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Abstract

Peter's readers were exiles facing accusations and slander. As a response to these negative declarations, Peter exhorted them toward positive, life-giving verbal proclamation. He reminded his readers of *past* proclamation by Jesus, the prophets, and those who preached the Gospel to them. The verbal proclamation by Peter's readers was to include the declaration of "the praises" (2:9) of God, blessing and keeping the "tongue from evil" (3:9, 10), giving a coherent defense of the Christian faith (3:15), as well as "speaking the very words of God" (4:11). Word and Mission then, are connected in positive verbal proclamation. The chapter concludes with a brief case study concerning dialogue with the Muslim world.

Introduction

Peter's readers were suffering "grief in all kinds of trials" (1 Pet 1:6). These trials included accusations, insults and slander. Peter, then, gave them several ways to respond. They were to live holy lives (1:14–17; 2:11–12), know their identity as born-again chosen ones (1:1–3; 2:3; 2:9–10); realize the action of God on their behalf (1:3–5; 18–21); commit themselves to God (4:19); and stand firm in the grace of God (5:12). In this article, however, I would like to point out another response: positive, verbal proclamation. In other words, Peter encourages life-giving, affirmative words amid insulting slander and negative accusations. To motivate his readers to positive proclamation, he highlights *past* proclamation, seen most prominently in the lives of Jesus, the prophets, and those who preached the Gospel to his readers. It is in this way that Word and Mission are connected in 1 Peter.

Theology “from below”

At the outset of this “academic” article, we need to be reminded of the context of many of our fellow believers. Although those of us in academia have the joy of spending hours reading, pondering and writing on the deep things of God, many of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ do not share this same privilege. Consequently, we need to have in mind the perspective of theology “from below,” as well as to appreciate a study of the Bible as an “ordinary reader” who lacks formal theological training (Musa 2020, 36; cf. Akper 2005, 1–13). As Hassan Musa writes, “[t]he perspectives of these readers need to be heard. They show us where God’s word is needed in the lives of people and reminds us of how God in Jesus lived with people in their contexts” (2020, 36). While we should always strive for “solid food” (Heb 5:12–6:1), as well as to “teach ... sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1),¹ we should also acknowledge the reality and context of the “ordinary reader” of the Bible. In other words, while there are circumstances that call for a deep, intellectually challenging treatise (that we might title a “Book of Hebrews type of exposition”), other times we need to enter the real-world context of many of our fellow believers. We might title this a “1 John type of personal engagement.” This article seeks to encourage all readers, irrespective of their educational background, toward verbal proclamation.

Life as Exiles

It appears that Peter did not personally know his readers. Even though he called them “dear friends” (2:11; 4:12), he did not call anyone by name, and “his knowledge of their situation does not seem specific enough to have come from being present with them” (Jobes 2005, 43). He described them as scattered “exiles” (1:1). As such, they would have felt “isolated and insignificant” (Muriithi 2006, 1544), and would have experienced the stigma of being identified as refugees (see Nijukuri 2020, 245–246).² Interestingly, “the entire book of 1 Peter is both framed (1:1; cf. 5:13) and saturated with the terms of exile and foreignness ... [and it is] the only NT book to use the motif of foreignness to explain the life of the Christian with respect to society” (Jobes 2005, 39). Indeed, there is the possibility that Peter’s readers had experienced expulsion from Rome and were forced to immigrate a long distance to the east: to “Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia” (1:1) (Jobes, 2005, 37–41). We would be remiss if we did not note that many

¹ Throughout this article, I will be citing from NIV (1984 translation), unless otherwise noted.

² Of course, Scripture is full of accounts of those who were forced to move from their homes to settle in other places. Examples include Abraham, those deported to Assyria and Babylon, and many early Christians (see Adedibu 2020, 231).

today are experiencing similar alienation through forced immigration, war, ethnic conflicts, and natural disasters (Adedibu 2020, 231).³

First-century believers often lived as outcasts and outsiders. They were viewed as a threat to social order, and were at times savagely slandered (Campbell 1998, 29). Craig Keener writes that Romans viewed Christians “as ‘atheists’ (like some philosophers, for rejecting the gods), ‘cannibals’ (for claiming to eat Jesus’ ‘body’ and drink his ‘blood’) and incestuous (for statements like ‘I love you, brother,’ or ‘I love you, sister’)” (2014, 685).

