

"Fides quarens intellectum"

The quote comes from a man named Anselm of Canterbury, an Italian Scholastic philosopher, theologian, and clergyman who held the office of Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109. Often called the founder of scholasticism, and as the archbishop who openly opposed the Crusades. Greatly influenced by Augustine, Anselm sought 'necessary reasons' for religious beliefs, notably the famous ontological argument for the existence of God.

I believe that Anselm gives us an interesting perspective on the way we intuit the reality of God.

In our day, it may seem difficult to imagine Anselm of Canterbury, as having much to contribute to the struggles of contemporary theology. The notions of partiality, relativism, and contextuality that mark our age do not allow us easy assent to Anselm's certainty concerning theological ideas. The confidence on reason he possessed seems foreign in an age in which the recognition of the historical character of human existence is often said to entail the abandonment of theological projects rooted in the past. ¹

But one cannot deny that we are rooted in the past – in as much as Anselm struggled in articulating his *fide* – that is his faith – we are also called to articulate our faith especially in an age that questions the rationality of faith. Presenting the case for faith is one of the main themes of the Epistle to the Hebrews especially since the culmination of the Christology as accounted for in the previous chapters leads to a response on the part of the readers– and that is to live by faith, and before doing so one must first have firmly grasped of what faith is in the first place.

Relationship of Chapter 11 to the entire Epistle to the Hebrews

The Book of Hebrews is a book that is constantly showing us something better. It is a book written to Jewish Christians who were tempted to bail out on Christianity and go back to Judaism. In this book we find lessons that show us that because Jesus Christ is better, there is *a better way* for us to live now. ²

The *better way* for us to live now is to live by faith. In relating the subject of faith as it is explored in the 11th Chapter of the Epistle we need to again look back to the main ideas that are presented in the book by back tracking to the previous chapters, in order to establish the Christological theme of the Epistle and its relationship with faith – for faith is the response to the revelation of God in Christ who is and will always be the object of our faith.

a. The Son - In the first part of Hebrews (Chapters 1 & 2) the author of the Epistle introduces to us God's self-revelation in the person of Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews explained it in this way:

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. (Hebrews 1:1-3)

b. The Great High Priest (Chapter 3-9)- Jesus is "the great high priest." Christ, in the exercise of his priestly office, in the sacrifice on the cross, was not adorned with silk and gold and precious stones, but with divine love, wisdom, patience, obedience and all virtues. His adornment was apparent to none but God and possessors, of the Spirit, for it was spiritual. ³

When we think of Jesus Christ as our priest, we tend to think primarily of his death as an atonement for our sins, and that, of course, is a very important aspect of his high priestly work, an aspect we must never lose sight of. He teaches very plainly that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ is a perfect sacrifice, that his death is a death, once for all, to pay for our sins and doesn't need to be repeated⁴. Also in talking about Christ's role as our High Priest it is to talk about His role as the One who intercedes with God the Father in our behalf for He was the one who offered the sacrifice of Atonement in our behalf with the sacrifice of Himself, but also as the One who sits at the right hand of God, upon whom we are given the right to boldly approach God's throne of grace. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a clearer emphasis on the finality of the sacrificial death of Christ than we do in Hebrews:

¹ Pugh, Jeffrey C. - The Matrix of Faith: Reclaiming a Christian Vision p. 54

² Baclagon, Chuck - The Revelation of God in Christ - Hebrews 1:1-3
<http://chuckbaclagon.blogspot.com/2008/12/revelation-of-god-in-christ-hebrews-11.html>

³ Luther, Martin - The Sermons of Martin Luther, Volume VII, p. 163-164

⁴ Gaffin, Richard B. Jr. - Christ, Our High Priest in Heaven
<http://www.kerux.com/documents/KeruxV01N3A2.asp>

For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. (Hebrews 9:24-26)

c. The exhortation of the above mentioned truths for the Church (Chapter 10) – Theological truths in the Epistles always have an ecclesiastical implication primarily because the immediate audience of the Epistles are always the community of faiths that are situated all throughout the world of the New Testament. Of course I am speaking here aside from the implications of theology to the individual Christians, but also as individuals who are called into the Christian community that is gathered by the Spirit around the risen Lord, and this is apparent in the book of Hebrews as the theological treatise of the Epistle culminates with a call for the church:

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Therefore to speak of in terms of the context of Chapter 11 in light of the entire Epistle we can conclude that - Faith is the state upon which we are called by God to respond to His self-revelation in Christ, because He is the Great High Priest and the once and for all sacrifice of atonement for His elect that is his Church.

