

they actually care about. This is merely playing to the gallery. It is not what I mean by unpopular opinions. What I have in mind is what Dorothy Sayers demonstrated, namely, the ability to take the Bible and to apply its truth in an acute and uncomfortable way – but in a way which gets under the skin, which is demonstrably good and fruitful.

I like unpopular opinions which frighten the conscience. I like unpopular opinions which have to be suppressed by the thought-leaders, which cannot be spoken. I like unpopular opinions which expose the incoherence of the ruling ideologies of the day. I like unpopular opinions which may make the progressive secularist pause, if only for a moment, to wonder whether it could be true after all that God is God.

Now don't get me wrong. I am not talking about the adolescent need to shock for the sake of shocking. I am talking about the power of the Bible when exposed to the world, to do its own shocking for the sake of the world. For example, the Bible says that there is but one true and living God and that there is only one Saviour, and that is Jesus Christ. He alone is our mediator with God. Now that is really shocking.

How do we say that sort of thing in a way which gains a hearing, but which tickles and prickles and provokes? How do we say it in a way which invites belief?

I have three suggestions worth trying out in private conversation or public discussion.

1. **Know exactly what it is you need to say to be true to the Bible.** In due course, make it clear that this is where you are getting your argument from. Do not be afraid to express an unpopular opinion if it is or flows from the gospel. Let the Bible loose on the conscience.
2. **Instead of going directly to your gospel claim, ask questions to probe the incoherence of secularist thinking.** Many of our contemporaries simply assume that their position is completely obvious and that the Christian view can be destroyed by a quip. Allow the natural desire to express opinions to work for you. Invite them to explain and justify their convictions. Use questions as a means of holding up a mirror in which your friends can see themselves.
3. **Proceed from the known to the unknown.** That is, in the midst of the argument, find a point of utter commitment, on which you can build the house of truth. Often such moments are found in the unwary clichés of modern speech, clichés which reveal a deeper commitment to a better truth than that of secularism. See if you can turn their own cliché into an unpopular but compelling truth, a truth which shows how the Bible makes sense of the world.

For example, there is a juicy opportunity when you hear the immortal phrase, “I just want to make a difference.” But let me talk about that next time.

Collect

Almighty God, you alone can order the unruly wills and passions of sinful men: grant to your people that we may love what you command and desire what you promise, so that among the many and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



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Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved [Acts 4:12]

Easter 4

21st April

Acts 4:1-12

Psalms 23

1 John 3: 16-24

John 10:11-18

Easter 5

28th April

Acts 8:26-40

Psalms 22:25-31

1 John 4:7-21

John 15:1-8

Unpopular Opinions: (1) Setting the Bible Loose on the Conscience

Peter Jensen 29/03/2016 TGCA

I admit it: my title is a direct steal. Beside me, as I write, is a little book published in 1946. Its author is the Christian dramatist, novelist and essayist, Dorothy Sayers. Its title is *Unpopular Opinions*. I have always wanted to write under that title and seventy years after her, I think I can get away with it.

Miss Sayers' explanation is interesting:

I have called this collection of fugitive pieces "Unpopular Opinions," partly, to be sure, because to warn a person off a book is the surest way of getting him to read it, but chiefly because I have evidence that all the opinions expressed have in fact caused as certain amount of annoyance one way and the other.

The three essays which created such hostility that they were suppressed, were entitled "Christian Morality," "Forgiveness," and "Living to Work." This may be puzzling, but since the one on forgiveness was written during the Second World War and suggested the need to forgive enemies, you may guess what some of the problems were.

Miss Sayers was an acute and applied theologian. She therefore annoyed people. Of course, some "unpopular opinions" are really popular opinions in disguise. Thus, there is a tendency for those who speak for Christ in public to have the immense personal satisfaction of speaking against their own tradition in favour of some cause where they are in accord with the progressive secularists of the day.

As a result, they experience the pleasant frisson of being thought daring for being different, while standing in no real danger of being criticised by those whose opinions

A guide for our prayers during the week

Monday

Our diocese and the gospel

- Bishop Peter
- Other parishes
- Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

Tuesday

Our church and the gospel

- Children and youth
- Families
- Seniors
- Ivy, Nancy, Chris

Wednesday

Our community and the gospel

- St Luke's Op Shop
- Blackwater
- Emerald Churches

Thursday

Our nation and the gospel

- Prime minister
- State and local government
- Religious Freedom legislation

Friday

God's world and the gospel

- Islamisation
- War and poverty
- Persecuted Church
- CMS and ABM

Saturday

Ministry and the gospel

- Bible Studies
- Food for Body and Soul
- Wardens and Parish Council

Dates to Remember

Today	Service at 4 pm Food for Body & Soul at 5.30 pm
27-28 April	BCA – Mike Uptin
25 May	Lay Preacher training Springsure 1-5 pm
26-29 May	Clergy Conference

	21 April	28 April
Service Leader	Russell	Daniel
Welcome	Merv	
Power Point		
Read	Larry, Nancy	
Prayers	Natalie	Donna
Sunday School		
Morning Tea		
Shop	Nancy, Jenni	
Mowing		

The BCA Prayer

Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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