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transform

Autumn
2022



**A lasting
legacy...** p3

**Helping to heal
a nation** p5

**Bottom of the well theology
from Ukraine** p6-7

**Chris Wright on moral
integrity in leadership**
p10-11

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If you would like multiple copies of this magazine for friends, church members, etc., please ask Liz Wright, address below.

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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

Letter from the Editor

In this Autumn 2022 edition of Transform, we're telling many stories of how God's people are leaving a **lasting legacy** for His kingdom. Whether that's through preaching training in South Africa (**page 5**); a groundbreaking commentary for believers in Latin America (**page 3**); or heroic humanitarian efforts in Ukraine (**pages 6-7**).



Closer to home, Chris Wright's Word on the World gives a biblical response to the downfall and replacement of a Prime Minister and the cost of living crisis in the UK (**pages 10-11**).

Don't forget to join us for Langham Live on Zoom each month to hear first-hand from our Langham family around the world. Email uk@langham.org for more information.

We hope and pray that you feel encouraged and inspired by reading about what God is doing through Langham around the world.

With every blessing,

Victoria Marsay

Transform Editor and Digital Content Producer for LPUKI

Langham Partnership's Vision and Mission

Langham Partnership's Vision is to see churches 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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Scholars

Equipping theological leaders to reach their nations for Christ.

Preaching

Training indigenous pastors and leaders to faithfully preach God's Word.

Literature

Developing biblical resources to equip pastors and leaders.

‘Challenging us to live out the gospel in Latin America’



Watch a video about the impact of the Latin American Bible Commentary in Costa Rica and beyond:

uk.langham.org/get-involved/videos/

Did you know that Latin America is the most unequal continent on the planet? The gap between rich and poor is enormous. Latin Americans face daily challenges of injustice, poverty and lack of education.

The Church hasn't escaped these challenges – many pastors have little or no access to good biblical resources, resulting in congregations being badly taught and poorly equipped to follow Christ.

That's why Langham helped to create the Latin American Bible Commentary (LABC). It's a single-volume commentary on the whole bible, written by over 100 Latin American Scholars, to **shine the light of Scripture on the cultural realities of the continent**. The project took twelve years and was finally published in 2019.

Pastor Gerard Jugalde leads a church in Guacimo, Costa Rica, which is a poor, rural community.

“Most pastors have not studied in a seminary so they don't preach exactly what the Bible says. Instead they preach

from their experience”, Gerard says.

“When we started, we lacked training and resources, so we weren't really preaching what the Bible says either. I had never really studied the Bible in a systematic way and I didn't really have books to help me.

“A book like this commentary, **for me is a treasure**. After we started using it, our people kept coming to us saying ‘I had never heard the Bible that way or had it explained so clearly that I could understand it.’

“Thanks to Langham we have tools like these. Today, we as pastors are trying to impact our community.”

Pastor Mauricio Solís Valle, senior leader of Vida Abundant Church in Costa Rica, is grateful for the LABC because the materials that pastors do manage to access are “so far from our reality”.

He reads the LABC every time he preaches, because it's coming from his reality. Pastor Mauricio says the commentary enriches their entire lives.

One commentary can multiply and impact many.

Luís Calvo is a friend and mentor of Pastor Gerald. In his role as a Bible teacher at Vida Abundante Church, Luís travels to rural areas to train pastors who have “sixth grade school level” education.

“They are getting their sermons from listening to the radio”, he said.

“I will walk through the commentary with them and they will say ‘I am so happy that someone came and told me that there is something more to investigate.’ **This book helps people tremendously.**”

The general editor of the LABC was René Padilla, who died last year aged 88. His daughter, Ruth Padilla deBorst, is a Langham Graduate and a noted theologian and missiologist. She deeply values the support of Langham, as the LABC looks at the Bible through “Latin American eyes”, then invites readers to live out the gospel in all its fullness.

