

Power and Authority

Peter Adam

In this essay, I refer to power as the ability to act, and authority as the right to act. Power without authority is mischievous. Authority without power is ineffective.

I set the issue of sexual abuse in the broader context of the use of power and authority. I also try to refute the idea that the gospel is susceptible to the accusation of affirming the validity of child abuse.¹

The right use of power and authority is one of the most demanding aspects of the human condition. It demands a keen sense of communal and ethical subtleties, the appropriate expression of various roles of responsibility in our many varied communities, a fine awareness of the perceptions and feelings of others, understanding of the culture or sub-culture of the immediate situation in which we are placed, the most absolute self-restraint and self discipline, a keen sense of timing, proportion and changes in the immediate situation, the ability to act graciously, and patient love. If even one aspect of one of these is missing or slightly askew then 'building up' easily turns to 'tearing down'. As there are few aspects of human behaviour more attractive than the appropriate expression of power and authority, so there are few aspects that are more distressing than their misuse.

The call to the right application of power and authority is the call to be imitators of God, in whose image we are made.

1. Imago Dei

Humanity was well described by Alexander Pope as 'the glory, jest and riddle of the world'. Our great challenge is that that we are both made in God's image, and also 'of the earth, earthy'. We are both called to act as God's vice-gerents in the world, and yet we are also part of the world which we are called to serve.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion...So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth' (Genesis 1:26-28).²

Men and women in their createdness are images of God, the God of Genesis 1, who spoke to create, who brought order and purpose to his creation, and who delegated some responsibility for the welfare of the creation without diminishing his own glory. Human responsibility for the world is meant to match the delight which the creator finds in the creation: 'God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good' (Genesis 1:31).

Humanity is responsible to God for the welfare of the world, and for its stewardship of the world. This responsibility and privilege is reflected in Psalm 8.

O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them? (Psalm 8:1,3,4)

We might expect the answer: 'nothing very significant, nothing but dust'. A very different answer is given.

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour.
You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet...
O LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Psalm 8:5,6,9)

God's gift of power and authority to humanity does not diminish his own glory and majesty.

Human power and authority are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God: 'we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone' (Hebrews 2:9).

This role of humanity lasts into the renewal and transformation of the universe:

They sing a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.' (Revelation 5:9,10)

So the responsibility that humanity has to exercise power and authority is given by God, and we are accountable to God for it. There are two ways in which this responsibility may be corrupted: either by failing to exercise it, or by exercising it for our own glory and satisfaction, rather than for the glory of God and the welfare of God's universe.

2. Corrupted good

The corruption of power and of authority is either the failure to use them, or their use for self-serving and self-glorifying purposes. The agony of humanity lies in this ever-present possibility. I think that one of the most distressing discoveries of life is that we may misuse them even when not intending to do so. When I was young I thought that if I wanted to do good and to love people, I could do so, and if I wanted to harm and hurt people I could do so. However one of the convincing signs of our human depravity and failure of integrity is that we so easily harm when we intend to do good, and hurt when we intend to love.

Augustine described this human dilemma in terms of that love of self which is aboriginal to the human community after the fall, that rejection of the common good which involves dismissing, neglecting, and despising God.³ He thought of the Fall in terms of pride, *superbia*, for 'the beginning of all sin is pride' (Ecclesiasticus 10:15).

This has certainly been a common understanding of the Fall. John Donne followed the same theme in one of his sermons.

But in Adam's wife, Eve, her first act [that is noted] was an act of Pride, a hearkening to that voice of the serpent, *Ye shall be as Gods....* This love of place, and precedency, it rocks us in our Cradles, it lies down with us in our graves.⁴

John Milton thought of the primal sin as that of disobedience to the voice of Reason. 'Obedience to the right leader is the key to Milton's psychology as well as to his theocracy, and the right leader is Reason.'⁵ Calvin rightly described the sin that was the fall as unbelief in the word of God. 'Therefore, unbelief was the root of defection; just as faith alone unites us to God.'⁶

The immediate result of sin in Genesis 3 was the failure to exercise personal responsibility, expressed, as is so common, in blaming others: 'The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate".'⁷ (Genesis 3:12)

Evil is corrupted good, and the greater the good, the greater the evil when it is corrupted. Our greatest mutual responsibility is to work for the common good, by the expression of love for our neighbour. We are to exercise power and responsibility to express love for our neighbour, to want their welfare, not their destruction. Yet power and authority are so easily corrupted, and their corruption causes devastating destruction.

