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'Our life [is] given back to us in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. [...] History since Christ bears the mark of that in Christian civilization.'

O. O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order*, xiv.

PIPER, ST PIP'S AND PARADIGM SHIFTS

THE *Oxygen II* CONFERENCE IN LATE AUGUST MAY NOT be the only sign of leadership coming up for air in Sydney in 2011.

Katoomba Christian Convention has built the conference around John Piper, advertised as a 'recognized leader of world evangelicalism', and Dr John Lennox, professor of Mathematics at Oxford University and Christian Apologist (<http://www.oxygen.kcc.org.au>). Aiming particularly at those in Christian leadership, *Oxygen II* has all the features of the big events that have been run for decades: the overseas great ones, the large venue, the big crowds, large-budget advertising, 'media hype' well before the event. And, like many such conferences before it, it promises to be a great help for those who wish to suck in some air to keep them at the task of Christian leadership. Perhaps timely, as this task is getting harder in modern Australia.

In the midst of the beat-up for Piper, advertising for a new conference also appeared, much more quietly. The *Sydney and Anglican: A Fresh Look at Mission* conference (<http://afreshlookatmission.weebly.com>) will be held in June and hosted by a small inner-city parish church, St Philip's, York Street. All the speakers are local, and lean towards the 'younger statesman' end of things. Simply by virtue of those on the platform, this local-church conference hints towards the paradigm shift that is about to bring us the future.

It is not the first time local churches in Sydney have held conferences to assist good conversations about theology and ministry. St Paul's Carlingford is also about to hold its third *Nexus* conference—in-house encouragement for those associated with its circle of ministry. It will be looking at the importance of the doctrine of the church for a new day. Amongst the range of speakers, Mark Thompson will be revisiting the so-called Knox-Robinson teaching that has been so influential in this city. Given the importance that ecclesiology accords to the local congregation, it is perhaps surprising that local church conferences have not been more of a feature of Sydney Church life.

With the well-controlled larger platforms so difficult to renovate, as a new generation of leaders comes up for air, perhaps more such local church conferences will emerge. And so they should! Local teachers, addressing local needs, region by region. That doesn't sound too bad at all. ●

This local-church conference hints towards the paradigm shift that is about to bring us the future.

REAL RICHES

Steve Carlisle



OKAY, I’LL ADMIT IT, I’M ONE OF those guys with an iPad. It was a gift. Not that saying this gets me off the hook. I like it, I really do, its user friendly, convenient, and most of all, makes me look more important than I really am. However of recent days, I have come across a problem. My iPad

has a scratch on the screen.

Right
in the
middle.

Now, maybe there is a solution to my problem. But even if there is a solution, all I feel at the moment, is sadness, dismay and hopelessness. You see I like my ‘stuff’. That is why Proverbs 11 is such a rebuke to me. Verse 28 of that chapter says: “Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.”

Do I spend as much time thinking and dreaming of righteousness as I do my toys, and trinkets, and wealth, for even though it seems obvious, not many live with this reality in mind: “Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.” (Proverbs 11:4)

At my worst I believe that to thrive, and even be

delivered from death is something my possessions and wealth may grant me. According to these verses, though, all I need to thrive, and beat death is, righteousness.

A righteousness which Romans 3:10 says belongs to no one,

not,
even,
one.

While our wealth, possessions and iPad’s might brings security, and fulfillment for a time, they do not offer the righteousness we need to thrive and be delivered from death. Neither does good living, nor does great morality. We need righteousness. But there is a righteousness available to us, as Romans 3 goes on to say: “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

Wealth and possessions are worth nothing on the day of wrath. But a righteousness from God in the Lord Jesus is on offer, a great and glorious treasure which is graciously given to us in the death of Christ.

May we be people who trust in the provided righteousness of Christ and not in our “stuff”. 🍌

FLOODS, FRUIT – AND CHURCH

Alison Blake



IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE RECENT floods, did the fruit and veg in your local fruit market look a bit dodgy?

A local food writer, suggested the best thing we could do was stop being picky and start thinking “spots are good, blemishes are great, the odd bruise is okay”.

Isn’t that the mindset we should have towards God’s people? In his wisdom, God fills our churches with people just like us — damaged and bruised. With some of us, our spots and blemishes are on the outside for all to see. For others, the bruises are internal, not always visible. In his perfect wisdom God builds his church with those he has chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph 1) and equips his church with all the people gifts we need to be the body of Christ (Eph 4).

