

## **The mind of Christ: 1 Corinthians 2.9-16**

**Today's Thought for the Day is from the Revd Rod Hill of AEMC.**

**Do we have “the mind of Christ”? 1 Corinthians 2.16**

Every time I read this chapter of 1 Corinthians (and others too) I get caught up by the image of God’s wisdom set alongside human foolishness and I am reminded of one of the first theology books I ever read, John Austin Baker’s ‘The Foolishness of God’. It was published in 1970 (fifty years ago this year) and I read it first in 1977. I confess that, at the time, I really struggled with it as my training at that time was not in Theology, but in Science. Scientists and Theologians have very different writing styles, shall we say? However, it’s a book that I’ve gone back to several times over the intervening years for John Austin Baker was a prophet – not in the sense that he foretold the future, but he foretold what the future required! Just look at this extract:

“Perhaps the best news our day has to offer is the collapse of pseudo-Christianity under the pressures of history; for this affords Christians the best chance they have ever had to regain the perspective of the original Gospel. Because people are ceasing to believe in a Providence of simple, retributive justice, or in a magician-god who will wave his wand to give them whatever they ask; because they are beginning to value freedom and the responsibility which has to learn by making mistakes; because they are more acutely aware than ever before of being one small single family of

Man in a universe too vast for their imagination to take in; because of all these things, what Jesus said and how he lived has more meaning, more relevance, not less. The world has not left Jesus behind; it is getting to the point where it can just see him, far ahead, blazing the trail. In the so-called 'ages of faith' it made endless false Christs in its own image. Now these images are for the most part broken and abandoned; only in the churches do men and women in any numbers still fall down and worship them."

"The frightening urgency is that if Christians continue to misrepresent the information they have, and go on fiddling ineptly with the key, in time everyone will have given up and gone home."

"There are on all sides encouraging signs. But if the gathering light is not to prove a false dawn, there must be a far more thorough-going reconstruction than any yet envisaged, both in the Church's structure and in her presentation of her teaching. The latter involves nothing less than a change of perspective."

Perhaps the Covid pandemic has helped us to reaffirm our need to see things from God's perspective, insofar as we are able to do that. God's wisdom, alongside God given human wisdom is what we need, and are desperately short of in political circles at the moment.

However, Paul is pointing to something even deeper than that in this passage. In the wisdom literature of the Old Testament (and elsewhere) the wise and perfect stand in contrast to the foolish and babes and enjoyed the intimate relationship with divine wisdom (*Sophia*) and Paul is here identifying that divine *Sophia* with Christ crucified (v2).

Our passage for today begins with an apparent quotation from Scripture:

“What no eye has seen,  
what no ear has heard,  
and what no human mind has conceived”<sup>[b]</sup>—  
the things God has prepared for those who love him—  
<sup>10</sup> these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

(But this is not to be found in our current Bibles!) and goes on to argue that no-one knows the thoughts of God, except the Spirit of God, but we have received the spirit of God to teach spiritual realities with spirit taught words and that gives them (us?) the Spirit to make judgements about all things:

“Who has known the mind of the Lord  
so as to instruct him?”<sup>[d]</sup>

But we have the mind of Christ.

As Matthew Henry puts it “It is the great privilege of Christians, that they have the mind of Christ revealed to them by his Spirit. They experience his sanctifying power in their hearts, and bring forth good fruits in their lives.”

What an awesome privilege and, at the same time, an awesome responsibility. So, where the Donald Sopers of today, who have the deep spiritual wisdom, the mind of Christ(?) to speak truth to power?

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