Caught in the Current

Baptist General Conference, Celebration
May 29, 2024
Calgary
Target: 5,850 words which is 45 minutes at 130 words/minute.

[Slide 1: Title Slide]

Before we start into today's talk, let's take a few minutes to recap what we talked about yesterday. Our conference theme is "for such a time is this." And I tried to paint a picture of the time we're in. We started by looking at stats that show that the church is in — or at least some of the reasons the church is in decline.

[Slide 2: Attendance]

I showed you this chart, that shows the declining weekly religious service attendance.

[Slide 3: CES]

I showed you this recent sounding of the Christian evangelical scale with the Canadian population where we can see that most Canadians are very strongly unaligned with us.

[Slide 4: Authentic Self]

We talked about Charles Taylor's idea of the authentic self which I've summarized on this slide.

- My authentic self is good
- The problem is I'm separated from my authentic self
- Salvation happens when I discover my authentic self
- Others can't help me with this discovery
- Those who do try to help are trying to control me
- My authentic self, which includes my religious beliefs, will be unique
- I need others' affirmation to confirm I have found my authentic self

And I focused on how the authentic self is a change in our anthropology, a change in how we understand ourselves.

[Slide 5: Outline]

Today I want to do two things. First, I want to talk about how these changes are affecting Evangelical churches, and to do that we're going to look at the work of Sam Reimer.

Second, we're going to pull all of this together, look at a little more Charles Taylor and then well look at Paul in Acts for what this means for evangelism.

[Slide 10: Caught in the Current]

Sam Reimer is Professor of Sociology at Crandall University, formerly Atlantic Baptist College, in Moncton, NB. In addition to being a first-rate scholar, Sam is also a believer who cares about the church. Sam serves on the national board of the Mennonite Brethren church, he's not just an academic.

Caught in the Current written by Sam Reimer was released last year and it is one of the most significant books in recent years for evangelical church ministry. I recommend you all get a copy.

I'm going to talk about *Caught in the Current* for the next part of this talk. For this book, Sam interviewed 125 Evangelicals in the UK and in Canada. 65 were clergy and 60 were laity. They came from a variety of denominations including Baptists, plus he did another 40 informal interviews with Evangelical leaders and academics. What you need to realize is that all of these people were involved in their churches, they were committed. So, we are not talking about the peripheral people here.

Sam's big finding was that in our culture, and in evangelical churches, there has been what he calls "the inward turn." He's talking about where we locate authority in our lives. Is it outside of us, external to us, like in the

Bible, in denominational doctrinal statements, with the government, etc. Or is it inside of us, internal, in our gut.

We're going to see that there is an overlap in the change in anthropology that I talked about yesterday, and this inward turn that Sam talks about.

We look inside for "who we really are," and we look inside to know what is right.

This has been happening for years. We have songs with lyrics like "It feels so right, it can't be wrong." Think of Whitney Houston's question, "How will I know if he really loves me?" and the answer is "trust your feelings." Feelings are internal things. When we trust our feelings over good advice, what our parents might say, what our church teaches, or what the Bible teaches, we are placing our feelings above these other things as a source of authority in our lives.

[Slide 6: External/Internal]

Sam says this (and I want to be clear that I'm relying on Sam's material for much of the section of this talk where I'm dealing with Sam's research, and I'm using this material with Sam's permission.) Here's the difference between having an external locus of authority and an internal one:

> "Those with internal authority do not naturally defer to institutional authorities, but tend to question them. Instead, they tend to be guided by their internal sense, their intuition, or the dictates of their own heart. As a result, they view institutions in a consumeristic way. A church may be used (temporarily) if one thinks that it will enhance their personal journey.
>
> That is, if Joe or Jane Canadian senses internally that the church is helping them become a whole person, they will participate. But they will do so selectively. Jane or Joe may agree with certain beliefs and get involved in groups to the degree that they will help them toward wholeness. That is, the beliefs, behaviours, etc are to be discovered and to chosen by the individual. As a result, identity tends to be more flexible. I am on a personal quest to discover myself.

