

THE new vine



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Blackall Range Uniting Churches

(Kenilworth, Maleny, Montville and Palmwoods)

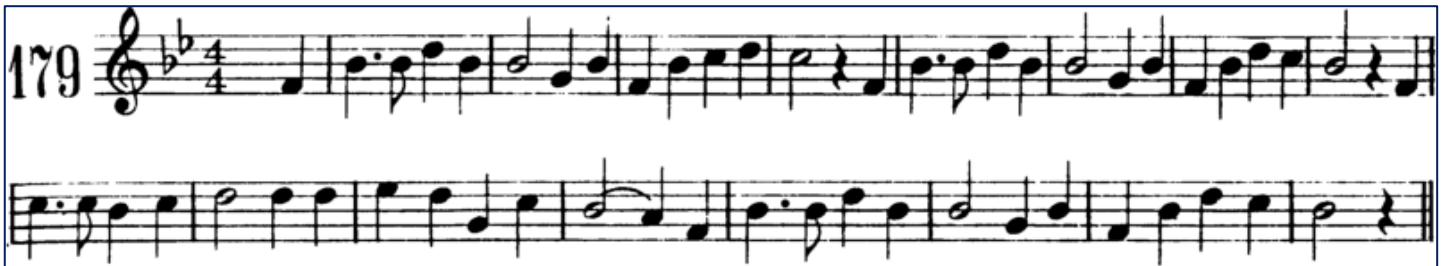
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WINTER EDITION, Issue No 29, WINTER 2023

Theme: "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus"

EDITORIAL COMMENT ... Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus



Just after I sent the draft of the previous edition of *The New Vine* to Muriel Wilson so she could work her magic on it for us, a letter arrived from Bob Grice which I had to reject as "too late this time round". However, as I read and re-read this letter, I heard a cry from the heart.

Here was an issue, or issues, really upsetting at least one of our number – so what to do with it? It should be shared somehow, but how?

For some reason that old hymn came to me in all its glory – more of it later – so I thought that "Stand up, stand up for Jesus" might be a good theme for this NV edition. So, I gave plenty of notice to the congregation to respond in some way and then took a holiday.

My e-mail inbox has not been filled to the brim with responses, but those that came are both interesting and varied and again, show the diversity that abides among us. However, I was left wondering if, once having read all the articles, more people may have something they want to share about standing up for Jesus. Has a memory been jogged? Why didn't I think of that? I had a similar, but different, experience once that people may be interested in. I really should have had a go. I disagree with such and such because... I have a photo of something that suggests standing up for Jesus in a different way. You know the sort of thing.

That all led me to suggest that it could be time to include a **Letters to the Editor** section in each edition so we can all comment in some way if we wish and share this with others.

This is the twenty-ninth edition of *The New Vine* which means it has been around for the best part of seven years and in that time, we have only ever received one letter to the editor which, of course, was printed! Perhaps it is time to try this expansion of content by asking readers to send letters, of around 200 words [that is, about half as long as this comment], that add to the conversation in some way.

It is, after all, OUR journal.

I have found that life is full of challenges, and this is just my way of sharing the joy.

Peace and blessings,

Graham

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LIENA'S LINES ... STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS

Metaphors are helpful. Most of the time.

Metaphors help us to understand and describe something or someone we do not readily have the words to describe. The Bible is a great source of metaphors to describe God – like Rock, Shelter, Shade, King, or Potter. And most of these metaphors are very helpful. Incomputable is the value and comfort that the words “the Lord is my Shepherd” have brought and will continue to bring millions of believers and mourners across the ages.

Metaphors are also powerful. Metaphors paint pictures, awaken associations, stir up emotions. The metaphor “God is our Shade” brings assurance and encouragement as we understand that we can seek shelter in the Shade from the burning sun.

However, not all metaphors are as helpful and encouraging as the Shepherd or the Shade metaphor. Other metaphors, like God being a Warrior may be less helpful. Isaiah 42:13 reads -

*“The LORD shall go forth as a mighty man,
he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war:
he shall cry, yea, roar;
he shall prevail against his enemies.” (KJV)*

The metaphor of war and of God being a Warrior is complex, especially today. For the metaphor of war stirs many emotions, arouses zeal and calls soldiers to be strong and brave. The difficulty is that metaphors of war also stir up associations of opposing parties, warring sides – ‘an us’ and ‘a them’. The metaphor of war arouses images of an enemy that needs to be destroyed before victory can be attained. It provokes strong emotions and fosters an ideology of conquer and overcome, at all costs. It advances the ideology of survival – we need to defeat in order to survive.

I grew up singing heartily and loudly the song:

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquished,
And Christ is Lord indeed.*

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus” arouses a sense of urgency. A sense of battle, of needing to put on our armour and go to war – imminently! And the accompanying tune, the beat of a march is wonderful and uplifting – stirring up passion, deepening our zeal.

Yet we know that we are called to love our enemies, not vilify them or trample them, or vanquish them.

How then do we understand this song embedded in our worship DNA?

There is no doubt that we, as believers, corporately and individually, need to stand up for Jesus – boldly and courageously, and that we need to do so urgently. Yet we are not called, like the Crusaders of tragic times in the church’s history, to conquer by trampling and killing, until every foe is vanquished.

The call in Ephesians 6 to put on the armour of God is not a call to war and to march on destroying the foe. It is a message of encouragement, of protection against the evil and dark forces. It is, as the second verse says to “stand in Christ’s strength alone”, protected by His armour.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus remains true today. However, my plea is for someone to write new words to this song, so we can march on the beat of love and not war.

