

THE SCOTS' CHURCH

THE LEAFLET

Summer 22-23



IN THIS ISSUE

BEING HUMAN | SMART TECH | HERITAGE | FAITH



The SCOTS' CHURCH, MELBOURNE

LOCATIONS

The Scots' Church, Melbourne,
77 Russell Street (corner Collins Street), Melbourne
Assembly Hall, Werner Brodbeck Hall, Ground Floor,
156 Collins Street, Melbourne
Assembly Hall, Robert White Hall, First Floor,
156 Collins Street, Melbourne
St. Stephen's, Flemington and Kensington,
26 Norwood Street, Flemington.

WORSHIP SUNDAY:

10.00 am Service, St. Stephen's Church
10.30 am Indonesian Christian Church
(www.icc-melbourne.org), W. Brodbeck Hall
11.00 am Traditional Service, The Scots' Church
5.00 pm ScotsCity, Werner Brodbeck Hall.
Sunday School – held during Sunday morning services
for the Traditional and Indonesian congregations.

MINISTRY TEAM:

Senior Minister Rev Phil Campbell
Minister Pastoral Care Rev Litha Heshusius
Minister, Indonesian Christian Church Rev Christian Tirtha
Minister, St. Stephen's, Flemington Rev Andrew Wong.

MUSIC MINISTRY:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Director of Music | Mr Douglas Lawrence AM |
| Assistant Organist | To be confirmed. |

EDITORIAL TEAM, THE LEAFLET:

Rosalie Strother, Phil Campbell and Phil Court.

Welcome to The Scots' Church Melbourne,
and this edition of our quarterly newsletter

THE LEAFLET

ISSUE NO. 1093

Welcome to the Summer Edition of The Leaflet, the quarterly magazine of The Scots' Church Melbourne. Maybe you've picked up this complimentary copy as you've visited the church, maybe you're a church member, or perhaps you've been handed it by a friend. As usual, we hope you'll find it a fresh and enjoyable read.

Scots' Church Melbourne is full of history, and full of life. We look back with thanks at our history, and look forward with optimism - a theme you'll see reflected in the articles inside this issue. Looking back, Rosalie Strother highlights the Scottish Heritage of our church, uncovers the Christian origins of healthcare, and introduces the biblical author John.

With an eye to the future, we're asking the question, "What does it mean to be human?" With computerised artificial intelligence creating artworks and fine-tuning advertising to our private conversations - what makes us 'special'? (If we really are!) That's a question that runs through our book review and two stories on the technologies that surround us. As a matter of interest, in keeping with Martin Howard's fascinating look at computer-generated artwork, many of the illustrations in this issue of The Leaflet were generated or edited with the assistance of Dall-E, which creates fascinating images from text-based requests. We're sure you'll spot them. Or maybe not!

There's more, as you meet some fascinating people, and consider the difference Jesus makes to the distinctively human problem of shame.

If you're not already part of the Scots' community, we'd be delighted to meet you at any of our Sunday church services. If you want to know more about the Christian faith, or about becoming part of Scots' Church, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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Search for ScotsCast, our weekly podcast, on Spotify or Apple.

Rosalie Strother, Phil Campbell, Philip Court - Editorial Team

Front Cover image – Busker Stephen Twohig has been playing the Queen Victoria Market since 1978. With a confident acoustic style that ranges across blues, country and rock and roll oldies, Steve always draws a Saturday morning crowd at the Therry St entrance. Steve's regular guitar is a well-worn Maton Messiah, but his pride and joy is a handcrafted guitar built from aged timber sourced from St Patrick's Cathedral.

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A DOWN TO EARTH WOMAN

Former Airbus Pilot Buwanika Weerasinha is used to flying high, but now she's plotting a new course for the future...

Hi Buwanika. You're new to Australia, and to the Scots' Church community, so tell us a little about your background.

I grew up in Colombo, Sri Lanka - a multi-cultural and multi-religious commercial city. I come from a mixed religious background as my father is Buddhist and my mother is Christian. The only church in Sri Lanka that was willing to give them a church ceremony was St. Andrew's Scots Kirk Colombo, and that's how we became part of the Presbyterian family.

In Sri Lanka, we're given a religion (I use the word *given* here, as I believe faith should be a choice) at birth and it is usually the father's religion. But, I was exposed to both faiths growing up, as we would visit both the temple and the church as a family together. My dad would come to church with us and sing the hymns and my mother learned the Buddhist prayers and recited them. As a kid, I loved being part of two religions as it meant more presents and celebrations!

However, as I grew older my connection with God and my own faith grew stronger. I was more involved in church mission projects, Sunday School and youth group. Once I turned 18 I was keen to be baptized but sadly our church was vacant and there was no minister to conduct the service. Finally, I was baptized and confirmed on the same day (on Easter Sunday) in 2015.

Share something about yourself that makes people go wow!

When people meet me, they can't believe that I have been flying huge aircraft for the last eight years. Becoming a pilot was my childhood ambition, and I achieved it at the age of 19 when I received my Commercial Pilots License in the USA. Since then I've clocked up almost 5,000 hours of commercial flying time. Maybe it's hard to believe because I'm quite lighthearted and easy-going, and even slightly shy – not quite the stereotype people have for an airline pilot. I've had people walk up to me in the airport while I was in uniform after a flight and ask me if I actually landed the plane! (I would say “Yes,” and smile!)

What's it like to be in control of an Airbus A330?

When I'm on duty I switch into super-professional and super-serious mode. I make sure to follow all Standard Operating procedures and give 100% concentration. I'm not the smiley girl you might meet at church on a Sunday! The responsibility of the many lives on board doesn't make me nervous but pushes me to be the best version of myself.

Without putting us off flying, have you had any nervous moments in flight?

In aviation jargon we call them “TCAS incidents.” TCAS stands for Traffic Collision Avoidance System. Basically, this is an inbuilt system in all aircraft and they each receive all surrounding aircraft positions and track and coordinate with each other to ensure we don't cross each other's flight paths. If we're on a collision path they coordinate, and each aircraft makes a controlled vertical maneuver (guided by the TCAS) to avoid impact. This is the last line of defense, as usually Air traffic Control is responsible for maintaining separation, and it's very rare for this to happen in real life. Even so, we practice the maneuver bi-annually at our routine simulator checks – it's easy compared to engine failures and dual hydraulic failures! We simply react fast, disconnect the autopilot, and follow the instructions of the TCAS to climb or descend.

In my flying career, I've had one real-life TCAS incident. It happened on the Air Traffic Control border between Colombo airspace and Chennai airspace. The system triggered and we completed the maneuver. Because we're trained for such occasions, the action was so immediate and smooth that the passengers didn't even know anything had happened... though when I came home and told my mother what had happened she almost fainted! I tried to reassure her that we would never have had an airborne collision because of the amazing technology of the TCAS.

What's your biggest passion in life? (What is it that led you away from your flying career?)

Becoming a pilot was my ambition, but my passion has always been serving and helping people. As I grew up that was something I learned from my parents who were always helping friends, family and strangers alike. We always had people staying over at our home while they were going through medical treatment in the city or searching for jobs. During my schooling years, I was part of the Interact Club, which is the school-based level of Rotary International. As part of Interact I was



involved in many community service projects, and nothing made me happier than seeing joy in others and the smile on a stranger's face.

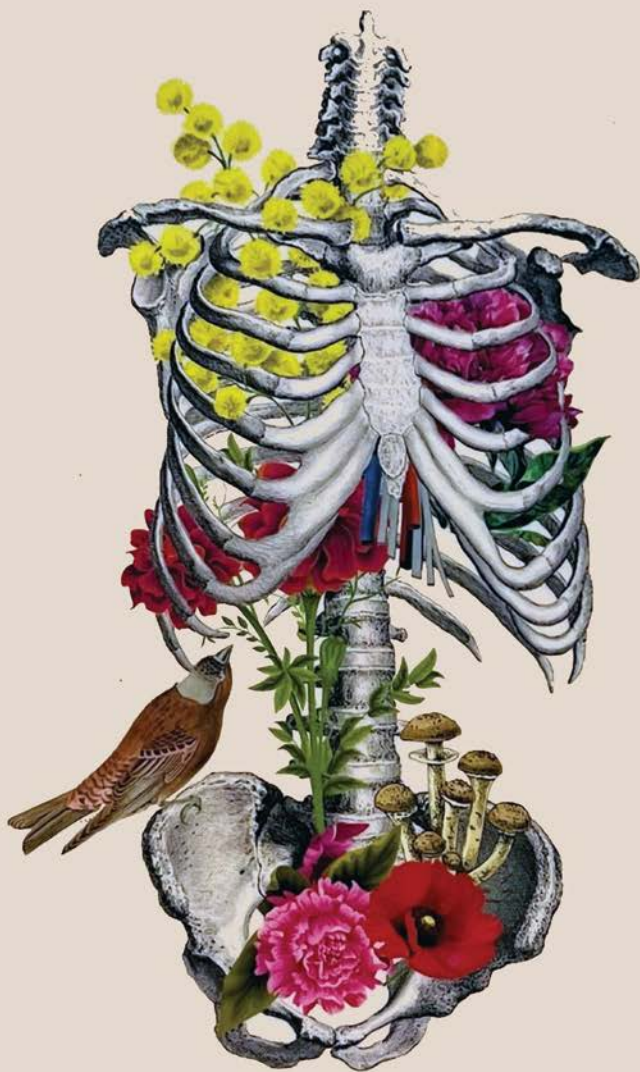
With my job as a pilot, I felt a sense of accomplishment in terms of my ambition, but I didn't feel a sense of fulfillment in life. The busy schedule and non-standard work hours made it challenging to continue my passion for serving, although I did my best to help and volunteer whenever I was free. After about five years in the job, and maturing with age and numerous life lessons, I decided I wanted to make a change to do something more meaningful with my life. Changing careers is a big no-no in our culture. And I don't think many people understood my decision to change paths. I'm happy that I accomplished my childhood ambition as a pilot, but now I'm excited to dedicate my life to studying social work and policy-making, and striving to make a difference in as many lives as possible.

What makes you think it's worth following Jesus?

I don't follow Jesus because of any promise of the riches in heaven that await us, or the blissful life in Zion city. So I wouldn't really term it "worth" as if it's a business deal. The reason I follow Jesus is because he has done so much for us already, by sacrificing himself and bearing all our sins so that we're set free from the consequences of our transgression. Not to mention how he intercedes on our behalf, and how we can come before God because of Jesus who makes us pure with his own blood! Because of all that God and the Son have done, I just wholeheartedly want to serve him by serving others and spreading his peace and grace to others. ■

THE UNSEEN BODY

*A Doctor's Journey Through the Hidden
Wonders of Human Anatomy*



Jonathan Reisman

Phil Campbell reviews a book that takes us on a whirlwind tour through the body's systems, but leaves us asking if there's still something more ...

