

Is there any hope for Hong Kong?

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Introduction

In October 2005, Jim Smith visited Hong Kong to lead a number of prophecy teaching schools, and to share what he felt was on God's heart for Hong Kong. What he said is printed here, along with material for further study and reflection. He accepts and welcomes the testing of God's people, and has provided some outline as to how that testing might take place. This word is very challenging. It asks us to do challenging things, to give valuable things to him, to yield not material assets but our very hearts.

Part 1: Two Words for Hong Kong

A. A Lost Child

This was the vision I saw as I arrived in Hong Kong:

I saw a child, lost, beaten, and alone in the dark. The child was crying.

The child called out for help, and then I saw the Lord standing there.

He held out his arms, and the child ran and threw itself into his arms. The child had a name:- "Hong Kong."

I felt the Lord begin to speak, "This child can bring help to many nations. This child can reach out and be the servant of many nations, bringing light, joy, hope, healing and power.

"From this place I want to do great things — to touch much of the world."

God speaking to nations?

We live in a global village, where e-mails and information fly round the world in seconds, yet as God's people, we seem to have forgotten, or overlooked God's ability to direct his affairs through nations. We can understand him using individuals, and even key churches in a locality. But acting nationally? Jesus had the right perspective on this, when he showed his insight for individuals (Mark 10:21), towns (Luke 10:15) cities, (Luke 19:41) and nations as well (Acts 1:8). We have to take a similar view. (See more on this in the "Additional Materials" section.)

Against this background, God has a purpose for Hong Kong. He will work with individuals, individual churches, and groups of churches, and through organisations which span churches and denominations. But he will also use the whole Church for his purposes. I believe that the vision which I had when I arrived underlines this desire and this potential on God's part. It is our privilege to search out God's greater purpose, and put our spiritual commitment behind it, so that God can use this nation for the purposes which he has planned for it.

In the following pages I have shared the word which I brought to Hong Kong in October 2005. I have laid out what I believe the Lord might be saying, with biblical references and comments to help with the testing process. In the end, this word has to be tested by those to whom it has been given — it is not for me to suggest the validity, or otherwise of it myself.

This word for Hong Kong is clearly under-girded by the compassion of God. In order to be clear which is a prophetic word, and which is teaching on compassion, I have separated these two themes, and the teaching on compassion is in the second part.

B. I was Broken and Forsaken

This compassion is very clear from Scripture, but the Lord also revealed a Second word for Hong Kong which was this:

*I was broken and forsaken.
Can you follow me?*

*I drank the cup of suffering
Can you drink it?*

*I gave everything.
Will you give everything?*

*The price is high
for servants.*

So let's look at this word , and set it against a biblical perspective.

Word

**I was broken and forsaken.
Can you follow me?**

Bible background

“See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness — so will he sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.

Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.”
(Isaiah 52:19–53:10. N.I.V.)

“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”
(1 Peter 1:18–19)

Comment

As the Lord begins sharing his heart for Hong Kong, we are taken at once to his sufferings. This is an unusual place to begin, especially as much of the current experience of the church flows in the direction of wholeness, healing, prosperity, triumphing, conquering and winning. I have nothing against all these things.

It is a profound part of our Christian experience that we overcome (Rom 8:37), and we have lived too long with a defeatist attitude. But overcoming by itself is only part of the truth. We overcome because Jesus has overcome, and he has overcome by his cross. We are going to have to learn to walk this path as well.

Understanding what it means to be broken and forsaken is the path to victory. Isaiah spells it out in agonising detail, which is matched by many New Testament Scriptures:-

Jesus was:

- * Disfigured and marred. (Isa 52:14) (Mark 15:16–20)
- * Despised and rejected. (Isa 53:3) (Mark 15:14)
- * Pierced. (Isa 53:5; Zechariah 12:10) (Mark 15:25; John 19:34)
- * Crushed. (Isa 53:5; Ps 22:14) (Mark 15:21); and
- * Wounded. (Isa 53:5) (Matt 27:26).

