

A parable – Angus Buchan

Monthly Word
from ANGUS BUCHAN

A monthly column by farm, preacher and writer for Jesus, Angus Buchan

What is a parable? According to the Oxford dictionary a parable is: “a simple story used to illustrate a moral, or spiritual lesson.”

The greatest Teacher, storyteller that ever lived was the Lord Jesus Christ, so much so, that Nicodemus who was a member of the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of Israel in those days, came by night to learn from the *carpenter's* son.

Jesus always spoke in parables – simple stories. His illustrations are the same yesterday, today and forever. They are still applicable, even to the man on the street (especially the farmer) and they are very profound. They are always challenging when it comes to our personal lifestyle, but they remain full of love. Jesus speaks clearly in the Gospel of Matthew 13, the story of *The Seed and the Sower*. We as farmers can really identify with this beautiful story. Jesus said that the sower went out to sow seed and some fell on the wayside, which means that some people hear the word of God, but they do not understand it and so it never takes root, and is eaten up by the birds of the air.

The second amount of seed fell in stony places, where it is received with great joy, but has no root because of the shortage of soil. So, when tribulation and persecution come knocking on their door because of the word of God, people get

offended and fall by the wayside.

The next amount of seed falls into the thorns, which are the cares of this world. They literally choke because of the deceitfulness of riches. People get so sidetracked with the riches and success of this world, that they bear very little fruit, and become totally unfruitful.

Some seed falls into good, well-prepared, deep and rich soil. This is the seed that we hear from the word of God, we understand it and as a result we bear much fruit. We are told some bear up to 30-fold, 60-fold and even 100-fold.

More applicable than ever

Isn't it amazing that after around 2 000 years these parables are still applicable! In fact, probably more so today than in those days. We really need to plant our seed in good soil. We need to make sure that our lives are in order and that we don't get snagged up with things like fear, depression and anxiety, to the extent that we can't think straight and make very poor decisions.

We need to make sure that our priorities are in order – first God, then our families and then our business, because what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul (family)? (Mark 8:36) Absolutely nothing, as we've said many times in this column.

We need to stop worrying about things that we can't do anything about and concentrate on the things that we can do well. We need to operate by faith and not by sight. (2 Corinthians 5:7) Remember faith comes by reading our "Agricultural Manual" (the Bible) every single day, and that will see us through.

May God bless you.

Angus Buchan

The great Gaza betrayal – Charles Gardner



Grace Fryer with one of her evocative photographs depicting the suffering of Jewish children in Sderot.

Peace was promised for pull-out – but it never came!

As thousands of Palestinian rioters take part in demonstrations against Israel on the border with Gaza, media attention is rarely focused on the Jewish victims of violence living nearby.

The so-called March of Return, during which protestors have hurled rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers trying to safeguard their citizens, is about claiming the right of return for refugees (and their descendants) supposedly driven out of Israel at the birth of the modern state exactly 70 years ago.

Quite apart from the fallacy of their claim, which I shall

explain, the whole scenario of Hamas-led Gaza erupting in turmoil is a terrible betrayal of Arabs and all those who have supported their aspirations.

The nations who encouraged former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to withdraw from the enclave in 2005 in a “land for peace” exchange have blood on their hands.

For there is no peace for those Jewish residents who live within easy rocket-fire of Gaza, as a North Wales photographic exhibition called *The Hope (Hatikva)* graphically illustrates.¹

Suffering children

Having witnessed mortar and rocket attacks while visiting the area as a child, student photographer Grace Fryer returned in 2016 to the Jewish communities of Sderot and Kfar Aza, located just over a mile from Gaza, to record the suffering of children whose daily lives are shattered by the sound of sirens giving them just seconds to find shelter. A number have been killed while others have been traumatised and unable to live normal lives.

Grace tells the story of 17-year-old Ella Abukasis, who died while protecting her younger brother from shrapnel, and her exhibition includes photographs from the children’s centre her father Yonatan founded in her memory as well as shrapnel from a Kassam rocket recovered after a similar attack.²

“The Israeli communities around Gaza are not only subject to the constant fear of rocket attacks, but also face the reality that terrorists are tunnelling under their homes with the sole intention of taking hostages and killing civilians,” Grace points out.

“There are also times when the rocket fire becomes so extreme that Israel has to enter Gaza to protect her citizens.”

Just imagine if you were living in your neighbourhood and were subject to a never-ending barrage of missiles being launched

from a few blocks away. You would no doubt expect your government to do something about it. Yet Israel is almost always cast as the aggressor when they strike back at the Hamas terrorists causing all this mayhem.

When Israel took back control of Gaza from Egypt in 1967, the communities around Sderot built good relationships with the Arabs in Gaza. Jews would sell their fruit and vegetables on the beaches of Gaza while Arab mechanics would repair Jewish cars.

But Yasser Arafat put an end to that when he initiated an intifada (uprising) in 2000. Under his direction, terrorists began attacking Jewish communities in Gush Katif, in the Gaza strip, which is what ultimately led to Ariel Sharon's withdrawal five years later. With a population of just 8 000, this community produced over 12% of Israel's dairy and horticultural products.

'Peace' agreement

"The agreement was that if this community gave all their property and business to the Arabs of Gaza, their leaders would stop the terror attacks on Israeli communities," Grace explained.

"Many in Gush Katif, who were themselves children of refugees from 1948, were forced to leave their homes to live in temporary accommodation in Israel; and they did so in 'The Hope' that there would be peace – but it never came!

"Breaking their promise, Gaza-based Arab terrorists began using the very land which had been left vacant for them to fire rockets and mortars into Sderot and the surrounding areas."

It's a terrible and frightening scenario, as you can well imagine, for children playing in school playgrounds, or visiting outdoor markets, stores and synagogues. Nowhere seemed safe, and pain is etched on the faces of those who have

never known peace.

Not surprisingly, living with this constant danger takes a huge toll on these communities, leading to family break-up and illness caused by stress and anxiety. And yet none of these difficulties is recognised by the UN, individual governments or human rights organisations.

