



UK AND IRELAND

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Inspiring Christlikeness

transform

Spring
2025

Langham Partnership News



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come true in
Ethiopia...**
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preachers** p6

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Equipping a new generation of Bible teachers

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Like many mission organisations we can benefit greatly when friends make a final gift that continues to bless the ministries they have generously supported in life. Once you have made proper and primary provision for family and friends this can be a very effective way to go on making a difference to the church on earth when you have joined the church in glory! If you would like to consider this option in your will please let us know and we will send you a helpful legacy leaflet. Contact Simon Foulds: simon.foulds@langham.org

Hello!

Letter from the Editor

I'm so excited to share Spring 2025's Transform magazine with you! In this issue, we're travelling to Taiwan, Peru, Egypt and many more places in between. I hope and pray that hearing from our Langham family on the frontline of ministry is a blessing to you, as it has been for me compiling Transform.

Let me highlight Fernando Sevilla's joys and challenges training indigenous Amazonian pastors in Peru (**p6**); fascinating insights about sharing the Gospel in Taiwan (**p10**); and the remarkable story of one man's dream to be a Christian publisher in Ethiopia (**p4-5**).

And of course, read our Global Ambassador Rev Dr Chris Wright's Word on the World feature (**p11-12**) and find out what one of our more intrepid supporters has been up to on his sabbatical (**p8**)...

Enjoy!

In Christ,

Victoria Marsay
Media Producer for LPUKI



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Could you volunteer for Langham by leading a prayer group; administration; event management and/or more?

Please email Laura:
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Langham Partnership's Vision and Mission

Langham Partnership's Vision is to see churches in the majority world equipped for mission and growing to maturity in Christ through the ministry of pastors and leaders who believe, teach and live by the Word of God.

Our mission is to strengthen the ministry of the Word of God through:

- nurturing national movements for biblical preaching (**Langham Preaching**);
- fostering the creation and distribution of evangelical literature (**Langham Literature**);
- and enhancing evangelical theological education (**Langham Scholars**), especially in countries where churches are under-resourced.

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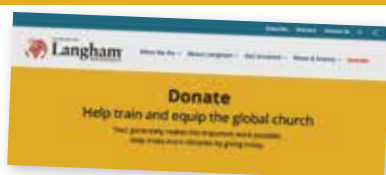


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Reflections from the National Director



'Department of Gospel Efficiency...'

'We are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man...'

2 Cor 8 v21

The focus recently in the news has been on countries cutting costs and making staff 'efficiencies'. In the US this has been focused through DOGE - my thoughts have turned to - does your church need its DOGE; does Langham need its DOGE? (Which could be read as Department of Gospel rather than Government Efficiency?)

Langham's mission and ministry has expanded dramatically over the last 5 years in line with our Strategic Plan. An independent assessment of our last financial year estimated that over 1.76m people around the globe are impacted by Langham's work, 109,105 directly and 1,656,678 indirectly. To delve deeper into this impact, please follow the QR code at the bottom and read our new Annual Report.

Langham to deliver the ministry outcomes which inspire their support. Organisations which grow significantly particularly need to audit their impact and efficiency. It is interesting to note the current initiatives in the US and UK where, in the eyes of some, their civil service and state sectors have become costly and



But still the challenge remains as to how to demonstrate Langham's efficiency and impact in delivering our global programmes.

This work has been underpinned by a greatly expanded supporter and donor base (thank you!) who release the necessary large amount of financial resources to continue such momentum. With such expansion comes the increasing obligation to be transparent and accountable for the ministry and resources trusted to Langham, in order both to demonstrate that the resources are stewarded wisely and for the encouragement of those who trust

inefficient in delivering their intended outcomes. The focus is on cutting budgets and reducing staffing rather than bettering efficiency and impact. But still the challenge remains as to how to demonstrate Langham's efficiency and impact in delivering our global programmes. What might such an audit include, in addition to the work of 'Excellence in Giving' who provide the independent impact assessment and the numbers quoted above?

My thoughts have been triggered by the Natural Church Development's identification of 'The 8 Essential Qualities of a Healthy Church', because Langham and our members are all ourselves members of the Church. Might the 'qualities' they identify give some guidance: 'Empowering Leadership, Gift Based Ministry, Passionate Spirituality, Inspiring Worship, Holistic Small Groups, Loving Relationships, Need-orientated Outreach, Functional Structures'?

