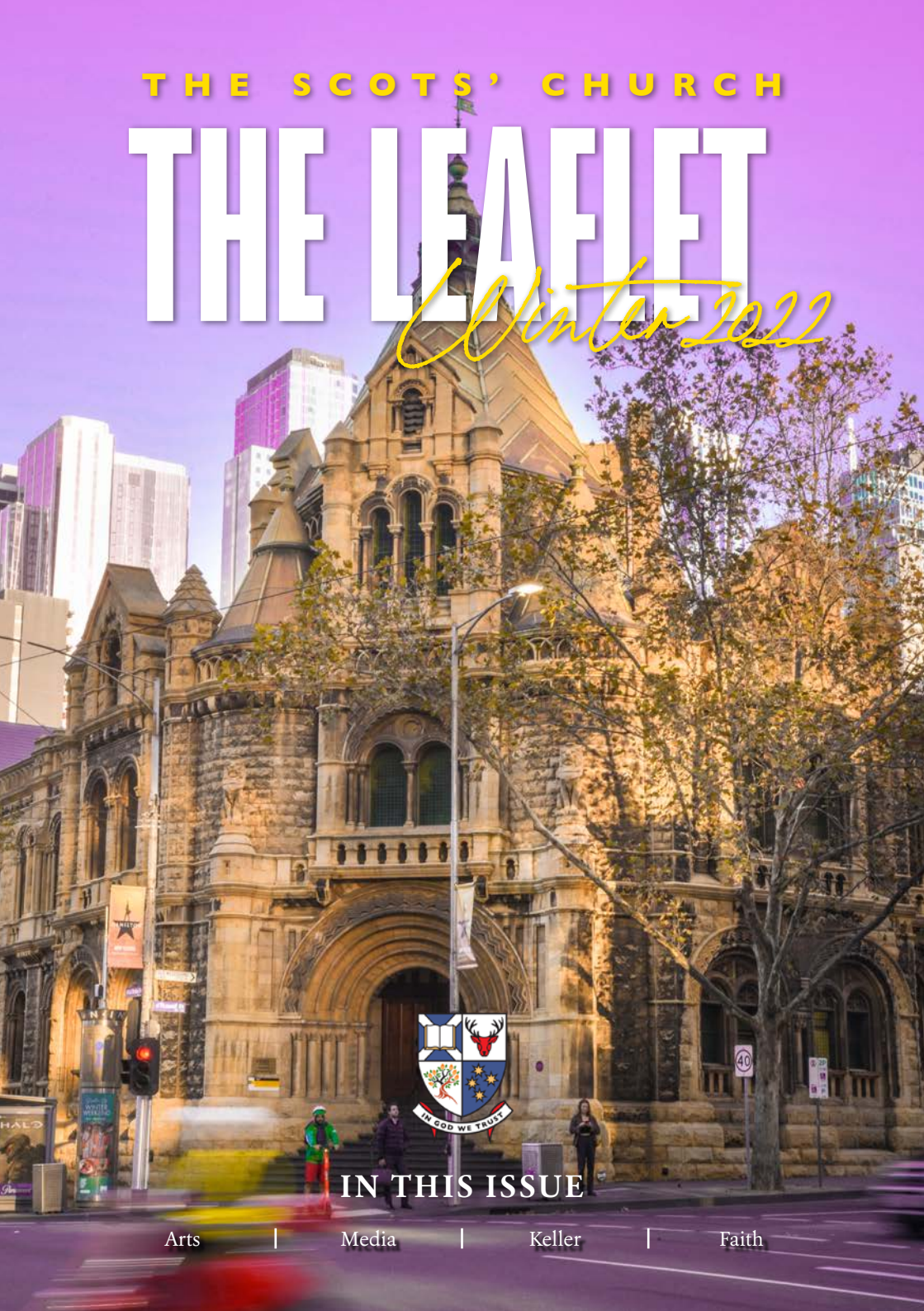


THE SCOTS' CHURCH

THE LEAFLET

Winter 2022



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Media

Keller

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 Ms Ria Angelica Polo.

CO-EDITORS, THE LEAFLET:

Rosalie Strother and Phil Campbell.



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

THE LEAFLET

ISSUE NO. 1091

The Scots' Church Melbourne is a diverse and eclectic body of God's people with a long history, who come together each week to worship God in a variety of styles and settings as we learn what it means to be followers of Jesus in our 21st century world.

Beyond our weekly gatherings, we seek to love and serve Him by being faithful in our devotion to the Word of God, caring in our fellowship with one another and visitors, and generous in our love to the communities in which God has placed us.

We would be delighted to meet you at any of our church services or at any of our other public meetings and functions.

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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Web: www.scotsschurch.com

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Back cover image by Natalie Parham
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VICTORIAN ELEGANCE IN MELBOURNE

To visit the Royal Arcade is to step back into the elegance of the 19th century Victorian era. The Royal Arcade is one of Melbourne's icons, together with the nearby Block Arcade. The first arcade to be completed in Melbourne, it has the honour of being the longest-standing arcade in Australia.

My first memory of the Royal Arcade was a special visit as a young child to the dolls' hospital with my mother for repairs to one of my cherished dolls. I was fascinated by Gog and Magog as they struck the chimes for the hour – our visit was well timed! Two giant mythical figures, they flank the magnificent Gaunt's Clock, Gaunt being Melbourne's best-known clockmaker at the time. They have been marking the hour since 1892. Gog and Magog are surrounded by

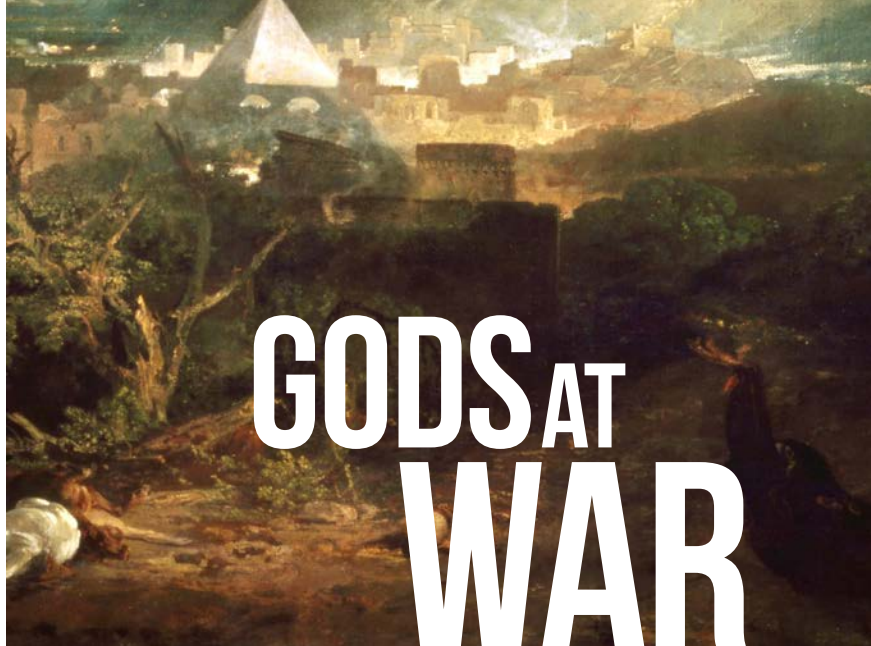
several myths, including being guards of the underworld and gods of dark spirits. Father time, also known as Chronos, another character of Greek mythology, is also featured at the opposite end of the arcade.

The architect of the Royal Arcade was Charles Webb, from Suffolk, England; he was the winner of a major competition for the design. In Italianate style, it draws on French and English models. Webb also designed a number of other notable buildings in Melbourne, including the Windsor Hotel and Melbourne Grammar School.

Construction of the arcade began in June 1869 and, following completion, was officially opened in May 1870 by the Lord Mayor Charles Amess. Since its first days, when it opened on to Bourke Street, with the entrance to a Turkish bath at the other end, it has seen many additions and alterations. In 1902 the arcade was opened up to Little Collins Street and an extension was added to Elizabeth Street. The shopfronts all featured bow-fronted windows by 1894, many being altered later. The white and black chequered floor was an addition in 1934. The ageing Royal Arcade was finally restored to its former glory in 2004; the shop fronts of 1894 were recreated, bringing consistency to the appearance of the arcade once again, and the façade was repainted in white and yellow, with gilded highlights.

As you stroll through this beautiful arcade, there are many boutique shops to enjoy, ranging from clothing, jewellery, sweets, perfumes and games. The doll's hospital is no longer there – now found in Malvern. I'm glad it was located in the Royal Arcade in my younger days!

Rosalie Strother



Phil Court takes a look behind the famous ten plagues of the Exodus, and discovers an underlying logic...

The Bible's second book, *The Exodus*, is a dramatic saga of, well... biblical proportions. It's the story of the founding of Israel as a nation, which starts with their dramatic march to freedom from slavery.

The chapters leading up to the actual departure of the Israelites from Egypt (7-12) are dominated by accounts of ten plagues visited upon the Egyptians, one after the other. Each plague came from the hand of God; the God the Israelites knew as "Yahweh".

But have you ever wondered why Yahweh would even bother visiting these ten plagues on Egypt? Why does Yahweh say to Moses, *"You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land. But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you."* (Chapter 7, verses 2 to 4)

At first blush, it seems like Yahweh is embarking on a self-defeating campaign. And what about Moses and Aaron? Sounds like the ultimate Mission Impossible, don't you think? But it turns out there were very particular reasons and objectives for each of the ten plagues – all of them related to Egyptian religious beliefs. While Yahweh uses the signs to convince Pharaoh of his power and authority, it's arguably just as much about convincing the ones he intends to liberate from slavery in Egypt; the Israelites themselves.

The prevailing theology, culture and world view of ancient Egypt, like the rest of the Middle East, was saturated in polytheism. Pharaoh himself was regarded as the son of Ra, the Sun god, and a pantheon of gods and demi-gods wielded power within their particular domains. Nothing and no one in the whole of Egypt was thought to be outside some god or other's influence and authority.

The Israelites, whose ancestors had settled in Egypt under Joseph's protection, brought with them their own God; Yahweh, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. But now that their peace and freedom in Egypt had turned into outright slavery, Yahweh must have seemed to them to be out of his jurisdiction. He might have had power in Canaan – modern day Israel and the West Bank – but surely not in Egypt. The narrator of Exodus tells us specifically that when Moses told the enslaved Israelites what Yahweh was about to do for them, *“they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.”* I think that's the key to understanding the theological significance of the ten plagues.

When Moses and Aaron first deliver Yahweh's demand to Pharaoh to “let my people go”, Pharaoh denies even knowing this god of the wilderness; this Yahweh who claims the Israelites as his own people. *“Who is this Yahweh, that I should obey his voice and let Israel go? I do not know him, and I will not let Israel go,”* he declares. He has thrown down the gauntlet. And soon after, the plagues commence.