[First fly-in picture]

We can see this change in the advertising of the US Army. During WWI and II, the poster of Uncle Sam (representing the US government) says “I want you for the US army”. The assumption here is that young Americans would defer to the authority of the US government and fulfill their duty to their nation by joining the army. You join the army because an external authority asked you to.

[Second fly-in picture]

The army slowly realized that approach would not work after the 1960s. Starting around 1980, the US army used “be all that you can be” as their slogan. The message changed; we can assist in your journey to reach your full potential. Is primarily about what you want now, not about what an external authority wants.”

But *now* we tend not to trust the government, *now* we get second opinions — usually from the Internet — instead of taking our doctors word for it. We tend not to defer to our pastors, rather we find our favourite podcast, our favorite preachers, our favourite authors, and *now* we hold up what our pastor says, beside what they say, and we choose for ourselves. We found in the parenting study that I talked about last year that about 2/3 of current parents are intentionally trying to parent differently than the way they were raised, and as we’ve seen even in the church, many people hold non-biblical views, and what is more, and unlike in the past, they are quite happy to be in our churches while they disagree with our teaching. They do not feel the conflict because they do not feel that the church is owed deference.

“[Slide 7: Self-Spirituality]

Sam calls the new “spirituality” “Self-spirituality” and by this he means that spirituality is a means to an end. Another way to say this is that spirituality or religion becomes functional. It performs a function, and a lot of the “be a better you” preaching we’ve seen even in the evangelical world is functional. The function is to make you a better you.

As I go through these points you should hear echoes of the authentic self.

Self-spirituality is a “Private journey.” Remember that Charles Taylor called discovering “who I really am” moral salvation, a discovery that I have to do alone.

Self-spirituality is Perennialism. What’s that? Perennialism is the belief that all major world religions, if you scratch beneath the surface are essentially the same. They teach the same basic things, and one can be substituted for another — as long as it works!

Self-spirituality is inner epistemology. What is epistemology? Epistemology is just how we know things. I have a friend Bob and if you ask him how he knows things, he’ll say, “I just know it in my knower.” That’s an epistemological statement, and his knower is inside him, and that he trusts his inner knower is an example of an inner epistemology. I know because that knowledge comes from inside me.

Self-spirituality is personal liberty. With the inward turn I reject external authorities and to the extent that I can do this I am free from their control.

Self-spirituality is immanent god. Immanent means close. And you’ll note that Sam has written god here with a lower case g. Functionally, you come to treat yourself as a god.

And then, finally, if self-spirituality is a means to an end, the end is “the authentic self.” And we’re back to Charles Taylor.

And Sam has selected a couple of images here. The first is of a girl casting a shadow and the shadow is of her as a superhero. The knowledge of who she really is transforms, or transfigures her. The second is of a swan. The swan is the swan of the Ugly Duckling story, a staple of every childhood in the west. It’s a story of a cygnet, a baby swan, who finds itself in a family of ducks, the one grey “ugly duckling” in a brood of beautiful yellow ducklings. It’s only later in life with its transformation into a beautiful adult swan that the “ugly duckling” realized who he really is.

[Slide 10: What are beliefs]

We've talked about how our locus of authority has moved inside. We've looked at what Sam calls "self-spirituality" and how that relates to the authentic self that we looked at yesterday. Next Sam asks the question "What are beliefs?" This is a subtle but important question.

Here I'm relying on a presentation given last year by Sam:

> Evangelicals normally assume that religious beliefs are theocentric, that is, "stable inner convictions involving assent to doctrinal propositions". These beliefs are deeply held, and people live their lives according their beliefs (that is, they are not hypocrites, saying they believe on thing and doing another). In this theocentric view, we accept beliefs **cognitively**; that is, we understand them and become convinced of their truthfulness intellectually (the apologetics model). The person's beliefs will come from the teachings of the church. They will **belong to the church because they believe**, and if they should move and need to find a new church, they will find one with the same beliefs they were taught to believe.
>
> But British sociologist Abby Day argues this not primarily what beliefs are, especially for the younger generations. Beliefs are primarily relational because they stem from my warm relationships with friends and family. They are less stable, more fluid as they change with my friendship circle. Beliefs are **performative**. For Joe or Jane Canadian, beliefs are like "waving a flag", showing which camp you belong to in a polarized society. Beliefs flag my identity because they reflect my authentic self, because I know something is true because I sense it in my heart. But what we sense in our heart does not come out of nowhere, but a belief "feels right" because it was formed in the company of positive relationships with friends and family. They are shaped by relational networks. We **believe because we belong**.
>
> Theocentric beliefs are also partly relational, BTW, but are not connected primarily to humans but to God. So beliefs are typically a combination of both cognitive and relational factors, but we are