How can Langham be transparent and accountable in these areas? Several links are obvious, others need to be teased out a bit more but I believe they are there - and the Healthy Church initiative encourages self-assessment and then a focus on the weakest and how they can become more efficient and impactful.

John Libby
National Director, Langham
Partnership UKI

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Read our 2024 Annual
Report online
uk.langham.org/about/reports

Empowering the Ethiopian Church: the birth of homegrown Christian publishing



Ethiopia has a long-established church. It is estimated that 18% of Ethiopia's 129.4 million people are evangelicals (about 23.3 million).

But, reportedly over 90% of Ethiopia's evangelical pastors lack formal training - though there is a growing number of seminary-trained pastors (including Langham Scholars).

Significantly, there hasn't been a credible, indigenous Christian publishing house, so gifted authors have written in English to be published externally. The result? A dearth of quality resources, contributing to theologically weak churches and vulnerability to cults and prosperity gospel preaching. That was until Langham's Colin Macpherson met a man called Tekalign Duguma, from Ethiopia, in 2022. **That's when everything changed.**

'That's my dream!'

When Tekalign applied for a Langham Writers' Grant, Colin responded that he would need a publisher. Tekalign's

surprising reply was: "I want to be a publisher, that's my dream!"

Colin arranged to meet Tekalign to discuss him starting a publishing house. After speaking to his peers from across denominations, Colin sensed that Tekalign was a man "that God is calling into publishing".

Tekalign, 45, has been on a remarkable faith journey.

Although coming from a Christian home, by his twenties Tekalign had rejected God, was drinking heavily, using drugs, and had no hope. He left his home to live on the streets and ultimately destroy himself. A few days later, he had the rope in his pocket and was looking to hang himself, when an uncle recognised him.

He invited Tekalign to come with him to a prayer meeting. When they sat down, the preacher spoke about God's loving second chances, and that he believed there was someone in the congregation who was planning to kill themselves but for whom God had better plans. That caught Tekalign's attention.

He encountered God that night and submitted his life to Him. Over the

He encountered God that night and submitted his life to Him. Over the next three weeks, he read every Christian book he could find.



Last October, around 400 people attended the launch of Onesimus publishing house in Addis Ababa.



Langham's Publisher Development Manager Colin Macpherson (right) with the team of writers working with Tekalign (second from left) to produce contextually relevant books.

next three weeks, he read every Christian book he could find, and applied to Bible college. He said he wanted to write Christian books and publish them. That was the beginning of 14 years of academic study through various certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

As well as writing books, he is currently a lecturer at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, and an exegetical consultant for Wycliffe Bible Translators in Ethiopia.

Onesimus publishing house launched

With support and encouragement from Colin, alongside seed capital from Langham, **the first serious indigenous publishing house in Ethiopia, called 'Onesimus', has been launched.** An event was held in October last year, with some 400 people from across denominations in attendance. Three books were released at the same time.

Tekalign said the reason he wanted to start a publishing house is because other publishers focus mainly on translated works rather than contextual books:

"Translated materials often fail to fully address the unique cultural, social, and spiritual realities of Ethiopian communities. By publishing works authored by local scholars and practitioners who deeply understand these contexts, we aim to provide more relevant and impactful resources

for the local church and theological community."

With your support, last year Langham was actively involved with 28 indigenous publishers, in 23 different countries, in the production of 61 local language titles.

But ideally, Colin wants to work himself out of a job:

"The Western aspect of [Onesimus Publishing House] is my friendship with Tekalign and the capital to get it going. Everything else is his. It's his ministry.

Less dependence

"We want other people to take ownership. In every country I work in, that's my goal. And the less I am needed, the better. The less dependent they are, the better."

Colin explained why contextual resources written in the local language are so vital:

"We wouldn't like it if we were told in our churches that we must have the latest Southern Baptist books from Memphis!

"How would you like it if you had to preach everybody else's sermons and never one of your own?"

"One of the reasons I believe wholeheartedly in indigenous publishing is that they have the chance to pick the materials that they need. They are so vulnerable to all sorts of outside interests, particularly those that come with money. And I try to buy them a little bit of editorial freedom to do what they want to do because with money comes control.