At the moment, we can’t expect our fruit markets to be full of export quality fruit and vegetables. The church of God however will always be full of sinful saints and damaged disciples. We bring with us into the kingdom the

bruises of our past. And we’ll likely suffer more bruising as we go on serving the king.

So how should we think of your church family?

Trust God that he has wisely, generously and carefully provided your church with exactly the right people to build his kingdom, his way, in your corner of his world. Thank him for them. Learn to value them.

Remind each other that your church’s weakness, imperfections and stuff-ups serve to highlight God’s might, wisdom and mercy to humanity. It’s right that Christ should be seen to be more glorious than us!

And since we’re vulnerable, damaged and weak, be caring, loving and patient with each other. Expect that you’ll need to forgive others, and to be forgiven yourself!

The imperfections of our church family are our God-given opportunity to display to the world the generosity, love, kindness and mercy of God, in action.

And next time you’re turning a bunch of mushy bananas into muffins, thank God and pray for the church he’s placed you in! 🍌

EDITORIAL

THE ONES WITH EARS TO HEAR, LET THEM ... CRITICIZE!

CRITICISM OF PREACHING HAS BEEN A FAVORITE pastime since the Garden of Eden ('Did God really say?' ... 'but God knows...'; 'you will not die!'). Since hell is a state of perpetual sin (Mark 3:29), presumably such an activity will be around long into eternity!

In early Sydney, sermon criticism was as rife as in any age. Mrs Macquarie apparently said she preferred Rev William Cowper of St Philip's, anywhere else than in the pulpit. On the other hand, his congregation thrived on the same preaching for 48 years. W.P. Crook had nothing good to say about anyone else's preaching, but in the cold light of years now past, we have to ask whether his kind of severity was more his problem than theirs—after all, as an independent minister he was rather put out that he didn't have the ministry the Anglicans had handed to them on a plate! It was usual for many ministers to read sermons written by other people (like rebadging a podcast today), and there were printed sermons with a variety of styles and theological viewpoints. The evangelicals, like Samuel Marsden, filled out one of Charles Simeon's sermon outlines published for this purpose. This practice opened up a whole new vista for criticism: that they read someone else's sermons; that they read the *wrong* someone else's sermon.

Criticism of preaching arises from many different motives and causes in the *hearer*.

Personal and psychological issues are part of the picture. "I don't like what he said, because": it isn't what I would have said; I don't want to hear such things; I don't like someone else getting the 'glory' in the congregation; etc etc. All sermon listeners are damaged people, and damaged people damage other people—often with that most brilliant of all weapons, the tongue (Prov 18:21, 'Death and life are in the power of the tongue'). Preaching

is just inviting trouble!

But there are seriously problematic spiritual reasons for this as well. The devil is anti-word, he snatches away the word of the kingdom almost as soon as it is spoken (Mark 4:15), and there is nothing better to do this than encouraging a sermon-critical spirit. The world is also anti-word (1 John 4:1–6), greeting it with indifference, amusement, mockery, or contempt (2 Peter 3:3–4). To complete the trifecta, the human heart is also anti-word, subordinating God's interests to its own, evaluating God in the light of human traditions, thus keeping him far away (Mark 7:6–13).

Okay, there may (occasionally?) be problems with the preacher, or with his sermons. Even the apostle Paul had his bad days and attracted his critics (2 Cor 10:1, 10). But with all these problems with the *hearers*, even with perfect preaching, criticism of preaching will not go away any time soon. And, unfortunately, since the grace of God comes through the preaching (in a variety of forms), criticism can become a blockage to receiving its transformative power.

Perhaps in these days of podcast sermons from all over the globe, we are in a new era of sermon listening. If listening to sermons is on the increase, then so is the need for improving our *hearing*.

The training of preachers is a very important task. But equally important—if not moreso—is the training of its *hearers*. (for Jesus' attempt, see Mark 4:1–34). ●

All sermon listeners are damaged people, and damaged people damage other people—often with that most brilliant of all weapons, the tongue.



