disaffiliation in the future, have been discerning God's guidance and considering how they can continue the teaching and practice which the Anglican Church maintained prior to May 2018. There is a deep desire to work together to see God honoured, the gospel expand, churches flourish, and Anglicans grow in their love and knowledge of God. To this end, representatives of those who have disaffiliated met twice in late 2018 to consider how a new expression of Anglicanism might emerge in these Islands. They were men and women from large and small parishes, urban and rural locations, encompassing many styles of churchmanship. With the prayerful support of people near and far, they met to consider the way forward.

At the first meeting (August) it became clear that the formation of a new Diocese, with local episcopal leadership, outside the existing Provincial structures of the ACANZP, would be the best structure. Since this first meeting and agreement, work has been ongoing in the formation of a new yet-to-be-named Diocese.

**"There is a deep desire to work together to see God honoured, the gospel expand, churches flourish, and Anglicans grow in their love and knowledge of God."**

The second meeting (in October) saw continuing discussion on these matters, and the establishment of seven core principles for the new Diocese. These are set out on the FCANZ website:

"The new expression of Anglicanism will be, firstly, grounded on an authoritative Bible. The prayerful proclamation and preaching of, and living in accord with, the Scriptures will be a priority. This is because these Scriptures declare to us Christ and his Cross – the second core principle. It is Christ and him crucified which will be at the heart of the mission and ministry of the Extra-Provincial Diocese (EPD). This drives the third core principle: that evangelism is essential. Love for God and love for others compels us to share the great news of Jesus in every way possible. New churches and new methods and new ministries will be employed to reach all people groups with the gospel. And as God is faithful to his word, we long for and humbly expect God to grow his people. That is why deliberate discipleship is the fourth core principle of the EPD, where we want to see people growing in their love for the Lord and for each other and seeing the fruit and gifts of the Spirit being exhibited in their lives. The breadth of the EPD means robust relationships (the fifth core principle) will be vital to our common life as we seek to express the unity we have in Christ, speaking the truth in love. This will be expressed within

an ecclesial structure which is authentically Anglican, building on the foundations of our faith entrusted to us and seeking to express appropriate breadth and generosity under the godly leadership of a bishop. Undergirding all this will be persistent prayer – God’s people humbly and expectantly seeking him to work in and through us by the power of his Spirit for the glory of his Son.”<sup>1</sup>

By the time of publication, these representatives will have met again, to discuss the details of a Constitution and core canons for the new Diocese, as well as consider a name. The projected timeline would see the legal formation of the new Diocese, as well as the election and consecration of a Bishop, by the end of the year.

Latimer members can be found worshipping in disaffiliated churches as well as those remaining in ACANZP. They are involved in diocesan leadership in the Province, and in the leadership forming the new Diocese. While this is an unprecedented time (in this Province), what a wonderful opportunity for the Latimer Fellowship to pray and support biblically-faithful, evangelical ministry wherever it is found.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://fcanz.org/communication>



# Keith Mitchell: A Tribute

**Keith Mitchell 1930-2018 (NZCMS in Pakistan, 1958-1993)**

## 1. THE EARLY YEARS

Keith came to a personal faith in Christ, while at Papanui High School in the Crusaders Class led by Jim Cross. He obtained a BA at Canterbury University 1956 & after missionary training in England went to Pakistan, initially learning Urdu. He told his life story in "Out of St Martin's". It was at St. Martin's, Spreydon under Roger Thompson, that Evangelical expository preaching moulded his life and ministry, so aptly encapsulated in Micah 6:8: 'He has told you O man what is good; & what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy & to walk humbly with your God.' This was the Scripture that he asked to be read in his Memorial Service at the Transitional Cathedral in Christchurch on 25 October 2018.

## 2. HOSTELS

In 1961 Keith became Evangelist to the Quetta Hospital and later in the same year married Joan Larsen, an American teacher at the Murree Christian School, where he had helped. When a hostel was proposed for young men from Pakistani Christian homes, the Mitchells felt led to offer to run it. During the winter, when the hostel was closed Keith delighted to teach at the Bible Training Institute. Later he was ordained in the Church of Pakistan in 1981 at a Service, when Bishop

Max Wiggins, then the NZCMS General Secretary was in Pakistan. For one academic year after that time Keith was Travelling Secretary for the Tertiary Students' Christian Fellowship in New Zealand, before returning to Pakistan.