Believers today in some Asian contexts also face opposition: “ancestral worship and domestic cults are common in individual households, and ... participation in various folk religions is just part of the social norms. Christians failing to participate in these ancestral rites and common cultic practices can similarly result in social rebukes for being stubborn, exclusivist and even impious toward the ancestors” (Wai-Lan Sun 2016, 257). K. K. Yeo writes of theory and practice being inseparable in Asian biblical interpretation, with Asian believers living a very public faith. As they live out this life in the midst of a pluralistic society, many are confronted with sociopolitical alienation (2017, 328). Many other cultural contexts around the world exhibit these same tendencies. Thus, Peter’s words to the “exiles” of the first century hold acute relevance for many today.

Paraenesis and Proclamation

To appreciate how Peter “speaks” to the scattered exiles, we will briefly focus on the actions of Paul. In a time of potential crisis—before their shipwreck on Malta—Paul sternly warned and admonished the soldiers on board the ship. We note two instances of an interesting verb: *παρήνει ὁ Παῦλος* (*parenei ho Paulos*) (Acts 27:9); *νῦν παραινώ ὑμᾶς* (*nun paraino humas*) (Acts 27:22). The former phrase is translated as “Paul warned them” (NIV; “began to admonish them”: NASB; “advised them”: ESV), and the latter as “now I urge you” (NIV, NASB, ESV). The lexical form of the verb is *παραινέω* (*paraineō*) and can mean “to advise strongly, recommend, urge” (Bauer 2000, 764). Thus, Paul was warning and exhorting the soldiers in Acts 27. From this verb we get the word *paraenesis*.

³ Today’s church needs to be consistently reminded to affirm the human dignity of these immigrants, show solidarity with them, and meet their spiritual needs (see Niyukuri 2020, 252–254). For the perspective of an “exile mentality” of Peter’s readers, seen with the “spiritual house”/ “temple” of 1 Pet 2:5, see Mbuvi 2007. He writes that the cultic language (“sacrifices,” “priesthood,” and “spiritual house” also translated “temple of the Spirit” in v. 5) emphasizes the identity of the exiles in *spiritual* terms. “Cultic language thus provides the vehicle to communicate the active presence of God in the midst of the Christian community’s struggles with ostracization, persecution and self-identity” (2007, 5). Although I am not denying a spiritual aspect to Peter’s use of the term “exile,” I am assuming that Peter’s readers were physically forced to move to a new location.

Paraenesis is a particular genre of literature. It is characterized by moral exhortation and encouragement toward a certain action. While we see the paraenetic tradition in nearly every New Testament epistle, it is “perhaps most richly on display in the General Epistles” (Charles 2006, 287). Rather than complex doctrinal treatises (seen in Romans or Galatians for example), letters like 1 Peter are characterized more for exhortations and encouragement. Thus, 1 Peter “displays characteristics of paraenetic as its specific literary genre” (Campbell 1998, 20). Also, “[l]ike Greco-Roman paraenesis, 1 Peter evidences an emphasis on ethical instructions that direct and encourage moral action” (de Waal Dryden 2006, 7). Doctrine is still discussed in paraenetic literature but is firmly connected to exhortation and is meant to be applied to the daily life of the believer (Pérez Millos 2018, 48).⁴ One aspect of paraenesis is the comparison of negative and positive behavior. Authors will challenge their readers *toward* the positive and *away from* the negative. This aspect is prominent in 1 Peter (Charles 2006, 287, n46). What follows, then, is an example of this “positive”/ “negative,” paraenetic tradition of 1 Peter, seen specifically in the topic of verbal proclamation.⁵

There are three aspects of verbal proclamation in 1 Peter. First, there are *negative* declarations: accusations (2:12); ignorant talk (2:15); “everyone who asks you” (3:15);⁶ malicious words (3:16); slander (3:16); abuse (4:4) and insults (4:14).⁷ A result of these negative declarations was that “[s]lander and malicious talk undermined their relationships with associates and family, threatened their honor in the community, and possibly jeopardized their livelihood” (Jobes 2005, 58). Second, there is *positive* proclamation *in the past* by prophets (1:10, 12); Jesus (2:22, 23; 3:19; 4:6); the God who “calls” (1:15; 2:9, 21; 3:9; 5:10); the Spirit (1:11, 12); and those who preached the Gospel to Peter’s readers (1:12, 25; cf. the “word” or “message” of 2:8 and “the gospel of God” in 4:17).⁸ The “word of the Lord” in 1:25 is central to this idea of a past proclamation. Previously, Peter wrote of the *new birth* by the word of God that created the people of God (1:23; also 1:3). He then writes: “this is the word that was preached

⁴ Peter uses a similar verb (“encouraging you”) in 5:12: παρακαλῶν (*parakalon*) which also means to “encourage, exhort” (Bauer 2000, 765).

