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# essentials

Summer 2020

EFAC AUSTRALIA

Essentials is the journal of the Evangelical  
Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.  
Promoting Christ-centred biblical ministry.



## Lampada alicui trado

My pompous Latin heading indicates that I am, this issue, passing on the torch of the *Essentials* editorship-in-chief to others and leaving the *Essentials* editorial team. In God's providence I have recently accumulated two new ministry roles, and after six years' involvement with the *Essentials* editorial team, I took this as a cue to resign from this rewarding, but involving, responsibility.

I have used a pretentious Latin heading, not only because I think Latin should be more widely known, but also because Latin lends an appropriate sense of *gravitas* (more Latin) and tradition (from Latin *trado*; hand over, bequeath) to the activity of producing *Essentials*. EFAC represents Anglicans who are formed by, and love, the reformed and evangelical character of the Anglican Church. We are convinced that the faith of the disciples of Jesus Christ is well preserved and articulated in that reformed and evangelical understanding of the gospel, of the Christian life and of the church and her ministry, and we want to encourage one another in it and commend it to others. *Essentials* plays a part in that mission, and I hope that it has done so by returning consistently to the things which unite and animate us: the gospel of the grace of God in Christ, the Scriptures, evangelism, the life and ministry of the local church, prayer, Bible study groups, training new ministers, mission,

addressing the issues of the age in the light of the eternal truth of God, and celebrating those who have gone before us, inspired and mentored us. I also hope that *Essentials* continues to be read and appreciated across Australia, and addresses the concerns, circumstances and labours of EFAC members in a positive, irenic, creative and thoughtful way.

I have tried to put together this summer issue in a way that showcases these perennial evangelical emphases. Small group Bible studies, prayer, training new clergy here and abroad, reflecting on the Scriptures, music in church, and more besides, all receive attention here. I trust these articles are not simply one more tired repetition of well-worn themes, but are fresh, current, encouraging reminders of what we are convinced will honour Christ and serve his people well. *Essentials* is, from here, in the capable hands of my fellow editors Gavin Perkins and Mark Juers. God willing, there will be new names joining them to carry the torch. As always, we encourage you to be in touch to let us know what you have appreciated, or what you'd like to see treated in these pages.

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**What is EFAC?**

EFAC is a group of Anglican clergy and lay people who value the evangelical heritage of the Anglican Church, and who endeavour to make a positive, constructive contribution at local, diocesan and national levels. EFAC Australia is part of the world-wide Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.

The purpose of EFAC is to maintain and promote a strong biblical witness in and through the Anglican Church so as to advance the cause of the gospel in Australia.

The aims of EFAC are:

1. To promote the ultimate authority, the teaching and the use of God's written word in matters of both faith and conduct.
2. To promote this biblical obedience particularly in the areas of Christian discipleship, servant leadership, church renewal, and mission in the world.
3. To foster support and collaboration among evangelical Anglicans throughout Australia.
4. To function as a resource group to develop and encourage biblically faithful leadership in all spheres of life.
5. To provide a forum, where appropriate:  
a) for taking counsel together to develop policies and strategies in matters of common concern  
b) for articulating gospel distinctives in the area of faith, order, life and mission by consultations and publications.
6. To promote evangelism through the local church and planting new congregations.
7. To coordinate and encourage EFAC branches/ groups in provinces or dioceses of the Anglican Church in Australia.

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\$50 per annum full cost

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# Ideas Page

## NOW SHOWING

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Whether you are streaming on Netflix, Stan or Youtube, or going IRL to an actual cinema, there are movies and TV shows that raise issues, stir the heart and may help you make spiritually useful conversation with people you know. Thanks Nic Lockwood, Andrew Burr and Michelle Underwood for these suggestions and others.



### THE CHOSEN

[studios.vidangel.com/the-chosen](https://studios.vidangel.com/the-chosen)

Long-form storytelling through the medium of the TV series is hot, and The Chosen is a multi-season show about the life of Jesus. The Chosen portrays Jesus through the eyes of those who knew him. Check it out on YouTube, where The Chosen channel includes bonus material interviews with cast and consultants.



### MOVIES CHANGE PEOPLE

[movieschangepeople.com](https://movieschangepeople.com)

Heritage Films aim to make, distribute and promote 'films that move people and inspire life' Originating in Queensland, their 2020 cinema line-up includes Saint Judy and The Girl On The Bridge, this latter film about Jazz Thornton's efforts to improve how we help young people drawn to contemplate suicide, as she herself once was.



### MY OCTOPUS TEACHER

Netflix

"Superbly filmed, with a great soundtrack, we learn through the eyes of a diver how beautiful, clever and personal an octopus can be. It even likes playing games with fish. As my wife and I watched we were mesmerised by what God had created, under water, with the octopus. The words of Psalm 8 came to mind; 'O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth...'" *Andrew Burr, WA*



### AMERICAN GOSPEL

Netflix

The Reformed and Restless kick down the door of the peddlers of the prosperity gospel and apply a flamethrower to the contents of their 'gospel'. Along the way they seek to set forth the gospel of human sin and divine redemption by faith in the shed blood of the risen Jesus with relentless clarity.



## My Growth Group

*Bible Study Groups, Gospel Groups, Growth Groups, Life Groups, Cell Groups—call them what you will, they have proved to be a powerful part of what it means to belong to a church for many people, for many years. Here are three personal accounts of what it has meant to belong to small groups based around Bible discussion and prayer.*



Josie Murray

pictured

### JOSIE MURRAY, WA

Crossing the country on my own to embark on new and challenging work in a place where I knew next to no-one and had never been, I was sure I wanted to be a part of a growth group. I had no idea then how established I would become in this group, or just how important this growth group would be to me. That was 6 years ago.

I joined up to a mixed night-time group that met weekly, and I relished the familiarity of faces and format that welcomed me. I noticed that these were the people that were becoming my ‘family’ here: people not chosen by me, but given to me, to know more closely, for me to love and care for, and who loved and cared for me.

**The emphasis in the group, it seemed to me, was a love for God’s Word, honouring Jesus as Lord, and a commitment to each other. This would be a place to grow.**

My new job, as I expected, was tough. I was in the deep-end, and my normal support network was a long way away. I was spread thin just to feel like I was afloat in my work, and to try to establish a home and some roots in this new place, but I was committed to showing up to my growth group. I rarely missed a week. There were many weeks where I would not stay to the end, as weariness and the drive pushed me to go; but this new family understood and cared, and I knew they prayed for me as I drove home.

One of the things that I loved about my growth group from the outset was the openness and honesty afforded by the fact that this was a group without hierarchy, where we were all exploring what we found in a passage of the Bible together. There is always freedom to ask questions—questions that aren’t even fully formed, questions that might sound unconventional (or even heretical!) or questions that just don’t look pretty. There

was room for all of it—we could all be real with what we were wrestling with. A result of the openness of our group is great encouragement: members of the group are committed to one another, and we are vulnerable with each other, thus we receive true encouragement from each other. One of the greatest reminders I get from meeting with this group (both as it is expressed and embodied) is the fact that our task as Christians is not to add anything new, or to do anything fancy, but simply to continue on, to persevere: to stay in Christ. This is encouragement.