As for the fallacy of the “March of Return”, to which I also referred last week, the refugee situation affecting the Palestinian people is a crisis of their own making. It was self-inflicted. Some 800 000 of them heeded the warning of the surrounding states bent on Israel’s destruction in 1948 to flee their homes, promising their swift return alongside the victorious Arab armies. Israeli leaders, meanwhile, had tried their best to persuade them to stay, but to no avail – hence creating a totally unnecessary humanitarian crisis conveniently used as an excuse to blame Israel for almost everything wrong with the world.

What’s more, there were at least as many genuine Jewish refugees expelled from Arab countries at the same time. And Israel successfully integrated every one of them. The surrounding states, however, still refuse to take responsibility for the welfare of those they persuaded to leave Israel.

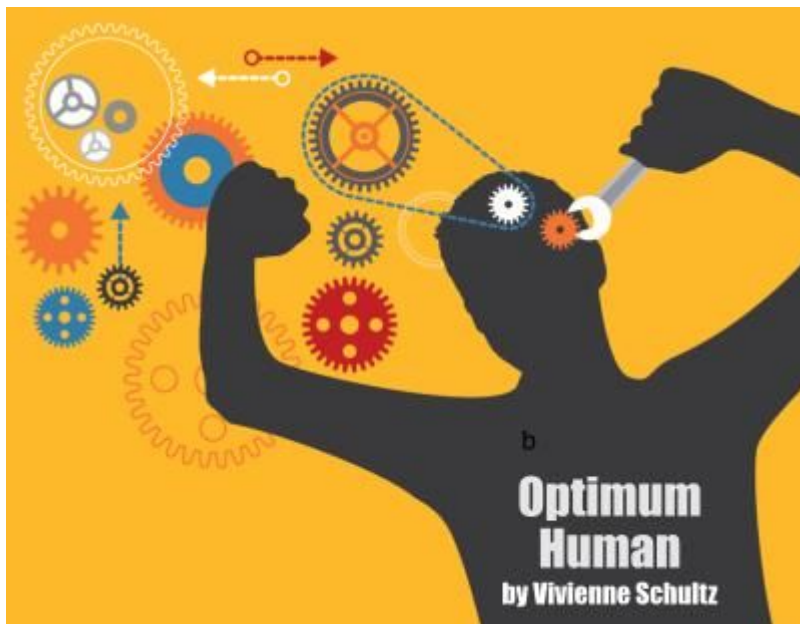
As Walter Scott put it, “Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive!”

Notes

1The month-long exhibition, opened on April 12th, is being held at the Theatre Clywd Education Gallery, Mold, North Wales.

2Leaflet promoting The Hope photographic exhibition – see www.fathershouse.wales

Getting rid of our hardwiring – Vivienne Schultz



A new monthly column by social entrepreneur and A2B Transformation Group founder Vivienne Schultz.

I recently read in *Psychology Today*, an international magazine, that only 1 out of 8 people are willing to work with their own truth. With God's grace, it sets them on a journey towards humble single-mindedness, righteousness and integrity. Sadly, 7/8 persons resist transformation, rationalising themselves out of it and stay in their false self and bondage mindset.

Our organisation's 24 years research identified 16 nasty hardwires (or character flaws) that develop in your brain from early childhood, without you even being aware of it happening. During every second that you were/are in a state of fear or experience with sense of "I am not ok", this hardwiring

happens.

Through advances in neuroscience, it has been proven that your brain was altered every single incident where you were handled unlovingly, felt neglected, ignored, embarrassed, abused, harassed, scolded or where irritation was shown towards you. It caused an unhealthy distortion of your impulse control, your natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits and moral tendencies, and caused character flaws.



How it works

How? A cascade of stress-type neurochemicals starts in the lower brain and literally washes into the rest of the brain. This tells your brain that you are unsafe and need to move into hyper-gear to protect you from further exposure.

If this triggered reaction occurs frequently and over an extended period of time, where you constantly feel “under attack”, you stay in this prolonged state of fear. As a result, some wonderfully designed parts of the brain, required for taking initiative, thinking in higher gear by being creative, having empathy, and flexibly and patiently getting along with others, are now shutting down and your mind is being driven into a diminishing frame of self-protection. These experiences fuse, alter, warp and limit the way you think. It reduces the unlimited potential of your brain and

keeps your mind stuck and biased, thus driving similar stuck behaviour, limiting your possibilities, making life less pleasant for you, and those close to you.

When your pride is threatened, you hide behind a smoke-screen of defensive behaviours. So, too, every hardwire keeps you enveloped in a pall of smoke preventing you from being adaptive, influencing your view of yourself and others. It is your resistor – it blocks you and impairs your vision, causing you to view yourself through a lens that distorts reality.

As seriously hazardous as hardwires are, they are hard to spot. Your ego stands firmly in the way and if you sense the slightest challenge to your self, it is interpreted as a 'threat' and you go into self-preservation 'fight and flight' mode immediately. Your hardwires will paint even the 'ugliness' in your 'stuckness' as beautiful and commendable. Those comfortable moments when you pat yourself on the back for how well you are doing, are the moments that should alarm you the most, because it's your blinkered hardwires running as a default programme in you.

Hardwiring occurs in both men and women, in all civilized cultures and at every socioeconomic level. Each hardwire has its own default pattern and vicious circle of some kind, and, will keep you spinning in this 'stuck' trajectory, going nowhere with your life. Substantiating this, by calling it "my personality", or "my culture," does not fly any longer. Each hardwire causes new electrical short circuits and new different hardwire abnormalities in you, affecting and influencing you and the people you come into contact with, spreading dysfunctional behaviour in our world. It is the destructive force that prevents both you and your loved ones from change and blocks you from becoming an optimal human.



**What can be predicted,
can be managed**

You have become a combination of the recorded experiences within your brain and your mind. On a conscious level, you probably do not even have any memory of the thousands of exact moments forming these hardwires, especially if you had a disempowering childhood, as this lies deep down in your unconscious mind. If we can take this fact seriously, that a lot of what drives human behaviour, is often irrational and lies at a deep unconscious level in the mind, in other words, we are predictably irrational, then it's time we spent many more daylight hours understanding ourselves and others better, to navigate through our mire of hardwires. The wonderful news, is that what can be predicted, can be managed.

