

in the mission field

not just cricket

the trinity

what does the Bible say about euthanasia?

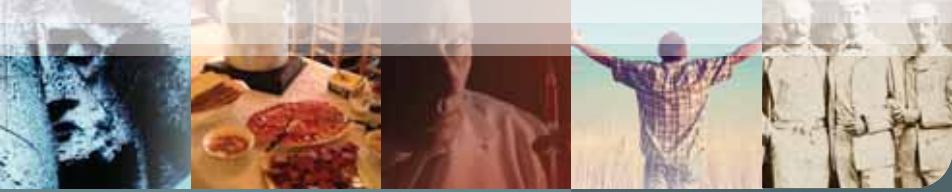
the student journal of the christian medical fellowship

crucians



plus: Norway, suffering, cross-word, acknowledge love and obey God

NUCLEUS



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Managing Editor
 Laurence Crutchlow (CMF)

Editorial Team
 Giles Cattermole (CMF)
 John Martin (CMF)
 Melody Redman (HYMS)
 Hannah Reynolds (Birmingham)
 Laura Risdale (CMF)
 Tom Roberts (CMF)
 Peter Saunders (CMF)

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Editorial address
 The Editor, *Nucleus*
 Christian Medical Fellowship
 6 Marshalsea Road
 London SE1 1HL
Tel 020 7234 9660
Email nucleus@cmf.org.uk
Web www.cmf.org.uk

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As well as a modicum of cricket (Heroes and Heretics, page 32), this issue begins a new series of articles explaining CMF's beliefs and values. CMF holds to an evangelical basis of faith, shared with UCCF, which outlines our core beliefs. CMF members sign the simple affirmation: 'I am in sympathy with the Aims of the Christian Medical Fellowship. I declare my faith in God the Father and in God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is my Saviour, and in God the Holy Spirit. I accept the Bible as the supreme authority in matters of faith and conduct.'

The full doctrinal basis (DB) is set out in CMF's constitution, and is signed by staff and office holders. A copy can be found on page 7 and online at cmf.org.uk/about/our-beliefs. A doctrinal basis is useful not only in laying out our core beliefs, but also in reminding us of the great truths God has revealed to us. Doctrinal statements may seem restricting, but are helpful in cases of disagreement. Perhaps as important for a non-denominational fellowship like CMF is what is *not* in the DB, reminding us that we can work together for God's kingdom even if we don't agree over every secondary issue.¹ The UCCF website has a good article outlining why a DB is necessary in more detail.²

CMF's Christian values can be summed up in Christ's two great commandments (Luke 10:27). 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' (Deuteronomy 6:5); and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18). A set of ten values (page 7) outline what the Bible's statements mean in the day-to-day life of a Christian medic.

We hope to cover one 'belief' and one 'value' in each *Nucleus* over the next three or four years, showing why these are true, important and relevant today. We especially want to show how the 'beliefs' shape our practice of medicine, and how the 'values' are based on what the Bible teaches, giving practical examples throughout.

We're also including some more of the great material in CMF's archives. Most of what we've published from the mid-1990s onwards is online, but there is much good material that predates this. Although some of the illustrations may occasionally seem dated, or the language formal, the eternal truths of God's Word remain. God's glory is for all generations (Ephesians 3:21).

Articles and letters for *Nucleus* are always welcome. These can be sent to the CMF office at any time – you don't have to wait for publication day! We are always happy to give feedback and suggestions on articles; the only 'rule' is that articles must be consistent with the Christian faith as expressed in the Bible. Most articles cover topics that are both Christian and medical, with a few being Christian but less medically specific.

We look forward to receiving more letters and articles – why not start by telling us what you think about the articles in this issue? =

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1. For a fuller treatment of disagreements, see Crutchlow L. When Christians Disagree. *Nucleus* Spring 2012:10-14 cmf.ji/18A3IH9
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our values: love & obey

'To acknowledge, love and obey God as the creator, sustainer and Lord of all life'

Laurence Crutchlow explores the first of CMF's values

This first of CMF's values is the foundation; the one that underpins the other nine.

To analyse it, we'll look at who God is, and then what our relationship to him is to be, why others might not agree, and finally how this looks in the daily life of a Christian medical student.

who is God?

God is the *creator*; not just the ruler or owner. The Bible asserts his role as creator (Psalm 8), his detailed knowledge of his creation (Psalm 139), and describes something of *how* he created (Genesis 1-2). Creation is only the beginning. God is not a remote inventor who built a machine, set it running, then retired to a safe distance! Not only is he the creator, he is also the *sustainer*. Psalm 147 speaks of some of the ways in which this works; Hebrews 1:3 tells us that Jesus, the exact representation of God's being, sustains all things through his Word. This is quite a dramatic concept. If God no longer sustained, life as we know it would end.

God isn't just the designer and operator – he is king as well. Psalm 24:1-2 is clear that the Lord reigns over the earth. Daniel sets this out in one of his prayers (Daniel 2:20-24), and even one of history's ultimate power freaks, Nebuchadnezzar, acknowledges God's lordship (Daniel 4:17).

how do we relate to him?

We must acknowledge God before we can love or obey him. Creation itself declares his glory (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:19-20). But acknowledging him alone isn't enough – after all even demons believe in both God and Jesus (James 2:19). So we must go beyond acknowledgment.

One of God's best known commands is: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.' (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). Jesus affirmed this for Christians when answering a question from the Pharisees (Matthew 22:37-38), describing it as 'the greatest commandment'. This commandment is clear that our love for God should not just be a feeling, but a deliberate act.

It is hard to separate love and obedience in the Bible. 'In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands' (1 John 5:3). 'Love the Lord your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always' (Deuteronomy 11:1).



Laurence Crutchlow is a London GP and CMF Associate Head of Student Ministries

interestingly the *National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies* lists large numbers of universities with no such society on its website.¹ By contrast, we have active CMF groups in 38 of the 40 UK and Irish medical schools. Perhaps atheism isn't as common as is thought!

More often, people accept that a 'god' of some description exists, but deny that he is creator, sustainer or Lord. Others acknowledge a powerful God intellectually, but decide that because of their perception of his characteristics, they want nothing to do with him. Recent controversies over the Canaanites (see article on page 22) illustrate this.

What about someone who professes to love God, but shows no desire to obey him? Jesus said: 'If you love me, keep my commands' (John 14:15), so we must question the depth of their love for God. This is quite a different situation to a Christian who wants to obey God, but struggles to do so. 'I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do', says Paul in Romans 7:15. The Bible is clear that we cannot in ourselves live up to God's standards (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8). Yet it is as we realise we can't live up to God's standards that we turn back to the Cross; to Jesus' sacrifice in our place for our sins. In our weakest moments we see most clearly our need for the Holy Spirit, who enables us to obey God. And in longing to be able to fully obey God, we long for our heavenly home, free of pain and suffering.

how does this look in the real world?

This first of CMF's values underpins the other nine values, which illustrate how this first value

'Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.' (John 14:23-24). Our love for God is expressed as we obey what he commands.

how is this different from the world around us?

Some deny the existence of any God, though this view is surprisingly rare worldwide, held by about 2% of the population according to the CIA's *World Factbook*. Atheism at least appears rather more prevalent in the UK – but

looks in some of the situations faced by doctors. This more general first value reminds us that obedience to God should shape not just our medical life, or our time at a CMF meeting, but all of our lives. If we acknowledge, love and obey God, our lives will look quite different to those around us in the medical student world.

Most students of any faith and none will place a high value on patients – the difference is that we recognise it is very hard to do this in our own strength.² Differences in our relationships with fellow students, the authorities, hospital staff and administrators are often more noticeable.

The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) will be

seen in anyone being regenerated by the Holy Spirit (ie any Christian). The characteristics are radically different to what those around us might expect. Such actions will lead to questions about what we believe, particularly as we get to know people better. Even if pressured, part of our obedience includes answering such questions with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

We must also be clear that our god is not medicine. Of course medicine is a good thing. But it is easy to worship a good thing which is created, rather than its creator. Our use of time usually reflects our real priorities. Though studying medicine needs time, we mustn't

Our values

As Christian doctors seeking to live and speak for Jesus Christ we aim:

- To acknowledge, love and obey God as the creator, sustainer and Lord of all life.
- To practise whole-person medicine which addresses our patients' physical, emotional and spiritual needs
- To maintain the deepest respect for human life from its beginning to its end, including the unborn, the handicapped and the elderly
- To serve our patients according to their healthcare need without partiality or discrimination on any basis.
- To care sacrificially for the poor, vulnerable and marginalized
- To uphold marriage between a man and a woman, faithfulness and the family
- To speak the truth, respect privacy and safeguard our patients' confidences.
- To put our patients first whilst fully accepting our duty to promote preventive medicine and public health.
- To deal honestly with our professional and administrative colleagues and to respect the governing authorities
- To work constructively in scientific research and in training others for the benefit of individual patients and the advance of health care throughout the world.

spend *all* our time working! If God is foremost in our lives, we will spend time with him, both individually and together with other believers. Indeed, mentioning church when asked about the weekend is an easy way into further conversation about Christian things for someone who wants to ask.