Jonathan Reisman is a renaissance man - competent physician, ardent explorer and wilderness adventurer. Insatiably curious, he's a sparkling writer to boot. Most of us would be happy to have a single one of those strings to our bow. In *The Unseen Body*, Dr Reisman takes us for a fascinating and often hilarious journey through the parts and systems that make our bodies tick.

Deftly, Reisman even turns usually gross bodily fluids into the heroes of their own detective tales - his enthusiasm is infectious. "As a medical student, I learned quickly that mucus holds a special place among bodily fluids," he says. "Healthcare workers, who deal with bodily fluids of every sort, seemed to have a particular distaste for mucus above all the others." On he goes, describing the intricacies of snot, urine, blood - systems that produce them and balance them, and diagnostic tests that use them to read our bodies like a book.

Chapters typically feature a real life case study - we learn about blood circulation through the unfortunate story of Michael, who "began his day like any other, with no hint that it would quickly turn into a bloodbath." Unleashing his dog, a loop of chain encircled his thumb as the large pooch took off at full speed; almost severing the digit, and leading to a detailed explanation of the microsurgery that followed, and the modern day medical use of leeches.

Reisman's out-of-the way travels form another thematic thread. Time spent in the town of Barrow, Alaska, forms the backdrop to the topic of 'fat' - whale blubber and seal fat are dietary staples. The chapter on skin takes us on a wilderness trek, where he learns the art of tanning animal hides, with an up-close investigation of the dermal layers. Here's another evocative sample:

"Moments before skinning, the hide had enclosed a complex, cervine geometry of trunk and limbs, but now the skin lay perfectly flat. It had already begun to resemble swatch of fabric - the goal of tanning, and something humans have done with animal skins since time immemorial... Unlike finished leather, skin still fresh and hydrated from life felt rubbery, and it elastically sprang back when I pushed and released... Only just removed from the flesh it had once covered in life, that skin was the corporeal perimeter within which a deer had lived its entire life. I looked more closely at a small scar that Gary had pointed out, a whitish rough patch of skin that had lain over the animal's back..."

Among other things, Reisman has a scintillating vocabulary. Did you notice how easily 'cervine' rolled off his fingers, perfectly balanced by words from the familiar, mundane, coarse and common sections of the lexicon? By the time you finish the book, you'll feel educated in more ways than one.

Notable too is the author's quirky fascination with food. Enthusiastically embracing the circle of life, he'll eat almost anything in the animal world. Textures, tastes and fibrous content all become part of his in-depth investigation. Tagging along on a hunting expedition with his Arctic hosts, he doesn't hesitate to sample a piece of raw whale blubber known as muktuk - an Inupiaq favourite. "Herman cut thin slices with a pocketknife and passed them around. I bit into one and began chewing, my lips coated with an oily slick. It tasted like the sea smells, and it was not nearly as tough as I had expected." Urk. But a riveting entree to questions of human fat, obesity, and diet, and fun to read.

Heart, Liver and Brain each have dedicated chapters. The interface between 'mind' and brain is fascinating, and leads to a brief exploration of spirituality. Visiting the Himalayan village of Munang, Riesman experiences first-hand the effect of acute mountain sickness: lower air pressure and reduced levels of oxygen cause blood vessels in the brain to leak fluid, leading to painful intracranial swelling. Consequently, pressure on the brain's emotion centres - the amygdala and hypothalamus - lead to feelings of fear, apprehension and anxiety. "Emotions," notes Riesman, therefore "straddle the body and the mind." Higher up, the cortex is "the brain behind the brain's operation," and the probable location of consciousness, which can be turned on and off with drugs like ketamine.

But what, then, is consciousness? What is it that makes "me, me" and "you, you"? Riesman interviews Dr Benjamin Yudkoff, a psychiatrist, who believes that the human mind doesn't exist at all. "Each area of the brain, and every one of its levels - from brain stem to cortex - contributes a portion of our awareness," he says. "The mind is actually a layered fusion combining the most basic reflexes from deeper brain areas overlaid with the loftier functions of emotion and cognition." The mind, he says, is simply a way of understanding the way various parts of the brain work together.

To my mind, for one, that's not entirely satisfying. After Riesman's brilliant overview of the 'animal workings' of the human body, I am more convinced than ever that the words of King David in Psalm 139 ring true. Speaking of God, he says:

"For it was You who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I will praise You because I have been fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps 139:13-14)

In short, while *The Unseen Body* provides a masterclass in 'how' the body works, there's little insight into 'why.' There's no real sense of purpose or design - as humans, we are simply 'meat machines' and not much more. And for many of us, that just doesn't ring true. Mark Haddon, author of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, asks, "Why do most of us feel that we are something more than molecules?" Writing recently in a collection of essays reflecting on what consciousness actually is, he says, "We are made of the same raw materials as bacteria, as earth, as rock, as the great dark nebulae of dust that swim between the stars, as the stars themselves - and yet the sense of being made of something immaterial, too, has long haunted humans." ■



THE ART OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

*These days it seems talk of artificial intelligence (AI) is almost everywhere. Graphic Designer and artist **Martin Howard** looks at the latest trends, and asks, “Will artificial intelligence make us less creative?”*

2023 will likely go down as the year that artificial intelligence began the takeover of creative industries around the world. Web based services that enable anyone to type in a verbal prompt to create a professional visual image have moved from primitive to godlike within the last 6 months.

From now on, architects, fashion designers, illustrators, product designers, graphic designers and photographers will need to watch their backs and master this medium to compete with a coming wave of cowboy creators churning out dazzling creative output faster and more economically than ever.

The power behind these text-to-image apps is their deep analysis of millions of the most aesthetic images from across the internet. Every great and small artistic work has been sifted for clues. This data has been collected and analysed by supercomputers which can seamlessly remix, reproduce or reconstruct them at the speed of light. The legality of this activity is being tested with several lawsuits, but it looks like the genie is out of the bottle. The output images are phenomenal – prodigiously creative and genuinely beautiful. Not only can AI now imitate the best creative styles, it can merge styles and invent totally unique yet aesthetically pleasing works of art that are virtually original.

Almost anyone can now deliver stunning, accurate and diverse images in seconds. Leonardo Da Vinci took 4 years to paint the Mona Lisa. Now you can create hundreds of new digital Da Vincis in a matter of hours or mint new works in the style of Escher, Frank Lloyd Wright, Rodin, Warhol, Banksy, Disney, Starck or Versace. Indigenous art styles are also available.

This creative capacity and level of execution will only continue to improve and expand in the next 2 years.

While the current hype surrounds the ability to create amazing fine art digital paintings, illustrations and photographs in the style of the greatest artists, I think the bigger economic and cultural impact will be seen in the broader creative professions, where the vast majority of paid creative work is carried out. These studios are accustomed to charging 5 and 6 figure sums to produce imaginative visual concepts for everyday appliances, consumer electronics, apartment blocks, video games, medical equipment, vehicles, publications, landscaping, interiors, fashion, food packaging - in short, almost every product we touch in daily life. AI could also disrupt the music and film production industries. While the jury is still out on the legality of the technology, there is no entity that is powerful enough to stem the AI tide.

I saw something similar happen before. I worked as a graphic designer in an advertising agency when the Apple Macintosh revolutionised the creative world in the 1990's. There were doubters throughout the industry who dismissed it as an amateurish fad but everything changed within 2 years. Then, the web disrupted the entire business world. Fortunes were built and others saw their business model crumble – thinking the internet was just a nerdy craze.

I avoided extinction by reinventing myself as a digital designer and web developer.

The advances I've seen in AI this year look just as disruptive. Since discovering basic text-to-image tools in 2021 I've been exploring the possibilities and potential of this new medium. In the accompanying images you can see some of the capacity and diversity of what I've produced with my \$20 monthly subscription to Midjourney.

As these designs emerge from the typing of a few words, I've realised the incredible power that is at my disposal. This is phenomenal software. It is also built on the back of hardworking, brilliant and inspired artists. On one hand, I know how I can benefit from this tool; at the same time, I know it ultimately devalues my own creative work which forms a fragment of its engine. It also threatens my creative career.

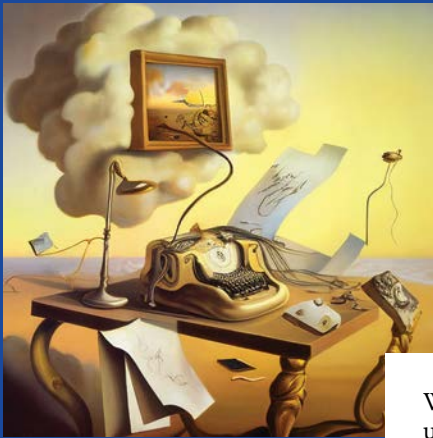
I know the time and energy that it costs me to produce great visual ideas - and now, how quickly and cheaply my creative capacity can be replicated. As I stare into the abyss, I can also welcome a feast of creative inspiration and capacity.

I feel for the most brilliant artists who have spent their lives developing groundbreaking artworks and iconic styles that have influenced many and brought joy and inspiration to millions. The Matisse's, Basquiat's, Warhols, Diors, whose hearts, souls and legacy are now available for indiscriminate regurgitation. At the same time, I hear of people becoming more appreciative of such legacies as they research their work to remix them into new AI creative work, so hopefully this returns some value to the giants of art.

The commoditisation of creativity threatens the existence of our great artistic innovators who require time, training, and inspiration. The casual warehousing of intellectual property by AI companies is problematic. If this is to continue, all artists deserve a commission when their name is used in text prompts, and copyright needs to be actively upheld. Artists should be able to opt out of having their work archived.

This is an important moment to understand the work and contributions of talented individuals who enhance the world we live in, both past and present. What is real inspiration? If you're persuaded - as I am - that we are image-bearers of a transcendent Creator, how does our own creative process confirm our connection with the Divine? Can the creative 'spark' ever really be outsourced to a machine? I hope that the revival in art creation stimulates an enlightened public discussion about these questions and the need to protect and reward our artists. ■

Martin Howard is a Brisbane based Graphic Designer.



AI ART

HOW IT WORKS

While the process of computers using Artificial Intelligence to create 'artwork' sounds complex, in essence it works like this. When you type in a description of the image and style you want, the system scours millions of existing images. Common elements are identified, and a (kind of) composite image is formed, complete with appropriate colour palette, brushstrokes and artistic vibe. The real genius lies in the 'seed images' that the software analyses for inspiration, but the results are often unexpectedly pleasing. ■



A HEALTH-CARE REVOLUTION

Former Nurse-educator Rosalie Strother looks back at the impact of Christianity on the history of health care...