Each plague dramatically demonstrates the superiority of Yahweh over and against his various Egyptian rival gods. Here's the list of Egyptian gods and the plagues by which Yahweh defeats them.

1. **Hapi – god of the Nile** could not stop the Nile's water turning blood-red for a full seven days.
2. **Heket – goddess of fertility with the head of a frog** could not make a plague of frogs go away. Only Yahweh, through Moses could do it.
3. **Geb – god of the earth** could not prevent a plague of lice coming from the dust of the earth.
4. **Khepri – god of creation** could not prevent a plague of flies swarming the Egyptians but not the Israelites.
5. **Hathor – goddess of protection with the head of a cow** could not stop a plague falling upon the Egyptians' livestock.
6. **Isis – goddess of medicine** could not stop a plague of boils and sores that afflicted Egyptians, but not Israelites.
7. **Nut – goddess of the sky** was helpless to prevent huge hailstones from destroying the Egyptian flax and barley crops.
8. **Seth – god of storms** was powerless to prevent swarms of locusts appearing out of the sky and devouring what was left of the crops.
9. **Ra – the Sun god** was unable to prevent darkness descending on Egypt for three days.
10. And finally, **Pharaoh himself**, who was worshipped as a great god, lost his own first-born son, along with the rest of Egypt's first-born males, during the terrible night of the Passover; a night on which all Israelites who sheltered under the blood of sacrificed lambs, daubed on their household lintels, were spared.

That was the last straw for Pharaoh, at least for the time being. He ordered the Israelites to depart. It was also the clincher that convinced the Israelites, at least for the time being, that their God Yahweh truly was without rivals and could accomplish whatever he said he would.

The Israelites carried the saga of the ten plagues with them into their wilderness wanderings, into the promised land of Canaan, into their Babylonian exile and into their return from exile. It was recounted at every Passover feast, and still is in the practice of modern Judaism.

Jesus gathered with his inner circle on the night of his arrest to observe and celebrate this saga. But he went much further. He revealed himself as the one it was all pointing to; the ultimate Passover Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Even more than the events of the Exodus, that's the point – according to the apostle Paul – where every spiritual power is defeated, and even death itself is overcome.



Rev Phil Court is serves as an advisor to the Session of The Scots' Church, Melbourne.

STOP FOR A YATTER

Local app-developer **Kebbie Kirkcaldie-Bowell** is a familiar face at Scots' Church. Phil Campbell asks him about software, life and Western civilisation...

Hey Kebbie, how long have you been dropping in at Scots' Church?

Since before the arrival of the coffee machine!

What sparked your interest? (Has Jordan Peterson shaped your thinking in some ways?)

We live in a very cluttered world. Many different demigods are telling us to boil down our gold and worship them. These are the Instagram influencers, football players, politicians – the works. I find an immense amount of solace in simplifying my belief system to that which Western Civilisation has held as its wisdom for the last two thousand years. That, and of course reading Augustine's Confessions.



What do you reckon younger people are looking for, spiritually speaking?

Young people already attempt to remedy the void of Christ in many ways. We find astrology, we consume various spiritual healers, meditation, setting intentions, new movements like “the secret” etc. Though these foundational questions of “why are we here?” “what ought we do with our time?” “how should we treat people?” etc will come up no matter the supposed difference in generations. They are all questions of the living. Specifically, the young people of today’s day and age want to see the church:

- Remove any corruption,
- Acting out its ideals,
- Remain open to all cultures and races,
- Become accessible to them technologically,
- Articulate to them why its still relevant,
- Explain itself.

While it is easy to say that God doesn’t need explaining, the reality is we live in an information centric culture, the mystery of it doesn’t cut it anymore. The teachings are already there; Aquinas, Augustine, St Paul, and others already explain much of the rationale of faith. For instance, many young people don’t know why monogamy matters; great, then it would help if St Paul’s letter to the Romans was shared with them. The church must shift its approach to stay relevant in society. The consequences of not doing this is simple - people die, cultures die and the church is not above this.

On the subject of “spiritually speaking”, they are the same people the church has catered to for over two thousand years.

You’re co-developing an app called Yatter that allows people to chat in some new ways. What’s the vision driving the project?

Fundamentally, Yatter wants us to come together. To do that, we build software which enables people to have an authentic audio conversation as conveniently as possible. The dream is that we can live in a world whereby how we communicate online positively reinforces how we communicate in person, and how we communicate in person positively reinforces how we communicate online. The logic is, if we can get people talking, we will resolve our apparent differences and we will come together. Yatter allows you to easily shoot voice-clips back and forth in what feels like a real conversation. It’s much better than texting!

Tell us about life as an app developer. Is it as cool as it sounds?

It’s a combination of being an architect, translator, monk, philosopher, researcher, mathematician and nerd. It has taught me how to think. I highly recommend everyone give programming a go.

What’s the next step? Is it going to be the next Twitter or Facebook?

I hope not. Yatter will be Yatter. While we intend on being the default medium of communication on the internet, again, what we really want is for people to come together. The existing platforms are not designed at their core with the same ethos, and thus it is fundamentally important that with every decision we make, we ask “Does this get people talking?” and “Will this lead to us coming together?”

On an aside, one of the most erroneous perspectives one can have is that the future is the past, or the future has already been decided upon. The future, in fact, has not happened yet – it is totally up for grabs. The opportunity for a better present exists in the vortex of the unknown and the speculation of our potential outcomes. Doubt, wonder and faith are some of the most important attitudes to building a world in which we want to live in. The future is worth thinking about.

If people want to help road test your app (or invest in it!) what should they do?

If they would like to test it out, head to yatterfriends.com/download. If they would like to invest, email invest@yatterfriends.com and let's get coffee.

Back to life's big issues... what's your personal impression of Jesus of Nazareth? What challenge does he present?

To me Jesus represents the ideal of man. The notion of a society living in the land of Israel ascending toward Christ, to me, is what makes up one of the most fundamental building blocks of the West. That being said, I would say I am “unconventional” in that I don't believe in his miracles in a literal sense. Once looking at Jesus through the lens of the necessity for the miracle in the articulation of his teachings, it allowed me to be open to him, and the vast majority of challenges disappeared. On the challenge front, I believe the very notion of Jesus is that he is a challenge to all, he challenges who we are so that we do ascend.

Thanks Kebbie! I guess you need to get back to work, but I'd love to Yatter to you some more about Jesus sometime! It will be exciting to watch your project launching over the next few months.





BANNERS, BATTALIONS AND BRUSSELS

Peter Macmillan reflects on the lessons of sacrifice, and why the past is worth remembering.

Anzac Day has once again passed, an annual reminder of the sacrifices made by our forebears in times of war - lives given to protect family, friends, fellow citizens, and future generations. Here at Scots' we're surrounded by ever-present reminders of these things, as each week we sit beneath the fading 'colours' of local battalions draped above our heads.

Present-day conflicts are brought into sharp focus during times of remembrance, too, with the devastation of Ukraine being front of mind for many. But I want to reflect for a moment on the ending of World War I, and the powerful effect the centenary commemoration of that event had on me as an Australian living in Brussels in November 2018.

On Remembrance Day that year, I attended St Andrew's Church of Scotland on Chaussee de Vleurgat. The service, conducted by a Glaswegian Presbyterian minister, was dedicated to commemorating the Armistice signed in nearby Compiègne, France, one hundred years before.

Belgium, although wanting to remain a neutral country, was invaded by the German military in August 1914 and remained under German occupation until 1918. The Belgian Government went into exile, although the Belgian army continued to fight on the Western Front.

Sitting in St Andrew's that morning, mental images of the men and women who sacrificed their lives more than a century earlier were enlivened in all of us. We heard at length about the formalities of ending the war, and many of the selfless acts performed by those who had made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight against the enemy.

What made the deepest impact on me was hearing of all the young people, mostly men, whose lives had been cut so tragically short. Each one had dreams of a future that they would never see. A family. A career. A long life in which to experience all the joys and all the disappointments that every one of us takes for granted.

After the service, I walked back to my apartment on Avenue Michel-Ange, the cool air and pale sunlight of that morning bathing my face. As I walked, I resolved to no longer live my life just for myself, my family and my friends, but also for - and on behalf of - all those who gave up their futures for me.

Since that day, I've lived my life differently. Now, whenever I have any opportunity to help others, or to develop my skills and abilities so that I might help them in the future, I don't hold back. Rather, I grasp the opportunity enthusiastically and give it my all.

There is no doubt in my mind that, had they been given these same opportunities, those young people who died during the war would not have so casually dismissed them nor so half-heartedly embraced them as too many of us tend to do today. Imagine how precious our lives would be to them. How much they would long to do the things that we are free to do because of the peace they purchased for us.

As meagre as it often feels, I can't think of a more respectful and grateful response to their sacrifice than this: To live the life that they would never see, with the same commitment and sacrificial spirit that they demonstrated in protecting their loved ones and in so doing, enabling all of us to enjoy our families, careers and, with God's grace, long and meaningful lives.

In fact, this is the same motivation the Apostle Paul says we should draw from the sacrifice of Jesus, as he says in Ephesians 5:2 – “Walk in the way of love, *just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us* as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

That's why during every service at Scots', I spend time reflecting on the banners raised high above me. I think about the men and women here in Melbourne, in Victoria and in Australia, who stood up in our defence; and whose sacrifices deserve to not only be remembered every day, but also to be reflected in how we live our daily lives.

Dr Peter Macmillan is a Melbourne-based lawyer, psychologist and author who regularly offers free document witnessing and signing services from a city café table.

More thoughts on the motivation for thankful living...

Romans 5

⁶ You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ **But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us...**

Romans 12

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.



TIM KELLER UNPLUGGED

It's worth getting to know New York Pastor Tim Keller, the subject of a new podcast, says Phil Court...

Tim Keller is our generation's most winsomely appealing and influential Presbyterian church leader in the English-speaking world.

That's my personal opinion, and I know I'm making a very big call. You can judge my claim for yourself, and the means to do so is right there, on our Scots' Church website's homepage. It's a fascinating and deeply thoughtful extended interview with Keller by the Australian podcaster John Dickson. It's part of Dickson's "Undeceptions" series of interviews with a wide and always interesting variety of Christian leaders and thinkers.

So who is Tim Keller? He's the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York's Manhattan, and the Chairman of Redeemer City to City, which trains pastors for service around the world. He is also the author of several *The New York Times* bestselling books.

On a personal level, Tim was diagnosed in 2020 with pancreatic cancer. His struggle coming to terms with his looming mortality is just one of the topics he candidly discusses during this interview.

The main focus of the interview is the future of Christianity in the West.

Keller reflects on his first pastoral ministry; the working-class town of Hopewell Virginia, in the bible-belt South where to be a white Christian was to be a flag-waving American in an ethos of an anti-intellectual fundamentalist moralism with little or no actual spiritual vitality. He compares and contrasts this with the prevailing sceptical secularism of Manhattan; the field of his second pastoral ministry. And although the two cultures could hardly seem more different, he identifies the core similarities: both are fundamentalist, both are moralistic and, in different ways, both suffer from anti-intellectualism. "There was a cancel-culture in New York City long before it got a name," he says. "If you didn't have the right views, you were just shut out."

