



THE EAGLE RETURNS:
A FRESH LOOK AT THE GOSPEL OF JOHN
C. Paul Burnham

Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018,
ISBN: (978-1-5326-4200-5) pp. 64, £12.00

Paul Burnham, a close friend of the late Howard Marshall, presents us here with an extraordinary little book. As a lecturer, I have personally found it invaluable in bringing me very rapidly and easily up to date with the most significant developments in the study of the Fourth Gospel. Burnham has an eye for the authors that are truly important, especially with regards to the debate about authorship.

If, like me, you are often inclined to skim over lengthy and dull discussions of authorship when reading a biblical commentary, you will find Burnham is a breath of fresh air. He shows how vital a right understanding of the authorship of John's Gospel can be. Burnham makes no secret of the fact that he is advocating a particular view here. And his take on authorship might well be described as a turn towards a more conservative view. However, considering the way the so-called 'Johannine Community' view has now acquired the status of near orthodoxy, what Burnham says is quite radical. Yet, he's not wishing to go back to arguing that the John in question is John son of Zebedee. You will need to read it to find out who this John is for Burnham, but it is a view well supported

by some celebrated Johannine scholars and makes sense of the Jerusalem emphasis that we find in this Gospel.

Burnham nourishes us with a survey of every scene in the Gospel, showing us how it can be seen that these are all the reports of an eye witness. He concludes with an explanation for his chosen title, inspired by Augustine of Hippo's designation of the eagle as the symbol of John's Gospel:

'The eagle is uncompromising, as is John's insistence that Jesus was uniquely one with God the Father. The eagle is supremely equipped for grasping, as John's Gospel is equipped for drawing people to faith and salvation.'

He laments that, in contrast, '... the modern symbol for the Gospel of John might be a parrot, and a caged parrot at that.'

Reviewed by Ben Pugh, Lecturer in Theology and Postgraduate Research Programme Lead at Cliff College.



GROWING ON THE FRONTLINE
LICC (the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity)

Every Christian wants to live their life more like Jesus. But despite our best intentions, it can be hard to live out our faith meaningfully and consistently. What is it that's stopping us? And what can we do about it?

That's what Growing on the Frontline is about. A new small group resource from LICC, Growing on the Frontline focuses on the lives we lead when we're not in church - our workplaces, homes, and social groups. We call these places our 'frontlines': the places in which God has placed us, and where we interact with those who don't follow Jesus.

Over an eight-session course, participants are encouraged to reflect on what's happening in and around them, receive God's wisdom for their situation, invite him to renew them, and so respond more fruitfully to opportunities on their frontlines.

Focused around in-depth, presenter-led videos, each session features a combination of Bible study, real-life stories, and group discussion to help people identify what's holding them back from living like Jesus and consider how to grow more like him with God's help. The course also teaches a variety of prayer tools participants can use to help them embed what they're learning in daily life. Ultimately, the goal of Growing on the Frontline is to equip people with the practical tools to overcome barriers to fruitful discipleship in every situation.

Growing on the Frontline builds on the concepts explored in LICC's flagship group resources Frontline Sundays and

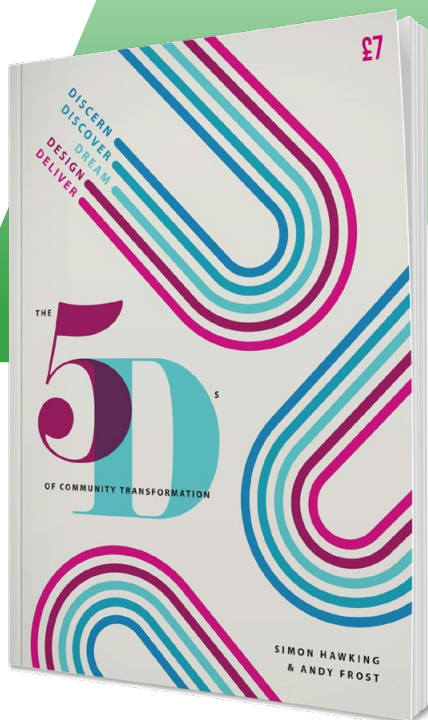
Fruitfulness on the Frontline, but it's easy for newcomers to digest. Early sessions focus on the choices we make on our frontlines - what influences us, why we make them, and what consequences they bring. The course then moves to explore how our emotions and desires affect our behaviour, before delving into what it means to go through seasons of life, and how we can be fruitful even when we feel distant from God. It ends with inviting participants to put what they've learnt into action, and gives them practical steps to sustain that growth for the long-term, so they can be consistent in their fruitfulness.

Feedback for Growing on the Frontline shows how effective it is at making a difference to how people approach discipleship.

'It's really helped to deepen the conversations we have in our home group', one participant shared. 'It's helped me realise that I need to take more responsibility for my spiritual growth. I've started to see what drives the choices I make when I'm on my frontline, and now when something happens, I stop, think, and pray before I respond, rather than having a knee-jerk reaction.'

Growing on the Frontline is perfect for anyone looking to grow in fruitfulness in everything they do. Session 1 is available for free at licc.org.uk/growing, and you can purchase the complete pack at the LICC online shop: <https://licc.org.uk/product/growing-on-the-frontline-complete-pack/>

Tim Yearsley, Presenter, Growing on the Frontline



THE 5DS OF COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION *Simon Hawking and Andy Frost*

London: SJI self published, 2022 pp. 138, £7

In these financially constrained times, we need to have our eyes peeled for a bargain. Here it is: for £7 you get so much for your money with this little gem of a book! Seriously, it's much more than that. This is a well-researched book which is a real 'go-to' manual for community transformation. It is clearly presented by two experienced practitioners - Simon Hawking based in Lincoln and Andy Frost, Director of Share Jesus International.

If you're wondering what the 5Ds are - buy the book! However, to whet your appetite they are: Discern - Discover - Dream - Design - Deliver. The first three themes are focussed on exploration and the final two are mobilisation.

Excellent stuff! What I particularly appreciated was the inclusion of testimonies to back-up the practical teaching and systematic advice. There are insights from Christians Against Poverty, Acts Trust (based in Lincoln - which I found interesting having been stationed there for 10 years), the Gather Movement (wow-check them out at <https://gathermovement.org>) & Tearfund.

Within the five categories mentioned, we delve into:

- Understanding the needs, assets and role of the church;
- Exploring your community from different perspectives;
- Prayerfully imagining what could be;
- Creating an action plan;
- Launching, staying on track and honest reflections.

I ask you, where can you get all that for seven quid? Marvellous! As it says in 1 Corinthians 4:20, 'For the kingdom is not in word but in power' (NKJV). We are hearing a lot from certain quarters about so-called 'justice' at the moment, but here is a realistic book based on Jesus' heart of compassion. It is uncompromising and (unlike certain politicians & theologians) proven to deliver. This is a true outworking of Micah 6:8.

Well done Simon and Andy. This book is a total gem for any church that has the heart of the Lord Jesus and wants to reach out to a broken world which is just outside their chapel doors. I salute you, brothers, and pray that this little book will yield an eternal harvest.

Reviewed by the Revd Mark Lawrence, Superintendent Minister of the Market Drayton Circuit, where he ministers with his wife, former Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Carolyn Lawrence. He has been in Circuit ministry since leaving Wesley College, Bristol in 1997. They have two married daughters and are blessed with four grandchildren. They give thanks to God for nearly 40 years of marriage and for being placed in North Shropshire where the church is growing and we they oversee three new expressions of church.