Later articles covering the other values will deal with more specific issues and ethics. Whatever the issue, living in obedience to God means that we will sometimes come into conflict over our values; sometimes with the authorities, sometimes with those we are working and studying with. As a student tensions are often over 'day-to-day' issues like

gossip or sexual boundaries as much as over medical ethics.

in conclusion

Acknowledging, loving and obeying God will flow out of understanding him as creator, sustainer and Lord. We will only do this in the power of his Holy Spirit, who enables us to lead the radically different lives that are noticed by those around us. ■

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1. www.ahsstudents.org.uk/region/greater-london
2. My previous article 'Work as for the Lord' expands this point. Crutchlow L. Work as for the Lord. *Nucleus* 2013. 43(2):24-26 cmf.li/19WIAvV

Doctrinal Basis

1. There is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
2. God is sovereign in creation, revelation, redemption and final judgement.
3. The Bible, as originally given, is the inspired and infallible Word of God. It is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and behaviour.
4. Since the fall, the whole of humankind is sinful and guilty, so that everyone is subject to God's wrath and condemnation.
5. The Lord Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son, is fully God; he was born of a virgin; his humanity is real and sinless; he died on the cross, was raised bodily from death and is now reigning over heaven and earth.
6. Sinful human beings are redeemed from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death once and for all time of their representative and substitute, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between them and God.
7. Those who believe in Christ are pardoned all their sins and accepted in God's sight only because of the righteousness of Christ credited to them; this justification is God's act of undeserved mercy, received solely by trust in him and not by their own efforts.
8. The Holy Spirit alone makes the work of Christ effective to individual sinners, enabling them to turn to God from their sin and to trust in Jesus Christ.
9. The Holy Spirit lives in all those he has regenerated. He makes them increasingly Christ-like in character and behaviour and gives them power for their witness in the world.
10. The one holy universal church is the Body of Christ, to which all true believers belong.
11. The Lord Jesus Christ will return in person, to judge everyone, to execute God's just condemnation on those who have not repented and to receive the redeemed to eternal glory.

our beliefs

'there is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.'

Giles Cattermole considers the trinity

Isn't the trinity a bit odd? A theological abstraction that confuses and divides?

Wouldn't it just be simpler to believe in a 'singular' god? Why is it the first statement in the doctrinal basis?

The trinity is what makes Christianity unique. Other religions and cults might believe in an almighty God, that Jesus was a great prophet (Islam), that he died for sins (Jehovah's Witnesses), or even that he is the Son of God (Mormons). But only Christians worship 'one God in trinity, and trinity in unity'.¹ Only Christians believe that God is both one and three; of one 'substance' in three persons, each eternal and equally God.

Part of our problem lies in what we think God is like. Pagan gods seemed more like mighty men with super-powers. A pantheist god is a force permeating all reality. The god of philosophy is a logical necessity, or an explanation of the design and fine-tuning of the universe. Pagans, pantheists and philosophers might see God as personal (but petty), around us (but without relationship), or powerful (but remote). Such a god might be a creator or ruler, but he's not the God of the Bible. And when we try to shoehorn the trinity onto one of those false understandings of God, it all becomes a bit of a mess.

The problem is that those false gods are based on what we think God is like. Instead, we need to hear what *God* says he is like. And he is radically different from what people imagine when they make God in their own image.

Jesus told his disciples 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.' (John 14:6-7) Read this again. It's not just that to know God we need to know Jesus

(Hebrews 1:3), but that through Jesus we know the *Father*. God is revealed to us in this Father-Son relationship; in fact, the Father has always been the Father (John 17:24); the Son has always been the Son (Colossians 1:13-20).

This didn't begin in a stable in Bethlehem, it's part of the eternal nature of God. God is love (1 John 4:16), yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). If God were primarily defined by being the creator or ruler, he'd be dependent on the world and his people for him to be what he is. If a 'singular' God were to be defined by his love, he would be similarly limited. But our God is trinity, in eternal love between the Father, Son and Spirit. The Father makes his love for the Son known through giving his Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17); the three persons of the trinity are bound together by love in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

This eternal, abundant, joyful love overflows in creation and salvation. God the Father both creates and saves by his Word, in the power of his Spirit (Genesis 1:1-2, Titus 3:4-7). Jesus is eternally loved by the Father, and creation is 'the extension of that love outwards so that it might be enjoyed by others.'² Because we rejected him, and because his love is so immense, God acted to save us in Jesus. God shares his love with, showers his love on, his people.



Giles Cattermole is CMF Head of Student Ministries

He now pours out this love by his Spirit (Romans 5:5). God doesn't just give us good things in salvation, he gives *himself*. He fills us with his Spirit, who points us to Jesus, who shows us the Father. This is the God we believe in, not some philosophical faceless force or petty tribal tyrant.

And this changes everything. Being a Christian is not about following rules or rituals, it's about the love that the persons of the trinity have for each other, and that they share with us. We are loved by God, filled by God, to love others. To love others in the way Jesus showed us on the cross (1 John 4:7-11).

So trinity shapes our medicine because only in the trinity can we know who God really is and how he wants his people to live. He wants joyful, self-giving service for the good of others. The compassion we are to show our patients should reflect the overflowing love of God. How could we be filled by the Spirit of love, and keep our knowledge or skills to ourselves? How could we *not* want to help the poor and

vulnerable? When you're doing your umpteenth clerking in the middle of the night, if your view of God is 'singular', if he's just a big boss who tells you what to do, what motivates you other than duty and fear? But if your God has given his life *for* you, and given his life *to* you; if his over-flowing love for you has filled you in order for that love to overflow from you; what *won't* you do for others?

There's so much more we could say about the implications of trinity for medicine. At the heart of reality, within God himself, are personality and relationship, harmony and beauty, communication and knowledge, order and goodness. These things are real and eternal. If everything we see today came from a singularity (for example, of matter-energy) then these things would either be illusions, or contingent on something else that came later. But trinity means these things are of eternal reality and worth. It means ethics in medicine come from the character of a good and holy God. Our attempts to understand science make sense in the light of a God of order and revelation.

In the lab, in the lecture theatre, on the wards; trinity shapes our science, our ethics, and especially the compassion we show our patients. But most importantly of all, it is only because God is trinity that we can be saved. trinity is how God reveals himself in creation and salvation, and it is this God and this God alone who saves us, who redeems us through Jesus' death and resurrection, and who gives us new life in the Spirit. ■

Mike Reeves' book, 'The Good God: enjoying Father, Son and Spirit' is wise, joyous and readable. It's a must-read.

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2. Reeves M. *The good God: enjoying the Father, Son and Spirit*. Paternoster, 2012:24

apologetics 3

responding to suffering

Chris Knight on how we 'do' apologetics

the biggest question

We turn now to what is often seen as the biggest objection or obstacle to faith – the existence of pain and suffering in a world where God is said to be good and loving. Whether we simply turn to today's news, or are talking with family and friends, pain and suffering never seem far away. The question that so often comes to the lips of Christians as well as non-Christians is: 'If God is so good, why doesn't he stop the pain?'

In this short article, we're not going to resolve that issue fully – even a whole book wouldn't be enough. But we will think about some ways that we might respond when people raise this common question with us.





former research scientist **Chris Knight** is
content coordinator of *bethinking.org*

a real problem

For many people, the issue of suffering is a real obstacle to believing in a loving God. Nothing that I say is intended to dismiss the extent and depth of an individual's suffering. The question can be raised, however, for varying reasons. It can be an intellectual and philosophical issue, as it was for me as a teenager. Or it can be a very real, personal and emotional issue, raised by someone's own experience of suffering or that of someone close to them. It is not necessarily very helpful to respond to one of these when our friend has the other in mind. Questions will help to identify whether this is a purely philosophical issue or whether faith remains, but there is anger and disillusionment with God for what has happened.

the intellectual problem

A typical example of the intellectual problem of suffering is expressed as 'Why does God allow...?' There is not necessarily any real emotional contact with the question – although there may have been in the past. For some, it may be a real barrier to belief but it can be a question that troubles Christians as well.

The argument is often put in the following way, which I will call 'the happiness argument' for reasons which will become clear below:

1. If a loving and all-powerful God exists, he would not allow any suffering
2. Suffering exists
3. Therefore, a loving God does not exist

Few would disagree with the second statement, and if the first one is true, then the conclusion follows. So we need to look at the assumptions that lie behind the first statement: 'If a loving

God exists, he would not allow any suffering'. At first glance, this is an attractive belief. Any parent can acknowledge the extent to which they try to minimise the suffering of their children. So if God is omnipotent, surely he would simply want to prevent suffering before it happened and the world would be a wonderful, happy place to live. But there are at least two assumptions lurking behind this argument that we might question.

The first assumption behind 'the happiness argument' is the reason I chose that name – it is assumed that happiness is the main purpose of human life. The 'perfect' world is pictured as a five-star luxury hotel – solely devoted to pampering us with everything that could make us happy. Even if the world is not expected to provide five-star luxury, the assumption is still that our current happiness and contentment must be central to the purpose of life and hence require the absence of all pain and suffering, which a loving God would therefore remove.

The second assumption behind the happiness argument is that we have perfect knowledge of the world – and of God. There is no bigger picture within which suffering might be understood and resolved.

Both of these assumptions are, of course, highly questionable. The happiness argument revolves around whether there is a bigger picture that is beyond our knowledge, so the second assumption really just begs the question. But the first assumption does seem more plausible: surely God does desire everyone to be happy? So why did he not make the world to ensure that that was the case?

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a bigger picture?

Our everyday lives actually show that we do not view the avoidance of suffering as the most important aspect of our lives. Vaccinations, surgical procedures, visits to the gym can all be painful – but we do not avoid them at all costs. We acknowledge that these things have a higher purpose behind them that make sense of the immediate suffering imposed. Might not the creator of the Universe also have a greater purpose for his creation that allows (but does not necessarily want) the possibility of suffering? He sees the bigger picture – which is not visible to us.

