



The Great Divide: Overcoming the SSD Syndrome

5

by Mark Greene

I used to work in advertising, which means you can trust every word you hear from me in this lecture. And I tell you that not simply to build a bond of trust between us quickly, but also because I think it will explain why I want to address you not particularly as the Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, nor as a former member of the London Bible College faculty, but rather from the perspective of a 'worker'.

What I am hoping to explore with you is one aspect of how the Gospel might make a radical impact on contemporary society and on contemporary people. But I need to say that although this is my fourth visit to Northern Ireland – and it has always been what I'm told is called 'good craic' to be here – I personally don't pretend to understand your particular challenges in any real depth. So I am hoping that you will not only quiz me and utter snorts of disgust, but perhaps also contribute your own perspectives.

First I want to begin with two stories that have helped me encapsulate the spiritual tone – at least in England:

A while back, a man called Jeremy Paxman, who as you know is a Rottweiler who works for the BBC, was trying to contact the Bishop of Hull, now the Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones. I think cuts at the BBC had been so severe that Jeremy Paxman had to actually find out his phone number himself. And so he called up directory inquiries and he asked for the Bishop of Hull, to which the operator said, "Is that a pub?"

Around about the same time as this, while I was moving from LBC to LICC and had to buy a house, I found myself talking to a woman, probably about fifty years old, from the Cheltenham and Gloucester building society. Somehow in the middle of a conversation about cash-backs, redemption clauses, and how if I failed to meet one payment I would have to sacrifice my first-born son, the word 'God' came up. At this point the woman said, "I'm not very happy with him at the moment." So I said, "Um, well, what do you want him to do for you?" She said, "Well, you know, I've got my health and you have to be grateful for that. And my children, they're so good to me. But," she said, "I just... I just can't get any peace."

So, on the one hand you have a society where, if you ask an operator what the Bishop of Hull is, they think of a pub, and on the other hand you have a society where if you call somebody, a total stranger, and you just press a tiny button, underneath is this extraordinary need. Yet, in no sense is she looking in the direction of Jesus to get that peace. Of course you can say that that's just one example. But as Tony Blair put it a while back, "We enjoy a thousand material advantages over any previous generation, but we suffer a depth of insecurity and spiritual doubt that they never knew." We have the highest divorce rate in Europe, the highest

rate of teenage pregnancy, the biggest drug problem, a very high rate of youth crime, 5 million people on antidepressants and a workforce that on average works five and a half hours longer per week than any other in Europe and also commutes for longer periods of time.

Our society now actually knows that it needs something, but it is on the whole not looking in the direction of Christ. Overall in Britain – although clearly not here – only about 7.5% of the population go to a church on any given Sunday. On the one hand, 7.5% of the population is a lot less than it was a decade ago; on the other hand, 7.5% of a population of 55 million is still an awful lot of people. If they were mobilised.

In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus gives us two images of the church, the people of God. He says, "You (plural), you are the light on the hill. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl." That is an image of the gathered people of God. It is not, as it is in John's Gospel, about the light in the world – it's the gathered people of God. What do people see when they look at the church? How do the church, how do Christians treat one another?

And then there is the image of salt, the people of God scattered in the world. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled by people."

If we look at the idea of the light on the hill, how effective is the local church in the community? In fact, although overall the church is down on itself, the impact of the local church on the community is extraordinary. If you ask yourself who is looking after old people; who's got mums and toddlers groups, who's got drop-in centres; who voluntarily is helping people with drugs and drink; who's got clubs in the evening for children and for latchkey kids and who is running football clubs on a Saturday so people don't have to play on Sunday – in many communities the answer is the local church. An extraordinary contribution to social capital, as Hague and Blair would have it.

But if we ask ourselves more broadly (and obviously your context is slightly different), "Are we having an impact on public life outside the neighbourhood?" – it seems that distinctive Christian values are making little inroad.

