Mission and Meaning
Essays Presented to Peter Cotterell

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It is customary in academic circles to celebrate the retirement of a prominent internationally known scholar with a book of essays written by his immediate colleagues and by his more distant friends concerned with the same discipline. Such volumes usually address the research community, and lecturers, sometimes on rather arcane topics. The editors have chosen to offer a different volume.

In the first place, the one to whom this work is presented is no mere academic. That he is a scholar of considerable critical acumen and wide-ranging contribution is beyond doubt. There are not many who can claim to have been a University lecturer in Physics (in Brunel University), a Fellow of the Institute of Linguistics, and a visiting lecturer to Seminaries as far-flung as Addis Ababa, Oslo, Stavanger, Trinity (Deerfield) and Fuller, as well as the Principal of one of Europe’s largest theological institutions. In addition Peter Cotterell has served as Specialist Advisor in Religious Studies to the CNAA, as external examiner at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), and has supervised to successful completion a number of Masters and doctoral dissertations. A glance at the list of his publications will indicate a range of academic interest that goes even beyond what might be indicated above, to embrace Ethiopian church history, Islam, theology and various aspects of missionology. But as we began by saying, Peter Cotterell is no mere academic. He served what many might regard as the more fruitful years - his late twenties to mid forties - in the 'relative obscurity' (from a biased western perspective) of mission work in Ethiopia; from 1984 onwards he has been President of the British Church Growth Association, and from 1989, Vice-President of the UCCF. In short, his academic interests have not been permitted to take over the garden; Peter Cotterell has devoted his best energies to serving God’s people in preaching, in pastoral work, and in informed semi-popular works addressing significant areas for the church. Perhaps most notable amongst these latter is his Mission and Meaninglessness: The Good News in a World of Suffering and Disorder (London: SPCK, 1990). This work evinces some measure of his wide-ranging scholarship and independent thinking, but also speaks from the depths of the heart, articulating the different forms of the cry of the poor and the oppressed, and pointing to the ways in which it may be answered in Christ. The present volume echoes that work, not merely in its title, but in its concern to address central issues of Mission and Meaning. And it is written not to wave him farewell into a relatively obscure retirement (as if that were possible for him!), but to encourage him to seize the benefit of new-found liberty to write further for our profit and our delight.

In another respect too, this volume differs from most such celebratory anthologies. While the custom is to search far and wide for contributions, all the essays herein contained come from Peter Cotterell’s immediate colleagues and friends at the London Bible College, including two of his former research students (Keith Ferdinando and Daniel Chae).

In a third respect also the volume differs from the norm. While we have included several essays that would otherwise have found their way into the academic research journals, and all are well informed by theological scholarship, the aim has been to produce a volume that would be more readily accessible, interesting, and useful to (e.g.) the second and third year theological student, the pastor, and the intelligent layperson. The essays address various areas of more general significance for church and mission, rather than being entirely specialist contributions. We have felt this to be more in keeping with Peter Cotterell’s own position (in precept and in example) that theology should, where possible, be ‘relevant’ and offered in the service of the wider church, not confined to the academe.

With this volume, we, the editors, the publisher, and the contributors, wish to record our indebtedness to the friendship, leadership, and example of Christian life and service, that Peter Cotterell has been to us all.

Peter, we salute you on your retirement from the College. We wish you a fruitful ministry beyond. May Christ’s love and strength be with you to build up others as you have us.

Antony Billington
Tony Lane
Max Turner

May 1995
Main Publications of Peter Cotterell


*I Want to Know What the Bible Says about Death* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1979).

*I Want to Know What the Bible Says about Personal Salvation* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1980).


'The Christology of Islam', in H.H. Rowdon (ed.), *Christ the Lord* (Leicester: IVP, 1982).


*This is Christianity* (Leicester: IVP, 1985).

*All About House groups* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1985).

'Sociolinguistics and Biblical Interpretation', *VoxEv* 16 (1986).

*Cry Ethiopia* (Eastbourne: MARC, 1988).


*Prosperity Theology* (Leicester: RTSF, 1993).

*Small Groups, Big Results: All About House Groups* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1993).


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Abbreviations

A1CS  The Book of Acts in its First Century Setting
AB    Anchor Bible
AOAT  Alter Orient und Altes Testament
AV    Authorised Version
BETL  Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib   Biblica
BibSac Bibliotheca Sacra
BNTC  Black's New Testament Commentaries
BTB   Biblical Theology Bulletin
CBNTS Coniectanea Biblica, New Testament Series
CBQ   Catholic Biblical Quarterly
DSB   Daily Study Bible
EKK   Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EMQ   Evangelical Missions Quarterly
EvQ   Evangelical Quarterly
ExpT  Expository Times
GNB   Good News Bible
IBMR  International Bulletin of Missionary Research
IBS   Irish Biblical Studies
Interp Interpretation
HTR   Harvard Theological Review
ICC   International Critical Commentary
ITC   International Theological Commentary
IRM   International Review of Mission
JB    Jerusalem Bible
JBL   Journal of Biblical Literature
JETS  Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JSNTS Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
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<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>TS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<td>TSA</td>
<td>Journal of Theology for Southern Africa</td>
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<td>LCC</td>
<td>Library of Christian Classics</td>
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<td>LCL</td>
<td>Loeb Classical Library</td>
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<td>NAC</td>
<td>New American Commentary</td>
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<td>SBLDS</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</td>
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<td>SBLMS</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBT</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Theology</td>
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<td>Scottish Journal of Theology</td>
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<td>SNTSMS</td>
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