

Andrew Fuller: Holy Faith, Worthy Gospel, World Mission by John Piper, Crossway Publishers, Wheaton, IL: 2016. (7 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. Globalization of Christianity

One key area of Fuller's great impact is the globalization of Christianity: Fuller provides the pioneers of the modern missionary movement with a robust theology of missions that was hammered out in the context of theological controversy with hyper-Calvinism and Sandemanianism. [page 9]

2. Mission Work Was Compromising Church Work.

Fuller did all this while knowing his pastoral work was suffering. He did not have an assistant at Kettering until 1811 (John Hall), four years before he died. In October 1794, he lamented in a letter to Ryland how the mission work was compromising the church work: "I long to visit my congregation that I may know of their spiritual concerns and preach to their cases." The love he felt for his people is expressed in a letter he wrote to a wayward member that he was pursuing:

When a parent loses ... a child nothing, but the recovery of that child can heal the wound. If he could have other children, that would not do it ... Thus it is with me towards you. Nothing but your return to God and the Church can heal the wound.

Fuller pressed on, faithfully feeding his flock with faithful expository preaching.

Beginning April 1790, he expounded successively Psalms, Isaiah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Daniel, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Genesis, Matthew, Luke, John, Revelation, Acts, Romans, and First Corinthians as far as 4:5. [page 23]

3. No Time for Recreation.

And when he was home from his travels, his life was one form of work or another. His second wife, Ann, once told him that "he allowed himself no time for recreation." Fuller answered, "O no: all my recreation is a change of work." His son Gunton recorded that even in 1815, just a few months before his death, he was still working at his desk "upwards of twelve hours a day." [page 24]

4. The Gospel to All People.

Fuller's greatest theological achievement was to see and defend and spread the truth that historical, biblical Calvinism fully embraced the offer of the gospel to all people without exception. [pages 28-29]

5. Searching Scripture for Truth.

Fuller immersed himself in the Scriptures and in the historic tradition flowing from Augustine through Calvin through the Puritans down to Jonathan Edwards. The Bible was always paramount. In Fuller's words, "Lord, thou hast given me a determination to take up no principle at second-hand; but to search for everything at the pure fountain of thy word." That is one of the main reasons why it is so profitable to read Fuller to this very day; he is so freshly biblical. [page 29]

6. Preach the Gospel to All.

The all-important conclusion from all this exegetical, doctrinal, theological labor and controversy was the enormously practical implication for evangelism and world missions:

"I believe it is the duty of every minister of Christ plainly and faithfully to preach the gospel to all who will hear it; and, as I believe the ability of men to [do] spiritual things to be wholly of the moral, and therefore of the criminal kind—and that it is their duty to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in him for salvation, though they did not; I therefore believe free and solemn addresses, invitations, calls, and warnings to them, to be not only consistent, but directly adapted as means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, to bring them to Christ. I consider it as part of my duty that I could not omit with being guilty of the blood of souls."
[page 44]

7. Greatest Missionary Movement in History.

One crucial lesson from Andrew Fuller's life is that the exegetical and doctrinal defense of true justifying faith and true gospel preaching in the end did not hinder but advanced the greatest missionary movement in world history. Getting Christian experience biblically right and getting the gospel biblically right are essential for the power and perseverance and fruitfulness of world missions. [pages 55-56]