It seems to me that if we have the possibility of happiness, then the possibility of unhappiness and suffering must also exist. If you fall in love with a wonderful person, there is a possibility of great happiness – but if that love is unrequited, there is great *unhappiness* instead. We cannot be made for real happiness without the possibility of its opposite. The only alternative is for us to be automatons – incapable of free will, but consequently incapable of any real relationships, moral choices, creativity, faithfulness, courage and every other characteristic that makes us truly human and makes life worth living.

why doesn't God stop it?

But even if we accept that free will is important to our humanity, it's still tempting to ask why God doesn't stop the huge evils that occur in the world. Couldn't he at least stop the really big things – the Holocaust, evil dictators, and so on? We might all think that if God had prevented Hitler from carrying out the Holocaust, the world would have been a better place. But why do we stop there? Surely other evil dictators could also be stopped? Murders

prevented? Violence stopped? Lying, cheating, anger and gossip can all lead to terrible emotional and physical hurt – so should these all be prevented as well? Where would God need to draw the line at his interference in the world to prevent all pain and suffering? Even sports and leisure activities that people enjoy can lead to serious accidents and tragedy.

if we have the possibility
of happiness, then the possibility
of unhappiness and suffering
must also exist

What sort of a world would this be? There would be no true freedom – no action would have any real consequences. There would be no moral or immoral actions as even if you shoot someone at point blank range, God would turn the bullet to jelly before it hit your intended victim. In such a world, we could make no real plans, because cause and effect would at times be suspended (science would be impossible!) and morality would be non-existent as moral actions require a knowledge of good and bad consequences.

All the above is nothing like a conclusive resolution to the problem of suffering. But it does show that there is more to the argument than first appears. It must be clear that there is no bigger picture or purpose behind the suffering in the world before the atheist's argument works. So the atheist might then revise the happiness argument to the following:

1. If a loving and all-powerful God exists, he would not allow purposeless suffering
2. Purposeless suffering exists
3. Therefore, a loving God does not exist

But it is now much harder for the atheist to maintain that he knows that purposeless suffering exists. Also, the Christian can turn the argument around:

1. If a loving and all-powerful God exists, he would not allow purposeless suffering
2. A loving God does exist
3. Therefore, purposeless suffering does not exist

Statement one is the same in both of these arguments, and the difference lies in what other truth (statement two) we have the best reasons to believe – and hence what we can conclude (statement three). Can we really know that any example of suffering has no possible wider purpose or reason behind it? What evidence could allow us to conclude this with any confidence? On the other hand, has our Christian understanding and experience convinced us that God is indeed a loving God who cares deeply for us? I believe that as Christians we have good reasons to believe that God exists and that God is loving (more on this in my next article). If that is the case, we can affirm in statement two above that ‘a loving God does exist’ rather than that ‘purposeless suffering exists’. So the atheist’s argument against God’s existence, based on suffering, fails – because of our knowledge, experience and trust in God and his character. That conviction is unlikely to convince the atheist, but it does give us an opportunity to explain why we believe in such a God and can lead to interesting conversations about the nature of the God we love and serve as Christians, which leads us to consider the personal problem of suffering.

the personal problem

The personal problem of suffering is typically expressed as ‘Why, God...?’ or ‘How can I

key points

the intellectual problem of suffering

- Only purposeless suffering is a real problem – but how does the atheist know that it is purposeless?
- Loss of free will or consequences to actions negate our humanity
- You can turn the argument around by showing that God exists

the personal problem of suffering

- Know why you trust in God
- Trust sometimes needs to walk ahead of understanding
- It’s more important to know who God is, than why suffering happens
- Jesus Christ shows us the heart of God’s love for us

continue to trust God when...?’ At first it might be expressed more dispassionately, like the intellectual problem of suffering – but we need to see whether there’s a question behind the question. What is *really* going on here?

Giles Cattermole expressed this personal problem of suffering really well in his *Nucleus* article ‘Is God helpless or heartless?’¹ He writes: ‘Most people don’t ask this question as an academic exercise for an intellectual solution, but because they’re hurting, and they’re crying out for an answer that will help them through the pain; an answer that works in real life.’ Do read the whole of Giles’ article, which is highly relevant to this personal problem of suffering. I will add just a few other thoughts.

Our emotions are powerful – they are far more likely to eat away at Christian beliefs than any argument for the non-existence of God. When we become a Christian, we begin a journey of faith, a journey of trusting God. Os Guinness puts it like this: ‘When Christian believers come to faith their understanding and

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their faith go hand in hand, but as they continue in faith their trust may sometimes be called to go on by itself without their understanding.’² When we don’t understand what is happening to us or our loved ones, and our emotions urge us to ask ‘Why?’, our trust needs to walk on ahead of our understanding. That is so much easier if we know why we trusted in the first place – which is one of the reasons why I recommended in part two that we should all think through our testimony of why we became a Christian – so that when the feelings tell us it’s all false, we can go back to that written testimony and remind ourselves why we know that God *can* be trusted, whatever our feelings currently tell us.

When we or others face the emotional turmoil arising from the pain and suffering of the world around us, perhaps we ask the wrong question. Instead of asking ‘Why?’, we should be asking ‘Who?’. The book of Job can be difficult to read all the way through, but it makes this point well. After all of Job’s suffering and all of his friends’ advice, Job finally gets what he needs. Five times in chapter three, and many more subsequently, he asks ‘Why?’, but God instead answers the question ‘Who?’. God responds to an enquiry with an encounter.

Job’s experience of God silences his questions: ‘Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.... My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.’ (Job 42:3,5) We may know why we believe in God, and we need to hold on to that, but it should lead us in our journey of faith to an absolute trust in the God in whom we believe. That same God came to us in Christ and ‘demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8). Then, whatever befalls us, our

further resources

- Giles Cattermole: Is God helpless or heartless? cmf.li/110iXYr
- Os Guinness: *God in the Dark: The Assurance of Faith Beyond a Shadow of Doubt*. Wheaton: Illinois: Crossway, 1996.
- Melvin Tinker: *Why do Bad Things Happen to Good People?* Christian Focus Publications, 2009.
- www.bethinking.org/suffering

experience of God’s love and faithfulness will enable us to continue our walk without further understanding. To quote Os Guinness again: ‘We always have sure and sufficient reasons for knowing why we can trust God, but do not always know what God is doing and why.’³

‘Why?’ is a difficult question to answer – indeed there probably is no adequate answer we can give. Perhaps we can redirect our friend to consider instead the question ‘Who?’. Who is it that offers us hope and purpose in the midst of suffering? Who can bring peace and joy in pain and despair? Who came to earth to identify with his creation? Who died on a cross that we might live? When we encounter the reality of God in Christ, we know we can trust him in everything. When our understanding has reached its limits, we still have reasons to trust God and continue to walk with him. We can say confidently with Abraham: ‘Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?’ (Genesis 18:25). ■

NEXT TIME – how do we know God exists?

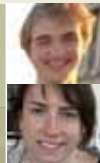
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fjords and fellowship

Jack Strain and Lorna Hemingway report on a CMF Summer Team in Norway



Jack Strain is a medical student at Bart's, Lorna Hemingway is at Imperial College, London

what did we do?

Having answered an advert for summer teams on the CMF website, we found ourselves in Norway. After sightseeing in Oslo, we met with local students to travel to *Hermon Høyfjellssenter*, a traditional wooden lodge in a Christian-run ski resort. The beautiful surroundings were a real retreat from London life! There were 16 people including students, junior doctors and speakers at the conference from Norway, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Denmark, and Germany.



CMF's Giles Cattermole led teaching on Titus and running a CMF group, and a German psychotherapist gave talks on caring for yourself and others. We found these talks a great opportunity to reflect personally and encourage others from countries where running CMF groups is more difficult. Some of the most uplifting aspects of the week were prayer, sharing and worship sessions. We had great fun learning about other CMF groups, and were able to share ideas such as Imperial College CMF's 'Brothers and Sisters' mentoring scheme.

The last two days involved a day hike (complete with jumping over streams) and visiting *Sognefjorden* – the largest fjord in Norway. Both days were a great opportunity to reflect on seminars, brainstorm ideas for the next year and make some good friends.

Fun included traditional food (did you know that on Saturday night everyone in Norway eats rice porridge with cinnamon and sugar sprinkled on top?) and the revelation that the other students would come in school uniform

if asked to dress up as someone British (the countries represented do not have school uniforms). Less surprising was the large amount of time needed to describe cricket, or the importance of the Lions' rugby game.

what did we learn?

It's staggering to think that in nearly every medical school across northern Europe there are other Christian medical students like us, meeting and sharing the gospel. It

was encouraging to realise we're 'all in the same boat' and that students from other countries are praying for us!

Before the trip we thought that as large UK medical schools we had everything sorted and knew exactly how to run a CMF group and encourage others in Christ. We left realising that we still have a way to go! To see how others battle in countries where CMF isn't an easy organisation to be a part of, or where they struggle to find other Christian medics was incredible. We were amazed at their huge faith and trust in the Lord.

join a CMF summer team next year

It's a great opportunity to meet Christians in similar situations, and see for yourself that we have a global gospel, bearing fruit in all sorts of different countries where Christians face varied challenges. It is easy to hold a narrow picture of the Christian world in the UK; being part of a summer team is a splendid way to break down those assumptions. For more details see: www.cmf.org.uk/students/summer-teams

euthanasia – what does the Bible say?

