

not a single situation where “before the close of the Round Table Conference Christ was not in moral and spiritual command of the situation. . . . At the close everything had been pushed to the edges and Christ controlled the situation.”

Jones presents a vast amount of documented evidence to prove that the evangelistic use of dialogue was extremely successful at those Round Table Conferences. Such a proven method can work in similar situations of evangelistic impenetrability anywhere.

There is a story about a young man who was jogging along a seashore. One morning, he noticed an older person involved in a sort of childlike play. The old man was rhythmically bending over, picking up a handful of objects, and flinging them into the ocean. Driven by curiosity, the young man stopped jogging and asked the old man what he was doing. The old man replied, “You see, these little creatures belong to the waters. They have been washed ashore by the rough tides of the night. If we let them lie on the sand, they all will die. By throwing them back into the sea, I am giving them life!”

The young man smiled rather sarcastically and said, “But, you see, this seashore stretches hundreds of miles. If you walk down, you will find thousands of these creatures washed ashore all along. So, by throwing a few of them back into the sea, what difference does it make to the rest of them?”

The old man looked intently into the eyes of the young man and said firmly, “What difference it makes to the rest of them, my son, I do not know. But as far as these few are concerned, it does make a difference.” Then he bent over again, picked up a handful more, and flung them into the sea.

As we reach out to a few Hindus here, and a few Muslims and Buddhists there, we may never know what difference it will make to the rest of the millions who follow these faiths. But as far as the few Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Shintoists, Taoists, Confucianists, and Baha’i are concerned, the gospel we share does and will make a difference. And as long as there are people in need—in need of an adequate goal for character, a full and free self, and a God—and as long as they are searching in their respective religions to meet these elemental needs, our job will not be over. As long as even a handful of people of other faiths are eagerly searching for the truth, we must not tire of reaching out to them. He who said “Behold I am with you to the ends of the world” is still with us. In this confidence and trust, we face the challenges of other religions with the gospel of Jesus Christ and his uniqueness of being the one and the only Lord and Savior of the world!

## THE GOSPEL AND SALVATION I

# The Gospel and Salvation

Tokunboh Adeyemo

John Newton was a notorious slave master. During the inhuman and cruel period of slave trade, he was the captain of one of the ships that transported Africans from West Africa to work in the sugarcane plantations of North America. Newton was a product of his day—brutalizing and exploiting those he regarded as nonbeings. How natural it is to be greedy, self-centered, hateful, and indifferent!

But something happened to Newton. He was confronted with the gospel and the claims of Jesus Christ. Convicted of his wickedness in the light of God’s righteousness and judgment, Newton, in repentance, submitted his life to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. What a transformation! Not only did Newton renounce his involvement in slave trade, but he spent the rest of his life fighting against it and defending the rights of slaves. He was no longer of the world once he met Jesus. Out of this experience of new life in Christ, he wrote one of the church’s favorite hymns:

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see.

Newton’s testimony of a life that honored God confirms the words of 2 Corinthians 5:17, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

These words were born out of the experience of the writer, Saul of Tarsus, who was to become Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. A religious fanatic, arrogant, boastful, proud, and a killer of the people of the Way, this former Pharisee met Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road and was completely transformed. His life was never the same. He was translated from darkness to light, from wickedness to righteousness, from following the god of this world to following the Lord Jesus Christ. No longer of this world, he wrote, “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20). From the point of his conversion Paul lived for Christ. He could write: “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

It does not matter that Newton was a Gentile or that Paul was a Jew; whether ancient

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or contemporary; neither do the genders nor socioeconomic classes make any difference: the eternal gospel is the power of God for the salvation of everyone (Revelation 14:6) who believes (Romans 1:16). For purposes of clarification, we ask: *What is the gospel?* and *What is salvation?*

### A Definition of the Gospel and Salvation

Occurring over seventy-five times in the New Testament, *evangelion* simply means “good news,” or “joyful tidings.” Originally, it denoted a reward for good tidings. Later, the idea of reward was dropped and the word stood for the Good News itself. Theologically, the Good News is that God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting our sins against us (2 Corinthians 5:19). While this was crystallized in the New Testament, especially in the Christ-event (i.e., the incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ), the concept has its root in the Old Testament. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew, the verb *euangelizomai*, “bring good news” is used of the declaration of Jerusalem’s deliverance from bondage (Isaiah 40:9; 52:7) and also of a wider announcement of liberation for the oppressed (Isaiah 61:1–2).