⁵ While I will not be using formal aspects of the methodology known as rhetorical criticism, I will be taking advantage of general insights from this field. One insight focuses on an investigation into how an author attempts to address and then persuade his or her audience given their situation. Another insight shows an appreciation for the communicative force of texts and highlights the “art of persuasion” by the author, who often is attempting to put the hearer into a certain frame of mind. Such an author appeals to the mind as well as the heart (see Möller 2005, 689–692).

⁶ There is nothing in the grammar or word meanings that would suggest negativity here. However, acknowledging *the historical situation* of exiles being harassed and accused, we can surmise that non-believers were not genuinely asking nor humbling seeking answers. The fact that Peter encourages his readers (in the same verse) to answer “gently” and “with respect” corroborates this idea of some sort of negativity in the questions from the non-believers.

⁷ See also “threats” (3:14, NIV 2011), also translated as “intimidation” (3:14, NASB), as well as 2:4: “rejected by humans.”

⁸ Another example of this “past” proclamation is Peter himself, since his purpose was to “encourage” and “testify” (5:12).

to you” (1:25). Here we note the first hint of a connection between Word and Mission—the Word was preached, and a people were formed (thus, Mission completed). The third aspect of verbal proclamation in 1 Peter is the encouragement *to continue* this positive proclamation (2:9; 3:9, 10, 15; 4:9, 11). In the context of past, life-giving proclamation, then, the missionary strategy of positive declarations—seen paradigmatically in the “word of the Lord” (1:25)—will be explored as a response to the negative accusations that Peter’s readers were experiencing. Peter, in this paraenetic letter, seeks to morally exhort his readers to verbally proclaim God’s message amid dark and negative slander and accusation. In what follows, we will discuss the content of the positive proclamation seen in 1 Peter 2:9; 3:9, 10, 15; 4:9 and 11.

Continued Proclamation: “Declare the praises” (2:9)

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet 2:9).

Mission is a consequence of our identity. This identity was formed because of the Word. The new birth, through the Word (1:23–25), formed believers into a chosen people (2:9). These believers were then given the task of “declaring the praises” (2:9) of God. Thus, the Word births Mission. The Word leads to Mission. The Divine Word grants rebels and sinners a new identity and calls them to the task of announcing to a dark world the wonder of living in the light. Yet, even in this passage on *our* identity, Peter reminds his readers that the focus is to remain on God. This is important given our propensity to self-absorption and egotism. The work of salvation is *from God* (see also Ps 3:8; Jon 2:9); specifically worded in 2:9 as he who “called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light.” The Triune God always does something *for his people* before asking *of his people* (McConnell 2006, 330). God first establishes our identity, and then calls us to his mission. This is done through his Word.

Specifically, our identity is described as “a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God” (2:9). These phrases are rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures.⁹ Peter connects the NT church with the people of God from the old covenant and is “giving his readers a distinctive identity that is bound up tightly with God’s mercy to them in Christ Jesus, and with their response in obedient faith and holiness” (Carson 2007, 1032). This response takes the form of proclamation (2:9) and holy lives (2:11–12). By knowing our identity, “the church will have authority to speak with a prophetic voice and be an instrument for peace and reconciliation” (Jusu 2016, 1857).

⁹ See Exod 19:5–6; Deut 7:6; 10:15; 1 Sam 12:22; Isa 62:12; for the mention of a “people of God” in 1 Pet 2:10, see Hos 1:9, 10; 2:23.

The crucial phrase for our purposes is “declare the praises” (NIV); “proclaim the excellencies” (NASB; ESV). The Greek verb translated “declare”/ “proclaim” is ἐξαγγέλλω (*exaggellō*) and appears only here in the NT. It means to “show forth” or “to make known by praising or proclaiming” (Strong 1995, #1804). Another source sees its similarity to the different (and common) Greek verb ἀναγγέλλω (*anaggellō*)¹⁰ to emphasize the presence of the preposition ἐξ/ἐκ (*ex/ek*) at the beginning of the verb that “gives the sense of publishing forth” (Alford 1976, 348). Thus, we were birthed by the Word of God; we have become the people of God; and we proclaim *outward* this reality to the nations. When we realize what our God has done, and ponder the darkness that previously encased us, we will participate in mission.

