



Season 9: Episode 12 | Nicky Gumbel | How Does God Speak to Us As We Read the Bible?

Joanna LaFleur: Hello and welcome to Scripture Untangled, a podcast by the Canadian Bible Society. My name is Joanna LaFleur. I'm a friend of the Canadian Bible Society and I'm going to be your guide for today's episode.

Today we're delighted to feature Nikki Gumbel, interviewed by Lorna Dueck. Nikki Gumbel is the pioneer of *ALPHA*, an introduction to the Christian faith running in churches of all denominations in 147 countries. Nikki has written several best-selling books including *Why Jesus? Questions of Life*, and *The Jesus Lifestyle*.

Having initially trained as a lawyer, Nikki went on to be vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton, a large central London church for 17 years. Nikki and his wife Pippa now work to support *ALPHA* globally. They are also the authors of a daily Bible commentary, *The Bible with Nikki and Pippa Gumbel*, which has had over 9 million users.

Nikki was recently awarded a CBE, that is *Commander of the British Empire*, in the 2024 New Year's Honours for services to the Church of England. Please enjoy this rich conversation.

Lorna Dueck: Well, Nikki Gumbel, it is an honour to have you here at the Canadian Bible Society. Welcome into Canada.

Nicky Gumbel: Thank you, Lorna. It's a pleasure to be with you.

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Lorna Dueck: I know you've been to Canada many times, and you welcome Canadians, you teach us, and, you know, the Bible Society has watched. I think I'm okay to say this, we have a Bible reading plan, but it is not getting as much traction yet as your Bible reading plan, which I've done several times. I'm in it this year again. And so, we want to talk to you about this, about your conviction for reading through the Bible in a year.

How did that begin for you?

Nicky Gumbel: Well, I think that my love for the Bible started..., I was an atheist as a teenager, and I encountered Jesus for the first time through reading the Bible in February 1974, just over 50 years ago. And from that moment on, I had a love for the Bible, and I've read it in different ways. But then in, I think it was Christmas 1990, Sandy Miller, now Bishop Sandy Miller, who was the vicar of HDB, gave me the Bible in one year.

And I started reading through the Bible in one year. And I've done that ever since 1990, so the last 34 years, which is a bit of a Psalm or Proverb, bit of the New Testament, a bit of the Old Testament. And then in 2006, someone came up, someone who was Palestinian Orthodox by background, married to a Catholic, came on Alpha, and their faith really came alive.

And he wanted to start reading the Bible. And so, he tried, he was a very, very clever guy, Harvard educated, Harvard Business School, very successful. And he said he'd looked at all these different things, he couldn't find a way that was helpful.

What could I do to help? So, I said, well, I'll send you our thoughts every day. And then I thought, if I'm going to send them to him, I might as well send them to the whole congregation. So, in January 2009, we started emailing the congregation with our thoughts from each day from January the 1st through to December the 31st.

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And then each year it developed. And then someone put it into an app without really asking us, but it went into an app. And then that started to take off and we found, then people started translating it. And then YouVersion took it off and promoted it. And now it's gone all over the world, much to our amazement.

Lorna Dueck: Wow, I had no idea it had slipped out of your personal devotional life with your congregation, and technology had taken it.

Okay, I want to back this up a little bit. So, you and Pippa start just narrating your thoughts after you've read your daily Bible passage.

Nicky Gumbel: That's exactly what happened.

Yes. And then it developed from there. Each year, we kind of developed it a bit more.

First year, I think Pippa only did about 70 Pippa ads. Oh, she may have done more, but gradually she filled in the gaps until there was one for every day.

Lorna Dueck: Wow, I thought you must have had a little army of writers.

And this is just coming out of the richness and discipline of you and Pippa reading your Bible every day.

Nicky Gumbel: Well, we had lots of, over the years. Each year I asked somebody to help, you know, to go through, sort of edit, look at it.

So, lots of people have contributed to it over the years. But yeah, essentially, and we've done different things to it. One year I went through I think it was 150 words or something.

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And I wanted to make sure it was exactly the same. So, some of them were 151 and some of them were 149. So, if it was 149, I added one word. And if it was 151, I took out one word so that they're exactly the same length. And one year I've been noting stories. One year I put in subtitles.