Peter Saunders, CEO of CMF, examines the biblical case against compassionate killing

Despite huge pressure from lobby groups, and two bills¹ currently under consideration by British parliaments, both euthanasia and assisted suicide remain illegal in the UK. The opposition to legalisation from faith groups, the medical profession and disabled people's advocates has been strong and the key argument² that changing the law would open up vulnerable people to exploitation and abuse has so far held sway with politicians. CMF, through the Care Not

Killing Alliance,³ has been strongly outspoken in this arena, in the mass media, Parliament



Peter Saunders is CEO of CMF

and through medical bodies like the BMA.

It's appropriate, when addressing the issue in a public square occupied largely by people who do not share our faith, to use secular arguments in order to connect with a non-Christian audience, but what does the Bible have to say about the issue? Many Christians are uncertain or confused about this.⁴ Can a strong argument be brought against euthanasia from our scriptures? I believe that it can and that all Christian doctors should be able to argue the biblical case. Space does not allow a wider consideration of to what extent Christians should become involved in helping to shape our nation's public policy so I am here concentrating on why it is wrong for Christians to seek, or to administer, euthanasia themselves.

When addressing contemporary ethical issues biblically, we can't simply look up words like 'euthanasia' and 'abortion' in a concordance. But this does not mean that the Bible has nothing to say about them. God's Word enables us to be 'thoroughly equipped for every good work' and he intends us to know and apply his timeless godly principles to all situations (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

There are in fact two instances of voluntary euthanasia in the Bible.

In the first, Abimelek, believing himself to be fatally wounded (with a fractured skull after being hit on the head by a millstone), asks his armour-bearer to kill him. His request is granted and the Israelite leader is thus spared the 'indignity' of being killed by a woman. The death is seen as just retribution for Abimelek's own murder of his seventy brothers, and we are not told what happened, if anything, to the armour-bearer (Judges 9:52-55).

In the second, an Amalekite despatches the

mortally injured Saul, still alive after a failed attempt at suicide.

'I happened to be on Mount Gilboa', the young man said, 'and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me and I said, "What can I do?"...Then he said to me "Stand here by me and kill me. I'm in the throes of death but I'm still alive." So I stood beside him and killed him because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive' (2 Samuel 1:6-10).

Whether the story is true (it varies from the account of Saul's death at the end of 1 Samuel 31) or the Amalekite's fabrication in order to win favour in David's eyes for despatching Saul and delivering him the crown, the new king's reaction is interesting.

'Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?' (2 Samuel 1:14), he asks, and then apparently before receiving a reply, as if the confession in itself were sufficient grounds for a judgment to be made, orders the Amalekite's execution.

In the mind of David at least, the compassionate killing of Saul constituted a capital offence, despite him being in great pain (presumably with peritonitis) and close to death without the possibility of analgesia, and most significantly of all, despite Saul's own request to be killed.

These two cases demonstrate the two main arguments for euthanasia, autonomy ('death with dignity') and compassion ('release from suffering'). But we have to be careful not to derive moral principles solely from narrative passages in Scripture.

The creation narrative tells us that human

beings are unique in being made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) and it is on this basis, after the flood, that God introduces to all humankind the death penalty for murder (Genesis 9:5-6). Human beings, being made in the image of God, are not to be *unjustly* killed. Note that these are principles given to *all humankind*. All human beings belong to God (Psalm 24:1) and all human beings are accountable to God and will one day face judgment (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:8; 22:14-15).

The prohibition against killing *legally innocent* people is later formalised in God's covenant agreement with his chosen people Israel in the sixth of the ten commandments, 'You shall not murder' (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17). But what does this mean? The English language has created for us a confusion that is not present in the original text. There are in fact ten Hebrew words translated 'kill' in the Authorised Version of the Bible, all with different shades of meaning, but only one of them is implicated in the sixth commandment, the word *ratsach*. Its Greek equivalent is *phoneuo* and its most accurate translation is *murder* (NIV). The meaning of the word is further defined in four main passages in the Pentateuch (Exodus 21:12-14; Leviticus 24:17-21; Numbers 35:16-31; Deuteronomy 19:4-13).

These passages resolve any ambiguity for us and leave us with a precise definition of what is prohibited, namely the '*intentional* killing of an innocent human being'. Let us consider this in more detail.

First, the sixth commandment forbids *intentional* killing. Anyone killing another human being unintentionally was able to flee to a city of refuge where he would gain some protection from the 'avenger of blood'. The natural death of the high priest would later atone for the killing and the guilty party would be freed (Numbers

35:28). However this 'manslaughter' provision applied only in very limited circumstances:

'For instance, a man may go into the forest with his neighbour to cut wood, and as he swings his axe to fell a tree, the head may fly off and hit his neighbour and kill him' (Deuteronomy 19:5).

Killing resulting from negligence was not excused as unintentional (Exodus 21:29). Neither was killing 'in hostility' even if not necessarily premeditated (Numbers 35:21).

Second, the commandment forbids the killing of an *innocent human being*. Under the Old Covenant God authorised or permitted killing in three situations: in the context of holy war, for capital offences and in self-defence (Exodus 22:2). The holy war conditions are clearly spelt out by Moses (Deuteronomy 20:10-18). In cities within the promised land everybody was to be killed, in cities at a distance the men only were to be killed and only if a preliminary offer of peace was not accepted.

There were also over 20 capital offences ranging from murder to contempt of court. In these situations the Israelites had the obligation of carrying out the judicial killing as God's representatives. The self-defence provision only operated if someone who had broken into a house after dark intending to commit a crime was killed by the owner while protecting his family and property.

God only authorised the killing of the guilty. 'Innocent blood' could not be shed intentionally under any circumstances and the shedding of innocent blood is in fact uniformly condemned throughout Scripture (Exodus 23:7; 2 Kings 21:16; Psalms 106:37-38; Jeremiah 19:4).

We must not become confused here with legal, psychological or social definitions of murder. The Bible does not support the

conclusions of others that murder is ‘the killing of a human being unlawfully with malice aforethought’ or killing with ‘a feeling of ill-will’ or ‘illegal killing inimical to the community’.⁵ It is rather the *intentional killing of an innocent human being*.

Euthanasia clearly falls within this biblical definition. There is no provision for killing on grounds of diminished responsibility (on the basis age or illness) and there is no provision for compassionate killing, even at the person’s request. Similarly there is no recognition of a ‘right to die’ as all human life belongs to God (Psalms 24:1). Our lives are not actually our own. Suicide (and therefore assisted suicide) is equally a breach of the sixth commandment. Only God has the authority to take human life and human beings may only do so under God’s delegated authority (eg Romans 13:4).

dealing with objections

Loving God means obeying him (John 14:15) and if God commands something clearly then that should be the end of any debate. However, many Christians today are not convinced that euthanasia is wrong in all circumstances.

Those who believe that it can sometimes be justified usually fall into one of two categories – which, for convenience, we shall call antinomians and situationists. Let us consider them in turn.

Antinomians try to dispense with law altogether. They argue correctly that we are saved by God’s grace through Jesus’ death on the cross and not by good works (Ephesians 2:8-9), but incorrectly assume that therefore our moral behaviour doesn’t matter to God. The apostle Paul addresses this misunderstanding with his rhetorical question ‘Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace?’ to which he

supplies his own answer ‘By no means!’ He goes on to point out that our freedom from the condemnation of the Old Testament law means that we are no longer ‘slaves to sin’ but have become ‘slaves to God’. As Christians we are both enabled and obliged to obey God’s commands (Romans 6:15-18). We are not saved by this obedience – but rather this obedience is part of the evidence of our being saved. The taking of innocent human life, ‘murder’, is as wrong in the New Testament as it is in the Old (Matthew 5:21-22; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9-10; Revelation 21:8, 22:14-15).

Situationists claim that in certain situations God’s commands may be suspended in favour of the higher principle of ‘loving one’s neighbour’ (Matthew 22:39-40). The situationist argues therefore that a Christian may intentionally kill in certain situations and yet be acting ‘in love’. There are two main problems with this. Firstly it clearly contravenes Christ’s own teaching that obedience to the greater commandments of the law did not in any way excuse disobedience to the lesser (Matthew 5:17-20, 23:23). In the mind of Christ these ‘conflicts of duty’ with the law of love simply do not occur. Secondly it begs the question of what a truly ‘loving’ action is. The practical reality is that right and wrong is simply left up to individual conviction or conscience – a return to the Israelite’s error of each doing ‘as he sees fit’ (Deuteronomy 12:8). This has tremendous dangers. The Bible is quite clear that the commandment ‘do not murder’ is summed up in the commandment ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ (Romans 13:8-10). Love does no harm to its neighbour (Romans 13:10) and murder, even for seemingly compassionate motives, constitutes harm.

Of course the danger is that we may fall into the trap of merely becoming *legalists*. The

legalist may be so obsessed with avoiding killing that he goes to the opposite extreme and strives to sustain life at all costs. A tragic consequence can be that the attainable goals of caring, consoling and comforting are forgotten as the Christian doctor, driven more by guilt than compassion, feels he must do everything technologically possible for the patient. The result is that the most important principles of love, justice and mercy are ultimately lost sight of (Matthew 23:23). We need to recognise that there comes a point when death is inevitable and when the burden of treatment outweighs its benefit. It is not euthanasia to withdraw treatment in such circumstances when the intention is simply to make the dying process as comfortable as possible.