It is a mark of our fallen-ness that we find corrupted good so much more interesting and enticing than goodness itself. In the words of Simone Weil,

Imaginary evil is romantic and varied; real evil is gloomy, monotonous, barren, and boring. Imaginary good is boring; real good is always new, marvelous, intoxicating. Therefore imaginative literature is either boring or immoral [or a mixture of both].⁷

Of course those who are abused do not experience real evil as boring, but as terrifying, paralysing and immensely destructive. But in the long-term, abuse demonstrates a failure to imagine the good, and accumulated stories of abuse are painfully predictable. As we drink in the benefits of our society, so we also drink in its weaknesses and sins, its individual sins, corporate sins and sinful structures. This is true in the area of power and authority, as it is in sexuality. We are naturally conformists, despite our pride in our freedoms from arbitrary authorities and in our independence and ability to make our own decisions. A sea of fundamentalisms surrounds us, and it is painfully easy to sink and drown.

It is one of the ironies of our age that though we pride ourselves in being heirs of the Enlightenment, set free from external authorities, in fact modern Western society is thoroughly conformist if not fundamentalist, and accepts without question what is described as the results of scientific research, or what are the customary assumptions of its culture. George Bernard Shaw commented that his contemporaries were more gullible and superstitious than people in the Middle Ages.⁸ Neil Postman suggests that training in scepticism, education in divergent ideas, and training in asking questions would help us escape our contemporary fundamentalisms.⁹ Sin blinds us to its presence, and we are most blinded by the sins that surround us, and

that are familiar to us. They pervade our world, and form our instincts and assumptions at every level of our existence.

Here are two classic examples of the misuse of power and authority. One illustrates oppression, and the other avoidance. In the first, King Rehoboam threatened his subjects with these words: 'My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions' (1 Kings 12:14). In the second, the Priest Eli showed his lack of power and authority when he failed to discipline his priestly sons.

Now Eli was very old. He heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He said to them, 'Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad.' (1 Samuel 2:22,23)

It is possible to see the narrative of kings, priests, and prophets in the Bible as a nearly unrelieved history of thugs or wimps.

3. Power and authority in the church

The church of Christ, the people of God, is meant to be a sign of hope for the world, the first-fruits of the saving death and resurrection of Christ, the temple of God's Holy Spirit, an expression of 'the wisdom of God in its rich variety', with the certain hope that God will be glorified 'in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever' (Ephesians 3:21).

The exercise of power and authority in the church is the way in which God encourages us to care for each other, to love our neighbour, to guard the truth, to bring honour and glory to Christ, to bring others to believe in Christ, and to adorn the gospel of our God and Saviour. The authority of the church is derived from the authority of Christ, to whom 'all authority in heaven and in earth' has been given (Matthew 28:18). The power of the church is the power of the gospel and the power of the Spirit (Romans 1:16, Luke 24:49). Power and authority are *charismata*, charisms, gifts given for the common good; given, not to 'puff up,' but to 'build up' (1 Corinthians 8:1).

We all have a duty to exercise the power and authority that we have for the common good and for the glory of God, and we all have the duty to allow others to exercise the power and authority they have, and to welcome their ministry and receive it with humility and joy.

As in other contexts, there are two dimensions of sin in this area, sins of commission and sins of omission. We abuse our power and authority if we exercise it for the destruction and defeat of others, to destroy, rather than to build up, and also if we fail to exercise it. Both these dimensions of sin are present in our churches.

There are different levels of responsibility for the exercise of power and authority in the church. This includes the mutual responsibility of members of the church, and also the special responsibilities of leaders.

The exercise of authority in the church is expressed in many activities, including, as we find in *The Gift of Authority*, 'Proclaiming the Gospel,' 'Persevering in the Truth,' and in 'Discipline within the church.'¹⁰

Proclaiming the Gospel

Rowan Williams uses the immediate engagement in the missionary activity in the years after Jesus' death and resurrection as a sign of how he impacted his age as a divine person.

The mind-stretching dimension of what is going on in Jesus is there from the start. And it is reinforced by the conviction that drove the friends of Jesus out into foreign lands, to share the news in foreign languages. They were quite sure that what they had to say about Jesus would be equally relevant wherever they went, and whoever they met...They saw Jesus as a man for all seasons, a man for all climates and languages, capable of transforming any human situation by his presence.¹¹

This expresses the universalistic claim of Christianity, that is implicit in monotheism, and in the belief in the one Son, one Saviour, one Spirit, one faith, one church, one apostolic foundation, and one baptism.