Can we follow him in this way of suffering? Why should we need to? The answer is simple. If we want to share his heart of compassion for Hong Kong, then this is the way we are going to get close to that heart. He saw the people harassed and helpless. (Matt 9:36) So must we. He grieved for the waste of Jerusalem. (Luke 19:41) So must we. He cried out in pain over Ephraim being lost. (Hosea 11:1–8) So must we. He summed up all of his compassion in his suffering towards, and at Calvary. We must walk the same path. The way to sharing his emotion is the way of sharing in his sufferings as Paul said. (Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:10) Once we know and experience his sufferings, then we will understand his heart. This is a truly frightening challenge to our flesh, but the way of life in the Spirit.

Word

**I drank the cup of suffering
Can you drink it?**

Bible background

“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favour of him. “What is it you want?” he asked. She said, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said to them. “Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” (Matt 20:20–22)

Peter declared, “Even if all fall away, I will not.” “I tell you the truth,” Jesus answered, “today — yes, tonight — before the cock crows twice you yourself will disown me three times.” But Peter insisted emphatically, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” And all the others said the same.” (Mark 14:29–31)

Comment

There is a difference between “following” and “drinking the cup.” Followers can turn back, as the disciples did in Gethsemane. (Mark 14:50) But once we drink the cup, there is no going back. The experience is then part of us, and goes with us everywhere. We are saying, “I identify with you. I am part of you. I will endure what you endure.” It seems that “drinking” is a deeper experience than following. What might the drinking mean for us, as we reflect on this word? Here are three of many potential meanings:-

- * Being overwhelmed with a profound sadness and sorrow.
- * Being overwhelmed with compassion.
- * Sacrificing all that we are and all that we have to serve the Lord.

These points are all “feely” things, matters of emotion and attitude. They are not practical, concrete doctrinal observances, but matters of the heart — hard to define but very important and required of servants nonetheless. This is not a list of objectives, a list of targets, or a logical strategy. I think the Lord may have chosen this way especially for Hong Kong, where everything is targets, strategies, goals, and measurable achievements. But the Lord is not looking for these things in Hong Kong. He is looking for hearts — hearts that will yield to his feelings of pain, sorrow and compassion. Once he has such hearts, then he can begin to reveal his plans.

Can we do this? He isn’t asking us for thousands of dollars, for cars, buildings, or companies given out of our abundance. He isn’t asking us to go to the farthest parts of the earth to prove our commitment. He is asking for our hearts. He is asking for our feelings. He is asking for our emotions. How much easier for Hong Kong if he had asked for a million dollars! But he has all the million dollars he needs. He wants something so much more valuable, and we are going to find giving that is hard.

Word

**I gave everything.
Will you give everything?**

Bible background

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the words of my groaning? O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the praise of Israel. In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. They cried to you and were saved; in you they trusted and were not disappointed. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: “He trusts in the Lord; let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.”

Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no-one to help. Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. Dogs have surrounded me; a band of evil men has encircled me, they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." (Ps.22:1-18)

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil.2:5-8)

Comment

So finally, here it is. We have to give everything, as he did. Every emotion, every thought, every hope, every dream, everything we own, everyone we love and care for. Everything has to be given away, but not given up to nothing — given to him. Then the compassion which he has for Hong Kong can begin to flow into us, and through us. Then we can feel as he feels. This is the new beginning of the redemption of Hong Kong. This is the home-call to the lost child.

The beginning of what? Making way for God's compassion to flow in our hearts is just the beginning of what God wants to do with us. He may well reveal strategies and plans, he may well set targets and goals. He may well send us to the farthest parts of the world. When God's love is flowing in uncluttered channels, there is literally no end to the possibilities. But unless the beginning is right, the end cannot be right. If the beginning is right, then the plans become achievable, however fantastic they may appear to be to us.