Keller discusses confirmation bias; the interpretation of information in a way that conforms to what we already believe. He notes how strong this is amongst both the Christian fundamentalist right and the secular fundamentalist left.

He discusses the increasing proportion of young adults in the West claiming no religious affiliation. He does not regard this as an irreversible trend, and he gives three reasons for his optimism: the strong growth of evangelical Christianity in the non-West; the increasing proportion of non-whites in Western countries and the associated increase in multi-ethnic church leaders; and the withering away of combative, hard-line anti-spiritual atheism.

How do you motivate sceptics to even consider the claims of Christ? Keller suggests it's firstly by showing people that Christianity is reasonable, and secondly, that it is desirable. He discusses his approach to "levelling the playing field" in discussions with sceptics and pointing to what Christianity offers to people grappling with the vexed questions of life.

Many other topics are covered in this engaging interview. I'll leave it to you to discover them for yourself. But perhaps the most poignant and helpful segment is Keller's frank and moving discussion of his terminal cancer diagnosis and how he and his wife Kathy have come to terms with it.

The entire interview goes for an hour and ten minutes. Set aside the time and listen in. I'll be surprised if you don't find it informative, thought-provoking and uplifting.

By the way, The Atlantic magazine published an article in 2021 by Tim Keller titled *Growing My Faith in the Face of Death*. You can read it by scanning the QR code.

Like the interview, it's a very worthwhile read.

Phil Court

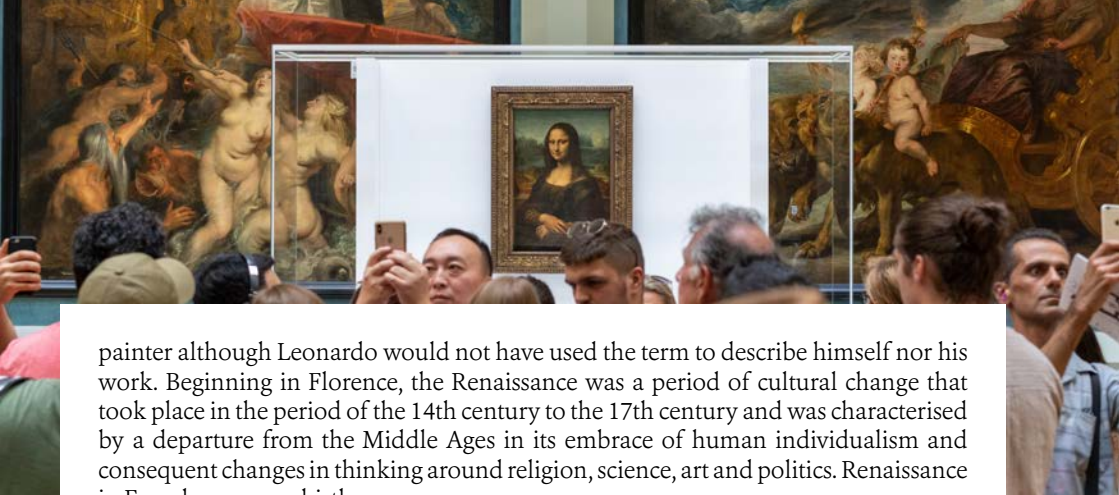


WHY IS THE MONA LISA SO FAMOUS?

Graeme Harris's love of art history is reflected in the TED talk he reviews here...

On retiring from the work-a-day world I indulged in what is now commonly referred to as some 'life-long learning', a euphemism, I think, for old guys just checking that they have not lost their marbles. I enrolled in an Art History degree course at Monash University and am currently in final year. If truth be known, it is one of the most enjoyable learning experiences that I have ever been engaged in and aside from the deeply academic focus there are little gems that I come across that I guess might be called footnotes to history. One of these footnotes is articulated so lightly and accessibly by Noah Charney in his TED talk. He tells us the story of the Mona Lisa's rise to celebrity status.

Leonardo Da Vinci painted the Mona Lisa (or Gioconda in Italian) over a protracted period from around 1503 to 1513. Leonardo was what we now refer to as a Renaissance



painter although Leonardo would not have used the term to describe himself nor his work. Beginning in Florence, the Renaissance was a period of cultural change that took place in the period of the 14th century to the 17th century and was characterised by a departure from the Middle Ages in its embrace of human individualism and consequent changes in thinking around religion, science, art and politics. Renaissance in French means re-birth.

Leonardo Da Vinci thoroughly embraced the Renaissance and explored different techniques in painting with which he was free to experiment in the new cultural and social milieu. In his lifetime he produced magnificent examples of Renaissance Art and Mona Lisa was quickly identified by probably the first art historian, Giorgio Vasari who wrote biographies of Renaissance artists. He wrote, as Noah Charney describes in his TED talk, a “gushing” description of Mona Lisa and this set the work on its trajectory to greatness but only really amongst art connoisseurs.

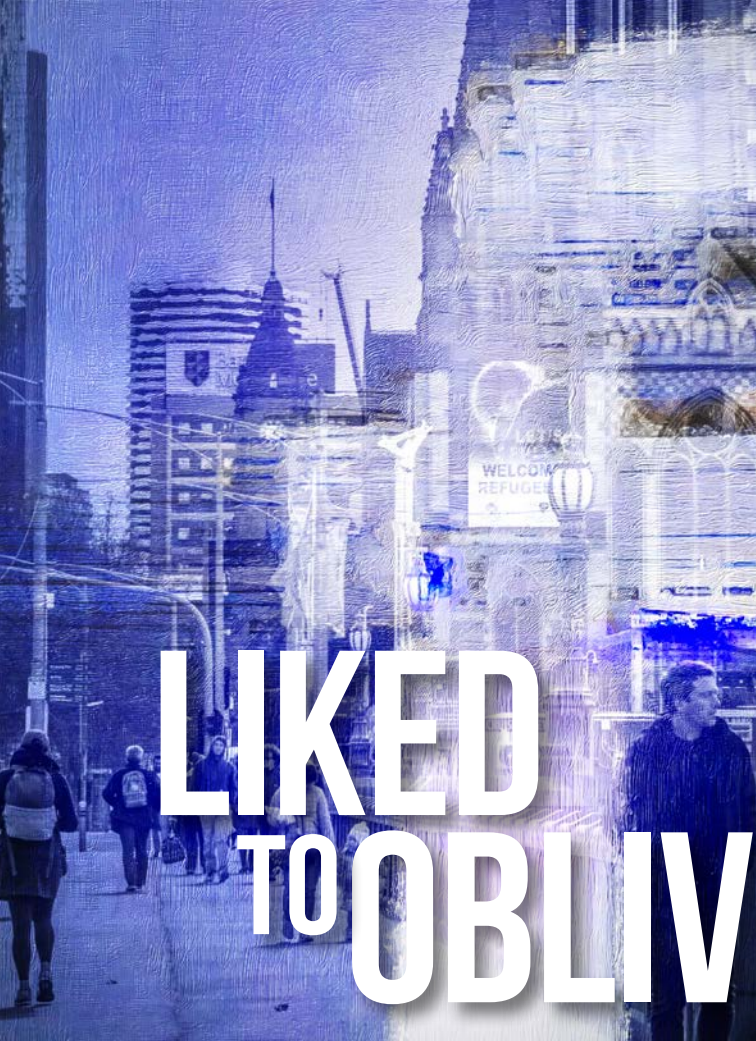
The fascinating historical footnote that involved the theft of the painting in 1911 by Vincenzo Peruggia was the impetus for the Mona Lisa to move from being a great Renaissance artwork to becoming a ‘celebrity’. The robbery was reported widely and the long two-year period that elapsed between its theft and return allowed plenty of time to fuel public interest, especially in the USA. Noah Charney in the TED talk also describes what happened on the painting’s discovery and return. “Newspapers took the story on a victory lap.” Mona Lisa was now more famous for being lost and found rather than for being a great painting.

I was reminded by the TED talk of a similar but more local incident that involved our own National Gallery of Victoria’s Weeping Woman by Picasso (who, by the way, Noah Charney tells us was a suspect in the Mona Lisa heist). This artwork was stolen in 1986 and also became a cause célèbre elevating the status of Picasso’s work from being a brilliant example of cubism to ‘celebrity’. The story is well told in a new SBS documentary titled ‘Framed’. Certainly, in both cases and in their day, patrons who may never have entered an art gallery before in their lives flocked to both the Louvre in Paris and the NGV in Melbourne to look at empty spaces where artwork once hung. The Mona Lisa and the Weeping Woman had both attracted a new audience and had both become celebrities.

It is very clear that art appreciation can involve so much more than the appreciation of the artwork itself but can also involve appreciating and understanding the ‘life story’ of the artwork.

Graeme Harris is an elder of The Scots’ Church Melbourne





The Social Media Like Button is unravelling Western Civilisation at an alarming rate, argues Jonathan Haidt in an influential article. Phil Campbell explains...

In early May, news emerged that tech billionaire Elon Musk was attempting to take control of Twitter, the social media platform where 140 character 'tweets' make or break careers, companies and fortunes overnight.

Musk offered US\$44 billion to control the system which currently has more than 200 million users, citing his motive as a desire to "protect freedom of speech." (Donald Trump, for example, was previously banned by Twitter in an attempt to limit the spread of mis-information.)

Unsurprisingly though, the Australian lobby group Digital Rights Watch fears the takeover is really about power. "Musk's style of free speech absolutism will tilt the

scales in favour of the rich and powerful who can silence or bully critics,” says chair Lizzie O’Shea. “What Musk really seems to want is freedom from accountability.”

Either way, it’s clear that social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook now shape our political and social landscapes, for good or ill. In a recent article in *The Atlantic*, New York based social psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt argues that we are living in a new ‘Babel,’ the ancient city intent on making a name for themselves by “building a tower with its top in the heavens.” To limit their overwhelming egos, God responds in Genesis 11 by confusing their speech. They’re condemned to a world of miscommunication, mutual incomprehension, and never-ending tribalism.

For Haidt, that’s a great metaphor for the trajectory of 21st century America, a country that he claims is fractured and disoriented, unable to speak the same language or recognise the same truth. “We’re cut off from one another and from the past, Republican and Democrat America are fast becoming two different countries claiming the same territory, with two different versions of the Constitution, economics, and American history.”

The division runs even deeper. “Babel is a metaphor for what is happening not only *between* red and blue, but *within* the left and within the right, as well as within universities, companies, professional associations, museums, and even families.” And the blame, he says, lies squarely with the rise of social media.

Here’s the problem. Social scientists have observed that successful democracies are bound by high levels of trust (social capital); strong institutions; and shared stories. Social media has profoundly weakened all three.