At the beginning of 2020, I planned to move to a new church, closer to home, beginning there at Easter. Those plans, of course, were thwarted to a great degree by the period of time where no-one was going to church (physically) anywhere. I could not have guessed how important my old growth group would be through this globally unsettling and uncertain time. We met online for zoom growth group, and checked in with each other on Sundays. It wasn’t the same, but I knew I needed it: the week I tried to ‘watch church’ without the accountability of my group, I ended up ‘leaving the building’ about two songs in.

When churches went back to meeting, and I was at my new church with a new growth group I found I did not want to let go of my ‘old’ group. This was not nostalgia. This was admitting to myself that this year has been hard—for me, for everyone—and that keeping around my ‘family’ was good for me through this time. I’m sure my new church is also a place of encouragement and openness, but being already established with a group counts for so much. I don’t have to explain or go into ‘the backstory’ when I share, and I don’t have to make an effort to get to know in order to understand and be understood—we have already done that work over the past five years. And now, when I need it, I am making

the most of it. Sharing ups and downs of life honestly without protective layers is hard, so having a group that already ‘gets me’ gives me courage to share where I am at, and to receive what I need from the group.

While the group has changed and morphed, farewelling people along the way to other groups and other places,

and welcoming newcomers, we continue to meet in the same house at the same time. We have the same focus and purpose we always have; and the group, for me, has the same effect. It continues to be a bulwark or anchor, my family of encouragement here, in the changes of life and circumstance.

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## DONNA VAN BUEREN, WA

I have been part of three different growth groups over the past eight years. Each group has served a different purpose in my journey to becoming a Christian and maturing in my relationship with God in different ways that were not obvious at the time, but on reflection seem to have been very purposeful. For me personally, being part of a growth group has achieved exactly what the name suggests—it has seeded, grown and nurtured my faith in and relationship with God. I think that there are several specific experiences that growth groups provide which contribute to the intangible process of deepening faith. These include:

- becoming familiar with reading the Bible, its overall story and sequence and the link between the Old and New Testaments;
- learning to interpret the Bible and internalise it for living a Christian life;
- Learning to pray (alone and with others)—by listening, observing and trying;
- gaining confidence talking to God, relying on him and asking for help and guidance for myself and for others;
- becoming closer to other Christians, receiving and giving fellowship to support each other in faith, and together finding guidance in the Bible and from prayer.

My own journey to becoming a Christian started only after I had children. Whilst I was raised to believe in God and as a small child attended Sunday School, as we grew older my family did not regularly attend church, pray or read the Bible at home. I had no connection to Christ through my teens or twenties, and it was not until my children were toddlers and I had made several friends who were Christians, that I became more interested in what it might mean to have faith in God. I started attending church, initially infrequently and then more regularly, however I resisted joining a growth group for several years. My resistance was couched in reasons such as having limited time, or not knowing anyone well enough, but if I reflect honestly it was also me wanting



*Donna van Bueren*

**pictured**

to distance myself from committing more fully to God. Joining a growth group felt like a very big step towards a commitment I did not feel ready for.

### **The pathway into a growth group at that time felt overwhelming and insurmountable.**

The first growth group that I attended was at the invitation of a friend who offered to pick me up on her way, and in several ways created a comfortable introductory experience in early weeks. That friend took the time to create a pathway into the group that made it feel safe and unthreatening. One of my greatest fears at that time would have been the risk of exposing my lack of biblical knowledge and unfamiliarity with prayer to a bunch of people who were very experienced and committed Christians. As I look back, I recognise that the value of my first growth group experience was in getting to know other church women a little better, which in turn made my church-attending experience feel less isolating and consequently more frequent. Over my year in this growth group I developed an ‘ear’ for the Bible, through observation and trial, slowly gaining confidence in reading the Bible out loud, and for the first time, praying out loud as part of a group. I would describe this phase as one of finding one’s feet as a Christian.

For the last six years I have moved between two very stable growth groups, for purely logistical reasons depending on our family commitments. The second growth group that I joined is where I have spent my longest time, and is where I experienced the deepest growth and maturing of my faith in Jesus. This group was led by one of our church ministers and included a wonderful mix of more recent and life-long Christian women and men, across a really broad age range. During this time I progressed to being a more committed and confident Christian, and have benefited in many ways from the guided discussion and interpretation of scripture, in a group where I felt safe to ask ‘dumb’ questions to help clarify understanding or meaning. It is also where I experienced the dual gifts of praying for others, and having Christians pray for me. This period of being part of a growth group ‘family’ was a time when I felt the Holy Spirit at work in me, and when I felt most accountable to God, and most Christ-centred in how I lived daily life. I have been blessed with

remarkable growth group leaders, whose talent is in leading Bible-centred discussions and ministry, providing a strong compass on scripture interpretation into our daily lives, and offering helpful counsel through personal challenges. The ability for a growth group leader to meet a newcomer where they are at on their faith journey, and then to help them to mature their relationship with Christ from their initial starting point is such blessing.

In contrast, I now feel this blessing most keenly, having experienced a disruption to growth groups due to COVID-19 restrictions and church restructure. While church services couldn’t run, our growth group met weekly online. Whilst the online version is not a replacement for face to face fellowship it provided continuity, support and structure while we couldn’t attend church. Being able to continue to study scripture, discuss its relevance to our lives, share prayer points and pray for each other during the COVID-19 uncertainty has been a bolster in faith through these uncertain times.

**AGREE TO DISAGREE**  
**SEYMOUR CLIFFORD, WA**

Politics, sex, money, death: topics not to be broached except in the safest company. Where then, in this cultural moment, is the safest company to be found? Is it in a ‘safe space’? It does not seem so to me. A safe space suggests to me a stern proscription on discussing topics of meaning and sensitivity; or rather it suggests a firm prescription that such topics be discussed solely in safe, non-committal platitudes. Now perhaps I have a special gift for saying the wrong thing and getting nice people off side, but it does seem to me that it is a difficult thing for two people of good faith to discuss certain topics from differing perspectives and it to be a positive learning experience for one of the parties—or better yet, both. Across politics, morality and even sport or art there seems to be a growing will to reject people with oppositional views as bad, or of bad faith.

Enter Bible study. It is has been, for me, one of the comforting and hope-giving things in life that at Bible study people of differing ages, sexes, income brackets, sporting and political affiliations regularly meet to read, discuss, agree and disagree upon Scripture. Furthermore, at the end of each meeting, not only are we still on speaking terms, but there even remains the grace for us to then pray for each other! I hasten to add that fraught topics aren’t rendered anodyne at Bible study because we all share the same viewpoint; goodness, no. There have



*Seymour Clifford (and Helen)*

pictured

been divergent views aired on infant baptism, election/predestination, the role of the sacraments, the role of liturgy and plenty of other points relating to Scripture. (My previous Bible study also found time to argue at great length about an extra-scriptural dilemma: which would you rather meet in combat, one horse-sized chicken, or one hundred chicken-sized horses?)