We can easily see how the power and authority of the church and the preacher has been misused by over-authoritarian and manipulative behaviour. We should recognise also that when the church and its clergy fail to use their authority and power to evangelise, there is also a significant failure of power and authority. In Barbara Vine's novel *The Minotaur*, one person observes of the local Vicar,

I thought then that in all the time I knew him I had never heard Eric make a single reference to God or the Christian faith or heaven or hell except when he was conducting a service.¹²

Silence in gospel proclamation is a failure of authority, power and responsibility.

Persevering in the Truth

It is significant that the New Testament authors place heavy responsibility on the churches to exercise power and authority to ensure that the church persevered in the truth. It is also striking that the need to persevere in the truth is seen as a constant and demanding responsibility, because of the constant warnings of the immense pressure of lies, confusion, heresy and idolatry indicated in all books of the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation.

The churches have the power and authority to preserve the truth. Most New Testament letters are addressed to churches, not to leaders.

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood (1 Peter 1:1,2).

And Jude, not yet a patron of lost causes, wrote to the church,

Beloved, while eagerly preparing to write to you about the salvation we share, I find it necessary to write and appeal to you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3).

And crucial to apostolic ministry is the preservation of the gospel. This is a greater imperative than the preservation of unity, as Paul demonstrated in his public rebuke of his fellow-apostle Peter. 'But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned' (Galatians 2:11). At issue was the content of the gospel. As Paul had rebuked Peter, so he also warned the church, 'As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!' (Galatians 1:9). Apostles and churches should exercise the responsibility of ensuring that churches persevere in the truth of the gospel of Christ.

Discipline within the church

Again, discipline within the church in the New Testament is the responsibility of the members of the church, its leaders, and the apostles. Any abuse of power and authority must be resisted, either in individual instances, or in long-term practice, and either in the structures of the organization or in the actions of individuals. The Bible calls for discipline within the people of God in terms of life, worship, truth, and ministry. All these areas are of fundamental importance.

Why then does sexual abuse deserve special attention? There are three reasons:

i. The deep power of sexuality.

The first is because sexuality is such a powerful element in our humanity, for good or ill. This is why Paul wrote, 'Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself.' (1 Corinthians 6:18) Presumably the body sinned against is that of the fornicator, but this will also be true of the person with whom fornication has been committed. And it is instructive to reflect that *soma* [Greek, translated as body] may include the notion of personality as well as that of physical body. There are many possible distortions of our human sexuality. These include self-absorption and self-hatred, coercing others and being coerced by others, diverse issues of self-worth, the rejection or worship of sexuality, the worship or hatred of the body, obsessive behaviour, fear, the need to be loved and affirmed, and the abuse of power and authority. It is simplistic to view inappropriate sexual behaviour as solely the result of unbridled lust. It may be an expression of self-hatred, low self-esteem, the need for affection and respect, idolatry or despair.

ii. The connections between power, authority and sexuality.

The connections between sexuality and power and authority are themselves powerful, complex, often hidden, and deeply subversive of godliness. So abuse may turn to sexual abuse because of the needs of the person with power and authority, because that person can only express sympathy by physical or sexual means, because the parishioner or patient may only be able to receive sympathy and love in its physical or sexual dimension, because for some sexuality is primarily a matter of personal power. Some are drawn to sexual abuse because they have an innate belief in the power of sexual activity to bring healing.

iii. Our society is calling us to repentance.

Western society has called us to account in this area of abuse. Issues of sexual abuse raise questions not only about those who perpetrate abuse, but about how the leaders of the churches deal with that abuse. As Neil and Thea Ormerod observe,

In handling this whole issue, the churches are facing important pastoral and moral problems. Sexual abuse undermines the churches' moral authority and calls into question its pastoral practices, not just in the original abuse but in the ways in which disclosures of abuse are handled.¹³

As Paul reminds us in Romans, the sign of God's wrath is found not only in those who commit sins, but also those who approve them (Romans 1:32). It is typical that sexual abuse is perpetrated as a sin of *commission*, and then covered up by church leaders in a sin of *omission*. Perhaps a church that prides itself in the dispersal of authority is most likely to commit sins of omission in matters of difficult discipline. In the words of Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, 'Sexual exploitation ordinarily occurs in an atmosphere of enforced silence'.¹⁴

It is the separation of love from power and authority that lies at the heart of the problem. As John Cornwell wrote of Cardinal Pacelli, Hitler's Pope, 'His is not a portrait of evil but of fatal moral dislocation - a separation of authority from Christian love'.¹⁵

