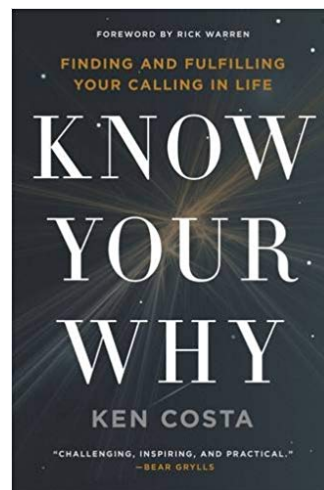


Review: Know Your Why – Finding and Fulfilling Your Calling in Life

Sometimes I read an excellent book that I find deeply frustrating. This is one of those times.



Ken Costa's *Know Your Why* is well written, right-hearted, and helpful. **This is a book about vocation.** If you are interested in what it means to live according to the calling of Christ, especially if that calling is within the marketplace of the "secular" world, this book would likely bless you. Costa is not only successful in the world of finance and investment, he is one of the key leaders behind Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB) and the Alpha movement. *Know Your Why* could easily be the "Beta" course – a follow-on curriculum about introductory discipleship for real people in the real world. What's not to like?

Yet I find myself set on edge. In this review, therefore, I am taking a lead from my own reaction. I need to be clear about that. I'm not trying to whinge or tear down. I'm exploring my response and attempting to articulate my disquiet. I am checking myself for a critical spirit!

I must admit a bias. I didn't know Costa's background when I ordered the book, and when I made the HTB connection I found myself wearily sighing. Why? Maybe the pages of endorsements

from the pantheon of Christian celebrities provoked my cynicism. Nevertheless, why so critical, O my soul? On the face of it, HTB and Alpha should be “my team” to cheer for. They are the face of charismatic Anglicanism, and it’s *not* the skin-deep prosperity-peddling Trumpist forms that have a similar appearance in other places. The HTB/Alpha movement has birthed or nurtured new Christians, new church fellowships, worship leaders I admire, and even the current Archbishop of Canterbury. Why can I not sit with this book, that *is* full of some decent wisdom and pastoral guidance, and savour it freely like a fine refreshing tonic? I should be reading books like this as if it is from a friend to a friend. But I can’t. And if I try, I’m pretending.

Here’s the thing: Every time I find myself walking in proximity to the HTB hegemony, I don’t feel like a fellow-pilgrim, I feel like a *customer*. I read books like this looking for resonance with my own journey. I hope to find some guidance, some solace, or even some rebuke and correction from the steadying hand of an elder in the church. Instead, I have come away from it weary, feeling the same as I do after sitting in a conference room all day.

Am I just being grumpy and over-critical? Perhaps I’m just being a reverse-snob, smarting at receiving crumbs that have fallen from a table set in the shadow of Harrods? Maybe. I do have a reflexive reaction against the presumptive and proud professionalist proclivities of the Western church. But I don’t think it’s just me. There *is* some substance to my deconstruction.

I can pull apart this book, and **I find gem after gem after gem of really good stuff**. But when I take a step back to gather the bigger picture, I realise that there is something crucial that is obscured. I can’t see the cross. **I see very little of the cruciform life**. This book is about *vocation* and *calling*. In it, I can learn about success from someone successful. But **true vocation rests not on success, but on surrender, death,**

and undeserved grace. Vocation, in the end, navigates a wasteland of Christ's sufferings and those who walk it need help to die and live in the desert everyday; we only flourish as a desert rose. To extend that analogy: This book is a manual on English gardening techniques. It is pleasant, useful, *correct*, aspirational, lovingly intended, and frequently applicable; but it overlooks what green English middle-class gardens always miss, that living water costs you.