Shalom, Liena

SILENCE IS NOT ALWAYS GOLDEN

I was recently saddened to learn of a large Brisbane State Primary School moving to terminate both Chaplaincy and RE in the school.

Developments such as this, the removal of prayers before Parliament, and liberal attitudes to same sex marriage, bring to mind the words of Joni Erikson who said:

“Although no one seems to know how it happened, gradually and inexorably it did – The unthinkable became tolerable, the tolerable became acceptable, the acceptable became legal, and the legal became applaudable. “

How in the space of a single lifetime could the unthinkable become applaudable? Can I suggest friends it is because as these issues progressed through the stages outlined by Joni Erikson, grassroots Christians like you and I have remained silent while minority groups have pursued their causes with passion and determination.

The reasons for our silence are many.

Some of us just want to live peaceably avoiding confrontation, unpleasantness, being howled down, vilified, and belittled. Some of us are concerned about causing offence or of being labelled narrow minded, bigoted, hypocrites, or Holy Joes. For some of us it is the fear of repercussions from those who don't play by the same rules as we do. After all, the apostle Paul was imprisoned and persecuted in countless ways for speaking the truth; John the Baptist lost his head for standing against immorality; and Jesus stand against the false teaching of the religious leaders of his day took Him to the cross. Then there are an increasing number of us who have family and friends who live in, or agree with, the path our society has taken us down, and despite Jesus' example to love the sinner but hate the sin, we feel if we love a person we have to endorse their views. Then too, some of us do not know our Bibles well enough, or if we do, we question the authority of the Word so that we are reluctant to come to a position on which to take a stand.

Some might say “I am not prepared to speak up, but people will see where I stand by the way I live”. Whilst it is true that actions usually speak louder than words, the people who make the laws rarely see how we live, and those who do, need to know why we live as we do.

As we journey on into the future however, the silent majority cannot continue to be silent as most of us have been in the past. We need to ask God for the courage and strength to stand and be counted for Him, to know what the Bible says and to live by it, regardless of how difficult that is, or how we might suffer as a consequence. We need to ask for boldness to speak up in love, in our families, in our community, in the highways and byways of life, to our politicians and to our spiritual leaders.

Lest I give the impression that I think speaking out is simple and easy, it is not. We need wisdom, discernment, and discretion for the right time and place and our speaking out needs to be clothed in prayer. I believe there is a great need to be trained and taught in this vital area of witness so we are better equipped and more confident to do what we know deep down we ought to do.

Sometimes we excuse our failure to act by questioning whether our seemingly small participation could make a difference. In doing so, we deny the power of prayer and the ability of our almighty God to honour our faithfulness – also we fail to encourage like-minded believers to step out of their comfort zone and raise their voices on issues close to God's heart.

May God bless and guide you as together we seek to please God rather than our fellow travellers on our earthly journey towards a heavenly home.

Bob Grice

STAND UP! STAND UP FOR JESUS!

The theme for this issue of our journal!

I am sure most readers' minds will have turned to their memory of this song when they heard what the theme was to be.

I think most of us will have sung this hymn/chorus many times [we could even, now, sing much of it without reference to reading the words if we chose], while younger people may have never heard it, and may even shake their heads.

What does this say to us?

As it is seldom sung anymore, the words are worth a read to refresh our memories.

*Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the Cross;
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From vict'ry unto vict'ry
His army he shall lead,
Till ev'ry foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed.*

*Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
The trumpet call obey,
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this his glorious day.
Ye that are men now serve him
Against unnumbered foes:
Let courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.*

*Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
Stand in his strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you
Ye dare not trust your own
Put on the Gospel armour,
Each piece put on with pray'r;
Where duty calls or danger
Be never wanting there!*

*Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
The strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle,
The next the victor's song.
To him that overcometh
A crown of life shall be;
He with the King of Glory
Shall reign eternally*

As it was such a martial hymn, and there are many in our ranks now with a preference for peace who oppose the singing of martial hymns in church, I was interested to find out more about its origins. Google and Wikipedia helped out with the following summary.

"**Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus**" is an American Christian hymn. It was written by George Duffield Jr. in 1858 and is based on the dying words of Dudley Atkins Tyng.

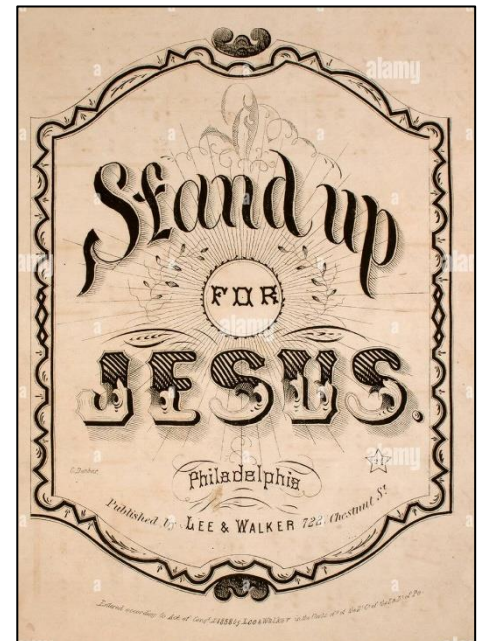
In 1858, Presbyterian minister George Duffield Jr. was an associate of Dudley Atkins Tyng who had recently been removed from his local Episcopalian [Anglican] community for speaking against slavery. Duffield assisted Tyng in supporting a revival of evangelicalism in Pennsylvania. In March 1858, Tyng gave a sermon at a YMCA meeting of over 5,000 men on Exodus 10:11, "Go now ye that are men, and serve the Lord", converting over 1,000 men listening in the crowd. The following month, Tyng was maimed in a farming accident. Before he died a few days after the accident he told his father "Tell my brethren of the ministry, wherever you meet them, to stand up for Jesus." Duffield then wrote the hymn based on those words, and also incorporated the phrase "Ye that are men now serve Him" from Tyng's memorable sermon the month before he died. At a memorial service for Tyng, Duffield gave a sermon based on Ephesians 6:14, "Stand firm, wearing the whole armour of God", and ended it by reciting the new hymn he had written as a tribute. The hymn was first brought into public knowledge through leaflets printed by the superintendent of the local Christian school containing the words of the hymn. One of these leaflets ended up being published in a Baptist newspaper, and "**Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus**" was published in The Church Psalmist in 1859.

