

Notes

1. Parts one and two on Saul and David appeared in *Transformation*, vol. 19, no. 3 in July 2002.
2. Unattributed references are to 1 Kings.
3. V.P. Long, 'How Did Saul Become King? Literary Reading and Historical Reconstruction', *Faith, Tradition, and History: Old Testament Historiography in Its Near Eastern Context* (eds A.R. Millard, J.K. Hoffmeier and D.W. Baker) (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), pp. 271-84.
4. Brueggemann, W., *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 31.
5. Provan, I.W., *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995), p. 85.
6. Porten, B., 'The Structure and Theme of the Solomon Narrative (1 Kings 3-11) *HUCA* 1967, vol. 38, pp. 93-128, 111.
7. Parker, K.I., 'Repetition as a Structuring Device in 1 Kings 1-11 *JSOT* 1988, vol. 42, pp. 19-27, 24.
8. Provan, I.W., *1 and 2 Kings*, p. 87.
9. The only other reference to justice after 3:11 and 28 is 7:7.
10. Brettler, M., 'The Structure of 1 Kings 1-11', *JSOT* 1991, vol. 49, pp. 87-97, 90.
11. Walsh, J.T., *1 Kings* (Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative & Poetry) (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 132.
12. Walsh, J.T., *1 Kings*, p. 154.
13. Josipovici, G., *The Book of God: A Response to the Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), pp. 90-107.
14. Josipovici, G., *The Book of God*, p. 103.
15. Josipovici, G., *The Book of God*, p. 104.
16. Josipovici, G., *The Book of God*, p. 105.
17. Walsh, J.T., *1 Kings*, p. 110.
18. Provan, I.W., *1 and 2 Kings*, p. 76.
19. And his words in chapters 3 and 9.

Chapel Reflections on the Washington Conference on Evangelicals and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America

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Keywords: evangelical, politics

Following the Washington Conference held from June 28-30 2002 on The Bible and the Ballot Box, the final conference of the Study Programme of the International Fellowship of Evangelical Mission Theologians (INFEMIT) on Evangelicals and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America, supported by the Pew Charitable Trusts, the project director, Canon Dr Vinay Samuel shared these reflections at a chapel service at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies. See www.evangelicalsandpolitics.org. Summaries of the regional studies follow this reflection.

The study was designed to help us understand what is happening with evangelicals engaging with political reality in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We studied six different countries at a level that would be acceptable to the most rigorous secular scholars. The study was not done for Christians to affirm themselves, but for academic and activist communities irrespective of their attitude to religion in general and evangelism in particular. It was not an exercise for ourselves but to enable the world to see what evangelical involvement in political life is all about.

I need to pay a rich tribute to my colleagues who delivered the studies at that level. They worked very hard to present this work to a phalanx of scholars. It is only a stage of our research.

It showed confidence in scholarship, care, no arrogance, a humble presentation.

It was important for INFEMIT to do it. It was the first conference in the United States. The first INFEMIT conference was almost exactly 20 years ago in Thailand where we had the consultation on Christology. The book *Sharing Jesus in the Two Thirds World* (edited by Samuel and Sugden, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1986) came from that. And that book was a trendsetter that enabled people to recognize that there was evangelical scholarship that looked distinctly at the person of Christ and the reality of Christ's rulership over all of creation. It reflected a different and very important way of understanding Christology. This conference in Washington was the first INFEMIT conference for the academic community at large, not just the Christian scholars only. It was saying our scholarship is open for review by anybody who is a scholar interested in the role of religion in relation to politics.

For example, Professor Daniel Levine, the Head of the Department of Political Science in the University of Chicago, who has been studying religion and politics in Latin America for years, and is an expert on Peruvian politics, said he was impressed by the paper on Peru, produced by an OCMS doctoral graduate, Dario Lopez, and commended Dario's work as new and path-breaking in helping understanding the reality of Peru and the role of evangelicals and the Christian church.

