

## Weekly Newsletter: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2023

### Reflection: Where is your citizenship?

By Lorna Ferguson

*“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” Philippians 3:20-21*

“Gaijin da!” – “There’s a foreigner”. This is a phrase you will hear fairly regularly if you venture into parts of Japan that are less frequented by tourists. Children might shout it out when they are surprised by or curious about the presence of someone who is obviously not Japanese. You might hear “Mr/Mrs Gaijin” from an adult who is not sure how to refer to you. From others, it might have a more derogatory meaning.

A “gaijin” is anyone who is not Japanese. The official term is “gaikokujin” or “outside country person”, but you are more likely to hear the shorter form “gaijin” – “outside person”. In essence, it means someone who is not Japanese, someone from outside of Japan.

In Japan, there is a clear distinction between people who are Japanese citizens and those who are not. It doesn’t matter if you were born in Japan or have lived here all your life; if you’re not Japanese, you are a gaijin, an outside person. As a gaijin you cannot vote, work for the government, or work as a teacher in a public school. Only Japanese citizens can do these things. Moreover, Japan does not permit people to hold more than one nationality. If you want to become a Japanese citizen, you must renounce any other citizenship you hold. While children may have dual nationality, when they reach adulthood, the Japanese Government asks them to choose.

Our citizenship is important. It determines the rights and privileges that we have. Paul was a Roman citizen. In those days, that was significant, providing various rights throughout the Roman Empire. On some occasions Paul took advantage of those rights, such as in Philippi where he protested against being beaten publicly without a trial (Acts 16:37). In fact, the city of Philippi was itself a Roman colony, and its people enjoyed the same rights and privileges as they would in Rome. Many of those in Philippi were also Roman citizens. They lived in Philippi but their citizenship was in Rome.

It is therefore interesting to note that Paul refers to citizenship twice in his letter to the Philippians. In 3:20, he reminds the Philippian believers that they are citizens (“politeuma” in Greek) of heaven. This was not just a future status, but a current reality. And in 1:27, Paul uses the Greek word “politeuomai”. This word is translated in our English Bibles as “conduct yourselves” or “let your manner of life” but it has the meaning

of "living as a citizen". Although some of the Philippians may have been Roman citizens, and they lived in a town governed by Rome, their primary citizenship was in heaven. Therefore, they were to live as citizens in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Tim Keller once wrote on Twitter "The way you live now is completely controlled by what you believe about your future." The Philippian believers suffered persecution for their faith (1:29-30). However, Paul and the believers in Philippi knew that their citizenship was in heaven. They not only believed that Jesus was coming back but they eagerly awaited it, looking forward to the time when everything would be made new. This is what gave them hope in the midst of their trials.

We know that our citizenship is in heaven, but it's important to ask ourselves whether we are living as if we really believe it. It is possible, even as Christians, to become so comfortable in this world that we do not actually long for the world to come. Are we eagerly awaiting a Saviour from heaven, or do we want to have some more time here? Can we say, as Paul did, that we desire to depart and be with Christ which is better by far (1:23), or would we actually prefer to stay here a little longer?

One of the privileges of being a missionary is a sense of not being fully at home in this world. Living for a significant period of time in another country changes you, so that when you return, you no longer feel fully at home in your passport country. Even after living here for more than 25 years, however, Japan is not my home either. I am still very aware of the fact that I am a foreigner, an 'outside person'. This feeling of not being at home in either place may in some ways be an unpleasant one, but it serves as a constant reminder that my true home is not in this world. My citizenship is in heaven.

Our reality as Christians is that we are all "gaijin" – outside people. Even though we live in this world, we are not of it (John 17:14-16). We are citizens of heaven. Our true home is elsewhere, with Jesus, and that should make every difference to the way we live our lives now.

## **Christmas Choir – this Sunday**

Choir rehearsals for the Christmas Carol Service will begin this Sunday (5<sup>th</sup> November) after the morning service. All new singers are very welcome and there is no requirement to read music - just an enthusiasm to sing with other believers to the glory of God! Please contact Norma ([shippins@sky.com](mailto:shippins@sky.com)) for further information.

## **Equip on Ecclesiastes – this Sunday**

By Jon Gemmell

Ecclesiastes feels like it doesn't belong in the Bible. Far from being illuminating truth it feels like contradictory, confusing, pessimistic philosophy. However, if we can tune in to this amazing, liberating and mind blowing book we will be equipped to live joyfully and sanely in a world of misery, death and vanity.