Faith – Living in the context of

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for. (Hebrews 11:1-2)

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). This passage is considered one of the most concise definitions of faith given in the Bible. Faith is synonymous with belief, and both are translated from the same Greek word: *pisteuo* in the New Testament.⁵

To believe means to want to understand because faith is an orientation of one's thinking and of one's whole life. Faith is precisely the opening of one's mind, one's understanding to God revealing Himself.⁶

See here that when it was defined in the passage that it speaks of several action words: '*being sure*', and '*certain*'. What do we hope for we hope for?

We *hope* for - imminent the Return of Christ⁷, an end to injustice and that our present suffering is nothing compared to what God has in store for us. We hope He who began a good work in us will be faithful to finish His work on us⁸. We hope that all things indeed work together for those who love God⁹. These hopes are all given to us in the Scriptures.

While when we speak of *certain*, it means here that we are certain of realities that we do not see with our eyes, but through the eyes of faith. It can be looked at as having vision impairment that is cured by eyeglasses and it is with this eyeglasses of faith with that we see -that God exists as testified to by creation¹⁰, we know that He controls the present age and that the laws of physics are kept in place by His hand¹¹. We know that Jesus is the One who brings us to God¹² and that God indwells us through the Holy Spirit¹³. By the eyes of faith that we are confident of our salvation by grace through faith in Christ.¹⁴

All Christians are called to live by faith – that is Biblical faith.

Warren Wiersbe interestingly defined Biblical faith: "*True Bible faith is confidence to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences*. Faith is not some "feeling" that we manufacture. It is our total response to

⁵ <http://www.theopedia.com/Faith>

⁶ Hellwig, Monika K. - Understanding Catholicism p.1

⁷ Revelation 22:12

⁸ Philippians 1:6

⁹ Romans 8:28

¹⁰ Genesis 1:1

¹¹ Colossians 1:17

¹² John 14:6

¹³ Romans 8:9

¹⁴ Ephesians 2:8-9

what God has revealed in His Word.”¹⁵ Moreover faith isn't an intellectual acceptance of certain doctrines or ideas. Nor is it merely a special psychological state. Rather, to speak of faith is to speak of the entire self in action.¹⁶

Faith here as it was delivered is a faith that exists not only in convenient times but also in trying times. That's why faith here is a construct that encompasses time, J. Oswald Sanders writes: "Faith enables the believing soul to treat the future as present and the invisible as seen."¹⁷

One important word best describes faith: context, which theologian Benjamin Myers so compellingly wrote: "Faith occurs as my whole self responds to the reality of God. Faith is thus the total transformation of my existence. God addresses me; God confronts me; God calls me; God summons me into fellowship. God becomes more real to me than I am to myself, so that my whole existence is placed in a new context – in the context of God!"¹⁸

By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. (Hebrews 11:3)

Faith – a historical demonstration of

But apart from faith *as a matter of living in the context of*, the passage also shows that faith is also a *historical demonstration of*. It is in this point that we move from a concept to that of Divine Revelation itself - By faith we "understand" that the universe is not self-existent; rather, it was designed by the Creator (v. 3). The notion that one cannot be intelligent without being anti-religious is a myth propagated by those who hate God. Logic and faith are companions.

Furthermore, it is also important to note that in defining faith as *a demonstration of*, is that it is not merely an irrational belief in the unknown it has historical root which is found in the cosmic story of God's dealing with mankind as testified to in the Scriptures.

God has, in history, "borne witness," "warned," "called," etc. (v. 4,5,7,8). Man does not intuitively know how to serve God. The Lord has spoken (Heb. 1:1), and, in the final analysis, that revelation is embodied in the Holy Scriptures.¹⁹

This is what the ancients were commended for. (Hebrews 11:2)

Here we are now introduced to a list of names, the so-called 'Hall of Faith.' Beginning here in verse 4 and throughout the rest of the chapter, we will be treated to examples of Old Testament believers who exhibited faith. It is a virtual Hall of Faith. Notice that all of these examples have one thing in common. In each case, faith led to a resulting ACTION.²⁰ For one is not commended for non-action but for carrying out something, in this case that is carrying out a life that is lived as a faithful witness to the Lord.