## 3. A TRIBUTE

Since returning from Pakistan in 1993, Keith went back to visit three times. He wrote:

In 2000 it was a privilege to attend a tribal convention held in Mirpurkas. It was wonderful to see various tribal groups worshipping and eating together. This would never have happened in the pre-Christian days when cultural barriers had kept them firmly apart. Faith in Christ brings people together!

## 4. LATER YEARS

Though Keith had health problems in his early years in Pakistan and a serious motorcycle accident later, he and Joan continued with hostel ministry. Keith assisted in a Christchurch parish before retirement. They have been very much involved in the local parish, as well as at CMS and Latimer Fellowship gatherings in Christchurch. He is remembered as living out Micah 6:8.

*Well done good and faithful servant!*

*Photo: Keith Mitchell  
Written by: Rt Rev.  
Henry Paltridge*



Jackson Burt

## Book Review

### PREACHING & PREACHERS

*D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones*

This book is not for the faint-hearted. It is not an easy, before-bed kind of read. It is challenging, entertaining, and frustrating – and sometimes all at once.

The book will, however, revive your concern and reverence for word ministry. You cannot read this book and think that preaching is an optional extra for the church. Lloyd-Jones makes it clear that preaching, as the cure for the world's greatest need, should be central to everything the church does. All ministry hangs off the work of preaching, “the highest and greatest and the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called.”

I have been thoroughly challenged by the way Lloyd-Jones views the importance of word ministry, and forced to examine my attitude and approach towards my own work for the Gospel. Do I truly understand the seriousness of facing eternity without God? Do my actions reflect a deeply-held respect for the privilege it is to proclaim God's good news in this desperate world?

Ministry is not a job you do because, ‘maybe you might be good at it, and why not?’ The calling is far too important for that kind of indifferent attitude. No, ministry is the work of proclaiming God's gospel, to rescue people from the wrath that all humanity is helplessly and deservedly facing. Ministry is the great privilege of being an ambassador for God, proclaiming the good news of the risen Lord Jesus, God's offer of salvation to all who turn to, and place their trust in, Him. Nothing in this world is more serious, or of more consequence, than this. Indeed, we are engaged in work of eternal consequence.

Bold assertions are frequent in ‘Preaching and Preachers’, catching the reader off-guard.

This is intentional. Lloyd-Jones is a master of hyperbole, stating his point provocatively to force the reader to seriously consider the argument he is making. His deliberate overstatement and presentation of matters in black and white – there is no grey area for Lloyd-Jones – helps the reader to see the significance of the topics he is addressing.

While his provocative writing style will impress upon you the importance of his subject matter, you are likely to find yourself disagreeing with his applications. Now I am not saying that you will disagree with his main claim that preaching and word ministry is of supreme importance in ministry. Nor that you will disagree with him that preachers should therefore dedicate a considerable amount of time to studying God's word and preparing sermons. I am certain we can all agree on this principle and application. However, some of Lloyd-Jones' applications of this principle are painted in extraordinarily black and white terms, such as his view that, in light of the supremacy of preaching, personal work is a waste of time.

If you share my experience, at times you will find yourself deeply frustrated with this hardline approach. However, this approach actually serves to stimulate the reader to consider how Lloyd-Jones has come to the conclusions he has. The principles behind his provocative statements are amplified, becoming clear as he builds his case with reasoning and examples. We come to understand his unapologetic dogmatism. Returning to the example above, why be so tough on personal work? Surely one-to-one ministry is valuable, and it is. But we are forced to decide whether it is as valuable as preaching. By challenging our view of personal work we consider its merits relative to preaching and, in doing so, Lloyd-Jones increases our appreciation of preaching. I

**"Ministry is the great privilege of being an ambassador for God, proclaiming the good news of the risen Lord Jesus, God's offer of salvation to all who turn to, and place their trust in, Him. Nothing in this world is more serious, or of more consequence, than this."**

can assure you, this book contains far bolder claims than this example, which will push you to reflect on your own approach and the principles that shape your ministry.

Lloyd-Jones writes, *"Every preacher should believe strongly in his own method; and if I cannot persuade all of the rightness of mine, I can at least stimulate them to think and to consider other possibilities."* I challenge you to be frustrated by the bold assertions of this book, that by examining your own method in light of these, you too might have your reverence for word ministry revived.