Instead of sharing truth, social media users share only carefully crafted and edited versions of their lives. Constantly striving to impress (through a carefully curated veneer) is not the way to deepen genuine friendships and build trust.

Worse, social media applications are built on algorithms that create an amplification effect based on “Likes.” Click the button, and you’ll subtly start to see more of the same. And if you create content that generates “likes,” you can become ‘internet-famous’- a viral overnight sensation.

By 2012, the quest for virality had become the focus of Facebook’s design. The “Like” button harvested a huge amount of data about what best engaged its users, and so algorithms were optimised to bring each user the content most likely to generate interaction. Research soon revealed that posts that trigger emotions – *especially anger at out-groups*—were the most likely to be shared.

In short, the whole system was purpose-built to encourage dishonesty and mob outrage, with a pavlovian system of punishment and reward. Platforms were optimised to bring out the maximum amount of moralistic outrage, with minimal reflection.

In contrast, Haidt observes that the American Constitution was designed to avoid exactly these ‘mob reactions’, with intentional dampeners built in to slow things down, cool passions and insulate leaders from the ‘mania of the moment.’ Change could wait until election day, rather than through constant revolution.

James Madison, America's fourth President (1809-1817), made a major contribution to the ratification of the Constitution by writing *The Federalist Papers*, along with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay. In "*Federalist No. 10*" he wrote of our innate human proclivity toward "faction"; our tendency to divide into teams or parties that are so inflamed with mutual animosity that they are "more disposed to vex and oppress each other than to cooperate for their common good." In fact, he says, "where no substantial occasion presents itself, the most frivolous and fanciful distinctions have been sufficient to kindle their unfriendly passions and excite their most violent conflicts."

The Apostle Paul makes exactly the same point about the church in Corinth in his first letter. Some want to follow him; some prefer Apollos - signs, says Paul, of spiritual immaturity.

Now, with a constantly amplified (and algorithmically curated) source of information in our news-feeds we find ourselves subject to the constant chipping-away of trust. Consequently, says Jonathan Haidt, we lose trust in elected leaders, health authorities, the courts, the police, universities, and the integrity of elections; every decision becomes contested; every election becomes a life-and-death struggle to save the country from the other side.

"When people lose trust in institutions, they lose trust in the stories told by those institutions," says social scientist Philipp Lorenz-Spreen. "That's particularly true of the institutions entrusted with the education of children." Consequently, concludes Haidt, "Young people educated in the post-Babel era are less likely to arrive at a coherent story of who we are as a people, and less likely to share any such story with those who attended different schools or who were educated in a different decade.

CIA analyst Martin Gurri sees social media as a universal solvent, breaking down bonds and weakening institutions everywhere it touches. He notes that distributed networks "can protest and overthrow, but never govern." Movements like Occupy Wall Street (or more locally, the "Sack Dan Andrews" rallies) demand the destruction of existing institutions without offering an alternative vision of the future or an organisation that could bring it about.

In short, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and other large platforms have unwittingly dissolved the mortar of trust, belief in institutions, and shared stories that had held a large and diverse secular democracy together.

Typically, a small subset of social-media activists are aggressively engaged in gaining status. They mock, curse and bully their targets, dominating much larger discussion forums, while the voice of the moderate majority is reduced. In a typical bell-curve result, a recent study shows that the 6% of online participants furthest to the right, and the 8% furthest to the "progressive left" were by far the most prolific contributors to online debate. In Haidt's words, "America is being torn apart by a battle between two subsets of the elite who are not representative of the broader society."

And while social media mobs can't carry out literal 'lynchings,' Haidt likens their impact to a crowd of deputies issued with dart guns... none able to inflict a fatal wound, but collectively able to deliver a barrage of painful criticism and follow-on strikes.

“Enhanced-virality platforms facilitate massive collective punishment for small or imagined offenses, with real-world consequences, including innocent people losing their jobs and being shamed into suicide. When our public square is governed by mob dynamics unrestrained by due process, we don’t get justice and inclusion; we get a society that ignores context, proportionality, mercy, and truth.”

Jonathan Haidt’s disturbing critique continues at length. The impact of confirmation bias in a ‘like-driven system’ is profound. Conspiracy theories easily take root. Counter-evidence is algorithmically minimised. Knowledge-producing institutions like schools and universities are hamstrung by a fear of social-media critique. Dissent is stifled, both on the left and right.

“American politics is getting ever more ridiculous and dysfunctional not because Americans are getting less intelligent,” he says. “The problem is structural. Thanks to enhanced-virality social media, dissent is punished within many of our institutions, which means that bad ideas get elevated into official policy.” In short, “If we do not make major changes soon, then our institutions, our political system, and our society may collapse.”

So what changes are needed? First, Haidt argues that we need to harden our democratic and educational institutions so they can stand up to the barrage of darts.

Ambitiously, he suggests that it’s also within our power to reduce social media’s ability to dissolve trust and foment structural stupidity. “Reforms should limit the platforms’ amplification of the aggressive fringes; a democracy cannot survive if its public squares are places where people fear speaking up and where no stable consensus can be reached. Social media’s empowerment of the far left, the far right, domestic trolls, and foreign agents is creating a system that looks less like democracy and more like rule by the most aggressive,” says Haidt.

Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen recently advocated for simple changes to the architecture of the platform - for example, simply modifying the “Share” function on Facebook to require slightly more user intervention taking slightly more time, may serve to slow the spread of toxic content.

Toxicity of existing platforms would also be reduced by requiring user verification - a Twitter feature promised by Elon Musk as he takes the reigns of Twitter. Anonymity removes our usual social constraints, and amplifies aggression.

Finally, Jonathan Haidt argues that we need to reinvent childhood. More free, unstructured play; more unsupervised time outside; less time online. And the most important change, he says, is to delay entry to social media until kids have passed through puberty. It’s essential that they know who they are, and learn to interact in the real world, before they enter the dangerous ruins of Babel.

Jonathan Haidt’s article “After Babel” is published in the May 2022 print edition of The Atlantic. It appears online under the title “Why the Past 10 Years of American Life has been Uniquely Stupid.” You can read the full article online by scanning the QR code.



The background image shows the interior of a Gothic cathedral, likely Sagrada Família in Barcelona. It features tall, slender columns, a high vaulted ceiling with intricate tracery, and large stained glass windows. The lighting is dramatic, with warm tones from the windows and cooler tones from the architecture.

SACRED OR SECULAR?

What is it about a religious building, past or present, that gives it a sense of ‘the sacred’?

Human beings have put extraordinary time, energy and resources into the creation of structures that express spirituality. In *The Secret Language of Sacred Spaces* Jon Cannon states: ‘It is a remarkable and universal fact that in most cultures throughout history the greatest buildings have been religious ones’. Christianity is no exception.

Although enormous effort has gone into the building of the great cathedrals of the world, they do not have a practical function as does, for example, an office block or a home. The aim of the building is profound: to express the desire for a relationship between humankind and God. The abundance of paintings, sculptures and elaborate design found in these buildings may provide a rich cultural and spiritual experience.

However a small chapel or shrine can equally be considered a religious structure and a sacred space. For those of us who have a lively faith in God through the mediation of Jesus Christ, the sacred can be anywhere and everywhere as it extends to all aspects of daily existence, and is not defined by a building, however aesthetic that may be. This does not mean that, to the faithful, the importance of a building as a place of worship is diminished. It becomes a place of significance because of the interactions with the community there, and because of the importance of corporate worship to those who may have gathered there for generations. The building itself may hold significance because of shared memories, experiences and objects that have an emotional resonance, such as a memorial of some kind.

Religion, as expressed in art, is as old as humankind, with polytheistic faiths dominating religious practice as ancient cultures arose and disappeared. As the first monotheistic faith, Judaism saw the evolution of the synagogue and the Temples of Jerusalem; these became the forerunners of Christian churches which began to appear from about 200 AD. From their origins as simple structures where groups of Christians met, often secretly due to persecution, church buildings developed into complex and ambitious structures trying to meet the increasingly sophisticated needs of church leaders and worshippers. The English word 'church' is derived from the Greek *ekklesia*, or 'meeting place for discussion'; this came to be applied to a building or a church, and to the community of the faithful, the Church.

But while Jesus and the New Testament writers made it clear that the role of a 'temple' as a meeting place with God through the ministry of High Priests had passed with his own final sacrifice at the cross¹, both theology and church building devolved back towards the familiar idea of a mediating priesthood. As a consequence, church buildings developed a concept of two spaces: one to hold the 'ordinary people'; the other a smaller sanctuary for the priests or leaders to conduct worship and to celebrate the sacrament of the Eucharist or Holy Communion which they saw as central to the Christian faith. It was from the fifth to the 17th century that the churches of Europe were constructing ever more ornate buildings, first in Romanesque, and later the various phases of Gothic style. The design of these great church buildings allowed large congregations to come together to celebrate the sacraments in an environment designed to direct their thoughts towards the heavenly, with soaring heights and light coming through large windows, many with stained glass depicting Bible stories and images of saints. The buildings still required two interconnected spaces – one to hold a large congregation and the other a 'sanctuary' from which the worship was conducted. These requirements resulted in shaping architectural design of enormous variability, ranging from such vast basilicas as St Peter's in Rome and St Sophia's Eastern Orthodox Church, to the great Gothic cathedrals of England and Europe.

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century turned the established church upside down as it called for changes to long-established practices, with the elaborate rituals that had evolved, together with the rich furnishings and ornate carvings being seen as an abomination. There was a call for the return to the Bible as the source of spiritual authority rather than tradition, and the belief that we are saved by God's grace through faith, and not by deeds. The huge cost of the ornate St Peter's Basilica in Rome became something of a flashpoint, with the Pope and his fundraising cardinal Tetzl selling 'indulgences' - certificates that guaranteed safe entry to heaven, in exchange for a generous donation to the building project.



Now, then, there were two competing visions of sacred space: the Protestant tradition, with a return to simple church buildings for people to gather as they focussed on the word of God rather than ritual; and the other that retained a highly decorated tradition with the resurgence of a Counter-Reformation and the growth of the extremely ornate Baroque style, born in Rome in the 16th century and spreading rapidly across much of Europe. European church architecture also spread around the world, as exploration resulted in colonisation and, with it, Christianity.

The stark contrasts in ecclesiastical architecture have become blurred in the five centuries since the Reformation, as various denominations have constructed buildings to best meet their needs and aspirations. Some continue meet in simple chapels with plain interiors; others are more ornate but without rich furnishings or ornate statues and carvings. They are designed to meet the needs (and reflect the theological tradition) of the community of people who worship together, the Church.

As the world's largest faith, with about 2.2 billion adherents, the story of Christianity is continuing to evolve, with religious architecture being as varied as the denominations it contains. Whether a church is a great cathedral or a humble chapel, it is a place built for the community of the faithful, the Church, to worship and have fellowship together.

Rosalie Strother

¹See for example Hebrews 7:26-27. "Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins *once for all* when he offered himself."