But what of it? I’ve so far asserted that Bible study has been for me a forum where disagreement need not be a force for enmity or harm; but can I go further and say that Bible study sublimates disagreement into a force

for good? Reader, I can. During the West Australian COVID shut-downs, as Easter approached I was very troubled that my parish made no attempt to provide Holy Communion—even in a limited manner that would have complied with public health directives and lockdown rules. Perhaps poor theology or over-strained shut-down emotions were at the root of my feeling, or perhaps I had a valid reason to be troubled; it's not really my aim here to ask those questions. But in the context of (socially-distanced) Bible study we did discuss such questions. And it helped me a great deal. One generous and thoughtful person even went so far as to write up some reflections regarding the situation and its meanings for my benefit. Again, I don't wish to go into the question of whether my feelings were mistaken or not so I will stay away from details and just say that what I took away from our discussions was a renewed confidence in God's sovereignty, goodness and faithfulness.

Is my experience of Bible study recounted above, typical and if so why? That is, why is it that small, heterogeneous gatherings of Christians can turn disagreement into a tool for growing in relationship and understanding while the rest of the world simply has to avoid certain discussions. I can think of a two-fold explanation of this counter-cultural phenomenon.

### **1. Love for one another.**

*Per* St John 13:35, Christians are to be known for a noticeable love for one another, and, *per* 1 Cor 13:7, love means assuming the best, never the worst of others; therefore we really ought to be well positioned to avoid the trap of turning disagreements over ideas into *ad hominem* attacks.

### **2. Being open to the possibility that my position might be wrong.**

One of the essential tenets of Christianity is the fallen state of humanity. *Per* St Matt 7:5, a right understanding of our fallen nature will make us first examine our own faults before turning to the possibility of another's faults. So the dogma of original sin ought to help keep Christians from going into disagreements with over-abundant confidence that it is they who are in the right. Put differently, for Christians it should never be a huge surprise or devastating blow to find out, that actually, you were mistaken after all.

Well, those are my explanations, and I'm willing to discuss them, and can think of no place better to do so than a Bible study group. But please do feel free to disagree!



## An intimate discipline: the minister at prayer

JAMES MACBETH

*James is an Anglican minister in Sydney. He has been in full-time ministry for 15 years and is currently a Senior Assistant Minister at Christ Church Anglican, St Ives.*



James MacBeth

pictured

There comes a day in each parent's life when the little hand that has instinctually sought yours no longer arrives in your outstretched palm. It's a sad but vital moment, when a growing child no longer needs your immediate guidance, protection and presence to make their way in the world. It's a vital moment, because our kids need to grow independent if they are to mature into adulthood. It's also sad, because the intimate path you made together, hand in hand, now becomes a series of byways with occasional common intersections. In many ways, the maturing of a Christian into whole-hearted discipleship moves in the opposite direction. Having come from outright rebellion and alienation from God in our sin, we now, by grace, journey into ever-deepening dependence on Christ. We need his guidance, protection and presence more and more. We learn to put our hand up and into the Father's hand each day, becoming increasingly child-like as he conforms us to the image of his Son. (Rom 8:29)

As we consider the minister or any Christian at prayer, I find this image helpful. Clasped hands could equate to so much in the Christian life, but the particular intimacy and common motion equates beautifully with prayer—as does the tension between independence and dependence at the heart of our experience as adult believers. The world trains us to make our own way and sin fools us into thinking we are at the centre of that world. The gospel shatters that lie and the Spirit drives us to God our Father—but the journey into prayerful dependence is uneven and often slow. In my experience, what should be an 'intimate path' is too often a series of 'byways' with occasional meetings with the Lord! This is not just unfortunate, it's dangerous—especially if we are charged with discipling God's people and seeking the lost.

The assumption that all followers of Christ can and should pray is threaded throughout Scripture. "In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence". (Eph 3:12) Jesus and subsequent early church leaders are all marked as

prayerful people who exhort others to pray (e.g. Matt 6:5-15; John 17; Eph 3:14-19; Eph 6:18-20). The assumption that those in ministry will follow suit is built into the Anglican ordination service. Each candidate is charged to "continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our Saviour Jesus Christ, for the assistance of the Holy Spirit." The reason for this charge is that the office is of "such excellence and difficulty", such gravity and scale, that it cannot be done without the explicit equipping of the Holy Spirit. Paul knows this and is constantly thankful and pleading for others' prayers (Phil 1:18,19; 2 Cor 1:10, 11).

When the gentle, familial image of clasped hands is married to the rigours of an 'excellent, difficult' ministry, we can describe a minister's prayers as an 'intimate discipline'—a deepening relationship with God that is pursued in a decisive, rhythmic manner. It is not a rigid duty, but an honest, healthy pattern of prayer that is woven into the fabric of one's life with God at home, church and beyond. At its best, it is a discipline that becomes a delight—a godly ritual that becomes a reflex action in all weathers. Below are some of the ways I have sought to develop an intimate discipline of prayer.

### WORD, CONFESSION AND IDENTITY

If we would approach the Lord with 'freedom and confidence', then our hearts and minds need to be saturated in his word. In Zechariah 7.13, the Lord Almighty states, "When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen". Are we speaking as those who have been listening and applying God's word?



Are we finding out what pleases him before we seek what we want? (Eph 5:10) The Anglican ordination service rightly weds prayerfulness with daily meditation on the scriptures. We ask for the Spirit's help, even as we handle the 'sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.' (Eph 6:17)

To help me listen and apply God's word, I have found it immensely helpful to write short prayers based on what I am reading. I would not do this daily, and these are not the sum total of what I pray, but over the years I have developed a significant personal liturgy that has helped shape my faith and ministry. Having written prayers—including those of others—has been a particular blessing on those days when I am weary or distracted. Just as the psalmist in Ps 91:2 states the truth of God out loud in the face of hardship, stating these prayers has helped drive the words back into an otherwise dull heart.

Praying God's word back to him has proved most helpful in terms of personal confession. If we are to be gospel ministers, we must be men and women who regularly clear the decks by repenting of our sin and walking on, forgiven. This ensures that we are regularly gripped and motivated by grace, not guilt. Here is a confession I wrote when reading through Matthew 10.

*"Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt 10:28)*

Heavenly Father, awesome God, test my fears today.



Photo by Jed Owen on Unsplash

pictured

Forgive me for fearing people more than you.  
Forgive me for failing my neighbour and friend  
by remaining silent when I should speak.  
Teach me a right fear of your Majesty  
and give me courage in this wicked world.  
Then I will love others in truth  
and stand for Christ without fear. Amen.