“Langham's had a part in that by sponsoring the writing, publication and distribution of this book so that it's in the hands of local pastors and leaders. They can't afford a huge library but this book has it all in one.

“**I believe this commentary is a gift from God's spirit**, for God's people in Latin America, to challenge us to live out the gospel in all areas of life”, Ruth explained.

Since 2006, Langham has helped develop 16 Bible commentary projects, including the recently published Portuguese translation of the Latin American Bible Commentary, multiplying the impact of this important resource.

■ **Thanks to the support of generous donors like you, Langham is currently developing an additional 19 Bible commentary projects.**



[l-r] Luís Calvo, Pastor Gerald Jugalde and his wife Jeimy.



Riad Kassis, Director of the Langham Scholars programme

Snapshot of Scholars studying in the UK

Through the Langham Scholars programme, Majority World leaders leave a legacy of lasting significance in their home nations: they head up Bible Colleges; start humanitarian relief ministries; lead churches; and in some cases, even influence governments.

“For example in Ukraine, one Langham Graduate was repairing a dormitory so it could be used as a meeting place for Christians. Then the war started, and the dormitory is now being used to shelter families who are escaping from the war.” Please join us in praying that the Scholars who are in the UK right now

Here is a small snapshot of the Scholars who are currently studying at UK institutions on a full-time basis. These promising young Scholars hope to return to their home countries after completing their PhDs, joining a fellowship of over 300 Langham Graduates around the world. Riad Kassis, Director of the Langham Scholars programme, recently commented: “Fulfilling the Great Commission requires deep theological foundations and, more importantly, the equipping of pastors, evangelists and ‘ordinary’ Christians to create disciples in whatever situation they are in.

Fulfilling the Great Commission requires deep theological foundations...



will stay close to the Lord during their studies and be used mightily for His kingdom when they return home. *Currently 34 Scholars are studying at UK institutions: 16 of these are studying on a split-site basis, one of these is on a distance learning course.*

(Left) Scholars based in the UK came together for fellowship and learning at a consultation in Cambridge earlier this year.



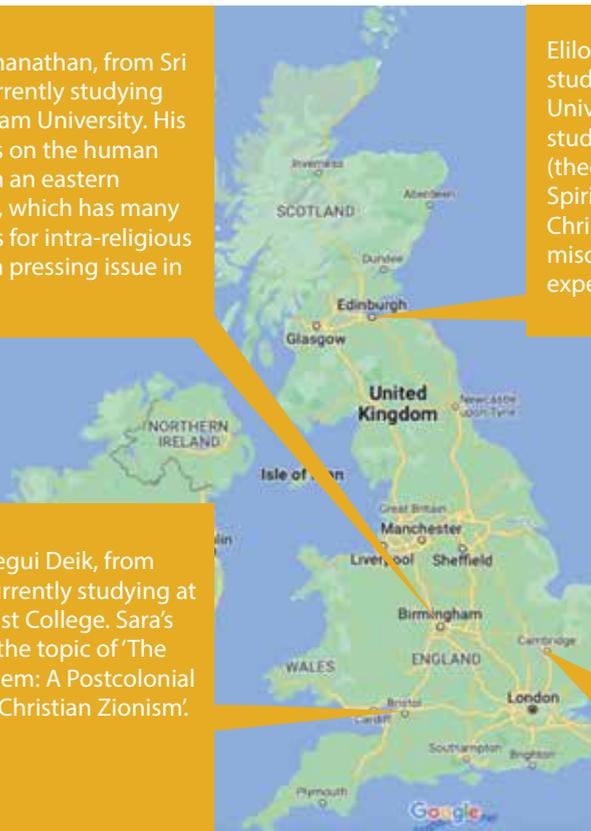
Nathan Somanathan, from Sri Lanka, is currently studying at Birmingham University. His PhD focuses on the human person from an eastern perspective, which has many implications for intra-religious dialogue – a pressing issue in Sri Lanka.

