

Turning Points: the Church in the World 1910-2010

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- [0 : 0 0] Just in case you thought it was an original topic, the book Turning Points by Mark Mill is the inspiration for this presentation.
- It's not a review of Mark Mill's book, but Mark Mill stops at 1910. And so I have taken the liberty to try to say something about the 1910 period.
- Now you know, no respectable historian can do this. The order of those kind of recognition of jumping in, because the order of those want to know approximately where they are, rather than where they were 2,000 years ago.
- I know that historians in the audience, if you'll correct me, if my history was alright. The purpose of this presentation then is to try to locate us in relation to both internal and external histories of the last 100 years.
- Which is a nonsensical ambition. But nevertheless, what I mean by that is that the turning points that are identified by someone like Mark Mill are essentially internal turning points.
- [1 : 3 0] They are the history of the Church from inside the perspective of the Church. And I thought it might be helpful for us to look at the history of the Church inside in the last 100 years, and also to consider the way in which external events have, either directly or indirectly, influenced the way in which the Church evolves and is presented.
- So here is the outline of the talk. There are four parts to it. A very quick list, essentially, of the topics that Mark Mill presents between the history, between essentially 33 AD and 1910.
- Then, the second paragraph, which deals with the internal and speculative account of the Church, because there are speculations both by Mark Mill and by myself in this section.
- And thirdly, the external, that is, external to the Church, record of events since 1910 which have had a direct or indirect influence on the expression of the Christian faith.
- This is also speculative, but these speculations are contributed entirely by me. And therefore, I have to have the adjusted political response as well.
- [3 : 0 1] And finally, why is all this important? Thank you. You'll see here why I'm just listening in order to help you see the scope and extraordinary comprehensiveness of Mark Mill's book.
- I don't have anything to say in terms of challenging this. I simply give it to you so as to stimulate your interest in reading the book itself. But it starts with the fall of Jerusalem, as essentially the time when the Church was forced out of synagogues.
- It became a pilgrim church. And it's interesting, it seems to me, that we find ourselves as a pilgrim church today. Continuities here which are important.
- So you'll see on the left the timing of all these events. The 325 and 451 are the councils that essentially establish the creedal statements of faith.
- There's the record of the monastic development under Benedict's rule. There's the question of the crowning of children as Holy Roman Emperor.

[4 : 21] The Greekism between East and West. The beginnings of Protestantism. Dated from the Diet of Rome, in this case. Always a fascinating place to think about.

And the development of national forms of Christianity. The establishment established as from the UK in 1534. The Roman Catholic Reform and Worldwide Outreach.

The conversion of the West. The French Revolution and the demise of Christendom, which is essentially one external aspect of this list that Mark Knoll produces.

And the Edinburgh Missions Conference and the Ecumenical Movement as the end point of the story. Moving on to the second part of the discussion.

Tentative suggestions of internally generated turning points in the history of Christianity in the 20th century. Martin Knoll adds several turning points that have occurred since 1910, but notes that these are much more tentative than his earlier 12 turning points listed on the previous overhead.

[5 : 53] And I have consolidated some of his suggestions and added my other. I've tried to put these in a chronological order here.

The life and writings of C.S. Lewis, the life and writings of C.S. Lewis, has passed it to a significant turning point, both in terms of the way in which C.S. Lewis has popularized the Christian faith.

I think in terms of his book, Mere Christianity, as one of the real turning points. And yet also, of course, his whole life of writing is moving.

The starting point there is simply his birth date. And it does not constitute the starting point or the planning point of contribution. Then there is the question of the rise and spread of Pentecostalism.

Revival of the Apostolic Faith Gospel Mission in Los Angeles starting in 1906. And the extraordinary explosion of Pentecostalism in the post-1950 period.

[7 : 04] Then we identify the life and witness of the German pastor, theologian, and martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer. If you have not read his letters from prison, I'd like you to do so.

It's the most moving and remarkable way in which a very thoughtful, intellectual, but also deeply committed Christian has responded to the drastic events in Germany during the last war.

There's the Albanian mother, Teresa, a nun whose life was dedicated to the core of Indian society. I judged from discussions last week, and not everyone there is enthusiastic about her as a turning point.

And the last, I think this is an amazing contribution to the life of the Church in terms of when she has impacted the broader society from inside the Church.

The miracle of survival under communism is a turning point of some note. Starting with the survival under Marxist-Leninist society in Russia, and moving on through other versions of communism.

[8 : 25] I think that is a major turning point. And the activities on civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr.