After first publication, the hymn was popular and was sung by both the Union and Confederate soldiers in the American Civil War. The hymn also became popular among British revivalists, and within public schools in England. As a result of the images of Christian militarism in the hymn, some people object to the hymn, and some people do not stand to sing it. The hymn was excluded from a more politically correct volume of The Presbyterian Hymnal published in June 1990, in order not to offend handicapped people.

[References given in the original articles]

This is an interesting historical story and made me wonder how such a scenario would play out in the twenty first century. Can we imagine:

- A church meeting today attended by 5000 people
- A contemporary church meeting where there would be 1000 people converted?
- So many denominations working so closely together as intensely as this?
- Soldiers going into battle singing hymns?
- Christian schools taking such a lead in publication of faith matters?
- Soldiers on both sides of a conflict singing the same hymns?
- The work of the church being subjected to political correctness?



I also wondered if there was a modern-day equivalent to this story.

If not, what should we do about it. What do we look for?

How would we sermonise on Exodus 10:11 and Ephesians 6: 14?

Happy ponderings!

FIJIAN FRIENDS "STANDING UP FOR JESUS"

Maleny Uniting Church recently hosted an Ecumenical Ladies' Breakfast on 29th April. It was quite a unique kind of morning for many reasons. It was pleasing 48 chose to attend despite other significant events happening in town at the same time – the Maleny Wood Expo and pre-planned sessions at both the Anglican and Catholic Churches.

Delicious food, including Fijian pancakes, cassava and banana cake and fruit "kebabs", table decorations of hibiscus and "fruits of the spirit" bookmarks, a display of Fijian artefacts and the warm, relaxed fellowship all combined to make it a memorable experience.

However, most inspiring of all were the personal testimonies of Vika, Sarah, Clare and Maritina. You could have heard a pin drop! Each one spoke with such sincerity, and they displayed their deep faith. Their approach to ministry to us in Australia and their dedication to serving the folk at Erowal showed great commitment.

The morning concluded with heartfelt prayer for Vika, Sarah, Clare and Maritina followed by their beautiful, harmonious singing together.

Also, thank you to all others who expressed their faith in so many practical ways.



Barbara Richards



STANDING UP FOR JESUS ... Through a Different Lens

Recently Sue Callaghan spent some time on a 'photography tour' in New Zealand where she was challenged to look out for 'Stand up for Jesus' moments. Some examples of what spoke to her follow.



Christ Church Cathedral (Anglican) in the heart of Christchurch. This was severely damaged in the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. There have been years of debate ever since as to whether it should be rebuilt or demolished, but eventually the people - not just the parishioners, but the people of Christchurch – won! Standing up for Jesus?! Work finally began in 2020, and at a cost of \$111M, it is expected to be finished in 2027.



St Patrick's in Burkes Pass. Built in 1872, it is the oldest surviving Union Church (Anglican, Presbyterian and Catholic) in New Zealand. In Feb 2001, it was purchased by the Burkes Pass Heritage Trust to preserve the building, and can be used by the community for meetings, church, and church events. How sensible.



The Church of the Good Shepherd, overlooking Lake Tekapo. What a position!



St Peter's Parish Centre Hall in Queenstown, situated behind the church (Anglican), and close beside a great little café called The Odd Saint!



I had been walking along the edge of the lake at sunset in Te Anau. On coming back up onto the esplanade to return to our hotel, here, set back from the road, I saw this little church, the Lakeside Presbyterian.



The Church of St Peter, Queenstown, opened in 1932. On the plaque outside is written “This church is the gift of a faithful Parishioner, the Late Capt. Thomas Hicks”. Standing up for Jesus!



St Patricks Catholic Church in Arrowtown, opened in 1874. St Mary McKillop came to Arrowtown, and would have worshipped here.



In the grounds of St Patricks is this cottage which was originally an old miner's cottage. Mary McKillop came here in 1897, and with other teaching nuns, converted part of a school attached to the cottage into a convent. Her mission was to bring education to the poor. The building was restored in 1995, and the school that was attached to the cottage was shifted across the road.

BOOK REVIEW ... God is Good for You by Greg Sheridan

Greg Sheridan is a journalist and foreign editor at *The Australian* newspaper and an occasional panellist on one or more purportedly serious talk shows on the ABC. He has an Irish heritage and as revealed in this book, a Sikh wife, and sons.