Eילו Ezung, from India, is studying at New College, University of Edinburgh. Her studies focus on pneumatology (theology of the Holy Spirit) in Nagaland, where Christians sometimes have misconceptions about spiritual experiences.



Sara Amestegui Deik, from Bolivia, is currently studying at Bristol Baptist College. Sara’s thesis is on the topic of ‘The New Jerusalem: A Postcolonial Critique on Christian Zionism’.

Pablo (Paul) Johnson, from Argentina, is studying at Cambridge University. He is focusing on the Church in Argentina. While in the UK, he remains involved with the theological education committee for the Presbyterian church in Argentina.



Helping to heal a nation



Watch a video about the impact of Langham Preaching in South Africa: uk.langham.org/get-involved/videos/

How does the Word of God impact nations? Why does every church need a pastor who 'correctly handles the word of truth'? What difference does it really make?

Let's travel to South Africa and listen to pastors there, who say that faithful Bible teaching is what their country needs to heal and recover.

South Africa has had a turbulent history. During Apartheid, from the late 1940s to the early 1990s, a brutal system of institutionalised racial segregation was enforced.

Many assert that apartheid was influenced by a wrong interpretation of scripture. While Christian morality and doctrines were taught by the incoming Dutch people in the late 1600s, they also pushed an agenda of white supremacy and exclusivity.



Sphiwe Pandeka, a lay minister who believes every pastor should go through Langham Preaching training.

But through faithful Bible preaching, pastors across South Africa are now helping to heal the nation. **Langham Preaching is playing a huge role in this**, having begun training seminars there in 2009.

Pastor Frank Shayi, who was among the initial group of pastors attending the sessions, now leads Langham Preaching for the entire region.

He says the training impacted his personal life, and the lives of others in his church.

"Langham Preaching is equipping the pastors who are equipping the congregations. Those congregations are going to become salt in the communities and the communities are going to change," Pastor Frank said.

Sphiwe Pandeka, who is a lay pastor in Johannesburg, believes Langham Preaching is so good, every person who gets into a pulpit should go through the training.

He says that as a result of Langham Preaching training, he is able to **apply the Word of God to every situation** he finds himself in. And there are broader applications too:

"The cultural diversities, the economic challenges, the social ills that we have in South Africa as a country, is the Word of God able to cover each and every single area of our lives as a country? Absolutely!"

There are lasting consequences for believers who receive faithful preaching week in, week out. Russel Abrahams, Langham Preaching's coordinator for South Africa, explained:

"The Bible has so much to say about justice and reconciliation and healing and all of the issues that are still very very prevalent in our country. But if you are not careful enough, you miss all of that. That is the radical gospel and I think if we learn to preach it well as Langham

MJ Tshidzumba, lay minister, St Matthew's Church, Sibasa, Limpopo: "Before attending Langham Preaching, I used to hate the Old Testament.

Now I'm enjoying any scripture or any verse from the Old Testament. Now I can understand it."



seeks to do, preach it accurately, faithful to the text, God's vision will somehow be imprinted upon our minds and we want to do it because we see this is the way we ought to have lived all the time."

■ **Thanks to your support, between July 2021 and June 2022 Langham Preaching has equipped over 9,800 pastors and lay leaders to teach God's Word in countries around the world – including South Africa.**

Kgabo Ledwaba, lay minister, Christ Church Cathedral, Polokwane: "I always bring my Bible to church, and sometimes when you listen to the preacher you realise something is missing. But I've not been educated in theology so I'm unable to pinpoint what is wrong. Now I've attended Langham Preaching training, it has shown me how to read the Bible. I'm looking forward to getting more and more equipped, whether it's a small setting or not, it doesn't matter. What matters is if I can reach one person at a time."