We are not surprised, therefore, to note that Christ’s inaugural address and the manifesto of his ministry (Luke 4:18–19) was taken from this Isaiah passage: For the Messiah is the Good News!

We err if we confine the gospel to the New Testament alone. The central theme of the whole Bible is nothing but Good News through and through! If I were asked to define the central concepts of the gospel, I would put it this way: It is the triumph of good over evil; of light over darkness; of life over death; of sight over blindness; of order over anarchy; of righteousness over wickedness; of purity over profanity; of justice over corruption; of Christ over Antichrist; of God over god substitutes; and of the kingdom of God over the kingdoms of this world. The gospel announces:

- Good news to the poor
- Freedom for the prisoners
- Recovery of sight for the blind
- Release for the oppressed, and
- The year of God’s favor for all humanity

God grants *soteria* which denotes “deliverance,” “preservation,” and “salvation”—to those who accept his conditions of repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, in whom alone it is to be obtained (Acts 4:12), and upon confession of him as Lord (Romans 10:10). For this purpose the gospel is the saving instrument (Romans 1:16; Ephesians 1:13). Salvation is both instantaneous and continuous. These two aspects are expressed by the terms “justification” and “sanctification.”

To preach the gospel, therefore, is to lift up Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9–10); to invite sinners to the Cross where God’s free offer of new life in Christ can be obtained.

### Justification

God’s external work outside us and for us, like clothing

God reckoning sinners to be right

The declaration of the Father

Concerns guilt

Righteousness imputed

Complete and perfect

A gift which entitles us to heaven

Relates to our standing

### Sanctification

God’s internal work inside

God working within sinners to make them holy in heart and behavior

The internal working of the Spirit

Concerns pollution

Righteousness imparted

Never complete or perfect in this life

A work which prepares us for heaven

Relates to our condition

In Nigeria lived a professor of medicine at the University of Ibadan—a Rhodes scholar, brilliant, proud, and reckless. He lived a loose and wayward life until he met Jesus. By the power of the gospel a revolution took place in his life. He was delivered from a life of sin. Today, he humbly serves the Lord as a parish pastor at Kano in northern Nigeria, turning others to true life in Jesus.

As a politician depends upon public opinion and a military general upon soldiers in warfare, the church depends upon the Holy Spirit and the Word (the gospel) in matters of world evangelization and salvation of the lost. “Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Romans 10:17, NASB). God has ordained that by the preaching of the gospel—simple and ridiculous as it may sound—men and women who believe shall be brought into the kingdom of God. The apostle Paul condemns anyone who preaches another gospel (Galatians 1:6–9).

### Demands of the Gospel

Throughout Bible history, the gospel made demands on whoever embraced the good tidings. The first of these is separation. To embrace the gospel is to follow Jesus Christ; and to follow Jesus demands a radical break with the former ways of life. Christ does not call us to a set of *dos* and *don’ts* but to himself. “Follow me,” “Learn of me,” “Come to me,” are some of the expressions of his invitation. Jesus calls us away from corruption, wickedness, injustice, and violence and unto himself—his peace, forgiveness, joy, and righteousness. At conversion every believing sinner is ushered by the power of God into a new life—a life in Christ—diametrically opposed to the former life. God’s Holy Spirit is deposited within us in order to produce God’s holy nature in us. The implication of this is threefold: (a) we are obliged to be pure and live a holy life as God who called us is holy (1 Peter 1:15–16)—Christian integrity rests on this fact; (b) we are not to be conformed to this world but rather to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2)—the Christian principle of nonconformity rests on this fact; and (c) we are Christ’s ambassadors sent to this world as its only salt and light with the message of

reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:19–20)—Christian stewardship rests on this fact.

The gospel demands separation: contact without contamination. As Paul aptly states: “No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer” (2 Timothy 2:4).