What exactly are we to declare? We are to proclaim God’s “praises” or “excellencies” (ἀρετὰς, *aretas*). After the return from exile in Babylon, the people of God were “to declare τὰς ἀρετὰς (*tas aretas*, the mighty acts, praises) of God (Isa 43:20–21 LXX) ... The word *aretē* was used to refer to the excellent character of one who is worthy of praise” (Jobes 2005, 163). Knowing our identity—as well as the identity of our God (his goodness and excellence), we go forth in mission.

However, there are some who see this “declaration” more in the sense of worship (and not necessarily missional activity) (Michaels 1998, 110–111). Others imply a dual purpose to our declaration: “The two interwoven functions of the church are to offer worship to God and to witness to others” (Muriithi 2006, 1543). Another author points out the biblical connection between worship and mission with the “the hymn-singing Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:25; cf. 1 Pet 2:9)” (Wright 2006, 133). Thus, “it is more likely that this word [“declare”] should be seen along with the other instances of evangelism in 1 Peter (1:12, 25; 3:1; 4:17)” (McKnight 1996, 110). Nonetheless, given the presence of “live such good lives” in 2:11–12, it may be more accurate to say that the dual purpose of the people of God revolves around evangelization and holy living—which would include worship. Wright comments: “the mission of the church, according to Peter, includes both verbal proclamation and ethical living, and the impact of his tight argument is that *both* are utterly essential” (2006, 390). The verse of 1 Peter 2:9 demonstrates that mission is birthed from identity (that was given through the Word): “If this is what you are (your identity, through election, redemption and covenant)”; “then this is how you must live (your ethics)”; “and this is what will result among the nations (your mission)” (Wright 2006, 389).

¹⁰ Seen e.g., in 1 Pet 1:12 and translated as “told” (NIV) or “announce” (NASB).

Continued Proclamation: “Bless”; “Keep tongue from evil” (3:9, 10)

“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. For, ‘Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech’” (1 Pet 3:9–10).

After the mention of “declaring the praises” in 2:9, the next example of positive, continued proclamation is found in 3:9 and 10. Peter calls his readers to respond “with blessing,” “which literally means ‘to speak well [of someone]’ ... The word occurs over four hundred times in the [Greek OT] often in opposition to cursing” (Blum 1981, 238).¹¹ Other uses of the verb “to bless” clearly denote verbal proclamation and not just an attitude or an action of grace: see Matt 14:19; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 14:22; Luke 24:30; 1 Cor 14:16. As he cites Psalm 34 in v. 10, “Peter reminds them that there is nothing new about this command” to bless and not curse (Muriithi 2006, 1547). Yet, again, Peter does not want his readers to begin and end with verbal proclamation. A holy life is to be reflected as well: these verses are in the context (from 2:11–4:11) of Peter calling his readers to “live godly lives” (Jobes 2005, 165). We would be remiss if we did not point out that some of Peter’s admonitions reflect the words of Jesus, especially with this positive proclamation of “blessing” (e.g., 1 Pet 3:9 with Luke 6:28) (Seng Ja 2022, 482–483). Peter has already reminded his readers of Jesus in 2:23. Jobes comments: “the example of Jesus’ refusal to retaliate for unjust accusations broke the vicious cycle of escalating conflict that is so familiar within communities” (2005, 217).

This admonition by Peter to bless is even more striking given the historical-cultural context of Peter’s readers. They lived in a culture of “honor and shame,” where insults, verbal abuse and defamation of character were “weapons typically employed ... for challenging the honor of others and *publicly shaming and discrediting* those who [were] different or regarded as one’s competitors” (Bruce Malina, in Jobes 2005, 216–217, emphasis added). In the face of a public shaming, a Christian would experience dishonor if they did not respond properly (Campbell 1998, 27). Thus, Peter’s instructions of nonretaliation would have been startling. He calls them to bless and refrain from verbal retaliation (Jobes 2005, 217). When someone curses us, the natural inclination is to respond in like manner. Peter calls his readers *not only to resist the temptation to retaliate*, but to “return blessing for evil and insult” (Jobes 2005, 218). We are to bless, and to keep our tongues from evil and our lips from deceitful speech.

¹¹ One of the best examples is seen in 1 Cor 4:12: “When we are cursed, we bless.”

Continued Proclamation: “Give an answer” (3:15)

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect” (1 Pet 3:15).

