

Engage



Quarterly comment from the Jubilee Centre

October 2017



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Deceptively Simple

Jonathan Tame

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus uses two everyday analogies to describe the action of God's people in the world: salt and light. Christians often attach a 'salt and light' label rather freely to different initiatives, but I have been discovering that a closer study of Matthew 5:13-16 yields some wonderful insights into a comprehensive strategy for social engagement, for individual believers and for local churches alike.

From the context of the verses preceding this passage (ignore the extra-biblical paragraph headings, as they distort the meaning) we see that Jesus puts the church squarely in the stream of the prophets. The role of the prophet was broadly to proclaim God's judgment or salvation (or both), and call people to obey his commands (which were given for their good). The church is to do likewise – but Jesus has more to say about how that should happen.

Coming to the two analogies, in first

century Palestine salt had three primary functions: to preserve fresh meat and fish; to add flavour and nutrition to food; and as an antiseptic on wounds. These were so important that salt was frequently used as a form of currency (which is where our word salary comes from). If Jesus called his disciples 'the salt of the earth', it suggests he intended that they should have similar functions as physical salt, but in the social sphere. This meant preventing or at least slowing down moral decay and corruption; affirming what is good, beautiful and true; and bringing reconciliation and peace to broken relationships.

Jesus immediately warned of the dangers of salt 'losing its saltiness'. Now physical salt is only effective when it's in direct physical contact with the material it is intended to change. So followers of Jesus can only be 'salty' if they are fully engaged in the institutions of society around them. Withdrawing from

politics, business, the arts or any other cultural endeavour because they are corrupt or sinful is one way that the Church loses its saltiness. The other is when Christians become so accommodated to the values of those institutions that they become indistinguishable from what they are called to change.

The second metaphor – light – operates at two levels. First Jesus said 'a city on a hill cannot be hidden'. The cluster of lights from all the dwellings in a town would have been a welcome sight to travellers at night. So too the gathered witness of God's people – the church – shines out through all manner of good deeds. At the household level, Jesus spoke of a lamp on a stand, giving light to a single room. This would suggest that in the home or the workshop – in the domestic and neighbourhood context – followers of Jesus would brighten up the lives of those they welcomed or encountered daily through acts of love and service.

How might this become a strategy for long term social transformation? The lamp on a stand represents the simple but transformative work of providing hospitality – something which almost every Christian can do. The city on a hill represents the

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Adam and Eve: Feet of Clay

Guy Brandon



Domenico Zampieri (c.1625) *Adam and Eve* (detail)

The story of Adam and Eve is one of the 'Sunday School' passages of the Bible that can easily lose their impact through over-familiarity. It's a good story, but it also belongs to a bit of the Bible that we treat as distinct from the history books or the gospels. Life works differently in Genesis 1-11, as if the world hasn't quite worked out the rules it's supposed to keep just yet. Animals talk, people live to unbelievably advanced ages, divine beings mix with humans, and it's possible to fit collections of animals from every species in the entire world on the same boat.

The standard debate around the Creation account focuses on history vs allegory, but in explaining why things are the way they are, these chapters rely more on observational wisdom and paranomasia – or, to put it another way, common sense and puns. Since this approach is good enough for the writer of Genesis, it will also be adopted here.

Earthlings

The Creation narrative is full of wordplay. The first human [*ādām*] is formed from the ground [*ādāmāh*], animated with the breath of life from God (Genesis 2:7). The woman [*'išshāh*] is created from the man [*'īsh*]. And whilst Adam and Eve are naked [*'arūmīm*], the snake is the most cunning [*'arūm*] animal in the garden. The assumption has often been that a direct link is intended here. 'It has been

suggested that the function of the wordplay is to establish a connection between the two verses, teaching that nakedness causes temptation; to emphasise that Adam and Eve were aware of their nakedness because of the serpent's cunning; or to indicate that because Adam and Eve were naked, innocent and oblivious of evil, the serpent was able to use his cunning to mislead them.'¹

Alternatively, it might just be a handy turn of phrase to introduce the next chapter, with the writer engaging in a kind of Eddie Izzard-style free association approach to his narrative (minus the Saxon language). It's one of many uncertainties about Genesis 2-3, our assumptions about which tend to reveal more about us than they do about the Bible.