"And if publishers simply edit books that others want them to publish, you're not a publisher anymore. You're not a prophetic voice. You're just a service provider to somebody else. You've lost your voice."

Onesimus is laying a foundation for a generation of future Christians in Ethiopia. They have plans to publish a staggering 90 books in the coming years.



Tekalign is now married to Kalkidan and has a daughter Nathainiya and a son Noah.



‘Great joy’ training Amazonian pastors in Peru

Introducing... Fernando Sevilla, Langham Preaching’s coordinator for Peru. He’s been involved with Langham for nearly two decades and recently shared the great joys and challenges of training indigenous Amazonian pastors.

There are 150 ethnic groups based along the Amazon in northern Peru, and Fernando says there is a “great need” for preachers in these areas to be trained to preach faithfully from the Bible.

The opportunity for Langham to be involved in training the Shipibo-Konibo community came about when one pastor, Samuel, became a member of an ‘escualita’ (Preaching Club) and attended Langham seminars.

It was very difficult for him, as Spanish was his second language – but the Langham Preaching team persevered, followed up with him and made a big impression. Samuel returned to his community, desperate for other pastors in his ethnic group to receive the same training. So they invited Fernando to bring Langham Preaching to their region.

Experiencing the culture

Fernando initially visited the area for eight days purely to experience the culture and day-to-day lives of the

Shipibo-Konibo people, because it is so different to life in the big cities.

After much organising, and collaborating with another missionary organisation called “Three Waves”, the training took place in November for 40 pastors. The Langham Preaching team and attendees travelled for 10-24 hours by boat to get there.

Yet Fernando said the event was a “great joy”. One participant, the only female preacher to attend, had great difficulty getting to the training, but gave “the best sermon of the entire group”, Fernando shared.

He said that the event was also frustrating because of the language barrier:

“We learnt that we can change the way we teach, but not the content. This event was one small part of the entire process – we now mentor them. One event is not enough. We call them constantly to ask how they’re doing with the material, and whether they are meeting in small groups together”.

A huge lack of resources

The plan is to complete the Langham Preaching programme over the next two years, with three more similar events.



There is a huge lack of resources in the Shipibo-Konibo community.

Fernando explained that the training is “very special, because there is a huge need and a huge lack of resources. There needs to be a learner-centred approach, which is more oral rather than text-based.

“Our team is keen to finish the entire programme, but it’s very expensive. Everyone needs to travel on tiny boats, and it is expensive for the team and the participants.”

Though 40 pastors did manage to attend, 20 more were unable to because of financial hardships.

Wonderful opportunity

And now Langham is being invited to train other ethnic groups, as they have heard how good the training is!

Praise God for this wonderful opportunity, and pray for the vision and resources to complete the programme.

If you would like to financially support Langham Preaching training in places like Peru, please prayerfully consider giving to the Langham Preaching programme, either online or using the attached giving form.



Fernando has been married to Carmen for 14 years, and they have an 11-year-old son called Renato.

Encouraged seeing Langham's impact first-hand in **Egypt and beyond**

David and Wendy Balcombe, members of Tonbridge Parish Church, were part of a group of Langham supporters who visited Egypt last Autumn.

From a grey October Friday at Heathrow to riding camels the next morning in the desert sunshine close to the pyramids at Giza, on the Western side of Cairo – what a contrast! Cairo has a densely packed population of 22 million, still expanding; it covers 1,200 square miles, twice the area of London.

The Great Pyramids, the Sphinx and Step Pyramids around Giza are impressive, not least for their sheer scale. The largest of the three Great Pyramids took 20 years to build. One wonders how the huge stone blocks were moved 4600 years ago!

The next day in central Cairo, we saw the enormous Tahrir Square, famous for the 50,000-strong demonstrations of the 2011 Revolution. We visited Cairo Museum nearby with its fascinating ancient artefacts, mummies preserved for over 2 - 3000 years, and some of the treasures of Tutankhamun's tomb.

From there we headed towards a town on the north-eastern edge of Cairo in the Mokattam Hills. Here, a community of Coptic Christians formed, seeking escape from persecution through the ages. They are now called Zabbaleen, (rubbish collectors) as their livelihood is based on collection and recycling of much of Cairo's waste.