The last century has brought enormous advances in science and technology that have transformed the practice of medicine and health care. But there's also been a gradual shift in emphasis from caring for a person with a disease or illness to a focus on curing the condition. The inability to bring about a cure is often seen as a 'failure' and the concept of love and compassion is sometimes overshadowed in the zeal for treatment.

The Christian perspective on health care has an important message for modern times, reflecting the love of Christ for the whole person rather than the physical aspect alone. It is timely to reflect on the role Christianity played in the establishment of hospitals out of compassion for the sick and suffering, and how this is still the case today..

The medical profession goes back at least as far as ancient Egypt: physicians were certainly a part of society in biblical times. In the New Testament Luke the physician was respected, and Jesus was seen as the Great Healer, concerned with the physical health and well-being of people as well as their spiritual condition. The four Gospels relate stories of Jesus showing compassion to people as he healed their physical illnesses. He expected his disciples to heal as well as teach. This continued as early Christians were engaged in healing, teaching and preaching. They cared for the sick regardless of who they were, in contrast to the pagan world of the Greco-Roman period, where there were doctors but a lack of compassion for the sick and dying. The early hospitals founded by Christians were the world's first charitable institutions, providing care simply out of compassion for the sick and suffering.

An early Christian conference, The First Council of Nicea in 325 AD, directed Bishops to establish hospices and hospitals to nurse and heal the sick. By the sixth century hospitals had become independent of bishops, and were linked with monasteries in the Middle East, Europe, and later England. Love for Christ, who commanded love for others, was their only motivation. The Rule of St Benedict, who founded the Benedictine order in 527 AD, stated that "Care of the sick is to be placed above...every other duty, as if indeed Christ was being directly served by waiting on them." The hospitals associated with monasteries continued to provide care for the sick, aged and infirm as well as hospitality for pilgrims throughout medieval times.

The natural link between Christianity and caring gained new impetus during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century with a renewed understanding of faith and its expression in works, especially in social reforms. Significantly, too, Martin Luther valued God-given 'science' over 'superstition.' Under his influence health care moved forward by emphasising that most diseases could be traced back to natural causes rather than black magic or Satan.

The Christian hospital movement re-emerged in the 18th century with the time of 'Enlightenment'. Medical societies were founded and new hospitals established. The religious revival sparked in England by John Wesley and George Whitefield was part of a great upsurge in Christian energy throughout Western Europe and America. Christians were reminded of their obligation to remember the poor and needy, and to care for physical as well as spiritual needs. A new age of hospitals began, founded by Christians, with new institutions built for the 'sick poor' supported mostly by voluntary contributions.

The dispensary movement, the prototype of general practice, was also led by Christians as they ministered to the poor in congested urban areas of large cities that grew up during the Industrial Revolution.

In spite of our inclination to complain about today's 'health care crisis,' we typically enjoy accessible and excellent health care provided by hospitals, many of which are 'secular' in origin. Hospitals that were founded by religious orders continue to exist, although structurally they are becoming increasingly secularised; nevertheless their vision and goals continue to reflect the Christian ethos. It's interesting to look back at the early history of Melbourne's Alfred Hospital, a secular institution established as the first 'hospital south of the Yarra' in 1871. When the residency built for medical staff in the early days was demolished to make way for a new building in the mid-20th century, six beautiful stained glass windows were preserved and now form part of the hospital's 'sacred space'. The windows depict the story of the sheep and goats told by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 25: 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Maybe the sacred and secular are not so far removed.

As we look back to the origin of hospitals and the role of Christianity in the promotion of love and compassion for the sick, we should ensure that modern health care is not overwhelmed by technology and medical science at the expense of caring for the whole person as a physical and spiritual being. ■



IS YOUR SMART HOUSE LISTENING?

These days, most of us have had the spooky experience of talking about a product, only to find a targeted advertisement in our Facebook feed a few minutes later. So are our intelligent devices listening? Of course they are, says Stallone Joel Purushottam, as he shares what he learned from one of his favourite TED talks...

When I first heard Tony Stark chatting to his intelligent assistant Jarvis in the movie Iron Man, I was fascinated by the concept of a voice assistant and the tech behind it. It didn't take long for tech companies to come up with something similar in real life. In 2011 Apple released Siri, in 2014 Microsoft presented Cortana and Amazon introduced Alexa; and in 2017 Samsung developed Bixby. Every time I talked to Bixby on my smartwatch I felt like Iron Man!

If we look under the hood of these voice assistants, they all follow a similar mechanism. First of all, a microphone acts as an input. Once the device receives a speech request, it will send it to the 'cloud' - in reality a fast and powerful 'server' computer operated by the service provider - where speech to text translation will be done within milliseconds. This process of translation is called Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP is a large topic in its own right, but for now let's focus on the magic occurring in the cloud. The cloud deals with the query, and the data is sent back to your device in audio format, all within seconds. All you need is an inexpensive smart device with a connection to the internet and an account with the provider, for example Apple, Samsung, Amazon or Google.

Isn't it great to have a personal assistant who can be placed in your living room, bedroom or even bathroom to carry out your requests within a few seconds? This has gone far beyond the concept of 'information at your fingertips' as quoted by Bill Gates. It really is remarkable.



But what about the implications of smart devices that we're now inviting to listen to our conversations at home, or Smart TVs that monitor our viewing habits and share the information with others? I recently watched a TED Talk with two speakers, who had conducted an investigation into "What your smart devices know (and share) about you". The results are astonishing. Take time to watch this video by scanning this QR Code.

The talk begins with some current statistics around the use of smart speakers. According to research by NPR and Edison, one in six American adults use smart speakers. Main presenter Kashmir Hill, a tech journalist with online magazine Gizmodo, wanted to test whether smart devices shared her data with others. After her husband gave her a smart speaker for Christmas, she turned her apartment into a 'smart home' by connecting everything she could to the internet, including her smart-bed which monitored and evaluated her sleep patterns. ("It doesn't help," she joked, "when you've had a bad night's sleep to then be evaluated, and told you slept badly! I knew that already!") Ultimately, Kashmir had connected 18 smart devices, including lights, bed, door lock, toilet, toothbrush, and coffee maker. The next step - to engage an engineer to find out what was going on inside these smart devices. Surya Mattu, an engineer, investigative journalist and her co-speaker, joined Kashmir on stage to share the results of his investigation.

Without getting into technical details, this is a summary of Surya's findings. He installed a special router to log every single 'network packet' as it entered or left her home network. During the time of the experiment, there was not a single hour of digital silence, with a constant exchange of 'network packets' even when the house was left empty for a week. Based on network packet logging data Surya could find out when Kashmir woke up, went to bed, or brushed her teeth; what TV shows she watched, and her favourite TV show based on frequency of access. The most 'chatty' smart device was the Amazon Echo, which contacted its servers every three minutes whether or not it was being used. All the smart devices in Kashmir's apartment were in constant conversation with their servers in the cloud, although she was unaware of this until it was revealed through the logging process. She concludes that although she owns the smart devices, it's wise to remember that the data which is generated is owned (and can be sold) by the manufacturing company.

It is of interest to note that Smart TV brand Vizio was required to pay a \$2.2M fine by the US government after it were found to be collecting data every second and selling it on to brokers and advertisers without consumers' consent. In summary, the smart things you buy will be used to target and build up your profile, so don't be surprised when you're targeted by advertisements that are tailored to your secret desires!

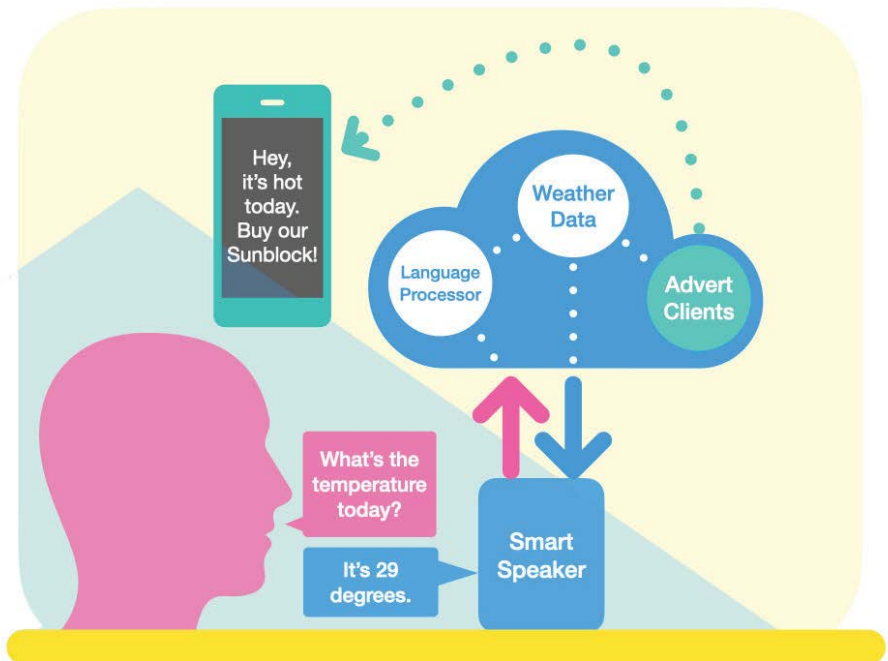
Sometimes, there are obvious benefits to this. Maybe you'll receive targeted discounts based on your interests. "Give up a little privacy, and get some price-breaks in return," says Kashmir. And yet often, the new complexity brings inconvenience too.

“Infuriating - my toothbrush had a password!” she says. “And I thought smart coffee was going to be great. But we had to use particular phrases to make it work, which - early in the morning - was frustratingly hard to remember. I had to say ‘Alexa, ask the Behmor to run startup’... and the Echo Dot smart speaker beside our bed just couldn’t understand me. In the end it was quicker to go to the kitchen and press the switch to turn it on.”

Ultimately, Smart Devices range from useful to annoying. And in the end, you become the product, as the companies consistently harvest your data. “It’s hard to remember that your normal household items are spying on you. It’s easy to forget these things are watching you, because they don’t look like cameras,” concludes Hill.

My own view as an IT Professional is the same. Smart technology offers many benefits, and a taste of “science fiction in real life.” But it’s important to be aware of the range of data being captured by smart devices, and its subsequent use by others in targeted marketing, in assessing insurance risks, and other ways we haven’t yet even imagined. As Kashmir Hill concludes, companies should rethink the design of these devices with our privacy in mind. But I guess that’s just a dream, as their ultimate goal is to use everything they can discover about us to sell us things we didn’t even know we needed! ■

Stallone Joel Purushottam is an IT professional, and a member of the eldership team at The Scots’ Church Melbourne.



MEET JOHN

APOSTLE OF LOVE

Rosalie Strother introduces the fascinating author of the Bible's fourth gospel...