Now, the traditional analysis of why the Church has failed to make an impact in the West has tended to focus on a whole host of external factors – ideological, economic and

social. Ideologically, the rise of modernity and its shift into post-modernity tended to say that faith is a private thing, relegated to the private sphere. It's a matter for personal, private, pietistic, inward reflection. Faith is not the central organising principle that informs all of life and all of life's decisions and actions. It has no place in the public sphere, whether that be in work, school or politics.

Other people say it is the impact of consumerism, which vaunts the material things not only as pleasurable – which they are – but actually as sources of identity and of self-esteem, of belonging in the community. I wear Nike, therefore I am. The school day that is least well attended by school kids in England is Non-Uniform Day. And the reason it is Non-Uniform Day is because if you don't have the right gear, you're not going to school to get humiliated. So things, logos, become the entry into community and the sign of self-esteem. We could blame the media, and we could say that it's the billion different forms of entertainment, distractions – the new opiate of the masses – which anaesthetise the people, which prevent people thinking, which prevent them dealing with that most awkward thing, themselves, in silence.

The problem with this analysis is that it tends to say that our doctrines, all Christian doctrines, are actually impotent to do anything about the world. It presumes that the truths we stand for do not have the power to resist the onslaught of these external forces – they're just too big for us. In other words, we blame the world for the demise of Christian values in the world, and perhaps don't ask ourselves to what extent we might be responsible. John Stott said, "You can't blame the meat for going rotten. That's what meat does. You blame the salt for not being there to preserve it."

So my interest is not so much in the impact of contemporary forces on privatising faith. My question is rather this: Is the Church herself privatising the Gospel? Is it the Church that is actually saying faith is a private, inner, pietistic, reflective thing that should have no impact on the broader life and society? Now of course that is not true of ECONI whose aim is in fact to bring Gospel values into the political process.

But when I use the terms 'public life' or 'engaging with society', I am not primarily referring to the way that great politicians like Sir Fred Catherwood pursued his calling to engage in public life on the national and international stage, nor am I primarily interested in how the institution of the Church engages with society, nor even in the sense

that you might apply these terms to a group like ECONI who engage in the political life of the nation. I am actually primarily interested in what the 7.49% of the population are doing. In other words, I am primarily interested in the way that ordinary Christians do or do not apply their faith to lead Gospel-infused extraordinary lives in the world. And I am primarily interested in whether ordinary Christians bring their faith to bear in their public arenas – work, neighbourhood, school, and university.

What we might ask first is to discover what is the state of play. Do Christians feel equipped to apply their faith in their contexts? Whilst doing some work at Edinburgh University three years ago, I conducted some research amongst evangelical Christians. Here's what it said: 47% of people in evangelical churches say, "The preaching in my church is irrelevant to my daily life." Now imagine for a moment that you were a preacher or a pastor. Would you indulge me for one moment and just look into somebody's eyes? What this says is that if you are a preacher or a pastor, one of you is irrelevant. You decide which one. Because it's never me.

Helpfulness by Area 0-4 scale	
Personal/Spiritual	2.57
Church	2.12
Home	1.83
Work	1.68

And when you go deeper and look at this by life area, you see from the relationship of the numbers how the relevance of the preaching is distributed. What people say is that in my personal spiritual life, in my inner, pietistic life, is the church

teaching helping? Yes, quite helpful, thank you: 2.57. And when it comes to church life? Not bad: 2.12. What about home life? Not very much: 1.83 What about my work life? Less still: 1.68.

Now what does this tell us? The places where people spend most of their time – home and work – are the places where teaching is least helpful.

Nationally, 50% of Christians have never heard a sermon on work. And if you explore it further and say, "Okay, not a sermon, but would you be able in two or three minutes to give a biblical view of what work is and what Jesus would say about it and its role in your life?" – you'd get about the same response. Actually, you might get a worse response. I would submit to you that that is extraordinary. Here is something that people spend 65% of their lives doing in 'the public arena' as 'ordinary Christians', something so central to the life of every community and every nation – yet they are in no sense helped to do it. How could this be?