Word

**The price is high
for servants.**

Bible background

"Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it." (Mark 8:34-35)

Comment

In the end, it all comes down to this — do we love him, and in the framework of that love, are we willing to feel as he feels? This is the terrible painful sword which is hidden in this prophetic word. No matter where we start, it all comes down to this for every real disciple of Christ, for every true servant of God — a piercing of our heart, so that his heart might be revealed in us.

Part 2: The Compassionate Heart of God

Someone asked me, “How do I respond to this word? I don’t know where to begin.” The best starting point is to get hold of the compassion of God. When that window is open, the vision of the child and the word will begin to make sense.

What is “Compassion?”

The word most often used in the Gospels for “compassion” is the Greek word “*splagchizomai*.” Vine’s dictionary gives this definition:-

Splanchizomai — “to be moved as to one’s inwards (*splanchna*), to be moved with compassion, to yearn with compassion.”

It is frequently recorded of Christ towards the multitude and towards individual sufferers: Matt 9:36; Matt 14:14; Matt 15:32; Matt 18:27; Matt 20:34; Mark 1:41; Mark 6:34; Mark 8:2; Mark 9:22 (of the appeal of a father for a demon-possessed son); Luke 7:13; Luke 10:33; of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:20.

That’s a rather forensic description, even if a very accurate one. To get a clearer understanding, we need to reflect on the way Jesus is described as having compassion. In all the references which follow, “compassion” is the translation of the Greek word “*splagchizomai*.” It all looks a bit lifeless in cold print, but we have to read with our imagination, and with our heart open to feel as Jesus felt. So let’s look at some examples from Scripture where Jesus ‘had compassion.’

A. Jesus had compassion on the people because they were helpless.

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” (Matt 9:35–38)

Jesus identified with the people. He felt their lostness and their despair. Perhaps that’s why they flocked to him in their thousands. It wasn’t just what he could do for them which drew them, it was how he felt about them which was so special.

He didn't stand above their struggles, nor did he lecture them. He felt their position, and they knew it. He made them feel special. To do this must have placed a great strain on his emotions, but he was willing to make that commitment. God is truly moved with compassion for his creation, and for every member of that created order.

B. Jesus had compassion for the needs of people

“Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.” (Matt 15:32)

It's amazing to think that Jesus would have compassion just because the people were hungry. After all, they were only hungry because they had made no provision for their needs, and they would probably not die before they got home! So why bother to feel for them, or to feed them?

To think like this is to fail to grasp the compassion of God. His compassion isn't measured by circumstance or reserved for crisis or tragedy. We commonly think that Jesus would only have compassion in a life or death situation, but in other circumstances he would just have mild concern. Jesus doesn't think in this way. His compassion is one hundred percent in all circumstances, great or small. His compassion is “full on” at all times, regardless of the circumstances. This is what we have to take hold of, and when we do, our real journey of knowing God is just beginning to blossom.

C. Jesus had compassion to help undo the ravages of sin

“When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.” (Matt 14:14)

“Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” (Mark 1:41)

The compassion of Jesus was always stimulated in the presence of the ravages of sin. Seeing the sick, he healed out of *splanchnizomai*. His healing ministry seems to have been motivated in part by his compassion.

D. Jesus had compassion which wants to make a way back

“So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” (Luke 15:20)

This is the story which grips me the most. The cost to the father was immense, yet he waited in expectation that his child would return home. When it happened, his arms were open wide, forgiveness was assured, and the future was changed beyond recognition for father and son. The compassion of God knows no bounds. His compassion grieves at our loss, longs for our return, and welcomes us back.

Then it goes even further, restoring us to our position as sons and daughters of the King, all at his expense.