Over recent months our Scots' Church Senior Minister Phil Campbell has led us on a journey through **The Gospel of John** in a series of sermons exploring the apostle's deep and complex account of the life of Jesus. This Gospel is the fourth of the New Testament narratives of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The others, Matthew, Mark and Luke, are considered the 'Synoptic Gospels' (from the Greek that literally means 'viewed together') as they present a similar account of Jesus' life and ministry.

John differs from the Synoptics in several ways, and provokes fascinating questions for the serious thinker. Jesus openly presents himself as the Son of God rather than hiding his identity, and is portrayed as speaking at length on matters of theology. As well as narrating events, John singles out details that support a theological interpretation, and highlights seven highly symbolic 'signs' performed by Jesus, not so much for the astonishment they produced, but because of the truth they

conveyed. (For example, Jewish ceremonial washing water is replaced by something far better in John chapter 2.) In ancient times *John* was considered the 'Spiritual Gospel' and had a profound and lasting influence on the development of early Christian doctrine.

One of the twelve disciples of Jesus, John was probably the youngest. Most of the biographical information we have about him comes from the gospels themselves. Born around 6 AD, he was the younger brother of James and the son of Zebedee. According to tradition his mother Salome was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus, making James and John cousins of Jesus. John was a fisherman before he and James answered the call of Jesus to become his disciples, and was among the first to do so.

Although James and John both seem to have been even-tempered, at one stage Jesus refers to them as 'the sons of thunder' - perhaps when they suggested calling on fire from heaven to consume the unbelieving Samaritans. Famously, John is the only gospel to record the famous 'new commandment' of Jesus - "Love one another as I have loved you."

Curiously, John never refers to himself directly by name in his own gospel - most scholars agree that John refers to himself with the phrase 'the beloved disciple' or 'the disciple Jesus loved', with several self-references through his Gospel.

James and John, together with the well-known Peter, formed something of an 'inner circle' among the disciples. They were the ones Jesus chose to be with him on the Mount of Transfiguration, at the healing of Jairus' daughter, and in the Garden of Gethsemane prior to his arrest and trial. The 'disciple Jesus loved' was the only one of the twelve who stood near Jesus at the cross, where he asked John to take care of his mother as his final instruction. (Peter, on the other hand, denied he knew him.)

Following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, John and Peter were active in the establishment and guidance of the church in Jerusalem. John later went to Samaria with Peter to visit newly converted believers. Although we know little of John's later life from the Bible, he was banished to the Greek island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea by the Roman Emperor Domitian, known for his persecution of Christians. He later lived in Ephesus, where he reportedly lived into old age, dying some time after 98 AD during the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

After writing his account of the life of Jesus, John also wrote three short letters or epistles, and the final book of the Bible, Revelation - which in spite of its spooky reputation, is full of symbolically coded encouragement for Christians living under Roman persecution. All his books are believed to have been written later in John's life, although the exact time and order is not known. The three epistles were probably written in Ephesus, and it is thought that the book of Revelation was written while John was exiled on Patmos.

You may have been fortunate to have heard Phil Campbell's sermons that cover the entire Gospel of John, but if you missed them or you'd like to refresh your memory, you can access most of the series on our Scots' Church podcast - just search for Scotscast on the Spotify or Apple platforms. Video versions are also available through our Scots' Church Youtube channel. ■

JESUS

AND OUR
SHAME



With the rise of social media and ‘cancel culture,’ our sense of shame is more active than ever. Pastor and Author **Rory Shiner** investigates in his new book *Forever Forgiven*.

When your conscience speaks to you, what voice do you hear? Is it an inner lawyer or an inner grandma?

This is the question of Australian missiologist David Williams. The inner lawyer is interested in right and wrong, good and evil, guilt and innocence. As you weigh your future options or consider your past actions, that inner lawyer will ask questions such as “is it right or is it wrong?”. He (I’m making this lawyer a man, mainly because my imagined inner lawyer looks and sounds exactly like Atticus Finch) is either your defence (“you were right!”), or your prosecutor (“that was wrong!”). Either way, the inner lawyer deals in categories of guilt and innocence. He judges you and your actions according to fixed categories of right and wrong.

The cross, which deals with our guilt, also deals with our shame. This is very good news.

The inner grandma is different. She is not so much interested in guilt and innocence as in honour and shame. “What will people think?!” “You can’t go out in that!” “How could you look them in the face again?” “Shame on you!”.

The inner lawyer deals with evidence. Once the facts are in and the case is made, who cares what other people think? The inner grandma, on the other hand, is very much interested in what other people think. Indeed, that’s how she’s making her decisions. What will the neighbours think? Will this bring honour, or will it result in shame?

The Cross and Shame

The cross, which deals with our guilt, also deals with our shame. This is very good news. If no one’s ever told you about this before, allow me.

Guilt and shame are related but not identical experiences. Guilt is something you may or may not feel. It’s possible to be guilty but not feel guilty, just as it’s possible to feel guilt and not be guilty. A criminal may walk away from the courtroom with the objective status of “guilty”, but may personally feel defiant, numb, or even cheerful. Conversely, a tender-hearted person may experience feelings of guilt for things that were just mistakes or for nothing at all. All our consciences are like faulty alarm systems, sometimes sounding off when there is nothing, other times failing to alert us to a major problem.

Shame tends to be subjective. Shame is felt, and it is felt by our whole person. Guilt says, “I did the wrong thing”. Shame says, “I am the wrong person”. Guilt is able to focus on a specific event or action, shame takes over our sense of who we are.

Guilt is personal. A young boy can kill a frog for fun and then feel terrible about it. No one needs to have seen it or objected to it. But shame is social. Shame is about how others see us. It has to do with our standing before others. To be humiliated or defiled before others is to be shamed.

Even when shame is personal, we construct a little community out of ourselves and speak of ourselves in the third person: “I feel ashamed of my Self”. A miserable little party of two: me, and the Self I am now heaping shame on.

The opposite of guilt is innocence; the opposite of shame is honour. And honour, like shame, is something bestowed on us by others.

With the rise of social media, cancel culture, and public shaming, grandma’s back. And she’s not happy.

Since the work of anthropologist Ruth Benedict, western culture has commonly been understood as a guilt-innocence culture, non-western cultures as honour-shame cultures. The truth, of course, is more complex. But as a rough rule of thumb, it holds up well enough—at least since the enlightenment. In the west, we tend to hear the inner lawyer. We are driven by an individual conscience. We seek innocence and avoid guilt. In other cultures people are more likely to be driven by a communal voice, the voice channelled by grandma, calling us to seek honour and avoid shame.

Of course, non-western cultures know guilt, just as western culture knows shame. It’s a matter of degrees. But for whatever reasons, the cross and shame haven’t got the air-time they deserve. The Bible, in general, and the cross, in particular, have a lot to say about shame. We have been underselling a key achievement of the cross. With the rise of social media, cancel culture, and public shaming, grandma’s back. And she’s not happy. We need to know what the cross does to address our shame.

Shame in the Bible

Shame, it should be noted, is acknowledged in Scripture; like guilt, it can be a completely appropriate and useful response. Shame gives the wider community a vote on my actions. To never feel shame is to be a sociopath. The person who is completely impervious to the judgement of the community is not generally someone you’d want running your country, teaching your children, or joining you for your summer holidays. Shame can be a good thing.

Or at least a good thing in a fallen world. In the garden, Adam and Eve were naked but felt no shame. They were not embarrassed. Or threatened. They anticipated no rejection or mockery, or judgement from the one to whom they were exposed. Shame is only good in the way that locks on our doors or police on our streets are good. Shame (along with door locks and police officers) was unknown in the garden and will be retired from use in the new creation. It is a feature of the fall.



The Shaming of Jesus

It is a feature of the world that Jesus experienced too. Although he never internalised people's contempt by becoming ashamed, he was certainly shamed. Deeply. Profoundly.

If you look at the world through a guilt and innocence framework, it's possible to miss the emphasis on shame in the crucifixion of Jesus. Consider the event itself.

Jesus was spat on (Matt 26:67), his head and face were struck (Matt 26:67), his clothes were stripped off (Matt 27:28); he was verbally mocked and insulted (Matt 27:28–29). None of these actions was in itself physically painful. Being spat on doesn't hurt. It shames.

■ Jesus associated with contagiously shameful people.

Jesus associated with contagiously shameful people: bleeding women, tax collectors, prostitutes, gentiles and the like. These people were a threat to your social standing.

Yet in the case of Jesus, the contagion seemed to go the other way. Rather than them bringing him shame, he brought them honour:

- The bleeding woman is healed and Jesus calls her his daughter (Mark 5:25–29);
- Zaccheus is presented back to the community as a “son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9);
- The prodigal son in the story is welcomed back into the family (Luke 15:21–32).

In the crucifixion, however, the traffic moves in the opposite direction. Jesus, who moved so many from shame to honour, is himself humiliated, embarrassed, degraded, and shamed.

Exchange: Jesus takes our shame and gives us honour

Jesus bore our shame for us. He took our shame and exchanged it for his honour. He who knew no shame became shamed for us so that in him we might become the honoured ones of God.

Theologically, this is necessarily true. As the church fathers never tired of reminding us, that which Jesus did not assume, he could not heal. Jesus came to reverse the curse of the fall. He did so by entering into that curse, by assuming to himself, not just bits here and there, but all of it.

As we read in Hebrews:

... Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. (Hebrews 13:12–13)

Jesus suffered “outside the city gate”. That is, his suffering included exclusion from the esteem of the community. He bore our disgrace to make us holy. But the encouragement is to “go to him outside the camp, bearing this disgrace he bore.”

■ Jesus suffered “outside the city gate”. He bore our disgrace to make us holy.

When we stand in solidarity with the people of God as they are being shamed; when we allow our social credit to diminish by refusing to disown them, we bear shame for the sake of Christ.

Think of the kid rejected at high school for their brave (even if ham-fisted) stance for Jesus. Or the CEO who loses a board position because of their association with a local church. In these situations, we have a choice: stand with our sister or brother, and lose social credits—or distance ourselves from them and be ashamed of Jesus.

Trajectory: Jesus pioneers the path from shame to glory

Finally, when it comes to shame, Jesus blazes the trail for us—the path from shame to honour. And it's a path he invites us to follow.

The author of Hebrews encourages us to fix our eyes on Jesus, calling him ...