Is it not in the Bible? Haven't we got a worker God in Genesis 1, creating, engineering, decorating, reviewing, finishing, and appreciating? Haven't we got a worker God in Genesis 2? Doesn't he command people to look after the Garden? In Genesis 3, doesn't he tell the people about the consequences of their rebellion on their work

And in Genesis 4, isn't the first symptom of Cain's rebellion – which is going to lead to murder – actually that he disconnects work from worship, that he doesn't offer the fruit of his labour to God with a faithful heart? It's not like you have to look for it – it's all over the Bible.

That's all very well, you say, but that's about adult life. We might ask ourselves: Are we equipping our children and young people to live, share and apply the Gospel where they spend most of their time? Let me ask you this question: Would you be able to give me a biblical view of Maths or tell me something about what Maths might tell us about God? Now, did you do Maths at school? Yes, in fact you would have done it for 45 to 50 minutes a day for 11 years, 8 months of the year. Say 65% of you grew up in Christian contexts, and all the children you know in your churches are doing the same. If I ask you the question, therefore, "Can you think Christianly about Maths?" is that not a legitimate question? Is it not legitimate to consider that we might have been teaching our children – that you might have been taught – to think Christianly about something that fills so much of your life? I think it is.

What does Maths tell us, then? Here are a couple of thoughts. First of all it tells us something about truth. $1 + 1 = 2$. The equal sign teaches us about absolute truth. One plus one does not equal 2.130. Imagine somebody comes up to you and says, "One plus one equals 2.130." You say, "Well that's fine for you if you want to believe that. That's just great. If it makes you happy..." No! You can't run a railroad that way, can you? Maths tells us about a God of order, a God of reason, a God of rationality.

Perhaps Maths also gives us insights into concepts like eternity, or even the Trinity. What is $1 + 1 + 1$? The answer is 3. That's a tougher one. And you say, "You can't do the Trinity that way, can you?" You cannot do it, which is why the Jews had such a problem. You cannot explain the Trinity using addition, but what is $1 \times 1 \times 1$? One – which shows how three entities can be equal in value and relate to one another, and still be One. Which solves the problem of the Trinity – which may be of some comfort to the faculty here at Union.

So there is this question: How is it that we ignore something so obvious – the idea that the world might reveal something about God?

Let me give you some other examples just to complete the picture. Harry Potter. Now there has been a fuss in the church about whether or not we should read this book, and whether or not we should allow anybody under the age of ninety to read these books. I suspect that some people think it is okay. I also think there are a number of people who think it's not okay. I don't happen to be one of them, but I think it's an important question. The question before the church is: How does literature, or how does media work to influence? And when is that influence positive or negative? That is an important question, and it's a responsible question. But notice: have you ever heard anybody talk and have a debate – publicly to the extent that we've had debate about this – about the English literature curriculum for GCSE and A level? Lots of churches are talking about this, but very few are talking about Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. If you do that text at either French or English A level, depending on which language you end up reading it in, then you're going to have to learn quotations from it, you're going to have to learn about one of the great atheists of the 20th Century, and you're going to have to understand his perspective. Or if you do DH Lawrence, *Women in Love*, you're going to have to learn about a man who believed in free sexual love outside marriage. How alluring that is to a hormonally challenged fifteen, sixteen or seventeen year old. But this is not what we are thinking about. No, what we're thinking about is something that happens in leisure time, because that's the church's time.

We are worried about children whisking through Harry Potter under the bedclothes with a torch because they're so enthusiastic about it, when actually in the schools they are studying and really thinking about atheism. You see, it's leisure time. So the church's concern is not for the nine to five, in other words, not for public time – wherever that public time is spent – it is for leisure time. It is we, in other words, who privatise faith, not the world. The world has not asked us to do this. We have done it to ourselves.