Let me show my working:

The good in this book is really good: "At the heart of the Christian faith is a big, fat *why*," Costa says (page xx), "A calling for us to be *here*, in this place and at this time... to live out our faith and values in the rough-and-tumble of our everyday existence." If only more Christians and more churches would be moved in this way! Costa's pastoral heart is passionate and clear: "I have longed to strengthen those who try to make the very best of their lives" (page xxiv). I would love to have a coffee and a long chat with Ken.

The guidance he offers is focused on Jesus, and responsive to a God who cares and gives us his attention (page 3, *Called to Passion*), and in whom we have our fundamental sense of self ("Identity comes before destiny", page 16). He confronts our need for salvation and restoration, and pushes back at the shames and fears that will turn us from God's heart and lead us into stumbling and falling.

This realization that life is best savored when lived for Christ is the key to living well. It moves the center of gravity from me to him, and, in that shift, is the very basis of finding my real calling. (Page 17)

Costa is dealing with *vocation*, and that's not a churchy thing. **He doesn't just break down the sacred-secular divide, he cuts across the premise of it.** "There is only one sphere of influence: the kingdom of God", he says (page 23, *Called to*

Engage). “The world tries to atomize society, but we are called to draw together the spiritual, ethical, and vocational aspects of life” (page 27).

I particularly appreciated his dealing with the problem of *distraction* (page 127, *Called to Focus*). This is a standard, but necessary, theme for discipleship in this generation. Here his experience may make him slightly blind to those for whom money issues are not matters of *distraction* (page 132) but actual *existence*. But he takes it to the right place, including the need to turn and be captured by a desire for Jesus; i.e. to *repent* (*metaanoia* in the Greek).

No calling is complete without a true understanding of metanoia. Page 138

But the essential thing is missing or obscured. This is what has frustrated me.

The heart of vocation is cruciform. All vocation takes us to a moment of death, surrender, and abandonment of self into the hands of God. It is there in every vocational story in the Bible. It's Abraham with a knife on Mt. Moriah. It's Moses-of-Egypt shuffling around Midian with his sheep. It's David staying his slaying hand in a cave. It's the rich young ruler facing his idol. It's Peter weeping at the sound of a rooster. It's Paul, blind and helpless in Damascus. It's Jesus hungry for bread in the wilderness, and hungry for life in Gethsemane.

The exercise of vocation needs wisdom and skill and Costa is a great help with those things. But the *foundation* looks more like Bonhoeffer, who literally knew the Cost of Discipleship: “When God calls a man, he bids him come and die.” In my own experience, and in walking alongside people over the years, vocation is knowing how we are to be “living sacrifices.” Any sense of success is a gift and a grace. I don't quite see this essential dynamic in Costa's book.

The examples he uses, in the main, attach to career prospects and business or philanthropic projects. These are good points of application, but vocation is so much deeper than that. Moses didn't come back down from the burning bush excited about his career shift from shepherd to liberator, feeling equipped with a new-found maturity. Jonah's careerism wasn't *enabled* by his refinement in the belly of the whale, it *died*, and was *vomited* back to life, on God's terms! David wasn't moved by his future prospects in the wilderness, he was spiritually rent asunder until the fragments rested in the Lord his God: "You, God, are my God... my whole being longs for you in a dry and parched land where there is no water" (Psalm 63).

Throughout this book, I kept falling into this gap between the exercise of vocation, and its cruciform foundation.

As one example, consider the prophet's wife in the days of Elisha who needed a miracle of provision; she had nothing but a little oil in the house. Costa wants to turn this into a lesson about recognising what we have, even it is little (page 50, *Called to Flourish*); we should be "prepared to live by an exception." But the story is actually about someone who is at the *end* of herself, and receives a *miraculous* provision. She didn't walk away from her time of indebtedness grateful for her lesson about looking on the bright side; she came out with a testimony of "I had nothing... but God..." Her family had died, so to speak, and had been restored back to life.