'I can resist anything except temptation' – Oscar Wilde

Another of these uncertainties concerns the serpent's strategy of approaching Eve, rather than Adam, and nudging her towards *that* tree.

Why Eve? Is it because she's female? Or because Adam was the one that God forbade to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17), and she has only received the message indirectly from him and isn't quite so clear about the precise terms and conditions? Or perhaps the snake knew that she held influence over Adam, and that he needed her on board if the plan was to

succeed. Perhaps Eve did the majority of the catering in the relationship. Or perhaps she was just the one the snake happened to meet first.

As an aside, on the forbidden fruit itself, the Bible just has *peri* (fruit), which does not shed much light on matters. Biblical scholars abhor a vacuum and have made various efforts to fill the gap. Traditionally it is identified as an apple, probably due to wordplay on the Latin Vulgate's *malum* (Latin *malus pumila*, cf. malic acid), meaning both evil and apple (making a bad apple a *malum malum*). The pseudepigraphic Book of Enoch describes it as a kind of tamarind tree (1 Enoch 31:4), and throughout history and in classical art there have been various other suggestions from pomegranates to – unconvincingly – very large hallucinogenic mushrooms. A forbidden fig appears on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, perhaps because Adam and Eve use fig leaves for clothes, or because the fig is a symbol of female sexuality in the Bible.

God has warned Eve that eating the fruit will lead to certain death. The snake tells Eve that the fruit will instead make her 'like God, knowing good and evil' (Genesis 3:5). This is, indeed, an attractive deal, and one she considers worth taking the risk for – especially when it turns out that 'the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom'. Would the story have ended differently if the fruit had been something less attractive, like a kiwi or an onion? Because it seems that gaining wisdom was the main attraction, but what really clinched the final decision was that it looked tasty. Eve picks some fruit and takes it to Adam, and they eat it together. Adam, for obvious reasons not given to navel gazing, goes right along with it. In the era before clothes or defined gender roles, it's clear who wears the trousers.

Suddenly realising they are naked, Adam and Eve make underwear out of fig leaves and, hearing God's voice, take cover among the trees. God asks Adam where he is and Adam tells him that they are hiding because they are afraid, on account of being naked (the Hebrew word can mean partially clothed). God immediately realises what has happened and, both literally and figuratively, calls them out. Under interrogation Adam breaks and gives up Eve, who in turn passes the buck onto the serpent.

Crime and punishment

Adam and Eve do not die, at least not instantly, as a result of eating the fruit – though death and suffering are introduced to the world with permanent consequences.

The immediate results of the Fall are telling. As a result of the rift in their relationship with God, Adam and Eve are also divorced from their essential natures. Adam, the first earthling, loses his relationship with the soil. From now on, his work of working the land and being a steward of creation will be an uphill struggle. Producing food will entail toil.

Eve, once a part of Adam as Adam was a part of the soil, loses her relationship with him. From now on, relations between them will be less than perfect. Imperfection is also introduced into her role as life-giver (it is only in 3:20 that Adam calls her Eve [*chavvah*], 'because she was the mother of all the living [*chay*]): 'in pain you shall bring forth children' (Genesis 3:16).

As for the snake, his cunning [*arûm*] gets him cursed [*arûr*] to crawl on the ground and eat dust, which is itself cursed. There will also be mistrust between snakes and humans forever. It is interesting that this is framed not in terms of Adam, but of Eve. She was the one the snake deceived, and so 'I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.'

Application

There are plenty of lessons in the Eden story, nuancing the usual Sunday School message of simply avoiding temptation.