And this goes slightly deeper. David Wilson, who runs Agape which used to be called Campus Crusade for Christ, says this: "Teenagers are being taught nuclear physics at school and gentle Jesus meek and mild on a Sunday. No wonder so many drift away from Christianity when they get to university." What he's saying is that the educational level, the intellectual level demanded by the church is significantly lower than the intellectual and educational

level demanded by the school system.

When I spoke recently to a group of seventy nineteen to twenty-two year olds involved with Youth for Christ, I asked them the question: How many of you would say that anything you've had in the church has made you think to anything like the same level as your A levels? Not a single person put up their hands. And then I asked the same question about GCSEs and only three people put their hands up. Now it is true that the core of the Gospel is simple. But the message to kids is: 'You don't need to think to be a Christian. Park your brain at the church door.' We do not require them to think.

And this carries on at university. "I could almost guarantee that if you walked into any Christian Union in any university in Britain, there wouldn't be a single person there who could give you a theology of the subject they're spending three years of their lives studying," said Norman Frasier, a former senior executive at UCCF, an organisation which is, after all, an evangelical group seeking to overcome this.

I wonder if this kind of perspective echoes your own experience. Here was a teacher speaking: "I spend an hour a week teaching Sunday school and they haul me up to the front of the church to pray for me. The rest of the week I'm a full-time teacher and the church has never prayed for me at all. That says it all."

All these things are symptoms of the Great Divide, of SSD, the Sacred-Secular Divide. Another symptom would be that we believe "that all Christians are born equal, but that full-time Christians are more equal than others." Of course, nobody thinks that in their head, but it is what we 'do' to one another. There is some kind of holy hierarchy that says if God really loved me, if I were really special, if his hand were upon me, he would call me to be a minister. And it's right to honour ministers. They are, in our minds, at the top of the holy hierarchy, bathed in 'halonic' light. In my view, often we do not honour them enough, but are they necessarily more pleasing to God? Where does that attitude come from? It comes from the Sacred-Secular Divide: their work is holy; ours is not.

Then of course below them are missionaries, as long as they're overseas. When they come back with those awful slides, they fall off the chart. Then we have full-time church workers, obviously very holy people. Then we have people called tent makers. Now 'tent makers' is a curious category. A tent maker is a person who's got a skill, probably many of the jobs that you do here – a midwife, a secretary, an oilrig person, an electrician, a builder, an

accountant – and you take it overseas to a third of the world that can only be reached by those kinds of people. Two billion people can only be reached that way. If you go and work for Kodak in Saudi Arabia, you are a very holy person and the church prays for you and your picture is on the wall. But what happens if you work for Kodak say in Harrow, near where I live? What are you? You're nothing. At best, you're a walking chequebook. That's pretty good, but is that it? So again, there's this sense of the Sacred-Secular Divide.

And obviously elders are holier than deacons, who are holier than church members, who are holier than poor Christians who aren't members of the church, who are holier than middle income Christians, who are holier than rich Christians. "Where there is brass there is muck, and the muck is at the heart of every man or woman who makes brass." We make people who generate wealth feel guilty, whether or not they deserve to be made feel guilty. And everybody is holier than these people – former advertising executives.

Now – since this is a lecture about theology – where does this come from? It comes from flawed theologies. The first one is the flawed theology of creation. That is, somehow we do not believe that God really created the material world, that Jesus had a body, that we have bodies, that Jesus has a body now and that we will have new ones in the future – that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. We don't believe that the material counts. We're not allowed to enjoy our clothes; we're not allowed to enjoy our food. We're not allowed to enjoy the material things of the world somehow. It's poppycock isn't it?

Where did this come from? You'll be pleased to know it originally came from Augustine and neo-Platonism. Augustine, great man that he was, was significantly influenced by Greek thought, which believed that the spirit, the non-material world was totally superior to the material world. So anything to do with work was a bad thing. The key point of life was contemplation. Leisure was what you wanted to get to, so the Roman word for business was *neg otium*, "not leisure". Leisure was the high ideal; "not leisure" is a pity, because you're not able to contemplate, to be involved in the non-material world of meditation and ideas.

