

The Monthly Magazine of the Anglican Parish of Northern Albury – Diocese of
NORTHERN LIGHT

Wangaratta.

St Mark's North Albury –St James' Lavington- St John's Thurgoona – St Paul's Jindera
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“TO KNOW CHRIST AND MAKE HIM KNOWN”

In my final letter to you all I want to continue to explore the church's mission in the modern western world. We can start with a simple question that lies behind many a discussion about religion. Is life simply a short, meaningless accident?

Last month I quoted the French Christian philosopher Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) and I want to let him pose the question for us.

“When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space which I fill, and even which I can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I know nothing, and which do not know me, I am frightened, and am astonished at being here rather than there. For there is no reason why I am here rather than there, why now rather than then. Who has put me here? By whose order and direction have this place and this time been allotted to me?”

I am sure that in one way or another you have reflected on these questions. We are created to ask these questions and everyone does. Today they have become critical. Someone has said, “The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it seems pointless.” We have overwhelming amounts of information but it does not create a pattern? Is there a big picture, a great story that can make sense of it all?

One way of dealing with this is not to think about it at all. The wise person should create a supreme indifference and disengagement from reality and instead develop personal character and rationality. This is the only way to create meaning in a meaningless world. We need to construct our own meaning and tailor it to our needs and concerns.

But in the end that fails because there is nothing to hold the morality of character and rationality together. In the end it leads to the conclusion that there is no *logical* difference between ISIS and Mahatma Gandhi. If there is no meaning-giving story then each is as meaningful or meaningless as the other.

We often hear that the church must be relevant in the modern world. The way that is usually addressed is to say that the church should support my favourite cause/s as opposed to someone else's favourite cause/s, be they so-called progressive or conservative.

The real issue of relevance for the church is the answer to the question, can it offer a meaning giving story? But ‘church’ is far too vague a word. The real question is, can **every** Christian person who sits in church offer a meaning-giving story to their neighbours?

To do that they will need to be able to answer four questions for themselves. And if each Christian cannot answer these questions convincingly then the church is lost. Forget programs and fashionable causes of whatever hue. Without an answer we belong in the dustbin of history.

1. The question of identity: Who am I?
2. The question of value: Do I matter?
3. The question of purpose: Why am I here?
4. The question of agency: Can I make a difference?

Identity: Who am I?

My identity is forged in the story of God's creation of me as His image bearer, in the story of God's liberation of me in Messiah Jesus and in the story of God's Spirit transforming me into the Messiah's image.

Value: Do I matter

My value is secure in the esteem in which God holds me, in the esteem that the crucified Messiah Jesus places

on my life and in the esteem the Spirit lavishes on me in security and stability.

Purpose: Why am I here?

My purpose is to live in loving fellowship with the God who loves the world and grieves over it, to let the image of Christ be formed in me and to follow the Spirit into a transforming deathless future of love.

Agency: Can I make a difference?

I am not powerless because God empowers me to live out His love, justice, peace, kindness, truthfulness, and joy, because Messiah Jesus breaks the power of sin and death and pours forgiveness into my life, and because the Spirit sets me free time and time again from the prison of my limitations and weakness.

There is no silver bullet to the church's present ills. There is just you and me and our answers to those questions.

As Jeanette and I leave you I want you to know how happy we have been here, and how much we have valued your love and care for us.

Colin and Jeanette

Gold, Goats and The Friends....

**“You must have been warned against letting the golden hours slip by;
but some of them are golden only because we let them slip by” J.M. Barrie**

Time spent in relaxation with friends is to be savoured and treasured. It creates more happiness, builds relationships. The Spring day spent around the Beechworth region gave us the time and space to enjoy one another's company while seeing new places and having enjoyable experiences.