This process of self-criticism and discussion with others worked so that a standard was produced not about scholarship but to understand what God is doing rather than assume it. This was using the mind that God has given us and the scholarship of others to understand where God is at work, what Christians are doing well, what they are doing badly and what they are not doing at all.

There is an INFEMIT network and tradition of scholarship all over the world that is emerging; this is more than a tradition of mission engagement, it is also a tradition of scholarship. Writing these traditions down, and seeing the influences on these traditions is very important because twenty years from now people will be identifying these as parts of a tradition of reflection. What are the influences on them? Is liberation theology an influence on us, and is our mission consciousness of the uniqueness of Christ and the centrality of sharing the gospel the real theme that shapes our tradition.

So to study the tradition over a period of time is important for us, and in Washington we began to see some contours of INFEMIT / evangelical engagement in political life and evangelical cultural transformation.

Contours of evangelical engagement in political life

The best summary was by Peter Berger.

1. The research showed that evangelical involvement in society was very diverse. It was not monochrome or predictable. People could not say 'That is what evangelicals do'. They did surprisingly different things. It was far more heterogeneous than people assumed it to be.

2. There was a constellation of moral and social character that was clearly evangelical. I think one of the basic elements is the faithfulness to Scripture. Scripture sometimes put the brakes on, gave us caution. It sometimes was a prison, it could be the chains that bind us as well as keys to liberate us.

3. There was also a commitment to cultural reformation. This is the key to pentecostalism. Pentecostalism in my estimation represents a development of protestantism rather than a distortion of protestantism. In a sense pentecostalism is at the heart of protestantism. Pentecostalism holds that we must transform culture. Cultural transformation came because people concentrated on changing behaviour not merely ensuring right belief, even if the behaviour starts in the home, with the male, the mother and kids. That itself is the beginning of transformation. In a sense, the people who are genuinely and practically committed to transformation in its fuller sense have been pentecostals rather than biblical evangelicals; not those who produced transformational biblical theologies, but the pentecostals who are convinced that transformation is the primary way of growing the church. Transformation was linked to the power of God. There was a link between transformation and empowerment, and behavioural change. Therefore transformation became much more of a driving force among pentecostals than it has among biblical evangelicals. That was an important recovery for me from this study. Pentecostals are drawn to transformation. Does this get reflected in pentecostal preaching adequately? Do they preach about transformation enough?

4. There is an affinity to modernization. We

are not afraid of change, of modern things. We want to be modern and transform. Transformation and modernization go together. My wife enjoys listening to Bishop T.D. Jakes and I have discovered his preaching in the last few weeks. I have listened to six of his sermons in the last six weeks. He was biblical in his exposition and applied it to the modern situation. For example he takes the story of the Samaritan woman and links it with modernity. He was talking to 10,000 women's leaders of the church. His word to them was that you are leading ladies; do not be a mere supporting actor. A leading lady is not merely a wife, or a supporting actress. You are the leading lady. He looks at the leading ladies in the Bible, and talks about the Samaritan woman being transformed from being used by men to being a leading lady. There was a transformation element, a modernization element (drawing on the best of modern resources) and a desire to change. It is worth investigating how such preachers are actually linking transformation, modernity, change, governance, and political reality to the Bible.

Religion is a public thing

5. Peter Berger thought evangelicals were empirically open because of our individualism. By this I think he means the following. Emphasis on individualism and experience means we are open to test experience. The whole concept of testimony was a concept of evidencing faith. When I became a Christian at the age of fourteen and a half, the first thing I was asked to give was 'testimony'. So I had to get up and give the evidence. The idea that you have to produce evidence of experience is a part of our Christian tradition. You cannot say that religion is a private thing that is up to me and I hide it away. That is not evangelical tradition. Religion is a public thing, it can be empirically tested, it has to be open, it has to give evidence to show that it works: that's evangelical even if it is done in a congregation where hardly any are educated. It is still the same spirit. That is the spirit of openness and looking at evidence carefully rather than privatizing religion. So the idea that evangelical faith was an over-privatized faith is a myth. It never was an over-privatized faith. In some forms it is, but certainly not in its non-western forms. The evangelicalism that I experienced in India was never privatized individual closed faith. Once you give a testimony you are vulnera-

ble to inspection and criticism, to the question 'Does he live by it?'. If a fourteen year old says 'I have given up all these things, now Christ is my Lord', after that his life will be hell because everyone will be looking to see if he is going to fall into those ways or not. You are vulnerable.