The other area that has been helped by written prayers is my identity as a minister. So much is asked and expected of us, and it can be hard to know what matters most. As I have considered this and helped prepare student ministers for ministry I have found the different roles described in the ordination vows helpful: Shepherd, Watchman, Steward, Messenger and so on. A number of years ago I began weaving different passages of scripture into a set of ministers' prayers that have grown beyond the formal categories to include my roles as a husband, dad and various other biblical roles. I have included one at the close of this article: "One Who Waits". These prayers help me remember my public promises and grow in deepening dependence on the Lord in all facets of my ministry.

#### READY TO WRESTLE—AND BE WRESTLED

In Colossians 4:12, Paul writes:

*"Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured."*

I love this glimpse of a man prayerfully wrestling for his church and their maturity. It's a wrestle we should earnestly desire to see in all Christians, but it should certainly be true of those in ministry. We have a unique vantage point and a responsibility to bring what we see and know to God in prayer. We can teach, equip and counsel, but it is in the realm of prayer that the deepest wrestles often occur. Will I pray for those people who have hurt me or damaged the church? Do I believe God can save those so dead to Christ? Will I despair of those who keep drifting in doubt and fear, or will I pray that God will make them firm, assured and brave? Will I bring my deepest fears and ingrained sins and lay them before the Lord? Will I obediently, honestly, 'Rejoice in the Lord always'? Each of these is matter of will. I am free in Christ to pray all of these. Will I? Here is the 'threshing floor' of prayer – the place of exposure, testing and accounting mapped in Hebrews 4:12-13 Our readiness to wrestle for others and be wrestled by God through his Spirit sharpened word is surely a key marker of our maturity as Christians and as ministers. If

we are going to follow Jesus' teaching in Luke 11:1-13, we will need a muscular faith marked by truth, humility, perseverance and will. I am convinced such wrestling is basic to truly prophetic preaching and teaching that brings God's eternal word to bear on our particular place, time and people. When we rush these tasks or drift in preparation, what we say may be true, but it will usually be anaemic and dull. When we allow a passage to do its surgical best on our hearts, waiting patiently on the Lord as we write and prepare, then we are far more likely to stand and speak a word that strikes deep and transforms those gathered with us. P. T. Forsyth, writing in 1916, warns against intercession that never pushes into large, difficult areas in our lives and the lives of others.

*“Lose the importunity in prayer...lose the real conflict of will and will, lose the habit of wrestling and the hope of prevailing with God, make it mere walking with God in friendly talk; and precious as that is, yet you tend to lose the reality of prayer at last. In principle you make it mere conversation instead of the soul's great action. You lose the food of character, the renewal of will ...*

*“Resist God, in the sense of rejecting God, and you will not be able to resist any evil. But resist God in the sense of closing with God, cling to him with your strength, not your weakness only, with your active and not only your passive faith, and he will give you strength.”*

*(Prayer, P. T. Forsyth, Independent Press, 4th ed., 1954; pp. 91, 92)*

Are we ready to wrestle like Epaphras as we develop the intimate discipline of prayer?

### **SHEPHERDING AND DISCIPLING**

A basic task of ministry is to breed in others an active, deepening faith in Christ. Leading them in prayer both feeds them and equips them. Wrestling might be a private art, but our public prayers underpin our pastoral and equipping work. The call to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests” (Eph 6:18) encourages us to punctuate virtually all exchanges with prayer. Every time we pray with someone, we are ushering them towards the peace of God (Phil 4:7). Instead of great, good and grievous matters being left on our shoulders, prayer with another ensures these things are ultimately left with the Lord. When we ask the suffering person to pray for us, or another, we are reminding them that even at their lowest they have a liberty before God to minister to others.

Determine to be a leader who is known for prayer and breeds leaders who are the same. Make it rare for someone to finish a conversation with you without the

subject matter being committed to the Lord. I think it's particularly powerful to pray on the spot with people we speak to on Sunday, as this overtly includes the Lord in the matter at hand. It is here that the intimate discipline of prayer, developed in private with the Lord, spills over into our public ministry. May those who hear us speaking to the Lord catch an echo of a deep, daily prayer life that loves approaching him with freedom and confidence.

I mentioned above a series of minister's prayers that I have been writing over the years. I will leave you with one that is germane to this COVID season, inspired by my reading in Isaiah.

### **ONE WHO WAITS**

*They that wait upon the Lord  
shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings as eagles;  
they shall run and not be weary;  
they shall walk and not faint.  
Isaiah 40*

Heavenly Father, Lord Almighty,  
so often this ministry finds me weak and weary,  
earthbound and impatient.  
Teach me to wait upon you.

Help me by your Holy Spirit  
to draw near in humility, need and faith,  
so that my love for Jesus is refreshed  
and my strength renewed.

Teach me to sit still in your presence,  
and sink deep into your Word,  
so that I might rise with heavenly purpose,  
run to your enduring glory  
and walk with unfailing faith in your Son.

Heavenly Father, teach me to wait upon you. Amen

### **NOTE**

If any reader would like a copy of James' *Minister's Prayers*, contact him at [james.macbeth.ccsi@christchurch.com.au](mailto:james.macbeth.ccsi@christchurch.com.au) and he will send a copy.



## Training Evangelical Anglican Leaders in the Developing World

TIM SWAN, CEO, THE ARCHBISHOP OF SYDNEY'S ANGLICAN AID

Right now, a terrifying number of pastors and teachers around the world are inadvertently leading their people astray because they lack solid biblical understanding, and are being “blown here and there by every wind of teaching,” (Eph 4:14). At the launch of Anglican Aid’s new Bible College Student Sponsorship program Rev. Samuel Majok said,

*“In many cases, in Africa, pastors and teachers in the cities do not have any form of theological training. This has resulted in increasingly shallow theology. Leaving many local churches subject to .... errors. The pulpit has become the place to sell anointed oils, to sell holy water, to sell holy soils!”*

We can help. We have the resources to make an impact on the developing church. One resource is those who can teach and train locals. I served in this way with the Anglican Church in Chile for 10 years.

But there are other needs as well. Since coming to Anglican Aid, I have received call after call from bishops in the Global South, telling me of the desperate need to train their clergy in the Bible, and the lack of money to do it. Bishop George Okoth called me from Tanzania, saying,

*“During COVID our churches are growing, we are even planting churches where there have been none before. But our great need is to train more clergy—can you help us?”*

Bishop James Almasi spoke to me from Masasi, Southern Tanzania,

*“Our diocese is High Church, but our huge need is to train our clergy in the Bible. We are planting many churches, but our college has been closed for seven years. Can you help us send people for training?”*

From Nepal the Rev’d. Prem Tamang, Director of Nepal’s Anglican Training College, told me,

*“We have many candidates for training, all sacrificial in ministry for the Lord. Could you sponsor some to be well trained in Nepal?”*

Anglican Aid donors already support more than 400 African students sent to college to prepare either for local church ministry, or for teaching at Bible colleges to train new clergy. Now Anglican Aid is launching our Bible College Student Sponsorships, which allow Australian Christians to connect personally with an individual emerging leader from a developing country, to receive culturally appropriate training at a trusted Bible college. Sponsorship is about growing evangelical leaders for the future of the Anglican Church in Africa and beyond—leaders who will preach the gospel, not ‘holy water and holy soils’. How better to demonstrate our Evangelical Fellowship within the Anglican Communion than to support the training of clergy, by sponsoring studies at trusted local Bible colleges, equipping students for a lifetime of faithful ministry?