Step one in your success is always: acknowledge and confront your hardwires with honesty. Suppressing this can cause mental health issues. We live in a society where mental health is still considered a "hush-hush" subject. This is really destructive. We all have weaknesses – we are all under construction – and if you don't stay under construction, you will self-destruct. Once you know your hardwires, you will typically say: "I wish I had become aware of them much earlier and stopped them from causing the invisible stress and slow destruction to my body and mind. It would have saved me years

of medical bills and wasted time through illness recovery.” It’s time to get to a new level of self-awareness, ensuring that you prevent yourself from being fatefully condemned to a life of coddling and/or failing on all fronts:

- Anguish, gloom, and hopelessness on a psychological level,
- The drying up of your ability to love and embrace humans and your simmering latent anger on a moral level,
- Nervous illness and its manifestations on a medical level.

From a Christian point of view, the hardwiring in your brain can cause the death of the soul before physical death – the experience of hell while still in this life.

Identify your hardwires asap. Take ownership over yourself now! Why now? On a secular level, nobody wants to pay salary’s to hardwired employees, nobody wants to be in a relationship with your hardwires, no child wants to be submitting to a hardwired parent. It’s time you become whole, and taste real happiness in your real true you! It’s time you become purposeful and focused on saving souls, before too many around you are too hardwired to change.

It’s a medium-term, committed journey to get unstuck! And you might suddenly one day face your own mortality and realise that you do not have the longevity, vitality and comprehension any more. And then it’s almost impossible. Just like an elastic band that has perforated by being exposed to the sun and rain, you might also be losing that neuroplasticity ability of your mind.

Today is the time to rewire yourself!

Precious Christians, rid the last hardwiring in preparation for our King’s coming.

Information on an assessment scale and toolkit that gives you

more insights into your predictable irrationality, followed by tools to help alter and guide you to optimum behaviour is available from Vivienne at info@a2btransformation.com.

Songs of the generations: Part 1 – Hugh Wetmore



Worship conversation with Hugh

Hugh Wetmore is a songwriter and student of worship trends. He invites you to join the worship conversation by commenting on his monthly column.

Thanks for the various responses I receive to my musical musings about worship in the congregation of God's people. Some as comments through this column, other in direct correspondence. I learn much, and am stimulated to explore new facets of this precious gift.

Here's another email received recently: "... Maybe our younger generation does not like to use hymns and choruses in worship, but to us from the older generation, we long to have these incorporated, as they have such depth and rich Scriptural content."

I replied: "... Very true. I do not object to the contemporary worship musical style of the younger generation ... but I do object to the vacuous, meaningless lyrics which

Musical styles are always changing. Some people will always prefer some styles over others. This is human nature, and

they so often sing. I plead with contemporary song-writers to fill their music with worthy lyrics. I point them to God's criteria for the songs He wants to hear such in our congregations. Each word in Colossians 3:16 is rich in meaning. Let our songs meet those listed criteria – and I don't mind what cultural musical style they use."

musical preferences are not sinful.

Let's get this clear, so that everyone of every generation and of every ethnic culture gets the message: Musical styles are always changing. Some people will always prefer some styles over others. This is human nature, and musical preferences are not sinful.

I've got books on my shelves that demonise rock-music and condemn those who use it in a Christian context. One book is titled *Why I left the Contemporary Christian Music Movement*. Dan Lucarini left because of the associations which music styles held for him. He'd come out of a secular rock music band culture, with some sinful lyrics and practices of the world, and he did not want to go back. I can understand how he views these temptations, and his clear break with them. But there are many others who don't have these associations and are not similarly affected.

That is why we must distinguish between Gospel essentials, and the non-essentials of our faith. (See my book *Why Christians Disagree* (Struik/TEASA 2001) for more on this.). Music styles are not "Gospel issues", for which we must be prepared to die. They are cultural issues about which Christians may differ in love.

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Culture is always changing, especially in music. I read somewhere that the musical culture of a teenager changes every four years. And think of the gap between that musical culture and the musical preference of a 70-year old who hankers after old-fashioned hymns sung to pipe-organ music! It's a fact that the music you enjoy in your youth is the music you'll enjoy throughout your life. Long after upcoming generations have replaced it with their kind of music. And future generations will not like the music of today's teen-culture.

Add to the generational musical mix the ethnic musical mix of the cultures of our nation, and you have a challenge second to none. You can't please everyone all the time. Don't even try!

Each of us, young and old, black and white, African and Oriental must handle his/her musical preferences in a Christian way. That is why I respect all musical tastes, because Christians are different. Our calling is to promote Christian unity in our human diversity. Human diversity includes differing musical tastes. Because humans are different, and cultures are different, I must not insist that all music suit my tastes. Rather I must insist that the musical interests of others in our congregation be included. This is the Christian way to handle our inconsequential differences. *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others (Philippians 2:4)*. That's a God-inspired motto for the one who makes up the Sunday

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song-list!

Paul applied this principle to the congregational singing of his day. He insisted we must *use three genres of music when we sing to one another in church (Ephesians 5:18, Colossians 3:16)*. These are listed as “Psalms” (really old-fashioned), “Hymns” (favoured by the middle-aged) and “spiritual songs” (which the youth enjoy most). Include all three genres in the singing mix, so that there will be some of each generation who are glad we are playing “my kind of music”. (To be continued next month ...)

Faith for the Journey – Vivienne Solomons



A monthly column by Vivienne Solomons who is a legal consultant who passionately believes that God wants His people to make a difference right where they are and to stand up for what is true and just. She is also passionate about encouraging young women to walk victoriously with God and she is engaged in a challenging faith journey as a parent of a child with special needs.

In recent weeks, I have been reflecting a great deal on faith, more specifically my own personal faith journey, especially as

it relates to what the future may hold for me and my family, for we live in a time of not only wonderful opportunity but also great uncertainty.

Faith is often likened to a muscle in our bodies (that needs to be exercised in order to develop) and without which, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). It is defined as *“the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen”* – Hebrews 11:1. As believers, we know that we are called to a life of faith. Indeed, we are called to live by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Doubting God

But have you ever found yourself in a place where you doubt God and His plan for your life? Even just a little? I certainly have, and on more occasions than I care to remember ... and it usually happens when I find myself in what I call *“uncharted territory”* (when I am doing new things or when I realise new fears and especially when I come face to face with the possibility of failure).