Word from the World

Bottom of the Well Theology: A Christian Perspective from Ukraine By Roman Soloviy

During this war, I have become increasingly aware of how emotional and geographic proximity relates to the perception of information. For our friends abroad, the news of the Ukrainian tragedy could remain just a piece of information about events in a neighbouring country. For us, it is the destruction of our world, our families, and our futures. Even the most sympathetic cannot experience what we are experiencing here on an existential level. Peering into a well and being at the bottom of one are two completely different experiences!

- Who knows how to pray with a woman who was raped by a Russian soldier for a week and then watched him shoot her sick mother when the woman refused to go with him to Russia?
- What words can be said to the elderly residents of an assisted-living facility that was ruthlessly turned to rubble by a Russian tank?
- How does one comfort a wife whose husband ran to get help as she went into labour but was killed outside their house?
- How do we mourn over nameless civilians who have been tortured beyond recognition and even identification?

Theoretical answers I might have formulated prior to this war didn't adequately prepare me for the actual words and deeds required in reality.

So allow me to provide some Christian perspective from the bottom of the well—the most important lessons we, the Ukrainian Evangelical believers, have learned through facing the challenges brought by this war.

1. The Beauty of Solidarity. The vast majority of Ukrainian Christians have chosen “to share ill-treatment with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin”



(Hebrews 11:25 NRSV). In times of great suffering, followers of the crucified Messiah cannot preach the gospel at a safe distance from a hellish reality. Those who haven't seen sunlight for months, hiding in basements from Russian bombs and rockets; those who flee; those who seek healing for their physical and mental trauma; those who lost all they had built and their loved ones; and those who have been victims of physical violence do not need triumphant preaching or endless moralizing. They need Christ, who will drink with them the bitter cup of loneliness and abandonment and who will go with them all the way to the end. That is the Christ we try to preach and embody in acts of solidarity and self-denial, descending, as He does, to the last depths of human suffering.

For years, my colleague Anya P., a Ukrainian philosopher in Poland, has provided assistance to Ukrainian families with children who needed palliative care. Since the beginning of the war, she has been working hard to evacuate children from the fighting zone. Each evacuation requires coordinating many people, transport, funds, fuel, and so on. Together with my friends, we helped Anya through several complicated

evacuations, each bearing witness to the incredible cooperation and beauty of solidarity. In one instance, evacuating an oxygen-dependent child from Kharkiv to Lviv (1017 km, 632mi) required special transport. Through social media and privately approached friends, we collected all the necessary funds for this evacuation within two hours!

There are different types of beauty. During these months of war, I have seen absolute beauty time and time again, the perfect incarnation of God's love in our imperfect and war-torn world. I pray that this present experience of compassion and co-suffering in solidarity will open us up to the pain of other people, regardless of their location and circumstances, so that we would be distressed in their distresses (Isaiah 63:9 AMP) and bear their burdens as far as is possible (Galatians 6:2 ESV), showing forth the beauty of solidarity to the world.

2. The Need for Humility. I also pray that sharing our experience can foster humility in the church at large. From the very first days of the war, many of our international friends, surely with the best intentions, started to encourage Ukrainian Christians to forgive and

reconcile with Russian Christians. Despite their orthodoxy and biblical vocabulary, I believe such appeals are terribly untimely. With the onset of the war, we in Ukraine have entered a Gethsemane, overwhelmed by loneliness and despair from the horror of the heinous violence suffered by innocent compatriots and friends and from the daily reports of the deaths of friends, colleagues, and co-labourers. Deathly sorrow overcomes hearts with the thought that the hardest times are still ahead. Although we certainly believe that after Calvary will come the Resurrection, for now, today, we are here in Gethsemane. The time came when the risen Jesus met with the apostles in Galilee and had a difficult conversation with Peter. He sent out His disciples to preach the gospel throughout the world, even to the oppressive Romans, at whose hands He had been crucified. But that was later. In the garden, His request was simple—to share His pain with Him, just to be near Him with no appeals and admonishments. That is the kind of humble solidarity we long for from the global church.