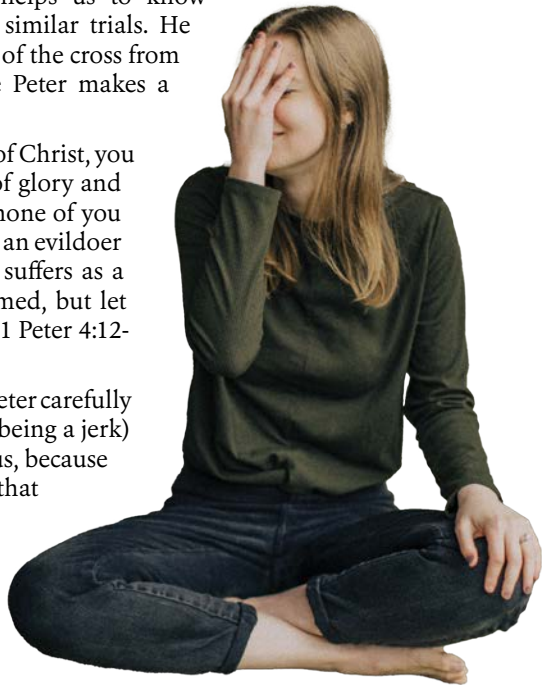
... the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:2–3)

Jesus was able to endure the cross because of the joy set before him. What was he enduring? Specifically, the shame of the cross. And yet he was able to endure that shame in light of the joy ahead of him. Jesus didn't enjoy the shame (who does!?). But the glory and honour of the other side of shame kept him going.

In this, Jesus is our pioneer. Knowing that he went through shame to joy helps us to know the destination when we face similar trials. He mapped out the V-shaped path of the cross from shame to honour. The apostle Peter makes a similar point:

If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. (1 Peter 4:12–16)

Suffering as a Christian (which Peter carefully disentangles from suffering for being a jerk) is, in fact an honour, a glory to us, because we bear Christ's name. And that means we are on the same trajectory as him, awaiting the crown of glory (1 Peter 5:4), trusting that God's mighty hand will lift us up in due time (1 Peter 5:6).



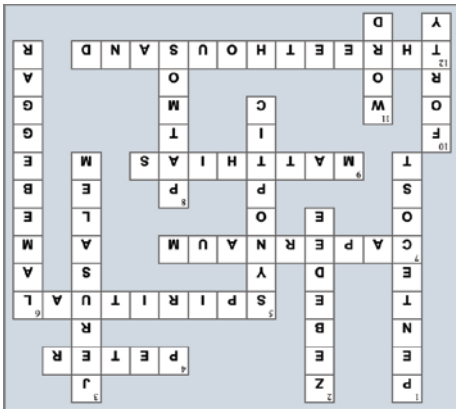
Conclusion

In our culture, we see the experience of shame as entirely negative—but we see the strategy of shaming as powerful, useful, and (thanks to social media) easily achievable. Shaming is everywhere.[1] Grandma is back. Shame can be useful. It can alert us to things that need to change. But only by the cross can we hear the words of honour on the other side of shame. Only through the death of Jesus can we now stand before God, knowing Jesus is not ashamed of us but honours us before the Father as his brothers and sisters.

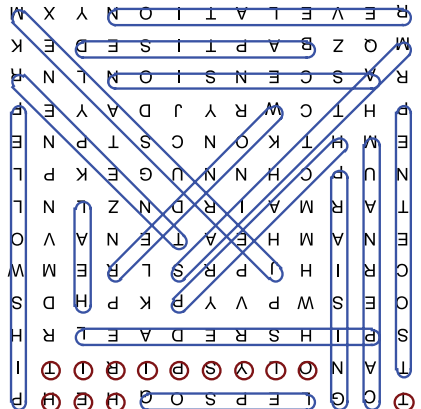
[1] For a brilliant discussion of the whole topic of shame, including the rise of shaming as a culturally sanctioned practice, see Gregg Ten Elshof's *For Shame: Rediscovering the Virtues of a Maligned Emotion*

*This is an excerpt from Rory's forthcoming book on the cross, *Forgiven Forever*. Edited and used by permission. ■*

Rory Shiner studied Arts at the University of Western Australia and theology at Moore College in Sydney. His PhD is on the life and work of theologian Donald Robinson. He is senior pastor of Providence City Church in Perth, where he lives with his wife, Susan, and their four boys. He has written books on *Union with Christ* and on the relationship between Jesus' resurrection and our own. His most recent book, *The World Next Door: A Short Guide to the Christian Faith*, is out now.



Hidden Message: THE HOLY SPIRIT



A dramatic night scene depicting a riot. In the foreground, a man in a dark suit is captured in mid-air, kicking a large, burning trash can. The trash can is on fire, and flames are visible. In the background, other people are seen, some holding up phones to record. The air is filled with smoke and falling debris, creating a chaotic and intense atmosphere. The overall lighting is dark, with the primary light source being the fire and streetlights.

THE POLITICS OF FAITH

There's an old maxim that says you should never discuss religion or politics in polite company. But suddenly, there's a new air of hostility on both sides of the spectrum and the old rules are out the window. Phil Campbell explores the new dimensions of the debate...

When Jesus famously said "My Kingdom is not of this world" in the heat of his trial before Roman Governor Pontius Pilate, he launched a vision of two kingdoms. His own reign called for an allegiance that exists alongside (and sometimes against) the political agenda of any age. This was to be a Kingdom that offered consolation and a call-to-action transcending race and status - a loyal subject could equally be a political prisoner in China, a subsistence farmer in the Sudan, or the late Queen Elizabeth II. Jesus described, and embodied, a kingdom of conscience, sacrifice and a hunger for righteousness - all matters of the heart rather than of political decree and enforcement at the edge of a sword.

So how did we get from there to the current environment of 'christian nationalism' that's sweeping the USA, and is on the rise even here? Matched by an equally strident 'wokeism' on the left, both sides seem to be pursuing their agendas with a ferocity that leaves most of us bewildered - dividing our culture (and even our churches) in the process.

In a recent essay, "The New Shape of Christian Public Discourse," Dr Jay Green, Professor of History at Covenant College in Georgia, suggests that to understand our moment, we need to move beyond the simple left-right spectrum, and consider a more nuanced quadrilateral instead - in other words, he adds an up and down dimension to the traditional mix.

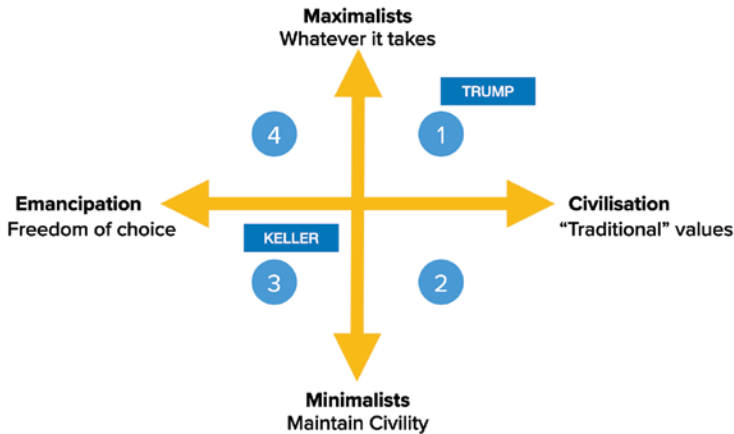
Green observes that the past seven years have seen time-worn public values, behaviours, and alliances replaced by a new way of thinking and acting. "Which way is up? Who is on whose side? What values animate the American public?" Many in Australia will be asking the same questions.

In the supercharged political world of US politics, everyone seems to self-identify as red or blue, liberal or conservative, traditional or progressive, religious or secular. But, says Green, "these binaries are starting to feel a bit creaky, especially in today's ever more complex environment. "Left" and "Right" do not have self-explanatory or stable meanings. The old labels tend to obscure at least as much as they reveal."

The changing boundaries are profoundly affecting - and dividing - the American church. Green suggests that we urgently need to find a common language for civil discussion, both in the church and the wider community. Whether you consider yourself 'religious' or not, it's worth considering his paradigm; you'll find yourself somewhere in his grid, and perhaps gain a more sympathetic understanding of other views.

Green's simple 2 x 2 matrix charts conflicting *public goals on the horizontal axis*, and a diverging set of *strategies designed to achieve those goals* on the vertical. On these axes we can plot (at least roughly) people, ideas and institutions.

America, of course, has been much more overtly “Christian” in outlook than we ever were in this rough and tumble penal outpost. Green’s x-axis represents the competing goals of Christians in American public life, dominant there, and represented by groups like Family First and the Australian Christian Lobby here in Australia. Green’s y-axis charts the tactics pursued by American Christians “to fulfil their respective visions of public life.”



Let’s get down to business. On the right side of the spectrum Green locates those he calls *Civilisationists*: “those whose Christian social goals are set with an eye toward aligning national priorities with the principles of a historic Judeo-Christian heritage.”

“Civilisationists express profound regret at the current state of America and the countless ways contemporary society has abandoned its founding commitments,” he says. “They believe that this once proud country has descended into decadence, self-indulgence, and radical experimentation.” Bemoaning abortion, divorce, gender confusion, federal spending, lawlessness and illegal immigration, they argue that key cultural institutions of American society “have been hijacked by “radical leftists,” and various agents of the “deep state”: higher education, journalism, public schools, and the federal government itself.” To this group, the project of Christian engagement is one of “renewing American civilisation by revitalising these institutions to make them align with the vital projects of Christian virtue.”

The reality, though, is that one man’s *civilisation* is another man’s *oppression*. So, on the left side of Green’s horizontal axis lies an alternate set of voices articulating a very different vision: one marked by appreciation of personal freedom and social equality, a diverse family eager to welcome all who wish to join in wide-ranging “pursuits of happiness.” Green calls the advocates of this social vision *Emancipationists*.

Christians in this group are disturbed at the idea that America was ever truly 'theirs.' Instead, they argue that efforts to enforce Christian civilisation undermine the promise of American democracy; oppression, exclusion, systemic injustice, and social marginalisation are the results. So here's their goal - a just (and therefore truly Christian) social order driven by "social equality, blind justice, and the personal freedom to choose different paths, lifestyles, and cultural traditions."

Emancipationist Christians celebrate expanding civil rights and liberties, expressing faithfulness by activism intended to fulfil the mission of Jesus and his pursuit of real liberation and harmony among all people.

So far, Green is saying nothing new. But this horizontal axis tells only part of the story. The greatest tension emerging especially among American Christians in fact occurs in the Struggle Over Means - and this is expressed in the vertical axis.

"What tactics should be employed to achieve our civilizational or emancipationist visions?," asks Green. "I believe the greatest conflicts we've seen over the past decade revolve around this question, and it has generated far more disagreements within the respective camps on either side of the x-axis than it has between them. All are tied to current attitudes toward the principles and practices of liberal democracy."

In American political terms, liberalism can be defined as "Willingness to respect or accept behaviour or opinions different from one's own; openness to new ideas." According to Wikipedia, "the fundamental liberal ideals of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, the separation of church and state, the right to due process and equality under the law are widely accepted as a common foundation of liberalism."

