

The Oyster

“...Divide and Multiply.”



December 2014

Is Time a Healer?

By David Trounce

One of the reasons we have for believing that there is a Creator in whose image we have been made is our desire to go about creating.

One of the reasons we have for believing that our relationship to our Creator is in a bit of a mess is that the things God creates, He delights over, whereas the things we create tend to enslave us.

Take the humble watch. Its invention was a great way to regulate our work and social life. But today we find ourselves enslaved by its ticking. “It’s ten past, quick, we are gonna be late.” “This took you two hours! It should have taken you no more than ten minutes.”

How many of us live our daily lives under the brow beating tick-tock of that overlord, the clock? Yep, we are good at advancing our technology, but these technologies often end up enslaving us.

Once we make gods of clocks, it’s not long before we start attributing to them all kinds of powers. Take healing. We say, “Time heals all wounds,” but does it? Is time a god that can fix things that are broken? From whence comes such power?



We often feel this way about the sins we commit or the grief we face. Given enough time, such pain, guilt or shame seems to fade.

But is time a Saviour, or is it just that over time we fill our lives up with so much other stuff that the awful bits seem less awful?

Time may provide opportunity for us to conceal our misdeeds, to learn to live with our discomfort, but Time is no Saviour.

At best, it just provides a layer of scar tissue.

No amount of time lessens our guilt before God. Time can’t heal the rift between man and His Creator. In the end our wounds turn out to be mortal and we die.

No, time cannot heal – But forgiveness can.

In His own time God has provided us with a Saviour who came to take away our sin and reconcile us to each other and with God.

He made forgiveness possible by coming into this world and dying in our stead.

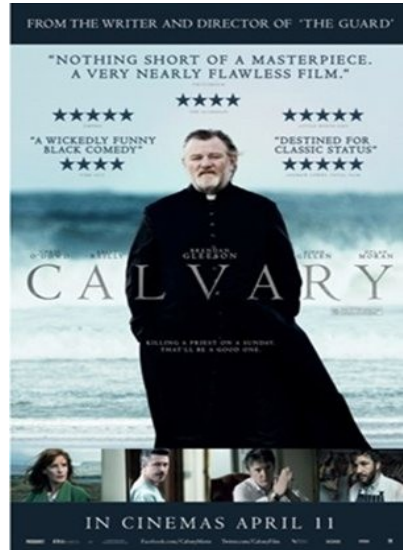
Christmas is a good time to remember this.

Calvary – A Movie Review

Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:13)

In *Calvary*, Brendan Gleeson plays the priest of a small congregation, and while nobody likes him, he is arguably easier to like than the other characters. He meets James O'Dowd in the confessional where O'Dowd, who plays a man mistreated by a priest as a boy, threatens to kill Gleeson in seven days as retribution for the crimes the Church has failed to punish.

A policeman had earlier tried to bring another priest to justice for a similar crime but was exiled for his efforts. Both O'Dowd and the policeman failed in their pursuit of justice, and so O'Dowd blames the church, and his wrath falls on Gleeson's head. It is hard to condemn O'Dowd, for he can see no other avenue for redress.



As the seven days pass, Gleeson provides care to and comforts needy people. His good works are needed. You like him and you don't want him to die. You can't believe that he will die, but the tension is always there. He acquires a gun to protect himself but hurls it into the sea on his walk to meet his killer.

Calvary is a morality play, but it is also a parable about atonement. Why? Gleeson is not guilty. He is blameless, yet he dies for the sins of the church.

The name *Calvary* reminds us that Jesus, like Gleeson, was a blameless man who died for the sins of His people, the Church. But Jesus knew from childhood that he would be murdered painfully, while Gleeson only carries that burden for a week. On the last day Gleeson says to his daughter, "You know we speak a lot about sin, but we don't speak much about virtue." "What is your favourite virtue, Daddy?" "To me, it is forgiveness," he says.

Then the credits roll as the scene shifts to James O'Dowd being brought to the prison's visiting room. We know Gleeson is dead. His daughter is on the other side of the glass pointing to the prison phone before O'Dowd. He picks it up.

Jesus' death paid the penalty so others would not have to, but did Gleeson die for nothing? Is Gleeson's daughter there to confront O'Dowd, or is she there to forgive him?

News and Events

Combined Churches Carol Service

5.30pm Sunday, 7th December, 2014.

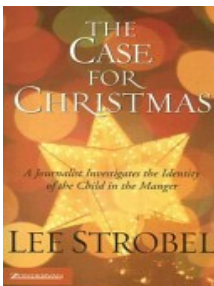
At Tanilba Bay Public School

Come along for a family friendly evening of Christmas Carols. Food provided.