# SPONSOR A BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENT

Equip the next generation of Christian leaders in developing nations

By sponsoring a student to receive culturally appropriate training at a trusted Bible college, you can help them to be fully prepared to defend and share the truth of the gospel in their home country.



ABN 94 609 182 072

Anglican Aid supported students at Johannesburg Bible College.



## A good investment: raising up new clergy

MARC DALE



Marc Dale

*Plenty of Anglican parishes are in need of ministers. Getting ordained may seem ordinary compared to church planting or mission work, but in an environment of denominational decline, will we raise up the clergy we need just to sustain ministry in existing parishes? Marc Dale has been busy rising to the challenge, and he shares his experience with us here. Marc is Rector of St Alban's Highgate, WA and Chair of EFAC WA.*

What does the future look like where you are, in terms of people offering themselves to be prepared for Anglican ordination? In my home diocese, there are a growing number of parishes who could be open to evangelical ministry, but we are very short of ordained evangelicals.

**In various dioceses around the country there are great opportunities for fresh gospel ministry in parishes, but will there be the people to meet those needs?**

We trust God to raise up workers for his vineyard and to grow his church, and we trust the Holy Spirit to awaken people's hearts to the possibility of serving in ordained ministry. There are also two critical things that local churches and their leaders must do. The first is to be always on the lookout for people whose character, gifts and gospel enthusiasm mark them out as people who should prayerfully consider full-time ministry. This

means encouraging them early on and sowing seeds and painting pictures. They will need opportunities to try their hand at leadership and ministry. Then the question will be: What kind of ministry? If it is going to be pastoral ministry in an Anglican church, then getting ordained will give them the greatest scope—particularly in terms of fresh gospel ministry.

The second thing we must be willing to do is support, nurture and equip those evangelicals who are accepted into whatever formation program our diocese has for its ordinands. When I went through formation the process in my diocese was brutal in general and especially so for evangelicals. It was a gruelling experience for both me and my family. We survived, but that was in large measure due to the support of our home church and, for me particularly, the friendship and encouragement a couple evangelical clergy who invested in me with their time, counsel and prayers.

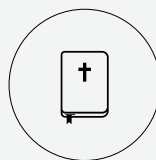
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So, it's been a real delight to have the chance, now that I'm working as a rector, to invest in the next generation. In the case of two young men that meant creating a ministry opportunity in my parish where they could get some practical experience and insight to equip them for the kind of ministry we do. It also established a relationship outside of the training and formation system and outside college where they could safely talk through issues and questions. It also gave them space to 'practice' free from assessment and away from the gaze of those who would make formal decisions about whether they would be ordained or not. I know that they appreciated the occasional opportunity to debrief and let off steam that I had found so critical for my wellbeing.

**There was a great payoff for our church too. We didn't just benefit from their ministry. The whole church joined them on the journey.**

I can't overstate how great an encouragement this was to our small, struggling fellowship. From a parish of just over sixty members two were ordained in the space of four years. I should say, though, that there is both joy and sorrow. One of these men, Paul, was ordained deacon and then priest and is faithfully serving Christ in an Anglican church. The other broke our hearts when, after being ordained a deacon, he 'crossed the Tiber' and became a Roman Catholic. We continue to pray that he'll come to his senses.

There is of course a cost, in time and energy, that comes with taking on a ministry apprentice like this. Listening, mentoring and teaching take time and its quite different from hiring an assistant minister who can potentially



double the amount of ministry that happens in your church. They are learning and gaining experience and every now and then there will be some mopping up to be done. Our church was investing in the wider church's future and in the mission of God's kingdom. At a very practical level, our church was contributing to the 'job-readiness' of one more evangelical minister who, we prayed, would be a blessing to other churches.

It's worth noting that, in some dioceses, those in charge may not thank you for your efforts and wisdom is needed in navigating those relationships and making sure that you don't create the impression that you're working against or undermining the formal training and formation processes. We were up-front with the diocese about what we were doing and careful to assure them that the ordinands were positively engaged with the diocesan processes.

One of the happiest occasions in my ministry thus far was attending Paul's ordination to the priesthood last year. God willing, he will have a long ministry ahead of him. I think it has been a good investment.



Paul Bartley

pictured

## To the elders among you 1 Peter 5:1-14

SCOTT THOMSON

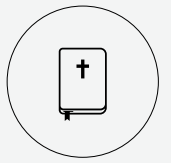
Scott is Youth Minister at St Lawrence's, Dalkeith, WA

*"To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."*

Although Peter is speaking to the elders, or leaders of the suffering churches, what he says is important for every believer. Perhaps you're on a staff team, or involved in volunteer youth leadership, serving in the music team, kids church, Bible study or any other church ministry? If so, how should you lead? What do we expect from our leaders and how can we pray for them and encourage them?

Peter's instruction to the church leaders is a command: "Shepherd God's flock." It's a biblically rich metaphor of a shepherd tending sheep under their care. A shepherd's purpose isn't to entertain or impress. They are to watch over the flock on behalf of the chief shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. This means feeding them with the Word of God by guiding and pointing them to the overseer of their souls, the Lord Jesus Christ. Church leaders are to be these kinds of "under-shepherds", people who care for God's flock while they wait for the Chief Shepherd to appear in all his glory. Shepherds lead by helping the flock see Jesus.

How do they do this? First, Christian leaders are willing leaders. Faithful shepherds don't watch over the flock grudgingly, or under compulsion. You might find yourself saying, "Well, someone has to do it, so I may as well." We need to catch ourselves and remember that elders of the flock of God are willing leaders. Staying fresh means praying for a willing heart and a willing attitude. If you are leader you might think, "It's time for me to step down because I don't feel like leading at the moment." He is setting the challenge. He is calling for a change of heart. God wants leaders who are so captivated by the Chief Shepherd, so motivated by his mission, that it is their desire to watch over the flock as



pictured

*Pasqua, Easter, by Giulio Bernardi, flickr.com/photos/thebbp/132883093*

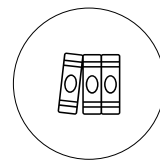
willing under-shepherds. This is a good prayer for those who are not elders to pray for their leaders, as well as those who have the duty to lead. Duty often is followed by joy. This is a good prayer to pray.

Secondly, godly leaders aren't pursuing dishonest gain but are eager to serve. Perhaps there are some elders who are pursuing dishonest financial profit. In which case, Peter doesn't want Christian leadership to become a kind of scam where the true motives are concealed, and the flock are given a raw deal. And notice what Peter compares dishonest gain with: it's not honest gain. Dishonest gain is contrasted with an eagerness to serve. I think that is one of the biggest challenges to my Christian leadership. It's not actually about my gain at all. So, when I stop receiving—whether that is acceptance or affirmation—does my eagerness wane? It's a sure sign that I am leading with a mixed motive.