The houses are self-built and many live in slum conditions but seem happy with their simple life and bustling community. Here also is the monastery of St Simon the Tanner, visited by a stream of pilgrims, and an amazing arena church with a capacity of over 10,000, built in the 1970's into a vast cave of overhanging rock.

From the very early Christian communities, Egypt became a predominantly Christian country, and there are still many Coptic Christian

churches, and other denominations too, although the country now has a large Muslim majority. In Cairo we saw a beautifully decorated Coptic church, with ancient relics and icons, which are important to Coptic Orthodox Christians.



Seeing Langham in action

Our trip was organised by John Libby (Langham UK's National Director). We were privileged to see something of Langham's work in action in Egypt. On our first Sunday we went to an Egyptian evangelical church attended by Dr Hani Hanna, Director of Langham Literature. There were about 200 people at the lively evening service, which was conducted in Egyptian Arabic. We were given headphones with an interpreter. We also met a Langham Scholar who normally studies and works in Lebanon, but was taking temporary refuge in Egypt.

We also visited the theological college, which partners with the Langham Scholars programme, funding and supporting students working for PhDs. We met several scholars. One



Rev Dr Andrea Zaki, a Langham Graduate who is now a highly respected church leader in Egypt, presented to the group of supporters.

is currently working for her PhD, and said Langham's support is enabling her to fulfil her distant dream of gaining higher education in order to serve Jesus. Another has completed and is now an Old Testament lecturer at the college. One was an ex-principal of the college, and another the current principal. It was encouraging to see these men and women, committed to the cause of the gospel, and being equipped to serve effectively in their home countries in their own language.

We were also privileged to meet another former Langham scholar, the Rev Dr Andrea Zaki, a highly respected church leader in the country, who is now also actively involved in advising the government on religious matters.

Egypt is a striking country, built on its fascinating ancient foundations and in such expansive dimensions. Cairo is a complex modern city, with its huge population and endless traffic jams, interwoven with some of the older parts which are still apparent. We were very encouraged, on this 'Langham Supporter Trip', to see that Langham is having such a positive impact in the modern church in both Egypt and beyond into the Middle East.

David & Wendy Balcombe



Supporter's Page

Langham Live: A Front-Row Seat to Global Gospel Impact

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to feel disconnected from what God is doing globally. But what if you could go beyond the news headlines? What if you could hear directly from bible teachers, authors and scholars who are serving worldwide?

That's exactly what Langham Live offers. Launched during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep supporters informed and connected, this monthly Zoom call brings you closer to Langham's global ministries.

Each call features insightful conversations with a guest who is engaged in one of Langham's programmes.

There is also dedicated time to pray for the guest, allowing attendees time to intercede for God's strength, wisdom, and perseverance. Prayer is central to what *Langham Live* is all about.



One participant shared, "I had no idea how much impact Langham was having until I joined *Langham Live*. Hearing directly from those involved made me want to **pray more and give more!**"

No matter where you are, you can join *Langham Live* and share fellowship with believers from the four corners

of the world. The calls take place on the last Thursday and Friday of each month, lasting 45 minutes. It's an opportunity to be encouraged, challenged, and inspired by the faithfulness of God at work around the world.

Join us!

Whether you've supported Langham for years or have recently discovered the ministry, you are welcome to join us.

Sign up today for the next *Langham Live* and be inspired by stories of God's faithfulness across the world. Visit uk.langham.org/langhamlive to register and mark your calendar for a **front-row seat to global gospel impact**.



Journal of 670-mile walk raises funds for Langham

A huge thanks to Presbyterian Minister, Rev Dr David Cupples, who is supporting Langham through sales of his book based on an epic 670-mile walk through France and Spain in 2017.

This included the famous 500-mile 'Camino de Santiago', a medieval pilgrimage route. Rev David took the trip during a sabbatical, looking for an "adventure" and an "opportunity for all-round growth and development".

Rev David read the Bible daily (Deuteronomy and the Gospel of John), listened to hymns and had time and solitude to meditate and pray.

He met many interesting people from all over the world, and had opportunities to share his faith and encourage others.

Different to normal life

Many aspects of the experience are very different to "normal" life.