4. Has God engaged in cosmic child abuse?

Some consider that our integrity is undermined by the fact that the gospel includes at its heart the belief that God has engaged in child abuse in the suffering inflicted by God on Jesus Christ on the cross.¹⁶ My belief is that such an accusation exposes a deficiency in Trinitarian Theology.¹⁷

We cannot express the significance of Christ's death without at the same time asserting the Trinitarian life of God. For the substitutionary atoning death of Christ only makes sense in the context of the Trinity. The idea of the Trinity communicates both the unity of God, and also distinct roles of the persons of the Trinity within the one saving act of God. Without the doctrine of the Trinity, the atonement is easily presented as Jesus Christ winning forgiveness from a reluctant Father, or implies that the Father's treatment of the Son was a form of abuse. Sadly, some presentations of the gospel give this impression, and so implicitly condone abuse more widely.

The gospel demonstrates God's willingness to embrace suffering for the benefit of others. We all accept suffering for others as one of the highest moral values. However many theologians have expressed the reality that God is our 'God and Saviour' and that the death and resurrection of Jesus the one and only Son of God is instrumental in this work of God for us. The one who died was the eternal Son of God, not a human being distinct from God. So Cyril of Alexandria wrote:

The one would not have equalled all, if he had been simply man; but if he be reckoned as Incarnate God suffering in his own flesh, the whole creation is small compared with him...¹⁸

Vladimir Lossky quoted from Gregory of Nazianzen:

[T]he Father accepts the sacrifice...because Man must be sanctified by the humanity of God, and God Himself must deliver us by overcoming the tyrant through His own power, and drawing us to Himself by the mediation of the Son who effects all this for the honour of God...we need an incarnate God, a God put to death that we might live...a few drops of blood recreate the whole world.¹⁹

The Son was incarnate, fully human. The poet and preacher John Donne used these words:

[T]o make Christ able to pay this debt, there was something to be added to him. First, he must pay it in such money as it was lent; in the nature and flesh of man; for man had sinned, and man must pay. And then it was lent in such money as was coyned even with the Image of God; man was made according to his Image: That Image being defaced, in a new Mint, in the wombe of the blessed Virgin, there was new money coyned; the Image of the invisible God, the second person in the Trinity, was imprimed into the human nature...his person fulfilled all righteousnesse, and satisfied the Justice of God by his suffering.²⁰

In that atoning death Christ endured the curse of God, making peace by the blood of his cross, according to Donne.

The Crosse, to which a bitter curse was nailed by Moses, from the beginning, he that is hanged is, [not onely accursed of God as our Translation hath it], but he is the curse of God, [as it is in the Originall] not accursed, but a curse; not a simple curse, but a curse of God.²¹

So if one rejects the atoning death of Christ, 'he makes Christ Jesus, who is the propitiation of all the world, his damnation'.²² At the same time, for Donne, the origin of the atonement is the God of love. 'I cannot name a time, when God's love began, it is eternal, I cannot imagine a time, when his mercy will end, it is perpetual.'²³

So it is not that God the Father was reluctant to forgive us, or that God the Father required a human being independent of him to suffer. Theologians avoid these two errors, by reminding us of the unity of God and of God's work of providing atonement for sin and wrath. Jürgen Moltmann stated the paradox in these words: 'In the cross, the Father and the Son are most deeply separated in forsakenness and at the same time are most deeply one in their surrender'.²⁴

So Archbishop William Temple wrote,

So God vindicates his own Deity...For the name of God signifies the union of the perfect goodness and absolute power. We should have to deny one or the other if we could not believe in God as revealed in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus.²⁵

In the words of Bishop N. T. Wright,

Because the Messiah represents Israel, he is able to take on himself Israel's curse and exhaust it...The crucifixion of the Messiah is...the *quintessence* of the curse of exile, and its climactic act.²⁶

For who could offer the perfect and sufficient sacrifice but one who was both God and human? And who could accept it except God? The atoning death of Christ was, as John Stott described it, the 'self-substitution of God'.²⁷ So Vladimir Lossky commented,

The work accomplished on earth by the incarnate Son is the work of the Holy Trinity, from whom Christ cannot be separated, since he shares the same essence and same will as the Father and the Holy Spirit.²⁸

Christian theology asserts that God acted in Christ to save us. Von Balthasar wrote that,

The shattered image can only be restored by God, by the Second Adam who is 'from heaven'...For God guarantees henceforth both sides of the covenant, the divine and the human, as the God-man actualises his entire righteousness...²⁹

