



28 July 2019

**Worship Leader:** Rev Dr Robyn McPhail

**Musicians:** Dave Hallam (KK)      Clyde Foster (Kaeo)

**Readers:** Jenny Phillips (KK)      tba (Kaeo)

*Here each Sunday we pray God's blessing over our buildings: thanks for the good that has happened through the week and cleansing for anything troublesome. May the Spirit touch all who come into our church and into our homes.*

Being family, we watch out for, and care for, one another.

Tātou tātou e



## Settling in

### Gathering with all the Saints

**Hymn** [KK] *With a hoot and a toot* AA161

[KAEO] *Koutou katoa rā* WOV659

### Settling

It is in this place of holiness that we can come with our fears,  
our doubts, all the questions of our hearts.

WE COME TO THIS PLACE, TO HEAR THE WORDS OF PEACE,  
OF HOPE, OF JOY GOD SPEAKS TO US.

It is in this place of discovery  
that we can come searching.

WE COME TO THIS PLACE, TO FIND  
THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN LOOKING FOR US.

It is in this place of openness  
that we can come knocking.

WE COME TO THIS PLACE, TO BE EMBRACED  
BY THE ONE WHOSE HEART IS NEVER LOCKED.

We are invited to pray - all who have hurt someone or something else, and all who have been hurt. We are called to pray: for hope, for healing, for mercy. We pray to the One who seeks to make us whole; whose will it is to restore us to new life. Join me as we pray, saying,

WE DO NOT FIND IT EASY TO SPEAK OF THESE THINGS,  
BUT YOU INVITE US TO SHARE OUR WEAKNESSES AND FAILURES WITH YOU, INVITING GOD.

TEMPTED TO THINK YOUR SALVATION IS FOR A SELECT FEW,  
WE PUT UP BARRIERS FOR OTHERS.

CLINGING TO ALL YOU GIVE TO US,  
WE ARE RELUCTANT TO SHARE WITH THOSE IN NEED.

SURROUNDED BY EVIL AND VIOLENCE,  
WE FIND IT EASIER TO CLOSE RANKS WITH THOSE LIKE US,  
RATHER THAN SEEKING PEACE AND RECONCILIATION  
FOR OUR WORLD.

FORGIVE US, SALVATION'S GOD.

OPEN OUR EYES TO OUR SISTERS AND BROTHERS  
ALL AROUND US.

OPEN OUR EARS TO THE WORD OF HOPE YOU SPEAK TO US.  
OPEN OUR SPIRITS TO THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST,  
OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR,

WHO FLINGS WIDE THE OPEN DOORS OF YOUR KINGDOM,  
THAT ALL MIGHT FIND LIFE WITH YOU.

...

Here is the good news, my friends: Christ came searching for us,  
calling us by name, leading us into God's kingdom.

IN CHRIST, WE BECOME NEW PEOPLE:  
BROKEN, WE ARE MADE WHOLE; LOST, WE ARE FOUND;  
FORSAKEN, WE ARE RESTORED TO NEW LIFE.  
THANKS BE TO GOD. AMEN.

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## Symbol of God's Presence

Hymn *Christians are all kinds of people* [Jenny's choice]

### Clarifying our Purpose

#### Conversation with the Word

A Pygmy Prayer

In the beginning God was.  
Today God is.  
Tomorrow God will be.  
Who could possibly make an image of God?  
God does not have a body.  
God is a word that springs from our mouths.  
And what a word!  
There is nothing more to be said.  
God is the past, and yet God is.  
That is what God is.

#### Reading Colossians 2:6-19

If you were to ask me what this reading is about, my best answer would be, *I do not know*. Anything else would be digging myself a hole, thinking I know what I'm talking about and ending up only waffling.

I *can* tell you what this reading triggered in me, particularly following a conversation with a person about the faith of the creed and the variety of thinkers and theories there are to follow out there in the book and internet world. For years now bookshops have had a large section of books under a heading like personal development or spirituality. How do these relate to people who, in the Colossians' terms, have received Christ the Lord and continue to live their lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith? How do we see these books and theories?