3. The Challenge of Truth. War from the thick of it and war from the news look different. Experiencing the war from the thick of it, you unconsciously strive for accurate wording. There is no “conflict in Ukraine,” not now and not in 2014-2015. Ukrainians are not at war with Ukrainians. There is no “special military operation,” as Russian propaganda calls this war. A war was started, armed and led by the Russian military and special services. And the purpose of this war is not some mythical “denazification”—unless by this notion one means the physical destruction of us, our culture, and our identity. Vague wording distorted by political correctness or propaganda is not only an epistemic fallacy but also an ethical mistake. Such word choice not only gives distorted information but also justifies and perpetuates the horrific injustice done to the victims of war. Precise wording matters not just descriptively but also prescriptively. Abstract prayers for peace in Ukraine may suggest that Ukrainians must accept their fate of an “error of history” and return to the fold of the Russian empire. What is the way to real peace? We seek the peace that will allow us to remain free people with the right



to choose our path. Therefore, to pray for peace in Ukraine and to be fair to Ukrainians means to pray for Russia’s military defeat and for the collapse of its economic power, which empowers this bloody war. Only if this happens can Russia agree to a peace deal which will not include the subjugation of Ukrainians.

To live through war is to experience anew the reality that truth is necessary and will set us free (John 8:32 ESV). It makes us long for the truth of the war to be known, and even more so for the sustained freedom to make the truth of Jesus known!

4. The Power of Hope. As some military experts predicted, the war is in a protracted phase with no reasonable expectations of cessation. For us in Ukraine, war is not a fragment of reality; it is the whole reality. It penetrates everywhere—determining the themes of our prayers and our perspectives on Scripture.

I used to wonder why many Holocaust survivors committed suicide later on—remembering poet Paul Celan, philosopher Jean Amery, and Primo Levy, grand witness to the horrors of Auschwitz (in which my own grandmother also died). But today, I understand that the level of violence and human evil they experienced deprived them of ways of returning to normal life, to healthy relationships, and the ability to trust people.

After the end of the war, one of the most difficult challenges for all of us will be to switch to peaceful life and return the war to its proper place - a fragment in the totality of our existence.

For Christians, this liberation from the totality of war must begin now.

How can this happen? It happens when we experience the hope that the infinite reality of the Kingdom of God inaugurated on the cross overcomes any totality on this side of eternity. I am very grateful to my friend, Pieter Kwant (Director of Langham Literature), who brought the attention of Ukrainian believers to this liberating truth at a recent seminar on the book of Revelation. All earthly totalities, even one as terrible and deadly as war, will one day give way to the infinite glory, peace, and love of the Kingdom of God. In prayer, in the Lord’s Supper, in the solidarity of the ecclesia, and in the beauty of sacrificial love, we experience the life of the age to come in which there will be no more death, no more tears, no more suffering. What a hope we have! That hope can get us through.



Roman is the Director of the Eastern European Institute of Theology in Lviv, Ukraine. He also serves

as editor-in-chief of *Theological Reflections: Eastern European Journal of Theology*, a chief editor of the book series “Contemporary Protestant Theology”, and a regional commissioning editor for Langham Literature.

