

Eaglehawk Uniting Church

Sunday 7th April 2013

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IDENTITY CRISIS

Revelation 1: 4-8 and John 20: 19-31

Introduction

Our individual identity - genetics / ancestry

How will we look in another 10 years? - license photo

Look at our identity as a Christian - also dependent on our ancestry

Pre-Christian (before Christ)

Bible - history of Israel - prophets and the writings

Themes of:

- ξ Kingship (dynasty of David);
- ξ Prophecy (court advisors and watchdogs);
- ξ the Temple (the 'house' of God);
- ξ Worship (the assessment of good or bad King).

How has that built our identity?? Does our own life measure up to these 4 themes?

New-Christian (1st century CE)

The Gospels:

- written about the life of Jesus,
- but after - a story remembered and re-told.
- Portraits of Jesus - different perspectives showing different facets of the character.
- Highlights the 'actual' teaching of Jesus

Letters:

- Written as responses to people's needs.
- All within the 1st century CE.
- written to a world of prosperity (roman rule, expanding trade);
- a world of fear (life expectancy, famine, slavery);
- world of confusion (many 'gods', please yourself).

How do the writers of the gospels and letters influence our beliefs today? Are they still relevant, or just 'nice' to read?

Christianity HERE (the Christian history of Eaglehawk)

Beginning at Eaglehawk - a single gathering; a small building for services; a substantial building (West Methodist).

History of believers while they were going about their everyday work - miners / farmers / traders.

Now even more history - no longer the 'West Methodist' but the UCA (1977).

Basis of Union:

- part of the WHOLE Christian 'church' - expressed progress toward unity of the one body of Christ.

- Jesus as our foundation - in fellowship with the Holy Spirit for reconciliation and renewal of the whole of creation (what??)
- The Bible as our 'nourishment and regulator'
- Continued interpretation of scripture for contemporary application
- ALL engaged to confess their faith, acknowledgement of gifts and corresponding service

How many of you were here (ie this church) in 1977?

How many were elsewhere (ie another church)?

How many weren't at any church in 1977?

How many have read the Basis of Union?

How many understand it?

So Now ...

With that short history lesson - where do we go from here?

We can't just keep on doing the same - we are challenged to see Jesus actions today, in our world.

Still a world of prosperity - for some ...

Still much fear and confusion - even though our country is much better than some

The saying - the only sure thing is change itself

Belief in God is only the beginning of our identity

It's what we do with that belief, and how we show the underlying characteristics of Christ that make us Christians.

May we continue to march, with Jesus as our leader gone ahead of us,

With each other as our companions keeping us motivated and in the right direction,

Ready to use our gifts and work together to achieve the 'new creation' of God

And make that 'new creation' a daily occurrence

Amen

Resources

Alexander, P & D. (2009). *The Lion Handbook to the Bible. 4th edition*. Oxford: Wilkinson House.

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