Second, the gospel demands self-denial and cross-bearing (Luke 14:27). Self-denial is willingly saying *No* to one’s fleshly desires and *Yes* to the things of Christ. It is living a life of obedience to the commands of God, which often involves suffering. In fact, the Bible says: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12, KJV). Those who became Christians in the New Testament and the first three centuries of the Christian era became “marked people.” They automatically became targets of persecution and attack. Christians’ refusal to worship Caesar caused them to be considered enemies of the state; their intolerance and nonviolent disobedience of unjust laws made them rebels; their indiscriminate love and acceptance of one another—Jews and Gentiles—was more than the Pharisees could take; and their loyalty and total allegiance to Jesus as Lord was unpopular. But this is part of what cross-bearing meant to them. It cannot mean any less for us today. The gospel demands from every believer the testimony: “Not my will but yours, O Lord.”

Third, the gospel demands perseverance. To persevere is to continue steadfastly, to bear up courageously, to endure patiently. The gospel is not a drug for occasional relief; neither is salvation in Christ a fad. Rather, the new life in Christ is equipped by the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to weather all storms. Those who once kept company with Paul but later fell away—such as Hymenaeus, Alexander, and Philetus—were treated as nonbelievers (1 Timothy 1:20; 2 Timothy 2:16–19). In Colossians 1:22–23 (NASB), Paul minces no words concerning the necessity to persevere. He writes:

He has now reconciled you in his fleshly body through death, in order to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

This remark does not limit God’s ability to keep whom he saves, rather, it addresses personal responsibility and warns against false pretenses.

Salvation in Christ is a small gate and a narrow road. It is free for anyone but it costs everything. The gospel that offers us salvation when we believe also makes demands on us. We cannot be godly and worldly at the same time.

## Demonstration of the Gospel

Almost invariably in the ministry of Jesus Christ as recorded in the synoptic Gospels, preaching, and healing go hand-in-hand. Matthew records the triple formulae of teaching, preaching, and healing while Mark and Luke simply speak of preaching and healing (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:34,38; Luke 4:40, 43–44). One word that stands out in Christ’s healing ministry is *compassion*, which, I believe, is a demonstration of the gospel. In its original root, *compassion* is “love in action.” When translating the Greek word into English in the New Testament, it is usually accompanied by action verbs such as *moved* or *filled* to convey the real meaning of the concept.

Compassion wells up from within—down deep at the gut level—and propels one into action. Compassion made Jesus heal every sickness and disease (Matthew 14:14); cleanse the lepers (Mark 1:41); give sight to the blind (Matthew 20:34); raise the dead

(Luke 7:15); and feed the hungry multitude (Matthew 15:32). Jesus was moved to compassion by the world’s pain and sorrow, especially of those who were gripped by demonic affliction (Mark 9:20–27; Luke 8:27–38). The sight of a leper, banished from society, living a life of loneliness and abandonment drew sympathy and love from Christ. He also saw the world as a confused mob without a sense of direction and had compassion for it. It is only logical that part of Christ’s gospel message is healing (Luke 4:18) and that when he sent out the Twelve and the seventy he gave them power to heal.

Another word which aptly describes Christlike compassion is *altruism*, which has been defined as “regard for and devotion to the interest of others.” No other story has vividly drawn out the demonstration of love as the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–37). Triggered by a lawyer’s question, *And who is my neighbor?* Jesus, by this parable, draws our attention to the master plan for world evangelization. Love sees beyond the accidents of race, tribe, color, nationality, and religions, to people made in the image and likeness of God. Neighborly concern ceases to be drawn along tribal, class, national, or racial lines. People are seen no longer as objects to be exploited but in their true humanness as God’s image for whom Christ died. The good Samaritan saw not a Jew (though he was), but a man in need. One’s personal security is not what matters, but others’ redemption. In the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “The church is the church only when it exists for others.” One can say that the ultimate measure of a church is not where it stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where it stands at times of challenge and crisis as in nations like Ethiopia, Namibia, South Africa, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Vietnam, and Armenia.

