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An important aspect of being persuasive, especially in a very self-consciously post-Christian cultural context, is to be willing to concede where the legacy of Christianity has been severely lacking; where Christian morality and doctrine appears difficult or demanding. Being evangelists with integrity also requires us to be transparent and cautious about our claims and God-willing, gaining credibility in our conduct.

Contextualisation needs to consider not merely questions of faithfulness to gospel truth and persuasiveness to our potential audience. We also need to assess which patterns of life, modes of communication and styles of rhetoric are fitting for the gospel of the crucified Christ—what does it mean to embody the weakness and foolishness of the cross, as we are called to do (1 Cor. 1-4, 10-13). This requires an attentiveness to the ways that worldly values penetrate our cultural expression. To effectively contextualise the gospel of the crucified Messiah requires us to embody the wisdom, humility and service of the gospel in both our message and our manner; in our words and our tone and patterns of organisational and community life.

Ordinary Christian conversation is arguably now more important than gospel presentations. Many ministries remain committed to training people in learning a basic gospel outline and the practice of cold-contact evangelism. These however are better understood as valuable training activities, rather than prized for their direct evangelistic effectiveness. I suspect it is largely understood that the most immediately relevant evangelistic training will be more connected with speaking of one’s own Christian conversion and experience; answering difficult questions; some elements of Bible storytelling; and inviting people to investigate further through events, courses or one-to-one reading.

There continues to be concern that Australian Christians are losing their evangelistic focus. Too much emphasis on political advocacy, charitable and environmental work or even the value of secular work may well detract from evangelistic commitment. This is a risk. And certain theological formulations do lack clarity about the distinction between gospel work and good deeds. At the same time, I want to agree with those who see the importance of setting a vision for a holistic Christian life and culture. When the culture around us becomes less Christian, this holistic work needs to be more deliberate. It gives our worldview cohesion, it makes our subculture robust (more of this in part 3). Giving due regard for the whole of the Christian life and work will not only sustain believers, but will likely also open up different kinds of evangelistic connections and opportunities.

**Collect**

Saving God, whose Son Jesus Christ healed the sick and brought them wholeness of body and mind: inspire us his disciples, so that we may constantly proclaim his gospel by our words and by the dedication and integrity of our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

 

St Luke’s Anglican Church Emerald

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*Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles.* [Isaiah 40:31]

**Epiphany 5 and Transfiguration**

 4th February 11th February

 Isaiah 40:21-31 2 Kings 2:1-12 Psalm 147:1-11 Psalm 50:1-6 1 Corinthians 9:16-23 2 Corinthians 4:3-12 **Mark 1:29-39 Mark 9:2-9**

# **Christian Life, Ministry and Mission in the 2020s: Current Points of Debate**

Mikey Lynch – TGC (08/12/2023) **Part 2**

There is a growing call for Christians to be circumspect in political lobbying and advocacy; some recommend for almost total disengagement from politics, at least for Christian ministers and churches. I believe Christians should always seek to speak into every area of life, out of concern for the glory of God, for truth, for justice, for the love for one’s neighbours. This includes Christians speaking into the political process. But I agree with those who are issuing warnings. In our current context, the best Christian stance in public political discussion needs to be cautious and thoughtful, not giving the impression of being presumptuous and bellicose. Rallying a conservative majority to our political causes has proved itself to lead often to compromise and failure. It has, I believe helped to tarnish the public reputation of Christianity.

We should also beware of our Christianity becoming limited to a few hot topics, or worse, succumbing to a political instinct that gels with damning predictability to the platform of a particular political party.

The push for Christian evangelists and pastors to adopt a cautious, irenic stance in their evangelism and efforts at public Christianity remains somewhat controversial. Many squirm at what seems to them an overly timid posture: apologising too much, giving too much ground to the sinful critiques of the world. Some react against this and adopt a forthright, muscular posture in their cultural engagement. Nevertheless, I hope that a majority will agree that one can be clear on godliness and the truth of God, while still presenting it in a manner that is persuasive.

 **A guide for our prayers during the week**

**Monday**

Our diocese and the gospel

* Bishop Peter
* Other parishes
* Dean for Cathedral – Rev. Ross Nicholson

**Tuesday**

Our church and the gospel

* Children and youth
* Families
* Seniors

**Wednesday**

Our community and the gospel

* St Luke’s Op Shop
* Blackwater
* Emerald Churches

**Thursday**

Our nation and the gospel

* Prime minister
* State and local government
* Religious Freedom legislation

**Friday**

God’s world and the gospel

* Islamisation
* War and poverty
* Persecuted Church
* CMS and ABM

**Saturday**

Ministry and the gospel

* Bible Studies
* Food for Body and Soul
* Wardens and Parish Council
* Rev Daniel and Jenni

**Dates to Remember**

4 February Blackwater service 3 pm

5 February Funeral for Ailsa Corneal

8 February Bible Study 5.30 pm

11 February Service in parish hall 4pm

 Food for body & soul 5.30 pm

13 February Parish Council meeting

14 February Ash Wednesday Service 7.30 am

25 February Reports for AGM due

10 March AGM

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## The BCA Prayer

##### Lord our God, help us to remember those who live in isolated and remote parts of our land. We ask you to strengthen and encourage all whose ministries are supported by The Bush Church Aid Society.

##### Refresh them in times of discouragement and loneliness and call others to stand with them in the task of making Christ known.

##### Grant that, through the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, through caring service and by support for young people, the message of your redeeming love may be proclaimed and accepted by the people of our land. We ask these things through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Direct Debit Giving Information**

**Account name:** St Luke’s Anglican Church

**BSB:** 034-181

**Account No.:** 810 226

**Description:** ‘Giving’

 Today **11 February 18 February**

**Welcome**

**Power Point**  Donna

**Read** Nat & Russell Larry, Nancy Jenni, Dianne

**Prayers** Daniel Dianne

**Sunday School** Cate & Noah

**Morning Tea** Jenni

**Shop** Jenni & TedCarolyn, Nancy Donna, Jenni

Theresa

**Mowing** Daniel  Phil