> moving more relational as we listen to our hearts more than our heads.
>
> So, if beliefs are primarily relational then we expect beliefs to change based on relational connections."

So, for example, when someone says, "I believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead." What they may mean is that I belong to a group, to a church, that says things like, "I believe Jesus Christ rose from the dead. "They may not believe this intellectually, and they may not feel that they need to believe it intellectually, rather, they may simply like the people who say these kinds of things. It indicates a connection to people, and not necessarily a connection to God.

[Slide 11: Findings]

> "Qualified belief- the Christian comedian Michael Jr. says that when he asks young adults what they are doing with their lives, he will get short answers if they are going to university or working a high-end job, like "I go to the University of Toronto." If on the other hand, they are not working or working a low-end job, the answer is much longer, "well, right now I am working at McDonalds, but you see, I am just trying to save enough money to …"
>
> The same is true of beliefs. In those areas like exclusive beliefs or conservative morality, those that make you look like you are judgmental of others, or not inclusive or narrow-minded, we see qualified belief. IN contrast, there were short answers in areas of doctrine, like the divinity of Jesus or the inspiration of the bible.
>
> [Read examples from the slide]
>
> [My views have changed]
>
> Probably the strongest evidence of the relational nature of beliefs is when respondents liberalized their views, often because of their expanded relational networks, which may include good people who are sexually active outside of marriage, or in a same sex relationship.

[I don't agree with my church]

Probably the strongest evidence of internal authority is when people knowingly disagree with the official position of the church. These disagreements are not about competing external authorities (like their church is not following the Bible) but about inner authority that trumps denominational authority."

"1. The underlying issue that is driving unorthodoxy in your church is internal authority. The changes in moral beliefs and softening of doctrine are only surface symptoms of this much deeper change in society.

2. People in the pew often operate with an internal authority which means they are interpreting things differently. Three quarters of the regular attending evangelicals Sam interviewed in Canada and Britain showed evidence of internal authority. Pastors often operate with an external authority paradigm. Pastors assume they have authority (or that the Word of God has authority) so that when persons in the pew hear what the pastor says they will align their lives with the truth. Maybe not. They hear you, but their thoughts are "Oh, I expect a preacher to say those things because preachers represent their religion's perspective, but I have to be me. I have to figure out what I believe based on what works for me. They are fine with accepting the parts of what you say that resonates with their inner self and rejecting those parts that do not.

To be clear. They may disagree with your church doctrine and be fine with staying in your church because believing what your church believes is not why they're there. They're there for their spiritual journey, which is often a journey to their authentic selves not necessarily to God. As long as they have warm, affirming relationships they're good.

3. Many parents, even some evangelical parents, are less concerned with correct official belief than with teaching them good values and helping them avoid the pitfalls in life (like unsafe sex or drug use).

4. Those with internal authority are not necessarily independent thinkers. Society is always a powerful influencer of ideas, but because society is the water we swim in and we absorb it unconsciously, we see the internet or what we hear in schools is neutral, and the church is biased. But our culture is not neutral, it is a powerful current. We are all under authority. It could be peer authority, or algorithmic authority, but you are not a free, open-minded person (even though some might be more open minded than others).