The good news is that God is always at work in me, enabling me (often in spite of me) to will and to work out His good purpose (Philippians 2:13), if not in plain sight then most certainly behind the scenes. Not only that, I have the assurance that He will work everything together for me because I love Him and I am called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

But what are we to do when we feel our faith is fading? Typically, I do two things. First, and most importantly, I immerse myself in the Word of God, for *“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”* (Romans 10:17).

Secondly, I choose (sometimes it is a choice as it doesn't always happen automatically) to remind myself of my journey with God, how far He has brought me and what we have overcome together (1 Samuel 7:12). Often, I find myself going back to

the beginning, to where it all really started for me. I was 17 years old at the time, a student at the University of Cape Town, away from home and everyone and everything familiar, when one night after I had said goodnight to my roommate and as I lay in bed going over the day's events, I heard a still small voice whisper in my ear. His was a new yet strangely familiar and comforting voice and I found myself responding to Him. So, there I was, talking to someone I couldn't see and there was nothing crazy or unnatural (at least to me) about it! In an instant, I knew that I was valued, that my life had purpose and that I was loved unconditionally.

Hope for the future

Needless to say, our nightly conversations became the highlight of my day. For the first time in my life, I was filled with hope for the future and an assurance that no matter the road ahead, I would be ok, for He was with me. This despite the fact that I did not know Him and could not see Him. Looking back, it was a defining moment in my life and the beginning of an incredible faith journey.

Since then, there have been many (and let's be honest here, often unwelcome) opportunities to exercise my faith, challenging experiences that have marked my life and changed me forever. To highlight just a few – my marriage across the race, culture and language divide in the face of doubt and some opposition; the birth of my first son after multiple miscarriages and a difficult pregnancy; the addition of my second (adopted) son to our family after years of waiting on the fulfilment of God's promise ... I could recount many more. Even today there are specific things that my family is trusting God for, that we are expectant for, and these are our faith stories in the making.

Do you record your own personal faith journey? If not, I hope that sharing mine has inspired you to do so. I have found it to be a wonderful way in which to encourage myself, whatever stage of life or season I may be in, that God is always at

work on my behalf and therefore I need not fear the future or what it holds.

Come and drink from the reopened wells of revival – Gary Kieswetter



Church leader, author and radio and television personality Gary Kieswetter reflects on revival in this article written for Gateway News in the light of what God is doing in South Africa in this season.



Also see [*It's time for a mighty revival in SA*](#)

Revival is necessary because as the church, we so easily get bogged down and satisfied with traditions and religion. We

need revival because the world needs to experience God as a good Father, full of mercy and grace. God has so often been misrepresented.

Revival is God's idea to partner with His church and to exalt His son Jesus Christ so that all men may be drawn to Him. It is so easy to become powerless in our mandate to establish His Kingdom on earth. There is no life without the presence of the Holy Spirit. Revival is the re-awakening of the cry of the heart for intimacy with Jesus. This is what Satan fears the most, for he has no answer for intimacy with God. A fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the dry and weary souls of mankind who have been caught up in a religion instead of daily living in a relationship with the living God.

God never intended revival to stop; it was to be passed on from generation to generation.

Re-open and rename the wells

In Genesis 26 God instructs Isaac to re-open and rename all the wells that Abraham his father had dug. The reason for this is that the Philistines filled up all the wells with sand thereby denying anyone the life-giving water. The Philistines represent religion that denies the Holy Spirit to have free access and movement in churches. God wants us to reopen the wells that through decades have been stopped.

For long the church has been in a spiritual wilderness of dryness desperately needing a fresh outpouring of the presence of God. Notice how Jesus went to Samaria, sat at the well waiting for the woman to come draw water.

God never intended revival to stop; it was to be passed on from generation to generation.

This picture represents the Church coming to Jesus who wants to give us the Holy Spirit to quench our thirst. Jesus asked her the question that she should have asked Him, give me a

drink of water. When she said, we have nothing in common, Jesus replied, if you knew the gift of God and who it is that is speaking to you, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water. For He who believes in Me, as the scripture says, the water that I give him will become in Him a well springing up into eternal life. This is the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This well and invitation to drink of this living water is still available for us today.

Throughout the years there have been many prophecies that have said that revival will break out in Cape Town and spread throughout our country and beyond our borders – a revival that has not yet been seen.

However, God is busy re-opening all the wells that through the decades have been dug in Cape Town. This is the desire of His heart for humanity to experience God as the good, gracious, generous God that He is. This revival will by far be dwarfed by the reformation that will take place. God will establish His kingdom in our country like never before. God determines the moment of visitation and the church determines how long He stays. Jesus taught us to pray, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

God wants heaven to invade earth.

God wants heaven to invade earth.

As the Church, we have the honour and privilege of hosting His presence that will cause multitudes in our country to turn to Him. This movement will establish many monuments that will continually give momentum for this reformation to take place.

Celebrate the past but live new revival in the present

In 2010 the Dutch Reformed Church celebrated the revival that God brought through Andrew Murray 150 years ago that swept

across the Cape in 1860. As the church we should celebrate the past but be inspired to relive it in the present. Habakkuk 3:2 says: *Lord I have heard of your reports, I stand in awe of your works O Lord, revive them in our day, in our time make them known. In wrath remember mercy.* Even before this revival broke out Andrew Murray's father prayed for 36 years every Friday crying out for a move of God.

My own father-in-law Dr James le Roux had the same heart-cry for revival in Parow, Cape Town in the 1970's. I remember that this church was so packed even with many standing outside just to hear what God was doing. Every week there were many salvations coupled with many healings and miracles, even creative ones. God's presence was so strong sometimes that people couldn't stand and it was not unusual to see people lying on the floor crying out in repentance.

In 1989 we as a family were called to full time ministry. We were invited to join a team led by PD le Roux, a retired pastor who started "Woord in Aksie" camps in Pretoria. Up to 400 men came every weekend from all over the country driven by their longing to encounter and experience God in a fresh way. This continued for years. They would go back to their towns and churches with a re-ignited passion for Jesus and often started meetings in their own towns. This was a powerful move of God during that time.

There is a hunger in our nation for God like never before.