As we move from bottom to top of Green's vertical axis, we trace a growing willingness (on both the left and right) to "ignore liberal procedures in favour of doing "whatever it takes" to defeat their cultural "enemies," and so achieve the desired visions of American society."

Those in the bottom half of the grid maintain a commitment to "civil discourse, open inquiry, free speech, tolerance of difference, the illuminating power of dissent, and the hope of reform through persuasion and compromise."

In contrast, in the top quadrants we find "increasing skepticism toward traditional liberal ideals: little respect for free and open inquiry, open contempt for diverging from the "correct view," and a rigid expectation of ideological conformity. A rising tide of authoritarian tactics found on both sides of the x-axis has deepened our cultural divide."

In simple terms, those on either side in the upper half are committed to doing "whatever it takes" to advance their vision of society and to stop those who threaten it. "They argue that the world we're living in calls for stronger medicine... Liberalism may have been nice in generations past, when our adversaries were reasonable and we all recognised one another as decent Americans who happened to disagree with one another on this issue or that."

Both groups believe the rules of liberal democracy no longer apply... liberalism is thought of as a form of "politeness" that *the other side* doesn't deserve and that *our side* simply can't afford. "Liberalism has failed," they claim. And we must therefore

“fight illiberalism with illiberalism.” The old procedures of fairness, free speech, and due process are seen as weakness.

In the lower quadrants are those who pursue their goals only within the frames of the traditional liberal order. For them, says Green, “Liberalism is a fundamentally core value that must be integrated as part of the social vision; liberalism is a basic tenet of Christianity itself. Liberalism isn’t simply a means. It is also a goal.”

Green then identifies prominent American voices and publications that fit into each corner. For simplicity, let’s begin with the upper right box, under his banner Civilisational Maximalists - those who’ll do whatever it takes to maintain what they consider ‘civilisation.’

Quadrant 1 - Civilisational Maximalists

Donald Trump’s presidential campaign angered and then empowered a tranche of American voters, determined to put things right. “His swagger, his masculine bravado, and his disregard for “the rules” are key to his appeal,” says Green. “Fighting against radical Wokeism requires this kind of brute force, righteous anger, and brazen tactics.”

“Christian Nationalists” quickly came on board, though at times uncomfortable with Trump’s own libertarian lifestyle. “Affirming that America was founded on Christian principles, they believe that the levers of the state should be... unleashed to rebuild Christian civilisation from the ground up. Likewise, they believe that the power of the state should forcefully suppress the enemies of Christian virtue, who will otherwise fill local communities with “critical race theory” and pro-LGBTQ propaganda.”

“This is a time for fighting!” they say. “This isn’t a time for “discussion,” “listening,” or “winsomeness.” Barbarians are at the gate and we must gird our loins for battle.”

According to Green, Dinesh D’Souza, Eric Metaxas, and Jenna Ellis are ardent Christian promoters of Trump, and of pro-Trump conspiracy theories (maximalists, of course, will do whatever it takes...) though there are other more nuanced voices in the same camp: Rod Dreher, Albert Mohler, John MacArthur and Douglas Wilson to name a few.

Quadrant 2 - Civilisational Minimalists

Moving downwards into Quadrant 2, we find the group who are personally supportive of what may be termed “traditional Christian values,” though principled rather than pragmatic in their advocacy. In the American context, they are typically opposed to Trumpism, with its disregard of the institutions of liberalism. Typically, they will support policies that trend in the direction of underlying Christian values within the framework of the liberal constitutional system. “These are what we once called *social conservatives*,” says Green. “They believe in personal freedom, small government, free markets, and traditional values... [they are not] pursuing a large and aggressive government with its thumb on the scales for Christians. To do so would undermine the very character of Christian civilisation.’

These are the convictions of Catholic scholars like Robert George and evangelical pastors like Kevin DeYoung, together with writers like Ross Douthat and Carl Trueman. “Online sites like Mere Orthodoxy and The Gospel Coalition, when they speak to public concerns, are apt also to fit into this framework,” says Green.

Quadrant 3 - Emancipatory Minimalists

This is the sector that believes “Faith flourishes in freedom,” - but such freedom must be extended to all. They’re comfortable with the fact that the liberal order will allow for things that Christians may personally find objectionable, but count that as the cost of living in a free and diverse society. Tolerance is prized highly.

“A key and representative Christian public intellectual working within this framework is Pastor Timothy Keller,” says Green. Launched in New York City during the late 1980s, Keller’s Redeemer Presbyterian Church found ways to value and celebrate the cultural differences represented in the city. “Being “salt and light” for Keller has always meant cultivating an openness to neighbours in conversation and shared interests,” says Green. “He has modelled a sophisticated engagement with art, ideas, and social concern in the face of intense expressions of cultural opposition.”

Green lists other voices within this quadrant as David French, Russell Moore and Karen Swallow Prior. They differ from Civilisational Minimalists because they see the pluralistic nature of American society as an undisputed fact that isn’t going to change; they embrace the diversity reflected in the population, and see this pluralism as a feature of our society. While critical of excesses on the left, they see emergent threats from among fellow Christians who support Maximalist strategies on the right as far more serious. Uniformly opposed to Trumpist politics, they grieve the ways Trumpism has seized control of Christian churches in America. In Australia, Christian voices like Nathan Campbell’s st-eutychus.com, and more recently Stephen McAlpine and Melbourne’s Murray Campbell have been sounding the alarm on this trend.

Mentone Baptist Pastor Murray Campbell says, “[While many are worried about opposition from the left of politics,] there’s a counterpoint emerging on the right that is also deeply concerning, and perhaps more so... Christian nationalism... has started to captivate some pew sitters and pastors and therefore it is more likely to create issues for Gospel ministry in Victoria. This theorem is thankfully marginal and I pray it doesn’t take hold as it is doing in parts of the United States, but nonetheless, I don’t wait for 100 mosquitoes to enter my house before dealing with the first one.”

Quadrant 4. Emancipatory Maximalists

Our tour of Jay Green’s proposed quadrants concludes with the group known by their critics as “the Woke.” Their emphasis is on civil liberties, personal rights, and cultural diversity, but they have largely given up on the civil discourse of liberalism in exchange for a hardened vision of identity politics. Green lists movements like Black Lives Matter, LGBTQ advocacy, and radical feminism as reactions against what they see as wrongs brought about by the white patriarchal version of Christianity that they think has long dominated American politics - an era that has

always privileged cisgender male, straight, white, Christian nationalist priorities. “Emancipatory Maximalists exercise a religious fervour intent on rooting out racism, sexism, transphobia, and homophobia,” says Green. “They aren’t keen on “persuading” their opponents. They wish instead to use coercive power to produce conformity to an unyielding dogma that regulates speech, artistic representation, and institutional policy.”

Emancipatory Maximalists oppose “allowing churches and other religious organisations to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the relentless pursuit of “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.” There’s an implicit passion for the previously marginalised that gives proponents of Quadrant 4 a sense of holding the moral high ground.

Green quotes Meghan Rohrer, the first transgender bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America: “We all need to be as loud and as angry as the people who want to declare that there are types of people that God can’t love. People are literally dying because of it.”

Various versions of “progressive” Christianity have aligned themselves with these cultural orthodoxies and are easy to find among mainline Protestant churches and seminaries, both in the USA and more locally, though rather than naming key figures in the movement, Green claims there are too many to enumerate. Publications that regularly feature Christian writing in this tradition include Sojourners and Red Letter Christians.

Conclusion

Jay Green hopes his outline will provide a starting point for discussion, though already there’s been significant pushback on Twitter. Arguably, his paradigm lacks nuance, and some of the key public figures he names don’t quite fit the boxes he nominates. But his concern is that Maximalism on both sides is winning the day. “I believe that upholding the liberal tradition is essential for the survival of our civic order and the best safeguard for human flourishing for all people,” says Green. “The authoritarian impulse on the left and the right is real, it is serious, and it threatens the institutions and our democracy. If there is a centre in American public life, I’m not sure how much longer it can hold.”

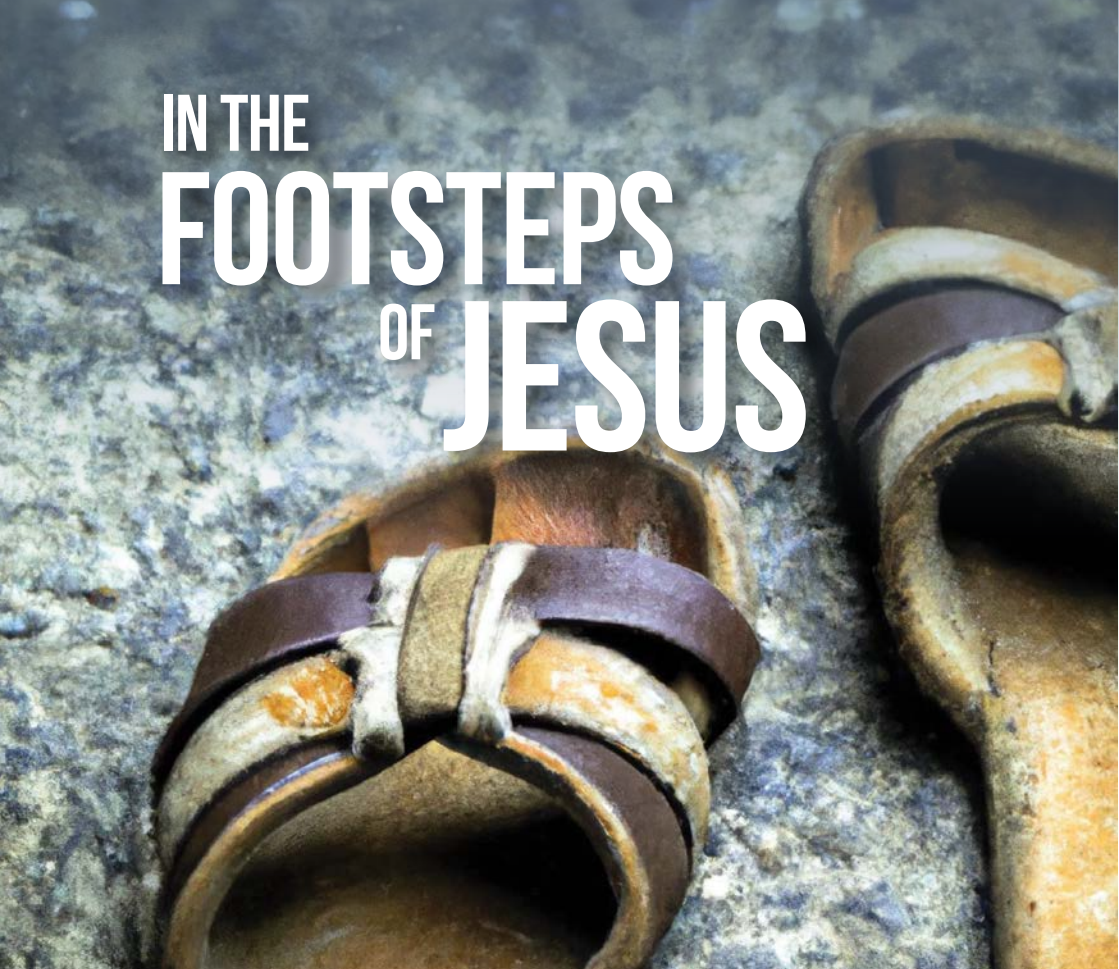
Australia, of course, is very different, in that there’s never been the same religious centre ground. Quadrant 1 hard-liners struggle to command more than 3% vote at the ballot box, although their voices are still heard. While still not quite mainstream, the push from Quadrant 4 goes largely unchallenged.