6. There was also an economic dimension. The wholeness the gospel brings extended to economic factors. That is why evangelicals have been most vigorous in engaging in economic programmes. I think it was less political and more economic. More cultural, social behaviour, more economic and less political. It is becoming increasingly political. So I come to Romans 13 which reflects the struggles of evangelicals with political reality.

Romans 13 represents the evangelical struggle with political realities of our time. As the project on evangelicals and politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America completed its first phase of research at this major consultation in Washington at the end of June, this passage came across as full of resources as well as problematic for the evangelical church. This the one passage where it is clear that Christians engage with civil authorities, in government, with political realities. The parameters are clearly laid out. We do not have a decent book on pauline political theology, his understanding of political reality.

'Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities.' Paul here treats of submission to civil authority. Submission is to authorities. If there was any Christian understanding that this lordship of Christ excluded or set aside submission to any other authority, Paul was undermining that. He was saying that the lordship of Christ and God's sovereignty was mediated through civil authorities. This means he is making civil authority an instrument of God. Apart from church leaders, civil authorities whether elected or appointed are also ordained by God. There is already a duality in human rule.

I have been reading in Islam this last few weeks. Islam has the same struggles: who do you submit to? If you are submitting to God then who are these other people you are submitting to - the government, is that of God? The religious sanctioning of government was important in certain situations.

Paul was facing the struggle which Christians face in the non-western world: is the ruling authority from God, do we submit to it because

God ordained it. Does God ordain political rulers? If the president of a country loots his country is he ordained by God? When do we say we need to organize a group of people to overthrow the president? Evangelicals do not do that. We say he is ordained by God, we have to suffer it. Political engagement will be nasty. Evangelicals pray that God will remove the man. How long do we keep praying for? If he keeps going for 30 years he will have looted the country, and we still keep praying. Is prayer enough?

The second word that is used in verse 5 is that it is necessary to submit to authorities because of conscience. Submission is based on the fear of punishment. You are to obey the law, based on conscience. Why does not Paul say, because of the Bible or because of Scripture? He uses the word for conscience which is a term from Greek moral philosophy term. Paul talks about a way of understanding that you have to obey as part of a natural law, part of something where all human beings are accountable. It is not merely scriptural obedience. It is broadening our understanding of lordship from Christ, to Christ's agents the governing authorities, and then to conscience, to something that is common to all human persons.

Then Paul says our accountability in verses 6 and 7, 'Give everyone what you owe him'. Our accountability is to everyone. The word everyone is 'Allelous'. Paul is saying you are accountable to everyone. Give everyone what is their due. Every Christian is accountable to give everyone what is due to them that is their humanity. That is at the heart of our engagement with everybody. We are not just to give to Christians what is due, but to everybody: respect, pay taxes, revenue, honour.

The key to Christian political engagement is not justice but love. Let no debt remain outstanding except the debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. On the one side, Paul asks what your debt is to everybody (vs 6-7). Then he says, go beyond what you owe to what you actually owe them. Go beyond accountability to love. Love is far beyond any debt: there is a continuing debt to love one another. You can never finish your obligation to love people. He refers to the other. The key to political theology is love for everyone. How do you love everybody practically. He goes to the very personal - do not murder, commit adultery, steal. This is where evangelicalism gets its emphasis on personal behaviour. To love

everybody you must start with yourself by being ethically and morally transformed yourself. Your personal moral transformation and commitment is the basis for your love of everybody. That is the key to your political engagement and your theology. Love does no harm to the neighbour therefore love is the fulfilment of the law. Democracy we say is the rule of law. What modern societies need today is the rule of law. But what is the fulfilment of law - love is the fulfilment of law. Unless there is a society where love has space, obedience to the law is impossible.