Another example: I truly appreciate how Costa devotes a chapter to the seasons of delay (page 63ff, *Called to Wait*.) For Costa, these seasons are a "a kind of spiritual workshop" (page 64). We might learn, alongside the footballer, Pelé, to imagine ourselves "performing like an irresistible force" (page 67). At this point even he realises that he is in danger of slipping into the "power of positive thinking" (page 67). His response is a subtle deflection, to **cover self-actualisation with a Christian aesthetic** rather than deal with

the principle: Perform, but of course, don't forget that "the source of our hope and our ability to deliver come from the Holy Spirit" (page 68). Yes, "we need to be firm, positive, and inspired to believe the promises of the Bible" (page 68), but that is the *fruit* of the wilderness experience, not the path that takes us through. The wilderness isn't an object lesson in having our "dreams and determination run together" (page 75). Rather in the waiting we learn to lay it all down, until the Holy Spirit grounds our inspiration in God and not ourselves. If we seek to save our life in the wilderness, we've lost it.

These gaps matter. "I am no longer the arbiter of success in my life" (page 17), Costa wisely says, but the measure of success he applies in his anecdotes are usually, frankly, *worldly*: measures of numbers, influence, and *size*! If it is that, and not the cruciform way, that seizes our vocation, then we are undone. Costa is borrowing his vocabulary (e.g. the sting of "satisfactory underperformance", page 56) from his mercantile world, and that is not without merit. But the *allure*, the *pursuit*, of 'success' is a subtle idolatry that needs sanctification, not succour. Performance-drive *undermines* vocation. In the church world, especially, we must confront it. One of the ugliest parts of evangelical culture, the wounds of which I encounter time and time again in my walk and in others, is the invalidation of brothers and sisters; their vocations have been weighed and found wanting by some cold measure of performance that is actually extrinsic to the vocational walk of faith. Fairly or not, in caricature or otherwise, the HTB ecosystem is often that measure.

Those with a prophetic vocation would be least helped by this book. Costa rightly recognises that he buys into a framework for expressing calling that is "a privilege of the few, and we should always see it as such" (page 81, *Called to Choose*). He is also wise to affirm the simple serving tasks of being a "cog in the bigger machine" (page 58). This book isn't an

insensitive triumphalist treatise! For those who are playing the game, this book will help them win it with integrity. But, for some, the game is rigged. Sometimes the machine needs breaking. At that point the prophetic vocation needs nurture and wisdom. Their “why” would collide with the milieu of this book, I think, and fall through the gap.

I admire his vulnerability in talking about fear and anxiety (page 105, *Called to Courage*). In fact, I found this chapter to be quite therapeutic as I brought to mind some of my own “disappointment and dashed hopes” (page 106). But again, the gap is evident, even in his **theology of failure**. It is good to talk about mistakes, especially painful ones, but, in the end, they are merely *mistakes*. It is *shame* that must be confronted, and Costa *avoids* it. “We will all fail at something at some point, we will never *be* failures” (page 109), he says, and skirts the issue. We can’t cover our failures with a Christian aesthetic of “There, there, think about Jesus realise that you’re *not* the failure.” Rather, it is *precisely* at the cross that shame gives way to life. I need the cross when I *am* broken and wrong – when I *am* a failure, and not simply when I’ve mucked something up. Christ took my shame, and all my *being* is now a gift from him. This is how vocation is built on his grace, and not our own sequence of little discoveries of how to do things better next time.

I appreciate how Costa may struggle with “determinist philosophies” (page 83) such as that of Marx and Freud, but he should also be wary of the opposite extreme of **self-determinism**. He urges us to “set [our faces] like flint” (page 121) as we “throw all that we have into this struggle.” But he is quoting from Isaiah 50:7 and the rest of it says this: “*Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced, therefore have I set my face like flint, and I know I will not be put to shame.*” The proactivity is not from us and our flinty faces, it is from the Lord. We realise our vocation when we realise our *utter existential* dependence upon God.