One is about the way we come to sin. Adam and Eve didn't suddenly find themselves in a position to eat the fruit. Eve was approached by the snake, alone. She evidently found Adam and they went to the

tree. From the outset, she must have had in mind what they were going to do. (It's almost certain the conversation included the words, 'We're only going to look...') This was not a spur-of-the-moment thing: like many temptations, it was considered in advance and approached progressively. She had a conversation with the snake. She found Adam. They went to the tree. They looked more closely at the fruit. Then they picked it, and then ate it. It's worth recognising that her rebellion against God began not when she bit the fruit but when she first entertained the snake's idea and walked towards the tree with Adam.

Then there's the idea that we might argue ourselves into a course of action due to motives that seem high, even if they're wrong, but a significant reason might be something altogether more mundane. Godlike knowledge of Good and Evil is a tempting prize, but the Bible notes that the decision was helped by the simple fact that the fruit looked tasty. How many decisions in personal lives and throughout history have been justified on the grounds of ideology, but ultimately come down to the 'incidental' benefits like money, fame, sex, and so on?

Lastly, there's the way that sin impacted Adam and Eve's relationship with God, Creation, each other and even themselves. There is something about the consequences of their sin that affected their essential natures and the reasons they were put on the earth. The lesson is that sin does the same for us. We were created in the image of God and sin makes us less a reflection of him, further away from what we are meant to be. If we have particular talents or callings, sin in these areas risks compromising our ministries – and equally, they are likely to be where some of the greatest temptations arise.

1 Zvi Ron, 'Wordplay in Genesis 2:25-3:1', *Jewish Bible Quarterly* vol. 42, no. 1, 2014.

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corporate witness of local churches and Christian organisations, expressed in prayer, evangelism, compassion and social action. So the church shining as light should lead to the gradual transformation of our streets and neighbourhoods.

Salt, on the other hand, represents the witness of believers in a personal capacity through their work and public influence – but that won't be overseen or managed by the local church. This doesn't mean acting as a lone ranger though, since Christians will need to collaborate with others to bring change to the workplaces or organisations of which they

are a part. So the consequence of Christians being salt will be the gradual transformation of institutions.

So in these two simple pictures, Jesus is suggesting a deep and wide vision for how to change the world: individually and corporately, in the home and the workplace, through resisting the effects of sin and affirming all that is good, building community and bringing reconciliation, being both creators and guardians of culture. Salt and light may be everyday themes, but Jesus turns them into a life-transforming vision and calling!

Theology of News

We're delighted to announce that Trans World Radio UK is collaborating with us to produce a 13-part radio series on thinking biblically about the news.

James Maidment-Fullard, managing editor at TWR, completed the self-study version of our course last year (which omits the group discussions and reflective essays). He was so inspired by it that he decided to produce a radio series based on the curriculum of the course. The programme looks at current perceptions of 'Christian news' and goes on to engage each week with a different topic.

The series is being aired from October to December; for more details or to listen to the programme, please visit www.twr.org.uk.

Online Public Leadership course 2017 - 18

The Jubilee Centre is seeking to train a new generation of Christian leaders through our annual Biblical Foundations for Public Leadership programme. This is a blended course combining personal study with monthly group discussions online, and writing reflective essays for each module of study. The course is built around our Cambridge Papers, and explores how the Bible provides us with the foundations for building a just and flourishing society.

The programme is made up of seven modules, each with four lessons completed over a period of five weeks. The modules are Foundations in the biblical social vision & Relational Thinking; the Economy; Politics; Law & Justice; Family & Sexual Ethics; the Arts; and Science & Technology.

Over the nine month period, participants will develop the ability to discern and interpret what is happening in society from a biblical, relational perspective. They will also become more confident in applying biblical principles to specific issues in their church or city, and build strategic relationships with others on the course, based on shared vision, geography and calling.