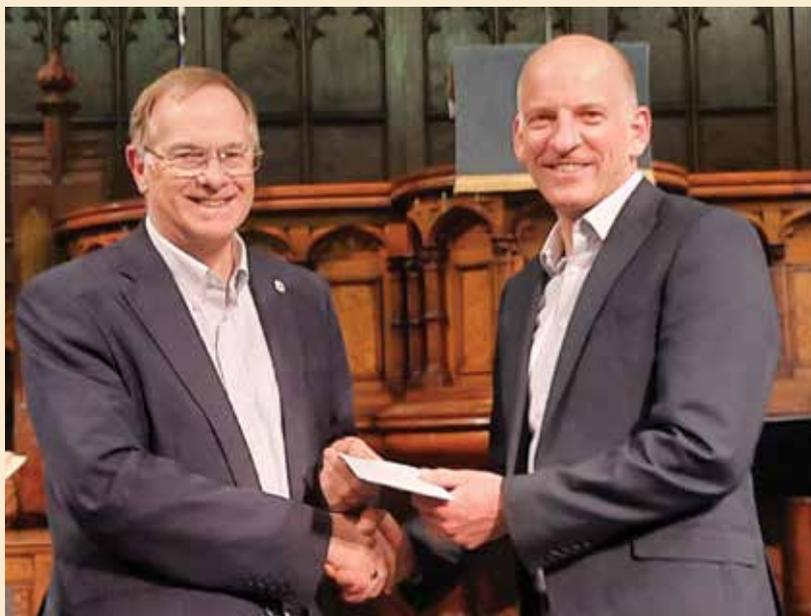
Supporter's Page

Langham at Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church

Earlier this year, our Global Ambassador & Ministry Director Chris Wright was invited to speak at Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, Bangor, Northern Ireland. The pastor there is Christoph Ebbinghaus, and the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention is held at the church each Summer. In the morning service, Chris spoke from Exodus 19 on 'Who

are we, and what are we here for?'. In the evening service, Pastor Christoph interviewed Chris about his work for Langham over the years. Videos about Langham's work around the world were also shown.

You can watch both services on Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church's YouTube channel – look for the videos from 27 March 2022.



Chris Wright with Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church's Pastor Christoph Ebbinghaus, receiving a substantial gift from the church towards Langham Preaching in Latin America.

Langham at Keswick and Bangor this summer

Over the summer Langham had stands at the Keswick Convention and the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention (Northern Ireland). It was so encouraging to connect with existing supporters and make new friends who dropped by. Look out for us in 2023!



Why do you support Langham?

"We give because it is wonderful to see John Stott's vision being realised in so many exciting ways."

**Nessa and Dermot,
Northern Ireland**

Join Langham Live

For over two years, supporters have been gathering on Zoom every month to pray for Langham's vital ministries. **Thank you for joining us!** We've had the privilege of hearing from and praying for our family in Panama, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Indonesia (to name just a few countries represented). The calls are for 45 minutes on the fourth Thursday (7pm) and Friday (10am) of each month. We start by hearing from a Langham friend, then we break into smaller groups to pray. If you would like to join the call or for further information, please email: uk@langham.org or visit uk.langham.org/langhamlive



Celebration Booklet

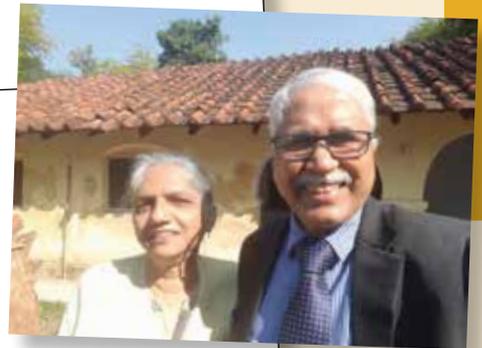
■ Inside this copy of Transform you'll find our brand new Celebration Booklet giving a snapshot of Langham from the last financial year. If you'd like copies to give to friends please email: uk@langham.org.



A note of thanks from India

FROM: **Pastor Sanjay Gaikwad**, Maharashtra, India
THANK YOU!
TO: Langham Partnership

"I am involved in the Langham Biblical Preaching Movement in India and coordinating the work in Maharashtra state. Every week I am preaching in at least 4 different church services in both Marathi and English. There is a great hunger for the pure word of God among the people. As people find so much corruption in preaching the Word of God by most of the preachers. It's a challenge to share the Word of God following the principles of Biblical preaching by Langham. It's a tremendous help and blessing for us. I really appreciate the training and resources that are available to us from Langham Preaching. Thank you so very much for the gift of books."