These are the biblical facts of God's compassion, seen through the word *splanchnizomai*. This is what we have to try and understand, if we are to grasp the depths of this word for Hong Kong. We have to remember that compassion, while being theologically correct, is in the end not about facts but about feelings. I have not put personal stories in this section, preferring to let the texts speak for themselves. But I too had to be changed in my view of compassion. For me it was far from an intellectual experience.

I was visiting Mumbai in India. I went, being quite sure that the best way to help people was to give to charities and missions working with them, and not to give to people on the streets. I still think that this is the right way to give, but I didn't realise how much I had intellectualised the experience of compassion. As I walked under a railway arch, a beggar woman, carrying a small baby, rushed up to me. She spoke words in Hindi that I couldn't understand, and then touched the hand of the baby on my arm. As I looked at that tiny hand resting on my arm, my heart was touched with God's compassion, for the child that should it be used in this way, for its mother, and the whole system which produced this beggary. I know all the theory about giving to organisations and missions who know what they are doing, but that tiny hand forced me to a different level, well beyond money. I felt the Lord might be saying to me, "It's not about money, it's all about hearts." I was moving away from my intellect to my feelings, which were reflecting God's feelings.

I'm not against the intellect. Our mind is such a valuable recourse, enabling us to study the biblical use of compassion, so as to get a deeper grasp of what God is saying. But in the end, we have to move across from intellect to emotion. It's in the feelings world that we encounter compassion, and are changed by it. This process, as I have discovered, is not as easy as it looks.

Part 3: The Way Ahead

God's people now must decide what to do, if they feel that God is truly speaking in this material. What options might we have? I'm always very cautious about making suggestions, as I believe that a prophet's job is to bring the word, not to apply it. It's for God's people to make their decisions, test the word, and when they feel that the message is from God, act accordingly. But with that caution, here are just a few suggestions intended to stimulate discussion and prayer.

A. Open our hearts to God's compassion

This is obviously a very personal experience. Each of us has to weigh up our willingness to open ourselves to the compassion of the Lord for Hong Kong. As I have already suggested, this can be a hard experience. God's feelings are very intense, and they can be quite a burden on our human frame.

But it's not a difficult path to find. All we have to do is express our willingness. I often find myself in the same position as the man with the sick child — “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24) This might translate in our situation to, “Lord I want to share your heart. Help me in my weakness.” Each of us has to make our own decision in this area, as do our groups and churches. It may be hard, but it is the most rewarding thing you can do for you will find the hidden treasure of God's own heart as you do. “For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. (Matt 10:39, 16: 25 Mark 8:35 Luke 9:24, 17:33)”

B. A move of intercession

This message, and its accompanying call to compassion has to be taken up by the intercessors, for whom, I suspect it is primarily intended. Is it time for a new move in the intercessory hearts in Hong Kong? A new call to deeper prayer at a collective level? With Hong Kong's high internet usage, it shouldn't be difficult to link intercessors in a new way, with a focus to feel God's compassion, and to move in to compassion at a deeper level. I'm sure there are many intercessors and intercessory groups already. May be the Lord is calling for a linking up, a collective effort to feel and know his love and pain? My feeling is that, if this were to happen, there would soon be a further revelation as to God's intentions for the nation.

C. The wider church

If this message is for Hong Kong, then somehow, the wider church must take it to heart. This message has been heard by a number of people, and is now available online. If those who have heard it have been moved and helped, then it has to be spread wider. There is no critical mass required with God. He sometimes only needs one person to hear, and that's enough to achieve his purposes. (For examples, see the lives of Joseph, Esther, Mary, Paul and others.). But sometimes he wants a larger group to respond, so that he can achieve his greater purposes. The whole nation had to respond at the Exodus (Exodus 12:30–37 and following chapters), and the whole church had to pray for Peter. (Acts 12:5)

What might we have to do? That is a question for the leaders in Hong Kong to ask. If they want to know what I think, they will have to ask me, and I'll seek the Lord. This is the only position a prophet can take up.