Antinomianism, situationism and legalism are all distortions of Christian teaching. We must never intentionally kill our patients. However, we need to recognise that each of these wrong approaches is in part an overreaction to mistakes of the past: antinomianism is a reaction to legalism, situationism to obedience without love in handling hard cases and legalism to lawless indulgence. In rejecting these false 'isms' we need to recognise that the best argument against them is joyful, compassionate and obedient Christian service.

With the patient dying in pain it may seem that we have only two equally undesirable alternatives to choose from – either 'living hell' or the euthanasia needle. In reality there is a third way – the way of the cross. It calls us to walk in the footsteps of Jesus in giving our whole selves to the service of others (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 8:34; Galatians 6:2, 10; Philippians 2:4-11; 1 John 2:6). This will involve expending our time, money and energy to find compassionate solutions to human suffering and has found

practical shape historically in the hospice movement and good palliative care – pioneered in large part by Christian doctors.

But perhaps the most powerful Christian argument against euthanasia is that death is not the end. God created a perfect world that has 'fallen' as a consequence of our rebellion as human beings against God. But God's intervention through Christ's death and resurrection for our sins and on our behalf (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3) means that through the eyes of faith we can look forward to a new world after death with God where there is 'no more death or mourning or crying or pain' (Revelation 21:4). For those, however, who do not know God euthanasia is not a 'merciful release' at all. It may rather be propelling them towards a judgment for which they are unprepared followed by eternal separation from God in hell (Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:15). Thus it may be the worst thing we could ever do for them!

Euthanasia is wrong fundamentally because God has said it is wrong – and when, as Christians, we are tempted to consider it, our response needs to be quite simply 'it is written: you shall not murder' (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). However, as well as being right, God's laws also make good sense. We can therefore argue effectively against the legalisation of euthanasia in a secular forum even when our opponents don't accept that God exists. ■

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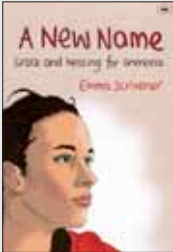


A New Name

Emma Scrivener

IVP 2012 £7.99 RRP

A *New Name* is the gripping, harrowing, inspiring story of Emma Scrivener's



personal experience with anorexia. It is also, wonderfully, a breathtakingly honest and insightful account of her struggle to know God and to know herself in relation to him.

Anorexia is the mental health disorder most likely to kill those who suffer from it. Emma, who first developed the illness in her teens, describes herself as one of life's 'good' girls – a keeper of rules and a craver of acceptance. In short, and brilliantly put, 'an approval seeking missile'. When the magically safe world of her childhood began to collapse around her she took responsibility for tidying things up. Her anorexia was never about 'feeling fat' or wanting to fulfil a physical ideal, but about control. Emma was a perfectionist, and this drove her to behaviours that nearly ruined her.

Interestingly, at around the same time as her anorexia started, Emma became a Christian. Like most perfectionists, she had more than aptly comprehended the guilt and shame of her sin. She says though, that while her brand of Christianity 'paid lip service to [Jesus'] work on my behalf... in practice it was up to me'. She understood herself to be saved by faith, but became a self-sanctifying machine. Years later, in the midst of a new marriage and successful ministry she had a devastating relapse. As Emma was on the brink of death, Jesus broke

into a life that despite her best attempts was wildly out of control.

It would be easy (but unwise) to think *A New Name* a bit 'niche' – about a small minority of troubled young women (and men) who 'have issues'. Ironically, this book is simply about a girl who is hungry. In fact, she is starving – for approval, acceptance, recognition, love, value, intimacy, identity. In short, I'd be pretty surprised if it wasn't as much about you, me and our obsessive, destructive idolatries, as it is about Emma and hers.

Healthcare often attracts a certain personality type, and perhaps this is particularly true of Christians. We want to heal and to care excellently. This is no bad thing. But the danger is that we are consumed by the title of 'doctor' or 'nurse' so that our desire to do and to be good becomes not only unhealthy, but sinful. Emma speaks profoundly, personally and poetically of the power of the good news to give us all what we crave and need in the person of Jesus Christ.

'I'm convinced,' she says, 'that we've all been given a true name, one that tells us who and what we are. It's not the name we build for ourselves, nor is it conferred by others. It's a name that's given to us by the Lord. When we accept it – when we accept him – the hiding, the searching and the striving can finally stop. We can rest. In him we can find our true purpose, meaning and identity.'

Emma will be speaking at the CMF Student Conference in February 2014. She blogs at www.emmascrivener.net ■

is God a genocidal monster?

In the first of a two-part series, a special correspondent examines a common apologetic question



One of the commonest objections to Christianity is that the God of the Old Testament is rather unpleasant. Richard Dawkins has called him *'a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser...a racist, infanticidal, genocidal...capriciously malevolent bully.'*¹ Typically strong words, but it is fair to ask how we can make sense of the violent acts commanded by God:

'When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations – the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you – and when the Lord your God

has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.' (Deuteronomy 7:1-2)

Critics have said: *'We rightly condemn the killing of an ethnic group when carried out by Nazis or Hutus. But Israel got a divine order to do the same thing to the Canaanites!'*²

And it's not just atheists who face this question. After all, isn't God against murder?³ And didn't Jesus tell us to love our enemies, not exterminate them?⁴

The question of whether God is a genocidal monster is best answered by examining four smaller questions. This article will consider the

first two, and the second the other two.

1. Is divine violence ever justified?
2. Why did God judge the Canaanites in particular? Is God racist?
3. What about non-combatants, women and children in Canaan?
4. Do the 'holy wars' of the Old Testament legitimise violence in the name of religion?

is divine violence ever justified?

Crimes against humanity

Firstly, would a God who simply ignores human brutality be a just or loving ruler? For instance, Dawkins is rightly enraged by priests who abuse children. But how much more enraged is the priests' creator, whose love and compassion far outstrips ours? Any offence against our neighbour is more fundamentally an offence against God, who will not stand idly by. God does not need to read the papers to be concerned about his world: 'God heard their groaning' (Exodus 2:24).

the need for punishment

Can the need for justice ever justify violent force? Doesn't that reduce the law enforcer to the level of the perpetrator? Hasn't society become more enlightened, leaving retribution behind us?


In fact most cultures throughout history have recognised the need for God to call man to account, and judge wrongdoing. Western post-Christian culture is the exception in imagining a god who simply turns a blind eye. While it is certainly true that God prefers genuine remorse, reconciliation and rehabilitation (see below), his love provokes him to anger against evil, and to a costly rescue plan that provides

an escape for those who turn back to him.

Perhaps many modern people who object to punishment are naïve about the realities of crime, and insensitive to the pleas of victims. Here is the perspective of a Croatian, who lived through the horrors of the Balkan war:

'My thesis that the practice of nonviolence requires a belief in divine vengeance will be unpopular with many Christians, especially theologians in the West. To the person who is inclined to dismiss it, I suggest imagining that you are delivering a lecture in a war zone. Among your listeners are people whose cities and villages have been first plundered, then burned and levelled to the ground, whose daughters and sisters have been raped, whose fathers and brothers have had their throats slit... Soon you would discover that it takes the quiet of a suburban home for the birth of the thesis that human nonviolence corresponds to God's refusal to judge. In a scorched land, soaked in the blood of the innocent, it will invariably die.'⁵

But perhaps even secular society does recognise the need for decisive punishment at times. A South African gang became notorious for their brutal action against their rivals. They would take a bike spoke, sometimes infected with faeces, hold down their victim, and pierce the abdomen repeatedly to cause an inoperable peritonitis, and a lingering death. Sometimes they performed lumbar punctures designed to leave their victims paraplegic and incontinent. The police might have been inclined to concede a no-go zone to the gangs. But instead they moved in to end the horrors. In the firefight that ensued, every gang member perished. Surely sometimes force is justified?



Similarly, when notorious killers such as Fred West or Ian Huntley were arrested, the authorities tore down the house, crushed every brick, and burned every timber. They wanted to thwart souvenir hunters, and eradicate any memory that might infect the community.⁶

crimes against divinity

Secondly, we easily forget that wrongdoing is not solely harm done to people, but offence against God. Not only is he an advocate for victims of crime, he is himself an injured party. The story of the prodigal son (Luke 15) illustrates the scandal of sin. The son's main wrongdoing was not wild partying, but his attitude to his father. He wanted him dead so that he could take his inheritance early and live as if his father never existed. Jesus taught that we all act in this way towards our heavenly Father, through rebellion or neglect. It's what the Bible calls sin. We must not be naïve about the reality of sin, and the need for God's judgment on it. Would a God who ignores it really be a worthy or credible God?

the mystery of mercy

So if God is right to judge, why hasn't the final judgment already happened? Part of the answer is that God delays out of mercy. We are given a glimpse of this when the Amorites were given a suspended sentence of 400 years before they reached the point of no return (Genesis 15:16). This act of mercy was costly, delaying God's chosen people from entering Canaan, who were taken into slavery in the interim. The Bible is littered with examples of God's patient mercy, such as Noah's 120 years of preaching (Genesis 6:3; 2 Peter 2:5), Jonah's commission (Jonah 4:10-11), and God's willingness to spare Sodom for just ten righteous people (Genesis 18:32).