So it was Augustine and neo-Platonism with this false theology of creation versus the Hebrew mind that embraces the earth, that says, "How good and pleasurable it is when brothers and sisters dwell together in unity. It

is like precious oil poured out" (Psalm 133). Oil. Sensual, fragrant. "Poured out and running down upon the beard, even upon Aaron's beard, down upon the collar of his robes. It is as if the dew of Hermon were to fall on Mount Zion, for there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore." The dew of Hermon? It's a natural image. Are we really happy with David's glistening, sensual imagery? Surely that's not an appropriate contemplation for the greatest poet in the Hebrew Bible. So we have a false theology of creation.

Then we have a false theology of the minister. What is the role of the minister? In Ephesians 4.11-13 Paul writes, "He gave gifts that some would be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ." Now the real question here is: What is the work of ministry? The sacred-secular divided church says the work of ministry is to do things in the church or in the neighbourhood from the church. But in Leviticus God says you can be holy by using just weights and measures. You can be holy by leaving some of the harvest for people to pick up off the ground. You can be holy in a whole range of things in the material world. So the question is: where are works of service done?

And then we have a false theology of the church, because deep in western theology at the moment is the concept that it's the gathered church that counts, not the scattered church. In other words, it is the light on the hill, not the salt in the world. When the church is scattered, very few people believe that they go into the world like so many scattered grains of salt as the individual representative of the body of Christ. If you sing carols outside Tescos, the church will pray for you because you're doing that as a church together, but if you go in as a manager to pastor-teach a hurting employee, you're probably on your own. In reality the average manager probably pastors as many people in a week as the average pastor, depending on how you define that word.

There is also the false theology of discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple? Presumably it means that we are learners and that we apply the Word of God in the Spirit to everything that we do. Let's take the work context for a moment. In the past, people would have said that discipleship at work had something to do with personal honesty: "I don't take the paperclips. I have sexually pure relationships with those who work with me. I am honest in my dealings." That's a pietistic Gospel. It's important

to do. It's about personal sin and we are all sinners unless we deceive ourselves. But isn't it more than that? Doesn't it radiate out into all our relationships? Doesn't it radiate out into the product and the worthwhileness of the product? You can be entirely honest and be building land mines. You can be a person of great integrity and be abusing people in Indonesia. Doesn't discipleship also relate to the structures and systems under which people operate? Doesn't it perhaps relate to the core values of the company?

Let me give you one example of how a non-sacred-secular divided human operates. Gary Grant is the biggest independent toy retailer in the UK. Now you would have thought that in the toy business you have to open on a Sunday in order to sell toys because that's when people go and buy toys. He doesn't open on Sundays, and in the independent sector, he actually makes more money than anyone else. So he's made a stand.

Then in terms of the product, he has decided not to take Harry Potter toys. Now you could agree or disagree with that, but he felt that the Holy Spirit said to him, "Do not sell the toys." Something happens when you play with a cauldron and you role-play casting spells – it's different to reading a book. Now that's his judgment. The point will cost him around £400,000, because Harry Potter toys are like Lego: if you can't get them in one shop, you'll go to another. So Gary has an understanding of the nature of his product, the understanding of his responsibility to the community and in particular to children.

And then last year he offered a premium, a little booklet, to anybody who spent £10 or more in his store. The retail price of the booklet was £1.50, and the story was "What's the Point of Christmas?" by J John. Anybody who spent £10 or more at Christmas – not a big amount of money at Christmas – got one of these for free. 50,000 went out of the door in eight days. What's neat about this is that it's a tax-deductible item because it's a premium. Clever. One man distributes 50,000 tracts, and it costs him very little.