Finally, Peter says that Christian leaders don't lord it over those under them, rather they lead by example. Don't misunderstand the apostle at this point. Leaders in the church are given authority from the Lord Jesus and the congregation and they are to exercise authority. Sometimes we Australians are so enthusiastic about everyone being equal that we're reluctant to step out in front and lead. Peter says in verse 5 that we are to submit to our leaders. But Christian leaders don't guide or lead the flock harshly. Military commanders enforce submission. Christian leaders never use coercion. There is no room for threats intimidation, manipulation or even by sway of influence. Christian leadership is much

harder. Christian leaders are to be an example. By their example others will imitate them. One of the best tests of faithful Christian leadership is to look behind and see if people are following. When you look at your leaders, do you see a person who is shepherding the flock like Jesus? May God make his leaders like that. Does the church family see Jesus? That is the question. Jesus was an astonishing blend of humility and gentleness. He had courage to confront sin and error with strength of character and unsurpassing and ongoing love and humility. That is what we need to pray regularly for all who lead in the name of Jesus.

In all these things, look to Christ who willingly and eagerly came as the servant of all. He suffered for others even when he was humiliated and rejected. Ultimately, he is the model of a Christian leader who is not lazy, or greedy, or power-hungry. While the church waits for the Christ, the Chief Shepherd to appear in his glory, the under-shepherds are to lead like him. Leaders, don't throw in the towel. Soon the Chief Shepherd will appear, and, Peter says in verse 4, when he appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. Your crown is both glorious and unfading. A crown far better than this world can offer, kept in heaven for you. Push on to that day when the Chief Shepherd returns and what is temporary will fade away. The fruit of your shepherding will be seen and recognised by the Lord Jesus and that is reason to rejoice, knowing that God used you in spite of weakness, failure, mixed motives and struggle. Your work will not be wasted, it will be recognised and rewarded by our good Father.



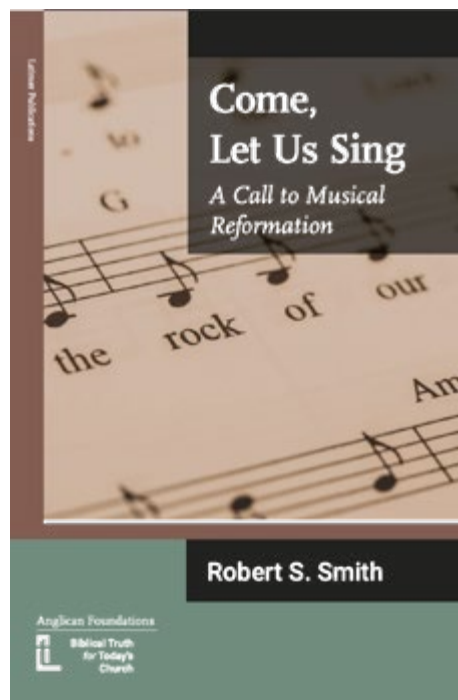
## Come Let Us Sing: A Call to Musical Reformation

ROBERT S. SMITH  
LATIMER TRUST, 2020

Reformation. That's a rather strong word isn't it? Are things that bad in Australian Evangelical congregational singing that we need reformation? I suspect different readers will have different perspectives on this. Some churches have grabbed the ball and run with it in the last decade or so, seeing wonderful development of music ministries and young, gifted musicians engaging in this high-profile component of church life. Others have tended to take a more conservative approach, but have still worked to clarify their theological position with musicians and congregations, encouraging growth in music ministry where possible. Across the board though, what many churches have achieved is improvement in relation to the cringe factor. Where I visit, things seem to be better than they used to be in terms of how the music is led, how bands and small ensembles are being used, and how creativity is achieved in musical arrangements.

Still, having said all this, I am not surprised at Rob Smith's call to reform. I feel that many Australian Evangelical churches may be missing the wood for the trees when it comes to congregational singing. I say this having worked full time as a music director in a large church for 12 years, seeing much growth in music in that time, but also an ever-growing need for growth in myself as a leader among the people of God. Ironically, we have grappled deeply with some aspects of the theology of gathering and singing, and yet, in a lot of churches, congregations still don't seem to be singing. Or at least they don't seem to want to be singing. The interesting qualification to this is, of course, that during the season of COVID, many evangelicals have deeply missed singing together (where it has not been possible) and have craved the days of opening our mouths together in song.

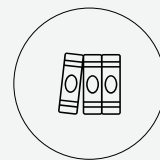
We've all heard congregational singing. When it happens, what you hear is a congregation singing. But I still find that it is the exception rather than the rule to hear the voices around me. Is it that we do not connect with music itself? Or—perish the thought!—that the gospel doesn't actually enthuse us? Is it that we do not want the person next to us hear our voice? (That's going to kill it right there). Or do we just not know the songs? This is not a passing triviality according to the Bible. And it is not just the musicians' fault for picking too many syncopated songs. Leaders, what does it mean for the Bible to call us



to sing?

Rob Smith and I are good friends and have shared dozens of conversations about this topic over past decades. And I have to say I am absolutely delighted that he has written this book. I'm going to say it: I think this is an important book. Many great books have been written on the topic of worship, the gathering and the place of singing. But Rob brings a unique combination of theological and practical insights. He understands our local musical scene as well as anyone. On top of that, it is not common for authors to be able to articulate *both* the immense strengths of the Australian conservative evangelical contribution to this topic, *as well as* the rather idiosyncratic blind spots that we seem to have developed. *Come, Let Us Sing* seems to be a book for Aussie evangelicals.

Rob seeks to answer two questions: why do we gather? and: why do we sing? Of course, these could be dealt with in separate volumes. But he argues that the answer to the second question builds fundamentally on the answer to the first. We are not just talking about singing in the shower, we are singing the word of God in the presence of God, whom we encounter as we enter the New Covenant temple. As Jesus himself is that new temple, this is nothing to do with entering a church building but meeting with Christ himself, through the proclamation of his word through his people, Christ's body. Therefore, our theology of singing depends heavily on our theology of the gathering.



Curious as it appears to many outside our circles, we find ourselves needing to tackle the question, do we meet in order to worship? The historical view, noted among the reformers and most evangelicals, has been that we do indeed gather to worship. But a revisionist approach has helpfully responded to a growing neglect of the horizontal aspects of church—the “one-anothering” that the New Testament expects not only of our relationships, but also of our gatherings. The question though is whether something has been lost as our churches have rediscovered the importance of edification. Something that may in fact be affecting our whole way of encountering God as we meet. And so, how do we answer the question, Why do we gather? Is it for worship or for is it for edification? You will have to read Rob’s answer.

As we come to the question of why we sing, one of the greatest gifts of this book is how it takes us to Psalms as our guide. Not simply to a verse of one or two psalms, but to a deluge of verses from dozens of psalms (and from elsewhere in Scripture), working together to demonstrate the emphatic call to the people of God to sing. Singing is, and always has been, for praise of God in a range of ways. But singing is not just for praise. Prayer and preaching are the other two key ways in which the psalms model what singing should be for the church today, just as it was for Israel. And we do well to remember how significant the psalms were for Jesus himself, not just as holy scripture, but as a vehicle for his own self-identification as the anointed of God, the suffering Messiah.