The Australian Church Record has served Sydney Synod for over 100 years, seeking to promote independent and evangelical thinking amongst Australian Anglicans. See our recent issues at www.australianchurchrecord.net

The Australian Church Record is an evangelical newspaper in the Reformed Anglican tradition of the historic creeds and the 39 Articles of Faith, and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written,

and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

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Influence

MUSINGS ON LEADERSHIP

Phil Colgan



THERE'S A LOT OF TALK around the circles I move in about leadership at the moment. There seems to be a feeling that we need stronger / better / more visionary leaders if we are going to continue to grow our churches. As we look for men to lead our parishes and, in the not too distant future, a

man to lead our Diocese, there is much discussion as to the type of leaders we need.

My difficulty in such discussions is that I am not certain what we mean by leader and leadership. That is, what are we looking for in such men? There are many secular studies and books written that focus on the attributes of an effective leader. We can learn a great deal about effective methods of leadership from such studies. However, when I read them I cannot help but think of the way Jesus contrasted Christian leadership with that of the world (Mark 10:42-45). So while I see the logic of these studies in theory and practice, I cannot help but think that Jesus did not want us to look for the same attributes in our leaders as our world looks for in its leaders. Am I alone in my difficulty here?

Instead I wonder if we might be better off changing the focus of our thought (and our language) from leaders and leadership to influence and influencers. I doubt whether the Apostle Paul would have been seen as an effective leader measured by many modern standards; he certainly

suggests that the world saw him as unimpressive in many ways. However, what he did do was have an impact on others through his teaching and example (1 Cor 11:1).

When I look at the people who have shaped churches and ministries (as opposed to simply led them) they have many and various leadership styles. Many would not be out of place at the helms of large companies, others would not be considered twice for such a role. What they have in common is that people are willing to follow them: their teaching, their direction and, most importantly, their example. They are influencers of people.

When we say that we want a 'leader', I fear that we are likely to look for the wrong sorts of characteristics and only look for the same men that our world looks for. Instead, I wonder if we should ask questions like:

- is this a man who influences others?
- is this a man that other people turn to for advice?
- is this a man that other people are willing to listen to?
- is this a man who people will follow the example of, as he follows the example of Christ? 🍌

I cannot help but think of the way Jesus contrasted Christian leadership with that of the world.

HERITAGE FILES

MOORE COLLEGE: VICTIM OF TERRORIST ATTACK

Mark Earngey



THE RECENT DEATH OF OSAMA BIN Laden reminded me that Moore College has had its own brush with terrorism! At 3:45am on the 23rd August 1972, two battery ignited petrol bombs were set off next to the Cash Chapel and an anonymous call placed to the Mirror newspaper stating:

"The People's Liberation Army has just set alight Moore College." The target was Dr. Jacobus Vorster, moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa, who was

attending a conference at the college. The phone call continued: "We are trying to kill Vorster in protest against South Africa's racist policies."¹ Unfortunately for him, Dr. Vorster was a marked man—he was also the brother of the South African Prime Minister. Fortunately however, there were no casualties from the amateur explosives—a malfunction caused tremendous flames but no explosion. The terrorist strike at Moore College was thus routed by the brave Canon Robinson and his long garden hose! 🍌

Note

1. "Bomb in College Grounds." In *The Daily Mirror*, 23/8/72

ACR READERS ADD TO THE ARCHBISHOP 'SHOPPING LIST'

THE ACR's 'SHOPPING LIST FOR A NEW ARCHBISHOP' has been added to by a recent 'straw poll' conducted by way of an internet survey.

613 active clergy/ministers listed in the yearbook were invited by email (some bounced), and 118 responded by taking the survey. At 19%, this is not a great take-up, although not bad as a first-run, and it may improve in our next attempt. Perhaps it was too early for some—even some respondents commented as much. Another observation is that some of our questions could have had more clarity. Nevertheless, those who responded have contributed usefully to the rising conversation. Some of the results will be published in this and future issues. The laity have not been surveyed, but they will be invited to do so shortly.

Group:	Invitations	Responses	%
Men over 40	398	72	18%
Men under 40	168	33	19%
Women over 40	28	6	21%
Women under 40	19	7	37%
Totals:	613	118	19%

Invitations and Respondents to Survey by category

One question asked about the desirable personal qualities in the next Archbishop: 'The Archbishop's personal qualities should include: [list some key ones; order of 1-5 to rank importance]'. (The priority given to the qualities are not indicated in the table below).