Clear and gentle voices like those of New York’s Tim Keller may not ultimately prevail, but I suspect that at heart, they do most justice to the goals of Jesus Christ - not to dominate political playing fields and battlegrounds, but seeking to promote a kingdom that’s ‘not of this world,’ one heart at a time. ■

Phil Campbell

Read Dr Jay Green’s article at
<https://currentpub.com/2022/11/28/forum-the-new-shape-of-christian-public-discourse/>





IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

How far did Jesus walk, and where? Our aerobic fitness guru Rosalie Strother runs the statistics, and offers some tips on how to literally follow in his footsteps.

In our modern lives walking is promoted as low impact, moderate intensity exercise with a range of health benefits and few risks, and is recommended for 30 minutes each day. This helps us to maintain a healthy weight, prevents or manages a range of health conditions, strengthens our muscles and bones, and contributes to our mental health. We walk for pleasure or exercise – perhaps we drive to a park or walking track to enhance the enjoyment of walking. You may walk (or cycle) to work with suburbs such as Hawthorn, Brunswick, Windsor, Footscray and Northcote, all being less than 6 kilometres from the CBD. Melbourne has good walking tracks and roads, and plenty of alternatives.

First century Palestine presented a different picture. In biblical times walking was the primary mode of getting places, and for many people the only option. While donkeys were used to carry supplies, and the wealthy travelled by horse or chariot, most people simply walked.

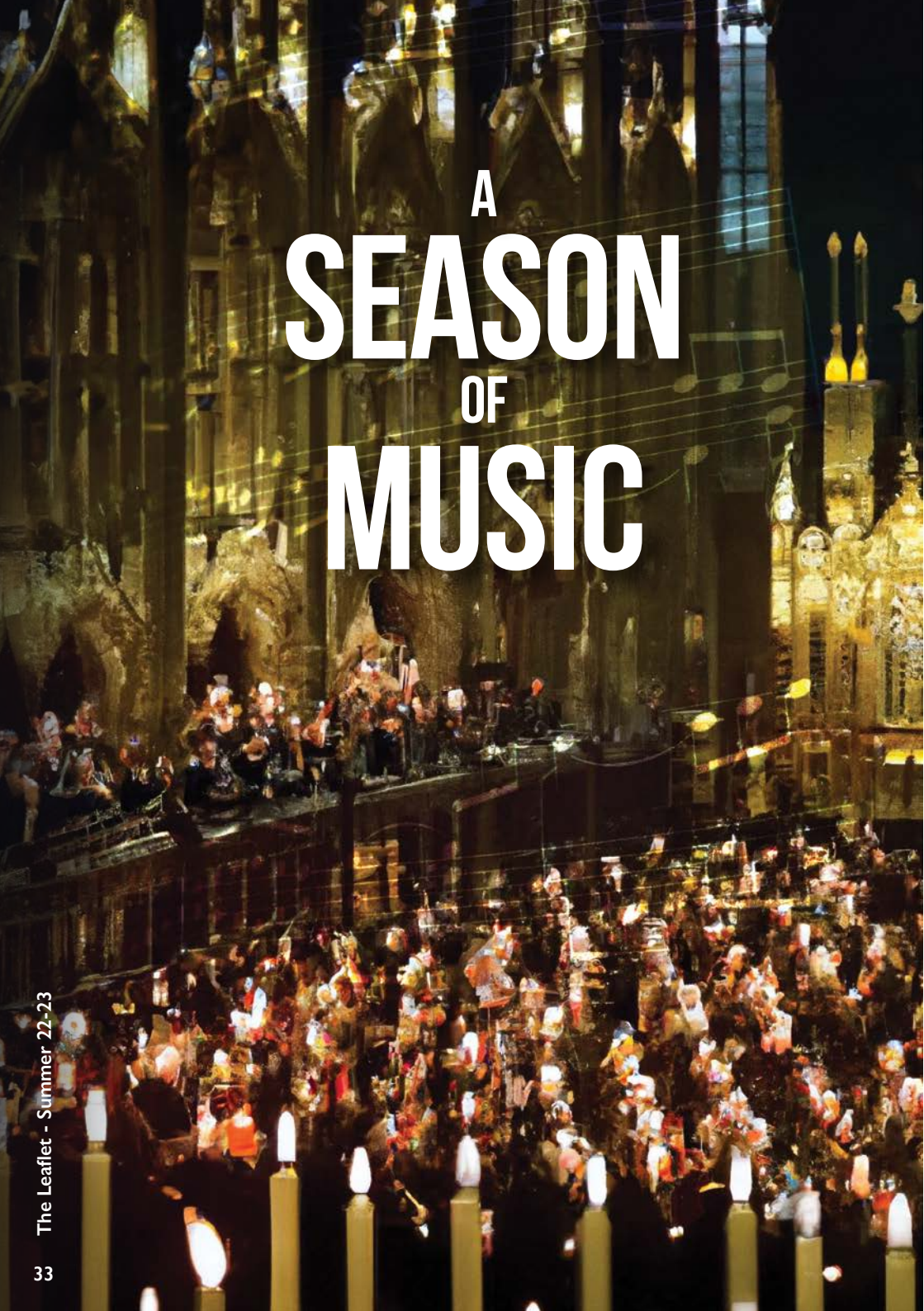
This led me to wonder, how far did Jesus walk during his three year ministry? At an estimate of about 34 kilometres each week, or a monthly distance of 140 kilometres, over three years he would have covered 5030 kilometres. Over his lifetime the distance he covered is put at over 24000 kilometres. Now you may say – quite reasonably – those are not huge distances each week or month. Many of us would walk four or five kilometres a day, or even the aspirational ten-thousand steps. However our distances add up as we do the shopping, walk to the station, or take the dog for a walk. When Jesus walked he went from one town or place to another. Based on biblical accounts of Jesus’ ministry his travels were within a radius of about 240 kilometres of his birthplace, Bethlehem. Except for a brief stay in Egypt with his parents as an infant, he lived all of his earthly life within a region that could fit within our state of Victoria about 10 times.

The people of New Testament times walked to shops and work, to gather supplies and visit friends and family. They walked to synagogue and to their festivals and religious gatherings in Jerusalem. As they walked, in pairs or groups for safety, they spent time in conversation, teaching and singing. Travel was a major part of first-century life: Mary left Nazareth to visit Elizabeth in the hills of Judea; wise men from a foreign country came to pay homage to the infant Jesus. People walked long distances in a day – often up to 30 kilometres.

The average walking speed of 5 kilometres an hour is described by Japanese theologian Kosuke Koyama as a ‘spiritual speed’. He says that it is a *different kind of speed from the technological speed to which we are accustomed. It goes on in the depth of our life, whether we notice or not, at three miles an hour. It is the speed we walk and therefore the speed the love of God walks.*

There are many instances of crowds following Jesus as he moved around the country preaching, teaching and healing. They too would have been on foot. Imagine the logistics of obtaining food and water, and somewhere to sleep for the night if you were on the road in the crowd. The roads were not our well-surfaced paths and tracks, but in many places were stony and rough; much of the terrain was also hilly. Sandals would have taken a beating along the way.

You may have heard of the ‘Jesus Trail’ or have been fortunate enough to walk it. This is a 65 kilometre hiking and pilgrimage walk in the Israeli region of Galilee, that covers some of the country that Jesus no doubt walked, connecting key sites from his life and ministry. Usually covered over four days, the trail begins in Nazareth and passes through the ancient city of Sepphoris and on to Cana, over the hills and on to the Sea of Galilee, the Mount of Beatitudes and Capernaum. An alternative return route encompasses Tiberias, the Jordan River, Mount Tabor and Mount Precipice. Founded in 2007, the trail is a non-profit project currently managed largely by volunteers. It is public and free for anyone to hike and camp along its course. The route of the trail is based on verses from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. According to the Gospels the town of Capernaum became Jesus’ home base for his ministry, although he frequently moved around. The trail attracts pilgrims from all over the world, keen for the opportunity to gain a new understanding of the life of Jesus through the people and land of his historical context. But even if you can’t make the trip and walk the dusty middle eastern tracks I’ve described, it’s good to know that the call to follow Jesus is not quite so strictly literal - his disciples still faithfully follow him in heart all around the world. ■



A SEASON OF MUSIC

Wearing his “other hat”, Scots’ Church Music Director **Douglas Lawrence** talks about plans for the Australian Chamber Choir in the upcoming year...

Buckingham Palace

Liz and I always have fun creating the concert programs that we present under the banner of the Australian Chamber Choir. The day after the passing of Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II, the Scots’ Church ministry team suggested that the choir might include some of the music from the Royal Funeral in our Sunday worship which, at short notice, we did!

We’ll do this again when we find out what music is to be sung at the Coronation of King Charles. In addition, we’ll present a full-length concert program with the ACC, entitled **Buckingham Palace**. The glorious music is so much a part of what makes the coronations, the funerals and the weddings of the British royal family memorable. This program will showcase some of the best English choral music of the last five centuries. Our fine Scots’ Church organ will play an important role in the concert, along with a selection of brass instruments.

Mozart Requiem

Mozart’s final work for choir and orchestra is a beloved masterpiece whose genesis is shrouded in mystery. I wonder how many can remember the first time they heard this staggering work. It is always new and always overwhelming for performers and audience alike.

The ACC will present three other programs in 2023: **Magic, Miracles and Mysteries**, **Sistine Chapel** and **Baroque Christmas**. In addition to staging these at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Middle Park, we’ll perform in Macedon, Geelong, Castlemaine, Terang and Dunkeld.

One innovation for 2023 is that we’ve teamed up with the Royal Mail Hotel in Dunkeld to create accommodation, dining and concert packages for folk who want to treat themselves to a slightly extended trip to the countryside.

Another innovation for 2023 is that we’ve made it possible for people to combine any three concerts into a discounted subscription. And that can also include the ACC’s final concert for 2022, Benjamin Britten’s **Ceremony of Carols** (with Melina van Leeuwen playing harp).