Part 4. Additional Materials

A. Does God speak to Nations?

B. Testing a prophetic word

C. Other visions and words

D. Accessing our website for downloads and our prayer forum

Additional materials:

A. Does God speak to nations?

Does God speak to Nations, and work at a biblical level? Is speaking about “national salvation” a biblical concept? Here is some material to help reflect on this issue. It is reprinted from my material “Is there any hope for England.” The full context of this material can be seen in “Is there any hope for England?” which can be downloaded from our website.

1. It is clear that God does see things in a wide national context

It is easy to argue that this principle belongs to the Old Testament, when Israel was first an unruly and casual group, then an anphictony, then a Kingdom, then a diaspora, then a returned law-centred kingdom in Jerusalem, a developing presence in Egypt and undoubtedly a remnant in Babylon. But from our biblical material, both from Jerusalem, and fleetingly through Jeremiah in Egypt, through Ezekiel in exile, and then Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi, God continued to speak collectively. Through prophets and leaders, he spoke, and his principles remained the same. The actions of the few — Achan (Josh 7:1), the spies (Num 13:29 onwards), the rebuilding programme (Hag 1), the community behaviour (Ezra 7 onwards; Mal) — affected his dealings with the whole. (Num 21:1–9) The Bible is a continuity, and the God who was dealing with Israel described himself as “I am”, the great continuing present tense.

2. Jesus linked himself in with the Old Testament teaching, in these ways:-

a. He accepted John’s baptism as a national event, and identified with it.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” (Luke 3:7–14)

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.” Then John consented.” (Matt 3:13–15)

b. He used the term “I am” to express that ‘God in Christ’ was a continuum.

“I am the bread of life.” (John 6:35) “I am the light of the world.” (John 8:12)
“Before Abraham was born, I am!” (John 8:58)

c. He taught us to regard the Old Testament in the continuous present.

“I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.” (Matt 5:18)

d. He saw his salvation work as an expression of God’s concern with the whole world.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming towards him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)

“That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” (2 Cor 5:19)

e. He saw his salvation work as an expression of God’s concern with the whole city.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.” (Matt 23:37–38)

f. He saw his salvation work as an expression of God’s concern with the whole body.

“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt 6:22–23)

Within the Christian community, the principle of whole salvation and whole action is identified in Acts 19. The sin of the few obstructed the growth of the kingdom. The eradication of the sin of the few blessed the whole body. (Acts 19:18–20) Peter was also well aware of the danger of individual action affecting the whole body, as he dealt with Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1–11)

3. This God, with a nation-wide view, loves us, and does not want to punish or hurt us

Judgment is his last resort — a very hard way to get our attention. The cry from Hosea, which we have seen a number of times already stands for all time:- “How can I give you up?” (Hos 11:8) The cross says exactly the same:- “This is what love is, not that we loved God, but he loved us, and gave his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.” (1 John 4:10) All theology brings us back to Calvary, and it is from the cross that all hope flows. We have several different perspectives on the cross.

* It is a place of substitution. (Isa 53:4–6; 2 Cor 5:19)

* It is a place of sacrifice. (Heb 9:28)

- * It is a place of reconciliation. (Rom 5:10)
- * It is a place of the destruction of Satan's power. (Col 2:13–15)
- * It is a place of love. (John 15:13)

Whichever route we take to Calvary, everything for our nation becomes possible in the light of the completed work of Jesus on the cross, and the galvanising power of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1 and following verses) At Calvary, the 'hesed' love of Yahweh and the 'agape' of Jesus combine for our hope. Other religions speak of judgment, and this is especially true of Islam. But there, Allah judges to punish the unbelievers (Sura 6:48–49) in a harsh and revengeful way. Yahweh in Christ judges only to bless. Let's keep the prodigal father in view:-

“So he (the lost son) got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.” (Luke 15:20–24)

4. This God has the power to turn every situation round

Spiritual pessimism has no place in a theology of nation, or, come to that, in people's lives. God can, if he is so moved, turn every situation from disaster to blessing. “Let there be light” could result in nothing less than light. (Gen 1:3) “Peace be still” (Mark 4:39), brought the same instant response. “It is finished.” (Greek ‘tetelestai.’ John 19:30), really did bring an end to separation, and the dawn of a new age of resurrection hope and power. We have to believe, theologically and in reality that with God, nothing is impossible. Our ship of state may be badly holed and sinking fast, but it does not have to sink. God has the power, and he can redeem every situation — he has had many millennia to practice!