Costa gets close to it when he acknowledges that “there could never be a shaking so severe as to dislodge the life that Christ wanted to have in and through me” (page 122) and when he affirms an ethos of “not sink or swim but saved” (page 123). But he presents this as if it’s our “emergency braking system” (page 124) or some sort of safety net. It’s not; it’s our *foundation*, and the essence of all that we are and do.

Again, I appreciate how he doesn’t ignore the *cost* of calling. He quotes Paul’s overwhelming challenges (page 156, *Called to Persevere*). But Paul, in fact, rests his perseverance not in his “indomitable *conviction*”, but in *surrender and being strong in weakness*. “When we are cursed, we bless”, Paul says, “when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly. We have become the scum of the earth, the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.” (1 Corinthians 4:12-13). Paul is compelled not by self-confidence, but by Christ’s love (2 Corinthians 5:14). Once again, the difference between Paul and Costa, is cruciform. All visions die; if they don’t we achieve them in our own strength. **All perseverance is grounded in our total reliance on Jesus.** We don’t “celebrate because our plans are completed” (page 161), we celebrate because, *he* has led us, and *his* plans have become *our* plans. *Our* plans have died, *his* have been completed. To *God* be the glory.

My frustration here echoes a broader angst. These various gaps – a tendency towards self-reliance and performance-drive, deflection by appeal to Christian aesthetics, diminution of the prophetic voice and so on – are a subtle but real characteristic of the wider church culture. They are often manifest in the nuance, and so I hope I am not reading them into Costa’s book or picking the nits. There is so much good in what Costa writes; I just want him to bring it all the way in. The gaps are subtle, but they do need addressing. Anyone who takes up this book will gain much from it. But start with Christ and the taking up of your own cross first. That is

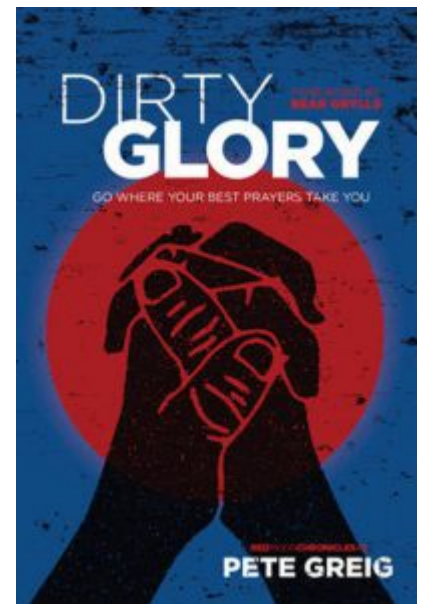
where the grace of vocation is rooted and grows; and it has deep joy.

Review: Dirty Glory

Hey @PeteGreig. You don't know me, but I just blubbed my way through Dirty Glory. Fanned fire from both living flames and dormant embers. Holy mess. Not sure whether to say "thank you" nicely or wryly :-/. "For the sake of the world burn like a fire in me..." Groan. Now what? ☐

– Will Briggs (@WillBriggs) April 7, 2018

I remember a Bible college lecturer asking the class once, "What aspect of the gospel first impacted you?" For some it was about *truth*. For some it was about *forgiveness* and *renewal*. For others it was about *belonging* and *reconciliation*. The aim of the question was to get us to think about how the gospel is a *passionate* thing. How are we *moved*, *enlivened*, *stimulated* by the good news that Jesus, who calls us to himself, is King of this world?



There's a similar question about our sense of *vocation*, the part we play in God's mission. How does the command to "*Go and make disciples of all nations*" move us? For some it is a passion to *teach* and *preach*. For others, it's about *embracing* the broken with care and comfort. Some simply want to introduce people to Jesus. [Aside: there's a strangely fivefold shape to these missional passions].

It's a question worth pondering, because vocational fires dwindle. We come to plod from day to day, being as faithful as we can. Even church life can become a lurch from Sunday to Sunday; it can revolve around the management of buildings, and the placating of opinions. Individually, and together, we Christians are adept at curling up into ourselves and maintaining a static equilibrium of spiritual excuses.