[Slide 12: Implications for the church]

5. Some parts of religion will be natural for pastors to emphasize, because they resonate with the culture, and they are attractive to seekers. They may even help your church grow. This includes:

- Therapeutic experiences: experiencing God, sensing God's presence, etc. is important. but we need to be aware that feelings are authoritative for moderns, and worship services can easily become about me and my serotonin levels.
- Friendships/community: since beliefs are relational, it is crucial for orthodoxy that we maintain warm relationships with other committed Christians. We also need to learn to serve others. People want to find a place where they belong and are loved, but they also need to hear us say that they flourish best when they learn to be less concerned about themselves and more concerned about others.
- Guidance: even though I have to find my own path, I am allowed to receive guidance along the way from authentic people and maybe even the Holy Spirit. As Joe Canadian, I like it when you tell me that the Spirit can help me through rough places and guide me by giving me peaceful feelings when I make the right decision. The problem is that the Holy Spirit can

easily become indistinguishable from my own intuition. Without lordship, the Holy Spirit will not convict us of sin, and he certainly won't ask us to do something that does not feel right. He is a guide on the side, not a Lord in the lead. A reminder that when we use Journey language, Joe Canadian will interpret that as a private inner journey.

Less acceptable and what may actually lead people to leave your church:

- Exclusive beliefs and morals: if you say that Jesus is the only way to heaven and or that sex outside traditional marriage is wrong, people will be offended and some may leave. The tendency of the clergy is to avoid these topics completely. If we do that though, another authority will fill the void.
- Lordship: Joe Canadian is fine with Jesus as A savior, but not Lord. He is fine with love your neighbor but not love God will all your heart, soul, strength and mind. Lordship requires I give up what I think and defer to what God thinks. I have to be committed to external authority. I submit to the authority of the Bible and to church leaders.
- Commit to all of it: when I am my own authority, I can pick the parts of religion that I want, that resonate with me, and can leave the rest. Religion a al carte and Reginald Bibby calls it. But when I defer to external authority, then I have to accept the whole package, all the teachings of the bible, the full deal. These will be hard to sell."

So what do we do? We've talked about a change in our anthropology. We've talked about the inward turn, how our locus of authority has moved inside. We've talked about how belief isn't necessarily belief.

Let me return to Charles Taylor for a minute. Charles Taylor when he's talking about our secular age, says that we have moved from a transcendent frame to an immanent frame.

What he means by that is that in the past we had a consciousness that God was there. We knew God was there and that we owed something to him. People may have rebelled against God, but they were conscious that they were rebelling against God. The fact of God, the fact that he was there, was assumed, or even felt.

This is why when we did evangelism in in the past that we could call people back to God. We did not have to convince them that there was a God. Our evangelism assumed that people were backslidden, that they had some knowledge of God and they had made decisions to turn away from God.

Charles Taylor's immanent frame is very helpful for thinking about evangelism. A frame is something that cuts out everything else that isn't in the frame. And "immanent" just means close. We have a close frame, and, in that frame, we have largely put ourselves — and only ourselves.

As you hear Charles Taylor talk about the immanent frame, I want you to hear the echoes of Rousseau and his "state of nature." Remember that in a "state of nature," we stripped away religion, and religion includes God, we strip away, we stripped away family. We stripped away all conventions. And as we strip these things away, we are really framing them away. And then we imagined what we would be like, and we put ourselves in the frame.

Framing isn't a widening of what we can see, it is a narrowing of what we can see. A framing that lets us see less, not more.

This is a really important idea when we consider evangelism. Hold onto some of these ideas as we take a look at Acts 17.

The Apostle Paul is giving a talk, I'm not going call it a sermon because his overt texts are really pagan texts. But it is, nevertheless, an evangelistic talk. There are helpful strategies for us as we share the good news with those who have been shaped by the authentic self, the inward turn, and an immanent frame.

Here's the big idea we're going to see: We only know who we are if we first know who God is.

[Slide 13: Acts 17]

Acts 17:22-31

> [22] So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of
> Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. [23] For as I
> passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also
> an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore
> you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. [24] The God who made
> the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does
> not live in temples made by man, [25] nor is he served by human
> hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all
> mankind life and breath and everything. [26] And he made from one
> man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the
> earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their
> dwelling place, [27] that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their
> way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one
> of us, [28] for
>
> > “‘In him we live and move and have our being’;
> >
> > as even some of your own poets have said,
> >
> > “‘For we are indeed his offspring.’
>
> [29] Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine
> being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and
> imagination of man. [30] The times of ignorance God overlooked,
> but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, [31] because he
> has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a
> man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to
> all by raising him from the dead.”