Paul uses a beautiful obstetric image to describe the patient mercy of a God who delays judgment. Like an expectant parent, he is excited about having a family, which will make the pain, blood and tears worthwhile: 'For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God.' (Romans 8:19-21)

So atheists are wrong to portray God as naturally wrathful, like a tetchy schoolmaster who enjoys caning pupils. The Bible describes God's judgment as an 'alien task', a 'strange work'.⁷ His anger is a right reaction to our sin. But without our provocation, before the fall and within the trinity, there is no wrath in the godhead, only love. Wrath is not a primary characteristic of God. So rather than being a vindictive bully who enjoys violence, God is a reluctant judge: 'Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!' (Ezekiel 18:31-32)

God desires that we turn back to him before it is too late, because judgment is necessary and inevitable: 'The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise...Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.' (2 Peter 3:9-10)

Or take another biblical figure, who said:

'But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.'⁸

Of course, this was not a fiery Old Testament prophet, but Jesus himself. If he is right that judgment is coming, then premature death on a battlefield may not be the worst outcome that exists. And the smaller scale advanced judgments we see in biblical history are kind warnings of a worse fate that might befall us.⁹ Perhaps we recognise the principle from medicine. A patient seeks help for a pang of pain, which alerts them of a cancer that needs urgent attention. How much more would a loving God want to warn us of an inevitable reckoning to come?

why did God judge the Canaanites in particular? Is God racist?

If you are with me so far, it may still seem a bit arbitrary to pick on the Canaanites. Haven't there been worse nations?

Canaanite notorious culture



Firstly, there is a longer story that needs telling.

The father of the nation, Canaan, was the grandson

of Noah. When he was involved in indecent acts, Noah demoted the whole family: 'Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.'¹⁰ We find it difficult to think of a family or nation being morally accountable in the same way as an individual, but all groups have cultures that predispose to particular forms of evil. Cultures have legitimised racism in South Africa, or financial risk taking with other people's money in the West, and are

passed down from generation to generation. Similarly, Canaan's culture and religion legitimised rape, incest, child sacrifice and bestiality.¹¹ There is historical evidence that human sacrifice and sexual abuse lasted longer in Canaan than amongst her neighbours in Egypt and Mesopotamia.¹²

God does not show favouritism



'Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molek, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am

the Lord....Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled....And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.' (Leviticus 18:21-28)

Secondly, despite the bad press, God is not a racist and he does not show favouritism.¹³ He gave Israel the chance to supplant the Canaanites, but on the crucial condition that they did not become like them. They had no diplomatic immunity as 'most favoured nation'. They were warned that they would be treated like just other nations if they followed them. In fact, they were judged by higher standards than other nations, and were driven from the land themselves.¹⁴

the God who welcomes outsiders

Thirdly, Israel's purpose from the very beginning was to be a pipeline of blessing to other nations. It all started with the promise to Abraham, whose mission was to benefit the entire human race (Genesis 12:3). Therefore God would not allow Israel's enemies to succeed in exterminating them.

The Old Testament is littered with examples of Israel welcoming outsiders, such as the 'mixed multitude' of the Exodus, Jonah's mission to Israel's nemesis Assyria, Elijah's healing of Naaman the Syrian. Israel's laws were to give foreigners equal rights,¹⁵ as God has concern for the excluded, such as Israel had been. The bloodline of Jesus reveals God's inclusivity, as it includes foreigners such as the Canaanite Tamar, the Amorite prostitute Rahab, the Moabite Ruth and Bathsheba the Hittite.¹⁶

Hence God had no less concern for the Canaanites than other nations. A remnant even of the Philistines and Jebusites would soon become incorporated into God's people,¹⁷ and even arch enemies Assyria and Egypt were to have their own exodus, released to worship Yahweh just as much as Israel.¹⁸ Jesus later recognised the faith of a Canaanite woman,¹⁹ and extended the kingdom of God to Gentiles.²⁰ Finally, the rescue plan was completed when Jesus did what Israel could not do, by taking the judgment that we all deserved.

summary

A God worthy of that name must take wrongdoing seriously. In fact, his anger and punishment is a sign that he cares for his creation. The judgments in Old Testament flesh and blood history are sobering warnings of what sin deserves. But God has deferred the

Questions to ask sceptics:

- Once we establish that God should hold man to account for obviously wicked acts, ask where he should draw the line. Above or below me? Why?
- Why do you think murder/genocide is objectively wrong if God does not exist, if we are merely highly evolved tribal monkeys? Are you not borrowing biblical values to critique the Bible? Without a creator, isn't might right, and wrong simply personal preference?
- What if there is a larger judgment is coming, and God is delaying out of mercy, waiting for you and me to turn back to him?

Recommended reading

- Copan P. *Is God a moral monster? Making sense of the Old Testament God*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2011

final judgment, that we might have time to turn back to him. In the meantime his rescue plan started with Israel, and fulfilled in Jesus, calls people of all nations to turn back to him, without favouritism or bias.

In the next edition, we will look at the two remaining questions, What about non-combatants, women and children in Canaan? And do the 'holy wars' of the Old Testament legitimise violence in the name of religion? ■

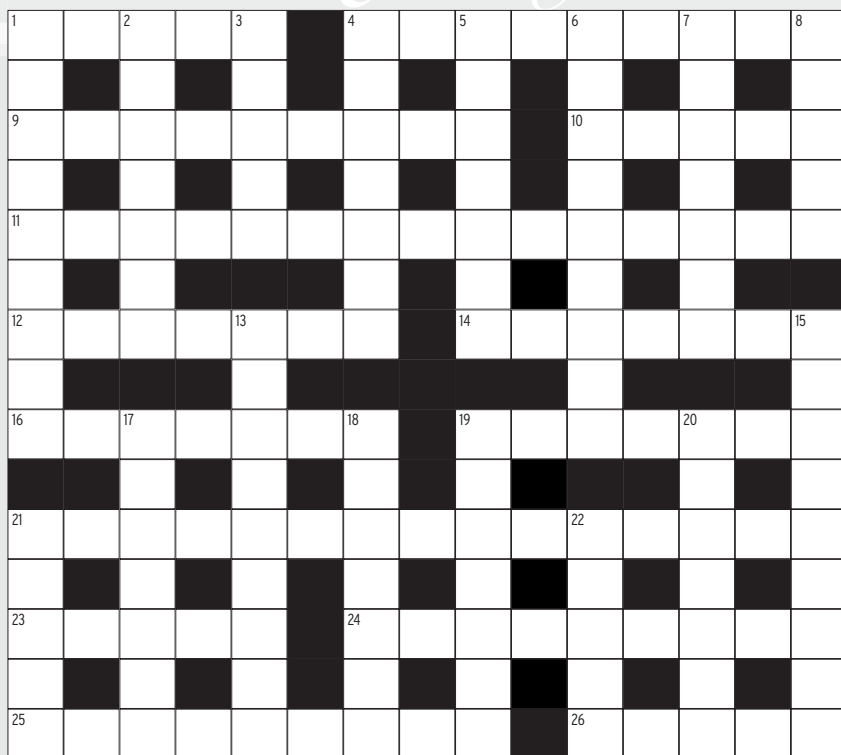
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14. Amos 2:4-16
15. Leviticus 24:22
16. Matthew 1:1-16
17. Psalm 87:4; Zechariah 9:7
18. Isaiah 19:23-25
19. Matthew 15:22
20. Acts 15:16-17, Ephesians 3:4-6

cross-word 10

word

by LACTOMETER (1 [26] 2:2)



The winner for cross-word 9 was **Naveen Kumar** of Tamil Nadu.

All Bible references are to the NWJ UK edition, 2011

ACROSS

- 1 [26] was half of Moab in sin. (5)
- 4 Form of triage right in mugging. (9)
- 9 Epistaxis in Leeds, bone broken. (9)
- 10 Spinal cord covering the state. (5)
- 11 see 21A
- 12 Hands hold bone and half tragus in direction of frontal lobe. (7)
- 14 Heard Jairus's brain convolutions. (7)
- 16 Analgesic for back, carried by new sounding enrolled nurse. (7)
- 19 Longer for animals eating gentleman. (7)
- 21,11 1 [26], 2,17 between show and family. (6,7,2,8,4,3)
- 23 As to that, I'm oddly one of David's warriors [1 Chronicles 12]. (5)
- 24 Could endless tinea concoction vaccinate? (9)
- 25 Caused to catch a cold; new room sound in English ED. (9)
- 26 Apostle's wild temper without Mark. (5)

DOWN

- 1 Jewish council hinders a new disaster. (9)
- 2 Moses takes 50... then 1000... followers of Mohammed. (7)
- 3 Worthily, like Helium or Argon?
- 4 Broke antlers on breastbone. (7)
- 5 Indication of serious pathology in labour's old song. (3,4)
- 6 Zovirax is made by Norton? (9)
- 7 Bile failing to start? It is inflammatory bowel condition. (7)
- 8 One under King's epistolic greeting from [26]. (5)
- 13 Describing a knee-jerk done to oneself? (9)
- 15 Sneer about Rome puzzled preacher. (9)
- 17 It crowed after denials by [26] in Kangaroo's terror. (7)
- 18 Half opiate is half my egotism. (7)
- 19 Bishop Tutu gets in for new tumour. (7)
- 20 Pull on wound edge and undo. (7)
- 21 Exercise expert epistolic greeting from [26]. (5)
- 22 Fit out fit of pique. (5)

Entries can be submitted by post to the office, or by email to giles@cmf.org.uk. The deadline is 1 December 2013. The winning correct entry will receive a voucher worth £20 for books from the CMF website. If no entry is correct, the closest will receive a voucher worth £10.