The 1934 Woodcliffe Bible translators, noting that far more individual language groups have received the scriptures during the 20th century than in the preceding 1900 years of Christian history.

1944, 1971, the ordination of Leti and White and the Anglican priesthood in Hong Kong, symbolic of a new visibility for women's ministry in the Church.

The events of Vatican II, 1962-65. And Martin Oll doesn't mention this, but 1968, the establishment of Regent College, and drawing some attention to the President and Jim Houston's vision for the Church in the world.

Essentially the idea of the need for all Christians to be educated theologically and historically. And so these events, I suggest, are turning points in the history of the Church.

[9 : 57] They're not events of established doctrine, of course. That is not the issue. They're events which influence the way in which the Gospel is projected.

And I think that that's the essence of the point that I want to make in relation to the external events as well. The Gospel is unchangeable.

The Gospel remains single. As David has shown in his recent summary for the Lester meeting, there's a single Gospel that prevails throughout history.

But the way in which that Gospel is projected, the emphases that come to bear on the presentation of that Gospel, have very much been influenced by these and many other territories.

And so it is important, it seems to be the first to take note of these, and then a whole lot of other events, about which, again, there can be considerable discussion, because these are all even more tentative suggestions, which derive from my own reflections.

[11 : 23] And again, I look forward to your response to some of these. It's my suggestion that turning points in the life of the Church are just as frequently created by external influences.

I've come up with the following suggestions from the twelfth century. Starting with your favourite, the Scopes Monkey Triumph.

This is the most oddly interpretive event in the history of both the Church and of society in general. It's been claimed to be a victory for Christianity. It's been claimed to be a history for evolution.

It's been claimed to be a triumph for Christianity. The colonial system, and all sorts of people, have looked at this event, and said yes, we try it. But the point with respect to the Church, is that it is an issue about, we have to have some opinion.

It's an issue which is characterised by a whole amount of misinformation. The actual people were extremely confusing to the American Civil Libertarian Union, who was supporting this event, and so was the whole of the Southern Baptist community.

[12 : 47] What it has done is to introduce a theme which was apparently resolved relatively easily in the UK in the 19th century, but has resurrected a matter which continues to vex many people in the Church today.

What is the role of God's creation through evolution? The second matter, 1927, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, which states that uncertainty is a fundamental property of all quantum or wave-like systems.

The more precise the position is determined, the less precisely its momentum. No, that is to say, a fundamental uncertainty exists from a physicist's perspective about the nature of reality.

I take it in this room, we're all realists. I guess we might have a show of hands. And John Bulkinghorne has addressed this issue very clearly from a realist Christian perspective.

This is a fundamental uncertainty in our ability to determine the location and state of matter. We introduce necessary humility in the scientist's perspective of the world.

[14 : 18] But it also challenges us to say what it is that is the real core of our Christian beliefs and doctrine.

The third external influence, which we're all sensitive to, is the role of the tyrants of this 20th century.

Hitler, Stalin and Mao, together, responsible for the murder of 150 million souls. Have we come to grips with what that does to us with respect to the sanctity of life?

Have we not all somehow been influenced by this outrageous century of tyranny and disaster?

Hitler, a radical fascist, Stalin, Marxist-Leninist, and now of course the Maoist.

[15 : 22] And all of them individually are directly responsible for that number of deaths. Another different kind of thing altogether is the 1937 development of the Turing machine, which is one of the earliest examples of a computer.

Very innocently developed in our laboratory. Now it dominates all of us, even to the point of dominating purchases of iPhones and other materiel.

And the way in which this has changed the nature of our society and the nature of the communications that we engage in, not necessarily for the better.

It has increased the efficiency of communication, but it has increased the depth of action that we can achieve on the basis of a personal place-to-place.

A set of interactions. So you can see this is what might be called a view from 30,000 feet.

[16 : 43] And I'm glad to know that we're coming up to the real historian next week. We can see some detail about the history. So we're moving on to 1939-45, and this obviously relates quite closely to what George will be speaking about next time.

But I pick up just the threat of annihilation in this case, caused by the dropping of the atom bomb in Hiroshima. Many Christians have a very real sense of the importance of Armageddon before this time, but it seems to me that not only Christians but the whole world, the subject of 1945, deals seriously with the prospect of annihilation.

Where does the Christian faith fit in the context of impossibility and violation? Well, we have fortunately been faith in a Lord who is in charge of the whole show.

But some of these events have shaken us in terms of how to respond. I pick up 1950 onwards for the population explosion.

