

The Oyster



"...We're interested in the beauty within"

October 2015

Go see God

By David Trounce

In his book 'The Idiot', Fyodor Dostoyevsky made the bold assertion that "beauty will save the world."

What did he mean?

In the novel, the 'idiot' is a man named Myshkin.

Myshkin's idea of life is to help rather than to harm, to give mercy rather than malice, forgiving again and again, though surrounded by people who do not.

Myshkin is labelled the 'idiot' because he refuses to participate in the destructive ugliness of the people around him. Instead, Myshkin takes what is cruel and repulsive in them and their culture and transforms it.

They hate him for it. They believe him a fool and want to destroy him. They wanted to destroy beauty, and the way to do that was to destroy Myshkin. But why would they want to sabotage beauty?

Yet this is something that we do in countless ways every day.

We go about destroying beautiful things and, like Myshkin's foes, we do it by taking aim at one thing more than anything else – other people.



Take the honest woman working hard in her business. Ever spread a rumour about her? Ever bagged out your wife in public or slandered your boss? Why?

Perhaps the real problem is not that we don't like beauty but that we don't like the hands that formed the beauty. Our problem is with the God who created beautiful things like husbands, kids and petrol station attendants.

Nowhere was this more true than in the murder of Jesus. Why did they hate the one who had come to save the world by offering beautiful forgiveness? Why did they want rid of Him? Wouldn't it make more sense to adore such beauty, to draw near to it?

Perhaps our real beef isn't with each other. Perhaps it's with God. Having God around, like having Myshkin around, reveals something ugly within us – leaving us with two options. Either get rid of the beauty or get rid of the ugliness. Jesus came to do the latter: To transform the ugliness. Your beef is with Him and the two of you really ought to get together and have it out.

Strangers in a Foreign Land

"Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God..."

(Hebrews 11:16)

After Nicky and I were married in Sydney, 4 ½ years ago, we made the move over to Scotland. I had lived there all my life, and my wife Nicky, with her Scottish grandfather and numerous visits, believed that there surely could not be much difference between Scotland and Australia. Right? I mean surely the move couldn't be too hard?



Not so! Nicky suddenly faced different coins in her purse, unfamiliar products in the shops and supermarkets, language difficulties (even though both Scotland and Australia spoke English apparently), a different climate, seasons at the wrong time of year, and so the list goes on. It took some time to adjust. To call Scotland 'home' seemed to betray Australia. To spend time with new family and friends seemed like disloyalty to those left behind. But it became home. It had always been my home – my country of birth – but now it was *our* home, my wife and me.

Now we find ourselves doing the same all over again, landing here in Tilligerry. Home for both of us feels like Scotland and so even my Australian wife wonders what she is searching for in the shelves of the local shops. The price is \$1.97 but it only comes to \$1.95? No need for pennies (or should I say 'cents') here! I even had to ask for help in Coles recently to know what vegetable I was weighing at the self service checkout, as courgettes are not courgettes in Australia – they are Zucchini's!

The 'cold' winter that has been experienced has seen us in shorts and t-shirts almost every day. If only summer in Scotland were so warm!

But we love it here. We've been warmly and lovingly welcomed and find ourselves very much at home, able to settle into a new culture and different way of life very quickly. So we are starting to feel at home.

But really, for those who are followers of Jesus Christ none of us is truly at home here on earth. It doesn't matter what country we are in or where we were born. We are all strangers in a foreign land, because for the Christian heaven is home. We are simply passing through this life on our way home.

All human beings were made to be with God and to be like Him. So while we make our 'home' here in Tilligerry, we long for our true home – heaven. It's our home through faith in Jesus. Will heaven be your home?

Foundations of the Christian Faith

Once in your lifetime, you should read a book like this, and read it cover to cover! It's a book about knowing God. What God tells us about Himself has been written down in the Bible at His command, so that the whole world may truly know Him.