Furthermore, Christlike healing ministry demands involvement. With his own hands the good Samaritan bound the wounds of the man, set him on his own beast, and paid the hospital cost from his own pocket. This is much more than the wounded might deserve. Compassion is empathy for the person in need. It is bearing others’ pain, agony, and burdens by which, Paul says, the law of Christ is fulfilled (Galatians 6:2). This principle can make us love our enemies, bless those who curse us, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us (Matthew 5:44).

St. Basil, styled as “the Great,” a hermit theologian and one of the Cappadocian Fathers, founded a complex of charitable institutions during the fourth century. Around the church building and the monastery, there arose a whole new city consisting of hotels, almshouses, and hospitals for infectious diseases. The bishop himself took up residence there. The establishment was regarded as a threat to the state. At the risk of his life Basil resisted the objection. During the great famine of the year A.D. 368 he organized free meals for the people as well as the immigrants, foreigners, pagans, and even the infidel children of Israel. Charity to Basil, as well as to other church Fathers, is giving what we have and not what we have left over (Mark 12:44).

The gospel in demonstration takes the church out of its comfortable environment, places it in the marketplace, in ghettos, in prison cells, in refugee camps, in rural as well as urban centers—wherever people are, people wounded and bruised by the scourge of sins and violent brutality of man against man. It disallows evangelism at arm’s length and speaks of “release” rather than “relief.” The ministry of Mother Teresa, for example, is internationally recognized as a ministry of healing, a significant link in the chain of peace. The church of Jesus Christ all over the world is under obligation to respond to human need with Christlike compassion. How better can the gospel be demonstrated than by acts of love?

William Wilberforce fought relentlessly against all odds for the abolition of slave trade in the nineteenth century. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in the struggle

against racial segregation. Lord Shaftesbury dared to stand for justice for the poor in the midst of the Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century. All these men shared in God's desire for justice based on love. Speaking of their heroic example, the late Francis Schaeffer said: "These men did not do these things incidentally, but because they saw it as a part of the Christian Good News" (*A Christian Manifesto* [Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1981], 65).

The gospel is not only a creed to believe, but a life to live! With untold billions still unevangelized; with escalation of violence and unrest all over the world; with the economic hope of the world waning as nations from the Third World sink deeper and deeper into debt; what better gift can come from Manila than to call on the church of Jesus Christ "to take the whole gospel to the whole world!" The need is more desperate than ever; the call is more urgent today! Like the apostle Paul, may the Lord lay the burden upon us so that we may say: "Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

## THE GOSPEL AND SALVATION II

# How to Teach the Truth of the Gospel

Peter Kuzmic

The saying "It's the gospel truth" is frequently used by people who insist on the total reliability of their statements. However, in our age of relativity, agnosticism, and denial of absolutes, the very truth of any truth is questioned and the validity of the gospel truth denied. Carl Henry rightly asserts that at the heart of the "modern eclipse of God" is the crisis of truth:

Such double loss of the gospel's truth and of all truth—as an objective and transcendent claim upon the human mind—is an unmistakable facet of the civilizational crisis that has engulfed modern Western culture.

Belief in God is considered to be part of an obscurantist, outdated, and pre-scientific way of thinking. Not only in the communist dominated areas and under the influence of Marxism, but also in the so-called Christian West. Henry continues:

God's very existence, and with this the objectivity of truth, have been submerged in tidal waves of modern doubt. The spiritual crisis of mankind is also intellectual crisis, in as much as the modern temper is now disposed to consider God unthinkable, unchanging truth an illusion, and gospel truth a fiction.

The result of the denial of divine revelation is stated by the apostle Paul, "They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator (Romans 1:25). Similarly, people today have become victims of modern idolatries and secular substitute religions. Modern man seems to be caught between the materialistic individualism of the West and the ideological totalitarianism of the East. Individualistic consumerism and collectivistic communism are both inherently idolatrous and are dangerously enslaving in their fanatic forms. Carl Henry again has said:

Multitudes of people are gripped by totalitarian lies, snared by commercial slogans and popular cliches, entranced by vogue ideas and warped words. It is fashionable to be committed to scientific revisability, resigned to the historical character of all men's knowledge, fascinated with evolutionary development, reliant upon historical method,

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