

The Extracts

Extract 1

We seem to have a real horror of being different. Hence all our attempts and endeavours to popularise the church and make it appeal to people. We seem to be trying to tell people that their joining a church will not make them so very different after all. 'We are no longer Puritans', we say: 'we believe that they over-did things and made Christianity too difficult for people. They frightened people with their strictness and their unnecessarily high standards. We are not so foolish as to do that', we say, and indeed we do not do so. Instead, however, we provide so-called 'sporting parsons', men of whom the world can say that they are 'good sports' – whatever that may mean. And what it does so often mean is that they are men who believe that you can get men to come to chapel and church by playing football and other games with them. 'I'll fraternise with these men', says such a minister. 'I'll get them to like me and to see that I'm not so different from them after all, and then they'll come to listen to my sermons'. And he tries it; but thank God, he almost invariably fails, as he richly deserves. The man who only comes to church or chapel because he likes the minister is a man of no value at all, and the minister who attempts to get men there by means of that subterfuge is for the time being guilty of lowering the standard of the truth which he claims to believe. For this gospel is the gospel of salvation propounded by the Son of God himself. We must not hawk it about the world, or offer special inducements and attractions, as if we were shopkeepers announcing an exceptional bargain sale...

The world expects the Christian to be different and looks to him for something different, and therein it often shows an insight into life that regular church-goers often lack. The churches organise whist drives, fêtes, dramas, bazaars and things of that sort, so as to attract people. We are becoming almost as wily as the devil himself, but we are really very bad at it; all our attempts are hopeless failures and the world laughs at us. Now, when the world

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persecutes the church, she is performing her real mission, but when the world laughs at her she has lost her soul. And the world today is laughing at the church, laughing at her attempts to be nice and to make people feel at home. My friends, if you feel at home in any church without believing in Christ as your personal Saviour, then that church is no church at all, but a place of entertainment or a social club. For the truth of Christianity and the preaching of the gospel [and the very ambience of the church] should make a church intolerable and uncomfortable to all except those who believe, and even they should go away chastened and humble.¹

Extract 2

One might have thought, from what we have seen of late, that orders had come from headquarters that the soldiers were to lay down the sword of the Spirit, the word of God, and take to lighter weapons. Entertainments, amusements, farces and sing-song are now used to do what the gospel has failed to achieve! Is it not sadly so? Well, if any will try these silly toys, I can only say that they have no command from their Lord to warrant them in their proceedings. Take all these things, and see what they will do, but you make the trial at your own risk, and on your own heads the result of failure will fall.²

Extract 3

The only multiplication of the church of God that is to be desired is that which God sends: 'You have multiplied the nation' [Isa. 9:3]. If we add to our churches by becoming worldly, by taking in persons who have never been born again; if we add to our churches by accommodating the life of the Christian to the worldling, our increase is worth nothing at all; it is a loss rather than a gain. If we add to our churches by excitement, by making appeals to the passions, rather than by explaining truth to the understanding; if we add to our churches otherwise than by

¹ Iain H.Murray: *D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1982, pp141-142.

² C.H.Spurgeon sermon 2201.

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the power of the Spirit of God making men new creatures in Christ Jesus, the increase is of no worth whatsoever.³

Extract 4

Dr James Montgomery Boice... lamented his concern that the church was being enticed 'to do the Lord's work in the world's way'. We try to transfer principles of success drawn from Madison Avenue⁴ and from other secular institutions and imitate them in the life of the church. Such a process is deadly.⁵

Extract 5

A church is like a great tree in the desert which holds out the promise of fruit, and towards which all the spiritually hungry turn. There can be few sadder things in this world than a church, promising by its very name,... by its open doors, by its songs and services... to give food to the hungry, refreshment to the weary, comfort to the sorrowing, and then failing to keep its [and Christ's DG] promises to the souls that come expecting.⁶

Extract 6

Christians should never substitute the biblical edict of evangelism for [that is, with or by] cultural relevance.⁷ Why? Because Scripture must bind the conscience, and if it does, the Holy Scripture will impact the culture in lieu of the culture impacting Scripture. In a world that is replacing the gospel for [that is, with or by] gimmicks, and theology for [that is, with or by] theatrics, Christians need to avoid accepting methodologies that are not warranted in

³ C.H.Spurgeon sermon 2265.

⁴ Wikipedia: 'The term "Madison Avenue" refers specifically to the agencies, and methodology of advertising. "Madison Avenue techniques" refers, according to William Safire, to the "gimmicky, slick use of the communications media to play on emotions"'.
⁵ R.C.Sproul: 'The Perils Facing the Evangelical Church'.

⁶ J.R.Miller: *Come Ye Apart* entry for October 6th.

⁷ With respect, the author should have said this the other way about: that is what he meant! The same applies twice more.

