



A Bracing Read:

A Review of Alison Morgan's *The Wild Gospel: Bringing Truth to Life*.

Brace – 1. “to strengthen and make firm”, 2. “to stimulate”, 3. “a device for support or correction”, 4 . pl. “straps passed over the shoulders to hold up trousers”.

In all but the fourth sense of the term, Alison Morgan's *The Wild Gospel* is indeed a bracing book. Although framed as a personal account of discovering the Truth this book is underpinned by muscular scholarship, luminous intelligence and a firm grounding in the joys and pains of her passionately lived life. The author, the Rev. Dr Alison Morgan is a member of the staff team of Holy Trinity, Leicester, UK. Interestingly, Alison Morgan is someone whose coming to faith is in no small part attributable to her love and knowledge of art and literature, particularly, the work of the Mediaeval Italian poet Dante Alighieri whose works were the subject of Morgan's doctoral research and subsequent internationally acclaimed academic book.

The central concern of *The Wild Gospel* is to examine the relationship of the gospel to culture through both time and space and, in so doing, to point a way forward for the Western church which she characterizes in this way:

“We stand, in the church, at the end of a long process of accommodation in which we have unconsciously sought to harmonise the Gospel with the assumptions of our culture, a culture which in abandoning the quest for absolute truth has embraced a new set of values – rationalist, materialist, technological and reductionist. The effect has been that we have gradually turned the gospel from something subversive and life-changing to something tamed,

packaged and institutionalized; from something expressed in words of power to something conveyed, if conveyed at all, in words of information.” (p.28).

Morgan begins her examination by looking at Jesus' life, teachings and ministry in the culture of his day and comes to the startling conclusion that although Jesus radically criticized the culture of his day his primary intention was not to change it but to open the eyes of individuals and groups within it so they could see beyond the man-made practices and into “the alternative world of spiritual reality” i.e. the kingdom of God. So freed from cultural blindness individuals can then see the two worlds for what they are and then speak the truth back into their own particular culture in pointed and persuasive ways. This task, she argues, must be repeated in every historical moment and in every geographical location.

In addition to its investigation of the life and ministry of Jesus in the first century *The Wild Gospel* also provides a well researched survey of the history of the church's engagement with culture from the early church before settling on a detailed analysis of the plight of Christianity and its institutions in contemporary culture. But Morgan's account is more than academic history. For all its scholarly credentials this book remains a passionate personal account throughout as Morgan charts her journey into truth through her experiences of married life, the near- death of her husband, her missionary work in Zambia, insights

A Bracing Read (continued)

through the world of nature, and seeing changed lives in the course of her pastoral work. This is indeed a book full of stories from life and through them we see the transformation of human history as people experience the truth of God acting in their lives.

The Wild Gospel: Bringing Truth to Life is a bracing read because it strengthens faith through personal testimony, broad research and intelligent argument. It is a bracing read because it restores confidence in the truth of the Christian faith and stimulates us to examine our own culture and the extent to which we and our own faith community are really ministering the truth. Alison Morgan writes in a clear, passionate and personal way which brings life to the truth she conveys.

**Dr Sue Penberthy, Humanities
In Tabor in Touch, Semester 2 Week 10,
2007. Adelaide: Tabor.**

A Miracle of Deliverance

For a very long time, we have spoken about the necessity of seeing the cross in all that we say or do; but, quite recently, a very wise man extended the challenge to identify the resurrection in our lives and ministry. Well, this year, Tabor College in WA has seen its own death and resurrection.



Because we have been unable to offer Fee Help, we had seen prospective students go to other colleges that could and even some of our very faithful students have felt it necessary to take some courses elsewhere. This had two effects: first, our enrolled numbers slowly declined and, second, we simply could not charge what the courses actually cost. After many years of slowly declining financial viability (which necessitated extraordinary fund raising), the staff and Board came to the conclusion that we could not continue.

It was a time incredible internal conflict. On the one hand, we could see no way forward. So that the logical and ethical decision was to close. At the same time, we felt that Tabor still had a vital role to play in the preparation of men and women for Christian service throughout the community. This was not to diminish the role of other colleges. We have the greatest respect for all who labour in the Lord's vineyard and seriously considered the option of merging with another college. Rather, it was a sense of "unfinished

Final Chapel 2009

Final Chapel is always a significant event at Tabor College and 2009 will uphold that tradition.