Sometimes we even forget what those old fires felt like. But then annoying books like Pete Greig's *Dirty Glory* come along and douse us in rocket-powering oxidiser.

I wasn't really expecting to begin to burn again when I read Greig's book. It was "just" another book; the standalone autobiographical sequel of "just" another hipster church leader and his well-marketed 24-7 prayer movement, (I mean, Bear Grylls wrote the foreword and everything!). I hadn't really looked into 24-7 much (it's mostly a UK-US thing and not as big in Australia). I'd heard enough to be both interested and slightly sceptical. And the thing is, I've read the book, and we've even visited Greig's Emmaus Road church in Guildford, and I *still* don't know much about the practicalities of the movement and the exact details of what they do. But there's something at the heart of this book, something in the intermingled testimonies and teachings, that has caused my heart to be strangely warmed.

Here are the principles that I can glean from what Greig has written:

Dissatisfaction. I get this. Without a sense of discontent, mission is reduced to "more of what we already have." Church health is reduced the *static health* of numbers and money, and not the *dynamic growth* of vision and depth.

I began to realise that it would now be possible to live the rest of my life as a minor entity on a Christian production line, busy and occasionally even applauded, peddling

religious experiences without ever really nurturing the kind of inner garden that I admired in others, and which could make it all mean something in the end... It dawned on me, but only very slowly, that my inner turmoil could not be dismissed as a quarter-life crisis, it wasn't boredom, nor could it be attributed to a besetting sin from the predictable checklist. Worryingly, nothing was wrong. Everything was right and yet I felt hollow. 'Within me', confessed St Augustine, 'was a famine of that inward food: Thyself, my God.' This hunger in my soul, I began to realise was not bad. In fact it was good: a gift of dissatisfaction directly from the Holy Spirit. (Pages 29-30)

For Greig, the touchstone of holy dissatisfaction is prayer. To express this he turns to the story of Jesus cleansing the temple, a house of prayer that had become filled with corrupt traders. He wants us to hear the rebuke of Jesus: "...[T]here could be large, impressive, popular churches... attracting large crowds... impressive buildings, strong brands, great wealth and a remarkable history..." but they might "evoke a similar rebuke" if "they have lost the fundamental heart of prayer", (page 44). From this, he develops his "blueprint" of *Presence, Prayer, Mission, Justice, and Joy* (page 45) which becomes the essence and structure of the book.

Presence speaks of the fundamental imperative in prayer to "seek his face always" (page 51). I have been exploring these thoughts in different ways recently, and I was able to rest in Greig's words here. What is fanned into flame is a posture of intimacy (page 71) and of surrender:

Urgent voices are calling us to abandon the familiar comforts of Christendom, to strike out into the unknown and rediscover the Nazarene. Let him hack our systems and take us back to the place of willing surrender in which we will simply do anything, go anywhere, say anything he tells us, whenever, wherever, whatever it takes... We need a theophany, a

rediscovery of the terror of his proximity. (Page 57)

Learning to dwell (and even to sleep) in the love of the Father is offensive to the strategic part of our brains: a violation of the ego; a sort of dying. It can seem irresponsible... It can appear profligate... It can seem naive and scandalous... It can appear selfish... It can seem rude... It can seem unstrategic... [but] 'To be a witness', says the writer Madeleine L'Engle, 'is to be a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist.' (Page 77)

Prayer speaks of power. Greig recounts some amazing stories of answered prayer, of course, but this isn't about hype. This is about simple prayers – bold, simple prayers – simply answered. It is also about “predictable valleys of the mundane” in between, in which “we mature; our faith fills up into faithfulness, we learn to push into community and into God's presence, which is, after all, the greatest miracle of all” (page 108).