The 2017 – 18 course begins soon on **16th October**, and participants should register by Sunday 11th October. For more information or to register, please visit www.jubilee-centre.org/training

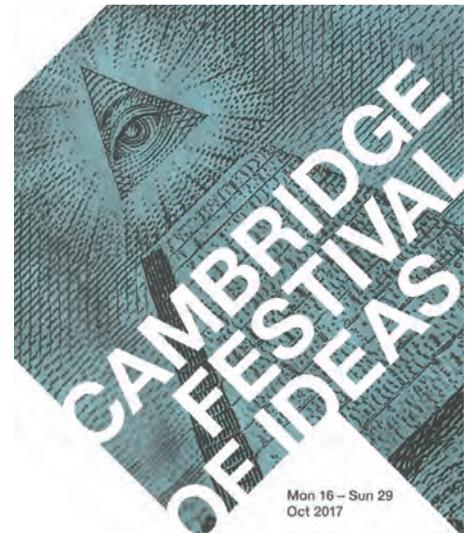
Festival of Ideas

Calum Samuelson

Each October the University of Cambridge organises a Festival of Ideas for the city – a wide range of talks and other events given by academics and people from other local organisations too. For the first time the Jubilee Centre will be contributing, putting on three events connected with our Reformation2017 theme. This fits well with the Festival's themes of 'truth' and 'reformation'. Our first event (17th Oct) will discuss our initiative to crowdsource 95 'new theses' and consider what the content of the submitted theses can tell us about how Christians are thinking about social reform and human flourishing. The second event (19th Oct) picks up on another dimension of this year's Festival—the 70th anniversary of India's independence. Accordingly, our training manager Philip Powell will examine

the extraordinary life of Pandita Ramabai—a female Indian Social Reformer—in the context of reformation and truth. Our third event—'The Creative Legacy of the Reformation' (27th Oct)—features former Professor of Divinity David Ford, who will draw attention to the varied fruits of the Reformation, especially the idea of the university in the 21st century.

In addition, we have collaborated with KLICE and Christian Heritage under our Reformation2017 theme to organise three further events for the Festival. The first is 'From Luther to Locke: How Protestants invented religious liberty' (KLICE, 18th Oct), when Cambridge Paper writer Professor John Coffey will explain how religious freedom eventually triumphed as the new orthodoxy among Protestants. The other two are 'From Tertullian to Constantine to Roger Williams'



(26th Oct) by Professor Timothy Shah, and 'An epidemic of shame' by Jonathan Linebaugh (27th Oct).

The Festival of Ideas (www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk) is a very popular feature of the cultural calendar in Cambridge and we are looking forward to interacting with many new people.

New research into Robotics and Artificial Intelligence

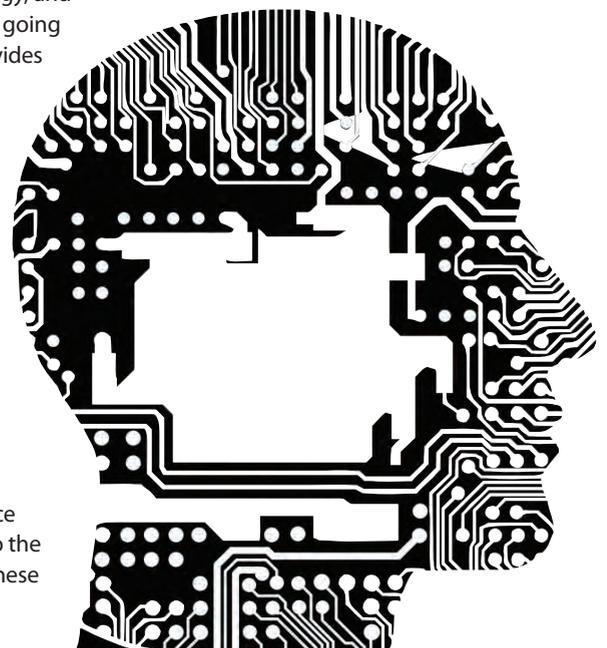
Jonathan Tame

Stories have been appearing more and more frequently in the news media around the looming 'robot revolution'. The impact of accelerating changes in robotics and artificial intelligence is affecting areas as diverse as warfare, social care and the sex industry as well as job displacement in manufacturing and service industries – which for the first time, will significantly affect professional and managerial jobs as well as manual ones. With the prospects of such far reaching changes in society, we have decided to start a research programme into this area.