JOHN STOTT LONDON LECTURE

Loving Disagreement: Christian Wisdom for a Polarised World

10 Nov | 7pm | Lecture & Q&A

IN PERSON & LIVESTREAM

The annual John Stott London Lecture, delivered by Revd Dr Christopher Landau, unpacks how

we can heal divisions and end conflict by practising Christlike love for those with whom we disagree.

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ALL SOULS



Word on the World

Chris Wright sees in Psalm 12 a biblical response to the downfall and replacement of a Prime Minister and the cost of living crisis.

Boris Johnson's time in No.10 Downing Street came to an ignominious end in July with his own party and many cabinet members no longer able to tolerate the repeated scandals in which transparency, truth and honesty were prime casualties. His successor, Liz Truss, has declined to say whether she will appoint a new Ethics Advisor to replace the two who resigned under Johnson, claiming, "I always act with integrity." Which one might faintly applaud with some mental reservation, "That's what they all say, including your predecessor." When our whole public and political culture is increasingly corroded by falsehood and corruption, **we need more, not less, of the protection provided by independent scrutiny and accountability.**

What does the Bible say about integrity (and the lack of) in public life and the plight of the poor?

"O Lord, what is shocking is not the extinction of dinosaurs and other animals; it is the disappearance of godly men and women (v.1)."

That is the arresting opening line of **Yohanna Katanacho's** meditation on Psalm 12¹. The Psalm itself is equally emphatic in its opening complaint, and sweepingly hyperbolic in scale.

Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore; those who are loyal have vanished from the human race (Ps. 12:1 NIV).

We might detect an Elijah-complex here, when he thought he was the only faithful Israelite left on the planet and God had to correct his arithmetic with the knowledge of at least 7,000 others who had not succumbed to the ambient idolatry (1 Kgs. 19:14, 18). Nevertheless, we resonate with the sentiment: **we seem to be drowning**

in an ocean of untruth, struggling to find a single truth-telling life-saver in the world of public, and especially political, discourse.

Lies are the devil's fingerprints since the garden of Eden. David lamented them in his little kingdom and we now discern them in global scale and violent ugliness, from Trump to Putin and many in between.

²They utter lies to each other; with flattering lips and double heart they speak

³May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that makes great boasts,

⁴those who say, 'With our tongues we will prevail;

our lips are our own—who is our master?' (Ps. 12:3-4 NRSV).



Derek Kidner captures the destructive nature of such a corrupt culture.

"Empty talk, smooth talk and double

talk are here [*in v. 2*], followed by the boasters, [*in vs. 3-4*] whose policy sums up that of their fellows: to manipulate the hearer rather than communicate with him. *Lies*, here, are more accurately 'emptiness', a term which embraces falsehood but also its fringe of the insincere (Ps. 41:6) and the irresponsible (Ex. 20:7), which cheapen and corrode all human intercourse. Flattering talk is lit. 'smooth': all the deadlier for the pleasure it gives and the addiction it creates (Isa. 30:10)... A double heart ... significantly traces the double talk to its source in 'double think'—for the deceiver becomes one of his own victims, with no truth to unite his character."²

Could one find a more depressingly accurate portrayal of the world of political speech, which, in recent years has become a **relentless war on truth**, along with narcissistic and idolatrous boasting and exaggeration? Even Kidner's last sentence stings with astute perceptiveness, for it does indeed appear that some of our political leaders are virtually compelled to believe the falsehoods that their incessant media messaging puts forth, even while knowing "inside" that they cannot be true, and having that pointed out repeatedly. Such intentional embrace of duplicity and dissimulation must wreak havoc with anyone's character. "With no truth to unite," what hope is there for any meaningful integrity? David realises this connection elsewhere: "*I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name*" (Ps. 86:11 KJV). The determination and the prayer are integrally essential to each other.