## Latimer's Curate

### **GOSPEL ACCOUNTABILITY**

We all know that holding people accountable for their behaviour is vital for the health and safety of church communities. So why is it so hard to do and so often avoided? Of course, a big part of the problem is due to the unpleasant nature of the task—we are all hard-wired to seek harmony and shun conflict. It's a rare breed of Christian that delights in seeking to bring accountability.

#### ***Gospel standard***

Yet I wonder whether there are also other factors involved. With so much talk of being a “broken” people and accepting people “as they are”, I wonder whether our reluctance to hold people accountable is also due to a confusion as to the standard of behaviour we expect of ourselves and others. Ordinarily, the standard should be set by the Gospel itself: God's holiness expressed in love and mercy towards sinners through Jesus Christ. This is the standard we see reflected throughout scripture. So, for instance, the Apostle Paul instructs the Philippians to live in a way that is “worthy of the gospel of Christ” and not as “enemies of the cross” (Philippians 1:27; 3:18). Or, again, the Apostle Peter tells the churches of the dispersion to “rid yourselves of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy, and all slander” and “conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles”—to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:16; 2:1; 2:12). This is to be our gospel standard of accountability as well.

#### ***Healthy churches***

Only by exercising gospel accountability can we expect to maintain the health of our church communities. The trouble is that in today's church another standard seems to be in operation: tolerance. Tolerance in our ears sounds better than holiness, for holiness implies a harsh and judgmental note in modern minds. When in Acts 5, the Apostle Peter held Ananias and Sapphira accountable for their lying, a part of us wants to side with the hapless couple: “Really! Was what they

did really so bad? The outcome seems a little extreme!” At this point the modern prophets also raise their voice, “Oh that's the Bible for you! People didn't know any better then. But now the Spirit is teaching us to tolerate the foibles of others—after all, we are all broken people.” It makes sense to most people: “Why can't we all just get on and be nice to one another?”

The trouble is that tolerance is a very poor substitute for holiness; and niceness can never replace mercy. For in the end, tolerance is really just indifference towards the plight of others (let alone the Lord); and niceness simply makes us complicit in the sins of others by our silence. On the other hand, holiness is motivated by love for a brother or sister who has erred or fallen into sin; and it is our compassion towards others that compels us to speak a word in season. We will be a holy people but never harsh, a merciful people but never complicit. Only holiness expressed in love and mercy toward sinners can ensure the well-being of the church.

#### ***Effective mission***

But gospel accountability is also essential for the mission of the church. If we only use the standard of tolerance, our churches will only ever be able to reach out to the so-called “beautiful people” of this age. For tolerance is powerless to deal with the grime of real life and the disfigured nature of our humanity. Holiness, on the other hand, displays the transforming power of the gospel. The gospel takes what we “used to be” and washes, sanctifies, and justifies us “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor 6:11). It is the holy gospel that transforms us from ugly sinners into beautiful people of God. Gospel accountability allows our churches to thrive (and not implode) as we reach out to a world in need. Think of the example of Jesus: he did not tolerate sin, yet he sat with sinners. He didn't mince his words, yet he spoke with compassion. The modern church, with its false standard



**"We will be a holy people but never harsh, a merciful people but never complicit. Only holiness expressed in love and mercy toward sinners can ensure the well-being of the church."**

of tolerance can only embrace the Pharisee standing in the temple. Holiness, on the other hand, is able to embrace the tax-collector standing at a distance.

### ***Godly fear***

I suspect that at the heart of the matter is a fear of the world rather than of God. When people think that the standards of holiness are too harsh, they are really implying that God is too harsh. When speaking the truth in love is considered rude and inappropriate, all we have done is exchanged holiness for hypocrisy. Holding people to gospel account will not endear us to the world—but it will bring forgiveness and restoration to a brother or sister in Christ who receives our rebuke with a humble heart, and joy in remaining in the faith.

When the Apostle Peter held Ananias and Sapphira accountable, a godly fear seized the whole church. As leaders in today's church, we need that same sanctifying fear: Jude 1:22-23 puts it like this: "Have mercy on some who are wavering; save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies." It is just such a godly fear that should motivate gospel accountability in our churches – one to another. It's never nice to be called to account by another, yet we affirm that this also is gospel love. It doesn't feel tolerant to bring accountability to another, yet we know that those who reject a brother's call to holiness are in grave danger of rejecting God himself.

