





Arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances continued, for which security forces were not held accountable. Hundreds of prisoners of conscience and other prisoners, including journalists, former politicians and practitioners of unauthorised religions, continued to be arbitrarily detained without charge or access to lawyers or family members, many of whom had been held for nearly two decades. The whereabouts and fate of 11 politicians and 17 journalists, arrested and detained 18 years ago, for criticising the President's rule, remained unknown.

Amnesty International

The Eritrean government has, at the time of writing, released 69 Christian prisoners, many of whom have been in long-term detention for their faith for up to 16 years without trial. [This follows the] release of more than 20 male and female prisoners on 4 September from the Mai Serwa prison, near the capital, Asmara. These releases, which have been linked to Covid-19 policies, are being made on condition that bail securities are lodged, usually in the form of property deeds, with guarantors held liable for the detainees' future actions.

Eritrea remains one of the worst countries in the world for Christian persecution, where believers of certain denominations are subject to arbitrary arrest and detention without trial. Since the introduction of religious registration policies in 2002, only three Christian denominations are legally permitted – Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran – as well as Sunni Islam.

Barnabas Fund

## 5. LIKE MINDED WITH *One Another*

Sermon  
Notes

Back in the mid sixties I bought a small paperback titled *The Christian Mind*. It was Harry Blamires' contention that the what he called the 'Christian Mind' was no longer evident in public discourse; it had already capitulated to the secular.

### 1. **The Bible, and your 'mind'?** What does it say?

Numerous verses throughout the New Testament refer to 'the mind' of Christian people. But who knows 'the mind of God'?

Jesus was emphatic about the "great commandment"; to Love the LORD with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Here we have Jesus quoting from his 'Bible', Deuteronomy 6 in particular. He accepted that God was revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. He often quoted them recognising their authority.

For Christian believers the New Testament too been received as God's revelation of Himself, supremely in the person of Jesus, "the Word made flesh" (John 1). He is primarily known to us through the writings of the apostles and their close associates, in what we call the New Testament.

In it, with references to our "minds" in connection with "one another" we discover the following: Romans 12:1,2, 14:13, 1Corinthians 1:10, 2 Corinthians 13:11, Philippians 2:5, 1 Peter 3:8. Here we are exhorted to be of the same mind as one another. What mind is that?

It is the mind of Christ!

### 2. **Pressures to social conformity** (Romans 12:1,2)

The *service we offer*, the manner in which we who are believers serve fellow believers and the wider community, *is our worship*. The concluding words of John's first letter "Little children keep yourselves from idols" should alert us to an ever present temptation and danger. Who or what do we worship? The idea of humble service is easily thwarted. Each day our minds are tempted to align with other points of view.

Each day we face intellectual pressures. We feel them with respect to our personal lives: where should I live, what work should I pursue, how should I spend my money? We also feel pressures with respect to public engagement: what guides my political loyalties, what groups should I align with and participate in, where should my social and moral concerns be expressed? To resist "the world the flesh and the devil" is difficult. Where can we find the mind of God?

Like Jesus our Messiah, we turn to God's revelation in the Scriptures.

## The Christian Mind

In 1963 Harry Blamires identified several things missing in public discourse which he calls 'The Christian Mind'. He identifies them as:

A supernatural orientation, an awareness of evil, a conception of truth, a place for authority concern for the person, and a sacramental cast.

Listen to him speaking in 2001 using the link below (from 8 minutes in to 45 minutes)

<https://www.christian.org.uk/resource/a-post-christian-mind-p/>



### 3. **The Mind of our Master** (Philippians 2:6-11)

The mind of Christ was exposed to the temptations of the world the flesh and the devil (Matthew 4, Luke 4). These he resisted by drawing on His Bible (In this case, the book of Deuteronomy).

The same powerful pressures invite us to pursue our own interests and welfare ahead of others. Like the disciples we want the top spots in the kingdom, or at least to know we are noticed.

We have to learn to serve, it doesn't come naturally to most of us!

To be perfectly qualified to be our Saviour Jesus was "tempted in all points as we are" (Hebrews 4:15). He embraced that servant role and gave himself to lovingly serve, with heart, soul, mind and strength, both God and humankind.

Will we turn from this to serve idols, or embrace the call to love and serve others? To accept the call is to take up the challenge of having our thinking change, our minds transformed.

### 4. **A mind transformed and renewed** (Romans 12:1,2).

CEB Cranfield, of Durham University, in commenting on this text says:

"The Christian has always to confess that to a painfully large extent his life is conformed to this age. Instead of going on contentedly and complacently allowing himself to be stamped afresh and moulded by the fashion of this world, he is now to yield himself to a different pressure, to the direction the Spirit of God..."

"It is as the Holy Spirit renews the fallen mind, *loosening the bonds of egocentricity* so that it begins to think truly objectively instead of egocentrically, that a persons whole life is transformed".

We need to ask ourselves how our own lives are being changed as our minds are subjected to the Word and Spirit of God.