Over the summer we welcomed Josh Parikh, who had just graduated from Oxford, as a research intern for a month. He wrote two blog posts for our website, and also drafted a discussion paper into three aspects of the robotics revolution. These were the impact on employment and its consequences; the prospect of deeper inequality in income and wealth; and the

effect on social isolation. The paper continued with some initial theological reflection on the nature of work and on technology, and concluded with some principles for going forward. This discussion paper provides a good starting point for Jubilee Centre's initiative, which we will be developing over the coming months.

Meanwhile we are collaborating with CARE and Evangelical Alliance to plan an event which will build awareness nationally among church leaders of the likely impact of the robotics revolution. It will encourage them to grasp the seriousness of the challenges and also to think strategically about the tremendous opportunities for witness and service which this revolution will present to the church. We will write more about these opportunities in due course.



Integration, Assimilation and Fundamental British Values

Philip Powell

In our latest Cambridge Paper, Dr Sean Oliver-Dee sets out a positive vision of citizenship and discusses the centrally important but sometimes controversial topic of British values. This Paper proposes a way forward for properly affirming national identity and the shared responsibilities of being a citizen of the UK.

Historically, two broad approaches have been taken to engender a sense of 'citizenship' or 'belonging' in modern democracies. They are the *assimilationist model*, where newcomers are expected to change and conform to enjoy the benefits of citizenship. The other is the *managed integration model*, where pre-existing cultural commitments are allowed to flourish in the new social context. This second model has generally been the British approach. Yet neither of these approaches serves well to create a strong sense of belonging, whilst also respecting cultural differences.

The attempt to create a multicultural Britain over the past several decades was a way to deal with the challenges of integration and assimilation. Unfortunately the policy of multiculturalism has actually led to further separation and segregation, as the *Casey Review* reported in 2016.

The term 'fundamental British values' (FBV) was first used by the Coalition Government in 2011 as a response to dealing with groups espousing extremist ideologies. Attempts by the government to define what counts as 'extremist' and what doesn't led to confusion. The deeper challenge is how to properly debate issues like citizenship and identity in the context of a nation which still struggles with accusations of institutional racism and a feeling of guilt about its colonial past. And once again, after the Brexit vote, we are debating afresh what being British really means.

In this context, an innovative approach has been proposed – 'Invested Citizenship' (IC) – which uses the tools of story-telling and remembrance to inculcate the values of citizenship. This approach is about remembering the sacrifices and service of



Image credit: Grempletonian CC BY-SA

people in the past which have shaped our society and defending the freedoms and good things we enjoy as a result.

Oliver-Dee makes a strong case for why Christians should embrace Invested Citizenship based around obligation and gratitude. Christians are to obey earthly authority (1 Peter 2:13, 3:5-6 and Titus 3:1), and to 'seek the welfare of the city' (Jeremiah 29:7). Invested Citizenship encourages Christians to serve in the area of citizenship as well as in ways we already serve society (such as in education and welfare).

Secondly, Christians in Britain largely enjoy the freedom to practice and propagate our faith, for which we must be grateful. After centuries of religious freedom, it's easy to forget that there many parts of the world where Christians are being killed for their faith today. Gratitude changes the way we think about citizenship. Our gratitude to Christ for what he has done for us puts demands upon us, so too our gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy in Britain should prompt a sense of grateful belonging.

Obligation and gratitude together are very good reasons why Christians should be keen to embrace Invested Citizenship both theologically and pragmatically.

You can order a copy of the full Cambridge Paper using the response form, or read it on our website.

An Indian Perspective on the Reformation

What do Martin Luther, William Carey, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore and GK Chesterton have in common? They all featured prominently in Vishal Mangalwadi's masterly exposition on how the German and English Reformation helped to shape modern India. Vishal spoke at a special event in the Round Church, Cambridge, as part of our Reformation2017 initiative. Not only is he well known as a social reformer and Indian Christian philosopher but also as the author of numerous books including 'The book that made your world; how the Bible created the soul of Western civilisation'. Vishal showed how the Reformation influenced the concept of nationhood in India; the importance truth and transformation; the linguistic revolution and universal education; and challenges to the Caste system. You can watch the the whole talk on our website.