The key elements of a Trinitarian doctrine of the atonement are found within the Scriptures. They are:

- The plan of God to bring salvation: 'for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son' (John 3:16).
- The divinity and humanity of the Son: 'the Word became flesh' (John 1:14).
- The willing obedience of the Son to die: 'he became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross' (Philippians 2:8).
- Christ's offering of a sacrifice for sin: 'Christ...offered for all time a single sacrifice for sin' (Hebrews 10:12).
- Christ's substitution for sinners: 'He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross' (1 Peter 2:24).
- The role of the Holy Spirit in the offering of Christ: 'the blood of Christ...who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God' (Hebrews 9:14).
- The effect of the sacrifice: 'we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus' (Hebrews 10:19).
- The eternal power of the sacrifice: 'by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified' (Hebrews 10:14).
- The universal efficacy of the sacrifice: 'you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation' (Revelation 5:9).

The answer to the accusation that God has engaged in cosmic child abuse is found in a fully rounded doctrine of the Trinity. Dorothy L. Sayers wrote of the death of Christ, 'Whatever reason God chose to make man as he is...He had the honesty and courage to take his own medicine'.³⁰

I fully admit that preachers of the gospel have often distorted that gospel consciously or unconsciously and thereby legitimised notions of abuse. Furthermore hearers of the gospel in a patriarchal society are likely to hear notions of abuse even

when they have not been present. Our sinfulness corrupts our hearing, and our hearing affirms our sins. This happens in all societies, not just patriarchal societies. Abuse is a many-headed Hydra, and the removal of patriarchy would only remove some expressions of it. For in Francis Thompson's words, 'And all man's Babylons strive but to impart/ The grandeurs of his Babylonian heart.'³¹

For we need to preserve the paradox that God is both light and love, judge and saviour. We find God's mercy in Jesus Christ in the midst of God's justice. The notion of punishment of the suffering servant is as old as Isaiah 53, and is an aspect of the atoning death of Jesus Christ: 'For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God' (2 Corinthians 5:21).

We humans need to be able act in both justice and mercy in human society, in churches, and in family life. If God cannot combine justice and mercy, then how will we be able to do it? Barth wrote of that theory of punishment which sees it as 'a representation and proclamation in human and earthly terms of the retributive justice of God'.³²

Indeed it is the failure of some church leaders to act in justice as well as mercy which has corrupted the church's response to abuse.³³ Costly grace reflects and expresses God's justice as well as God's mercy. As Bonhoeffer wrote:

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, Baptism without church, community without confession, absolution without personal confession, cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate ... It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies sinners. Above all it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.³⁴

Costly grace costs God, as the exercise of justice on abusers rightly imposes some appropriate cost on them, as forgiveness for abuse costs those who forgive.³⁵ Cheap grace will allow abuse to continue: costly grace will call abusers to account.

5. Hope in the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ

John Chrysostom wrote of the difficulties and pressures of ministry.

If it is true that those who are entrusted with civic government subvert their cities and ruin themselves as well, unless they are wise and watchful, what about the man whose task is to adorn the bride of Christ? How much strength in himself and from above do you think he needs to avoid complete failure?³⁶

Are there any signs of hope? Yes, because God's grace in the gospel of Jesus Christ offers us both forgiveness and transformation. There is forgiveness and transformation because of the work of Christ, our great High Priest, and his blood shed on the cross: 'If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1 John 1:9). This forgiveness and

transformation has the effect of restoring the damaged and defaced image of God within us.

Transformation in Christ is a daily experience. Paul wrote: 'clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness' (Ephesians 4:24). This transformation is the work of the Spirit of God. 'And all of us... are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit' (2 Corinthians 3:18).

And we believe that God in his grace and mercy will complete this work of transformation. 'Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven' (1 Corinthians 15:49) and, as John wrote of the coming Christ, 'we will be like him, for we will see him as he is' (1 John 3:2).

This transformative work of God should be evident in the lives and ministries of leaders in Christ's church. As Peter wrote,

I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3).

This reflects Christ's challenge to all his disciples,

[W]hoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many (Mark 10:43-45).

The Reverend Dr Peter Adam is Principal of Ridley Melbourne, where he lectures in Theology and Christian Worship.