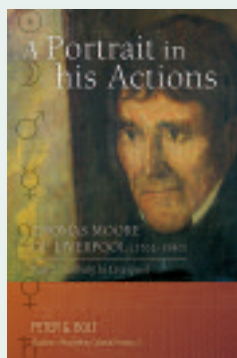
This question elicited a very long and wide-ranging list of such qualities, but there were several which stood out in terms of the frequency they were mentioned. (NB the actual language used in respondents' comments may not be the same as the particular generic categories under which they are now listed):

Quality	M 40+	M 40-	W 40+	W 40-	Totals
Godliness	46	22	4	2	74
Theologically astute	41	15	3	3	62
Good preacher & teacher	32	13	3	1	49
A (visionary) leader	20	12	0	4	36
Humble	14	5	2	5	26
Prayerful	12	4	2	1	19
Pastoral & Relational	9	10	3	2	24
Wisdom	9	3	1	3	16
Mission minded	8	9	2	1	20
Courage	8	2	0	0	10
Faithfulness	6	5	0	0	11
Management abilities	6	4	0	0	10
Personable	5	5	4	3	17

Qualities mentioned >5 times by M 40+ category, correlated with other respondents



LOCAL HERITAGE



A Portrait in his Actions. Thomas Moore of Liverpool (1762-1840), Part 1: From Lesbury to Liverpool

Peter Bolt's new biography of the Benefactor of St Andrew's Cathedral, the Diocese of Sydney, and Moore College.

Books from ... <http://www.boltpublishing.com.au>

LOCAL CHALLENGES



Lord's Supper In Human Hands. Epilogue

On the eve of Sydney Synod, October 2010, Peter Bolt, Mark Thompson & Robert Tong published an Epilogue to *The Lord's Supper in Human Hands* (2008). Sydney's discussion of lay and diaconal administration of the Lord's Supper has occurred for some forty years. After a related legal question was referred to it, the Appellate Tribunal handed down an opinion in August 2010. This legal opinion needs to be set within its proper context, and the biblical-theological discussion about the issue needs to continue.

Books from ... <http://www.australianchurchrecord.net>

THREATS TO JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH

Mark Thompson



F'EDERAL VISION' IS THE NAME given to a readily identifiable, yet rather small, 'movement' within Reformed Theology in the United States. Its origins are usually traced to the 2002 Auburn Avenue Presbyterian Church Pastors Conference.

The Federal Vision stance on the doctrine of justification by faith is often associated with writing on the subject by Norman Shepherd, a former professor of Westminster Theological Seminary, and with N. T. Wright, a proponent of 'the New Perspective on Paul'. All three positions have raised serious questions about the classic Protestant form of this doctrine.

Four significant problems arise from the way some of the Federal Visionists speak about justification.

1. The concern to insist on the indispensability of Christian obedience appears to lead to an inflation of the definition of faith so that it includes obedience. Martin Luther famously insisted upon good works as the necessary consequence of our justification but most definitely not a condition of our justification. Calvin wrote that while faith alone justifies, the faith that justifies is never alone. However, many Federal Visionists go further and routinely qualify the word faith, as 'obedient faith', 'new heart faith' or 'living faith'. Here the debt to Norman Shepherd's theology is often openly acknowledged.

2. The same concern risks conflating justification and sanctification. These two doctrines are inseparable, but distinct and confusing them leads to unbiblical conclusions on both sides, and bad consequences in Christian living.

3. This confusion is heightened by the way some practitioners speak of the final judgement. This is perhaps best exemplified by an article by Rich Lusk on what he calls 'future justification':

Paul never says that a bare faith will be sufficient at the last day. Instead, he insists that only a faith that works through love will avail for the final, hoped for justification (Gal. 5:5-6). He never says faith substitutes for deeds at the last day. Instead, he says, deeds are necessary as the fruit and evidence of faith, so that we


*can be established in blamelessness and holiness at the day of reckoning (1 Thess. 3:12-13). The apostle never says that our initial justification cancels out the need for a future, final judgement. Instead, he says the goal of final salvation remains contingent on conditions which are yet to be fulfilled (Phil. 2:12-13; Col. 1:22-25) ... All that to say: in the final instalment of our justification, there is a very real sense in which works will be the decisive factor. ('Future Justification: Some Theological and Exegetical Proposals', in *A Faith that is Never Alone*, pp. 317-318)*

Such statements seem to run counter to what Jesus meant when he said 'It is finished' (Jn 19:30) and 'whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.