By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead. Hebrews 11:4

The background story is in Genesis 4:1-10. Abel was a righteous man because of faith (Matthew 23:35). God had revealed to Adam and his descendants the true way of worship, and Abel obeyed God by faith. In fact, his obedience cost him his life. Abel speaks to us today as the first martyr of the faith.²¹

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death; he could not be found, because God had taken him away. For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. Hebrews 11:5

¹⁵ Wiersbe, Warren – Be Confident: How to keep your balance in the day we live p. 120-121

¹⁶ Myers, Benjamin – Theology for beginners: Faith
<http://faith-theology.blogspot.com/2006/08/theology-for-beginners-1-faith.html>

¹⁷ Sanders, J. Oswald – as quoted by Warren Wiersbe in Be Confident: How to keep your balance in the day we live p. 122

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Jackson, Wayne – Hebrews 11-What is Faith?
<http://www.christiancourier.com/articles/501-hebrews-11-what-is-faith>

²⁰ <http://www.angelfire.com/nt/theology/Heb11-01.html>

²¹ Ibid

We are called to live as pilgrims in this world and as a church we are a pilgrim community, but being a pilgrim involves us to pass through hostile territory. Faith here involves our daily walk with God, this is an example that was lived out by Enoch. Because to speak of faith is to speak of our desire to please Him and our diligence to seek Him. Prayer, meditating on the Word, worship, discipline – all these help us in our walk with God in the wicked world before the Flood came; he was able to keep his life pure. Enoch was taken to heaven one day. Abel died a violent death, but Enoch never died.²² In all these God showed His sovereign will by demonstrating that He alone has different plans for each of us to make our faith known.

Notice also that Enoch did not die but was taken up to be with God, which is a Scriptural revelation of what's in store for us in the Eschaton – an eternity with God. That eternity with God is appropriated by pleasing God, and that is by having the righteousness of the One who pleased God in our behalf.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Hebrews 11:6

Faith is the necessary ingredient in pleasing God. That was the secret of Enoch's success. His being taken up was a witness to the fact that he had lived a life that was pleasing to God. And the necessary ingredient which accomplished that was his faith. Notice that there are two parts to such a faith:

1. *He who comes to God must believe that He is.* - This is more than a general belief in the existence of a supreme being. Neither is it a belief in the God of Islam or of Buddha or some other religious system. This is a belief in the God of the Scriptures.
2. *He who comes to God must believe that... He is a rewarder of those who seek Him* -What is the reward of those who seek God? It is that they find Him. But that is not all. When you find God, you find that you have found a lot more beside. Jesus said this on His sermon on the mount: "*Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you*" (Matthew 6:33).

Man's problem is not that he has sought for God and has been unable to find Him. Man's problem is that he has not really sought for God.

This brings us to a question. If faith is so important, then how do you get it? You don't get it by wishing for it. If you are going to get faith, then you have to get it from someone else because it is not something that you have intrinsically. When you see a turtle on a gatepost, you know that he didn't get there by himself. And when you see the kind of faith described in this chapter, you can know that it was not generated through self-effort. Faith is a gift from God. It is bestowed by grace.

There are people in this chapter who are undeserving. There are prostitutes and murderers and liars in this chapter. There are real sinners who committed real sins. They didn't get faith by being good. They became good because of faith. And they received that faith from the hands of a faithful God.²³

For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." Romans 1:17

Notice here that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews echoes that same theme of all the Pauline Epistles that is – justification by faith. Which Alister McGrath has plainly out as the means of addressing the question of how the saving action of God towards mankind in Christ may be appropriated by the individual.²⁴ Remember the question that the Philippian jailer posed to Paul and Silas in Acts 16?

He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs what must I do to be saved?" They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved – you and your whole household." Acts 16:30-31

Notice here that faith bears witness to righteousness that comes from God. It is here that we are reminded that faith spoken of in the testimony of the ancients is that that has no origin in the will of men but solely in the will of God. Notice how faith is the means upon which we respond to God, to what He was in His sovereign will revealed to us.