Last Friday in Washington the president of the Islamic supreme council was present. He is the only Islamic leader who condemned the bombing of the World Trade Centre. We were talking about the possibility of democracy in Islamic societies. If there is no ethic of love, can you establish the rule of law. western democrats have forgotten that Western democracy was based on the possibility of love for neighbour; the understanding that neighbours had to be respected, accounted for and loved. People need to be respected for their humanity. Having the rule of law alone does not provide for democracy, when you do not respect other people for their humanity. Respect for other people's humanity comes out of the biblical injunction of love for the neighbour. This is what Paul puts at the heart of his political theology. That is what we as Christian communities should live out.

The other challenge

What is really critically important is the commitment to nation-building. The evangelical energy for church planting is significant. In the last 25 years our energy into evangelism and church planting has been enormous and very successful. There is also a challenge of nation building. What is the point of building churches in Nigeria where there are tens of millions of evangelical-pentecostal Christians, yet where the country is very poor and AIDS is reaching higher levels than South Africa. We are simply making people live in hell while sending them to heaven. Is that what church planting is all about? I hope not. Evangelical energy must be directed at nation-building in a more significant way than we have done hitherto. To make that happen I hope that our scholarship here will continue to develop. That energy must never undermine our commitment to church planting. I came away from this conference much

more committed to church planting than I ever was in the past. Without evangelical communities you do not have evangelical political action. But I have come away aware of how easily we give up nation-building because nation-building is much harder and evangelicals must be willing to do the harder work. Discipling and discipling nations is going to be much harder. To make that hard work possible we need to provide the right kind of knowledge, the right kind of encouragement, the right kind of leadership. Then we will be not only developing but living out evangelical political theology.

*Revolution begins with a
change of mind*

Discussion

MG Pentecostals are the revolutionaries of today because they focus on change and change of the mind. Revolution begins with a change of mind. The question of submission has always been a problem for me. The civil authorities express God's lordship and we have to submit to them. But this submission should not exclude criticism. We should not say that whatever we see the civil authorities do in our societies, God has chosen them to do. We are responsible and accountable to pay the dues, but also to see and criticize injustice is part of that accountability and individual responsibility. God hates injustice. If I see injustice in my environment, I have to criticize whoever commits that as much as I pray.

VKS One of the studies showed Bishop David Gitari's struggle with this in Kenya. Bishop Gitari did not submit to President Moi but called him to accountability. If you ask Archbishop Gitari, are you submitting to the authorities, he would say he is.

LN Could you help us understand who evangelicals are? You have spoken a lot about pentecostals. Evangelicalism seems to be a European movement. Modern pentecostalism has a different origin in black Christian tradition which is very different from some evangelical movements.

VKS Who is an evangelical is a western debate. A non-western Christian does not usually ask that question. The question is how do we understand biblical orthodox Christianity? Faithfulness to the

Bible, faithfulness to proclaiming the gospel, faithfulness to behavioural change and cultural transformation, faithfulness to seeing God's power revealed in the world.

These are all primary biblical truths. Pentecostals are more colourful in expressing them.

EH Liberation theology speaks of the issues of rebuilding communities and nations. I would hope you would say something about how liberation theology in depressed communities and cultures fits in to these cultures.

VKS Liberation theology was primarily a political and economic solution. Evangelicals have been looking at the solutions it offered not at its theological constructs and themes. The solutions were all marxist: political change and economic redistribution. While the theological themes were biblical, by the time they were solutions they ended up marxist. Now because of the collapse of communism and the end of socialist visions, instead of solutions they continue on talking about justice. I am a very solution oriented person and ask them what they are offering the poor.