The point here is that for him the Gospel radiates out into everything that he does. He is not caught in a pietistic view that 'public' does not matter. I would submit to you, however, that the church overall does not think this way. We have plenty of evidence of that, as I've already presented to you.

This brings us to the idea of witness, which historically has been understood in a number of ways. One form of witness

says, "Here's my presence and it will radiate Christ and one day somebody will come and ask me about Jesus." And this does happen, actually. Although I heard a story recently about a man who had become a Christian. His co-worker came up to him and said, "You have changed so much in the last six months and I've been trying to figure it out. Have you become a vegetarian?" At least he got his chance to share the reason for the change.

6 Levels of Witness

- Presence
- Work
- Personal issues
- General issues
- Business issues
- The Gospel

Then there's obviously the witness in the way that you work. There's what you bring in terms of talking to people about personal issues in their lives. There's the biblical perspective you bring when people are talking about general issues in the culture.

Then as we've seen there are the business issues. It's somebody seeing that the Gospel actually makes a difference to social policy, that the great commandment to love your neighbour as yourself, the relational command, will actually make a difference to how you build houses and whether or not you buy a microwave. (And I'll leave that as a cliffhanger.)¹

In Northern Ireland there are particular business issues for you as a society. Who is hired and who is promoted? Is the company actually sectarian even though legally it isn't? When the rubber hits the road, which supplier do people choose? And on what basis? Are they Catholic or are they Protestant? Is this in fact a place where the Gospel is a Gospel of justice and equity, or is it 'jobs for the boys'? God shows no partiality as the Bible – and indeed the ECONI literature – says. Nor does the Christian, whether evangelical or high Catholic.

Finally, obviously there is the direct opportunity to share the Gospel truths. Some people feel that it is enough to witness at level one, through their presence. Some feel that they have done nothing for God until they've actually delivered the payload – the Four Spiritual Laws, or the kernel of the Gospel, or the Roman Way, or the Bridge. That's obviously an important thing to do, but what we are doing here in society is showing people the credibility of the Gospel in all of life.

In sum, the Sacred-Secular Divide leads to a flawed theology of the mission of the church. It leads to people

failing to understand how mission can work where they are – the scope of Christ’s salvation for them. Now the mission of the church, certainly on the mainland, is primarily neighbour-oriented and pastor-centred. Many of the models that we have – Willow Creek, Alpha, and the Church Growth Movement – are primarily, though not exclusively, about getting people into a neighbourhood context to listen to an expert, live or on videotape. They are not about trying to encourage the people of God to get those who are not the people of God into the Word of God, wherever they might be.

These are radically different views of how mission works. It is in the public sphere, not in the private sphere that most people have most relationships. And this again is why the Sacred-Secular Divide is so crushing of mission, because if we actually believe that it is in the neighbourhood that we focus our missionary effort – if you ask most people where they spend most hours and know most people, it is not in their neighbourhoods. It is where they work or go to school or go to university. So what we have taken away from people by saying ‘the holy place is here and this is where we do our mission’ is the opportunity to see that actually where they are is where the fields are in fact ripe for harvest, as opposed to where they are usually not. You see, in the school-place or the workplace, people who don’t yet know Jesus can’t avoid you, and more significantly, you can’t avoid them.

Furthermore, there is enormous credibility for the Gospel in those contexts, because people are watching each other for 20, 30, 40, 50, 60 hours a week, failing and swearing and having a drink (which they would never do in their church life) and doing whatever they do – being honest, apologising, not apologising, resenting their boss. When they see how the Gospel works – and they do see – it is so much more credible than having a chat over a nice cup of tea in a home. It’s not that they both don’t necessarily contribute, but in those contexts people see us failing and succeeding and struggling. And often we all fail. But they see that it matters to us that we fail, that there is another way.