THE PASSION ST JOHN ACCORDING TO



Bach's
ST. JOHN
PASSION
AT SCOTS' CHURCH
REVIEWS

Reviewers Robin Batterham and Douglas Heywood share the highlights of Bach's St John's Passion, performed at Scots' on Good Friday 2022...

BATTERHAM'S VIEW Bach's St John Passion was first performed on Good Friday in 1724 in St Thomas Church, Leipzig and, more recently for us in Scots' Church, Good Friday 2022. Douglas Lawrence led the choir and orchestra in a wonderful, passionate, lively and yet sensitive and reflective performance of this extraordinary work.

After the lockdowns and the restrictions, to come together as a crowd and hear and feel the intensity and the conviction of the performance was quite inspirational.

The effort by all concerned deserves high praise. As a previous assistant organist at Scots', I come with a critical ear, knowing every note of the work. Indeed, it is a challenge to turn off the note by note listening and let the dramatic impact of the work and the performance wash one away. Let me outline just some of the heights that were achieved at Scots'. Firstly of course, Douglas' judgement. The tempi were lively but never rushed, indeed some of the chorales were sung slowly enough that each word could sink in and have impact. The chorus where the crowd cry out "*Wohin*" (where to?) is technically most demanding and few choirs are capable of the speed and precision that Scots' Choir achieved.

Just one more technical comment, this from the native German speaker sitting by my side who remarked that the pronunciation and diction was even better and clearer than some performances one hears in Germany.

Lest one be seen as biased in reporting, there were a couple of scrambles, but insignificant.

To finish, just a few names from what could be a very long list: firstly the Evangelist, Timothy Reynolds was faultless, dramatic and delivered with heart and soul on this most difficult part. Rhys Boak on organ and Edwina Cordingley on cello played as one in leading the essential continuo parts with musicality and precision. It was novel and welcome to have a double bassoon in the ensemble, the only one in the country and well handled by Brock Imison.

As to Elizabeth Anderson as the alto, this was her best ever with the "*Es ist Vollbracht*" (it is finished) utterly convincing. Amelia Jones as the soprano solo excelled as we expect from her showing restraint to keep the tone light and charming and never sounding forced as one would hear in an operatic rendition. That said, Nicholas Dinopoulos as Pilatus was more dramatic but also totally convincing. Thomas Drent is more than capable of operatic delivery but showed great restraint to keep the demeanour relevant to the part of Christ. Lyndon Green likewise showed just the right degree of restraint. Indeed, all of the soloists deserve high praise, including the minor parts which were taken by members of the choir.

To close, a good thing also to see the next generation present and singing with their parents.

To the Minister, Trustees and the Board of Management, a big thanks for supporting this inspirational delivery of the Passion according to St John.

Robin Batterham



HEYWOOD'S PERSPECTIVE When *St John Passion* was first performed in Leipzig on Good Friday, April 7th, 1724, the congregation would never have previously heard anything like it. The custom in Leipzig at that time was to tell the story of Christ's trial and crucifixion in a simple setting.

The Passion was heard four times during Bach's lifetime, each time with substantial alterations as he strove, as ever, for perfection. Bach could never have imagined that, after his death, this profound musical portrait of Christ's suffering would still be performed throughout the world nearly 300 years after April 7, 1724. On Good Friday this year, at Scot's Church Melbourne, I was privileged to hear a sincere and heartfelt performance by the Scots' Church choir, an orchestra of period instruments led by Timothy Willis, and the many soloists under the clear and musical direction of Douglas Lawrence AM.

The drama, power, and complexity of the opening chorus *Herr, unser Herrscher* (Lord, our Master), established the underlying theme and mood of the work. The restless orchestral accompaniment and the passionate opening chords by the Scots' Church choir were stunning.

From the moment Timothy Reynolds sang the opening recitative *Jesus went with his disciples ...* the clarity of his diction, the clear quality of his voice and his astute understanding of the text assured the audience that St John's account of the trial and death of Jesus would be dramatically told. This was particularly apparent in his powerful interpretation of the text when he sang *Da nahm Pilatas Jesum und geisselte ihn* (Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him).

For the remainder of Part One (the betrayal of Jesus), there were some very fine moments. The role of Jesus, thoughtfully sung by Thomas Drent and the balanced and beautiful sound of the choir in the chorales provided moments of reassurance and reflection.

In Part Two, the drama gathers momentum and becomes increasingly intense. Pilate was dramatically sung by Nicholas Dinopoulos. His rich voice enhanced his delivery of the recitatives as he argued with the crowd about the alleged guilt of Jesus. The chorus work in this section was exceptional as they represented the fear and the lynch-mob mentality of the crowd wanting blood, contrasting with the pathos, love, and conviction of the Lutheran hymns.

The arias take us outside the tragic story at strategic points to reflect on the action. Each of the seven arias places great demands on the soloist and the orchestra.

Both Thomas Drent and Nicholas Dinopoulos sang their respective arias with great conviction paying great attention to the importance of the text to the unfolding drama.

The two sung by Elizabeth Anderson showed her acute understanding of the baroque style and attention to detail. Her poignant interpretation of *Es is Vollbracht* (It is finished) was dramatic and palpable. The Viola da gamba, sensitively played by Reidun Turner, enhanced this moment of sadness.

Soprano, Amelia Jones, delighted the audience with the clarity of her voice, her attention to the style of the period and her understanding of the importance of her arias to the story of the crucifixion. Particularly impressive was the intensity and the emotion that she achieved in the aria in Part Two *Zerfließe, mein Herze* (Dissolve, my, heart).

The young tenor, Lyndon Green, gave a polished and very accomplished performance. The warm quality of his voice, his controlled phrasing, and his interpretation of his arias demonstrated a maturity beyond his years. The very difficult aria *Erwäge* (Behold Him!) was sung with conviction and control.

The Chamber orchestra, playing period instruments and led by Timothy Willis, is to be congratulated for their musicianship and the support that they gave to the choir and soloists.

This moving and memorable performance was achieved under the direction of Douglas Lawrence. His insight into the interpretation of this choral masterpiece and his ability to produce a beautiful choral sound is a credit to him and the dedication of the Scots' Church Choir.

Scots' Church is to be applauded for providing the venue and the funds to present such an important musical masterpiece to the public, free of charge, and provide the community with the opportunity to reflect on the message of Easter through the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Douglas Heywood OAM

Dr Robin Batterham AO was Assistant Organist at Scots' until December 2015, a position he filled for 20 years. He was appointed Organist Emeritus and still plays occasionally at Scots' Church.

Douglas Heywood OAM is probably best known as the Choral Director of 'Carols by Candlelight' on Christmas Eve each year at the Myer Music Bowl, a position he has held since 1988. He has been the Conductor of the Camberwell Chorale since 1974 and of the Camerata Orchestra since 1976. He was appointed Musical Director of the Melbourne Welsh Male Voice Choir in 2000, resigning in 2006. Doug was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 1995 for his service to music education and community music. His son, Thomas Heywood, a highly accomplished organist, was Assistant Organist at Scots' Church from 1992 to 1994.

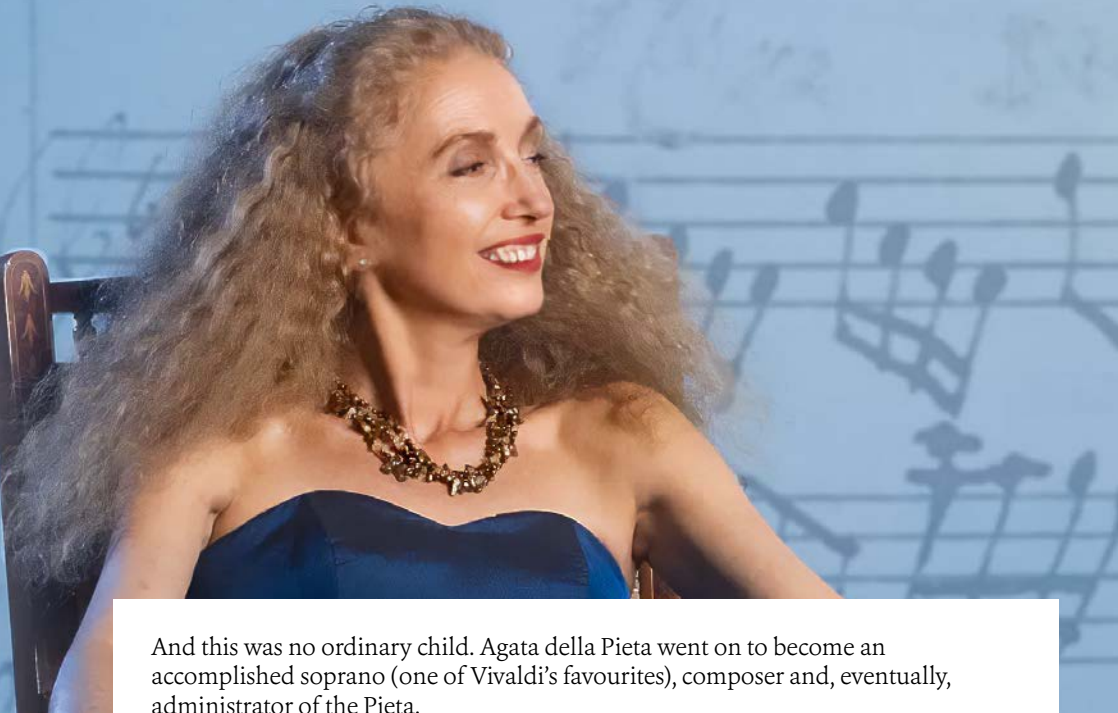
LOST SCORE



Canaletto's painting The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice, shows the view from Agata della Pietà's orphanage.

Barney Zwartz shares the fascinating story of a long lost Musical Masterpiece which recently premiered at Scots' Church

In 1720, a newborn girl missing four fingers on her left hand was passed through a tiny revolving door to the nuns at the Ospedale della Pietà, a convent and orphanage in Venice. This was no ordinary orphanage: it was famous throughout Europe for its musical ensembles of young women. The city's greatest composer, Vivaldi, taught and wrote much of his music for performance there.



And this was no ordinary child. Agata della Pietà went on to become an accomplished soprano (one of Vivaldi's favourites), composer and, eventually, administrator of the Pietà.

But in a strange turn of fate, the first public performance of one of her works would wait nearly three centuries and land in a continent she'd never heard of and a city that would not be founded for another 100 years: Melbourne.

The Australian Chamber Choir's manager, harpsichordist and alto singer Elizabeth Anderson, tracked down the fragments of Agata's cantata *Ecce nunc* and reconstructed it.