This article has been peer reviewed, and is deemed to meet the criteria for original research as set out by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

Notes

- ¹ I am grateful to members of the General Synod Doctrine Commission for their thoughtful responses to earlier versions of this material.
- ² I use the NRSV in all Biblical quotations.
- ³ Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-love in Augustine*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1980, pp. 93-98.
- ⁴ From Logan Pearsall Smith, *Donne's Sermons: Selected Passages*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1919, pp. 180-182.
- ⁵ Eric Smith, *Some Versions of the Fall: The Myth of the Fall of Man in English Literature*, Croom Helm, London, 1973, p. 26.
- ⁶ John Calvin, *The book of Genesis*, Calvin's Commentaries, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1981, p.153.
- ⁷ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1963, pp. 62,63.
- ⁸ Neil Postman, *Building a Bridge to the Eighteenth Century*, Scribner, Melbourne, 1999, p.169.
- ⁹ Postman, *Building a Bridge to the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 161-169.
- ¹⁰ Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission, *The Gift of Authority: Authority in the Church III*, CTS, London/ABC, Toronto/CPI, New York, 1999, pp. 25-36.
- ¹¹ Rowan Williams, *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief*, Canterbury Press, Norwich, 2007, pp. 64,65.
- ¹² Barbara Vine, *The Minotaur*, Viking, Camberwell, 2005, p. 283.
- ¹³ Neil and Thea Ormerod, *When Ministers Sin: Sexual Abuse in the Churches*, Millennium Books, Alexandria, 1995, p. 19.
- ¹⁴ Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ministerial Ethics: Moral Formation for Church Leaders*, second edition, Baker, Grand Rapids, 2004, p. 163.
- ¹⁵ John Cornwell, *Hitler's Pope: the Secret History of Pius XII*, Penguin, London, 2000, p. xi.
- ¹⁶ See these books for a critique of aspects of the traditional doctrine of the atonement: James Alison, *On Being Liked*, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 2003, and Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision of Justice Crime and Punishment*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids/Cambridge, 2001.
- ¹⁷ The following paragraphs are based on Peter Adam, 'Trinity essential to understanding the Atonement,' *The Melbourne Anglican*, December 2007, p. 17.
- ¹⁸ R. S. Franks, *The Work of Christ: A Historical Study of Christian Doctrine*, Thomas Nelson and Sons, London, p. 64, quoting from 'De recta fide ad reginas' II 7.
- ¹⁹ Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, James Clarke, Cambridge and London, 1973, pp.152,3.
- ²⁰ M. R. Potter, and E. M. Simpson (eds), *Sermons of John Donne*, Volumes I – 10, 1953-1962, University of California Press, Berkeley, Vol. IV. p. 288.
- ²¹ Potter and Simpson, *Sermons of John Donne*, Vol. IV, p. 296.
- ²² Potter and Simpson, *Sermons of John Donne*, Vol. VII, p. 321.
- ²³ Potter and Simpson, *Sermons of John Donne*, Vol. I, p. 167.
- ²⁴ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, R.A Wilson and John Bowden (trs) SCM Press, London, 1974, p. 244.

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- ²⁵ William Temple, *Christus Veritas*, Macmillan, London, 1924.
- ²⁶ N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, p. 151.
- ²⁷ John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, 1986, chapter 6, pp. 133-163.
- ²⁸ Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, p. 145.
- ²⁹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale*, Aidan Nichols (tr), T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1990, pp. 12 and 121.
- ³⁰ Dorothy L. Sayers, *Creed or Chaos*, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1949, p. 4
- ³¹ From 'Correlated Greatness' in Francis Thompson, *Selected Poems of Francis Thompson*, Burnes, Oates and Washbourne, London, 1908, p. 115.
- ³² Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III, part 4, G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (eds), T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1961, p. 440. I take it that such retributive justice is not the expression of uncontrolled fury, but the just exercise of judicial responsibility.
- ³³ This fault may derive from a failure to understand that the role of 'pastor' or 'shepherd' in the Bible requires the exercise of discipline and judgement as well as care, as for example in Ezekiel 34.
- ³⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, SCM, London, pp 36,37.
- ³⁵ See Eloise K. Thomas, Kelley White, and Geoffrey W. Sutton, 'Clergy Apologies Following Abuse: What Makes a Difference? Exploring Forgiveness, Apology and Responsibility-taking, Gender and Restoration,' *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, Vol. 27, No 1, Spring 2008, pp. 16-29. For a moving example of someone becoming able to forgive abusers see Sokreasa S. Himm, *After the Heavy Rain*, Monarch, London, 2007.
- ³⁶ John Chrysostom, *Six Books on the Priesthood*, III.6, Graham Neville (tr), SPCK, London, 1977, p. 75.