He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life' (Jn 5:24); or what the apostle Paul meant when he said 'There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:1).

4. The picture is even further complicated by some developing a notion of 'corporate justification' and associating it with the visible, objective reality of the covenant community.

The confusion that these suggestions introduce into the biblical doctrine of the justification of the ungodly (Rom. 4:5) by faith apart from works (Rom. 3:28) has been repeatedly recognised by those in the same confessional camp as the Federal Visionists and by others as well. Despite protests to the contrary, it is not difficult to recognize striking resonances with some presentations of the New Perspective on Paul and even with Roman Catholic doctrines of justification.

Like other threats to justification, the confusion introduced by Federal Vision strikes at the heart and motivation of the Christian life. Undermining justification, undermines assurance. Undermining assurance saps the Christian life of its spiritual energy. 

Many Federal Visionists go further and routinely qualify the word faith, as 'obedient faith', 'new heart faith' or 'living faith'.

This is an abridgement of four posts on Mark's blog, see <http://markdthompson.blogspot.com/2008/07/federal-vision-i.html>

A PROPHET WITHOUT HONOUR

SHIBBOLETHS OLD AND NEWFANGLED

Mark Earngey



It's interesting how our past helps us think about our future. Whilst reading through the D.B. Knox archives in the Moore College library recently, I came across a letter addressed to Canon Knox from Bishop Cameron with a tantalising and timely paragraph:

"It is not easy to discern from the Scriptures, a theology of the ministry and relate it to the institutional church, and yet, I feel, that if this were done realistically and without the use of old shibboleths which are meaningless to a new generation, something of permanent value would be laid in the minds of men."

As a young Anglican candidate for the Diocese of Sydney, there are plenty of 'old shibboleths' you hear about the traps concerning ministry in the Anglican denomination: *it's a good boat to fish from, you just need a pulpit to preach from, and so on*. Now, these are not meaningless statements — this old pragmatism conveys a lack of confidence in the Anglican heritage, which leaves young Anglican candidates like me questioning the value of taking up ministerial office within the Anglican denomination.

Perhaps the trend-setters are tempted to re-envisage, or re-mythologise, or re-create new shibboleths to put in

place of the old ones? Yet the tiring proliferation of the prefix "re" in pop-Christianity should be enough to warn us against that. The next pragmatic shibboleth will vanish when the next cultural breeze blows through.

So, if neither an old nor a new pragmatic shibboleth is helpful, I wonder whether the 'new generation' would prefer simply to retrieve its Anglican heritage? After all, the interests of this new generation not only look to the future, but all things 'vintage', 'retro', and 'old-school'. The keen interest by the 'new generation' to attend the upcoming conference explicitly entitled "Sydney and Anglican" perhaps confirms it.

Archbishop Donald Robinson once wrote: "If the theology of order and ministry in our formularies is sound and biblical, as I believe it is, we should be guided by that, and not by what one of our formularies calls 'newfangledness'.¹"

The two quotes above remind me that the Gospel-laden riches of our Anglican heritage may prove a great treasure available to a 'new generation' rightly suspicious of newfangled shibboleths. At least, that's the way it seems to this 'new generation' believer. ☺

Note

1. "What Theology of Order and Ministry Do the Anglican Formularies Teach?" in *Donald Robinson: Selected Words, Vol 2*. Page 412. Camperdown, N.S.W.: Australian Church Record, 2008.

THE RHETORIC OF CHANGE

Peter Bolt



THE BABY BOOMERS ARE ABOUT TO retire and die. It is difficult to know whether the world will ever recover from the damage they have done to the world. One of the key things that they operated with was the rhetoric of change. The usual scenario is to declare that 'this time is a time of

unprecedented change'. This can only be declared, of course, with a profound ignorance of history. What period wasn't a period of change? Change is a fact of life, isn't it?

But if you believe the present is 'a time of unprecedented change', then you keep on banging the same drum that we have to move forward, get rid of the past, move into the future etc etc etc. But the question to ask is simple: where to?

The thing the baby boomers haven't been strong on is the direction towards which change is going. It has been a

time of revolution, but never a positive society shaping direction. There has been no movement forwards, just a movement away from. In other words, even though it has the rhetoric of revolution, it is really the reality of reaction.