Come along at 6pm for an evening introducing the book of Ecclesiastes as we learn how to truly see through the fog that clouds all around. It will be really fun and life transforming.

## Tim Rawlinson

It was great to have Tim, Claire and the kids with us on Sunday morning. A number of folks have asked for Tim's details and his email is [timjrawlinson@gmail.com](mailto:timjrawlinson@gmail.com). Please contact Tim if you want to be added to their prayer letter mailing list. Many thanks

## Prayer Meeting – this Wednesday

Our prayer meeting this week will be in person in the church at 7pm. The prayer bulletin will be available online as usual and hard copies will be available in the church.

## Women's Ministry Update

Thank you to everyone who gave feedback after our recent Bible studies on Zoom. We're looking forward to the months ahead and here are dates for your diary-

- Four weeks of **Thursday morning Bible studies** (from **9<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> November**) in person at 10.30am in the church. Tea, coffee and scones will be served!
- An Evening at **the Christmas Market – Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December** at 6pm (meeting place TBC)
- **Handel's Messiah** on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January** at 12 noon – 'A long-treasured Edinburgh tradition to welcome the New Year, The Edinburgh Royal Choral Union will perform Handel's Messiah at the Usher Hall for the 136th time'. We need to book tickets soon, please contact Anncriis [anncrisr@gmail.com](mailto:anncrisr@gmail.com) by Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November if you would like to come.
- Online **Bible Studies on Tuesday evenings** will recommence in **February 2024**. We're waiting until after the Mission Week which will take place from 21<sup>st</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> January.
- Our next **Ladies' Breakfast** will be on **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2024** with Amy Wicks (Associate Pastor for Women & Pastoral Care at St Silas Church, Glasgow)

Please come along to any or all of these and contact Liz ([Liz@holyroodevangelical.org](mailto:Liz@holyroodevangelical.org)) if you have any questions.

## Church Family Lunch – Save the date!

As the weather gets colder and we can't meet in the park, we are hoping to have a church family lunch on **Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November** after the morning service. Lunch will be provided - please put the date in your diary.

## Christmas Appeal 2023

By Andy Scott

This year, we are again asking the congregation for suggestions for projects that can be supported by the Christmas Appeal.

This will hopefully have been discussed in your home groups as this year the elders are making a couple of small adjustments. While the congregation are free to suggest any project, the Session are keen to

encourage projects that reflect the developing aims of the church. The elders will be looking particularly for projects that enhance or support the following areas:-

- Within the fellowship:- preaching, prayer, congregational discipleship, or youth work
- Our local missional/outreach work
- Supporting other training and church planting organisations:- e.g. 20 Schemes, Free Church, Bonar Trust, Cornhill Scotland
- Missionary partners that we pray for and support throughout the year



The graphic features the Holyrood Evangelical Church logo on the left. The main text reads: "We hope that this year's appeal projects will reflect the developing aims of the church. Suggestions that might come under the following headings are sought:". Below this, four categories are listed with green diamond icons: "Within the fellowship", "Local missional/outreach work", "Other training and church planting organisations", and "Missionary partners". A red-bordered box contains the text: "Please let Andy Scott have your suggestions by Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> November". At the bottom left, it says "Full details in the newsletter".

Please send your suggestions to me by Tuesday 14 November at 5pm either by email ([andyandlizscott@gmail.com](mailto:andyandlizscott@gmail.com)) or happy to receive suggestions in long hand if that is easier.

The elders will meet on Thursday 16 November to decide which projects are to benefit from the Christmas Appeal. They will be announced to the congregation shortly thereafter and more information on each project will be

provided to the congregation in the month of December in the normal manner.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

## Church Calendar

For your prayers and info:

- Monday:
  - Baby & Toddler Group from 10am – 11.30am
  - Warm Space 12noon – 3pm
- Tuesday: Pickleball and Table Tennis at 7pm
- Wednesday: Prayer Meeting at 7pm in person
- Thursday:
  - Men's Discipleship 10.30-11.30am in the church
  - Session Meeting at 7pm on Zoom
- Friday:
  - Holyrood Youth – The Hudson Taylor Challenge from 1.15-2pm on Zoom. Contact Joe for more details
  - Holyrood Youth – First Friday Meet Up from 7-9pm in the church for pickleball, table tennis, spike ball and more...
- Sunday:
  - Communion Service at 10.30am (and live streamed). Joe Barnard preaching
  - Equip at 6pm (and live streamed) with Jon Gemmell



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