I found this book a very readable analysis of the state of the Christian faith in Australia, if not also what is called 'the West', and at times a desperate plea for the churches to wake up to themselves before we ask the last one out to switch off the lights. Unlike so many 'Christian' books, it doesn't argue theology or, despite his being Catholic, get into some doctrinal arguments but takes a much broader view. One observation mentioned in it I found particularly relevant to his plea. It went something like this (in my words):- "When about 80 – 90 percent of Australians identified as Christian, we could afford to argue about doctrine and interpretation. Now that there are way less than 50%, these debates are unaffordable."

The titles of the book's chapters will give a good clue as to his subject matter. So, here goes:-

Introduction: Is God dead?

Part 1: Christianity

- Believing in God is rational, atheism is an odd religious faith, and the new atheists are false prophets.
- The ragged edge of justice – What Christians believe.
- What did we ever get from Christianity – apart from the idea of the individual, human rights, feminism, liberalism, modernity, social justice, and secular politics?
- Christianity's problems – evil, suffering, the sins of Christians.
- Give the Old Testament a try – you'll be astonished.

Part 2: Christians

- Politicians – more Christian than you'd think.
- So national leaders have souls too – who knew?
- Free radicals – Pentecostals and monks.
- Signs of new life.
- Ordinary extraordinary Christians.
- Death (nearly) comes for the archbishop.
- Bold minority – the future for Christians and their churches.

As a long time commentator on politics which entails interviewing or discussing many things with a large array of political figures and other (what is now called) influencers, his quotes from such discussions are particularly enlightening. But the message that comes through time and again is one of deep concern. To quote just a few lines from the introduction:-

"Nothing is more powerful now in Western politics, or more dangerous, than identity politics. It sells itself as a way to help disadvantaged and marginalised communities, but eventually everyone wants a slice of identity politics and it sets all against all."

This gives insight into his perception of where our society is going and what may be in store for Christians who once were consulted by those in power, but have now been ignored, and then ridiculed or portrayed as even evil which may lead to suppression if not oppression.

The book towards its end asks those institutions of the churches to stand up for its beliefs and not vacillate to accommodate society's fashions or demands which inhibit the transmission of faith.

I recommend people read it.

Karl Tietze

A CINQUAIN CHALLENGE

Some years ago now, one of our church groups [a forerunner of our Connect Groups] was challenged to write cinquains about Advent.

A cinquain is a non-rhyming, succinct poem of 5 lines written to a very simple formula:

One word
Two words
Three words
Four words
One word

Here are examples of some that were written on that occasion:

Advent!	Darkness	Still
Church tradition	Flickering lamplight	Dark night
What's it about?	Rough wooden manger	Star light bright
Waiting, hoping, loving, praying	Holds the enlightened one	Angels declare Christ's birth
Incarnation.	Jesus	Wonder ...
God	Wait	Star
We wait	Put aside	Dazzling earth
With great anticipation	Busyness, distraction, tradition	Heralds the birth
For your imminent coming	Embrace the coming king	of our humble king
Again!	Christ!	Jesus
Father	He	Waiting
Everloving God	Will come	Not knowing
Saviour of mankind	Like morning sunrise	What to expect
Thankyou for rescuing us	The only begotten Son	You've not been listening
Eternally	Jesus	Salvation

-----ooOoo-----

It seems that ***Stand up, stand up for Jesus*** is ideally suited as a subject for such a verse.

So, how about it?

Can we all give some thought to this topic and then produce our own cinquain[s] for inclusion in the next edition of *The New Vine*? There is a little space left on this page for initial scribbles

Let's aim for a page of own creative endeavours, with or without names attached, so email them to me at any time and in any number. Just as the idea or the inspiration grabs you. Dribble them in over the full three months and I will store them up till publication time.

CHILDREN'S PAGE

Stand up, Stand up for Jesus

Colour the cross with bright colours to make it look like a stunning stained glass window

These are the 12 disciples who helped Jesus. Complete their names by adding the missing vowels...

Ptr = Peter

ndrw = _____

Jms = _____

Jhn = _____

Thms = _____

Mtthw = _____

Phlp = _____

Brthlmw = _____

Jms (the less) = _____

Thdds = _____

Smn (the zealot) = _____

Jds = _____

See Matthew 10:3,4

Using the wordsearch, find the names of these New Testament heroes who stood up for Jesus.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
BARNABAS, LAZARUS, LUKE,
MARK, MARTHA, MARY,
MATTHIAS, NICODEMUS,
PAUL, SILAS, TIMOTHY

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

THINGS ANCIENT AND MODERN

On Easter Sunday, I worshipped at St Magnus Cathedral in Kirkwall, Orkney.

Standing up for Jesus was not far from my mind, given the day, and the place I found myself in.

The church is very interesting and has been there for a long time – standing for Jesus.