1. Our Sovereign God: Boice tells us from the Bible that God is both knowable and also un-knowable – that He is faithful to what He promises, that He is the law-giver, that He is truthful, good, merciful & gracious. At the same time God is holy and just: He disciplines and punishes for sin. God has created the entire system of suns and planets, and has wonderfully created all life-forms on earth, with mankind being most special. Our God is Sovereign – meaning that He does what He chooses, without having to answer anybody who asks “Why have you done this?”!

2. God The Redeemer: Boice leads us through the sorry plight of mankind – from the initial fall of man into sin, and the reason for all the hurt, heartache and hatred throughout history. He shows how God's law now both unmasks us and instructs us; how Jesus Christ came to rescue people, and set them on a new path of serving both God and one's fellow man.

3. Awakening to God: And how does it happen that a person is called into fellowship with such an awesome God? Boice describes how God foreknows people, sets His love upon them, effectively calls & draws them to be born again, and receive Jesus as their personal Saviour and Lord. Through this process a believer is declared to be 'in-the-right-with-God', and becomes a member of the family of God [the church]. The promises of scripture assure the believer that God will keep him/her saved for all eternity. The Holy Spirit gives a rich assurance of being a child of God – along with gifts and graces to get God's will done on earth.

4. God And History: In these final chapters Boice shows that Jesus Christ is the focal point of history. His Church has a job to do. He points to the profound contrast between a secular city and the city of God. He sketches briefly God's plan for the return of Jesus Christ to this world as He promised – and for the amazing future of God's world-wide, multi-racial family.

You're welcome to borrow a copy from the Church shelves, while stocks last. BT.

What's on This Month

Women's Get Together

The local get together for women next meets on Friday November 6th, 7pm, Tanilba CRC Church. Call Ella on 0439824507

Men's Breakfast

Meets on the first Saturday of the month at Henderson Park, next on Saturday November 7th at 7.30am. For more information call Steven on 4984 5442

Pete's Kitchen

Pete's kitchen is on every Thursday in school term time at 6pm at the Baptist Church, Tanilba Bay. Come along and enjoy a meal among friends and neighbours.

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02 4984 5442

Corner of Tanilba Ave and Peace Parade, Tanilba Bay.

We're all the same?

Yes, there are differences we've found between here and Scotland, but there is also much that is the same.

My golfing prowess is as average here as it was in Scotland! Fish and Chips are still as delicious here as in Scotland!

Losing weight and getting fit takes effort just like in Scotland! (I'd kind of hoped it would happen automatically!?)

What is equally true is that people are all fundamentally the same.



Sure, people have different accents, maybe some cultural differences but I find that people here and people in Scotland are all much the same.

I find there are people here, just like in Scotland, who are simply not interested in God.

There are also many who are. Many attend church, still more who don't.

Speaking to people here I find that, like many of those in Scotland, they believe that they are good people and so therefore they will go to heaven.

The Bible says not one of us is good enough – not here or in Scotland, or anywhere for that matter. All of us have a common need – forgiveness of sins – no matter who we are or where we live. The Bible also tells us that this common need has been met only in Jesus. The only way to go to heaven is to accept the forgiveness of our sins through faith in Jesus – as we believe and follow him.

Jesus said, “Healthy people don't need a doctor – sick people do. I have not come to call those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.” If that is you, why not take God at His word and accept the forgiveness He offers.

You can hear Steven preach fortnightly at 9am, Tanilba CRC and we warmly invite you to do so. You can contact Steven and Nicola on 49845442.

About our Church Community...

Tanilba CRC is a Community Church that began on the Peninsula over 50 years ago. We believe in the Bible. We believe that Life is a Gift and we believe that God has created us to know Him and to live for Him in true family and community through His Son, Jesus.



If you would like to find out more about our Church's activities on the Tilligerry Peninsula, we invite you to contact us or attend one of our Regular Activities for more information.