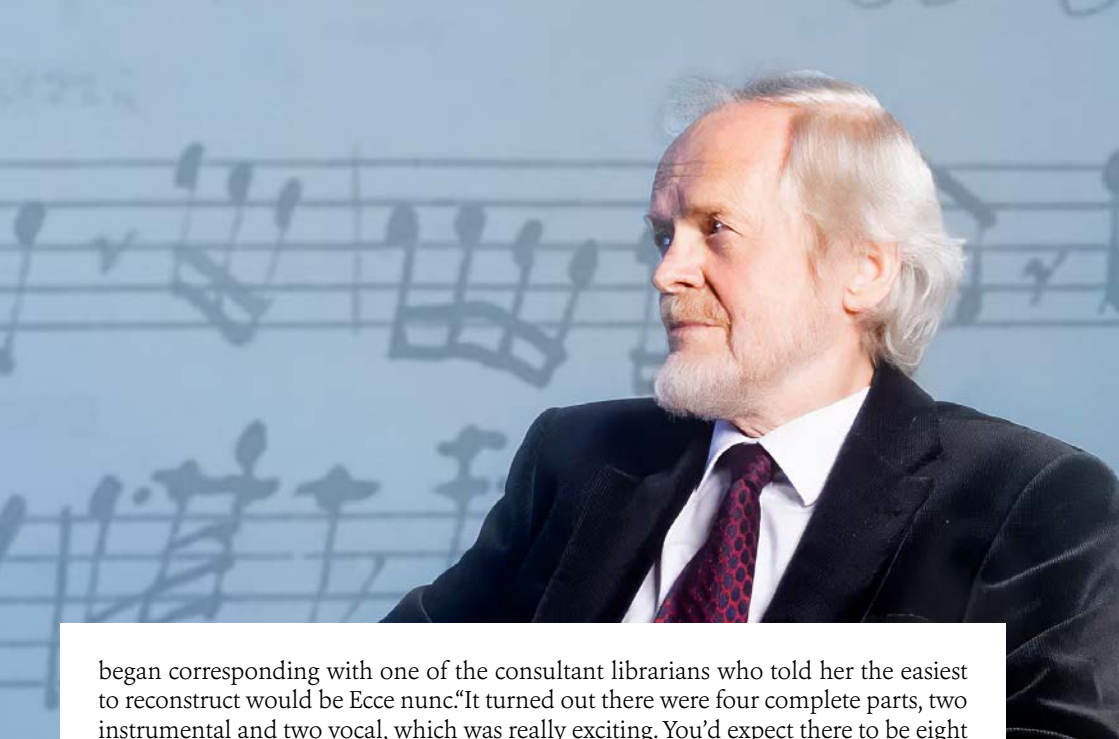
Venice had several orphanage conservatories in the 18th century – “all these nobles playing around, the babies had to go somewhere,” observes Anderson's husband, Douglas Lawrence, Music Director of the Scots' Church and the Australian Chamber Choir.

Antonio Vivaldi taught and performed at the Ospedale della Pietà regularly for nearly 40 years – he was contracted to write two concertos or cantatas a month for the orphans to play, with five rehearsals. His *Four Seasons* debuted there.

“We know Agata was one of the preferred soloists because her name is on several manuscripts by contemporary composers writing for the orphanage, such as Giovanni Porta and Andrea Bernasconi,” Anderson says.

“Agata lived at the Pietà all her life. She was paid as a singing teacher after she finished school, she wrote a thesis about singing technique. Later, she was the administrator of the Pietà. These women had a good life. Wealthy patrons of the Pietà offered them holidays in their villas; life was OK for them.”

Anderson's interest in the orphanages dates back to her youth. During lockdown, she found the library where fragments of manuscripts by Ospedale orphans are kept, and



began corresponding with one of the consultant librarians who told her the easiest to reconstruct would be *Ecce nunc*. “It turned out there were four complete parts, two instrumental and two vocal, which was really exciting. You’d expect there to be eight parts but the instruments play the same lines as the vocalists.”

Three movements had only the parts for the cello and violin. Anderson, an experienced arranger, played detective – the missing note in each chord helped identify which voice the solo was intended for. “Those two parts were enough to give me the information. It was like puzzle-solving, like a sudoku, where you have some elements and have to work out what the missing elements are.”

The result is the only piece of music written by one of the Venetian orphans that has ever come to light.

The three public performances culminated at Scots’ at 3pm on May 7th, and all were very well received, says Douglas Lawrence. “The music was wonderful, and the sense of connection with history was palpable. It was genuinely a world premiere.”

Lawrence says Agata’s work is like Vivaldi, “but it is more delicate, more feminine. Vivaldi goes for broke, but there’s no bombast about Agata”.

The exception is some demanding and decorative scoring for violin. “It’s just as well our first violin was a brilliant player because I think most violinists would look at it and turn the page,” Lawrence says. “I don’t know any vocal work from this period that has something as detailed and flamboyant as that solo – fast demi-semiquavers everywhere.”

Barney Swartz, a senior fellow of the Centre for Public Christianity, was religion editor of The Age from 2002 to 2013, and is passionate about classical and sacred music. This article is reproduced from The Age, April 26 2022, with the author’s permission.

A HEAVENLY GEM

Self-confessed choir-nerd Pepe Newton relishes the world premiere of Agata's Cantata at Scots'...

Vivaldi's well-known *Gloria* is one of my favourite choral works to sing. Joyful and exuberant it's my regular go to for a quick pick-me-up. As soon as I hear that blasting trumpet fanfare-like opening it puts a smile on my face, so I was looking forward to this concert by the Australian Chamber Choir (ACC) even before I knew that I would be hearing a program containing two world premieres written nearly 300 years apart. What an intriguing, and somewhat magical idea.

Most of the publicity centred around "Agata's Cantata," the cantata *Ecce nunc* composed by Agata della Pietà, a star student of the famed orphanage l'Ospedale della Pietà where Vivaldi taught in the 1730s and 40s. An incomplete set of two instrumental and two vocal parts were recently uncovered by ACC's manager, harpsichordist and alto Elizabeth Anderson, whose childhood curiosity about the female musicians of the orphanage was rekindled when programming Vivaldi for the choir's 2022 season. Agata's cantata had remained untouched in the Benedetto Marcello Library in Venice for almost three centuries and Anderson was able to reconstruct the work into a fifteen minute cantata of six movements.

At once both sweet and pious, yet fiendishly difficult – it combines a highly ornamented and virtuosic first violin part (completely written by Agata) with a fugal interweaving of choral lines, all in a highly Baroque, playful, yet warm style. Artistic Director Douglas Lawrence describes the piece as, "both assertive yet gentle" and I would certainly agree. He also asserted that it doesn't sound like Vivaldi, while Anderson disagrees. I'm with Elizabeth on this, I'm no Vivaldi specialist but I could pick up noticeable similarities, in particular the *Gloria Patri* soprano duet was reminiscent of Vivaldi's *Laudamus te* (at least to my ears). The darker tone of the alto solo *In noctibus extollite manus* (performed by Anderson herself) however was very different. Perhaps Agata was not so much inspired by Vivaldi himself but the music of their time and place, of which he no doubt had huge influence. Elizabeth Anderson should be commended for bringing this beautiful composition to light and congratulations must go also to the choir and musicians, especially violinists Jennifer Kirsner and Arun Patterson

who performed with a sense of lightness while still bringing a richness of tone to this stunning premiere. I hope to hear it again soon.

And finally the *Gloria!* While I had initial reservations about hearing the work performed with only a quintet and chamber organ, once they were joined by Joel Brennan on trumpet for the fanfares I very much enjoyed this more intimate interpretation of the work. Always a joyous listen.

The Australian Chamber Choir is quite a youthful ensemble full of talented voices, and you could tell they were enjoying themselves. A special shout out to Amelia Jones who took most of the soprano solos in the program; she and Kristina Lang in the lovely *Laudamus te duet* presented a fine performance.

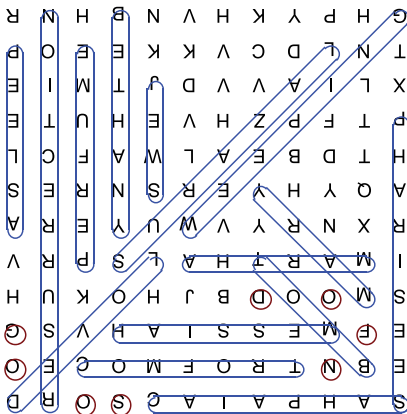
The ACC toured this concert to regional Victoria with the world premieres actually being first performed in Terang, a town of about 2,000 people in Victoria's Western District. A million miles away from Venice in both time and place, yet music lovers drove for up to six hours to be in the audience for *Vivaldi's Gloria, Agata's Cantata*. I wholeheartedly agree with Greg, an audience member surveyed at the first concert... "Well done Elizabeth and all who collaborated to bring this gorgeous piece of music to our ears – too good to remain hidden away in a library for such a long time. What a heavenly gem!"

The full concert *Vivaldi's Gloria, Agata's Cantata* is available on demand from access.auschoir.org and a recording of the cantata is planned soon.

Reprinted with permission from classikON, 14 May 2022.

Pepe Newton is classikON's Managing Director. She is an avid concert-goer and self confessed choir nerd, regularly performing and touring with no less than 5 different choirs to countries ranging from Poland to Cuba over the last few years. Through her board positions in choirs and her role with classikON she is actively involved in the exciting Australian art music scene, including the promotion and commissioning of new Australian music. Running classikON presents a perfect opportunity for Pepe to pair her love of classical music with her 'real life' qualifications in business management and administration.

Hidden Message: SON OF GOD





WORKPLACE:

CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF CANDOUR

Can you speak freely in your workplace? If you're a leader, have you created a culture where others can? Sen Sendjaya shares some useful tips.

On a scale of 1 to 10, how easy is it for you to report a mistake, propose an unpopular idea, or challenge an opinion in meetings? These are important gauges to know whether your workplace has a psychologically safe culture, which according to research is a key predictor for creating high-performing, innovative organisations.

Studies conducted by Professor Amy Edmonson and her colleagues have shown that individuals always engage in a sort of tacit calculus at micro-behavioural decision points.¹ In other words, you'll always be assessing the interpersonal risk associated with assertiveness. "If I say or do it here and now, will I be embarrassed or criticised or penalised?"

In the absence of a psychologically safe culture, honest conversations about difficult yet highly important issues never occur. Data from numerous airline accidents suggests that what causes plane crashes is almost always a lack of communication or communication errors. Critical information is not being communicated to and among pilots because of fear of its potential consequences (e.g., loss of face).² In other words, vital information is shared only on a 'need to know' basis. It travels up and down the organisational hierarchy only after being filtered.

A psychologically safe culture creates a culture of candour where individuals have the courage to voice their opinions. If you're a leader of your team, division, or organisation, whether it's a for-profit or nonprofit, how can you cultivate this culture of candour? Well, since leadership is better caught than taught, you need to model the behaviours you want to see in others. Here are four leadership tips.

1. Empower people to speak the truth, particularly upward

If you want to always know the pulse of the organisation, you need to protect the voices from below. Yet what many often fail to remember is that because of their position of power, people lower in hierarchy or status are typically reluctant to tell inconvenient truths from the field. These truths are vital for leaders to know, but they will never hear these truths if an open and transparent upward communication channel is not consciously nurtured and encouraged.