The Case for Christmas

By focusing on the “hows” and whys” of Christmas, this warm, yet journalistic book will help believers reaffirm their faith, while guiding seekers as they pursue solid answers about this miraculous occurrence.



With material from 'The Case for Christ' as well as new ideas from author Lee Strobel, this book is designed to help those who want to understand what happened at Christmas 2,000 years ago.

Who was in the manger that first Christmas morning?

Some say he would become a great moral leader. Others say a social critic. Still others view Jesus as a profound philosopher, a rabbi, a feminist, a prophet and more.

Many are convinced he was the divine Son of God.

Who was he really, and how can you know for sure?

'The Case for Christmas' invites you to consider why Christmas matters in the first place.

Get the Booklet: Our Church Book Shelf has a whole bunch of these booklets. Drop in and grab a free copy.

What's On This Month

Women's Get Together

Join with other local women March to December for an evening dinner and chat.

This month on Friday
December 5th, 7pm,
Tanilba CRC Church.
Call Ella on 4982 4507

Men's Breakfast

Meets on the first Saturday of the month at Henderson Park.

This month Saturday
December 6th, 7.30am.
For more Information call
David on 4984 5442

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Corner of Tanilba Ave and Peace
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So, you're ready for Christmas? Try this quiz!

1. An angel announced to the virgin Mary that she would give birth to 'the Son of the Most High'. The angel's name was *Michael? Lukas? or Gabriel?* [Luke 1:26]
 2. Does the Bible teach that Joseph & Mary *did* or *didn't* have a sexual relationship before Jesus was born? [Matthew 1:25];
 3. What's the name of the town in which Jesus was born: *Jerusalem, Bethlehem or Capernaum?* [Luke 2: 4-7]
 4. What brought Joseph & Mary to Bethlehem: their *donkey?* their *family* lived there? the *decree* from Caesar Augustus told Joseph to go there? [Luke 2: 1 – 4]
 5. Jesus was the *first-born, fourth-born or fifth-born* son of Mary? [Luke 2:7]
 6. Jesus had younger brothers & sisters? True or false? [Matthew 13:55,56]
 7. Jesus *surname* was Christ? True or false? [Matthew 2:4; John 1:41]
 8. The word 'Christ' means: *anointed* [with the Holy Spirit], *baptised* [with water] or *passover* [God saves us]?
 9. Jesus was also called 'Immanuel' which means: '*Happy Christmas*', '*God with us*', or '*God's child*'? [Matthew 1:23]
 10. Where did Jesus come from to earth? [John 16: 27; 17:5]
 11. When the angel visited the shepherds the night of our Saviour's birth, the shepherds were *terrified? petrified? or gratified?* [Luke 2:9]
 12. The angel choir sang to the shepherds, “ _ _ _ _ _ to God in the highest ...” [Luke 2:14]
 13. The angel said to shepherds, “ ... I bring good news ... a Saviour has been born to you. He is Christ the _ _ _ _ ”. [Luke 2:11]
 14. What did the wise men follow to find the baby Jesus? [Matthew 2:2,9]
 15. How many wise men were there – *three, four, or the Bible doesn't tell us?*
 16. When the wise men found the baby Jesus, they bowed down and O S P H D R W E I P [rearrange the letters]. [Matthew 2:11]
 17. The wise men gave gifts to Jesus – gifts of _ _ _ _ , frankincense and myrrh. [Matthew 2:11]
 18. The king who tried to kill baby Jesus was *King Hiram, King Herod, or King Hosea?* [Matthew 2:16-18]
 19. Jesus came to this world to be our Saviour. Does this imply that we won't be saved without Jesus as our saviour? [John 10:27,28; 14:6]
 20. When Jesus was about 33yrs old, he died on a cruel cross. He died for the sins of all who truly _ _ _ _ _ in him. [John 3:16]
- Scores: 16-20 *well done!* 11-15 *good!* 0-10 *was the quiz too hard? We'll give you a free Bible while stocks last! Please ask.*

Answers: 1. Gabriel ; 2. they didn't ; 3. Bethlehem; 4. the decree; 5. first-born ; 6. true; 7. false – it was his title ; 8. anointed; 9. God with us ; 10. from heaven; 11. terrified ; 12. glory ; 13. Lord ; 14. a star ; 15. the Bible doesn't tell us; 16. worshipped ; 17. gold; 18. King Herod ; 19. Yes ; 20. believe.