

## Walking with Micah. . . as evangelists

### What hymns can tell us

Just as the Father sent me,  
so I'm sending you out to be  
my witness throughout the world –  
the whole of the world:

Alan Dale and Hubert Richards' hymn ([God's spirit is in my heart](#), StF 404) was inspired by Luke's account of Jesus preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth. As Jesus does (quoting the prophet Isaiah), so Dale and Richards interpret the preaching of God's kingdom in terms of setting "the down trodden free". In this, Jesus is echoing his mother's hymn of praise, the Magnificat, which Timothy Dudley-Smith has paraphrased memorably: [Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!](#) (StF 186). (Also see: [My soul rejoices in God my Saviour](#), StF 60, by Owen Alstott.)

Perhaps especially in the Gospel of Luke, though it is present throughout the gospels, the evangelical call to faith in God is inextricably interwoven with a demand for right living – most obviously seen in the provision of justice and support for the most weak and vulnerable in society. The prophets insisted on this time and again, a fact to which Basil Bridge alludes in [O God of hope, your prophets spoke](#) (StF 708): we are called, he says, to be "faithful stewards on the earth" and to "let bread, with justice, bless the poor". As Douglas Galbraith implies, this essential relationship of proclamation and action lies at the heart of creation; it was present when God declared the world good: [The God who sings a new world into being](#) (StF 714).

To participate in the work of restoration, says Martin Leckebusch, requires us "to be disciples every day in every place" (not to "hide as hermits"), which will mean making hard decisions ([Called by Christ to be disciples](#), StF 660); but if we are "to serve the present age" (Charles Wesley: [A charge to keep I have](#), StF 658), there is an imperative that we not only preach to the world around us but engage with it, understanding its interests, needs and concerns.

### Double listening

The theologian John Stott came to understand that "getting inside the thought-world of those we aim to reach" is essential to good evangelism; but that being aware of the world around us (what he called "double listening") is not just about preaching: it is "indispensable to Christian discipleship and Christian mission".\* It is indispensable because this is the example Jesus offered us. He lived, died and rose, say John Bell and Graham Maule ([StF 296](#)), and "forever lives to challenge and to change –

all whose lives are messed or mangled,  
all who find religion strange.

The account of Jesus washing his disciples' feet ([Jesu, Jesu](#), StF 249) offers not only a rich message of faithful service and hospitality (cf. [In this house all people will be welcome](#), StF+) but also an enacted demand that we, like Jesus, be “evidence of transformation / in which God is known and seen”. ([Christ has risen while earth slumbers](#), StF 296). Being ambassadors for Christ ([2 Corinthians 5: 17-21](#)) demands, as Paul describes it, holistic evangelism – our whole selves given to the whole needs of those around us.

\*John Stott [\*The Contemporary Christian: An Urgent Plea for Double Listening\*](#) (1992: InterVarsity Press)