Christian medical service overseas

Keith Sanders describes our main focus

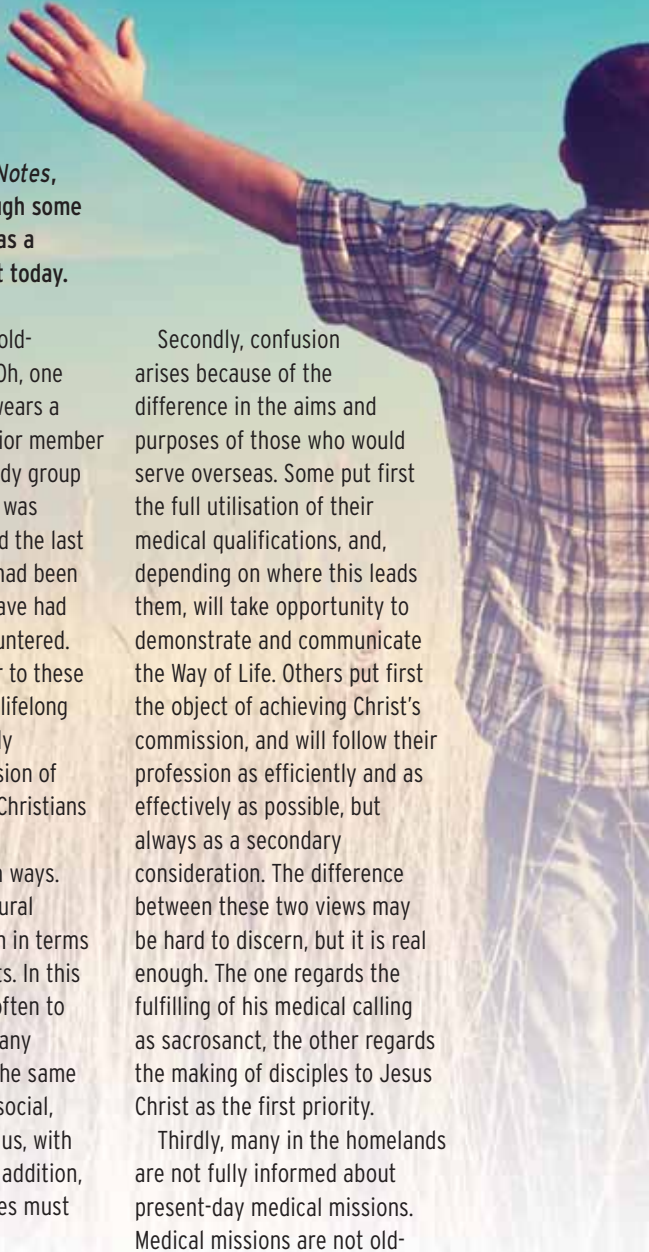
Keith Sanders was General Secretary of CMF in the 1980s, having previously been a medical missionary in India. This article is reproduced from *Clinical Medicals' Notes*, published by CMF in the 1960s. Though some examples may be a little dated, it has a message that is still just as relevant today.

What do you mean by "the old-fashioned missionary"? "Oh, one who joins a Society, and wears a topi!" Such was the appraisal of a senior member of a University CU in a missionary study group of 1962. The subject under discussion was 'preparation for overseas service', and the last avenue of foreign service envisaged had been that of a missionary. This 'missions have had their day' attitude is frequently encountered. Yet at the time a previous contributor to these notes writes that 'too many consider lifelong medical missionary service as the only possibility'.¹ It is apparent that confusion of thought often reigns in the minds of Christians considering service overseas.

Confusion has arisen in three main ways. First, there is an unfortunate but natural tendency to judge the world situation in terms of what are merely local requirements. In this both missionaries and missions are often to blame. It needs to be realised that many countries (and even districts within the same country) differ considerably in their social, political, and economic standards. Thus, with a variety of religious environment in addition, the types of Christian medical services must vary accordingly.

Secondly, confusion arises because of the difference in the aims and purposes of those who would serve overseas. Some put first the full utilisation of their medical qualifications, and, depending on where this leads them, will take opportunity to demonstrate and communicate the Way of Life. Others put first the object of achieving Christ's commission, and will follow their profession as efficiently and as effectively as possible, but always as a secondary consideration. The difference between these two views may be hard to discern, but it is real enough. The one regards the fulfilling of his medical calling as sacrosanct, the other regards the making of disciples to Jesus Christ as the first priority.

Thirdly, many in the homelands are not fully informed about present-day medical missions. Medical missions are not old-





R K M Sanders, MD, was at Duncan Hospital, Raxaul, Bihar at the time of writing and later CMF General Secretary



fashioned, but people at home have old-fashioned ideas about them. Accounts of medical heroics and penknife surgery, with pith helmets and savages, still tickle the fancies (and to a lesser extent the pockets) of many churchgoers at home. But an intelligent reading of missionary literature will reveal a very different picture. Confusion of thought can lead to misdirected or ineffectual activity. Alternatively, it can result in a period of lethargy. In order to avoid such confusion therefore I would suggest that the Lord's command, known as the 'great commission', be our lodestar, the fulfilling of it our overall objective.

Some basic considerations:

a. None can legitimately doubt but that all Christians (not excluding any in the medical

profession) are included in the commission to 'go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...'.² Needless to say, not all are to go abroad, but all must be related to the fulfilling of this command. 'This is not the hobby of a few enthusiasts nor yet an optional extra; this is the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ.'³

b. Each one of us must teach others the Lord's commands. We dare not rely on our professional conduct alone as the means of bringing others into obedience to Jesus Christ. All of us, whether college lecturer or rural hospital worker, must look for and take opportunities to instruct others in the faith. There are several very good reasons for this, besides the fact that it is the expressed will of God:

(i) Christians are made by being taught – 'teach all nations'.

(ii) Mimed Christianity, that is the non-vocal variety, does not by itself produce conversions. That we must be a Christian example in the way we work and behave

goes without saying, but we must communicate the faith by word of mouth at some stage. Not to do so plays into the hands of non-Christian governments, and suits the devil. The majority want Christian service without the Christian message. They want the demonstration of integrity, without themselves having to conform to the One who is the Way, Truth and Life.

(iii) To rely on the 'teamwork' idea, having doctors, teachers, and evangelists, each contributing their part, may lead to a false sense of achievement. The patient primarily comes to see the doctor, and if the doctor is not able or prepared to start the patient on the road to God, then, in many instances, the chances⁴ are that no other Christian will get the opportunity to do so.

(iv) If we ourselves do not communicate the gospel, it is hardly likely that the people whom we are training as medical workers will do so either, and so much of our effort will again be wasted as far as the building of an indigenous church is concerned. Dr Cochrane's quotation needs repeating: 'To my way of thinking, when we get to heaven we will be much more highly commended by our Lord for having made true disciples of some of our African brothers (as he commanded us to do) than for having provided good education and medical care to all the Southern Cameroons at the expense of failing to make disciples of the Africans.'⁵

(v) There are few things which keep one more spiritually alive and balanced than teaching others the gospel.

c. Just as the social and economic standards

vary from country to country, so also does the current need of the Christian community; which need should direct us as to the type of service to be undertaken. Our contribution, as foreigners, will therefore vary considerably in different countries. In some instances, as in Kenya, there is a well-established African Church, and Christians are to be found in all levels of society. A strategic need, therefore, is for suitably qualified personnel to take the teaching posts in the medical colleges, and head up other hospitals, with the district work being done by Africans, educated in their own

All of us, whether college lecturer or rural hospital worker, must look for and take opportunities to instruct others in the faith

country. Such places as Vellore in India also demonstrate the importance of training Christian medical personnel. On the other hand, there are many more countries and areas where the rural type of work needs to be done by the foreigner, to open up areas to the gospel and to win the confidence of people, and so more firmly establish a local Christian community.

The holding of teaching and administrative posts by Christians is not a first essential in every circumstance. Christian educational centres and hospitals catering for non-Christian students in a non-Christian country (in India at least) have contributed little to the establishment of the church.⁶ This does not mean that highly qualified personnel are not needed

in such countries – they are, but they may be best used not in colleges, but in rural community medical work, where their Christian testimony vitally contributes to the establishing of an ongoing Christian community. Later, with the growth of the church, the expatriate Christian doctor may be led to higher administrative positions, and may ultimately lose his title of ‘missionary’ as he enters government service. One of many examples of this adaptation is seen in the late Dr Patrick Dixon of Rhodesia. First a rural missionary doctor, working in a mission hospital, then ultimately a medical director under government employ, with a large African state hospital named in his memory. This was still the same man, with the same calling of God, but, as circumstances changed, he was found adaptable.

- d. An important fact to remember in the evangelisation of Asian and African people especially is that the individual largely moves with the community, be it the family or the clan. Thus, in helping to establish a Christian community we ought to try to put ourselves in a position where we can reach the family as well as an individual. It is inconceivably difficult for a student to change his religion when none of his family knows what he is talking about.
- e. Christian medical service should not be a compromise with mediocrity, but rather

making the full use of the facilities and equipment available, without neglecting our obligation to teach others the commands of Jesus Christ.

- f. The capacity and interests of the individual will help in determining the kind of service to be undertaken. AJ Cronin’s newly qualified doctor, whose heart was set on becoming a neurosurgeon, was disappointed when told that his was the temperament for general practice. But how much better to be given the honest opinion of one who by much experience is qualified to judge. It takes different qualities to make a good general practitioner from those needed for a research worker, yet both are needed in medical missions. God often directs someone to a particular country by giving him a special interest in that land.