One year I put in..., I don't know, we just worked on different things each year.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, let's back up though to, I don't know what it's like, you probably put on a pot of tea and reach for your Bible first. Do you go for your run first? Like how do you craft your life so that every day you take half an hour with the Scripture?

Nicky Gumbel: I always start the day with the Bible. I've done that for ever since I've been a Christian really, the last 50 years. I don't do it because I feel I have to. I do it for the same reason that I have breakfast, because I'm hungry.

And I have a physical hunger which needs breakfast. I have a spiritual hunger which needs to hear from God. What is Jesus saying to me today? So that's how I start the day.

When I was in, I guess 2009 onwards, it was taking me two and a half hours a day to do the Bible in one year. So, the first two and a half hours were on the..., and then I realized, and of course you have to do it every day. You have to, you know, Christmas day, New Year's Day, every day.

And it was after about four or five years of doing that, I just could not do two and a half hours a day. So, I tried to discipline myself now not to spend more than an hour on the Bible. And I've managed to reduce it now.

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So, it's basically the first hour of the day. And then after that I have breakfast. Then I get on my bike, and I bike 25 minutes up to the Serpentine, which is a lake in the middle of London.

It is 3.9 degrees at the moment. And then I do a prayer walk around Hyde Park, because I find it very hard to sit and pray or kneel and pray. I just go to sleep.

So, I do a prayer walk around Hyde Park and then I bike home.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, it's January 9th when we are interviewing you and you swam outdoors in a lake like you do every day in the winter. I mean, I saw that in my research, and I thought, oh, he stops for the winter, in winter he goes indoors.

No, come on, you're crazy. Wow. Before you jump in the lake, you've just lingered for an hour with Scripture as well, like you at home with your slippers.

Nicky Gumbel: Yeah, that's the first hour of the day. And then I bike there, 25 minutes to bike there. And then I swim, then I do, it's about, 45 minutes to an hour to go around Hyde Park.

And then I get on my bike, and I bike home. And in my diary, it's evangelism. Because there are 3,000 members of the club and they're wonderful, wonderful people.

But I got to pray with someone this morning. She said, are you a priest? I said, yes. And she said, are you one of the priests? So, I said, yes.

And then she told me about someone who's in hospital having open heart surgery. So there, I got to pray, you know, and 10 people around watching. But they're an amazing group of people.

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They're journalists, filmmakers, politicians. But not one of them is hostile. It's really interesting.

Not one of them is hostile to faith. They're all interested and open. It's very different from 10 years ago.

I think the atmosphere has changed.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah, Nicky, I enjoyed listening to a recent sermon you did, and I hope I've got this correct in it. You have done 104 Alpha's in your own home, you and Pippa.

Nicky Gumbel: Not in our home, that's 104. We did 96 at HTB (Holy Trinity Brompton).

Lorna Dueck: Okay, at the church.

Nicky Gumbel: When I was the vicar of HTB. When I was associate minister or vicar of HTB, we did 96 then. And then when I handed over HTB two and a half years ago, we did two in our home.

So, we did one online in Kuala Lumpur, with our church plant in Kuala Lumpur. And then we did two in our home. And since then, I think we've done four at maybe five at our local church, which is a church plant from HTB.

Lorna Dueck: Okay, so this is a beautiful track record that you've led over 100 Alpha's.

Nicky Gumbel: I've helped on them. In a small group, I'm just a helper.

Other people lead the group. Pippa and I sit in silence, because helpers are not supposed to say anything. So, we sit there and listen and watch.

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But it's amazing to watch people encountering Jesus over 10 weeks. And that's a huge privilege. I wouldn't miss it for anything.

Lorna Dueck: But the link I'm looking for to ask here is, you said you've never been able to invite anybody from the club, from your crazy group of people who swim in the morning and do all of that. They're not really open to Alpha, but they're open to be prayed for all the time.

Nicky Gumbel: Well, no, the two groups we ran here were people from the Serpentine.

So, they were friends who came from the Serpentine, the two groups that we ran here. They're very open and often ask about, and some of them pop into HTB, because it's much closer to HTB, where we were before, than it is to where we go now. We're down in Clapham now.

But yeah, no, they're very interested. And several of them go along and have a look at the services. And a few of them have come on Alpha here.

Lorna Dueck: Because it's such a beautiful thing to see how long this track record has gone. And maybe I can start with what it felt like to watch your intimate Bible reading get into technology. Like I follow it on the app.