It's not just the Big Lies, like the wilder conspiracy theories, that do immense damage. There is also the corrosive cumulative effect of habitual smaller



scale carelessness about the truth. Boris Johnson built his early career as a journalist with trademark jocularity on concocted falsehoods or distortions about the European Union. He was sacked twice from previous jobs for lying, but this proved no obstacle to a “successful” political rise (which says something very sad and sick about our politics). Indeed, the telling phrase used to justify his party’s selection of him as leader and for the country to elect him Prime Minister, was that this characteristic mendacity was knowingly “priced in” – a price worth paying to win an election, until it became a price too high, and his repeated evasions and excuses could no longer be tolerated even by those who elevated him.

Coming back to the Old Testament, **it is striking how passionate the God of Israel is about truth and integrity in public life and how their opposites arouse his wrath.**

The ninth commandment prohibits not only lying in general, but specifically false testimony that corrupts judicial integrity (Ex. 20:16). The severe penalty for perjury would have been a major deterrent (Deut. 19:16-21). If only the aspirations of David in Psalm 101 had characterized the governments of Israel in the following centuries (if only those standards could be true of our own political leaders today...). Amos denounced the demise of truth in the judicial system (Am. 3:10). Later prophets witnessed a nation in which political lying was not only shamelessly practised, but shallowly popular. Isaiah, for example, saw a people who crooned to the prophets, *“Do not prophesy of what is right; speak to us smooth things,*



prophesy illusions” (Isa. 30:10). Jeremiah complained not only about a whole culture of lying in public discourse (Jer. 9:3-6), not only about a ruling class that had lost all shame and even the ability to blush (Jer. 6:13-15), but tellingly about a populace that was content to be lied to: *“The prophets prophesy lies... and my people love it this way”* (Jer. 5:31; my italics) – a diagnosis that might have been written for the state of electoral campaigning in our country today. The smirking photo-op soundbite that seems to say, “I know I’m lying, and you know I’m lying, and I know that you know I’m lying. But I don’t care, because you don’t either.” Collusion in deceiving and being deceived betrays an advanced stage of terminal cultural decay.

Meanwhile, the **poorest in society suffer for the idolatry, injustice, folly, and profiteering of the greedy and powerful.** And sometimes, as

Psalm 12 recognizes, there will be little or no help from human capacities. Only God can and must act, for which the Psalmist bids us pray – especially as the cost of living crisis impacts swathes of the population and many of our Christian sisters and brothers. Arise, O Lord, as you promise.

*“Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise,” says the LORD.*

“I will protect them from those who malign them.”

*You, LORD, will keep the needy safe
and will protect us forever from the wicked,*

who freely strut about

when what is vile is honoured by the human race (Ps. 12:5, 7-8; NIV).

Calvin reputedly said, “When God puts a nation under judgment, he gives them wicked rulers.” By that yardstick, the lessons of Old Testament Israel, where God’s judgment on his increasingly depraved people took the form of increasingly demented rulers leading the nation into a reality-denying downward vortex into exile, are playing out again in modern western cultures where the symptoms of divine judgment portrayed in Romans 1:28-32 are all too evident.

The lesson of the Old Testament also, of course, is that beyond judgment lay redemptive hope – as we know it still does for our world too. But whether such righteous redemption will come in some partial and provisional return to truth and integrity in this earthly body politic (for which of course we long and pray and advocate), or only and fully in the glorious new creation that will have no place for “all liars...and everyone who loves and practices falsehood” (Rev. 21:8, 22:15)—**only God knows.**

¹Yohanna Katanacho, *Praying Through the Psalms* (Carlisle: Langham Global Library, 2018), p. 23. Dr Katanacho is a Palestinian Israeli Langham Scholar, Academic Dean at Nazareth Evangelical College.

²Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1-72*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Leicester: IVP, 1973), p. 75.



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LEGACY BY
REMEMBERING
LANGHAM IN YOUR
WILL?**

**Find out how to leave a gift in
your will by visiting:
uk.langham.org/gifts-in-wills**

**To discuss leaving a gift in your
will, contact Simon Foulds:
simon.foulds@langham.org**