



In January the texts proposed for the annual week of prayer for unity were marked by the recurring themes of social justice and peace in the world, the Church being called on to make these a priority. What should our reaction be to this?

First, I am struck by how much the Old Testament prophets bring up the question of justice: "Let justice flow down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). This message certainly echoes legitimate concerns of today's society (just think of the "yellow vests" movement!); but it is insufficient as a summary of the Christian message. The mission of the Church is not to bring about social transformation or establish world peace; it is to live and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead.

The Church certainly is responsible, though, for preaching a "prophetic" word, spelling out a worldview and social practices that could halt society on its road to self-destruction. The recent book of the Bishops of France, *The Dignity of Procreation*, is a helpful illustration of this.

Like Israel in the Old Testament, the Church is also called to be a living embodiment, in the midst of the world, of another way of life. The Church is called to be a community where his people truly live as Christ's followers, guided by a sense of justice and integrity as brothers and sisters in Christ, by the grace of God. Although this idea may not strike one as being central to New Testament teaching, it is at the heart of Christ's message. The summary of the law—that by which God's people is to live—is nothing other than: "Love the Lord with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself." Christ died and rose so that, through the Spirit's powerful work, this would become a reality in us. May God lead his Church to be this kind of witness to his grace in today's world!

## Justice, peace and the mission of the Church

Donald Cobb

Donald Cobb is professor of Greek and New Testament. Before teaching at the Faculté Jean Calvin, he worked as a missionary and pastor in France, Switzerland, the Near East and the United States. He is currently preparing a book on the resurrection and Christian hope (Groupes bibliques universitaires).



How can we not feel immense gratitude when we look back and see how God has always been with us, ever since we were born, directing everything according to his plan.

My life began with little promise. I was born in Cameroon into an animist family who worshipped a distant, unknowable god and the spirits of ancestors. Anyone who wanted to have a happy life on earth would make constant offerings to them. When I was only 6 years old, my parents divorced. This was a tragedy for me, a real blow, as I felt rejected by my father; it felt like my childhood was over. However, in the sovereignty of God, it was a great blessing in that it removed me from the influence of animism and brought me into close contact with the Christianity of my newly converted maternal grandmother.

My Christian education began in Sunday school: it was there that for the first time I heard of a person who could love so much that he gave his own life. Who was that? It was God himself. This made a huge impression on me; I had hardly ever felt loved by anyone. This message was only an abstract concept until I was 12, when God in His grace made me realize that it was because of my sin that He had to die in Jesus Christ and that He was offering me forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with Him. This was the beginning of my Christian life. I went through a number of trials during my teens because of my new identity, as it is difficult to live as a Christian in a fallen world. My relationship with God was a great source of comfort, though: I had found a father, a perfect father, full of authority and love, and I could trust in him entirely

Because of my difficulties I conceived a rather negative view of the world. Fighting against injustice became my main preoccupation; I believed a world of justice and peace could be ushered in through political action. This ideology haunted me until I was 21. I wanted to change the world. I remember spending sleepless nights thinking about a socio-economic and judicial system different from the one we had. But eventually I realized that the problem could not be solved like that, simply because injustice is seated in the heart of Man. It wasn't just other people who were guilty of injustice: I was just as guilty as anyone. I fell into a series of depressions as I became aware of my inability to act, but one day in my Bible reading I came across Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 1:17 "For in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as is written: The righteous shall live by faith" The Lord opened my eyes and made me see that there is justice in God, and that the justice of God is a person, Jesus Christ, who died two thousand years ago on a cross in Jerusalem. Not only are we completely justified by God's righteousness, but we also have the promise that His kingdom will be established and that everything will be restored. Yes, a cosmic restoration plan has been underway since the fall of the world and the Lord has granted me the privilege of being part of it. A heavy burden was taken off my shoulders and now I am a student at the Faculté Jean Calvin preparing myself for full time work in an evangelistic ministry for a local church.

**Darryl Tawembe** - 2nd year full-time student



**The Lord  
opened my  
eyes and  
made me see  
that there is  
justice in God,**

**and that the  
justice of God  
is a person,  
Jesus Christ**





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**Marie Baudrier**, librarian

Professor Donald Cobb preached at the Evangelical Reformed Church in Berre-L'Étang on November 11 and at a Christmas celebration in Velaux on December 15.

On 13-14 January he met with the professors of the Faculty of Evangelical Theology of Vaux-sur-Seine, along with Professors Jean-Philippe Bru and Rodrigo de Sousa

On January 24, he attended a meeting of the Association of French-speaking and European Evangelical Theologians (AFETE) of which he has been president since last September. On 21 January, he presented part of his PhD thesis at a meeting of the Catholic Association for the Study of the Bible (ACFEB) in Montpellier.

On 23 February, he gave a lecture on the Gospels at FocusTheo in Rennes.

On April 1-6, he will give a week's course in North Africa on the Gospel of John.

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**Paul Wells** will be in Bulle, Switzerland, on Sunday 10 March, preaching and giving a lecture. He will then give a week's classes on the doctrine of salvation at the Biblical Institute in Geneva (IBG).

**Gert Kwakkel** took part in the annual conference of the working group of German-speaking evangelical Old Testament specialists in Braunfels (Germany) from 17 to 19 February. He is at present on leave in Cambridge until May to start his research for a book on the Covenants God made with men in the Old Testament.

Professor **Rodrigo De Sousa** is in Bologna, Italy, from 3 to 7 March 2019 as part of the European Academy of Religion.

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