What was that like for you to realize, oh my goodness, this is no longer just you and I, Pippa, reading the Bible?

Nicky Gumbel: Well, people say to me, it's very good for insomnia. If you can't sleep, you put on the Bible. My voice apparently is very good for sending people off to sleep.

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And it even works with babies apparently. If you have a trouble with getting your baby to sleep, you put on the Bible in one ear, and they go off. And the other thing that people have said to me constantly, if I had a dollar for everyone who said this to me, they said, yeah, no, I do sort of get through your bit on it. But really, what I do is just sort of go quickly through yours and get down to the Pippa ads. It's all about the Pippa ads.

Lorna Dueck: She does have a lovely bow on the end of every one. She does.

Nicky Gumbel: I only do it really for the Pippa ads. If I got a dollar for everyone who said I only do it for the Pippa ads, I'd be a rich man.

Lorna Dueck: Well, as you've lived so long with your daily walk with the Bible, is there a character or a few characters that you relate to in a special way in the Bible?

Nicky Gumbel: I think, you know, whatever you're reading about, you kind of relate to the person that you're... I'm in Job at the moment. I'm reading the book of Job. So right now, I'm relating to Job.

Not that I've had all the things that Job's had, but it's very powerful. And before that, I was reading Joseph's life. And you sort of relate to Joseph.

I think whatever the person you're reading about, you kind of relate to. And that's the amazing thing about the Bible. You can relate to all these.

They're all flawed human beings. Joseph, Moses, whoever it is. And we're all very human people.

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And you can relate to all their sort of flaws. Or in the New Testament, you can relate to Peter or to any of the characters really, because we're all flawed human beings.

Lorna Dueck: And then when you personally have finished the assigned chapter for the chapters, I think it's like four a day. What do you do with that conversation with you and God? How does that go? How do you process what you've just read? Or are you stop/starting all the time, thinking on it? What's it like?

Nicky Gumbel: I've always believed that God speaks to us as we read the Bible. The writer of Hebrews quotes the Old Testament. And he says, as the Holy Spirit says.

He didn't say as the Holy Spirit said, like it was something that happened in the past. It's as the Holy Spirit says. So, the Holy Spirit speaks through what was written in the past.

And I believe that the Holy Spirit speaks every day. As you read the Bible, the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. And so that's what I believe every day.

And I'm looking to hear what is God saying to me today through this passage? And then how does it apply to my life? And it's a conversation. And it's a conversation sometimes that, you know, I continue when I'm doing my prayer walk. There's something that struck me.

And you continue the conversation. It's a two-way conversation, the relationship with God. But it's much more important that God speaks to me than that I speak to him.

So, to me, that's why the Bible is so important.

Lorna Dueck: Wow. What have you thought about the revolution of tech? You know, many of us read it on an app now.

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We read the Bible on an app. Your plan is delivered, you know, globally. What have you thought about that? Because you started when there was not even an internet.

Nicky Gumbel: Yeah. Well, I personally like, I mean, this is (my Bible), my other one wore out. But I've got a new one for the last five years. Unfortunately, it collapsed. The pages started falling out, so I couldn't do it. But I like to look at the actual words.

Because I think there, I don't know, there's something about the actual..., so this is what I read this morning. Because I'm a bit ahead because there's an editing process after I've done it. So, I'm actually looking at February the 3rd today.

And in the Psalm, "*he brought me out into a spacious place. He rescued me because he delighted into me. He delighted in me.*"

And you just think, Lord, thank you. You know, this is, it's amazing to be in a spacious place. We're not always in a spacious place.

But right now, it does feel like a spacious place. Thank you that you rescued me. And then there's the idea that *he delighted in me*.

It's so hard. I find it so hard to believe that God loves me because I know all my flaws. And then, each day I try to meditate on that.

The fact that, you know, we all love imperfect people. God loves imperfect people. We all do. We love our parents. We know they're not perfect. We love our children.

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We know, we love our friends. We know they're not perfect. But, and that helps me to understand that God can love me even though I'm far from perfect.

And I think it's, sometimes it's more important even than expressing our love for God to meditate on the fact that God loves you. God delights in you. God delights in Lorna.