A document called *Towards the Conversion of England*, written in memory of William Temple, expresses why I’m so concerned about this issue. While it applied originally to England, I’m absolutely convinced it also applies to Scotland and Wales and maybe even Cornwall, and you must decide whether it applies here. One sentence was in bold type – an extraordinary, avant-garde thing to do

in an Anglican document back in 1945. That sentence reads: “We are convinced that England will never be converted until the laity, that is the people of God, use the opportunities for evangelism daily afforded by their various professions, crafts and occupations.” A rather grand, old-fashioned way of saying ‘work’, but nevertheless you take the point.

A while back I was in Liverpool. I met a woman who had worked as an administrator in the National Health Service for seventeen years. She said to me, “Only last year I realised that this was my ministry.” And she said these words to me: “How sad it is that so many Christians die without knowing the ministry God had for them.”

Now the reality is that this idea has essentially been ignored. And it has been ignored because of the Sacred-Secular Divide, because essentially the thrust of the theology in the Western church – except in organisations like ECONI – is in fact to divide out what is holy and what is not. Kuyper said that there is not one square millimetre of this planet about which Jesus Christ does not say, “Mine.”

I’d go slightly further and say that I am convinced that Britain will never be transformed until the laity use the opportunities for influence daily afforded by their various professions, crafts and occupations. In other words, if we want better laws, it is politicians and lawyers who make them. If we want better education, it is teachers and educationalists who will mould it. If we want more ethical medicine, it is doctors, nurses and technicians who will shape that for us. If we want more honest business, it must come from more honest businesspeople. If we want to see a change in our culture, it will happen usually on the inside.

So the potential impact of breaking down the Sacred-Secular Divide is to release ordinary Christians into the epic purposes of God. Suddenly, whoever you are, whatever you are doing, you can do something for the King of the Universe. In fact, you have. In fact, you do every day, whatever you do. Clean the street for the King of the Universe. Say good morning for the King of the Universe. Smile at the checkout lady for the King of the Universe. Put the stuff through the checkout for the King of the Universe. No one believes this. Well, a few do. And this can make an enormous difference.

Martina Navratilova was once asked what the secret of her success was. She said, “Do you know the difference

between commitment and involvement?" So, what is the difference? "Well," she said, "think ham and eggs. The chicken is involved, the pig is committed."

It seems to me that one of the other impacts of the Sacred-Secular Divide is that we make chickens of most people in the church. That is, they've got their eggs and they bring them to us and we use them. But actually God wants us all to be pigs. When you're a pig, it's exhilarating because you're on the line. When you break down the Sacred-Secular Divide, sixteen hours a day – because of course people need to sleep – you can be a pig. And at least at the beginning of Animal Farm, that was a good thing to be.

So the Witness of Christians is holistic because the Gospel is holistic. It affects all of life and it affects every aspect of who we are. That is, it pervades the whole earth. The light shines through every pane of glass in the stained glass window. It affects our minds, our hearts and our bodies because God calls on us to love him thus, with our minds and our hearts and our bodies.

The Hebrew concept of shalom relates to all of life. The basic meaning of 'shalom' is not peace, the basic meaning of shalom is wholeness. So what we at the LICC and organisations like ECONI are working towards in our different ways is, as their strap-line goes, 'thinking biblically' not just to build a country marked by civic peace and by the absence of war, but that we are working towards thinking biblically to build a society where people do not simply live in peace, but where people know true shalom of heart and mind and body. Where they know the freedom, the satisfaction and the wholeness of identity that does pass all understanding, and is only to be found through relationship with the Prince of Shalom, the Prince of Peace.

May it be so in all our hearts. And in this land, may the lion indeed lie down with the lamb soon.

¹ If you would rather not be left hanging, see Mark's discussion of the theology of microwaves in *Of Love, Life and Caffe Latte* (Azure, 2000).

This is an edited version of the fifth Catherwood Lecture in Public Theology delivered by Mark Greene on 18 October 2001 at Union Theological College, Belfast. Mark Greene spent ten years working in advertising. He studied theology at the London Bible College, lectured there in communications and contemporary culture and served as Vice Principal. He is now the Director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.



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