

peace amidst the violence of the world. Evangelising is not about inviting people to adhere to a set of convictions but an invitation to live in a new story with a whole new *telos*, a new community of virtuous practice. This implies that ecclesiology and soteriology are essentially the same and that participation in the eschatological community of the church is salvation.

Virtue is essential for the witness of the evangelising community. Virtue has intrinsic value and as such it does not aim at effectiveness. The Church is called to the radical witness of martyrdom and obedient self-sacrifice. Stone concludes with four essential virtues for our time: presence, patience, courage and humility. Living these virtues shapes a faithful witness to the story of God.

Stone's account is compelling for several reasons. The mere fact he offers a well-wrought theology of evangelism deserves praise. He sharply challenges the actual practice of evangelism. Visibly aimed at the American context, his analysis of effectiveness-based evangelism is highly relevant for the European context. The way in which the Church has accepted being pushed back into the private sphere and has accepted and integrated the utterly modernist values of effectiveness and usefulness in her evangelistic practice poses a great threat. There is much to learn from the Radical Orthodoxy-like boldness Stone proposes. This is not only a challenge for our missiology but for our entire ecclesiology. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that Jesus' life and the lives of his followers are not only about being saved but also about the embodiment of his realm on earth. Soteriology is also ecclesiology and not merely a matter of the heart of the individual.

This, however, is also an apparent weakness in Stone's book. By identifying soteriology with ecclesiology he puts an almost unbearable pressure on the highly imperfect practice of the Church. The force of evangelism lies also – and perhaps foremost – in the proclamation of the Word. The weakness also becomes visible in the way Stone depicts Jesus as the bringer of the kingdom of peace, but not as the one who died for the sins of the world. It is essential to say both: embodiment and proclamation. The church's message for the world *does* concern forgiveness of sins. But this message can only be proclaimed from the virtuous practice of an evangelising community of saints. This is rightly the essential message of Stone's impressive work.

*Marinus de Jong
Kampen, Netherlands*

Jesus + Nothing = Everything

Tullian Tchividjian

Wheaton: Crossway, 2011; 224 pp., pb, \$18.99, ISBN 978-1433507786

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage captivant et d'orientation pastorale décrit quelque chose du voyage spirituel de son auteur. Celui-ci explique diverses difficultés qu'il a rencontrées et quelles réponses il a trouvées dans l'Évangile même. Par sa franchise et sa vulnérabilité, il est désarmant et communique avec efficacité. L'explication qu'il donne de l'Évangile, en particulier son évaluation de l'état d'esprit moralisateur et légaliste souvent rencontré au sein du monde évangélique, est en grande partie clairvoyante. L'ouvrage manifeste cependant de sérieuses déficiences quant à sa compréhension de la sanctification : elle revient en effet à une conception passive, celle d'une « sanctification par la foi seule ».

SUMMARY

This winsome and pastoral book describes something of its author's spiritual journey. It explains various difficulties experienced by Tchividjian and the answers he found in the gospel itself. In its openness and vulnerability, the book is disarming and effective. Much of the book's explanation of the gospel – particularly its assessment of much moralistic and legalistic evangelicalism – is astute. However, it shows serious deficiencies regarding its understanding of sanctification, which comes across as a passive theology of 'sanctification by faith alone'.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses gewinnende und pastorale Buch beschreibt in Zügen die geistliche Reise des Autors. Es schildert unterschiedliche Schwierigkeiten, die Tchividjian erlebt und die Antworten, die er im Evangelium selbst gefunden hat. In seiner Offenheit und Verletzlichkeit ist das Buch entwaffnend und wirkungsvoll. Ein großer Teil seiner Darlegung des Evangeliums ist scharfsinnig, besonders was die Bewertung von vielen moralisierenden und gesetzlichen Strömungen im evangelikalen Bereich angeht. Jedoch weist die Schrift ernsthafte Mängel auf in bezug auf ihr Verständnis von Heiligung, das als eine passive Theologie der „Heiligung allein aus Glauben“ vermittelt wird.

* * * *

This is a winsome and pastoral book that breathes the air of one person's spiritual journey and explores the ways in which the answers he has found in the gospel of grace apply to the whole people of God. Tchividjian's great burden is to set Christian believers free from the perennial danger of legalism by a fresh appropriation of the grace of God. While I have reservations about several areas of this book, the open-hearted transparency with which Tchividjian writes, and the concern to reapply gospel truth to pastoral wounds with vulnerability and honesty, are at once disarming, moving and helpful.

Tchividjian models for the gospel minister what it means to implement the pastoral strategy first articulated by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:4, as he shows us how to 'comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves have been comforted by God'.

Early in this volume Tchividjian explains that, amidst his own severe trials, God led him to see that 'the power of the gospel is just as necessary and relevant after you become a Christian as it is before' (24). The book's central thesis is simply that the entirety of the Christian life can and should be understood as an ever deeper and daily appropriation of the justifying work of Christ by faith alone. Thus Jesus (his person and his work) plus nothing (no work or labour of our own at all) equals everything (the full panoply of Christian gifts and graces). This simple thesis is compelling and attractive, and though I am compelled by my Reformed confessional commitments to dissent from it at fundamental points, it nevertheless has the virtue of being clear.

Tchividjian defines idolatry as 'trying to build our identity on something besides God. An idol is anything that's usurping the proper place of God in our lives' (40).

The greatest idol of all is legalism (45) which is understood as occurring when 'what we need to do, not what Jesus has already done, becomes the end game'. (46) Tchividjian exposes the various ways in which we move from dependence upon God in Christ to dependence on ourselves and our own meritorious efforts as mechanisms for acceptance with God. He is ruthless in exposing the legalism of our self-imposed and invented rules, and the ways in which our innate legalism is fuelled by moralistic preaching (50).

In this diagnosis of contemporary evangelical preaching and of the human condition and its tendency towards legalism, Tchividjian is strong. However, when he turns to consider the implications of the finished work of Christ in justification and sanctification, he begins to go astray. The manner in which he relates

these two doctrines to one another, in my view, leaves us with an anaemic gospel.

He is right when he observes that the imperatives of the Christian life must follow the indicatives and rest upon them: 'acceptance precedes obedience' (97). But how do our acceptance by God and our obedience to God relate? Tchividjian's answer is that according to Philippians 2:12, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling', God works his works in us, which is the work already accomplished by Christ. 'Our hard work, therefore, means coming to a greater understanding of his work.' (96) But are we really to conclude that when Paul said 'work' he meant 'understand' and 'believe'? Tchividjian comes close to implying that sanctification does not involve trying hard, praying more, reading God's word and getting involved in the church in any sense at all.

With the Westminster Catechism 154, I would argue that sanctification is not by faith alone. Certainly it all a work of grace, but in sanctification grace enables us to act. We must not allow our fear of legalism to make us allergic to the 'third use of the law' (e.g. Calvin *Institutes* 2.7.12-16). Although our obedience flows from Christ's work, Christ now calls us to live lives of discipline and diligence in the pursuit of holiness.

Tchividjian does seek to nuance his treatment of sanctification in chapter 10 with a reminder that we must work and obey. Yet, when placed alongside the consistent assertion of sanctification as little more than understanding our justification better, this chapter was too little too late. This book attempts to offer a corrective to the legalistic versions of the 'gospel' that seem to be perennially popular. It is strong in asserting the logical priority of justification and its theological foundation in the active and passive obedience of Christ (143), yet it seems to me to fall short of a fully Reformed and biblical doctrine of sanctification.

David Strain,
Columbus, Mississippi