He said: "The discipline of simplicity was experienced in laying aside the comforts of home and reducing life to a simple daily rhythm and routine of eating, walking, talking, washing and sleeping. That's it! You are not a tourist."

"So it is quite an ascetic experience. Sometimes I longed for my nice comfy bed at home as I spent another night on the top bunk in a dormitory with 20 or 30 people but usually you are so tired you appreciate the chance to lie down anywhere."



'Peregrino'

The book he wrote, 'Peregrino' (Spanish for pilgrim), is based on his journal, recordings and daily Facebook posts written during the walk.

It reflects on how walking the Camino can illuminate aspects of the pilgrimage of the Christian life.



Rev David said: "The Christian life is the great adventure and training experience of growing more like our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. Ask God to show you some new step you could take on that journey. Maybe walking the Camino might be part of a refresher course on learning to live like Jesus."

Rev David has sent Langham the proceeds of book sales since 2024, totalling £2,000 so far. If you would like a copy, please contact him directly: dcupples57@gmail.com

Watch an interview with Rev David: uk.langham.org/transform

Word from the World

Langham author Tony Chuang explains why sharing the Gospel in Taiwan (which is steeped in folk religion) needs to address daily needs and show God as more powerful than traditional deities...

As a first grader, I had the same daily after-school routine. My grandma would remind me to greet the ancestors before I could play with my Transformer robots. I'd pick up a stick of incense, clamp my palms together, and pray a simple prayer to the ancestral shrine in the middle of the living room.

I asked for health, wealth, and good grades. Then I'd snack on the crackers that had been offered to the ancestors and deities in the shrine.

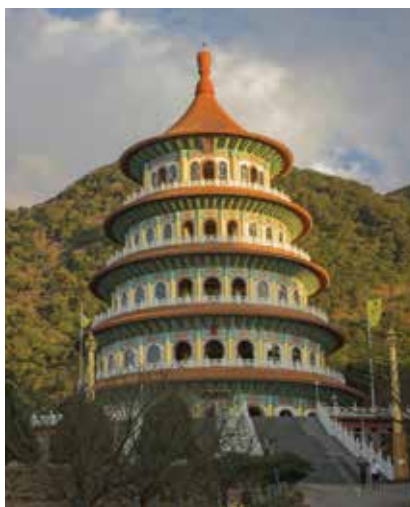
At the time, I had never heard the gospel, and what I did hear about Christianity from my grandparents was negative. Our way was Chinese folk religion, which mixed elements of Confucianism and Daoism (Taoism) with a plethora of deities, ancestors, and shamanistic rituals.

It was not until high school that a classmate told me the gospel and I gave my life to this Christian God.

About 30 years later, I wrote *Religiosity and Gospel Transmission: Insights from Folk Religion in Taipei* to explore how folk religion shapes the worldview of Taiwanese people, so that Christians can share the gospel effectively. Today, Christians only make up 6 percent of Taiwan's population, while adherents to folk religion compose 44 percent, according to research.

Through interviews with 25 people in the streets and temples of Taipei, I began to see two key questions that Christianity needed to answer for Taiwanese people enmeshed in the world of folk religion. **How does Christianity engage with the spiritual realm? And how does it help the everyday life of the Taiwanese?**

Chinese folk religion pervades everyday life, and social institutions—including government offices and schools—making it a key part of Taiwanese consciousness.



In this context, a presentation of the gospel should directly address the forces of ghosts, spirits, local deities, and ancestors that make up Taiwanese people's lived realities.

Demons and evil spirits are a real concern today in many parts of Taiwan. The gospel must be seen not just as insurance for the afterlife but as protection in this life against real or perceived spiritual forces.

One practical example is telling non-Christians about the power of Jesus's name to drive back demons that may be attacking one's house, or the power of prayer to do things that no spirits or deities could do.

While gospel presentations in the West focus on more abstract concepts like how Christianity provides forgiveness of sins, new life, and hope for eternity, Taiwanese people are more interested in practical, everyday concerns.

Today, many Christian teachers exhort us to gospel living, but what about the gospel in daily life?

When your business is not doing well, what is the gospel's answer to that? When you live in a crime-ridden neighbourhood, how does the gospel protect you? The easy answers of "have more faith" and "turn to Jesus" are

not concrete enough to address real concerns.