Luke 18:8 asks, “Will the Son of Man find faith, when he comes?” and Greig ponders “a big, fat, screaming ‘if’ hanging over the people of God in every generation: will we, will we not, pray when trouble comes?” (page 118). It is a real question. I used to think about ministry and church and simply assume that, of course, we would pray. After two decades in church ministry, I am no longer that naive.

Whenever prayer is reduced to a clumsy technique for getting God to mutter a reluctant ‘Amen’ to our selfish desires, it is merely wishful thinking in a religious disguise. But when prayer is an ‘Amen’ to God's desires, it is profoundly Christian and powerful beyond measure. (page 126)

What is fanned into flame here is a connection of our worship with the renewal of the land. Greig draws on the promises to

Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 to do this, and takes us to “God’s great project to see creation remade” (page 120). He speaks of prayer as a travailing and wrestling (page 129), as childbirth (page 130), and even of violence (page 131); to not have that in church makes as much sense as a soldier not having a gun, “a boxer his fists, or a theologian great tracts of his Bible” (page 132).

I would pushback a little at Greig at this point, though, because he sometimes slips into a false progression: “Once the church is back to normal, pulsing with life, God’s great project is to see creation remade” (page 120). These are not distinct steps, as if once God has finished building the church, he’ll move on to the world! A church does not pulse to life unless it is *already* yearning for God’s great project. Christ grows his church as he calls us out into his world-changing purposes, not *before* he does. I think Greig gets this though.

Mission reflects how God intends us to be a house of prayer *for the nations*. Greig takes us to stories of God’s people being present – in America, Ibiza, and (later in the book) “Boy’s Town” on the Mexican border. These are missionary stories of the old kind, like the ones that stirred Gill and I in our YWAM days. They are of ordinary folk stepping out in faith, daring to go where others would not, for the sake of bringing light to a life, to a place, to a generation.

There’s some decent missiology in Greig’s approach:

“In approaching any new culture our first task is always to remove our shoes, recognising that we are standing on holy ground. We are not bringing the Lord somewhere new, because he is already here. Our primary task, therefore, is to identify God’s fingerprints and to trace his footprints in the new environment.” (Page 208).

And he helpfully addresses our propensity to perform mission

as some form of service provision by professionals:

“Our own journeys of salvation and spiritual formation will... become intertwined with those to whom Christ is sending us... We go to the lost and make space for them to preach to us, to teach us, to minister to our unbelief. This requires stillness, and humility, a deeply anchored assurance in the gospel, and the ability to ask gently disruptive questions.”
(Page 213)

Justice is the touchpoint at which mission impacts the real world. “Prayer without action is just religion in hiding”, (page 238). Justice is where mission gets real. Greig quotes Bob Pierce as he tells us that “one of the most dangerous prayers you can ever pray: ‘Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God’” (page 247).

There’s a lengthy exposition of Kelly Teitsort’s ministry in Boy’s Town Mexico which fans these flames well. And Greig backs it up biblically: He runs a thread through the pre-exilic prophets (page 255), Christ’s cleansing of the temple, and his claim to fulfill Luke 4:18-19 (page 250) and then connects it to our own worship and mission. We are not just about reaching souls, we are about “recognising that “something [is] wrong systemically and it [is] only going to be changed by a profound cultural shift” (page 283).

“Compassion for the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner is not an optional extra for those with a strong social conscience. It bleeds from the heart of true Christian worship. When we care for the poor, we minister to Jesus himself.” (Page 254)

*When God freed the Israelites from captivity in Egypt he did it literally – not just metaphorically. Similarly, when Jesus forgave the sins of the paralysed man... he proceeded to heal him physically too... **Down the ages, it has always been the tendency of the rich to reduce salvation to a purely***

spiritual experience. But if you're hungry you need real bread before you will consider the heavenly variety. If you're in chains you take the Bible verses about freedom very literally indeed. (Pages 278-279, emphasis mine)

Joy is the outcome of faith as it works itself out through dissatisfaction. We are content with nothing else but the presence of God, manifest in power, mission, justice, etc. Jesus is our answer, and his presence is our joy, in with and through all circumstance. Greig spends much of this section talking about the fifteenth anniversary celebrations of his movement. He truly celebrates, but there is a warning away from triumphalism. He points us to the "Jesuit 'Litany of humility'... From the desire of being praised, *Deliver me, O Jesus...*" (Page 315).