Does he not equally guide in professional specialisation? A man who hates obstetrics and loves pathology need not feel that he must become an obstetrician, if he wants to go overseas. Furthermore, as a rule, opportunities for postgraduate qualifications should be taken. But a word of warning. The experience you need is mainly found in the place where you are to go. It is possible to spend several years at home, chasing different specialised posts in order to obtain a good all-round preparation and then, as all too frequently happens, end up by not going abroad at all. ■

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HEROES + HERETICS

Alex Bunn considers a missionary and cricketer

HEROES 11: CT STUDD (1860-1931): NOT JUST CRICKET!

Etonians get bad press these days: rich, arrogant and over-privileged. But what would you think of an Etonian who gave away £2 million and rejected celebrity status to become a pioneering missionary in China, India and Congo? Chances are, you've never heard of Charles Thomas (CT) Studd.

the Ashes

The Ashes is the most important contest in cricket. It dates back to 1882 when the Studd brothers played in an historic match alongside the legendary WG Grace. A doctor who served the poor in Bristol, Grace found fame and fortune by hiring locums and playing first-class cricket for a staggering 43 years. However, he scored a disappointing four and 32 in this test.

With only eight runs needed, CT could have saved the match that caused so much English shame ever since. But he never faced a ball as England's last batsman, Peate, foolishly kept the strike. Given that Studd was Cricketer of the Year, having already hit two centuries against Australia that season for Cambridge, this was the error that lost the match and led to the Ashes tradition.

This first loss to Australia was met with shock. *The Sporting Times* printed a mock obituary to English cricket. Soon after, some



lady supporters in Melbourne presented Lord Darnley, the English captain, with an urn which is said to contain the ashes of a cricket ball. The motivation is unclear, but one of these ladies later married Darnley, who must have appreciated the joke. This urn gives the Ashes contest its name. Not until 2013 did England regain parity with Australia, and now the two countries boast 31 wins each.

not just cricket

But fame and fortune did not capture CT's heart. Cricket was an idol of his for a while, but when he attended his gravely ill brother, he asked 'What is all the popularity of the world worth to George? What is it worth to possess all the riches in the world when a man comes to face eternity?' He was catapulted to fame through sport, but his life was not just cricket!

Instead, he discovered a joy in sharing Christ that eclipsed all others: 'I cannot tell you what joy it gave me to bring the first soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. I have tasted almost all the pleasures this world can give. Those pleasures were as nothing compared to the joy that the saving of that one soul gave me.'

mission on campus

CT signed up with Hudson Taylor's mission to



Alex Bunn is CMF Associate Head of Student Ministries (Field) and a GP in London

China and gained fame as one of the 'Cambridge seven'. Including the stroke of the Cambridge boat and army officers, they were men who inspired a generation. Even Queen Victoria received a tract with their testimonies. On mission in Edinburgh University, a lecturer recognised their unusual appeal:

'Students, like other young men, are apt to regard professedly religious men as wanting in manliness, unfit for the river or cricket field, and only good for psalm-singing and pulling a long face. But the big muscular hands and long arms of the ex-captain of the Cambridge Eight, stretched out in entreaty while he eloquently told out the story of redeeming love, capsized their theory. And when CT Studd, a household name and one of the finest bowlers in England supplemented his words by quiet but intense personal testimony... opposition and criticism were alike disarmed, and professors and students together were seen in tears, to be followed by the glorious sight of professors dealing with students, and students with one another'¹

mission in China: God provides

After living rough in China for two years, CT kept the promise he made as a student to follow Jesus' advice to the rich young ruler:



'Sell everything you have and give to the poor...then come, follow me.'² For most students today, whose equity is negative, giving away debt might be an easy decision. But Studd was due to inherit £2 million on his 25th birthday. The money went to orphan care in Bristol, missions to the poor in Whitechapel and India and the founding of the Moody Bible Institute. Thereafter, he operated as a 'faith missionary', reliant on income donated without fundraising.

Despite his aristocratic roots, his choice of wife, Priscilla, was not dictated by social standing or looks. He had prayed for a woman of character, a 'Real Salvation Army Hallelujah Lassie'. 'I didn't marry her for her pretty face; I married her for her handsome actions towards the Lord Jesus Christ and those he sent her to save'. And she was no gold digger: they started marriage with £5 to their name.

But their faith was rewarded. In their lifetime, the World Evangelisation Crusade (now WEC International) mission they founded received five times the amount they had donated. But they never applied it for personal use.

They had four girls, which was a point of witness in a country that threw baby girls into the river. They shocked their neighbours by calling the fourth Joy, but saw God's purpose in demonstrating that God loves girls too. Family

life on mission was costly. They lost two boys, and later a grandson died visiting them in Africa, on his first birthday.

mission at home: godly provocation

Forced back to England by a respiratory condition, Studd returned on mission to the hardest place of all: home. He upset a friend's cousin by comparing true religion to smallpox: 'if you get it, you give it to others and it spreads!' She offered him a cup of cocoa over a long chat, but he rudely left her holding it out as he talked. When she got as angry as a Victorian lady was allowed to show, he replied 'That is exactly how you are treating God, who is holding out eternal life to you!' Two days later he received a telegram: 'Got the smallpox badly - Dollie.'

CT joined his brother on mission to American students. One seemed confident of God's approval: 'I am trying to make Jesus my example'. 'Oh' replied Studd, 'then you are quite sure to be damned!' He explained the futility of trying to live up to Jesus' standard and the liberation of knowing God's free grace.

mission in India: planter turned ambassador

Studd's father had made his fortune in India and his dying wish was to see the gospel reach the Indian people: 'What have they seen? Studd the indigo planter? Studd seeking wealth? Are they not going to see Studd the ambassador of Jesus Christ?' CT honoured his father by travelling back to evangelise indigo planters. He



was based at Ootacamund a British colonial hub where snooker was invented. As a result he accessed the elite in order to reach the most. He joined a cricket tour becoming only the second man to score two double centuries on rough Indian pitches. But this was merely an excuse to preach on the barracks where they played.

Sadly his health suffered. His wife wrote: 'Charlie is a wreck, the slightest

movement brings on asthma.' He only slept from 2-4 am, sitting upright in a chair. Reluctantly, the Studds returned home once more.

Just as he played with a straight bat on the cricket field, CT was renowned for his unusually direct preaching. He once said: 'Some wish to live within the sound of church or chapel bell. I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of Hell.' Here is another sample of his style addressing a business lunch: 'You've had a rich dinner, I shall not tickle you with an academic display of language. I once had another religion: mincing, lisping, hunting the Bible for hidden truths, but no obedience, no sacrifice. Then the real thing came before me. The parlour game with the nurses became real cricket on the public ground. Words became deeds. The commands of Christ became battle calls to be obeyed, unless one would lose one's self-respect and manhood. Instead of saying 'Lord, Lord' and yet remaining deaf to the simplest commandments, I began to rely upon God as a real father...'

This approach bore much fruit amongst

groups previously hardened to the gospel. Even journalists warmed to him: 'Here is a missionary to emulate. No pessimism about him, no lukewarmness; he loves and he follows...his faith is as brave as his speech is clear and straight'.

mission in Africa: cannibals want missionaries! or my grave – a stepping stone!

In 1908 Studd's eye was caught by an unusual poster declaring 'Cannibals want missionaries.' He thought 'Why, sure they do, for more reasons than one!' He was shocked to hear that traders, diplomats, scientists and game hunters had ventured to the African interior, but no Christians.

Challenged to go, he replied 'But the doctors won't permit it!' Then he heard the Lord ask 'Am I not the good physician? Can I not keep you there?' He soon found backers, but they dropped him when they read the doctor's report, which predicted death within weeks. Studd told the committee: 'Gentleman, God has called me, and I will go. I will blaze a trail, though my grave may only become a stepping stone that younger men may follow.'

At the age of 50, Studd set out on his greatest missionary work. He proved the doctors wrong, staying in Africa 18 years. He was to see revival far beyond any expectation. Trekking through dangerous territory in Congo, Studd and his party found themselves without food or money. 'Why do breeches have so many buttons? To be cut off and used as money in Central Africa, of course.'

But not only trousers were transformed. The cannibal tribes recalled 'I have done more sin than there is room for in my chest... My father killed a man and I helped to eat him...I did witchcraft from the fingernails of a dead man,

CT Studd's legacy

- Valued time at university to grow in Christian character and encourage others
- Was totally unashamed of the gospel, and modelled Christ-like manliness
- Used his fame and wealth to commend Christ in China, India and Congo
- Founded WEC which today has 1,800 missionaries in 80 countries

and with the medicine killed a man'. They were asked why they came, as the missionaries had no money to offer. The answer: 'We do not care a snap about money, what we want is *God!*'

'The difficulty is to believe that [God] can deign to use such scallywags as us, but of course he wants faith and fools rather than talent and culture. All God wants is a heart, any old turnip will do for a head; so long as we are empty, all is well, for then he fills with the Holy Ghost'

Yet the humble Studd did use his head, not to avoid the real battle of the heart, but to engage the hearts of Africans who might find the Bible foreign. When he preached, he put biblical characters into bark cloths and black skins, bread became bananas, camels became elephants, and snow became chalk. Today we call it contextualisation, repackaging the message for a new audience.

Perhaps, then, Studd's most important challenge to us is to follow his attractive example in courage, giving all for Christ. Underlying his boldness was not sporting ego or machismo, but the love of Christ which compelled him to share the gospel.

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