When I was born, the world population was 2 billion, and today it is 7 billion. Don't claim responsibility, I'm sure.

[18 : 09] But it's an extraordinary thing that you reflect on this incredible increase in population of the global community.

The practice of birth control has been at the centre of the debate of the United Nations Population Council, pressing for decreased access to methods of birth control, at the same time as, of course, the Roman Catholic Church has staunchly imposed such development.

How do we look at the implications of essentially the uncontrolled growth of the world population when it is possible to have controlled it more significantly?

And in particular, this has become an issue under the importance of HIV-AIDS, where essentially death in a physical sense is being transferred from generation to generation in a way that is out of control.

So, I'm not here to encourage the practice of the child, I must recognize that.

[19 : 35] But I'm saying that these are realities about which we have to have an informed setting. And they seem to be turning points that have a significant impact on the way in which we practice our Christian faith.

Again, I'm saying the Gospel is unaffected by these issues. The presentation of the Gospel is affected by the people. In 1955, the Third World Bandung Conference, which you may be less familiar with, but it represents the emergence of a new community leading to the awakening and empowerment of the Global South.

We've seen the empowerment of the Global South in the Anglican community as a huge and magnificent event more recently. But in 1955, this was really the first time that we became aware of the Global South as a major force in the world.

And this is a significant turning point as we think about how we view the Global South from our perspective, as privileged Western industrial society members.

In 1962, the Silent Spring by Rachel Carson was the wake of a call for environmentalism. Those of you who know more about the environmentalist tradition will know that there were other things of importance before Rachel Carson, but Rachel Carson's book, which emphasized the dreadful impact of DDT on the bird population, was a first global call for concerns about the way in which the environment could be messed up in contemporary society.

[21 : 29] It still seems to me that, with the notable exception of individuals like Lorne Wilkinson at Regent College, which is a long way to go in recognizing the seriousness of this.

I'm talking here about the tree buggers, I'm talking here about a serious look at the way in which our environment has been influenced by our mass consumption and our mass growth in population.

In 1968 we were all shocked by the mass challenge to authority, and simultaneous student rights around the world.

Margaret and I arrived in Vancouver in 1968 to be greeted by a young man, followed by a pig, followed by 500 students invading the faculty club at UBC.

We thought we'd come to a circus rather than a university. But this was simply one of the smallest evidences of what was going on around the world in 1968.

[22 : 44] We recall that there were shootings and killings of students at Kent University. We recall that the Sorbonne was closed down. We recall that there was a whole ricochet effect around the world.

And to me this represents something that continues today and represents a significant turning point. Which you have to look at seriously. The continuing social unrest, the reduced respect of older generations, for institutions, now that I'm at has been, it was an extremely important turning point.

And for established institutions, we have to see how this clearly affects the nature of what respect for the church as an institution.

Well, some of us have already given up on that. But I think we cannot afford to give up on the church as an institution. In 1996, Samuel Huntington, who is a street professor at Harvard, therefore gets a lot of press, wrote about the clash of civilizations.

Many of my colleagues in the political science department think it's a lot of rubbish, because they're convinced that economic factors are at the root of our problems.

[24 : 06] But what Samuel Huntington pointed out was that there are real differences between religions, which we happen to know in this church, but that it is not solely poverty and economic disparities that breed global conflicts.

And since 1996, it seems to me that particular conviction have only been increased as a result of the growth, not only of fundamentalist Islam, but also of fundamentalist Christianity, and fundamentalist everything else.

that's one of the most extreme ways in which the real differences between religions demonstrate.

So this is a very, as I say, a mile-wide and a millimeter-deep overview of my suggestions for turning points.

And I simply then turn to a hopefully discussion, so we can revisit any of the samples.

[25 : 22] I think totalitarian inclinations come out in the first point.

How do these turning points affect the substance of the gospel? Not at all. This is not a question for discussion in this forum. And if you ask this question, you will not.

But, but, how do they affect our understanding of the gospel as Christians? How do they affect resistance to the gospel?

In light of these turning points, I'll be surprised by the secularism of our society. How do these turning points affect our own behavior as Christians?

If at all. Some people say, they don't, they don't think they're aware of. But, in the case, I guess also the discussion will be limited.

[26 : 21] But, surely, some of these events, turning points, must be distracting for all of us. And, one level over the world.

So this is a learner's exchange, and not, sometimes, give the impression that I want to stand up and tell everyone what to do. I don't have the answers in a package for you.

I don't think we are looking for an answer that is packaged. But, we have the confidence that the gospel of grace, the gospel of redemption, the gospel of our future with Christ is assured.