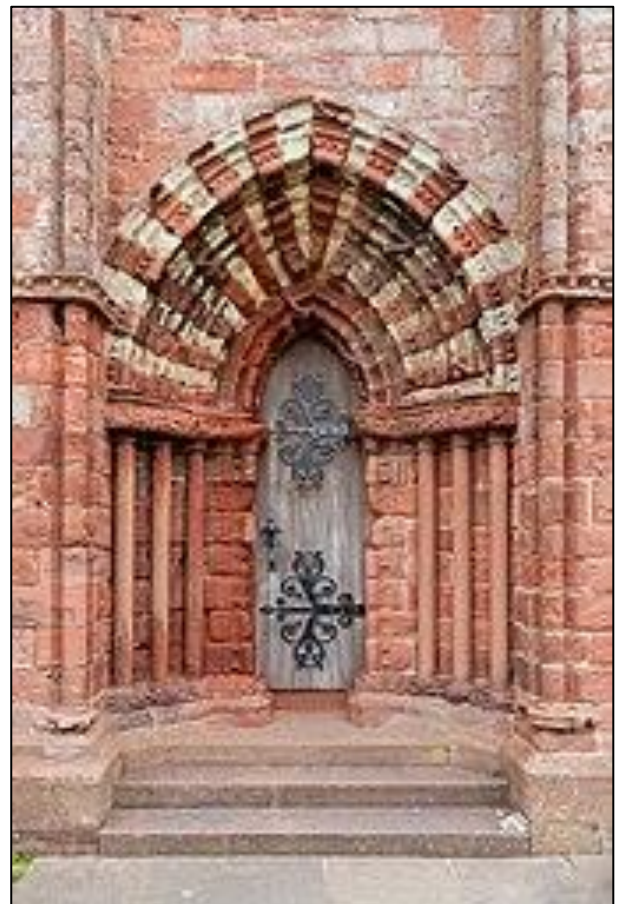
St Magnus Cathedral was founded as a final resting place for the relics of St. Magnus.

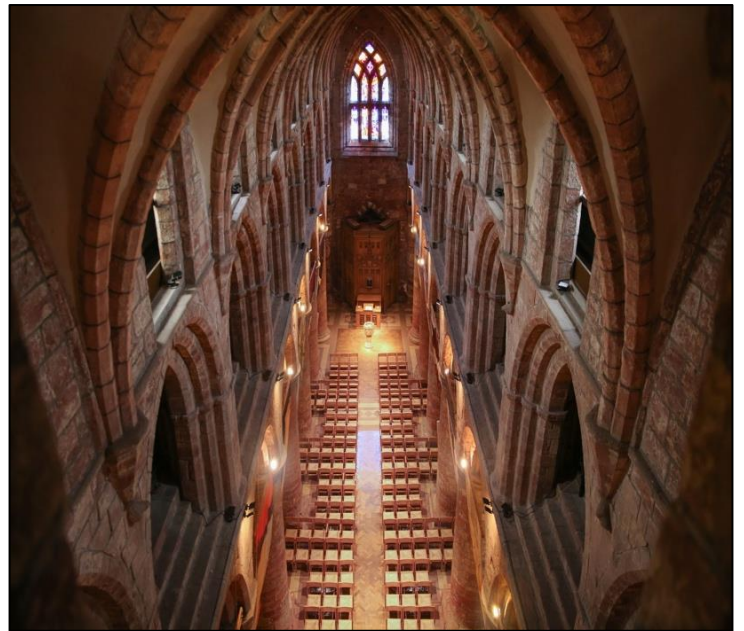
Work on its construction started in 1137 and was added to over the next 300 years until completion. This means, some parts of the cathedral have stood for close on 900 years.

Between 1154 and 1472, Orkney was ecclesiastically under the Norwegian archbishop of Nidaros and then became part of the Scottish province of St. Andrews. The Cathedral was assigned to the inhabitants of Kirkwall by King James III of Scotland in a charter dated 1486.

The cathedral seems to have emerged relatively unscathed by the Reformation in the sixteenth century and in 1845 the Government presumed the ownership of the Cathedral, expelling the then congregation and carrying out major restoration work to the fabric of the building. In 1851 the Royal Burgh of Kirkwall re-established ownership of the building. So, it is now owned by the city and not the Church of Scotland. The church simply has a congregation that worships there [no worries about major property costs!] However, technically, this means it is now simply a parish church and not entitled to be a cathedral.

One outstanding feature of the cathedral is its colour as it is built of both red and yellow sandstone quarried in Orkney. Another is the craftsmanship of the age – as seen on your right and below.





The cathedral dominates the town and makes a statement about standing up for Jesus, and it has done so for hundreds of years.

But what went on inside?

The service on Easter Day was unremarkable – no bells and whistles; no overhead projection; nothing dramatic at all. I thought this was not surprising given the age profile of the congregation. It was all very traditional. So, I simply went along with the printed Order of Service expecting nothing unusual.

Half-way through the service I heard a familiar hymn tune – *Ride on, ride on in majesty* - but when I found No 370 in the hymnbook, I discovered that the words to be sung were entirely different from the ones I knew. That surprised me somewhat but then I saw they were written by John Bell and Graham Maule – two contemporary hymn writers from the Iona Community. Here was a modern hymn which, I thought, was trying to show one way of standing up for Jesus today. Telling the story, and using the language, that people would recognise and understand today.

The modern words [written in the last few years] are shown below alongside the old words [written in the 1850's].

See what you think.