What many Taiwanese need is a more down-to-earth gospel that addresses the same things that folk religion deities address: daily lives and felt needs. These needs are not a side project for the deities but their sole purpose.

A contextual approach to gospel presentations in Taiwan should frame the Lord as better than the goddess Mazu in her protection of fishermen, better than the earth god in his protection of land, better than Guanyin in her compassion for people. That doesn't mean Christians should water down the gospel or make it only about fulfilling daily needs.

In Jesus' ministry, he encountered people and provided for both their external and spiritual needs (eg, Matt 5:41; Mark 12:17; Matt 18-21-22). Abstract truth sometimes came with the fulfilment of daily needs and sometimes did not.

Sometimes God does not fulfil every felt need. But that does not mean the gospel does not speak on a given subject. For instance, the gospel teaches people not to worry about money or promotions but to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matt. 6:33).

To show that the gospel of Jesus Christ is necessary and vital amid a culture steeped in folk religion, Christians need to show that **God is more powerful than the spirits and deities that threaten the Taiwanese people**, and that He is a better answer to the daily needs of their lives.

The result is a gospel that is truly "good news" for Taiwanese people and an appeal that can take root in this culture.

Excerpt adapted from 'Religiosity and Gospel Transmission: Insights from Folk Religion in Taipei' by Tony Chuang. Copyright © 2024 Langham Academic. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher. Adapted excerpt first published at <https://shorturl.at/PRhVW>





Word on the World

Rev Dr Chris Wright

Hannah's God in an Upside Down World

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Whatever one's political viewpoint, the world is spinning on more than its axis these days, with the "rules-based international order" after the Second World War a frustrated (and tainted) memory, with global economic systems swinging in a chaotic volatility that massively enriches those who know how to profit from it, and with the baffling friendly embrace of former enemies and insults heaped on former friends. And all of this in a whirlpool of lies, distortions, propaganda, and amplifying social-media algorithms, that makes George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* simply half a century ahead of its time. What do we need to remember about our God in such times?

God had turned Hannah's world upside down too - in a nice way, of course. The story of 1 Samuel 1 is familiar: from the pain of being the loved but childless wife, scorned and taunted by the other wife with her many sons and daughters, to the joy of answered prayer and a son called Samuel. Hannah reaches into the repertoire of Israel's worship songs and praises her God in words that resonate with the richest scriptural theology. What does Hannah's song tell us about her God and ours? Find it in your Bible and have a read.

The God who is "my one and only" (vs. 1-2)

It is so personal: emphatically, "my heart...my horn...my mouth...your deliverance...you...our God." Hannah knows how exalted Yahweh is, but also how close he is to her (as he had just proved). And in verse 2 she

blends the most outstanding revealed truths about the one and only living God with her personal relationship with him. That's what we aim for in Langham, that through faithful preaching and teaching of God's Word, people will *both* know the glorious truths of Scripture *and* know the living God for themselves.

The God who keeps the score (v. 3).

The opening of v. 3 might be referring to Peninah's taunting, but it speaks far more widely. The world today seems full of boasters in high places. But blasphemous arrogance is the primary sin for which God judges the mighty and powerful, whether ancient emperors or contemporary presidents. Have a look at the Pharaoh of Egypt (Ezek. 29:2-3), or Nebuchadnezzar who boasted of making Babylon great again (Dan. 4:30), or Babylon itself - symbolic of all idolatrous earthly

powers until Revelation (Isa. 47:7, 8, 10; Rev. 18).

Why is such boasting foolish and dangerous? Because God - the universal divine auditor - knows and weighs all that is said and done on the planet (as the astonishing Psalm 33:10-15 affirms), and God holds governments especially accountable for their words and works. Those who flaunt their power - financial, military, national, or plain personal - and do so with apparent impunity in this life, will not get away with it forever. God keeps the score. God is not mocked.

The God who turns the tables (vs. 4-5)

V. 5b is perhaps closest to Hannah's own "reversal", but she sees in it a wider pattern of God's action. Her words are a signpost to *what we would long to see*, if only. With v. 4, how we long for an inversion of violent military aggression and the deliverance of its victims. With v. 5a, we long to see the inversion of global hunger and conspicuous excessive consumption. With 5b, we long to see an end to so much female injustice in all kinds of violence and suffering in more ways than the lack or loss of children. And all of these things we long for so passionately because we actually live in a world of the opposites.