But, given that confidence, how do we get some of these turning points and want to escape the best way? Or, this is really the best one.

We need some of these, the best ones. I should have said before I started that the word turning point is not threshold, or thresholdism as we learned from Bobby a few weeks ago.

[27 : 37] Thresholdism has the, contains the idea that every new step forward wipes out what went before. And, everything that's most recent is therefore the most important and most insightful.

This is not what turning points are all about. Turning points are all, well, different kinds of magnitude, different levels of importance.

But, certainly the most recent is not the most important. What are the assumptions we find? Thresholdism is not. So, with that, I'd like to open up the discussion and ask for your comments, your questions, your feedback.

Would you like to be your chairman in the discussion?

I can try. Have a deal, then. So far, yes, Edie. Well, I've, I guess in the work I do with women, I am quite convinced that there's a real connection between Vatican II and the rebelliousness of 1968.

[29 : 03] And subsequently, the introduction to the Catholic Church of the Alpha program. And this, I think Vatican II, the friends I knew who grew up in a superstitious Christian, Roman Catholic faith all of a sudden began to realize they had the right to think this through.

And many of them, many of them backed away in, because they realized that they had been brought up on guilt and, uh... Shame.

And shame, yeah. And then Alpha, I think it was Archbishop Exner who introduced it to the Catholic Church in Canada. And it's made a huge impact on those who had chosen to stay with them at the Catholic Church but are truly born again believers.

And, um... So I think those, those two are very closely tied together. Yeah. So Vatican II, in fact, is... Huge.

Huge, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And there's no doubt that Pope Benedict has done a huge job of reinforcing the traditional perspective in the light of Vatican II.

[30 : 11] It's already, you know, a forward-backwards kind of relationship. I think we see it fully played out in Quebec, because that's where the students are most rebellious, even now.

And there's just, the churches are empty, perhaps. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Good. Sheila? I think there are two trends.

I liked your additions to all of those points, because I've realized that I've lived through quite a good bit of the last hundred years.

I think there's a bit of a short... But there are two opposing forces going on here, it seems to me. Um... You know, I, I belong to sort of the generation, the university generation of the fifties.

And, and we learned the system, because that was the way to get ahead. And then the sixties hit us. And, and people said, no, we're not going to do that, we're going to change the system, you know.

[31 : 12] Got to get rid of our bras, take, quit shaving our legs, and get out there and do something important, you know. And, um, all of that is part of what you're describing. But, in terms of the church, I think we have, uh, a resistance to authority, which is very much connected with individualism.

And I am really sorry to see us lose the collectivism that, that Canada has been sort of more famous for than our neighbours to the south. Because, um, I think that that was one of our strengths.

And, and yes, it is disappearing. And at the same time as this resistance to authority, we've got the two fastest growing, as you pointed out, um, types of religious practice going on in Christianity and Islam, which is becoming more authoritarian.

It isn't the middle of the road that is increasing in numbers. I think our own church didn't maybe look at this as carefully as we might have. And I'm certainly not saying we should have gone off and done our own thing, regardless of denominationalism.

But, um, the idea of supporting the institution is in direct conflict with some of the things that we also want to encourage people to do. And I would love to hear you comment on, um, uh, that, you know, the, the, the influence of the individual church and the allegiance to it.

[32 : 37] How, how much of this should be absorbed in our agenda? How much should be listening to God's plan for me? And you listen to God's plan for you? And let's go off and do our thing.

Yes, a profound question, Jim. Individualism, I guess, is really what's characteristic of many others, uh, in the contemporary world.

Well, we, we think we have been, uh, prepared enough to be able to make progress on our own.

And, uh, I was interested to hear the other day that one of the big growth features in Vancouver is the enormous number of singles who are now occupying condos at a, uh, a scale which has never been previously seen.

So that, uh, we are becoming isolated individuals. And, uh, society as a whole, which Canada has been characteristically, as you say, characteristically, uh, favored.

[33 : 57] We've been willing to pay more taxes than the United States, for example, because of our sense of the collective. And that's, that's with me, uh, at this point.

So I think it's a very profound thing. I think that the, the sum total of those secular turning points that I have mentioned tend to lead in that direction.

That, that just the, the mass challenge to authority is, is one extreme example. But if you think of each of the, uh, of the items, even going from the scientific establishment through to social and, uh, political unrest, that, uh, all of this seems to have become more individualistic, uh, in the course of our lifetime.