Modern Words

*Ride on, ride on, the time is right;
the roadside crowds scream with delight;
palm branches mark the pilgrim way
where beggars squat and children play.*

*Ride on, ride on, your critics wait,
intrigue and rumour circulate;
new lies abound in word and jest,
and truth becomes a suspect guest.*

*Ride on, ride on, while well aware
that those who shout and wave and stare
are mortals who, with common breath,
can crave for life and lust for death.*

*Ride on, ride on, though blind with tears,
though dumb to speak and deaf to jeers.
Your path is clear, though few can tell
their garments pave the road to hell.*

*Ride on, ride on, the room is let,
the wine matured, the saw is whet;
and dice your death throes shall attend,
thought faith, not fate, dictates your end.*

*Ride on, ride on, God's love demands;
justice and peace lie in your hands.
Evil and angel voices rhyme;
this is the man and this the time.*

Original Words

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Hark! All the tribes hosanna cry.
O Saviour meek, pursue your road,
with palms and scattered garments strowed.*

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
O Christ, your triumphs now begin
o'er captive death and conquered sin.*

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
The angel armies of the sky
look down with sad and wondering eyes
to see the approaching sacrifice.*

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
Your last and fiercest strife is nigh.
The Father on his sapphire throne
awaits his own anointed Son.*

*Ride on, ride on in majesty!
In lowly pomp ride on to die.
Bow your meek head to mortal pain,
then take, O God, your power and reign!*

And then, later in the service, we were called to pray together what they called The Jesus Prayer rather than The Lord's Prayer. Another piece of modernity amid all the traditional surroundings. The words were quite telling, I thought, as I did not think they would need explaining to a seeker after faith as parts of the original prayer may.

THE JESUS PRAYER

God our Maker who is everywhere,
your name is holy.
May your new world come, and your will be done,
in this place as in all times and places.
Meet our needs every day,
and forgive our failures to love, as we forgive others who fail us.
Save us from loads too hard to bear and lead us into your light.
For everything on earth and the universe beyond is yours
Now, and for all time.

Amen

In summary, I found myself in two worlds – one that reached back to antiquity and the other trying to be part of modernity.

That's one way of Standing up for Jesus, I thought!

A PRESBYTERY PERSPECTIVE

The Mary Burnett Presbytery Newsletter in May contained the following article which I felt provided a perspective on 'Standing up for Jesus'. If you do not receive this newsletter, and would like to, send an email to admin@maryburnettpres.org.au requesting you go on the email mailing list. [Editor]

Greetings Mary Burnett Presbytery,

A couple of weeks ago I listened to a message preached on Matthew 28:16-20, commonly known as the great commission.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matt 28:18-20)

The preacher challenged us by saying basically that the church really only has one purpose - to make disciples. While I don't agree completely with this statement, certainly the task of making disciples is embedded deeply and significantly within the foundational core, purposes, and vision of Christ's church, including of course, the UCA. This has recently been recognised in the Qld Synod's 'Project Plenty' in which responses from every area of church life noted the importance of discipleship, and the need to renew the church's focus on being obedient to Christ's command. The fact is, we are not good at making disciples – there, I've said it.

If the church was a business, and Jesus as the CEO came down to Earth to undertake a performance review, he might say, "When I left, I gave you one very specific and important task upon which the whole organisation depends, making disciples – ensuring you baptise them and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. So, how exactly is this going?" How would we respond? Where do we sit on a rating of 1 to 10?

One of the greatest laments I hear about as Presbytery Minister is the shortage of ministers. Fingers are figuratively pointed at the Synod, the Assembly, and our Theological Colleges as if it is all their fault for not providing more ministers and evangelists to save the church, when we need to recognise that this is our task too. We need to be raising up disciples, teaching them and encouraging them to recognise and use their gifts to serve Christ and the church. Congregations and Faith Communities are the soil in which seeds of Christian discipleship and leadership take root.

A great reminder of the importance of discipleship comes from Pastor and Author Robby Gallaty who declares: "When the church becomes an end in itself, it ends. When Sunday school, as great as it is, becomes an end in itself, it ends. When small groups ministry becomes an end in itself, it ends. When the worship service becomes an end in itself, it ends. What we need is for discipleship to become the goal, and then the process never ends. The process is fluid. It is moving. It is active. It is a living thing. It must continue to go on. Every disciple must make disciples." (Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples)

If we are to see things turn around in the life of the church, this is the starting point. We need to turn our endings into new beginnings.

Pentecost is almost on us; may the Holy Spirit ignite a spark within the church that becomes the birth of a new era of growth and renewal. And may each of us allow ourselves to be open to new areas of Christian service as we not only make disciples but do it by becoming the disciples ourselves that Christ calls us to be.

God Bless,
Pastor Graham Huth – who is the Presbytery Minister

KARL'S KORNER ... Stand Up for Jesus

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross." the old hymn begins. But how? And are we still (if ever we were) soldiers? And just exactly who were we supposed to be fighting? The fact is that much of this old language refers to an age that has passed, and a belief that, if we fight and win, this will please God. But Jesus didn't suggest we fight. He didn't even answer charges to save himself!

Or are we "fighting" our own demons – our weaknesses, bad habits, etc.? In this case, what does it mean to "Stand up for Jesus"? Of course, the Bible uses such imagery – helmet of salvation, breastplate of righteousness, etc. – but that helps for an external enemy – not the enemy within. Elsewhere we are called to fight against "powers" and "principalities" rather than flesh and blood. What might that mean?

The fact is that the wider church is struggling to articulate its faith in the face of "voices" in the media who want to bring us down to their level of "righteousness" – the standards of mankind, not anything higher. So, when we fail, or argue over irrelevant theology, that is gloated over. We are expected to be holier than most, yet that is despised because it shows up their failings. And a straw god (as opposed to a straw man) is set up and then sneeringly shot down to give the impression a faith in such a being is silly. Meanwhile the church seemingly stands there unable to articulate its faith in modern language. Maybe we need to start by rewriting one of our creeds as follows:-

I believe in a higher power I call 'God'.

This God has 'personality' (but not gender) and created all that is for a reason.