I believe very passionately that this is as much a theological issue as a personal one. One of the dangers we face today is that we are quick to abandon theology, seeing it as dry and dusty, in favour of experience. I love experiential faith — I couldn't be a prophet without it. But weak or bad theology always results in bad practice. Experience does not make for good theology. Theologically, God is Saviour (Greek ‘sotar’) and Lord (Greek ‘kurios’). He holds the world in his hands. (Hebrews 1:9–12) From him comes all power and authority. (Matt 28:18) When he speaks, it is very definitely done, whether we see it or not. (John 19:30) I am fully aware of the place of free will in this position. We do have the potential to mess up God's plans by not responding (Num 13:26 and following verses; Acts 27:2 and following verses), and God allows us that freedom. But when we call out to him (Jer 33:3; John 14:13), he will respond (Matt 7:11), and situations, however desperate (Peter in prison Acts 12:5ff), will change. On this solid theological ground rests our optimism, not on our personal feelings. This is why I believe there is still hope for England, both now, and even if we have to pass through a period of judgment. Unlike Allah in Islam, our God does not write us off.

5. The issue rests with us

Our decisions will affect the way God uses his power — to judge or to redeem. Ahaz, King of Judah (2 Kings 16), put his trust in the King of Assyria to save him. The prophet Isaiah warned him against this course, but he would not listen. The consequence was an invasion of false gods into the Temple. (2 Kings 16:11–13) Hezekiah inherited the problem of Assyria, but instead of turning to men, he turned to God — “Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the Lord and spread it out before the Lord.” (2 Kings 19:14) As a result of this, God spoke prophetically about the miraculous destruction of the Assyrian army, and that duly happened. It is down to us.

Additional materials:

B: Testing a prophetic word

This is not a difficult thing to do, but it takes time. There are two processes. First the prophet or prophetic voice must do some serious reflection and testing. They must:-

1. Take time to pray about the word.
2. Study the Bible, to find the biblical roots of the word.
3. Ask for God to give understanding of the word; and
4. Wait for the right time for sharing the word.

I have done all these things with the word for Hong Kong. What has been written here is the result of my testing of the word. The second process needs to be carried out by the people of God. How do they test a word?

Test the man

It is important to know the sort of person who is speaking to us:-

- * Does he belong to the body?
- * Does he submit his word/ministry to the leadership of the Body?
- * Does he submit himself to the testing of other prophets?
- * Does he have a desire to unlock the gift of prophecy in others within the Body?
- * Does he attend worship, and share in the local ministry of his local Church?

Test the word

Here are some of the basic questions which help get to the truth of a prophetic word. They have to be asked prayerfully. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal true prophecy to us, and I use these questions to give Him freedom to direct my thinking.

- * Is this word biblically correct? Every prophetic word from God must be rooted in the Bible and must not contradict or add to that revelation.
- * Do any of the words in the prophetic word remind us of particular verses/passages ?

- * Do any of the words in the prophetic word remind us of biblical stories or people ?
- * Does anything in the prophetic word remind us of anything we have come across recently in a sermon, a home group teaching, or in our own private study time ?
- * Does this word encourage, direct, rebuke, build up?