Speaking unpleasant truths upward is challenging because people's natural impulse is to tell others only what they want to hear. People hoard information, engage in groupthink, and tell others only what they think will please or appease them. Countless research studies point to our reluctance to speak the truth upward. To counter these natural tendencies, leaders need to consciously democratise information, flatten the hierarchy, and provide a safe space for people to voice their concerns upward.

2. Encourage participation in the decision-making process

Wise leaders know that better quality decisions are reached when a diversity of voices is considered. To that end, we need to recover the lost art of collective decision-making.

The easiest way for leaders to appreciate and empower one another in meetings is by inviting each person in the meeting room to speak. Most church and workplace meetings are dominated by a select few extroverts who speak the first, the loudest, and the longest. They tend to drive the agenda, even if they don't have the best ideas. The introverts (i.e., the other half of the people in the room) often get neglected. Often their brilliant ideas disappear into thin air because no one invites them to speak up. Introverts do not necessarily avoid interacting with people. They just easily get overloaded with loud voices and prefer to channel their energy and ideas elsewhere.

In larger circles, it is important to involve key stakeholders in making decisions. There is a saying in Latin '*nihil de nobis, sine nobis*' or "nothing about us without us." That essentially means that any representative should make no decisions without the full and direct participation of group members affected by that policy.

3. Recognise and appreciate contrarians

Of course, there are people who give contrary opinions for the sake of giving contrary opinions. But let's not be too quick to shoot the messenger! Even a shred of well-meaning intent behind a dissenting opinion might be helpful for leaders. At the very least, their opinions serve as reminders that leaders are not omniscient, let alone infallible. If you're a leader, you should avoid the temptation to listen only to views that make you feel good and despise those that make you think hard.

To encourage different opinions around the table, leaders must learn better to utilise their ears rather than their mouths. The late management guru Peter Drucker once quipped that "listening is not a skill; it's a discipline. Anybody can do it. All you have to do is keep your mouth shut."³ What it means practically is that leaders should be the last to convey their opinions and views, and let others speak first. This is perhaps the reason why *listen* and *silent* are spelled with the same letters.

4. Encourage healthy and productive debates

In the name of unity, even civilised disagreement and productive conflicts are often avoided at all costs in organisational meetings. Because of this conflict-avoidance mode, many ideas discussed in meetings are not challenged and refined. They remain half-baked ideas. In fact, many quick-fix solutions today become problems in the future.

If you're a leader you need to disrupt the equilibrium and foster task conflicts (but not relationship conflicts) that focus on the issues and problems at hand. Such initiatives require leaders to first embrace vulnerability and be ready to admit their limitations and mistakes.

The key leadership resource

If a psychologically safe culture requires a psychologically safe leader, how can you become such a leader? If you're a Christian as I am, you'll know that the gospel - the good news of God's unconditional acceptance - is the most robust resource that leaders can tap into.

The gospel enables us to not be disproportionately concerned about approval from others, because Jesus Christ, the One whose approval really counts, has fully accepted me at the cross while I was still his enemy. On the other hand, the same gospel also empowers me to live for other people's benefit, for the sake of serving them and bringing them even a small step closer to Christ.

As I have written elsewhere, because of the gospel, people's opinions *do not matter*, and for the sake of the gospel their opinions *do matter*.⁴

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¹Amy C. Edmondson, *The Fearless Organisation: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2019).

²This account is shared in Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers: The Story of Success* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008).

³Peter F. Drucker, *Managing the Non-Profit Organization: Practices and Principles* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 15

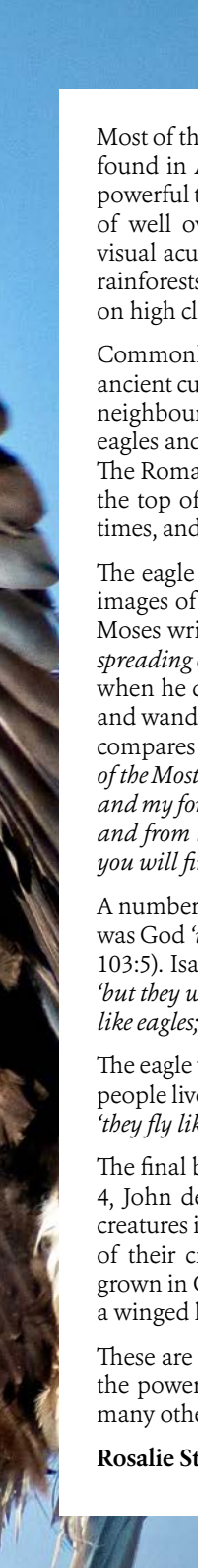
⁴Sendjaya, Sen. *Leadership Reformed: Why Leaders Need the Gospel to Change the World*. London: Routledge, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315638188>, p. 124.



WINGS OF EAGLES

In a recent issue of The Leaflet, our resident ornithologist Rosalie Strother introduced us to the humble Sparrow. This time, we're looking at the other end of the kingdom of birds...

Large, graceful and powerfully built, eagles are larger than any other birds of prey except vultures. To watch an eagle soar high above the ground has inspired humankind with awe and fascination throughout history. Since ancient times eagles have been associated with strength, shrewdness and protection. Powerful and graceful, eagles are fearsome predators; and remarkably good navigators. They are possibly the most attentive parents of all bird species, and the greatest teachers of their fledglings. Pairs remain mates for life.



Most of the 60 known species of eagle are native to Eurasia and Africa, while three are found in Australia. Eagles are large and powerfully built, with large hooked beaks, powerful talons for grasping their prey and a median wing span (in the larger species) of well over two metres. Their eyes are extremely strong with highly developed visual acuity. They are found in habitats that vary from the north tundra to tropical rainforests, temperate zones and deserts. Their nests, or eyries, are built in tall trees or on high cliffs. Hunting techniques vary amongst the species.

Commonly referred to as the 'king of birds', the eagle was held in high esteem by ancient cultures as far back as 4000 BC by the Egyptians. The Hebrews, as well as their neighbours, the Babylonians, Assyrians and Hittites, recognised the characteristics of eagles and incorporated these into their writings and culture with symbolic imagery. The Romans designated the eagle as the emblem of their army, where it was used on the top of their legions' standards. It is also found in heraldry through to modern times, and is represented in the coats of arms of many countries.

The eagle is used by many Biblical writers to describe a range of characteristics and images of God – notably, strength, protection, and the ability to bear much weight. Moses writes that God is *'like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions'* (Deuteronomy 32:11) when he describes God's care of the Israelites as they came out of captivity in Egypt and wandered in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land. The Psalmist also compares God to the eagle as a protector in Psalm 91:1-4; *'He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "my refuge and my fortress, my God, in who I trust. For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge.'*

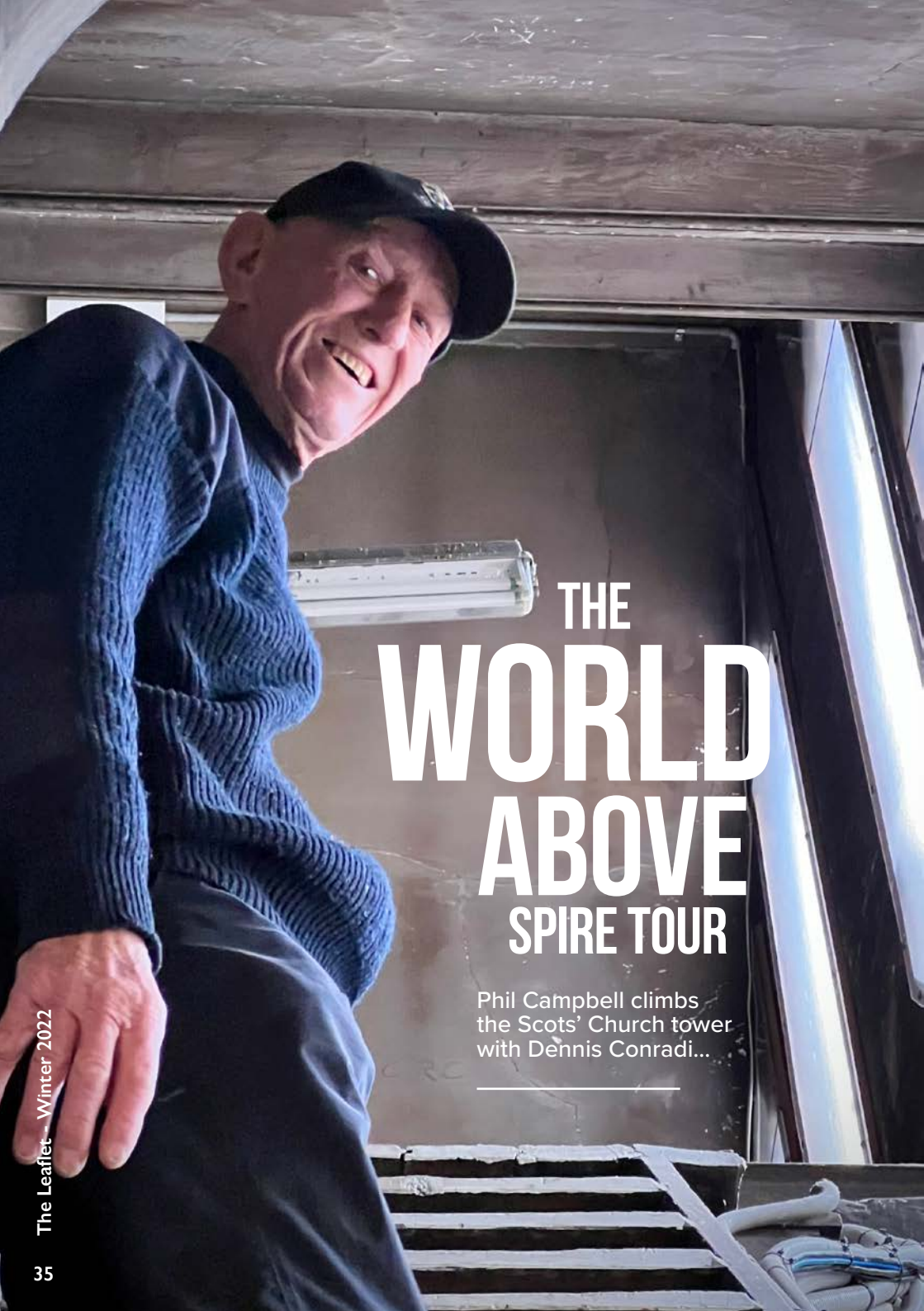
A number of other Psalms use similar imagery. For example the psalmist writes that it was God *'who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.'* (Psalm 103:5). Isaiah also acknowledged the symbolic strength of the eagle when he wrote *'but they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.'* (Isaiah 40:31).