He embodied himself (in part or in whole) in the man Jesus called the Christ,

who was conceived in a young woman called Mary;

later He was falsely charged, expediently condemned to suffer and be crucified

at the behest of Pontius Pilate;

that He was then buried but rose from death after three days and later returned to God's realm;

and He will be the judge of the living and the dead.

I believe in the His Holy Spirit, a catholic church, the forgiveness of sins, and a life everlasting.

Amen.

What do you think?

KARL TIETZE



In 1993, Billy Graham made this statement which continues to be even more relevant today:

The greatest burden we have is the need for revival and renewal within the churches. If the people within the churches are living as Christians and are living and taking a stand on things they should be taking a stand on as a group, we could see a change in our country.

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John Stott in a devotional from "Through the Bible in a year".

One might say that apathy is the acceptance of the unacceptable, whereas leadership begins with a decisive refusal to do so. How can we tolerate what God finds intolerable?

STAND UP, STAND UP FOR JESUS

I grew up in rural Northern Ireland and every time I hear the hymn or the tune of *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus* it takes me back there. I remember the Orange Order, Orange Services, the Twelfth of July, etc. The hymn *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus* was front and centre in the Orange Order, the tune being played by pipe, accordion and flute bands, and the words sung at Orange Services.

A little bit of history: The Orange Order was founded in 1795 and sees itself as defending Protestant civil and religious liberties. Its name is a tribute to the Dutch-born Protestant King, William of Orange, who defeated Catholic King James II in the Battle of the Boyne in Ireland back in 1690. The order is best known for its yearly marches, the biggest of which is held annually on 12 July and known as The Twelfth, a public holiday in Northern Ireland. This is a celebration of that Protestant victory and has been held annually since the late 18th century.

There are Orange Lodges throughout Northern Ireland in every village, town and city, and each has either a pipe, flute or accordion band. The lodge members, known as Orange Men, wear an orange sash and are proud to march with their bands. There is an Orange Service held in Protestant churches every summer, alternating between the Church of Ireland (Anglican), Presbyterian and Methodist – and they sing *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus!* Often ministers are members of the Order and are chaplains.

Likewise, there is a big annual Twelfth celebration when the bands march through their communities, cheered on by the crowds. My family attended the Twelfth, although my father was not a member of an Orange Lodge, and it was – still is – a big social event.

The various churches provide morning and afternoon teas and lunches, with proceeds going to church funds. Collections are taken up for the British Legion.



Bonfires are often held the night before, mainly around Belfast, and the pounding of the Lambeg drums can be heard by all around, upsetting the local Catholic community.

In addition to how it was in my young days, there is now a marching season in the summertime, leading up to The Twelfth, when band parades take place and are enjoyed by the Protestant community, but not so much by their Catholic neighbours!

Please bear in mind that the Orange Lodge members all consider themselves to be good Christian people who attend church regularly and cannot see the incongruity in this tradition, only that some traditions must be followed!

The United Kingdom and the monarch would have no more loyal citizens than the people of Northern Ireland and no doubt they would have been encouraged when King Charles, Defender of the Faith, promised to maintain and preserve “the true Protestant religion”.

So, *Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus*, or maybe on contemplation the Orange Order could adopt something like “*A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another as I have loved you*”. How different life might be!

Muriel Wilson



WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

When we hear the words ‘Stand up. stand up for Jesus’, we instinctively know what they mean, probably because of the old hymn we learnt years ago and the teaching that accompanied it. We understand we are being encouraged to be brave and let the world know that we are a follower of Jesus, and we are happy for the world to know this. We are saying we are prepared to be called to witness to his word and call which is a battle with the forces of evil in the world.

But I realised, as I thought about it, that the words ‘Stand up’ can have other meanings too.

- We stand up for the national anthem.
- We stand up for ageing or infirm people on a bus or tram.
- We stand up when a judge or royal commissioner enters the room or court.

Could then, perhaps, ‘Stand up for Jesus’ carry these meanings too?

After all, in all these examples there is an element of respect.

Does this suggest that we should consider changing our behaviours to reflect respect for Jesus – in our worship, in our every-day lives, in our dealings with other people?

What do you think?

This line of thinking led me to realise there are a number of similar phrases that we could consider that talk of ‘standing’ and ‘Jesus’. For example

- Standing with Jesus
- Standing by Jesus
- Standing down for Jesus
- Standing beside Jesus
- Standing on Jesus
- Standing under Jesus

How many more can you think of?

I found it an interesting exercise to find these phrases; try to interpret them; and then examine my Christian walk against these insights.

I would encourage you to try it with the above phrases, and also with your own.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Now, that’s a question with many, many answers. But, as followers of Jesus Christ, we know that the Bible is our starting point and guide in all matters – so why not questions like –

“What does the Bible say about standing up for Jesus?”

“What advice does the Bible give us?”

If we were all tasked with answering these questions, we would no doubt come up with a wide range of answers.

However, I thought it would make it easier if we were given a list of possibilities and asked to look at each through the prism of our own learning and experience. So, here is a short list of verses that came to me, [I am sure you could add others] and it seemed a good idea if each one of us could think about how we might interpret them now, or have interpreted them in the past, in our lives.

See what you can do. There is room to write your thoughts down if you wish.

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Mark 16:15

And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

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Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

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Romans 10:14-15

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”

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2 Corinthians 5:20

We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

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2 Timothy 4:5

As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

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1 Peter 3:15-16

But in your hearts honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame.