The more reformed oriented evangelical in the non-western world fell for the liberation solution because he is focused on solutions of changing global society from the top. The pentecostal grass roots worker did not agree because he knew you had to start with behavioural change from the bottom up. A liberation that does not start from the bottom up with behavioural change eventually ends up being a solution that never works up, a utopic dream that does not have practical reality. Utopian dreams are good for the preacher not for the congregation. So when an African-American preacher says that we will address debt in our church through a debt-rehabilitation programme that is a very different approach.

In the seventies I was attracted by the vision of liberation theology but the solutions were unrealistic. The themes were right, justice, vulnerability, the poor are often victims rather than villains but the solutions were not Christian enough. We did not adequately focus on Christian solutions which retain what God is saying about how societies change and get transformed. We worked on visions for transformation, not transformation itself. This is what needs to be done.

VKS Pentecostals have to deal with the question of power. A pentecostal theology of power has to be written. At this stage, among pentecostals, having power itself legitimizes people. It is not posi-

tion, it is power that legitimizes you. In the old evangelical circle, your position legitimised you. You are placed by God to be a governor, to be a ruler. The pentecostal understanding is, if you demonstrate power to change, God must have given you the power. The legitimation of power because it is powerful is a fundamental mistake of the pentecostals at this point. Even if power appears to do good and be good, the powerful with power go for blessing. In the pentecostal world we are too quick to bless power. There is no biblical precedent for blessing power. We must bless love not power. A pentecostal ethic of love must develop more vigorously to balance a pentecostal emphasis on power. This basic biblical balance of love against power is very important. The challenge is, you respect the ruler not because he is powerful but because he demonstrates love for neighbour. That is the constant challenge to the ruler: what is your debt to your neighbour - to love them. We have to call that power to accountability and the church can do it. The more powerful a person is the more accountability he needs from the church. Unfortunately the more powerful a person is, the less accountable he/she becomes because the church is quick to offer blessing.

TR It is extremely important to recognize the particularities and differences. Evangelicals do as Vinay has said, respond positively to modernization. That is true. But one has to distinguish between modernization and globalization. Lamin Sanneh distinguishes between global Christianity (an extension of western Christianity) and world Christianity (Christianity as assumed and adapted in every part of the world). Evangelical Christianity ought to be the second rather than the first, and the danger is that it is the first rather than the second: it is part of the expansion of a global Christianity rather than the creation of an African or Asian or Latin American Christianity. Insofar as it is the second it has to relate to modernization by making it appropriate to and capable of inter-

acting with and transforming the local. At the conference there was a discussion whether African Christians have to adopt western or African family models. The answer is neither. Evangelical pentecostal churches in Africa have the power to create different models of family and connection and kin which are neither western nor traditional. This happens in every sphere. So it is not impossible to make generalizations that apply to everywhere about evangelical Christianity. But it is difficult. It has to work differently everywhere. If it is successful it does work differently. We were mainly concerned to show that and therefore to ask the way that these transformations are taking place inside African society. There are the generalizations and the particularities and to test both against each other.

VKS World Christianity is not all different Balkanized Christianities. There is a common thread and common commitments which are genuinely universal. The Christian faith is still a universal faith. There are certain common commitments. The most interesting result of our conference was that in spite of research in eighteen different countries, I saw more a universality of passion, commitments and desires. This could be common humanity or common Christianity but also could be common commitments.

LB We need to look at evangelicals and politics in Islamic contexts. Muslims suggest that while they have a vision for the state, Christians do not and where they do it is reactive. The need for commitment to nation-building and church planting. It may be that the presence of church is the antidote to radical Islam. We need to note that there is no church as traditionally known in Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia and the Maldives which are the breeding grounds for this radical version of Islam. So we need to think about church planting in Islamic contexts. Will we give Muslim Christian believers the space to do theology in new ways that may not fit current church structures?