The first thing that Paul does is he re-frames their world for them. The Greeks were pagans with a pantheon of gods, each associated with some element of human experience or some part of creation. It might have Poseidon, god of the sea, storms and earthquakes, or Aphrodite, goddess of love, or Mars, god of war from whom the hill on which they were meeting drew its name.

Even though they had a kind of “king of the gods” in Zeus, Zeus himself was the child of Cronos and Rhea. Zeus wasn’t a first mover. He was a first-among-equals in the pantheon, but nevertheless limited like them all.

Into all this steps Paul, and he declares, “The God who made the world in everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man.” It matters not whether the gods the Greeks worshipped were real or not. In claiming God made everything in the heaven’s and the earth, he is claiming that this God is over all the gods that are nominally connected to things in the heavens and the earth — and that is a new frame for them.

He says this God “does not live in temples made by man”. And he says that to people living in a city full of temples made by man. And here Paul is going directly for the frame of what gods are like. Despite these gods’ differences, humans related to this pantheon of gods in similar ways. They did it in temples, with sacrifices and libations to curry their favour for this, that or the other thing.

Paul is building up a picture of how we might relate to this God of the heavens and the earth. He is self-sufficient not needing our sacrifices and libations: “nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything,” AND he gives “life and breath and everything to us.” Now this is adding some colour to this wider frame that Paul just opened up. So, God gives to us, it’s not we giving to him.

And so how should we relate to this God? Ah, Paul is coming to that. First, more about this bigger frame.

Verse 26 “And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, …“ Now we’re starting to see something about us, and our purpose. We were made to live on “all the face of the earth.”

Without directly quoting scripture, Paul is going back to the beginning, to Genesis, to Adam, that one man, and he’s saying something about the relationship that one man, and all of his descendants, have with this one

God. Paul doesn't say be "fruitful and multiply" like it says in Genesis 1, but clearly one man would have to be fruitful and multiply to live on all face of the earth, and just as clearly, we would have to "subdue it" as it says in Genesis 1:28 in order to live there. But again, this is an expansive claim because as surely as they are in this part of the earth on Mars Hill, they are there by this God's design.

But there is more: Politics, and nations. Paul says in verse 26, "having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place." Paul is saying that God is the God of history, of "allotted periods" and the God of nations, the allotted "boundaries of their dwelling places." They may think that their mythic heroes determined the boundaries and stories of their cities and nations, but Paul is saying, "No, it was the same God who gave you "life and breath and everything" that did this.

And why is this God so generous? Why has this God organized history and even the political boundaries they currently find themselves living in? This is really good. Paul says, "that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him." Now we're getting to the heart of how and why God relates to us with such generosity." He does this so that we might find him, or as Paul will write later in Romans 2:4 that "God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance" — but we're not there yet.

And then he comes to his peaching text, not scripture, but pagan texts that have now become part of our Scriptures because Paul used them. The first quote is from Epimenides of Crete and the second from Aratus's poem "Phainomena."

First, "In him we live and move and have our being," that's Epimenides, and then "For we are indeed his offspring," that's Aratus.

Why is Paul doing this? He's trying to show that Greek, pagan, poets are feeling their way towards God — not finding him, not yet, but feeling their way toward God.

And in the light that they have these poets recognize that if we are God's offspring then God must be like us, or we must, in some way, be like God, and if this is true, then God can't be like the idols that they have all around them.

Paul then moves on to open the frame further and wider, further than the initial frame of God's kindness seen in his generosity, and in his guiding hand in history, would let them see. Their groping around in the dark, their feeling after God has taught them something, and now Paul is about talk about how they should relate to God.

Let's stop there. This is where our evangelism usually starts. Paul is about to call them to repentance. And talk directly about Jesus.