Find the purpose of the word

This is a central part of the testing process. The purpose of the word should reveal itself as we test it. We are faced with a simple question – what is God asking us to do, or what is he showing or telling us about our situation? For example, is there:-

- * A challenge to surrender/deeper commitment.
- * A change of direction needed.
- * An encouragement to proceed with more/less caution.
- * Discovery of an error or sin in the body.
- * A relationship problem within the body/between bodies.
- * A lack of repentance.
- * A command to wait/listen more.
- * A warning of some impending event.
- * The uncovering of a truth that has been hidden / lost /forgotten.

Make a response to the word

The testing process comes to an end when we have understood the word, we believe it is from the Lord, and then we have to make some decision to act on it!

Additional materials:

3: Words already given around this prophecy

While I was in Hong Kong, I taught three prophecy schools. The material was called “Learning good things about prophecy,” and it is available for free download from our website. As part of this course, we studied the prophecy for Hong Kong, and a number of additional thoughts, words and visions were given by participants that that time. I have included some of them here. If, while you are studying this material, you also have thoughts, visions or words, then let me have them, either by e mail or in our FORUM, which can be accessed at www.serving-africa.org.

1: Isa 62:3 “You will be a crown of splendour in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.”

The word crown also translates as “diadem”, and the person who shared this thought didn’t even know what a diadem was, which is encouraging from a prophetic point of view. She saw Honk Kong beyond the lost child, to its final destiny.

2: Zech 2:8 For this is what the Lord Almighty says: “After he has honoured me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you — for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye....”

This verse was shared as an encouragement. The lost child may seem broken and defeated, but the child is also protected by the name and presence of God.

3. Pictures.

One person saw Hong King as a city of light, as they meditated on Luke 11:33.

Another felt the Lord said “Hong Kong is hope for the Nations.” I think they had been reflecting on Revelation 22:2.

As I was praying, I saw golden doves, flying round the people of God, looking for those on whom they could settle. These would be the ones who would enter into God’s compassion, and move us on to the next, and deeper level. But I also saw that the doves, sent by the Lord as a blessing and a help, could also easily be frightened away. They could also return to the Lord, if they found no place to settle.

Additional materials:

4: Website, free downloads and our FORUM

Website

Again, our website address is www.serving-africa.org

From this site you can download:-

Is there any hope for Hong Kong? This material can be accessed direct from the home page. Click the button there, and you will be able to download using pdf.

This material can be photo copied, and circulated. It must not be sold. We give all our material away freely, and we ask all users to respect this position. It may not be changed, but users are free to quote sections in their own news sheets, magazines or on the web. Please include a reference to where you found it, and our website address.

Users are free to put a link direct to our site on the own websites.

Learning good things about prophecy This is the self-help teaching course on good biblically based prophecy for the local church, which I used in Hong Kong. It can be downloaded from the BOOKS pages. Conditions of use are as above.

There is also much material on prophecy, biblical study and general church issues.

Contact us

Those reading this material may contact me through the site or direct by e mail. Feel free to do this — jimsmithghana@yahoo.co.uk. If God gives you anything about Hong Kong, I would love to know it, and I can share it.

Be warned! I do not give advice on problems with reference to prophecy in your local fellowship without the agreement of your Minister, Pastor or leader, to which I will copy all e-mails on Church issues.

FORUM

We run a prayer forum on our site. This is for those people who are interested in my work. We share with each other what God is doing in this ministry. Anyone is welcome to read our thoughts and prayers. We focus on what God is doing through this ministry and team, but we also discuss Hong Kong. If you wish to post, PLEASE REGISTER A USER NAME WITH ME FIRST. We are a disciplined forum, and a moderated one. If we find postings which have not been registered, we are all disciplined to ignore them. I'm sure you appreciate our need for vigilance. Register by e-mailing me first. We can communicate, I will post your user name to the FORUM, and all members will know you are with us.

Finally

My thanks to Ed Johnson for his careful editing of this material, and for his very helpful additional comments. Thanks also to the many people in Hong Kong who have contributed their pictures and visions, and their prayer support.