And I think that our, uh, that our conservative evangelical context has changed also, uh, and that we are less, uh, collective than we, than we might have been at the wrong time.

So the creed, uh, when we say, uh, I believe, uh, is more common than the statement we believe. Um, and I think that maybe this is one of the areas in which the catechetical emphasis that, uh, Dr. Packer has been emphasizing might be helpful in reinforcing that collective we.

[35 : 42] Um, and Mr. Packer's, our, uh, more oddahful thinking of, uh, as you can come forward. Uh, thanks to all of you. And do we recommend that despite other studies it is that they insist certainly makes possible give another one. Um, there's a minute of how we wanna get on the back from every side of in the centre.

But, as I would say we saw it in, you know, or we're gonna make a mark on the salt John Stark, in 1944, was able to address the attack on the evangelical aspect of the Anglican church with a label of anti-intellectualism.

And he was able to address the evangelical side from an academic, not an academic, I don't like that word, but from an intelligent point of view, right?

Following up behind with Jim Packer in 1973 with... 61. 61. Was it? Yeah. I was thinking of his book, Knowing God, which came up a little bit later.

But the fundamentalism of the word of God was an earlier one. Well, there was a turning point, I think, for the name of the church. And your experience, you're part of this.

[37 : 18] You're really part of this. We all are. Every one of us is. Well, I found it very interesting to read that history, Jesus' name, particularly.

But the idea that the gospel doesn't change, but it certainly was under attack by itself. The church itself was, in a sense, attacking the nature of the gospel by calling evangelical anti-intellectual.

So, what do you say about that? For those who don't know what Bill is talking about... The Jesus Lane lot is a movement that occurred in Cambridge and the UK during the 1960s, in which there was a real sense of the need for personal and group evangelism.

And the growth and the planting of churches, the planting of new collectives of Christian communities was given a huge impetus at that time.

So, yes, Bill has pointed out a number of other turning points that are important. To what extent they're more important than what I said?

[38 : 49] It was an interesting question. Yeah. I'll think about that, Bill. Well, Harvey has the floor. Was it last week that Rex Murphy on the CBC asked Dr. Stackhouse, point blank, do you think, and is it not a case, that evangelicals, broadly speaking, get a pretty rough ride in the media and, you know, have had some rough treatment?

And Dr. Stackhouse had not given an intelligent answer by saying, well, it's been earned by the evangelical community. Most of our spokespersons for the last couple of generations have been quite stupid.

If not, if not, at times, dangerous. And he's referring to the TV preacher phenomena. The evangelicals, he would say, have been, are still under the cloud of an unintelligent gospel that they preach.

It appeals to the heart strongly, that's good, but it has little to back it up. So I think that, in that context, I do have the floor, don't I? Would you say the, I think the rise of the group that are usually called, they're formally, the Reformed Epistemologists, that great eruption of Christian philosophers in the 20th century is a very significant intellectual turning point.

The idea that Orthodox Christians can take on the best minds in the world and meet them on their own ground is an amazing fact brought about by that movement.

[40 : 35] And I think it's having a very good impact on the church. Any comments? Yes, the brevity of my comments is obviously painfully obvious here because I wanted to index, really, C.S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's examples just of the beginnings of such an awareness.

I do know that, in looking back on my own life, that I can recall the increased confidence that I experienced as more and more literature that seemed to me to make sense was emerging from the conservative Christian corner.

And it was, I think I've said before, that this Fundamentalism and the Word of God by Jim Packer was in many ways a turning point because he made that clear distinction between Fundamentalism and conservative Christian thinking, which was something I had rebelliously been thinking about but not daring to express for many years as I sat in the highly anti-intellectual environment of my local church.

So, yes, Harvey, I mean, we've seen, I think, so many times in this forum the example of what deep Christian thought has been emerging.

Really, it's a phenomenon of the last part of the last century. And so it fits very squarely into this. Permit me one personal narrative here.

[42 : 17] My dad was born in 1895. And so he used to tell us, you know, you kids have no chance of experiencing the sort of things that I've experienced because I've gone through, you know, there were no planes around.

Telephones were anathema. All sorts of strange things. And we sat there and thought, oh, dear. Same old, same old guff.

Now, here I am standing up telling us how things have changed in the nearly hundred years that I've lived. So, change is a permanent feature of our lives.

There's no point in denying that. It's the wonder of the Gospel that it remains unchanged. In the context of everything else changing. And I think that's the remarkable encouragement out of all these terrible things that we've experienced or have heard about.

the fact that things are not getting any better. And, uh, Michael knows that the youngest of people went to church, they no longer do, and so on.