He delights in you. And that's something, you know, so that's just a thought from today. And then the New Testament passage is all about I was very struck by the Pharisees saying to Jesus, *"we know that you're a man of integrity."*

How important integrity is. Integrity is..., I've just written a book over Christmas, about my family. Because four weeks ago, my sister was clearing the house and she said, do you want any of this stuff? And I discovered a whole stack of boxes about my father.

Lorna Dueck: You did.

Nicky Gumbel: So, my mother told me when I was 14, that my father was Jewish and German, and I was never to speak to him about it. And I knew virtually nothing about him until 2012.

And even up until this box arrived, I knew virtually nothing about him. Anyway, so this book is called, *He Told Me Nothing, But He Left Me Everything*. So, I'm writing this book, but what struck me about my father and his grandfather and his great-grandfather, which I'm now discovering about, is they were all people of integrity.

But so, what struck me today was this line where the Pharisees are trying to trap him, but they say, teacher, we know that you're a man of integrity. Jesus was a man of integrity, and it just struck me how important integrity is. And it's tied in with this fact of my, that everything I saw about my father was like integrity is the number one thing, honesty.

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One of his sayings was, “I expect to be believed”, because he always told the truth, he expected to be believed. My grandfather was the same and my great-grandfather who was a banker, they were known as people of integrity. And it just struck, so I'm just saying what struck me.

And then the next bit is about the Sadducees, who want to know whether what's going to happen in heaven, where if you've got seven husbands, Jesus says you're in error, because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God. And I was just thinking about that because so many people now doubt that there can be any life after death. Jesus said, look, if you know the Scriptures and the power of God, there is life, this is not the end.

And then the commandments, “love your neighbor as yourself.” And what's amazing about, there's something I've been reading, it says, but I reflected on this. He said, you know, all the commands are summed up with “*love your neighbor as yourself.*”

But actually, Jesus went further than that. He said, “*love one another as I have loved you.*” So, it's kind of like he raised the standard from love the neighbor as yourself to love each other as I have loved you.

So, there's a slightly higher standard of love. So anyway, and then, I mean, you know, Job is amazing. And the people, Job's comforters coming up with all the rubbish about, you know, if you live a good life, you'll have a happy life.

If you live a bad life, everything will go wrong. And Job's saying, no, it doesn't work like that. I've done my best, look at me.

So, it's good to remember you can't judge anybody.

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Lorna Dueck: Yeah, you've just actually shown our audience exactly how the Bible in a year works. That's totally like, folks, we just got a page lifted out of one of your dailies.

So, Nikki, are you writing new commentary every year?

Nicky Gumbel: Well, I sort of update it each year.

Lorna Dueck: It's the Nikki diary. It's your diary.

It's your thoughts every year. Wow. Okay, now I need to take a big breath.

And just, you dropped a bit of a bombshell in the middle of that explanation, because this has always been part of your story is that you didn't know anything about your father's Jewishness. And now you actually have enough information. You're writing.

What are you discovering about your dad?

Nicky Gumbel: Oh, it's just riveting. I mean, it's absolutely riveting. So, the first chapter is basically the fact that he never..., that my mother said, you know, at age 14, your father is German and Jewish, and you're never to speak to him about it.

And how he avoided every conversation that could lead there. He'd talk about every time you got anywhere near, because everything of course led back to what happened before he was married. And he wouldn't talk about anything before he was married to my mother, which, he was 49 years of age when he got married.

Lorna Dueck: And he was in the army.

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Nicky Gumbel: Yes. So, I first got the family tree in, this is the family tree with my father, my grandfather, Sigmund, my great-grandfather, Isaac, my great-great-grandfather, Abraham.

And I first got that in 2012. And then I began to find out about different people, the bank they owned, that was confiscated. Now it's the bank in Heilbronn, **Volksbank Heilbronn**.

About my, his uncle, Emil, who I had actually met, but my father never told me anything about him, who was a mathematician who still studied at university today. And these were incredibly brave people. They were people of integrity and courage because they stood up to the Nazis way back in the twenties.

They were fighting the Nazis because they saw it coming. And another one, Siegfried had a street named after him because he stayed to look after the Jews. He sent his family to Israel, but he stayed.

He was arrested, tortured, and then murdered in Dachau. So, there's a chapter about each of these. And then my father's life, his war diaries from the First World War, which I can't, haven't yet been able to read because they're in German, but I've got them from 1912 when he was nine through to the last entry of his diaries is the day before he died.