In contrast to v. 4, as I write, the arrows of Russian shells, bombs, missiles and drones still rain down night after agonizing night, mercilessly and murderously, on cities, infrastructure, schools and residential

blocks in Ukraine, as they have done every day now for three long years. And the horrors continue in Myanmar, DR Congo, Sudan, Gaza...

In contrast to v. 5, as I write, people are dying of hunger and preventable diseases because food aid, medicines, and clinics have been shut off at a stroke, as the richest men on the planet deprive the neediest of help. Those who are already full grow wealthier yet, while those who were hungry before are hungry still.

How long, O Lord, we cry with the Psalmists, before you right the wrongs and reverse the evils of our world? Hannah sees that day as a “done deed”, in her own life. We can only see it by faith and in biblical hope, as we look on with her to v. 10.

The God who governs all realities (vs. 6-8a)

These verses are not so much about God’s inversion of evil realities, as about God being in charge of both extremes of all the realities we may ever face: death and life (v. 6), poverty and wealth (v. 7), ash heaps and palaces (v. 8), and everything in between.

But the fact that God governs all things is not an excuse for fatalism – “there’s nothing we can do about anything...” Rather, precisely because these are the lived realities of our fallen world, God has told us what to do about them. In relation to v. 4, it is the prime job of kings (governments) to rescue those who suffer violence and exploitation (check Psalm 72:12-14, or Prov. 31:1-9). In relation to v. 5, it is the responsibility of the whole society to care for the poor and feed the hungry (check Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 14:28-29), including especially foreigners (Lev. 19:33-34; Deut. 10:17-19). We can rejoice, with Hannah, that there are many who do engage in such works of compassion and justice as their Christian mission and calling, including many within the Langham family around the world. And we can rejoice in anticipation that ultimately God will put all things right.

How can we be sure about that, though? Well, Hannah makes the same move as the writer of Psalm 33 does, from the vision and hope of vs. 4-5 to the foundational assurance of vs. 6-9. Likewise, Hannah’s God is:

The God who holds the world together (vs. 8b-9)

Hannah reaches not only into Israel’s great traditions of monotheism (v. 2), and justice (vs. 4-8), but behind and beyond all that to Yahweh, the LORD, as creator and sustainer of the whole cosmos (v. 8b) “The foundations (literally, “pillars”) of the earth” speak of the dependable stability of the earth itself, and since God sustains *them* he can surely take care of his own (v. 9a), and distinguish between the faithful and the wicked (v. 9b).

An even more breathtaking expansion of this thought inspired Psalm 102:25-28, in words that Hebrews applies to Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:10-12), and find their fulfilment in him (Col. 1:15-20). The whole universe is created by and for Christ,

18:25). And if v. 10 sounds ominous, it is so only if you remain unrepentantly opposed to the Lord and his will and commands. For it is indeed good news, part of the gospel itself, that evil will not have the last word in God’s universe. All wickedness and unrepentant evil-doers will have no place in God’s new creation, as Revelation 21-22 so vividly portray. And all creation rejoices in anticipation of the day when God comes, the God who will reign as king and judge and put all things right forever (Ps. 96:10-13).

But meanwhile, there is a human king, whom Hannah prophetically sees as anointed by God, and given strength to do justice in the here and now (v. 10b). Her song points initially to David, who did model that (for a while), but beyond him of course to Great David’s Greater Son, God’s

... people are dying of hunger and preventable diseases because food aid, medicines, and clinics have been shut off at a stroke, as the richest men on the planet deprive the neediest of help.



sustained by Christ, and redeemed by the blood of his cross. What security, then! Our God-guarded feet walk always on Christ’s own turf. We can be comforted, then, by Hannah’s last thought. Her God is ultimately,

The God who is judge of all the earth (v. 10).

As Abraham knew, the Judge of all the earth will do what is right (Gen.

anointed Messiah King. For in Christ, Hannah’s God is our God. And in Christ, we can rejoice with Hannah for his triumph over evil. In him we trust, for he is “the Ruler of the kings of the earth” (Rev. 1:5). And in him we serve, in witness, work and prayer, for the sake of the kingdom of God and his justice, until he returns to judge the earth and to reign with us forever.



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