There are lots of confronting ideas in this extended text, but there's one at the start that was the catalyst for my pondering and this is the focus I want to share:

*See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.* (v.8)

Verses like this have been used to define or delineate who is Christian and who isn't, whose teaching is acceptable and whose isn't. The word "philosophy" has been a trigger word for many in the church, including some in the committee that was questioning my appropriateness for ministry back in the early 80s. Peter Gardiner, our minister who supported me through the process, commented after a meeting rather wryly that he wasn't sure which was worse for the committee – that I was a philosopher or a woman!

(From early on in ministry, it became clear to me that in fact the best academic resource I had for the role was in fact philosophy – learning how to think and working out from first principles.)

So, what's the problem? What is the writer of Colossians so down on?

The problem is that in trying to define what is wrong, what is not according to Christ, and delineating those outside the boundaries, we fall into the trap of doing what's being condemned: thinking *according to human tradition*. Definitions and delineations – boundary lines – are human tools for trying to manage our way through reality, the total nature of which is always beyond our grasp. The source of life is just that. God is a name we as church use to try to evoke this amazing thing that there is life, that life is given, and that there is

potential among us for love-driven life – with compassion, co-operation, connectedness, justice, well-being, peace. Wow, that it would be so.

And what happens if we step beyond the amazingness, beyond the thankfulness it arouses and the reflectiveness of just being in its presence? When we move to define what God is, put God in a box.

I'll take you back to the 1970s now and a band called Jethro Tull. An LP I had was called Aqualung and on the back was this:

**I**n the beginning Man created God; and in the image of Man created he him.

2 And Man gave unto God a multitude of names, that he might be Lord over all the earth when it was suited to Man.

3 And on the seven millionth day Man rested and did lean heavily on his God and saw that it was good.

4 And Man formed Aqualung of the dust of the ground, and a host of others likened unto his kind.

5 And these lesser men Man did cast into the void. And some were burned; and some were put apart from their kind.

6 And Man became the God that he had created and with his miracles did rule over all the earth.

7 But as all these things did come to pass, the Spirit that did cause man to create his God lived on within all men: even within Aqualung.

8 And man saw it not.

9 But for Christ's sake he'd better start looking.

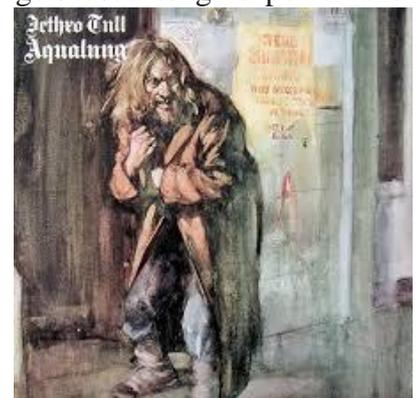
© Ian Anderson 1971

Not rooted in Christ, but making God up for ourselves. What's worse, God becomes under Man's control (Man being the language still of the 1970s), God for our purposes. God gets used to give power and legitimacy to human systems and principalities – that is to our political systems, be they kings or presidents or elected governments. God becomes an excuse for judgment, judging some as less worthy than others (as with Aqualung, scum of the earth), so the worthy ones can feel good about themselves and justify having power and control with security and all the rest. Classic 1970s political and religious critique, and I loved it!

But the Spirit lived on, writes Ian Anderson. The spirit of the true God, the essential life-giving reality. Whatever human beings might try to do to claim knowledge or take charge, this essential life-giving, this spirit, is always in some sense beyond or Other to us. A sense of... and I struggle for the best word because any word seems to make it into some thing...

For it's the other side of a relationship. Relationship is always more than just me. This relationship is exactly that – the feeling of more than just me and the feeling of being called out from where I am now, drawing out potential. Calling, calling, and sometimes racing round behind like the hound of heaven stirring us into action, and into belief in our worthiness.

The God that Man has created has too often been a God that has us feel inadequate, worthless even, unlovable. But God as Other of relationship is at once the assurance that we are loved and loveable. The relationship, the connectedness, is our assurance of that. Put it in tangible terms, when you are being hugged, you can't doubt that you're loved.



So how do we speak about God? What words can we use that keep this sense of relationship and don't move into defining and drawing boundaries on who is right with God and who isn't.

My answer is that it depends what works for you. What language keeps the mystery and evokes the closeness. Different strokes for different folks. This hymn we will sing is an example.