Our aim when putting these programs together is to bring many styles and periods together to richly complement each other in programs that will delight and intrigue.

Mozart Requiem: At Scots’ Church, 3PM on Saturday 27 May, 2023

Buckingham Palace: At Scots’ Church, 3PM on Sunday 12 November, 2023

More at auschoir.org ■

THE SCOTTISH CONNECTION



Rosalie Strother uncovers our Scottish origins in multicultural Melbourne...

“Why Scots’ Church?” As hundreds of visitors toured our beautiful building during Melbourne Open House in July 2022, this was a common question. And it’s a reasonable question to ask given our multicultural community - a question that opens up our history, and provides a springboard to explain a little of our faith.

The migration of Scottish Presbyterian settlers to Victoria from the mid-19th century provides the short answer to our origins in Melbourne. Delve a little deeper and you’ll find that the Scottish immigrants in Victoria ‘punched well above their weight’ since the settlement of Port Phillip by Europeans as early as the 1830s.

Why such a flood of Scottish migration at that time? There are various reasons. Land clearances in Scotland were forcing small farmers to relinquish their holdings to larger land owners; at the same time, ‘the disruption’ in the Church of Scotland in the 1840s caused considerable unrest in the church. This schism saw 450 evangelical ministers break away from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland, rejecting Government control of clergy appointments.

The gold rush in Victoria, sparked by the discovery of gold at Ballarat in 1851, brought in an estimated 6000 diggers each week, all seeking their fortune, and many of them from the Scottish lowlands. Between the peak years of 1852 and 1853, Ballarat was considered the world’s richest alluvial goldfield. With the decline of the gold rush, many Scottish immigrants moved on to farming, industry or commerce. Highlanders settled in the Western district and took up extensive pastoral runs.

The majority of Scots who settled in Melbourne and rural Victoria were Presbyterians; they were quick to establish Presbyterian congregations and build churches. The first Scots' Church was built further down Collins Street in 1838, while a building on the present site followed in 1841, on land granted by the government. However, the building was disappointingly small, and the spire had a dangerous lean, so the present building was erected in 1874.

In the 1860s, Scots accounted for around 15% of Melbourne's population, with only the English and Irish more numerous. The tartan crowd were prominent in politics, media, investment and business, and were very active in establishing educational institutions. Scottish migration continued into the 20th century, though at a slower rate.

The Scots who settled in Melbourne were keen to maintain their cultural heritage. They established societies to assist poor immigrants, and organised large social gatherings, dancing and sporting events, with the bagpipes being an integral part of every occasion. As the years moved on the Scots of Melbourne and their descendants merged with other immigrants, so that although a significant minority of our population can claim some Scottish ancestry, it's difficult to distinguish the Scots as a distinct ethnic group.

Although the transition to the multicultural Melbourne we live in today was gradual, other waves of migration continued, for example, from Europe after World War II, and from Vietnam in the final decades of the 20th century. Today we're a community made up of people from more than 200 countries. Almost half of all Victorians were either born overseas, or have one parent born overseas. International students add to the multicultural mix. At the 2021 census 6.9% nominated their ancestry as Scottish, behind English, which was first on the list. Chinese, Irish, Italian, Indian, and Greek ancestry followed closely after the Scots – which encouragingly, is reflected in our present day Scots' Church congregation.

We now have a diverse congregation at Scots' Church, with members from countries around the world, bringing a range of cultural heritage to share, including an Indonesian congregation. Although 184 years have now passed since Scots' Church was first established, our core message as part of the Presbyterian Church has not changed, and is as relevant now as it was in 1838; to be engaged in making disciples of the Lord Jesus, and to glorify and enjoy God through worship, teaching of God's Word, evangelism and social interaction, always in the light of the inspired scriptures and relying on God's presence, power and wisdom.

Our Scottish heritage is still acknowledged in various ways - the most visible is the annual 'Kirkin' o' the Tartans', when the tartans of the various clans are presented by their representatives, in a Scottish themed service. The 'Melbourne Scots' enjoy an annual church parade, and enjoy fellowship after the service. If you visit the church, you will notice military banners hanging high above the pews; these are the colours of the Victorian Scottish Regiment that are laid up in the church. But the fact that one of our regular members recently asked me the meaning of 'Kirk' – a Scottish word for 'Church' - tells me that our congregation is moving on from the days of our Scottish origins. Even so, our Scottish heritage is an essential part of our story; something to be acknowledged and appreciated while embracing our move to a far more diverse congregation and community. ■

COFFEE PALACES

MELBOURNE'S LOST HISTORY

Although coffee has been a part of the Melbourne scene since early days, the 1880s saw its popularity grow from an unexpected source – the establishment of Coffee Palaces. These were set up in competition with hotels by “offering all the ordinary advantages of those establishments without the allurements of the drink”, with origins in the coffee house movement in Scotland in the 1830s. This movement had spread throughout the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia by the mid 19th century.

With growing concern over the moral, economic and health effects of over-indulgence in alcoholic drinks, the temperance movement gathered momentum in Australia as the population increased with migration and the gold rush of the 1850s. Following a meeting at the Melbourne Temperance Hall in 1878 expressing the need for such establishments, the first coffee palace opened at 232 Smith Street, Fitzroy in 1879. Others soon followed. The aim was “to provide a place where working men could gather for harmless amusement and enjoyment, with coffee being served instead of alcoholic beverages.” In Australia these places were built on a business basis, rather than the not-for-profit ventures that been initiated in the United Kingdom.

Much of the success of Melbourne’s coffee palace movement was due to men like James Munro, a member of Toorak Presbyterian Church – and also a politician, property tycoon and temperance leader. He was responsible for building the Victoria in Collins Street in 1880, and the Federal Coffee Palace on the corner of Collins and King Streets in 1888. He took over the Grand Hotel in Spring Street in 1886, renaming it the Grand Coffee Palace, and ceremoniously burnt its liquor licence at the grand opening. Today we know it as the Windsor Hotel. By 1888 there were 50 coffee palaces in Melbourne alone, as well as many in the suburbs and in country Victoria, although they were not as grand as those of the city. Some were built in elaborate High Victorian style, while others followed the design of typical hotels of the time, with extensive cast-iron verandahs.

The greatest growth of coffee palaces in Melbourne occurred in the 1880s, in the midst of a land boom. However this wave of prosperity lasted little more than a decade, ending with the severe economic depression of the 1890s. Leading figures in the temperance movement had also been involved in land speculation and building societies and, with the collapse of these schemes, many, including Munro, were ruined. The Grand regained a liquor licence in 1897 and became the Grand Hotel, reopening as the Windsor in 1920. The Victoria finally received a liquor licence in 1967.

The Temperance Movement may have faded, but Melbourne’s love affair with coffee continued, with Bourke Street’s Café Florentino being the first place in Australia to install a commercial espresso machine in 1928 - though Pellegrini’s Espresso Bar in Bourke Street also lays claim to being Melbourne’s first “real” espresso bar, launching in 1954. We continue the tradition at Scots’ Church today, with our own espresso machine serving a welcome cup of delicious barista coffee before and after services. It’s a great opportunity to chat with newcomers and regulars as we welcome all to Scots’ Church. ■





OUR COMMUNITY HERB GARDEN

READY TO PICK!

Earlier this year we planted a herb garden on the west lawn between the church and the Assembly Hall, so that the church and community could come and enjoy picking fresh herbs for cooking. Established in autumn, the plants were slow to show growth in the cold winter months.

In recent weeks we have seen many of the herbs begin to flourish, and we invite you to come and help yourselves to whatever you need – the plants respond well to gentle and regular ‘pruning’. The varieties ready for your recipes include parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme and lemon thyme, regular and Vietnamese mint. Chives and marjoram are still on the way! ■

T C G L E P S O G H E H P
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WORD SEARCH

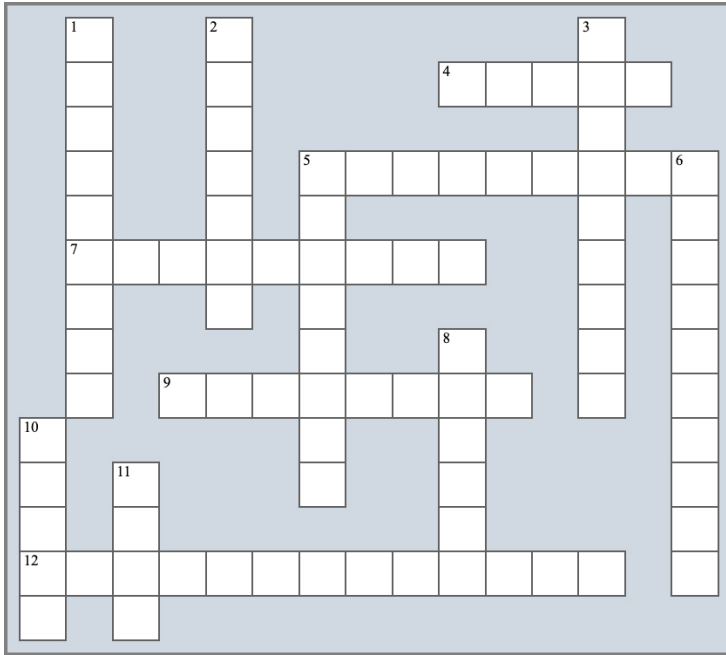
Wise Words from Acts 1 to 3, and more...

Find the words in the grid. When you are done, the unused letters in the grid will spell out a hidden message. Pick them out from left to right, top line to bottom line. Words can go horizontally, vertically and diagonally in all eight directions..

(Solution on page 23)

The words to find

| | |
|------------|------------|
| Ascension | Matthias |
| Baptised | Pentecost |
| Capernaum | Praising |
| Fellowship | Preach |
| Gospel | Repent |
| Heal | Revelation |
| Jerusalem | Wonder |
| Leadership | |



BIBLICAL CROSSWORD

Wise Words from Acts 1 to 3, and more...
(Solution on page 23)

Across

4. Who preached to the Jews in Jerusalem?
5. John's Gospel is sometimes called the _____ Gospel.
7. What town became Jesus' home base during his ministry?
9. Who replaced Judas as an apostle?
12. How many were added to the number of believers after Peter preached? (two words)

Down

1. When did the Holy Spirit descend on the apostles?
2. Who was the father of the Apostle John?
3. Where did the disciples gather after the ascension of Jesus?
5. Matthew, Mark and Luke are the _____ Gospels.
6. Who was healed at the temple gate? (2 words)
8. Where did John write the book of Revelation?
10. How many days did Jesus remain on Earth after his resurrection?
11. In the beginning was the _____.

BEING HUMAN

O Lord, where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand— when I awake, I am still with you...

The Holy Bible - Psalm 139



scotschurch.com