So, and then I've got the, you know, his certificate where he was disbarred. "Your license to practice law in Stuttgart has been removed. Your name has been removed from the list of lawyers."

And then my grandfather's one in 1938. "Your name has been removed from the list of lawyers." The correspondence between my father and his sister, when they had a coded correspondence, when he was getting my sister out and my grandparents, who got out just

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before 1939. And then I've got all the records from Yad Vashem of where 37 Gumbel's died in the Holocaust and aged between 18 and 75.

And then you begin to think, so I've written it as a journey of discovery and you discover, okay, why didn't he talk about it? It was too traumatic. And then I talk about my own trauma, how, you know, how hard, the little trauma I've experienced compared to him, how hard it is to talk about that. And so, I begin to understand why he didn't talk about it.

And then the sort of, it ends with the question, why did he leave me everything? It's quite easy to understand why he told me nothing, but why did he leave me everything? Was it because he was a record keeper or was it because he wanted me to know? I don't know. But, you know, and also his war record, he was a private in 1942 in the British Army. I worked for the Secret Service.

I found his war record now because you can get hold of it. And he was a colonel by 1946. So, he stayed on for a year before he was demobilized.

And then he went back to being a barrister. So, yeah, anyway, it's all of that. There's a lot of stuff in it, but a lot of things that I found, which I found his war medals unopened.

I mean, the box had been open, but it looks like they'd never been taken out.

Lorna Dueck: And how is it that it was left for you? Like, how has it found its way to you?

Nicky Gumbel: Well, my sister had most of it and I don't think she realized what she had. They were just in, because she moved into my parents' house and there were boxes and boxes she never looked at because they left a lot of rubbish.

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And then she was clearing it out about six weeks ago. And she said she was going to throw it out. Did I want any of the stuff? So, I went round there, and I couldn't believe what was there.

And so, with Google Translate, I've been able to discover stuff that is just riveting, really, about, oh, he was an agnostic, but I found his baptism certificate and I found the talk that was given at his confirmation service. And I found his account of, it was still in German, I still don't know what it says, but it's his sort of why he got confirmed, which I'm longing to discover. But it's because as far as I knew, he was just an agnostic.

But obviously he had these roots that maybe through the trauma, I don't know what caused him to lose or maybe it was all still there. I don't know. Anyway, it's a journey of discovery.

The Bible Course: I want to take a quick pause out of this conversation because I'd love to tell you about the Bible Course. Because whether you're a seasoned Bible reader or maybe you're just starting on your journey, maybe coming out of Alpha, the Bible Course offers a superb overview of the world's best-selling book. This eight-session course will help you grow in your understanding of the Bible.

Using a unique storyline, the Bible Course shows you how key events, books, and characters all fit together. It's great for in-person groups or digital gatherings. It really can be used anywhere.

Watch the first session for free and review the accompanying course guide. Go to biblecourse.ca to learn more. And the links for everything will be down in the show notes.

Now back to the conversation with Nicky.

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Lorna Dueck: And tell me what you and God are doing in that journey of discovery. It's very precious what you just shared.

How's God meeting you there?

Nicky Gumbel: Well, I tell a story on Alpha about how when my father died, I was so worried. And I felt the Lord say to me. Well, I read in the Bible, in Romans 10, I said to the Lord, Lord, could you speak to me? And the verse I read was, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And I sensed God saying that applies to your father.

He called on me and he was saved. And at that moment, Pippa came in and she said, I've just been reading this verse. I think it's Acts 2.21, which I think is for your father.

And it's, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." It only appears in the New Testament twice. And she'd read it in one and I'd read it in the other.

And that night, we went to a Bible study, and we were studying Romans 10. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And I was still doubting it.

And the next day, I was practicing as a barrister and I got out of, I think it was a tube or the train. And there was a massive great poster saying, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." And I told Sandy Miller, my boss at the time, the vicar of HTV.

And she said, do you think the Lord might be trying to speak to you? But finding these records, because people said, you've got no basis for that. I had no basis for believing that. But now I wonder, I always thought he must have done it on his deathbed.

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But now I wonder whether actually finding these records, which I hadn't ever seen. And I still haven't got that. I still haven't been, because it's in handwriting. You can Google translate type things, but it's very hard to Google translate things that are handwritten.

Lorna Dueck: Oh, someone listening to this podcast is German and is going to volunteer to go see your record. God will send you somebody to translate that.