An implication of Peter’s words in 3:15 is that believers need to know the preached Word (1:25) —to defend it and explain it coherently and adequately. Jusu comments: “We must be so well instructed in the knowledge of our faith that whenever anyone asks us about it, we may be able to give a proper answer” (2016, 1859). For Peter’s readers, they were to “set apart Christ as Lord.” In other words, instead of a life full of angst and frustration (especially considering the accusations and slander they were facing), Christ had to be “placed in a special and preferred place” (McConnell 2006, 343). Furthermore, knowing the identity of Christ, who is “Lord,” is a prerequisite for *positive* verbal proclamation. We are to have “a mind-set rooted in Christ’s uncontested lordship” (Charles 2006, 335). This must be done with “gentleness and respect”: “The dignified respectfulness of their speech should stand in clear contrast to the malicious slander of those who attack them (3:16)” (Muriithi 2006, 1547). The goal is not necessarily to win a debate—but to win a soul (McConnell 2006, 345). With the phrase in v. 16 of non-believers “speaking maliciously,” we conclude that when “non-Christians slander believers the statement of the truth [“giving an answer”] may shame them into silence” (Blum 1981, 240).¹²

We are reminded that Christians in Peter’s time were exiles and strangers in their new lands. However, “[c]ultural isolation is not to be the route taken by the Christian community. It is to live its life openly in the midst of the unbelieving world, and just as openly to be prepared to explain the reasons for it” (Paul Achtemeier, in Jobses 2005, 230). The call to verbal proclamation by “giving an answer” raises the issue of Christians today and their ability to defend the faith in a way that makes sense to those outside the church. We should avoid the use of jargon and be cognizant of Christian vocabulary that remains opaque for non-believers (Jobses 2005, 230–231). When we “give an answer,” it needs to be with deep knowledge of the Word and with cultural sensitivity.

Continued Proclamation: “Don’t grumble” (4:9)

“Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling” (1 Pet 4:9).

Peter gives his readers an urgent reminder of the return of Christ in 4:7. This crucial doctrine is also mentioned in 1:5, 7; 4:13, 17 and 5:1, 10. In light of his return, it is not

¹² The wording used by Peter here is further proof of their “honor and shame” culture.

enough to *do* good—we must also have a proper attitude—one that does not result in negative grumbling (McConnell 2006, 354). When we offer hospitality to others, we must not grumble because of the inconvenience such hospitality often entails (Charles 2006, 347). Peter’s readers would have been expected to offer hospitality to other members within community of believers, on account of similar expressions in the same context—“for one another” (4:8) and “serve one another” (4:10). Given their alienation and ostracization, Peter is encouraging them to provide a physical refuge for each other, without complaining or grumbling: “The church is to be that alternate society where Christians find a place when shunned by unbelievers who live by different values” (Jobs 2005, 281). It is surprising that Peter is concerned even with our “under the breath” grumbings and complaints. We are called to positive, verbal proclamation even in the “minor” areas of life.

Continued Proclamation: “Speaking the very words of God” (4:11)

“If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God” (1 Pet 4:11).

This passage alerts us to the seriousness of the topic of verbal proclamation for Peter. For his readers, “[e]verything they say (whether in preaching or in daily life) should be the sort of thing that God would say” (Muriithi 2006, 1548). In other words, “what one says is to be as God says it,” for “‘The very words of God’ translates *logia* or ‘oracles,’ which are utterances from God’s mouth” (Blum 1981, 247). This is a weighty, profound verse. Even though the verb used for “speaking” is common and “covers all forms of oral service—teaching, preaching, prophecy, perhaps even tongues” (Blum 1981, 247), Peter’s calls his readers to consider all their speech as God’s words.

Peter wants his readers to deliver the Word of God and not their opinions or speculations. They were to place the Word before their fellow believers and before the nations. For those involved in preaching/teaching/evangelizing, what is envisioned was not a matter of

...informal discussions, nor of reflections, nor of vain talk (see 2 Tim 2:14, 16), but of proclaiming doctrine from God himself that He has revealed in his Word, and that the Apostle Paul calls “the good deposit” (2 Tim 1:14). The church is not to be entertained but to be instructed. Some preachers consider that the congregation should leave the meeting place having *enjoyed* themselves, so stories, jokes, jocularities and the like are intermingled in the sermon, which entertain the listeners, but do not edify them (Pérez Millos 2018, 345–346).