²² Ibid

²³ <http://www.angelfire.com/nt/theology/Heb11-01.html>

²⁴ McGrath, Alister – As quoted by N.T. Wright – What Saint Paul Really Said? p.116

In speaking of faith as living in the context of we are reminded that it is the total transformation of our being, as being a person who believes – a person who believes and lives in the reality of God's self-revelation in the person, ministry and redemptive work of Jesus Christ according to the testimony of the Scriptures. Furthermore it is a matter living in expectant hope of the promises that God has spoken to us in Scripture.

In sum, to live in the context of faith is to live out our Christian life in accordance to the threefold pronouncement of Christian soteriology. We are justified by trusting in the realities of the Biblical narrative most importantly by appropriating the salvific work of Christ by trusting Him. We live out our lives in the context of our faith in Christ by developing good theological judgment by being in constant conversation with the testimony of God's work in the lives of kindred souls before us as narrated in the Scriptures – thus setting us apart for administering God's will. Lastly, we live in constant hope of the fulfillment of God's promises that will ultimately be fulfilled in the Eschaton that is our glorification.

By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. Hebrews 11: 7

Noah's faith involved the whole person: his *mind* was warned of God; his *heart* was moved with fear; and his *will* acted on what God told him. Since nobody had ever seen a flood (or perhaps a rainstorm), Noah's actions must have generated a great deal of interest and probably ridicule as well. Noah's faith influenced his whole family and they were saved from the Flood. It also condemned the whole world, for his faith revealed their unbelief. Events proved that Noah was right! ²⁵

All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. Hebrews 11:13

The emphasis in this section is on the promise of God and His plans for the nation of Israel. The nation began with the call of Abraham. God promised Abraham and Sarah a son, but they had to wait 25 years for the fulfillment of the promise. Their son Isaac became the father of Jacob who really built the nation through the birth of his 12 sons. Joseph saved the nation in the land of Egypt, and Moses would later deliver them from Egypt.

In Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, we have four generations of faith. These men sometimes failed, but basically they were men of faith. They were not perfect, but they were devoted to God and trusted His word.

We have to admire the Patriarchs. They did not have a complete Bible, and yet their faith was strong. They handed God's promises down from one generation to another. In spite of their failures and testings, these men and women believed God and He bore witness to their faith. ²⁶

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel. Hebrews 11:24-28

Moses was one of the heroes of the Jewish faith. If Abraham was the father of the Jews, then Moses was their deliverer and law-giver.

The Lord's providence had delivered Moses from the decree of death and placed him into the house of Pharaoh where he received all the benefits of being the adopted son of the most powerful monarch on earth. And then Moses gave it all up, not on a whim, but by faith in that same God who had previously delivered him. There came a time in his life when he had to choose between being an Egyptian versus being an Israelite. One brought high rank and privilege, the other brought servitude and suffering. Moses chose to align himself with God's people. This was a step of faith.

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Ibid

In Moses, we find that faith is a living identification with the plight of his oppressed people, which reminds us of the social dimension of our faith God calls us to follow the path of God as He always acts in favor of life, defending the weak, offering forgiveness to the fallen and promising eternal life in communion with Him.²⁷

Moreover we are also reminded that faith discriminates - it chooses the spiritual over the material, the eternal over the temporal. Moses chose heavenly riches over the treasures of Egypt (v. 26).

The word translated "kept" is the Greek word *pepoiaken*, the perfect active indicative of *poiew*, "to do." Because of the perfect tense, it has the idea of that which has continuing results and perhaps we can translate this as, "By faith he INSTITUTED the Passover."

Lastly, the story of the Passover is a vivid illustration of the cross. The Lord had decreed that all firstborn were under the sentence of death. It did not matter whether they were Egyptian or Israelite, man or animal. All were going to die. There was only one way of salvation. That would be for a lamb to be slain and its blood sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintel of the house in which they resided.

Jesus is our passover lamb. When all mankind was under sentence of death, He gave His life that when His blood is applied through faith to the doorposts of our hearts, we are delivered from the condemnation of death and are given His own eternal life.

By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the people had marched around them for seven days. Hebrews 11:30

We find ourselves skipping over the generation who wandered in the wilderness. We have already seen them portrayed as an example of unbelief. Instead we move forward to the walls of Jericho. It took faith to march around and around this city, waiting for the Lord to bring down the walls.