[43 : 33] There are lots of people, lots more people going to church today than there were when I was a little boy. And, uh, there are a lot more deep-thinking Christians, I think, who are making a difference in the world.

So, I don't think we need to give up. But we do have to think carefully about what all this means for us. Does that address your point, uh, what are we doing?

How wonderful. Sheila, are you allowed a second question? I was just going to ask that, however. Not to ask the chair.

Right. This time, anyway. Would you like to go ahead? Thank you. Um, this trend toward individualism, I think, is really quite frightening. And you're talking about, you know, people living alone and so on.

But, I mean, even in a crowded room, people are isolating themselves by texting people that are not in the room, taking calls and so on. Uh, it's as if this is the new umbilical. We have to be connected with somebody out there, but not necessarily can we talk to the person next to us.

[44 : 48] Um, I think the church has a unique, uh, opportunity in that, um, the church is the community. You know, you can't be one person and be the church.

It is the body of Christ collectively. And this is probably the only club in town that you don't have to qualify for. You can walk through the door on a Tuesday night and Nora Johnson will feed you no questions asked.

You know, it's, um, uh, you will be accepted, forts and all, and you will be included somehow or other in that. That's really a very special feature.

You know, it's not like the Rotary Club. It's not like the community center. It's not like any other organization that we have around. And I think we really need to kind of maximize that.

And I think this church is pretty good about doing that. I think. Maybe. Thank you very much.

[45 : 49] Yeah, George. Uh, I, two, uh, questions actually, uh, sneaking in with two and one. Um, you didn't mention in the previous, uh, you know, didn't mention the anti-slavery movements which changed some interpretations of the gospel.

And what about the effects of the two major wars in this century? Because, I guess, Bonhoeffer reflects some of them. Should they not, those not be included?

Good. Well, the first point is, uh, omissions by Mark Knowles. So I, I just, uh, pass that on. Pass that on. I feel free to criticize it.

Yeah, I think that's, that's fair game. I think we should concentrate on that one. The second one. Uh, again, sorry. The, uh, influence or effects of the two world wars.

Oh, right. I mean, there are statistics like the increased crime afterwards and then the rebound of more, uh, you know, change anxiety. Well, you know, yeah, you're absolutely right.

[46 : 57] I mean, the problem of making a list like this, uh, is you miss the, the interactions between individual factors. So that, uh, uh, the, the, uh, rise of, uh, prominence of women, for example, is immediately, uh, resulting from the second world war.

And the first Anglican modern bishop is a sort of reflection of that. The whole question of disillusionment, uh, associated with the two world wars is a huge, uh, phenomenon, uh, turning point.

I, I, I, I could have easily included that. I think what it's, what it's entailed in the list that I, I gave you would, in fact, encompass, uh, that point.

Although it didn't do so explicitly. I, I absolutely agree. Um, again, if you permit a, a personal illusion, because, again, my dad was blown up in the first world war.

He's one of the five people who was actually blown up, the minesweeper, and, uh, woke up in hospital in Hottelpools in, in northern England. And in the second world war, he lost his family.

[48 : 17] And, uh, he didn't have the difficulties of dealing with his little boy. Because we were separated in different countries. But, I think, he probably suffered more from the two world wars than, than most people.

And survived, and, and lived as a, a cheerful Christian soul. To the, to the end of his life, at the age of 90. But, surely, um, there were many people that we have known who went through similar experiences, and, um, the impact on them, on just a little disillusionment, a sense of powerlessness, and so on.

Um, hugely affected by the, the two world wars. And, um, and the actual decimation of, of, of citizens, was greater in the first world war than the second world war, if you exclude the, uh, the Hiroshima event.

But, uh, it does seem that the, the disillusionment was greater cumulatively from the two world wars. Something just didn't seem to come right.

Yes, sir. Margie. Like, when Jesus said himself that, till the end of the, of time, there will be war, the rumors of war, uh, see to it that you're not troubled.

[49 : 45] You know, in other words, don't be distressed to the point where you give up. But, um, but what did he mean when, really, because, you know, war is so devastating and affects everybody in that direct area, and it can affect, like you said, generations, the knock-on effect somehow, from parents, uh, a dad being in that war and telling you stories that make you feel terrible, you know, emotional things.

So, you know, don't be distressed, he said, but how could we not be, you know, well, there are two, there are two levels of distress here, I think, I mean, of course, there's many levels of distress, but he's, he's saying, keep your, keep your eyes on the big picture.