In 1990 we were invited to preach in a Dutch Reformed Church in Kibler Park in Johannesburg. The preacher Dieter Berner had a burning passion to see revival in his church. Every Sunday evening we would witness the Spirit move and touch many people. Healing, miracles and restoration of relationships was

the norm. There were people falling under the power of the Spirit and filled with joy and laughter.

We then travelled the nation for 22 years preaching everywhere and seeing God doing wonderful things. My wife and I simply desired to be fire starters and rekindle people's passion for God. In 2011 we started a church in Tygervalley in Willowbridge Shopping Centre.

God told my wife to name the church "Die Bron", The Well in English. When I asked God what does Die Bron stand for, He spoke in my spirit and said: Bring Revival On Now.

This was our heart cry to God to bring revival and for us to host His presence but we also experienced that this was God's request towards the church. The scripture says, deep calls unto deep so from the depth of our heart we cried to God and from the depth of the desire of His heart He cries out to all churches: Bring revival on now! God is waiting for us to respond to His purpose for the church. He has given us everything necessary to accomplish His will. His life, His Spirit, His power, His gifts, His fruit, His anointing for us to use to establish His Kingdom on earth.

The question is, what now? Is there something after Mighty Men? Is there something after It's Time?

A hunger in our nation for God

I think of Angus Buchan, a farmer in Natal who has been called and anointed by God for such a time as this. To think that 240 men came to his farm for the first Mighty Men gathering. This began to gain momentum in the country as men began to be re-awakened to encounter God in a living way. There is a hunger

in our nation for God like never before.

This hunger has reached the point of contagiousness as seen in Bloemfontein in 2017. This was the largest gathering of believers crying out to God in prayer for our nation in the history of our country with one million people attending.

On March 24 2018 Angus Buchan held another prayer meeting in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town with up to 150 000 people attending. This was the largest recorded gathering of people in this region. This was historical and I believe a pivotal moment in this region that has begun to release shock waves that are to trigger the coming tsunami of revival.

The re-opened wells are starting to flow with living water, so whoever is thirsty, let him come and drink.

This year there are 20 Mighty Men gatherings all over our country. You may ask, what is the significance of this? Remember the two dreams that Pharaoh had and no-one in Egypt could interpret it? Joseph was summoned to appear before Pharaoh for it was known that the Spirit of God was in Joseph. He told Pharaoh the reason you had two dreams and so soon after each other means the following, it is fixed in heaven and soon to come to pass. Whenever God begins to repeat the same thing more frequently we see a pattern established that the glory is about to fall.

The question is, what now? Is there something after Mighty Men? Is there something after It's Time?

The answer is an overwhelming yes. God is setting His church up for a visitation of His Spirit. God is giving us an invitation to embrace this move of God and to partner with Him by praying, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We are about to witness multitudes of people

coming into His Kingdom and a display of His goodness, mercy and grace through signs, wonders and miracles.

The re-opened wells are starting to flow with living water, so whoever is thirsty, let him come and drink.

Land expropriation and the religious community



The land reform issues has many questioning what to do. (PHOTO: John Fedele)

Land expropriation is a highly political and emotionally charged issue. Freedom of Religion South Africa (FOR SA) is closely monitoring this area since it clearly has the potential to impact on the religious community. We therefore want to bring a balanced perspective to our constituency so that we have a framework of reference within which to formulate appropriate responses at the appropriate time.

The issue of land expropriation has taken centre stage since

the ANC adopted a policy at its Congress in December last year, subsequently endorsed by a resolution tabled in Parliament in February 2018 calling for “Expropriation Without Compensation” (EWC). Yet almost immediately, President Ramaphosa stated that there was no cause for alarm, that there would be no land grabs, that it was imperative to ensure that the economy remained stable and food security protected. At the same time, the EFF attacked the government of back-peddalling, saying that this was no more than an electioneering ruse to undermine their more radical and populist approach. The initial EFF resolution called for “the necessity of the State being a custodian of all South African land”. However, placing all land into the custody of the State is not in the interest of any South African, given the well-documented lack of State capacity to optimally administer land for land reform purposes. The undermining of property rights will impact all equally.

At the centre of the debate is whether (or not) there is a need for an amendment of section 25 of the Constitution (the “property clause”) to allow the State to expropriate land without compensation. Section 25 has two distinct parts: Subsections (1) to (4) provide protection against arbitrary deprivation of property rights and define the principles and framework for expropriation. Subsections (5) to (9) describe the State’s obligation to ensure equitable access to land, land reform and redress.

It is argued by some that there is no need for an amendment to the Constitution, since the current provisions do not specify a Rand amount for compensation, but rather use the expression “just and equitable”. If implemented strictly, this could mean that a zero (or nominal) amount of financial compensation could be paid and – if opposed – the courts could decide on whether this is a possible interpretation.

A complex issue with no easy solutions

At the outset, although many believe that land expropriation

is a question of justice, there is evidently no easy solution to this problem. It is also arguably more of a political issue than a recognition of a priority demand at grass roots level, as evidenced by a recent survey which showed that a mere 9 respondents out of 2 245 demographically represented people (0.4% of the total) identified land reform as a key unresolved problem. For most South Africans, the issue has little or no significance, with jobs, crime and housing being far more important issues for the majority.

However, the issue of land ownership is highly symbolic, with some estimates showing that the vast majority of land in South Africa is "white owned", with the obvious related question of "how was this acquired?" At the same time, others have challenged the veracity of these figures because they omit vast land holdings owned by the State and other tribal trust structures. Against this background, it is important to note that this is not a black and white issue but rather many shades of grey. For example:

- How far back in history do you go when considering what land to appropriate? In this regard, the Khoi San lay claim to the ownership of nearly two thirds of all land in present day South Africa.
- How do you decide who should become the new owners of the land, especially where you cannot prove previous tenure as in the Western Cape?
- What framework will the State develop/use to decide which land to expropriate?

The religious sector is clearly worried about this development, which has the potential danger of being very divisive since there is a perception that the traditional churches are significant land owners whereas the more independent (particularly African) churches are often unable to acquire land for economic reasons. However, a Pietermaritzberg based organisation called Church Land has done extensive research on this area and initial enquiries

seem to indicate that large scale land ownership by churches is not true and that the religious community is a negligible land owner. Typically if/when churches no longer use land, they sell it.