I'm not one bit worried about you needing Google Translate. Well, thank you. That's very special.

Are you going to publish it publicly? Is the book going to be published?

Nicky Gumbel: Yeah, I think I'm going to. I mean, I have written it, but Robert Louis Stevenson said, "I sit a long while silent on my eggs." So, although I've written it, I'm going to sit a long while silent on it.

I'm going to, it's like when you take the turkey out of the oven, you have to let it rest. And you have to, I'm not going to publish it straight away. I'm going to let it, you know, there'll be a lot of, it'll go through a lot of editing.

Each day I'm working on it. Photos, I've got so many, I've never seen photos of my father as a young man before. And now I've got all these photos of him as a young man.

My grandfather, I've never seen photos of my grandfather. And, you know, it's amazing. And I want to put all of that in.

And the fact they kept these letters, you know, kept the letters that came from the Luftwaffe or whatever it was, the envelope, telling them that their license to practice law had been

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removed. I've got the whole records of the bank, the Gumbel Bank. In 2009, they published the records.

They published the hundred-year record from 1909 to 2009. And it's all about the Gumbel family. And again, it's in German, but there are lots of pictures.

And in 2009, they put up a statue to Abraham Gumbel. And they named one of the rooms *Saal Gumbel*. And it's, it holds 200 to 250 people.

And about six weeks ago, we had a conference at the church and someone from Heilbronn, the church from Heilbronn said, could they meet with me? And I said, of course, love to meet them. And then they took out, they showed me a photo of their church meeting in *Saal Gumbel*. They meet there once; there's a church that runs Alphen Heilbronn and they meet in *Saal Gumbel*.

It looked like sort of a Hillsong church with a great big screen and a band and all these people worshipping in Saal Gumbel. And I just thought, wow, isn't that amazing? Isn't God amazing? The redemption of, you know, the history. So, I don't know.

I don't think the story's over yet, but I love Germany, and I love the German people. And I feel a great love for that nation.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah, Nikki, that's a very powerful story. Wow. You've got a whole new chapter that you're going to look into there, along with other chapters.

Okay. There's a couple of things as you, that come to mind as you tell us that very personal story. Thank you for sharing your recent writing journey with your dad.

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Does it make you think about world conditions now at all? You know, what do you think of our polarised political climate?

Nicky Gumbel: Yeah, well, I've written an appendix to the book, which is, "What can the church...", and particularly I'm relating to the church in England, "learn from the German church in the 20th century."

And there are two great lessons, I think, from the German church. The first was in 1909, the German church leaders got together to discuss the Pentecostal movement, which had started at Azusa Street in 1900s. And they issued a declaration to say that the movement was not from above, but from below.

So, the German church attributed the work of the Spirit to the devil.

Lorna Dueck: Wow.

Nicky Gumbel: They repealed it in 2009. So, 100 years later, they repented of that declaration. And if you look at what happened in Germany between 1909 and 2009, it was not a happy story.

So, the lesson for the church is do not resist the Holy Spirit. The Church of England's been very careless. We had the Methodist revival and John Wesley, and John Wesley was pretty much thrown out of the Church of England.

We had the Pentecostal movement. We had that, and again, they didn't, they feel like orphans because they weren't accepted. We had the Windrush generation that came over from the Caribbean, full of the Holy Spirit.

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And they said, thank you for coming, but please don't come back. And it goes on like that. So, there's a huge danger.

Do not resist the Holy Spirit. And then second great lesson is syncretism. In the 1930s, the German church followed the state gospel.

So, the state, Hitler, the Third Reich, said, you know, oh, yes, we will follow. It's only the Jews we don't like. Christians we're very in favor of.

So, the church thought, oh, great. They, well you know, we can overlook the fact that there are some of these faults, but they're basically on our side, so we'll support them. And only people like Bonhoeffer and Niemöller had the courage to say, no, this is not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the state gospel. And every nation is always tempted to follow the state gospel and not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the state gospel, it's the liberal consensus, which is, as a former bishop here has described it, the state gospel is a dull echo of the liberal consensus.

And we have to be so careful that we don't..., syncretism is always tempting because you want to align yourself with the culture. But we must never align ourselves with the culture. We align ourselves with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's why the Scriptures are so important, because they keep us anchored to the truth and not to what we, because, you know, it's like you've got the Bible here and you've got, oh, I haven't got my phone. Someone's borrowed my phone. But you've got the Bible, and you've got all that stuff.