The eagle was used to describe the power of God that will come swiftly on Israel if the people live in disobedience. In one instance Habakkuk, writing about the enemy, said *'they fly like an eagle swift to devour.'* (Habakkuk 1:8).

The final biblical references to eagles are found in the Book of Revelation. In chapter 4, John describes a vision of the Throne of Heaven, around which are four living creatures including a flying eagle, along with a lion, and ox and a man – all pinnacles of their created domains, bowing in worship around the throne. A tradition has grown in Christian art, depicting the gospel writers: Matthew as a winged man; Mark a winged lion; Luke a winged ox; and John a winged eagle.

These are just a few of the times the eagle provides a biblical metaphor representing the power, majesty, protection and strength of God. No wonder the Hebrews, and many others, saw the eagle as the 'king of birds'.

Rosalie Strother



THE WORLD ABOVE SPIRE TOUR

Phil Campbell climbs
the Scots' Church tower
with Dennis Conradi...

It was a damp Autumn morning when Scots' Property Committee chair Dennis Conradi invited me to tour the astonishing world above the Scots' Church ceiling. For the uninitiated (and that includes most of us), the door to the stairway by the front entry is a mystery. An array of electrical switch boxes and controls crowd the walls around the first few stairs - a foretaste of what lies above.



“In the old days,” says Dennis, “it took a lot of work to manually wind down the church light fittings so we could change the light bulbs.” Now there’s a motorised system that operates from the key panel in the foyer.

Up a level into the ceiling cavity, and you’ll see the cable system, pulleys and winches that span the length of the building. Like many things at Scots’, you’d never imagine the behind-the-scenes complexity involved in making things happen. It reminded me of the old joke: “How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light globe?” In the

joke, the answer is, “None - Presbyterians don’t change anything.” But at Scots’, the real answer is, one to turn the key switch, one to operate the manual control panel, one to change the light bulb - and a few dozen engineers and experts to install the system in the ceiling.



Also in the ceiling cavity you’ll find a massive climate control system. “It compares the inside temperature and the outside temperature,” says Dennis, “and then moves air in or out of the building according to the thermostat.”

Within the ceiling cavity there are a number of platforms purpose-built to access outside areas of the roof. Recently, safety cabling has been installed along both sides of the main roof to allow maintenance of the slate tiles, and copper and lead guttering. Some gaps are appearing between slates, an issue that will soon need significant repairs.

Onwards and upwards. Our goal from here is to reach the tower, which involves first an upward stair-climb to the peak of the inside ceiling, and down the other side to access the entry point. Then the fun starts. We counted 120 narrow stone spiral stairs, which ascend over three levels - in darkness. There are two spacious rooms on the way up. "Maybe this could be the minister's office," I suggested. Moving the furniture would be an interesting challenge!



At last, we arrived - at least one of us slightly worse for wear - at the small viewing hatch at the top of our climb. That's when Dennis announced that he had forgotten the key. "No worries, I'll go back down and get it," he said cheerfully. Five minutes later, he was back. Take my word for it, if tower climbing was an Olympic event, Dennis would be top contender for Gold.

Finally, we peered through the small hatch onto the narrow walkway at the base of the spire. The views of Collins Street are majestic, with genuine river glimpses as a bonus.

According to Dennis, the biggest challenge for the future is to eventually completely replace the roof slates, along with the flashings and valleys. "We'll need to find an engineer to undertake this huge job. Also, Health and Safety rules keep changing, and we need to constantly update to stay compliant" says Dennis. To that I would add the challenge of maintaining our corporate knowledge of the history of our Scots' building, and how the complex systems work behind-the-scenes. It's both operationally complex and finely tuned - a bank of knowledge and experience that Dennis has built up over the last 20 years serving us on the Committee.

Phil Campbell is Senior Minister of The Scots' Church





ALL GARDENS GREAT AND SMALL

Rosalie Strother takes us to the Garden Show...

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show was back in all its glory in late March after a hiatus due to the pandemic. As you enter you are greeted by a riot of glorious colour – massed autumn flowers, tulips ‘brought on’ for the occasion in controlled hothouses, and plants of all shapes and sizes, displayed to entice you to buy bulbs in anticipation of spring. Inside, there’s a range of exhibits, model gardens, workshops and talks by experts, as well as places to sit for coffee or delicious edibles, all in the beautiful surroundings of the Carlton Gardens and historic Royal Exhibition Building, the venue for the event. There’s something for everyone here!

If you’ve attended this event in past years – it was established in 1995 – there’s evidence of subtle alterations over recent times, reflecting changes in the world around us. The changing climate with hotter, drier summers; the decreasing size of gardens around modern homes; increased numbers living in high rise apartments with balconies as outdoor space – have all played a part in shaping the direction of the show.



Succulents are coming into their own, with their high tolerance of hot and dry conditions, as are many Australian native plants so well adapted to our unforgiving climate. These plants are used creatively to great advantage in the model garden displays. Plants of all kinds are available for purchase at the many nursery stalls you pass as you wander along the paths. Model gardens include designs for small city plots, balconies, and accessible gardens for those with mobility issues as well as larger gardens, all to inspire and lift the spirits.

The latest technology in garden care is on display for serious amateurs and professionals. The robotic lawnmower captured the interest of young and old, novice and seasoned gardener, as it travelled sequentially across the demonstration lawn, back and forth, doing a 90 degree turn just at the last moment. Mesmerising!

For some years prior to the pandemic there was waning interest in gardening; this has been reversed since the short-term effects of 'lockdowns' became a reality over 2020 and 2021. There were plenty of people of all ages and stages at this year's event which is ranked as one of the world's top five flower shows, along with Chelsea, Boston, Singapore and Dublin. If you haven't been in the past, and have an interest in plants and gardens, keep a place in your diary to visit the show in late March next year.

The revival of interest in gardening during the pandemic has been a world-wide phenomenon. Studies conducted by environmental and public health researchers revealed that interest in gardening peaked just as infections peaked! They identified some important ways gardens and gardening can help us relax and socialise, and appreciate contact with the natural world of plants, insects and birds. During the pandemic, the garden became a safe space surrounded by peace and beauty as a counter to the depressing daily news of the case numbers, illness and deaths. In many countries, including Australia, plant nurseries ran out of seedlings and seeds, as people began planting vegetable plots for fresh food.

As the world gradually opens up and life returns to some semblance of normality, the question is whether the increased interest in gardening will continue. Only time will tell. There's no doubt that, while gardens can be places to relax, they are also places where our efforts result in positive effects on mental health and self-esteem, as well as pure enjoyment.

It's no accident the story of the Bible begins in a garden - Eden was a beautiful place where all kinds of trees grew, and where Adam and Eve were placed to work and take care of it. What better picture of creator and creature in harmony! Familiar prickles and thorns, though, became the equally fitting picture of life after the fall – the nemesis of any gardener. Much later the Garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, was the setting where Jesus suffered in anguish and prayed while his disciples slept, as he prepared to face his arrest and crucifixion. This garden still exists, with its ancient gnarled olive trees, and is a place of great significance to Christians. The rock tomb in which Jesus was laid prior to his resurrection was also found in a garden close by. It was there that Mary Magdalene mistook the risen Christ for a gardener until she recognised him when he spoke to her. No longer a garden, it is the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre with the rock tomb preserved within its walls.





COMMUNITY HERB GARDEN AT SCOTS'

We've recently planted a community herb garden on the west lawn (between the church and the Assembly Hall). These plants are easily grown and cared for, and only small quantities are needed to add zest to many recipes. When the garden is well established, we'll invite community members to share the results. The fresh herbs include: parsley, rosemary, sage, thyme, lemon thyme, chives, mint, Vietnamese mint, and marjoram. Although most of the herbs die down or show little growth through the cold months of winter, they'll flourish again in spring.

You may like to make a small bouquet garni from the herbs in our garden, to add flavour to your stew or soup. There is no set recipe for this – just gather some stems of the herbs you would like to include, such as marjoram, thyme, a sage leaf or two, a little rosemary, and a sprig of parsley, tie them together with string, and put into the pot with your stew or soup. Delicious!

Rosalie Strother

S A H P A I A C S O R D
 E B N T R O F M O C E O
 E F M E S S I A H V S G
 S M O O D B J H O K U H
 I M A R T H A L S P R V
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 A Q Y H Y E R S N R E S
 H T D B E A L W A F C L
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WORD SEARCH

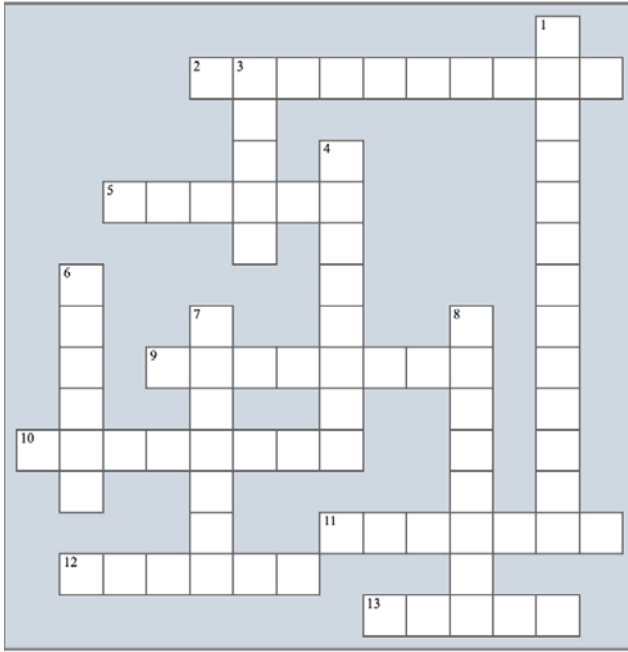
Wise Words from John Chapter 11 and more....

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 28)

The words to find

Asleep	Mary
Bethany	Messiah
Caiaphas	Perfume
Comfort	Pharisees
Jews	Resurrection
Lazarus	Tomb
Loved	Weeping
Martha	



BIBLICAL CROSSWORD

Wise Words from John Chapter 11 and more....
(Solution on page 28)

Across

2. The Egyptian god Nut could not stop _____ from destroying crops.
5. Kebbie has developed an app called _____.
9. Leonardo da Vinci painted the world famous portrait of _____ (2 words).
10. Many Jews visiting Mary _____ in Jesus.
11. Where did Lazarus live?
12. Mary and _____ were Lazarus' sisters.
13. When Lazarus fell ill his sisters sent word to their friend _____.

Down

1. Jesus said, 'I am the _____ and the life'.
3. _____, an orphan in Venice, wrote the cantata performed at Scots' by the ACC.
4. When Jesus saw Mary weeping he was deeply _____.
6. Why did his disciples try to stop Jesus visiting Lazarus?
7. At the tomb of Lazarus Jesus called him to _____ (two words).
8. A plot to kill Jesus was led by the high priest _____.



Want to join us
at Scots'?

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a warm welcome.*

Please contact the
Session Clerk,
Rosalie Strother, on
(03) 9650 9903



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