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And now, some verses of my own choosing:



AN ARTISTIC CHALLENGE

I know that on page 12 we were asked to produce cinquains for the next issue. That invitation remains. But, as I read Liena's Lines, I saw on page 3 the words - *However, my plea is for someone to write new words to this song, so we can march to the beat of love and not war.*

Now, there's a challenge! One verse each would be sufficient. Let's rise to the challenge. Send to me any time please.

Who knows - they may even be sung is a service. Surely that's something to tell your grandchildren.



An extract taken from a Salt 106.5 Devotional written by Robbie Parkin:

Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned briefly in all four gospels. He was rich, a prominent member of the Sanhedrin and a good and just man who sacrificially gave up his own tomb for Jesus. It would be easy to see him as a minor player perhaps. But in the Gospel of John, he is referred to as 'a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders'. In his world, boldly going to Pilate, on his own, was a big deal. Despite the enormous and embarrassing consequences and the very real possibility that this would ruin him, this man knew that it was his time to rise above his fear and bravely play his part, fulfilling his role in the story.

Like Joseph, all of us are sometimes called to play our part diligently and obediently in God's grand narrative. When you reflect on the life-changing Easter story, it's the least we can do.

MUSINGS

I missed the congregational meeting where the work of the Future Directions Group was considered, so I am unaware of the discussion that went on and how it was framed. However, I did lodge my proxy vote so my views could at least be included in the assessment process.

But, I have a confession to make.

It was only as I really started to prepare this journal concentrating on standing up for Jesus, [I am interpreting this as knowing Jesus and making Jesus known], that I asked myself the question – How does each proposal help us, as God's people here, to stand up for Jesus and make him known, and felt, throughout the community?

Of course, this is only one question to be asked but given my context of preparing the journal, it took on a particular significance for me. So, I looked at the proposals again and tried to see if I would reassess my priorities had I been more mindful that it was about serving Jesus and not, so much, perhaps, about our future as a church as we know it.

I found it an interesting exercise as I looked at them again:

- Labyrinth
- Online Engagement
- Ramp to Gallery
- Palmwoods Hub
- Children's & Families' Worker
- Community Chaplain

Of course, all were matters that were standing up for Jesus – they would all create opportunities to have Jesus known and faith nurtured – so, no worries. And then the outcome was emailed to us all.

I realised some would be very happy with the outcome; others would be very disappointed; some would accept this as democracy at work; others would see God's will being expressed; others will shake their heads. Different responses just as there had been different inputs and understandings throughout the process. And different ways of Standing up for Jesus.

But the one constant, it seemed to me, was that there will inevitably be change and I guess this process will lead to further change as the work of the Future Directions Group proceeds beyond the use of the accrued funds.

That thought led my mind to wander through various bits and pieces I had come across in recent times about change – and how that might impact standing up for Jesus. For example:

Benedictine and Celtic scholar Esther de Waal - *To Pause at the Threshold: Reflections on Living on the Border*

In the Gospels we watch a Christ who, in dismissing certainties, shows us what freedom might mean. We watch the way in which he enters into people's lives and *dissolves* an existing situation, whatever it might be. The likelihood was that the condition had promised security, safety, but now Christ challenges the people to leave their nets, or to leave a nice safe booth, and follow him. He says to Peter, James, and John, "Come," and to Matthew, "Stand up, move, walk, come with me." Our God is a God who moves and he invites us to move with him. [God] wants to pry us away from anything that might hold us too securely: our careers, our family systems, our money making. We must be ready to disconnect. There comes a time when the things that were undoubtedly good and right in the past must be left behind, for there is always the danger that they might hinder us from moving forward and connecting with the one necessary thing, Christ himself.

And then there was the late Timothy Keller – *How to reach the West again*

The main challenges to having [an evangelistic] encounter have been the same over the centuries. One is spiritual pride ... which often manifests itself in unnecessary disunity, fractiousness, and tribalism among Christians. Another abiding challenge is syncretism—when believers mix their faith with the idols of the culture...especially those that promise political power or social relevance.

Keller lists traits of a missionary encounter:

- Instead of withdrawal from a culture, connects with it but maintains distinctiveness
- Instead of assimilation to a culture, confronts it but also serves it
- Instead of political domination, converts or persuades people yet also calls them to repent and change

So, perhaps we will all be standing up for Jesus if we accept Church Council's decisions on these projects and commit to being prepared to meet whatever change that may mean for us.

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One congregation member offered this thought which seemed to fit here: We are not wedded to past traditions, to the extent we cannot face the adventure of moving in new directions, facing new experiences, or growing further in our relationship with God. Anon.



STANDING UP FOR JESUS

*When Graham flew off to Scotland today
He left us a point to ponder and pray.
“Stand up for Jesus” is the theme this time,
For the publication of the New Vine.*

*When Sunday School was over long, long ago,
I would sit on my swing and swing to and fro.
At the top of my voice, I would sing songs of praise,
I often wonder now, what the neighbours would say.*

*“Stands up, stand up for Jesus” was a hymn I learnt one day,
A hymn of declaration, loyalty, and trust.
So, let us join together and our banner we will raise
To Jesus give the glory and our voices sing the praise.*

*Now that I am older, I think of bygone days.
I think of our dear teachers who so freely gave
Their time to teach the children those great old hymns of praise.
What a blessing to remember those, Oh, so special days.*

*So let us stand together to honour our Lord Jesus
And as true believers we really, really must.
So ‘standing up for Jesus’ should be our solemn vow,
This is so important for the people here and now.*