The rhetoric of change needs to be resisted. It needs to be resisted by a simple question: why should we change? And what for? Where is this change going to? Change for changes' sake simply produces instability. And there is nothing Christian in instability.

The rhetoric of change needs to be replaced with the rhetoric of stability, faithfulness, steadfastness, solidity. That is what our world now needs. This is what the gospel works towards. ☺

What period wasn't a period of change? Change is a fact of life, isn't it?

GOD AND THE VAGARIES OF LIFE

Christopher Pears

I suppose any job has elements that are beyond your control, but with the sort of work I used to do before becoming a minister, that was certainly minimized. I was a computer programmer, and that's your ideal controlled environment. The customer tells you what they want the program to do, and you write the computer code to make it happen. I suppose along the way you can have computer failures, electrical blackouts and customers who change their mind, but all in all, it's pretty straight-forward. By and large it's a case of reaping what you sow—you put in the effort, you get the results.

Which meant that it was quite an education for me when I moved to the country. It's funny that we use the expression "reaping what you sow", because when it comes to farming, that's certainly not always the case. That's one of the jobs where you can work as hard as you like, but if the weather's not in your favour it can all come to nothing. I certainly saw plenty of that, living in northwest NSW through the recent 10 year drought.

Which brings me to a farmer called Mitch. I could always tell that we'd had a dry spell (other than by just looking at the dead grass in the back yard), because Mitch would come along to church and ask me to pray for rain. Now this was good in a way. It was great that he was acknowledging that God was in control of the weather. It was great that he understood that we could pray to God and he would listen to us. But I did wish Mitch could have had more time for God when there was plenty of rain about. The ups and downs of farming life certainly gave some a greater awareness of God, but what folk like Mitch really needed was encouragement to stay with him, through the good times and the bad.

For us in the city, we can learn from the farmers about the vagaries of life. As much as we'd like to think otherwise, we really don't have things under control. We do well to help people understand this. And we do even better as we encourage them to stay with Jesus. 🍷



LEARNING FROM OZ SLASH JONAH

Scott Blackwell



IN THE *Wizard of Oz*, DOROTHY becomes transported to Kansas during a tornado, and in her attempt to find her way back home, she is joined by three unlikely companions: the witless scarecrow, the cowardly lion, and the heartless tin man. Each of these three join Dorothy's quest with a mission of their own. While Dorothy hopes to regain Kansas, the Lion hopes to gain courage, the Scarecrow hopes to gain intelligence, the Tin Man hopes to gain a heart to love. I recently came across a picture of the Tin Man on the Internet, coupled with the caption: "Just because you have a heart that doesn't mean you care".

The caption caught my attention for two reasons: First because I was preparing a sermon on Jonah 4 and it seemed to speak brilliantly to the state of the heart of that prophet. Second, because as I thought on it, I wondered if it did not also capture something of the complacency that lies behind much of my attitude to evangelism and mission work.

Every church wants to be active in evangelism and mission. But sometimes one gets the distinct feeling that these two high priority gospel enterprises are an inconvenience—they are the things we *have to do*, but they are rarely the things we *love to do*. For all our big talk, sometimes we just don't care about those around us who are, in truth, perishing. We just want to be left alone—comfortable and content, not pushed, provoked, challenged or cajoled. Evangelism and mission are hard work, requiring planning, preparation, courage and, above all, a compassionate love for the lost.

From the comfort of our well-molded chair on the *inside of the kingdom*, reaching out to others seems such a pain. We have a heart,

but we just don't care—or at least not the way our Father does. How quickly we forget, and how much like the prophet Jonah we become. It was a great shock to Jonah (and Israel) to discover that God was not just their Lord alone, but the Lord of every nation. He was the mighty judge who holds every nation to account, and the great redeemer who could save any nation that found favour in His sight (Jonah 3). They were an enemy of Israel and a city under the heavy hand of God's judgment, and yet by their hearing and believing the promise of God, they discovered themselves graciously spared from horror.

The unmerited love and grace of God in Christ can touch anyone whom God is pleased to touch. If this is true, perhaps we should think again about our attitude to evangelism and mission—or at least revisit our prayer lists. 🍷

"Just because you have a heart that doesn't mean you care".