Peter was not just exhorting preachers, however. The words of 4:11 were not addressed to the “leaders,” like we see in the next chapter (5:1–4). The focus here is on “each one” (v. 10a). That is, each believer was to use their gift to speak (v. 11); to serve (v. 10); to love (v. 8); and to offer hospitality to others (v. 9) (Elliott 2000, 758). When the people of God speak and serve (4:9–10), they are to leave behind the self-absorption that can so easily hinder, “so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen” (4:11). As Muriithi writes: “Excited again about the glory of God and what he has called us to, Peter finishes his list with a resounding *Amen*, a wholehearted endorsement of what he has been saying” (2006, 1549). Peter’s own proclamation ends with giving glory to God.

Case Study: Christians and Muslims and Continued Proclamation

We have seen numerous examples of verbal proclamation in the book of 1 Peter. This is one way that Word and Mission are seen together. A contemporary need in this area centers on our dialogue with Muslims. As Christians, we should be known for declaring the praises of the Triune God. We should seek to bless individual Muslims; to prepare ourselves to give a contextually appropriate answer with vocabulary that Muslims will understand; and to focus on the proclamation of God’s infallible Word. This is urgent given the number of adherents of the Muslim faith, estimated at over 1 billion people (Kamau 2018, 167). Those ministering in this area encourage us to go beyond accusation and focus on basic principles that both Christianity and Islam have in common (Kamau 2018, 178). It would be helpful for Christians to learn how Muslims approach dialogue:

...the Qur’an warns Muslims not to insult non-Muslims, otherwise they will insult Allah (6:108). On the same note, generally the Qur’an advises Muslims that in dialogue they should engage people of the book [Jews and Christians] in a peaceful manner devoid of anger or intimidation. They should not be emotional or ask or answer questions out of disrespect (2:62; 48:29; 3:64–65; 5:82) (Kamau 2018, 178).

Obviously, we as Christians could follow these words. In addition, an aspect of our Christian faith “requires many painstaking efforts to understand ‘the other’” (Chul-Soo Kim 2009, 235). One practical way to understand the Muslim world would be with formal, interfaith conferences (Kamau 2018, 182). However, with a reminder of the “ordinary reader” that we mentioned at the outset, our dialogue should be done in a such a way that members of each faith will be able to grasp the content (Kamau 2018, 183). We know that challenging theological concepts such as the Trinity or monotheism

can be easily misunderstood. Thus, an organized plan of study of both religions should be arranged with the goal of avoiding simplistic generalizations (Kamau 2018, 183–184). Other practical suggestions include “offering help, visiting one another, giving invitations to eat in one’s home, and sharing free time” (Kamau 2018, 183). All of these suggestions would include verbal proclamation.

In the past, there have been “unfortunate relationships between the Christian West and the Muslim world” (Chul-Soo Kim 2009, 227). Some observers note that many Westerners have not had a positive view of the Muslim world. Indeed, some western intellectual approaches zealously sought to prove Islam wrong. However, there should be an attitude of dialogue and “giving an answer” gently and with respect (1 Pet 3:15). Therefore, those from the West should consider how to support Majority World missionaries in this endeavor. One advantage is that Majority World believers often share common cultural features with Muslims, as well as a shared awareness of the spirit world (2009, 234, 236, 239–240). In sum, Chul-Soo Kim exhorts all Christians to avoid viewing Muslims as “dangerous, menacing, or threatening,” and to realize the “deep-seated agony” of Muslims—their “rejection, abandonment, humiliation, and frustration” (2009, 233).¹⁵

Conclusion

One aspect of the suffering of Peter’s readers came in the form of accusations, malicious talk, slander and insults. However, Peter reminds his readers of past proclamation to encourage them *to respond to these accusations positively and verbally*. Specifically, they were to “declare the praises” of God, bless others, keep their tongues from evil, give a coherent defense of the Christian faith, avoid grumbling, and speak “as one speaking the very words of God.” Word and Mission are intricately connected in 1 Peter. The Word gives birth to new life in believers, and from this new identity these believers, as the people of God, go forth in Mission—with verbal proclamation. My goal in this article has been to highlight how Word and Mission are connected in the positive verbal proclamation of the Gospel by believers, as one of Peter’s responses to the accusations and insults that his readers were facing. May we know and declare the Word of God—all for his glory (1 Pet 4:11).

¹⁵ For Chul-Soo Kim’s defense of the agony of Muslims, see Chul-Soo Kim 2009, 230–233, where he writes of Muhammed being rejected for his monotheistic belief—first by his own people, then by others, and especially by People of the Book (Jews and Christians).

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