Are there any Linux nerds in the house? If you were to sit in on Linux nerds' conversations, they might talk about using AWK and GREP to process data, and perhaps they might write this in EMACS or Vim (that's a very serious decision), and you might have different sessions in TMUX run in a Kubernetes container and when you were done you might use a GPL licence for your code, and put it on Github. And if you don't understand what I'm talking about, that's my point. Linux nerds in their arrogance will call you a "Normie," a normal person, and by that they mean to pay themselves the complement of exceptionality.

You can't enter into their conversation unless you go way back and learn things that underpin these conversations. You don't have the frame, and any number of you could create a conversation from the specialized knowledge you have at your workplace and make a Normie out of me.

I've been talking about the authentic self, and about the inward turn, and about anthropocentric beliefs because our culture can't hear you any more than you could hear a Linux nerd.

When we proclaim the gospel it's not that we're wrong; it's that they're not ready. What I'm arguing for here is that we have to do some more work to help them get ready.

Paul understood where the Greeks were starting. He started there and then he took them back further and opened up the frame they were using.

It is no accident that when you go way back, you're going to touch on anthropology. And it should not surprise us that any discussion about who we are will touch on:

1. What are we for?
2. Where did we come from?
3. And if we came from God, then we need to start asking "What is God like?" "How does he relate to us?" and "How should we relate to him?"

God, the true God, was not part of the Greeks' frame before this. Paul had to add this in.

Boomers may be angry with God, but many in Gen-Z just don't know why they should care. We live in a culture that intentionally frames God out. Even when they do hear about God, it's very easy for them to be manipulated by the religious stuff offered up on Netflix, movies, and social media. Anybody seen an orthodox, virtuous, religious person on Netflix recently?

How would people know that they have life, breath and everything from this God that Paul talks about?

What I like about Paul's approach is that he starts with really basic foundational things before he gets to Jesus and the cross (he does get there though).

He says, "Hey, there is a God. No, not like you think. Let me tell you some things about him. This God is good. He gives purpose. He's been organizing history to help you find him.

I think that's a good place to start for those who hold to the authentic self. It says that the primary relationship you should be concerned about is not <u>you</u> with your <u>deeper you</u>, but <u>you</u> with <u>God</u>. Why? Because this God gives

you life, breath and everything, and he's organized time and space to help you find him.

Now, we know that until Jesus came that these other things weren't enough for us to find God, but in the fullness of time God sent his Son. And all of us today are on the good side of time's fullness.

I want you to see that in this simple rhetorical move Paul is reorienting our anthropology. Who am I? I am made by God with purpose, generously given all things, so that I might find him.

We all know there is more that Paul didn't get to in his short evangelistic message, but I want you to see that he is clearly getting at who God is and who we are, and how God relates to us, and how God wants us to relate to him. There's an explosive revelation in Paul's message that there is something to repent of and that the time is short. But this all has to do with this relationship between God and us.

The question of Identity is just so important "for such a time as this." That's why I chose to talk about it these last few days. I still believe that the Holy Spirit can work revival in our land, and I pray for that, I'm sure you do too. But we need to be busy preparing the soil. There is hard ground that needs to be broken up. And we need to pay care full attention to what our neighbours outside of the church actually believe. And we may need to wake up to what the people inside of our churches actually believe as well.

I think the flowering of Rousseau's ideas have left us particularly vulnerable as evangelists, especially if we aren't going to take seriously the identity question.

I hope I've convinced you that our understanding of God is wrapped up in our understanding of ourselves. I hope you've seen what the authentic self is. I hope you're listening for that little phrase "Who I really am." I hope you catch yourself when you say it and stop and question why you're saying it. I hope you understand that when people say "I believe Jesus rose from the dead" that they might just be saying I like people who say things like that. I

hope you understand that authority has moved inside, and that means for you pastors that you and I don't have much authority. I'm not saying that is good or bad. I am saying it has to change how we relate to people.

Finally, I appeal to you to study Acts 17 as an evangelistic model that reframes the world for people. That it introduces a bigger relationship, a further back relationship, than the ones they have with themselves.

Hear the benediction from Paul to Timothy. (2 Tim 4:1-5)

> **4** I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: **2** preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. **3** For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, **4** and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. **5** As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.