And so, as we come to the oft-quoted Pauline verses on singing in the gathering (Col 3:16, Eph 5:18-20 and 1 Cor 14:26), the psalms make us better equipped to see the context for singing out of which the early church found its own voice. When Paul says, “Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts,” he is anticipating that the whole Christian repertoire (including the songs of Israel) is intended to be Christ-centric, where we drink deeply from the gospel all the time. And putting Christ at the centre is part of how our gatherings are defined as new covenant gatherings rather than old covenant gatherings.

So, to this question of musical reformation. Is it overstating the problem? Much of the book was written in 2017, the year of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in Europe, and as such, engages

intentionally with the reformed tradition throughout, especially the contributions of Martin Luther. In particular, Rob cites the reformation principle that “the reformed church is the church that is always reforming”. Reforming is what we seek to do in an ongoing way if we see ourselves as in any way beneficiaries of reformation past.

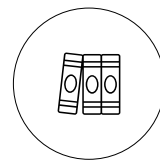
Part 3 of Rob’s book is entitled “Helping God’s People Change”. Here is the rub. Music and singing is not just the domain of the music team. In my experience, church leaders have too often delegated too much to the musically gifted in their church. This is not to say that Rob would envisage any form of micro-managing of musicians by ministers. Rather, his emphasis is on how music fits the high-level principles and practices of church life. And pastors, if you, like I have at times, sometimes skip the singing at the beginning of your services as you do final mental prep for your upcoming sermon, there is a very poignant paragraph of rebuke waiting! Not only do church leaders need to think through their approach, so too do members of the congregation. Perhaps one of the most significant reminders of the book is the congregation is the choir, not the audience. Members of the body are singers. And we do this singing for lofty reasons. Perhaps we need to be reminded how important it is for us each not only to turn up on Sundays, but to sing up!

Of course, there is a word of encouragement for musicians too as they continue to seek not only to serve on Sundays, but also to encourage others in the church in their important role of singing. As an aside, while I would recommend this book for anyone in church leadership, I would consider it essential reading for anyone specifically in music leadership. It will give you a wonderfully balanced biblical exposition of what you are doing in your ministry, what is important, and how to do it well.

I still find it hard at times to throw myself into singing on Sundays, despite all the music I have been involved in over the years. But in light of the sheer weight of whole counsel of God on this, as we think past, present, and future as his precious and privileged people, I am called to give myself heart, soul, mind and spirit every Sunday as I sing, just as I am in other ways every other day of the week. He calls me to love and adore him, and my song is part of my expression of that. I’m thankful to Rob for this timely and gracious reminder to come, and let us sing

**MARK PETERSON, SA**





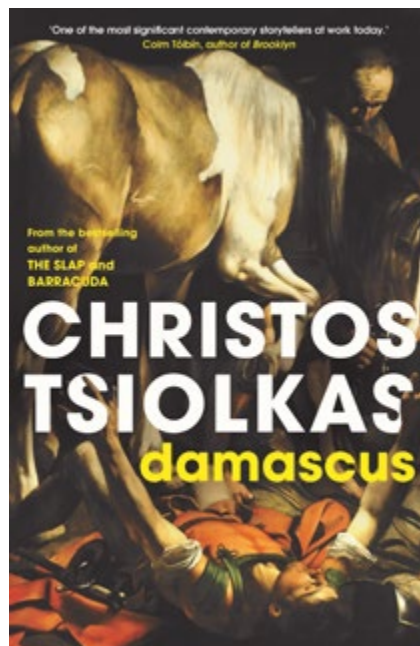
## Damascus

CHRISTOS TSIOLKAS  
ALLEN AND UNWIN, 2019

I was compelled to read *Damascus* after hearing its well-known Australian author, Christos Tsiolkas, speak at the Perth Writer's Festival. Only knowing Tsiolkas as the author of the controversial, bad-language-peppered novel *The Slap*, I was bracing myself for the session to be an atheistic, disdainful, mocking critique of biblical Christianity; at best annoying, at worst blasphemous. How wrong I was.

Tsiolkas spoke with warm humility about his persistent, genuine fascination with Christianity that he has had throughout his life. Having been raised Greek Orthodox, in his teenage years he was invited by an evangelical friend to study the Bible. He was drawn to the love and graciousness of Jesus, and Christ's care for the outcast. However, his growing awareness of his own struggle with homosexuality drove him away from the faith, which he believed had no place for him. Today he still rejects the "Christian myths" but continues to have an abiding attraction to Christian ethics and the Bible, which he understands is the foundation of Western civilization. (I was shocked at his rebuke of a young audience member at the Writer's Festival, who claimed never to have read the Bible so was unsure if he would be able to understand Tsiolkas' new novel. Tsiolkas, without hesitation, replied that such ignorance of the Bible as a foundational cultural text was pathetic. A non-Christian gay man defending Bible reading – I was gobsmacked!).

*Damascus* is a work of historical fiction, with the apostle Paul as the central character. But make no mistake: this is no pulp fiction *Da Vinci Code* or blasphemous *Last Temptation of Christ*. The writing is far superior. The book does not set out to undermine, as if Tsiolkas were arrogantly presenting an alternative history of the early church so that the Bible might be scorned and rejected. Tsiolkas puts flesh on biblical characters that surround Paul in an attempt to grapple with what life could have been like for those very first believers, struggling with sin and how to follow Jesus in a pagan world, while waiting for his imminent return. His fascination with what motivated people to convert to such a persecuted religion as Christianity and how this faith changed the world drives every page. It is a work that is thoroughly researched—Tsiolkas spoke of spending a year only reading first century texts in an effort to immerse himself in that world.

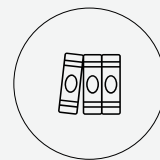


My favourite chapter is the story of Lydia, the wealthy, gentile convert from Acts 16. Tsiolkas imagines her first encounter with Christians, horrified at seeing how the nobility treated slaves as their equals. After Lydia becomes a Christian, he imagines her new faith put to the test as she gives birth to a deformed daughter, a baby who would ordinarily have been exposed to die, rejected as a mistake and worthless. It is in these pictures of an ordinary life lived that Christianity is seen for the revolution that it was. And is.

The story contains brutal, graphic violence – the opening scene is of someone being stoned to death. It is disturbing because Tsiolkas' imaginative writing is so powerful. I hesitate to recommend the book to everyone because of this. However, the violence is not gratuitous, but a vivid and realistic depiction of life in the first century Roman Empire. The heartless, cruel violence is an essential backdrop to contrast the Christian ethic of love and their belief in the value of all human life made in the image of God.