So why does all this make me burn up (in a good way)? I'm not entirely sure.

There are certainly some points of personal connection. I know what it is like to share the journey with a chronically-ill wife ("I'm sick of being sick", page 116). I know what it's like to travel internationally as a family, involving our children in the discernment and the cost (page 300). My tears flowed as Greig spoke of his wife's graduation after "illness had robbed her of so many precious moments" (page 299). They flowed even more when I encountered the thought of "the Lord inviting us to pioneer together once again" (page 299).

I found myself repenting at points, or at least, crying out with a *desire* to repent. In our current season I know I have had to turn from the idolatry of comfort. I have had to repent of the faithlessness by which I have placed my sense of identity and worth, and the source of my family's protection and care, not in God's hands, but in broken ecclesial systems.

There was also times of frustration in my reading of this book. Having had my passions awakened, the engines are revved

up and that is accompanied by a familiar sense of wheels spinning. No grip, nowhere to go. It's time to turn this towards intimacy, towards trusting God not just for the fire, but the fireplace in which to burn, and the specific promises for a specific people to cling to.

For me then, the greatest help was Greig's image of "Blue Camp 20." This is drawn from his time in America where he learned the history of his local town: It was once a camp, a place where pioneers, originally intending to go on further, often decided to settle down instead. It speaks of premature comfort with a road not yet travelled.

I was moved by Greig's confession of the temptation to "settle down here and stop pioneering... would it really be wrong to serve the Lord with a bit more cash, a bit more kudos, and a lot less rain?" (Page 141). Indeed, having experienced church planting, and time-limited placements, I am sometimes jealous of the seemingly comfortable run that some of my clerical colleagues get to enjoy! But then there's that annoying, calling, stimulating and painful fire: "I signed up to change the world. I never wanted to be like it." (Page 153).

It's easy to pioneer when you're too young to know what it will cost you, when you feel immortal and invincible and the whole of life is an adventure waiting to begin. But pioneering a second time is hard. Abraham was one of the few who never settled down – even in his old age he lived 'like a stranger in a foreign country... For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and build is God' (Heb. 11:9-10). (Page 143)

We tend to assume that Blue Camp 20 is the frontier from which we can pioneer into new territory geographically, or into new effectiveness professionally, but ultimately it is the place of testing from which we can pioneer into deeper intimacy with Jesus than ever before. We wrestle with God at Blue Camp 20... to come close to him in greater intimacy. We

lay down comfort at Blue Camp 20... We pioneer from Blue Camp 20 not to achieve something for God, but to receive something from him – a deeper fellowship with him in his death and resurrection (Phil. 3:10-11). (Pages 147-148)

Perhaps all that is happened in me is that Greig's prayer for his book has been answered. It has deepened my thirst, because it has "rubbed salt on my lips" and woken me up, (page 12). It has had me shaking off the protections and pretenses of being a performing parson. It has had me reflecting on the past and the present. It has got me dreaming for the future. It has got me longing for his kingdom to come, real, substantial, local, global.

I no longer have the vigour and brashness of my youth and younger pioneering days. I know what real mission costs. I have regrets, and I have hopes. And all I can do is pray, to the glorious God who meets us in the dirt. Somehow, that's where life happens, and I long for more of it.

I give you back today the prayers I have prayed that are not answered – yet. The seeds I've sown that haven't borne a harvest – yet. The dreams I've buried that haven't risen – yet. Restore the years, the prayers, the trust that the locusts have eaten. Remember me, Lord, redeem my life, and answer my oldest, truest, prayers. Amen.

(Page 307)