

Weekly Newsletter: 24th January 2023

Reflection: The Mind of Christ

By Joe Barnard

HEC currently enjoys a remarkable spirit of unity and stability as a congregation. We should give thanks for this. As the Psalmist notes, it is a divine blessing when brethren dwell together in unity (Ps. 133). At the same time, we should not be naïve. A ship on the open seas will eventually encounter choppy water. Paul's farewell words to the Ephesian elders are a warning to every church: "For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves" (Acts 20:29-30). Spurgeon once said that, where God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel. This does indeed seem to be the case. Satan hates nothing more than to see a healthy church. The more blessing we experience at HEC, the more vigilant we must be to keep an eye out for the little foxes that spoil the vineyard (Song of Solomon 2:15).

But how do we guard ourselves from being disrupted by the strategies of the Evil One? This is a question that we must ponder in the days ahead. One means of protection is what Paul calls 'the mind of Christ' (Phil. 2:5). For Paul, this 'mind' is a kind of shield that defends the church from the vices and temptations that are most disruptive to gospel unity. To have this *mind* is to be wearing armour; to give up this *mind* is to step out onto a battlefield naked and defenceless.

So what exactly is the mind of Christ? Three traits are listed below.

1 – The 'Mind of Christ' Is a Corporate Reality

It's very clear from the context of Philippians 2 that, when Paul takes up the topic of the mind of Christ, he is thinking in terms of a group, not in terms of an individual. Herein lies the great challenge of adopting and preserving the mind of Christ. Such a mind is not something that an individual can express alone. For a chair to be stable, each leg must provide stability. Likewise, for a church to be stable, each member must support the peace of the congregation.

2 – The 'Mind of Christ' Is a Mindset

The NIV translates Philippians 2:5 as follows: "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus". The use of the word 'mindset' here is interesting. A mindset can be described as a set way of thinking or as an established set of mental attitudes. People today often talk about the idea of a "growth mindset". In using this term, they are referring to an optimistic attitude that new skills can be learned and learning barriers can be overcome.

According to Paul, the church should have its own distinctive mindset. This mindset is defined both by the attitudes that it excludes as well as the attitudes that it embraces.

First, Paul tells us that the mind of Christ is devoid of selfish ambition and conceit (vs. 3). A follower of Christ should never be so self-confident as to assume that a personal agenda is Christ's agenda or that a personal point of view is the same as Christ's perspective. God places individuals in a congregation for a reason. Left alone, each one of us carries only a single piece of a puzzle. It is only as we come together that a more complete picture emerges.

Yet, Paul also tells us what the mind of Christ embraces. This includes three attitudes in particular: humility, mutual esteem, and mutual regard (vs. 3-4). Self-bias is a virus that each of us carries. We all tend to care more about our own interests than the interests of the others. The gospel is remedy for such self-centredness. From the example of Christ, we learn that the script needs to be flipped. Rather than starting with self and ending with other, we need to do the opposite. Paul's words in Philippians are striking: "Let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." As believers, we need to realise the high stakes game we are playing. Where there is selfish-ambition and conceit, the devil rejoices. Where there is mutual regard and mutual concern, the Spirit rejoices.

3 – The Mind of Christ Is a Unity of Mind, Will, and Spirit

The NASB translates Philippians 2:2 as follows: "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose". Of interest is the holistic nature of the unity that Christians are called to preserve. It's not enough to try to follow the same logic; we must also try to follow the same love. It's not enough to be united in purpose; we must also attempt to be united in passion. The way in which we know that the mind of Christ has been downloaded into our hearts is that mind, will, and spirit begin to operate with the same software. Over time, the idea of being a single body ceases to be a metaphor and becomes a reality. We start to think, and move, and act with coordinated motion.

Personally, I'm excited about the future of HEC. Will we have trials and difficulties? Of course. Growing pains are an inevitable part of growing up. Yet, I sincerely believe that, if are passionate about preserving the mind of Christ, the bumps and scrapes that we experience will be nothing compared to the joy of growing up together into "the measure and stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

Affiliation

By Andy Scott

As many of you will be aware, Holyrood Evangelical Church ("HEC") was formed in 2014 when the majority of the congregation of Holyrood Abbey Church decided to leave the Church of Scotland. Since that time, HEC has been an independent evangelical congregation. While we enjoy strong links with a number of other independent churches and churches of other denominations, HEC is currently not affiliated with any denomination or network of churches.