Yeah. The big picture is bigger than the world wars, it's bigger than the tyrannical activities of these, uh, leaders, it's bigger than everything else that's happened in our lifetime.

And, Jesus is the goal, and Jesus is the companion, and Jesus is the way. So I would think that's, that's the context. Yeah.

But that's, that's a very theoretical answer for some people. You know, we can be grateful for the fact that we have that conviction, but for many people that doesn't really seem to register very, very much, and so the question is, how do we deal with the disillusionment that comes from, from the wars?

[51 : 19] And I think that, that's really a gospel question. And, uh, and really, I don't know what the psychiatrists would say about it and what the psychologists would say about it, but yes, it seems to me that the two levels of distress are important.

Yeah. I think they're in this country. Joseph. Um, one of the things that struck me as not on your list, I, in your, in your answer to the preceding comment, I appreciated the way you tied things together.

A turning point spreads out and links to things that you have chosen, but, uh, I'm struck by the fact that 9-11 is not on your list.

And the context that I would throw out for that is prior to the Spanish-American War, the United States really didn't have much of an empire, and its apogee was World War II, and it's in severe financial trouble.

Well, did anybody hear that comment? 9-11 was not on my list. Didn't you just order that in 2010? Well, then, I don't know.

[52 : 46] It was pre-saved. I don't know. It seems to me that, uh, this is a, this is a wrinkle relative to the, uh, it's a...

And 9-11 is actually 2002. I thought about that. Or 2001. Yeah. Well, I think that the whole of North American reality is a pimple on the global situation.

I mean, of course it is terrible that 3,000 people were killed, but what is that? In relation to the massive genocides and the killing of so many millions of people by individuals.

To me, 9-11 is a sidebar because it's huge for North America, but for the rest of the world, it's, uh, really just an expression of extremism and terrorism of the kind that I was referring to as the growth of, of fundamentalism.

But the reaction, or the response to 9-11 was one that, I would say, aggravated the fundamentalism.

[53 : 56] Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Like, right into it. Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. But I don't think it, I, I, I would make the case it's not different than the, the turning points that I was looking at.

But, um, you may be right. Yeah. Terry. Let's go back to World War I. He was the elder man.

Uh, many. He was the elder man. Yes. Uh, many historians and others, uh, look at World War I as one of the great turning points of Western civilization.

And then, as mentioned earlier, World War II actually was the conclusion of World War I. uh, the events of 1918 and 1919 and the Resi and so on was a total mess.

Okay. And we're still dealing with it. Uh, today, literally. Yeah. However, the big, in this context, the tremendous amount of, what you call disillusionment, uh, angst, uh, disorientation after World War I, especially in Germany and, and the continent of Europe, was enormous.

[55 : 19] And we should not minimize the amount of philosophical and religious thought and rioting and turmoil in the 1920s and 1930s in Germany in response to World War I.

Not the war. The military aspect, but the total convulsion that changed the map of Europe completely. That led to a number of very prominent theological, uh, theologians and philosophers coming out of, in a German language.

And Bonhoeffer was very much part of that. Uh, he's the one that sort of survived, become known outside of the group if you weren't reading that literature, if you were.

That's why I thought he was a tannic, right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I appreciate that. Isabel, I think we're gonna have to... Oh. One more. One of your, the items on your last two years, or Marx, or both here, I can't remember, was the fact that we have this population explosion.

Yes. The two billion. And I said most part of that is our modern, um, science and medicine, keeping people alive. You know, it used to be that people would, you know, even in the Western world, were decimated by a plane.

[56 : 51] Now that, you know, there's one injection that's stopped. But then the other thing we have over this last hundred years, is this advent of technology. And I mean, as you said, it's isolating people with their, uh, cell phones and their own little flaps.

But on the other hand, it is also allowing people to, um, hear the good news of Jesus in places where normally, I mean, a missionary would have gone and fed, you know, a hundred people for a lifetime.

Now, the media goes in, and so people are hearing about the Gospel. So that must be, even though it may be an evangelist, wild evangelist Gospel, in some ways, that must be a positive for the, um, for the increase in Christianity.

Say in Africa, and I mean in Africa and Asia, Christianity is just, you know, ranging through there. Yeah. So one of the things on my list was the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Mm-hmm. Yes.

Which is a huge growth just, and it's partly through technology. Mm-hmm. But, uh, also in this, uh, context, the whole sort of growth of the, the, the, um, South, the global South is, uh, an aspect of this.