There is a lesson here. It is that faith works. The Israelites did not say, "We'll stay back in camp and give us a call when the walls have come down." No, they obeyed the command of the Lord to march around the city, no matter how futile such a command may have seemed. Real faith always produces a corresponding action on the part of the one who demonstrates it.

By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. Hebrews 11:31

It is striking that the last person of faith to be described in any detail is both a Gentile and a woman. This epistle is written to Hebrews. And yet one who stands out for great faith in the Hebrew Scriptures was a Gentile prostitute named Rahab.

It is interesting to see to what great lengths commentaries have gone to try to explain this away. Some have tried to soften the description of Rahab and have understood her to be a hostess or an innkeeper. But the word here is very explicit. The Greek word describes a prostitute - it is from this word that we derive our term "pornography."

Furthermore, the writer does not see fit to further elaborate of Rahab's background. It is likely that she repented of her past lifestyle and gave herself over to a life of holiness. But there is no passage of the Bible that makes such a claim. The thing for which she is commended is her FAITH.

Concluding thoughts

And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains,

²⁷ Boff, Leonardo - from <http://www.leonardoboff.com/site-eng/lboff.htm>

and in caves and holes in the ground.

These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect. Hebrews 11:32-40

The summary statement brings us to the conclusion. It is that all of these examples of faith are examples of people who were waiting for a promise. It was a promise for which they never saw the fulfillment - until now. The fulfillment is Christ. And together we enter into that which God has provided.

To properly end our study of the nature and object of faith we now look to the introduction of the next chapter:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:1-2

Here we are told that the names of the Old Testament saints mentioned in Chapter 11 are the ones that make up the great cloud of witnesses who lived and died for their faith of which they were commended for. Now here we are brought back to the starting point upon which we identified when we began our lesson. We are again led back to Christ who is the author and perfecter of our faith.

Worship as an actualization of our faith in Christ

The text from the 11th Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a staunch reminder of how our lives are entwined in living out a continuing story – a story that brings our lives into a new context that is the context of God, and in living in that context we are called to a life whose story points to the bigger story of God working in the lives of individual persons similar to those who were mentioned in the Epistle.

Perhaps it would be fitting for us to spend time in reflection of the truth that faith is a new way for us to live. That is living a life in the context of the truth that is revealed to us in Scriptures about God, who sought to actualize His love for us in the Person, ministry and atoning work of our Savior.

A fitting question for us now perhaps is to ask ourselves if we have ever stopped to think that to live in the context of faith in Christ is to involve both our hearts and minds that means we ought not only to bear witness with what we know but also in trusting that God will use us to reveal Christ in a life that we live by faith ?

As the Qoheleth of the Book of Ecclesiastes concluded in Ecclesiastes 12:13 :

“Now all has been heard;

here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments,

for this is the whole duty of man. ”

Fearing God and keeping His commandments are part of God's call for us to offer our lives as living sacrifices,²⁸ also as part of the call carry our cross to follow Christ²⁹ and to be crucified with Christ in the life that we live in the body.³⁰

All these things can be summed up in a life of reverent worship to our object of faith – Christ our Lord and Savior who loved us and gave Himself for us in the Calvary. The example of the Old Testament saints are more than enough for us who are heirs of the promise that Abraham and the rest longed for – to become confident in persevering in our Christian walk.

Moreover this is possibly a timely call for us to seek God who from first to last is the One who reveals Himself to us through the witness of His Word. Second is that we will continually pray for God to give us His grace of faith in order to persevere in our walk of faith with Him.

²⁸ Romans 12:1

²⁹ Mark 8:34

³⁰ Galatians 2:20

Let our prayer be like that of the father of the demon-possessed boy in Mark 9:24 when He had an encounter with Jesus: "Lord I believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"

Ecclesiological Implications of the Epistles

Earlier we have talked about how all epistles in the Bible be it Pauline, Petrine, Johannean etc. all have an implication for the Church at large for Epistles in general are ecclesiological in nature. Since as the epistles were written originally they are addressed to churches specific geographical locations at the time (i.e. Romans, Corinthians, Galatians etc) , therefore in studying Scriptures it is imperative for us to always give due considerations for the implications of theology for the church.

