

Review: J. John, *Making the Connection*, Rickmansworth, Herts, Philo Trust, 2013

Well known Christian speaker J. John has written this evangelical book based on the theme of connection by a non-believer with God.

[As an aside for some reason his organisation (Philo Trust) is named after Philo (c20BC-50AD), a Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, Egypt. He is infamous for allegorising (twisting) the Old Testament to fit pagan Greek philosophy:

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”
Colossians 2.8¹]

The language is sensitive, diplomatic and cagey regarding the biblical doctrine of repentance, and the closest mention of **hell** is on p. 16 where it is described as eternal separation, perishing, and failing to fulfill one's life purpose (which for the ungodly will only ever amount to vanity-Psalm 62.9).

The problem here is the unbeliever must view 'eternal separation' [from God] as a nebulous idea seeing there is obviously no relationship to be separated from! Neither is fulfillment of a God-ordained grand purpose any concern seeing they live life by their *own* standards and are often quite content.

How Jesus' described perishing is noteworthy:

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” **Mark 9.44**

And again,

“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” **Mark 9.46**

¹All scriptures herein taken from the Holy Bible in english, which is the Authorized Version

P. 17 de-emphasises personal accountability by describing sin as the object of separation between a compound subject 'us and God'. In reality the sinner and sin *together* make up the (unholy) object, God being the (holy) subject who is completely set apart.

John 9.31a: “Now we know that God heareth not sinners:” proves the state of the disregarded and sinful unsaved man. Further, by use of the first person plural *us*, a group-mentality may enter the mind of the sinner, e.g., “I'm just like this (saved) author and so can't be too bad after all”.

To his credit J. John mentions good works cannot play any part in justification (again on p. 19). This flows well into the (Trinitarian) nature of the Christian God, however the inclusive language again infers the sinner is part of the 'us' whom the Father is watching over, and that the Holy Spirit is living inside. This last point is not a small thing as pantheistic Eastern religions believe God already lives inside everyone and all are striving to awaken this 'Christ' consciousness.

On pp. 21-25 Christ is honoured as both the sinless God-man and redeemer by His sacrificial death, however a weak point is the lack of emphasis on Christ's **blood**. Bloodless descriptions (i.e. 'shameful and dishonourable') are more sanitary and ignore what the Bible reveals as the *only payment* for sin:

“For the life of the flesh *is* in the **blood**: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the **blood** *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.” **Leviticus 17.11**

Colossians 1.20a says:

“And, having made peace through the **blood** of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;”

Notwithstanding the above, page 24 does refer to Christ's death as that 'bloody' execution. Also, in chapter four's invitation to repentance the author switches to the second person singular 'you', emphasising individual accountability.

After explanations of sin and God's nature in the first two chapters, the concept of grace is introduced. The severity of breaking God's law (i.e.

Paul's 'schoolmaster') should rightly be overwhelming, but not so the sinner condemns themselves as unworthy of redemption. This is a fine line as thinly-veiled self-righteousness, pride or penance may be the real excuse for unrepentance (i.e. "God could never forgive me for what I've done."). The treatment overall is sensitive.

On p. 30, J. John says the Holy Spirit will 'energise' the believer. This has a disturbing New Age overtone and brings to mind the Jehovah's Witness doctrine (i.e. that He is not a person, merely a force like electricity).

The salvation invitation fits around the ABC(R) idea (Acknowledge, Believe, Confess, Receive). For some reason scripture quotations are lacking. Appropriate verses would be Romans 10.9-10:

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

On p. 42 a grave error is made in recommending a 'good' and 'modern' translation of the Bible, such as the NLT or the NIV. Suffice it to say these are dangerous perversions of God's holy words in the English language. The Authorized (King James) Bible of 1611 has rightly been *the* standard for four hundred years, its fruits bearing witness of God's hand of approval. These fruits are conspicuously *absent* from the plethora of 'modern bibles' (from c1881 and the Revised Standard Version).

An example of Bible corruption can be found back on p.40: J. John endorses confusion in Psalm 136 where the word **mercy** becomes 'faithful love'. The former implies the latter, but not necessarily vice versa. Romans 5.8 says:

"But God demonstrates His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

God does have 'faithful love' for all sinners, yet if they choose not to repent at death it runs out, there being **no** mercy at the Great White Throne judgement. Mercy is the withholding of just punishment due for transgression against the law.

As pure water to a thirsty soul, so are **every, all and only** God's unadulterated words to the Christian. This is especially true of a new believer that needs to be anchored in the Word, not a hill of sand. Jesus emphasised the importance of water (i.e. the Bible) in salvation:

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of **water** and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” **John 3.5**

As to the cleansing nature of the water of the words of God:

“Now ye are **clean** through the **word** which I have spoken unto you.” **John 15.3**

A good warning is given against repetitious prayer on p. 44 before expounding a teaching in the Pater Noster (the 'Our Father'). Again on the corruption of scripture, a comparison of Matthew 6.13 between the NLT and AV shows:

*The AV contains seventy words, the NLT only sixty five.

*The NLT omits part b of verse 13 (the Doxology), also the word 'hallowed' in verse 9 - the Father's name *is* hallowed (holy) by fiat and does not require any person or being to 'keep it' so.

The reader can easily research the corrupt/forged Roman Catholic manuscripts Vaticanus (1475AD) and Sinaiticus (1840AD) as well as the liberal theology of 'godly' translators, both of which form the basis of translations such as the ESV, NIV, NLT, NASB, etc.

Connection is critical for a new Christian and J. John explains this on pp. 54-55. Church metaphors of cruise liners and battleships used are good as any Christian (especially a new one) on a 'comfortable' and 'easy' path should, according to Paul, immediately examine their faith (II Corinthians 13.5). This comes under the topic of a false conversion (the treatment of which is absent).

Jesus' Parable of the Sower is quite sobering in regards to the above. Those who have said a sinner's prayer having never **understood** their transgression of the Ten Commandments may be shallow-rooted or choked plants. This is worth emphasising given the Church is in the final days

before Jesus' return. The seventh (last) Church addressed in Revelation is Laodicea, materially wealthy and prosperous yet rebuked by the Lord for being luke-warm and in danger of being spewed out of his mouth (see chapter 3, verses 14-19).

The best evidence of a true convert is like the good tree which brings forth fruit, i.e. one who is so convicted of the truth of Christ he has a desire to preach to others. This desire should overcome any feelings of shame, rejection of men and even physical persecution.

In summary, any evangelical message is better than none for reaching the lost and *Making the Connection* will 'do the job'. For having jettisoned God's words alone it is not literature I would choose to use on the street when witnessing.