The question of whether we should join another denomination or network of churches, or remain independent was looked at by the elders a number of years ago. However, at the start of the vacancy it was agreed to "park" those discussions until we had a new minister in place.

The elders believe that now is the right time to take up those discussions again. So last Saturday, the elders met together to begin to think through and pray about the topic of affiliation. Those discussions will continue in the coming months. No deadline has been set by the elders for making a decision on this issue. Our goal is to be prayerful, patient, and more than anything else, to seek 'the mind of Christ' (Phil. 2:5). Clearly any decision has implications for us as a church family and so as elders we want to make sure that the right decision is made at the right time. The elders would very much appreciate your prayers at this time as they continue to explore this important topic.

This weekend...



We're looking forward to having Lorna Ferguson with us at our next **Ladies' Breakfast** on Saturday. She's going to speak on 'Look up: standing firm in times of difficulty'. We'll begin by having our breakfast together from 9.30am and the main programme will begin at 10am. Please let Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) know if you're planning to come and haven't already registered.

Lorna will be joining us on **Sunday** morning and evening. She'll be sharing fellowship with us and providing an update on the work in Japan

Pray for Lorna as she prepares and speaks over the weekend. Pray for each of us to have our eyes lifted to see Jesus and the work God is doing to build his Kingdom.

Christmas Appeal – Thank You

The Johnson Family – We just wanted to reach out and express our heartfelt appreciation for the gift that HEC raised and sent! It is very humbling to be on the receiving end of such a generous gift, which we know is the outward expression of HEC's love and care for us. What an honour it is to be serving our great Lord and Saviour together with all of you! Thank you!

The Bonar Trust – We would like to say "thank you" to Holyrood Evangelical Church for your generosity and partnership. Your donations and prayers will help enormously with the ongoing work of the Trust in the provision of grant funding, training, resources and networking opportunities for gospel workers training in Scotland.

Queensland Theological College – Please accept the heartfelt thanks in the gospel of everyone here at QTC for the generous support of the people of HEC. The Board of "A Future QTC Ltd" (the new company which will complete the purchase of the building on 30th January) are deeply grateful for your partnership in the gospel. Our commencement service on Monday 6th February at 9am your time will also be our thanksgiving service for God's provision- we hope to livestream this, and will send you the link in due course.

Mission Prayer Meetings – Save the dates!

The Mission Team are planning four mission prayer meetings on Zoom this year. They will be at 9am on the following Saturdays - 18 February, 29 April, 26 August and 25 November. Please save the dates!

Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World – Saturday 4th March

We're excited to have Mel Lacy (from Growing Young Disciples) speaking at our parenting conference on **Raising Kids for Christ in a Confusing World** on Saturday 4th March. The conference will run from 9.30am until 3.30pm and is free to attend.

Mel is one of the most helpful voices in the UK in terms of helping parents navigate the difficult waters of identity, technology, sexuality, and the basics of raising children for Christ. It promises to be a great day!

Please contact Liz (Liz@holyroodevangelical.org) to book and anyone is welcome to attend so please pass on the details to family or friends who may be interested.



Open Doors Resources



Open Doors have released their World Watch List for 2023 which is their annual ranking of the 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. They have free resources (including ones for kids) to inform and help us pray for each of the countries [here](#).

CARE for Scotland

As we enter 2023, we are conscious that Liam McArthur MSP's *Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill* will begin its legislative journey through the Scottish Parliament. We must be ever prayerful and, with assisted suicide specifically in focus, CARE are hosting their first Zoom prayer time of 2023 on Tuesday 31st January from 19:00-20:00. Register to attend [here](#).

Church Calendar

For your prayers and info –

- Monday:
 - Baby & Toddlers Group from 10 - 11.30am
 - Warm Space from 12.30 – 4pm
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm on Zoom
- Saturday: Ladies' Breakfast from 9.30 – 11am
- Sunday:
 - Worship Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching.
 - Evening Gathering at 6pm (and live streamed)



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