The theologian Robert Webber clearly illustrates the ecclesiological implication that we can derive out of Hebrews 11 in "Recovering God's Story" which is an introduction that he wrote for his book entitled: Together We Worship.

In this short introduction he writes:

We live in a world where there are many stories—many ways that people interpret and therefore see the world. For example, just go back to the twentieth century and think about the stories that dominated our world:

- Hitler created the story of Fascism and set out to rule the world through the Aryan race.
- Marx created the story of Communism and set out to rule the world.
- The Secularists created the story that there is no God and that we humans, left on our own in a cold and indifferent world, must learn to make our own way.
- Then came the new religions from the East. They said God is the world and the world is God. So they sought to narrate the world through a resurrected pantheism.

In the meantime, Christianity became increasingly privatistic. We stopped thinking about the story of God. The Christian convictions of Creation, Incarnation, death, Resurrection, and the return of Christ to establish a new heaven and new earth where Jesus is Lord over all creation as the story of the world was neglected. In place of the whole story we concentrated on this piece or that piece of the story. So the story of God as the interpretation of the world from its beginning to its ending simply fell into disuse

Instead of focusing on God and God's story, we followed the emphasis of the narcissistic culture and became interested in self. This concern for self was translated into the Christian faith, and into worship and preaching in particular.

For many, the issue became "How can God help me? How can God make my life better? How can I be filled with joy? How can I recover from a divorce? How can I get my life together and be productive?" There is nothing wrong with these questions. People have to deal with these issues. However, the primacy given to these questions in recent years is narcissistic and not really what God's good news is really about.

The good news is that God the creator has a plan for his universe. That plan has been revealed in Jesus Christ, whose incarnation, death, resurrection, and coming again constitute not only God's story, but in reality, the story of the world.³¹

Notice how Webber played up the significance of stories in verbalizing the world we live in where he states that there are different divergent stories upon which we can view the world, superior among them by looking at the world in light of God's story, which is at present been co-opted into a very private story that has become merely concerned with addressing the 'needs' of individuals in a hurting world.

It is on the latter part of Recovering God's Story that Webber intersects the duty of the Church to collectively worshiping and at the same time proclaim God's story:

In a world that is disintegrating, somebody is going to narrate the world. Christians can't narrate the world with a privatistic, narcissistic religion. So Christians must once again become united, not in whining about their pain and brokenness, but in a hope for the future because they are recovering God's story.

In worship we reenact and proclaim that story. We tell and enact the meaning of the world because we proclaim the truth of the world.

The truth is, God created everything.

The truth is, we fell away from God through the sin of rebellion.

The truth is that God has become involved in the history of the world to rescue the world and restore it.

³¹ Webber, Robert - "Recovering God's Story" a Preface of Together We Worship

The truth is that God has rescued the world from the inside. He became one of us in the Incarnation. He died for us as our sacrifice, saving us from sin. In his resurrection, he destroyed death and began a new creation. He is Lord over all creation, and at the end of history he will destroy the presence of evil in this world and reign forever in the new heavens and the new earth.

When we worship together we are recovering God's story. This story is much bigger than our individual lives. It is more than a narcissistic preoccupation with self. It is all about God, who in Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit, has won back the world for God.

When we worship, we reenact and proclaim God's story to the eternal praise of God.

True worship puts you into God's story. It changes your life because it puts your day-by-day experience of life—the disappointments and the things that make you soar—into the perspective of God's story. It reminds you of the true story of the meaning of the world and puts into perspective the place your life has in the grand story.³²

It is interesting to note that in the context of church we are called to collectively proclaim the whole counsel of God as a community of faith re-tells the story of Jesus as the community's own story, as a story that narrates the truth and meaning of every person's life.³³

Conclusion

Lastly, I believe that in talking about how we are to articulate our *fide*, as Anselm, has put it we need not go far but to merely go and reflect on how God has enabled us sustained us in our walk of faith with the promises of Christ in Scriptures.

After all when all has been said and done we will not help but conclude that – faith is the substance in which we respond to God's love in gratitude to Him, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks as individuals and as a community of faith living holy and joyful lives even as we watch for God's New Heaven and New Earth praying, "Come, Lord Jesus."

³² Ibid

³³ Myers, Benjamin - Theology for beginners (17): Church
<http://faith-theology.blogspot.com/2006/09/theology-for-beginners-17-church.html>