[58 : 15] I think that, uh, that really, um, I, I don't want to defend my list to the last letter. It's clearly all sorts of things that could be added. My purpose in this was to just alert us to the fact that change is everywhere, and we need to be vigilant, uh, in relation to it.

But most importantly, that without, with all this, and I don't agree that, uh, that the Gospel was changed as a result of, of world with forces, uh, of slavery. But I, I think the Gospel remains the Gospel of freedom and grace, even though it was misinterpreted for a long time.

Yeah, I, I, I, I, uh, meant the interpretation. Interpreted, yeah, right, right. So I think that there's just a whole lot of turning points that one could be looking at.

So I, I think that Marnel has done us a huge service by picking up major turning points. They give us a lot of perspective, they give us a lot of bird's eye view.

And, and this is what I think, uh, is, uh, inspirational from my point of view, is just try and think where we are today, get an overview of all these things.

[59 : 24] We tend to get burdened so quickly by so many things. But look, all these things have happened, and the Gospel remains unchanged. And, fundamentally, that's the, that's the, the message that I would want to take away.

So, oh, come on. Yes. Uh, I have a comment, what my mother said to me, and she was born in 1889.

Oh, beat my dad. She lived in 93, and she told me one day, she says, you know, I was born with a, with a horse and bunny age, and I died, I'm gonna die in the, uh, the man in the moon.

So, it's, uh, you know, it's just the difference how the vast things are moving. Yeah, you're right. Yeah. And she came over from Ireland in 1911.

And, uh, she came over in the Empress of Ireland. The Empress of Ireland got hit by a barge in 1914, and it sucked.

[60 : 30] And I asked her one day, I said, so, when were you planning to come over? He says, the spring of 1912, you were planning to go into New York? Well, that would have been the Titanic.

So, as a result, me and my brothers had a little saying, never take a boat trip with mother, because she never knew what's gonna happen. . . .

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. . . . is the world is always changing. And the nature of our fallen, our fallen nature is we are always changing away from God.

[61 : 46] And Jesus says, in the context of the church, we are to separate from the world in the sense that we should have different values.

We should look at the world differently from the world. And Jesus tells us to bring the church to the world in the sense that bring the gospel to the world.

And the devil always wants to do the opposite things. I think, yes, it is true that the gospel does not change in the midst of all the change that we have experienced.

All the changes that the world has gone through in the history of mankind. But we have to be so careful of how we present the gospel.

There's a change in light of our cultural context. And inediblely, we always do. I mean, in that rich materialist society of the South, we get our prosperity gospel.

[63 : 02] In light of the poverty in South America, we got our liberation gospel. In light of our postmodern liberalist freedom society, we have our liberalist theology, and we know that all too well.

And these are different ways that we want to package the gospel that truly remains unchanged, but our human nature wants to package it and bring it to the world that way.

But actually what's happening is, how I understood it, it's a way that the devil brings the world to and impose it onto the gospel instead of the way that God wants it.

That is bringing the gospel to the world. I think on top of understanding how we're grateful that gospel doesn't change in light of how deviating we are, we have to be careful.

We have to really be mindful of this, not letting our, how we are formed by the world bring world values into how we present the gospel.

[64 : 33] I couldn't agree more. I think you expressed that very well. I think the question for me is, we don't need to deny certain things that occur in the world.

In other words, there's a possibility if we present the gospel in a framework of an unchanging society that we will not be listened to at all.

So, but your point is well taken, and the authority lies with the creeds, with the gospel, as presented in the Bible.

No question there. Thank you for that comment. Trav, this is the last question. Well, I'm one of the, I guess one of the older ones here, but certainly not the most educated in Scripture, and I can be a little bit less windy than that one.

Anyway, you know, when Jesus was walking around those three years teaching, he healed the blind, and he healed the deaf.

[65 : 49] And the world today is full of blind and deaf people. And it's the Scripture that will open their eyes and open their ears.

and the Scripture has to be open to these people in the proper way. So that, you know, I'm not, not that we're doing anything there, but with the, with what the Scripture is really teaching, not a lot of the Godly church is being spat out these days as faithful reading of the Gospel.

Right. And the other thing is that he said that he will be with us always. Yeah. So there's no fear in him leaving us. So we can just put our weight on his shoulders.

Excellent. Thank you, Trevor. That is a wonderful way to finish. Yeah. We trust our Savior to lead us through these difficult times.

And I think that's, that's the, that's the best message we could have finished with. So thank you. Thank you everyone for the comments. The book, in case you've forgotten the title, is Turning Points.

[67 : 15] Thank you. Thank you. Thanks.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.