Would I recommend *Damascus*? For the beauty of the writing, the complexity of the characters, the theological astuteness, and the vivid depiction of life in the first century—yes. But above all I would recommend it as a sympathetic, insightful grappling with Christianity by a not-yet-believer. Learn from Tsiolkas how to attempt genuinely to understand how and why others believe what they do, so that you might know how to humbly and attractively commend the gospel to such a person, who tragically believes that Jesus has no place for them.

MICHELLE UNDERWOOD, WA



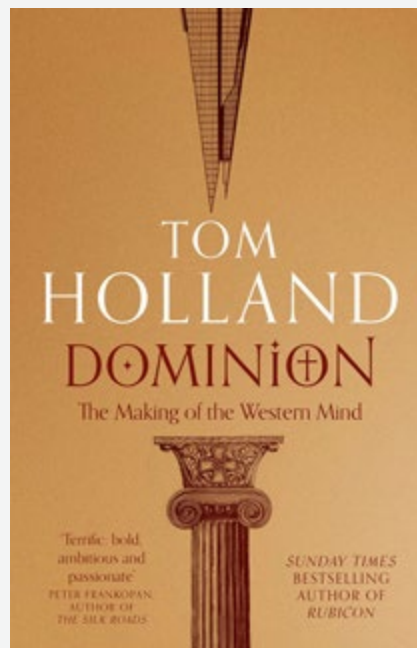
## Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind

TOM HOLLAND  
LITTLE, BROWN, 2019

So how did we get the culture, structure and morality of the Western world? Where did it come from? For many of us there is a vague feeling that many of the good things we appreciate in the West started in Ancient Greece but came to fulfilment in the Enlightenment. At that point in history humankind awakened to its own sweet reason and became aware of self-evident truths such as, for example, “all men are created equal”.

Not so, says eminent historian Tom Holland in his tremendously written book, *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind*. These so-called ‘self-evident truths’ are not self-evident at all. Having written extensively on Ancient Rome and then having turned to Islamic history, Tom Holland has swum in different historical cultures, cultures that show no indication of seeing the self-evidence of such truths as Thomas Jefferson wrote about. Christianity is the towering force that has shaped the Western mind and continues to have impact even in institutions and societies that have long rejected, or even spurned faith. It is from Christianity that springs all the many concepts we have long taken for granted, such as women’s rights, freedom, science and secularism just to name a few. Many a Christian has suggested as such but Holland, who interestingly, is a bit slippery about his own conviction of faith, writes with passion and persuasion.

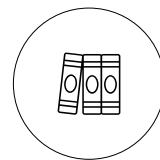
This wonderful book is less church history and more postcards of the past, as Holland jumps from era to era like solid stepping stones across a mighty river. The glorious tour starts in 479 BC in Athens jumping to 63 BC Jerusalem and then AD 19 Galatia and so on, until we get to the final step landing in 2015 AD in the German town of Rostock. Holland’s prose has a commanding yet gentle style. He writes like a movie



director as each stepping stone has its own internal story that links to a larger one. With his eye for detail and original angles, the world of the past rises up, pulses with life and dust clouds of colour. He also has many allusions to scripture and other works that are pleasingly not formally quoted. For example his description of Calvin’s Geneva “The shelter that the city could offer refugees was like streams of water to a panting deer.” One can almost feel the joy he has in creating each elegant, articulate chapter: learned but unencumbered by heavy scholastic drapery. Holland’s target audience is not academics of history. It’s the general public. It’s you and me.

So you may have gathered I liked this book. Just do yourself a favour: read it yourself and feel the fog of this modern world, with its vague assumptions of the past, evaporate.

**TIM CHAPPELL, WA**



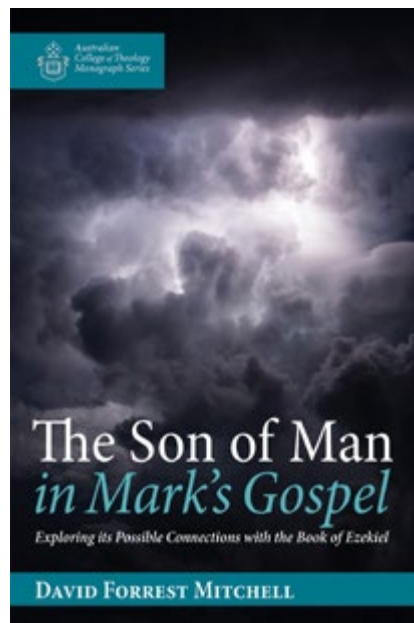
## The Son of Man in Mark's Gospel: Exploring its Possible Connections with the Book of Ezekiel,

DAVID FORREST MITCHELL  
ACT MONOGRAPH SERIES,  
WIPF AND STOCK, 2019

This book achieves what many would have assumed to be unattainable. Despite the immense amounts of scholarly effort invested in the study of Jesus' use of "Son of Man", David has contributed something that is not only new but also worth saying—and he has done it in less than one hundred pages! (This is the published version of the dissertation for which he was awarded the Master of Theology by the Australian College of Theology.)

The only surprise about what he says is that it needed to be said. There has been a long-standing consensus that Jesus derived this unusual self-designation primarily from the vision reported in Daniel 7. This leaves many thoughtful Bible-readers wondering why the scholarly eggs have been confined to this one small basket, when there is another that is much bigger and surely no less worthy of attention: the fact that the Lord never addresses Ezekiel by name but always (ninety-three times!) calls him "son of man."

However, it is one thing to suspect that there might be a link between Ezekiel and Jesus' use of the term and quite another to show that such a link is probable—and David makes this case in the way a skilful barrister assembles and presents evidence in a trial. He begins with a clear analysis of the state of scholarly discussion (chapter 1) and then explains and justifies the approach his study takes (chapter 2). Then follows the largest chapter, which discusses every "Son of Man" passage in Mark's Gospel under three headings: the scene; the saying; the emerging picture of the Son of Man. After summarising the results in Chapter 4, there are three chapters which discuss in turn the reasons for investigating the book of Ezekiel (chapter 5); the ways in which it uses the Hebrew form of "son of man" (chapter 6); and then how all of



this is similar to and different from what Mark's Gospel revealed (chapter 7). Chapter 8 assesses the implications of these similarities and contrasts before Chapter 9 gives a brief statement of where the investigation takes us.

As they reach the end of the last page, most readers are likely to be surprised that a discussion of complex issues—which includes a use of the biblical languages—is so clear and readable, and that such a slim volume could cover so much ground without being shallow. They are also bound to be impressed that the argument is so careful and measured, always resisting the temptation to claim more than the evidence allows—so there is no attempt to banish Daniel 7 and install Ezekiel in its place. What it does show very clearly is that Ezekiel now belongs alongside Daniel 7 in any study of Jesus' use of "the Son of Man."

Yes, I know that I have not mentioned at all the specific findings of any section of the investigation—and this omission is quite deliberate! If I had given such a summary, you would undoubtedly have reacted just as I would: "That gives me enough—so there's another one I can leave on the shelf." But this really is a book that deserves to be read!

**ALLAN CHAPPLE, WA**

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# essentials