Whatever policy may be adopted, it will need to consider the reality that there are existing and different property ownership systems in South Africa. In particular, huge tracts of land are owned by traditional rulers in the form of customary land, where in many cases an individual owns the land on behalf of the community. An example of this is the Ingonyama Land Trust, where some 3 million hectares in KwaZulu-Natal are owned by the Zulu King, who has already stated that his people will defend their land in needs be. This traditional system contrasts with the “Roman Dutch” law model of private ownership evidence by title deeds. The State – via multiple government departments and State-owned enterprises (SOEs) – also has vast land holdings.

However, at present there is no definitive audit available of land ownership in South Africa – hence President Ramaphosa ordering this to take place, with an ad hoc Committee due to present a report on this by August 30 2018. This is imperative, because it will provide essential information that will inform the process of policy development which will then be used for any subsequent EWC actions.

No “free for all” land grab

While there is a tendency to panic, it is important to note that any amendment to section 25 which might take place will not affect other pertinent provisions of the Constitution, which will remain in effect and be applicable. It will not be a “free for all” land grab because the rule of law and legal rights framework would not disappear. This includes:

- It is the State that must implement the expropriation process, not an individual. You therefore cannot lay claim to a property simply because you want one – you

must be able to prove legitimate cause.

- Expropriation must be justified, eg if there are six farms for sale in an area, it would be difficult to justify the expropriation of a seventh.
- Procedural principles in the Constitution will still apply, such as any expropriation must be non-discriminatory eg you cannot just expropriate Afrikaner-owned farms.
- There must be just administration – the principle of proportionality will apply to any legislative provision in the Bill/Act.

However, there is no doubt that there have been historic injustices in the current status quo of land ownership in South Africa. It is therefore important to look at how we arrived at this point and to consider what sacrifices we are prepared to make to remedy situations. This is particularly so where unjust land ownership transfer took place under Apartheid and both those who benefitted and those who were the victims are still living with the consequences. This would apply to eg forced land removals, the consolidation of homelands etc, where land was often acquired for nothing or a nominal payment. In such cases – which are also symbolic and evidently issues of justice – expropriation without compensation would seem appropriate.

Need for constructive engagement

The bottom line is that even if strong political will is exerted – which has been noticeably lacking in this area since 1994 – there is a long process ahead before any significant shifts are likely to take place. While it is very important to stay abreast of developments and to be well informed about (and involved in) the process, there is no need for undue alarm but rather for constructive engagement in this important national issue.

FOR SA will keep monitoring this issue – in particular with regard to the potential impact on religious communities in

South Africa – and inform our constituency of developments and any opportunity for input in this regard.

*With thanks for the input of Adv Mike Pothier of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) Parliamentary Liaison Office.

Invader snakes inspire land-debate approach – Africa Mhlophe



Part 2 of a two-part series on the land issue

[Read Part 1](#)

I stay in a suburb that seems infested with poisonous snakes. In my garden, I have encountered a viper and boomslang on two separate occasions.

When I shared my predicament on Facebook, some users suggested that I kill these dangerous creatures – as a preemptive measure to protect my family and me. No doubt this was an attractive proposition, especially considering that some members of my household have a morbid fear of snakes.

One evening we discussed this fear and myths about snakes. I was shocked when a university student who shares the house

with us confessed to a fear of having a snake chase her around the house. We used the evening to allay such fears and demystify myths regarding the behaviour of snakes.

Now allow me to link this incident with the protracted land debate currently taking place in South Africa. The link is purely for the analogous benefit and nothing more.

Let me start by telling you how I handled this snake problem. I took the option of paying a snake catcher to safely remove and release the snakes elsewhere.

I figured that snakes have as much right to live as I do. I also suspect that our suburb is built in a space that used to be their habitat. And if I am correct then the snakes are not the intruders – we are.

But as humans, we can coexist with poisonous snakes – if we pay the price to find solutions to nagging problems and demystify persistent myths.

As you would know, different types of snakes behave differently. And the same is also true of human beings. You can't generalise and say that all whites in South Africa are against making concessions on land. Also, you can't say that all blacks favour the wholesale expropriation of land.

There are nuances in between. Therefore, progress is only possible when we remove the veil of ignorance. For instance, we can't be blind to the fact that some politicians are not only leading this debate for egalitarian reasons – but also for political mileage.

Personally, I am wary of the socialistic approach wherein the state should own all land – with citizens merely tenants. Most South Africans are paying less attention to this. Others are imagining a type of resettlement scheme where private homes will be expropriated and given to new owners.

Now, let me share what I think will break the land impasse. For the last two years, my wife and I have been facilitating an empowerment project between an Eastern Cape farmer and his employees.

The farmer bought more land to expand the farming operation with long-serving workers as the main shareholders and beneficiaries.

Business plan and off-take agreements are in place for what would become a multimillion-rand project. We have now seen the project through tedious government bureaucracy to a place of implementation.

I imagine that if there was an attempt to invade this particular farm, the workers would become a bulwark against such an action. They would want to protect what they own.