At 1.00pm on Wednesday 25th November, we will gather in the sanctuary of HillSide Church (45 Berkshire Road, Forrestfield) to rejoice and give thanks for what the Lord has done throughout the year and to commit the student body to Him for the year to come.

For some it will be a time of further study and for others the beginning of a new avenue of ministry or the enhancement of an existing ministry.

If it is at all possible, I encourage you to be a part of that service and, afterwards, to spend time with staff and students as we share light refreshments together.



NB: It is also a wonderful opportunity to expose prospective students to the college environment.

A Miracle of Deliverance (continued)

business” - that the Lord had not finished with us. In the midst of our conflict, seeing no solution, we decided to close the doors and relocate our student body.

We made an appointment to speak with our registering authority (the Department of Education Services) and informed our sister campuses in Adelaide and Victoria.



It was at that point—at the eleventh hour and fifty-ninth minute—that the leadership of HillSide Church (Ps Richard McAllister) contacted us. They were unwilling to accept that this was the death of Tabor in WA and expressed a willingness to do whatever it took to keep the college functioning. Not wanting to be too melodramatic, but this was a ray of hope in a time of unremitting darkness.



We have relocated to the beautiful campus at Hillside (45 Berkshire Road, Forrestfield). We are still an independent, multi-denominational college but we are co-located with Hillside

Church, First Choice Employment, Walridge Retirement Village and HillSide Christian School. We have excellent lecture rooms, an enlarge library facility and very comfortable offices. Our students move from one structure to another along paths bordered by gardens and to the sound of birds. We have experienced resurrection and are so grateful!

I want to take this opportunity to do four things:

1. I want to express our deep gratitude to HillSide Church for their generosity and compassion.
2. I want to thank all those students who offered personal support in the darkest hours, have continued to believe in the College and have helped us to relocate.
3. I want to give thanks and praise to the Lord who brought all this about. I'm not all that happy about His timing, but His grace and love are beyond both question and expression.
4. I want to invite past students and prospective students to visit us and see what the Lord has done! Later in the year, we plan to have an open day, but there's no need to wait for that. Come and have a look!

Financial Update:

The College continues to face financial challenges. We are in the process of negotiating a way for our students to have access to Fee Help but that will not be available before first semester 2010. I am very hopeful that 2010 will see a turning point in our financial affairs but, in the meantime, we are still very much dependent on donations. If you want to donate funds to the college, there are two specific needs.

We always need to add to our library holdings—both in terms of recency, depth and breadth of research. Any funds donated to the library are tax deductible. If you want to give to the library fund you can do so by cheque, EFT (call the office) or by internet (Tabor College Library. BSB: 066-127 A/c: 10018544; place your name in the narration/details column).

The Main account pays salaries, insurances, registration fees, utilities and so on. Obviously this is a crucial account, but it does not attract tax deductions. **Special projects include the purchase of a student photocopier, costs associated with maintaining a website and the development of external studies resources.** You can give to the main account by cheque, EFT (call the office) or by internet (Tabor College Library. BSB: 066-127 A/c: 10017488).

It's not the amount that is so important—but your participation in the goal of creating and maintaining a Spirit-filled community that is dedicated to the impartation of the all-transforming power of the kingdom of God through academic excellence, Christ-centred thinking and the release of the manifold gifts of grace. Your continued prayer and financial support is very much appreciated.



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CONTINUING STUDY?

—Professional development—
 is not a luxury!

It is absolutely essential for the continuing effectiveness of every ministry.

What are you planning to do about personal & professional development in 2008?

Registration/Payment Form

I want to:

- Support the ministry of Tabor College, with a gift of \$_____.
- Become an alumni member of the the Library for \$30pa.

Name: _____

Contact details: _____

Options:

- Mail to: 45 Berkshire Road
 Forrestfield WA 6058
- Email to
 wison@perth.tabor.edu.au
- Fax to (08) 9359.5558

Credit Card Details:

Mastercard Visa Bankcard

Card #

Exp. Date:

Signature

Internet Banking:

BSB: 066-127 A/c No: 10017488
 Name: Tabor Perth
 In *Details* record **your name + Alumni**

Entrance to the Campus



The Well

Classrooms



Tabor Offices