El Dorado Gold Dredge and Museum

Beginning at the quirky “Provender” cafe, we were packed cozily in the backroom because no one wanted to sit in the courtyard - as we have on warmer days! Jane had booked a jam-packed schedule, so it was important to keep moving. The road to the old gold settlement of El Dorado is rough and dusty for the most part and washing cars was on the agenda for the following day!! The gold dredge and associated museum were waiting to be explored, as well as the pottery shop. In the little museum - housed in an old school building - Jeanette discovered a Jew's Harp on display reminiscent of that her Scottish grandfather played, Jane found memorabilia from the honey company husband David's grandfather owned. The collection there reflects 100 yrs of history with an emphasis on the gold rush. As the name of the place suggests, the discovery of the precious metal gave rise to a mining industry, during the nineteenth century. Next, lunch at Victoria's smallest pub – the McEvoy Hotel in El Dorado. Then a dash to Tolpuddle cheese for a talk and some Prosecco with cheese tasting, on a table under an umbrella while watching the goats in the paddock.



Talk at Tolpuddle Farm Tarrawingee



In the Hotel with Ned!

The Christmas Party was discussed and we will return to the Commercial Club after a 3 year break. Kate is in charge of the Christmas Tree for the festival again. She is having an angel theme so members have been asked to supply any they may have or would like to procure.....As Jeanette came along again she was able to take the \$110 Food Bank money collected. Jill didn't make it as has been busy cutting the ribbon to open the new Coles store in Wodonga. An honour bestowed upon her as she is a local supplier for the supermarket chain. Joan was still in hospital after her op so missed the day. She is progressing well and will be with us next month when we take a drive down the King Valley. This will be organised by Karen. Meet 9am in Jindera. Coffee is in Moyhu followed by a tour of the Old Butter Factory. Lunch in Whitfield.

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Inspiration is subjective, as different people will find different things to be inspiring. However, Christians can unite around one inspirational source—God himself. God is the basis for all of our inspiration because He is the basis for everything good and everything worth imitating. Here, are quotes from a variety of influential Christians that inspire us and point us back to Christ. Enjoy these many different thoughts on the Christian life.

1. "Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for the treasure that it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain. What was once foolishness to us—a crucified God—must become our wisdom and our power and our only boast in this world." –**John Piper**
2. "God loves each of us as if there were only one of us" - **Augustine**
3. "God never said that the journey would be easy, but He did say that the arrival would be worthwhile" – **Max Lucado**
4. "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supplies." –**Hudson Taylor**
5. "God will meet you where you are in order to take you where He wants you to go." –**Tony Evans**
6. "Let God's promises shine on your problems." –**Corrie ten Boom**
7. "Christ literally walked in our shoes." –**Tim Keller**
8. "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose." –**Jim Elliot**
9. "Remember who you are. Don't compromise for anyone, for any reason. You are a child of the Almighty God. Live that truth." –**Lysa Terkeurst**
10. "If you can't fly, then run, If you can't run, then walk, If you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." –**Martin Luther King Jr.**
11. "Our greatest fear should not be of failure but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter." –**Francis Chan**
12. "If God is your partner, make your plans BIG!" –**D.L. Moody**
13. "You are the only **Bible** some unbelievers will ever read." –**John MacArthur**
14. "We gain strength, and courage, and confidence by each experience in which we really stop to look fear in the face...we must do that which we think we cannot." –**Eleanor Roosevelt**
15. "He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss. He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him, death is gain." –**Randy Alcorn**
16. "God does not give us everything we want, but He does fulfill His promises, leading us along the best and straightest paths to Himself." –**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**
17. "The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'" –**Billy Graham**
18. "Always, everywhere God is present, and always He seeks to discover Himself to each one" –**A.W.Tozer**
19. "If you believe in a God who controls the big things, you have to believe in a God who controls the little things. It is we, of course, to whom things look 'little' or 'big'." –**Elisabeth Elliot**
20. "There is no one who is insignificant in the purpose of God." –**Alistair Begg**
21. "Relying on God has to start all over everyday, as if nothing has yet been done." –**C. S. Lewis**
22. "This is our time on the history line of God. This is it. What will we do with the one deep exhale of God on this earth? For we are but a vapor and we have to make it count. We're on. Direct us, Lord, and get us on our feet." –**Beth Moore**
23. "The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time." –**Abraham Lincoln**
24. "Your potential is the sum of all the possibilities God has for your life." –**Charles Stanley**
25. "The best and most beautiful things in this world cannot be seen or even heard, but must be felt with the heart." –**Helen Keller**