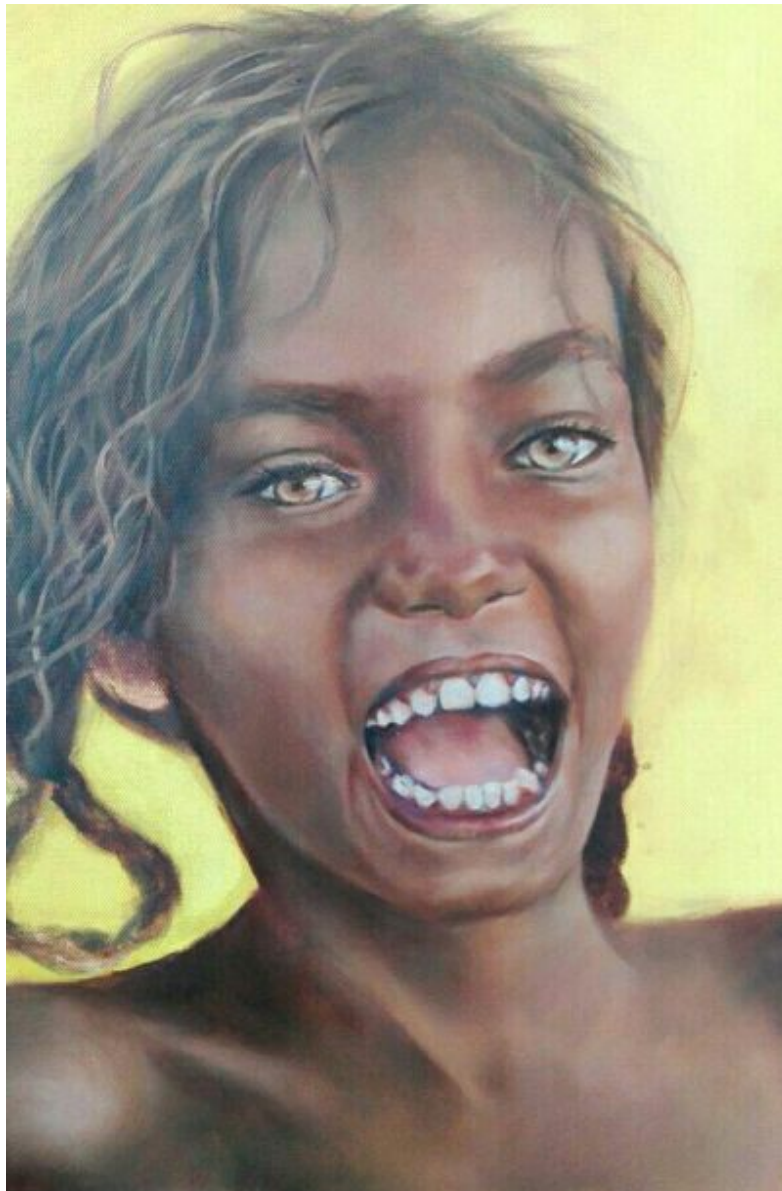
What excites me about this project is its social improvement plan. It involves the creation of an NGO to oversee things like job creation, educational needs, healthcare, recreation, etc. There's even talk of a pre-school and multipurpose centre for the community. So there is a multi-generational focus.

My point is, for South Africa to work, we have to work together. There has to be compromise from all sides. In my case at home, I am not prepared to move out and make room for the snakes. But I am prepared to pay for them to be settled elsewhere.

Let me finish off with Genesis 3:15. God said to the snake, *"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*

Notice that enmity between the snake and the woman is multi-generational, and that as long as this enmity exists, there will be bruising on both sides.

The nameless girl – a testimony of God's hand in all that happens



Susan Smith's unfinished painting of a happy and free child which was meant to be the first in a series highlighting the hidden reality of

human trafficking.

A letter from Port Elizabeth artist Susan Smith about painting with a purpose, finding meaning in a setback, and making a difference

Dear reader

Allow me to start by sharing some of the events that led up to me writing this letter.

I have been painting for quite some time as an art-student. In 2017, I was invited by a group of artists to take part in the Grahamstown National Arts Festival (NAF). This happened in a time where my heart's greatest desire was to create paintings that would carry a deeper meaning, and in the last few years I started trusting God for help and guidance with every painting.



Susan Smith.
(PHOTO: Facebook).

I completed a sequence of seven portraits named *Beloved Series*, for the Grahamstown NAF in June 2017. My inspiration for this series came from a book I read the year before on the Bride of Christ. Throughout the whole process of creating *Beloved Series* God constantly gave me confirmation through His word, and specific scriptures for each of the seven paintings. I was thrilled at the opportunity to share their meaning with their new owners, by putting a printed copy on the back of

each painting, and in that way get the message for each across.

After the exhibition, God started opening a door. I was invited to share the *Beloved Series* with women at my local church, and from there I have received a few other invitations to speak with women in and around Port Elizabeth and share the *Beloved Series* and God's heart for His beloved daughters. Up to date over 700 women have heard the *Beloved Series* message. My desire was to share the message with the person that buys the painting, but God used it for something bigger.

Rescued just in time

A people upliftment programme, called "Pop-Up" started in the Sidwell Area of Port Elizabeth. This programme started, in April 2017, through Louise Van Heerden (a friend in my church, Doxa Deo). I accompanied Louise to a safe haven for children, also located in Sidwell, in a block of flats (well known to the local people of PE as the "brown flats"). Some of the biggest drug lords in Port Elizabeth operate from these flats. After our visit I was overwhelmed at seeing the children and hearing their stories. The same week we visited the safe haven, there was an incident at the "brown flats". A woman sold her 5-year-old daughter to someone for drug money. This little girl was lucky enough to be found by the police in time, just before she was trafficked.

This reality was overwhelming to me, and I asked myself how I could really make a difference. It took me a while to realise that the one thing I can do, is to paint the "faces" of homeless and nameless children and people, and through my art help bring this "hidden" reality of human trafficking to people. My desire to do a series on this topic grew stronger, although my knowledge on this is very limited. This is not only about "physical" trafficking, but also about how the enemy traps our "minds" daily with negative thoughts and things that happens with and around us.

This is where my story starts and the reason for this letter...

Innocence and happiness

I paint every Wednesday with a group of local artists and friends. I've been working on a portrait of a young girl that radiates innocence and happiness ... not really anything to do with trafficking! At that point in time, I was still working on ideas for the series, and I never thought that she could be part of this important topic. I finished her on Wednesday February 21. I packed up to go home and carefully placed her, paint still wet, at the passenger side of my car. As I was driving home, every now and then I glanced at her to make sure that I was completely satisfied with her. According to me she was perfect. It suddenly dawned on me that this painting symbolises "the happy child" before they get trafficked. She represents innocence, joy, happiness and a care-free childhood, precisely how God intended every child's life to be ... free and happy. That was when I knew in my heart that she will be the first painting of my human trafficking series!

I made a quick stop at the Spar on my way home, but only when I got home I realised my painting was no longer where I left her. I searched all through my car even though I knew I never moved her! That's when I realised that she was gone. I clearly remembered locking my car, but somehow someone managed to block my remote!

My first thought was, who would steal a painting? I know her monetary value is not much and her only true value is what she means to me ... she probably got stolen because there was nothing else to take in my car.