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Scripture. When believers fail⁸ to follow the biblical paradigm of evangelism, they are not following the trajectory of Holy Scripture; they are following the direction of imaginations and devices of men... Embracing evangelism does not mean to espouse all of the cultural gimmicks that are gross misrepresentations of the gospel... Providing inventive principles in worship so carnal people can experience spiritual euphoria is not evangelism. Preaching palatable and innocuous sermons is not evangelism... Even worse,⁹ there is an unconventional mode of witnessing that imperiously demands that cultivating a relationship is a necessary precondition that must precede biblical evangelism. This is called Friendship Evangelism [or Relationship Evangelism]. Developing a relationship is certainly advantageous for an evangelist. However, there are several problems that exist for people who believe relationships must precede evangelising the unregenerate.¹⁰

Extract 7

When the church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. It is then that the world is made to listen to her message, though it may hate it at first... When worldly wisdom and carnal methods enter into evangelism you will find that there is no 'strait gate'. Too often the impression is given that to be a Christian is after all only very little different from being a non-Christian, that you must not think of Christianity as a narrow life, but as something most attractive and wonderful and exciting, and that you come in in crowds. It is not so according to our Lord. The gospel of Jesus Christ is too honest to invite anybody in that way. It does not try to persuade us that something is very easy, and that it is only later on we shall begin to discover it is hard. The gospel of Jesus Christ openly and uncompromisingly announces itself as being something which starts with a narrow entrance, a strait

⁸ The original had 'a Christian fails'.

⁹ The original had 'worst'.

¹⁰ Sonny Hernandez: 'Great Commission 101: Evangelism, not Evanjellyfish!'

gate. At the very beginning, it is absolutely essential that we should realise that.¹¹

Extract 8

The business of the gospel is to bring people to God, and to reconcile them to God. Not to fill churches! Not to have good statistics! But to reconcile men to God – to save them from the wrath to come... I suppose really there is nothing about the Christian message that is so hated, so much objected to, as this particular doctrine. And therefore I conceive it to be my duty in expounding this great passage [Romans 1:18ff], not simply to note and to mention the wrath of God, but to show you its integral place, its vital place in biblical preaching, in New Testament evangelism... I cannot understand a jocular evangelist... Go back and read the lives of the men whom God has used in the mightiest manner, and you will invariably find that they were serious men, sober men, men with the fear of the Lord in them; ‘knowing the terror of the Lord’, they all said with... Paul. They were not afraid of the people or what they might think of the message; they were only afraid of what God might think of it, and so they started with it [that is, God’s wrath] and proclaimed it, and God used it... God hates sin. Sin is abhorrent to God. There should be no difficulty about the term ‘hate’. If you recognise love in God you must recognise hate also. All that is opposed to God is hateful to God... It is clear that the very character and being of God as holy, makes this doctrine quite inevitable. You cannot mix light and darkness. You cannot conceive of sin as existing in the presence of God. God’s holiness insists upon this doctrine of the wrath of God. God must deal with sin. God must show his hatred of it. It is part of his own holiness and his greatness and glory that he should do so... The wrath is as much revealed as is the righteousness of God by faith. Therefore I do not hesitate to say that ultimately you cannot believe [Rom. 1:17] unless you believe [Rom. 1:18] as well – indeed, you will never see the real need for [Rom. 1:17] if you do not believe [Rom. 1:18]. The two

¹¹ D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones: *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, Inter-Varsity Press, Nottingham, reprinted 2002.

things go together... If you do not see the wrath of God when you look at the cross of Calvary's hill, it is very certain that you do not see the love of God either. It is there that you see the wrath of God revealed... It is only as you have some conception of the depth of his wrath that you will understand the depth of his love.¹²

Extract 9

There are many, many ways to build the... church of the tares... many ways. Behind which Satan is the real power. And it can be done very effectively. The church of the tares can be very effective, it can be big, and it can be enduring. The Gnostics did it, and it's still around. The Roman Catholics have done it, and it's still around. The liberals have done it, and it's still around. The cults have done it, and it's still around. The church of the tares is actually bigger than the church of the wheat. And today [some of] those who call themselves evangelicals are busy doing it.

And there's a long list of locations called churches where tares assemble in increasing numbers with a scattering of weak wheat-stalks among them. The successful assemblies of tares will eagerly market their skill at tare development. It can be very seductive to those who are motivated by numbers or popularity.

So, if you want to take a shot at competing with the rest of the tare pastors to see how many tares you can get in a building, there's ample information, lots of seminars, plenty of books and data on the Internet that you can draw down to work on building your church of the tares with a smattering of wheat... How does Christ build his church and has he revealed [the answer] to us? Or are we in the dark? Is there some wiggle room here that allows for some of the contemporary approaches to this?

Well I'm happy to say to you, the answer is not vague, the answer is not obscure. When you ask how does Christ build his church, the answer is not debatable, it's not complicated, it's not even difficult. It is simple, it is straightforward, it is so clear that it is inescapable. It is so

¹² D.Martyn Lloyd-Jones: *The Plight of Man and the Power of God*.