### Reflection Hymn

Dear Mother God, your wings are warm around us,  
we are enfolded in your love and care;  
safe in the dark your heartbeat's pulse surrounds us,  
you call to us, for you are always there.

You call to us, for we are in your image.  
We wait on you, the nest is cold and bare –  
high overhead your wing-beats call us onward.  
Filled with your power, we ride the empty air.

Let not our freedom scorn the needs of others –  
we climb the clouds until our strong heart sings –  
may we enfold our sisters and our brothers,  
till all are strong, till all have eagles' wings.

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### Continuing the Conversation

#### The World: Our Prayers

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle: Republic of Congo, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe

*prayer book prayers...*

Prayer for transformation

Barriers, walls, and barbed wire mark the frontiers, O Lord.  
Help us to transform them into places where we can meet,  
with sincerity,  
as countries and as persons,  
so that the world will know that we are Christians  
by the love with which our actions are marked.

Louise Bakala Koumouno, People's Republic of Congo  
[www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle)

#### Lord's Prayer

**Loving the World as God Loves**

#### Serving in the Week Ahead

**Offering Hymn** *Community of Christ* tune: Leoni WOV7

#### Dedication and Blessing

As you have done with us, may we do for others, holding nothing back, but offering our treasures and lives that hope may be restored, that healing might touch the broken, that the suffering might be revived, and that all might know of your steadfast love in their lives. This we pray in the name of Jesus.

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Kia tau/The grace ...

Robyn McPhail, 28.07.2019

**NOTICES FOR TODAY – 28 July 2019**

**Parish email:** admin@kkup.org.nz **Church Office:** 09 407 8250

Find us at [www.kkup.org.nz](http://www.kkup.org.nz) and on Facebook

**Minister:** Robyn McPhail (DD) 09 283 4802, 021 0247 6280

minister@kkup.org.nz

**Ministry Leadership Team:** Bev Tayler, Alan Robinson, and Robyn

**Notices:** Jenny Phillips 09 407 8883 jenny.jane@xtra.co.nz

**KK Pastoral:** Jessica Scott 09 407 5555 jomscott2@gmail.com

**Bookings for the buildings** (hire or church use): phone office or [cornerstone@kkup.org.nz](mailto:cornerstone@kkup.org.nz) or [wesleydale@kkup.org.nz](mailto:wesleydale@kkup.org.nz)

**NEXT SUNDAY 4 AUGUST 2019**

**Worship Leaders:** Kerikeri Home Group, with Kerikeri Singers

**Musicians:** Marie Cannon (KK) Clyde Foster (Kaeo)

**Readers:** Ros Simpson (KK) tba (Kaeo)

**Door and Tea:** Trevor and Ngaire

**LECTIONARY READINGS FOR THE COMING WEEK:**

Hosea 11:1-11 Psalm 107:1-9, 43, Colossians 3:1-11, Luke 12:13-21

**COMMUNION SERVICE AT TED ROBINSON CHAPEL:** Today at 4.00pm led by Robyn.

**BIBLE STUDY:** Monday 29 July at 1.15-2.45pm at Cornerstone

**KK WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP:** 1 August at 10.30am at Cornerstone

**SINGING PRACTICE:** Fridays 6.30-7.30pm at 23 Hall Road. Those who would like to join the singing group are welcome to come along.

**PASTORAL CARE WORKSHOP:** Kaurihohore/Kamo Co-operating Parish invites parishes to attend a workshop presented by Rev Dr Mary Caygill.

Date: Saturday 17th August Time: 9.30am-3pm

Place: St John's Golden Church, 149 Kamo Road, Kensington

Notice on Cornerstone noticeboard gives more information including Mary's background. For more information, and to record your interest, ring Jessica ph. 4075555.

**CAR BOOT SALES:** next sale on 10 August at 7.30am-12noon at Cornerstone. Contact: Mary 021 722 938 or [carboot@kkup.org.nz](mailto:carboot@kkup.org.nz)

**KERIKERI ROSTERS:** Jenny has a form for people on the current rosters and those who would like to help. It's also a chance to review involvement and step down, or change role, if you wish. The options are: Door and Tea, Communion Prep, Bible Reading (with hymn choice and optional Symbol), Flowers, and Technology.