Shocking reality

At first the loss after all my hard work made me cry, and the absolute pointlessness of the act made me feel angry and frustrated. Immediately a shocking reality hit me ... it felt as if God wanted me to grasp, if only a fraction, of the absolute horror and devastation parents would experience at losing

their child!

My focus shifted completely, to the senseless stealing of millions of innocent and happy children. My painting was still wet, if by any chance I would get her back "she" would never be the same again, unrecognisable! Another true reality of what happens in real life to children ... their childhood and their innocence, are stolen forever.

The painting was "nameless", a fact on human trafficking is that, most children age five and under that are stolen will not remember their real names, from that moment, they lose their identity.

I have no reference of the finished portrait. The last photo of her was taken with my cell phone, with only my bed lamp as a light. I had sent this to my daughter for her to see the progress of the painting, just because she asked me to. If not for that, I would not have taken a picture of her, and I wouldn't have had any reference of her!!! How many children get stolen without a proper reference or photo of them?

One friend suggested to file a police report and put up a poster of her with a "promise of a reward" on return of my painting. I remember thinking, if "she" was my real child ... is this what I had to do? It was as if the reality of what happens in such a situation was playing out in front of me.

Someone else asked if I would want to re-paint her. Again, another reality, I could re-paint a portrait, but no child could ever be replaced by another! How could I have imagined that I could ever comprehend the profound impact and trauma of an act so evil!

God opens doors

Only 24 hours later I received an invitation by a friend to an event that was focused on the topic of human trafficking, held in PE on February 24. I believe that God open doors, because He is faithful, and He is interested in the desires of our

hearts. I had been hoping to find a company in Port Elizabeth who are involved in awareness programmes on human trafficking for about two months prior to this invitation.

At the event, the lady that spoke said the following: "You may think that you can't do anything to make a difference or you may look at the statistics and get overwhelmed by it. But you can make a difference if you educate yourself on this topic and realise that this is a reality and that it does happen around us every day!!"

I met a wonderful lady there, who together with my friend that invited me to this meeting, encouraged me to write this story. If just one other person is touched by reading this and becomes aware of this reality, I have made a difference!

Christine Caine founder of A21 said the following in an interview: "People think we can't change the world, but what if we can change the world for one person, aren't we then changing the world?"

I truly do not know how the rest of this series will turn out! All I do know is that in my previous experience, God used a desire that was in my heart to share His message of the *Beloved Series* to His Bride (the church) through art. I also know God can use the "natural" things we do in obedience, for His Glory!!!

Co-labouring with God

Bill Johnson wrote in his book, *The Supernatural Power of a Transformed Mind*: "... until Christians decide to co-labour with God in unheard-of creativity and off-the-map dreams, we won't change society and the world. We can't rely on God to do everything. We can't demand that He come up with all the solutions; we must co-labour with Him. In my personal experience, the more I come into an intimate place with the Lord, the more He blesses the labour of my hands with creativity and new ideas. That is God's desire for every

person.”

May we not miss God’s hand in all that happens around us.
May we not miss God’s voice when He speaks to us.

A dear friend encouraged me in saying: “Susan, your paintbrush is your weapon of warfare!” I believe God is asking you today, what is your weapon of warfare?

This Scripture encouraged me: *What could I do, King Agrippa? I couldn’t just walk away from a vision like that! I became an obedient believer on the spot. – Acts 26:19-20 (MSG)*

With all my love
Susan Smith

That trapped feeling – Michael Cassidy



A monthly column by Michael Cassidy, evangelist, author, Christian leader and founder of African Enterprise whose ministry in Africa and the world has spanned more than 50 years.

Some time ago I saw a letter in a newspaper from a woman who said she felt trapped by life. There seemed to be “nowhere to go.” She lamented that there was no “way out” which she could

see, though she felt there must be one.

While desirable and worth preserving, marriage for our friend was a primary trap. But so too was life generally. Boredom seemed to have become the order of the day and the prospect of growing as a person appeared to have vanished like the morning mist.

Quite rightly, this was recognised not only as a cry, from the heart, but as a typically 21st century cry from the heart. It was also recognised that the trap need not simply be marriage or the family, but equally obviously could be the job or neighbourhood or anything.

In search of freedom

The idea of a trap is a vivid one. It conveys the sense of being bound, held captive, imprisoned. To be in a trap is the opposite of being free. Freedom is thus the answer to that trapped feeling. Yes, but where and how is freedom to be found?

The 21st century has many answers to this question, the most common being "throw off every yoke and do your own thing." But many either can't or won't cast off their job, or their marriage partner, and moving to another neighbourhood simply relocates the problem elsewhere. Likewise changing marriage partners or jobs solves little, because the bondages of the first partner and the original job soon reappear to bind us again, only with a different set of chains. And so we stop externalising the problem and conclude reluctantly that life itself is a trap. Somehow we just do not fit or feel at home in the universe.

If freedom is indeed the answer, then how in the world are we to find it? The Bible replies quite clearly: "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). Says the Apostle Paul: "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Galatians 5:1). The basic thought here is that the trap is not outside

man, but in man. The chains are in us, not in our home, job or society. The problem is internal and spiritual, not external and physical. Guilt, dividedness, alienation from self and meaninglessness – these are the inner coils with which the trap is sprung.

True freedom

Only, therefore, in conversion, new birth and spiritual discovery is true freedom found. Paradoxically, it is only as we exchange bondage to self with bondage to Christ that liberation comes. Paul described himself as “a bond slave” to Christ, but in that bondage he became a liberated man. Jesus was discovered as one “whose service is perfect freedom.” And did He not say: “Whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel’s will find it?” But whoever saves his life, by clutching it to himself, loses it. For to clutch one’s life to oneself, and to leave God out, is to spring the trap and then feel its bars snap closed upon one’s soul.

However, if Jesus is indeed the cosmic Lord of the universe, then to become a Christian is to become ‘universalised’ and to feel at home in the universe, and therefore to feel free. Our mysterious spiritual homesickness is ended. We feel at home – with God, with ourselves and with our fellows. No wonder Charles Wesley could exult: “My chains fell off, my heart was free. I rose, went forth and followed Thee.” He was out of the trap.