Update on Sculpture Exhibition

The process of creating a set of sculptures inspired by the five *solas* of the Reformation has been progressing more slowly than we originally hoped. Although we have planning permission to display this exhibition for a five month period in Great St Mary's churchyard in the centre of Cambridge, the church has a building project scheduled to start in January which will require the use of the churchyard until next July. So this would mean the exhibition would be in place for barely two months, over the winter.

We discussed this dilemma with the church, and together we came to the conclusion to postpone the exhibition to next summer, when it can run for the full five months, all the different aspects can be better prepared, and the overall impact will be much greater. Although we will miss the actual 500th anniversary of Luther's 95 theses, the focus of the exhibition is the spiritual and cultural legacy of the Reformers' theology – which will be just as valid next year.

Social Reformers Summer School – 2017

Philip Powell



Our second Social Reformers Summer School took place in July at Westminster College in Cambridge. The twenty participants came from ten different countries, representing various sectors of society.

On day one we had talks on the lives and work of two lesser-known social reformers: Henry Dunant from Switzerland and Pandita Ramabai from India. Both these reformers faced severe opposition and had to overcome challenging circumstances, but in the end their lives made a lasting impact because they trusted God and pursued their mission with dogged determination.

The second day began with lectures from Jubilee Centre's founder Dr Michael Schluter on the biblical basis for social reform and creating a more relational society. In the afternoon Michael Trend, director of Relationships Foundation, spoke on the role of communication in social reform. This was followed by three seminars on how Christians can effectively engage in the spheres of politics, business and social media. One conclusion was that without building a strong intellectual foundation based on the

Bible, efforts to engage in social reform are unlikely to have a significant impact or to be sustainable.

On the last morning Charles and Jill McLachlan led us through a creative, hands-on workshop on strategies for turning ideas into action – starting with one or two first steps. Later in the afternoon we were taken on a Christian Heritage tour of Cambridge to understand the city's Christian impact on the world, followed by a gala dinner. The after dinner speaker Dr Elaine Storkey addressed the topic of Hope in Social Reform. The Summer School was deemed a success because every single participant felt challenged and encouraged to become a champion of social reform.

In the Jubilee Centre we believe that Jesus calls his followers to be the salt of the earth and this means training a new generation of young social reformers to become committed to God's work that extends beyond the salvation of souls to the transformation of society itself.

The next Summer School is planned for 12th-15th July 2018.

Jubilee Centre Trustees

Jubilee Centre's trustees play a vital role in ensuring the charity is governed well. Meeting four times a year, they review our strategy, monitor progress and support Jonathan as Executive Director. We are deeply grateful to our trustees for all the time they give freely to the work. Recently Sarah Snyder stood down from being a trustee after many years of service, latterly as chair. We will miss her enthusiasm, vision and encouragement, and pray for her in her new role as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisor for Reconciliation. Likewise we have said farewell to Andy McWilliam, who faithfully served as a trustee for around a decade. Andy with his wife Ann (who was minutes secretary at the trustees' meetings) brought a clear focus and a thoughtful efficiency as they supported the work of Jubilee Centre.

Dr Ralph Lee MBE, a researcher in Eastern and Orthodox Christianity and lecturer at SOAS, with a long association with the Navigators, has taken over as chair of trustees. We are regularly looking for new trustees, and usually appoint one every year; if you would like to find out more about the role, please email Sally (s.bertlin@jubilee-centre.org) for details.

About Jubilee Centre

The Jubilee Centre is a research and policy think tank that offers a biblical perspective on social, economic and political issues. Through our research, publications, events and training we equip Christians to be salt and light in the public square.

Jubilee Centre is based in Cambridge, where it collaborates with some of the other organisations launched by Michael Schluter, including the Relational Thinking Network and Relational Research. Our office has been in the heart of the city since July 2015.

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