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It used to be the newspaper. Now it's the phone. And you've got these two influences, and this is what we follow (Bible), not the stuff that's coming to us.

So that's the second lesson from the German church. Anyway, that's the appendix. What can we learn from the mistakes of the German church in the 20th century?

Lorna Dueck: Wow. Well, as you sit on that book that God is giving you out of your father's story, you know, history, you said goodbye to a big part of your history when you resigned a few years ago as the vicar of Holy Trinity Brompton. What was it like leaving the church that you knew well and just, they loved you, you loved them?

Nicky Gumbel: Well, it was, I love HTB. I loved my time there.

I was there in total for 46 years, 10 years as a lay leader of the church, 19 years as a curate, as we call it, assistant, and then 17 years as vicar. And I loved, I just loved it. Absolutely loved it.

But I felt called to this 2033 vision.

Lorna Dueck: Yeah, tell us about this, 2033.

Nicky Gumbel: Well, it's because, 33 of course, is very significant because of, so the 17th of April 2033, will be the 2000th anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus and the Great Commission.

And so, we've got, it's only, you know, it's like eight years left. To get the gospel out to the whole world. And so, and lots of people have felt this.

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I think Rick Warren has, you know, the Bible, a believer, a body of Christ in every community. We're working with 79 different Catholic organizations that are all along these lines. And so, our part in it is to try and make Alpha available to everyone on the planet by 2033, by the 17th of April 2033.

So that's what I've, you know given, that if the Lord spares me, to the next.., it was then 10 years, but now it's eight years to make Alpha available to everyone on the planet. So, we've just done a Chinese version of it that is, I mean, it's always been dubbed into a different language, but this is, I'm nowhere near this one. It's the Chinese presenters, Chinese experts, Chinese testimonies, filmed in China, directed by Chinese.

So, it has no Western influence in this at all. And that has, rather than 25,000 a year doing it in China, that a million have done it already, I think, since it's come out. And so, we want to do that for Africa.

We want to do it for the two versions for India. It's not the languages because, you know, for Africa, we'll probably make it in English. But then for Nigeria, you've got to dub it into 240 languages, lip sync it now through AI.

It's so, you know, there've been really sort of four great developments in terms of communication. If you think about it in, well, three, you have Roman roads, enabled the gospel to go out in the first four centuries. Then you had the printing press, enabled everyone to have a Bible in their own home.

Now you've got generative AI, which will enable lip syncing very cheaply into every language in Nigeria, for example. Once we produce at once, but it'll be all African faces. The one for the Arab world will be all Arabic faces.

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The one for India, you have to have two because faces in the North are very different from faces in the South. So that's the vision. It's to make it available to everyone in their own language.

And we're working on a new version of the English one, which I'll start filming in September. And that's for a billion people. The Chinese one is 1.5 billion.

Africa is 1.2 billion. India is 1.5 billion. Arab world's half a billion.

And that leaves another two and a half billion to have contextualized versions.

Lorna Dueck: That's a beautiful vision. And it will all need people to invite.

Those of us who love the Bible, who love Alpha, we'll need to share it. We'll need to be part of the Great Commission, which is what your 2033 project is driving at.

Nicky Gumbel: Yes, exactly.

But so, we always feel rather than making people feel guilty about not inviting their friends, we want to make it so attractive that they want to invite their friends. So that it's the most natural thing in the world to say to your friends, come and see. Because that's what people said when they met Jesus, wasn't it? Come and see.

It was not natural. And I think when people encountered Jesus, it's the most natural thing in the world to say, wow, this is amazing. This has changed my life.

Come and see. And people see the difference in their lives, too. And they're interested.

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What has it changed you?

Lorna Dueck: Well, on that wonderful challenge, I think we have concluded our time. You've been very generous with us. Thank you for sharing your special morning time with the Bible and swimming in that cold, cold lake, discovering your dad's papers and challenging us to get engaged with 2033 and inviting people to Alpha.

God bless you, Nicky. You're one of those rare gifts that the Holy Spirit has given us. Thank you so much for being with the Canadian Bible Society today.

Nicky Gumbel: It's been a real pleasure. Delighted to talk to you. Delighted to talk to you, Lorna.