

{ Well Thought }

Engaging the city

ISSUE 003 : NOVEMBER '13



Letter from the editors

Welcome to the third issue of Well Thought, a collection of articles, reviews, and artwork by members of the Jacob's Well community.

It is commonplace in our culture to talk about worldviews. Without getting too technical, a worldview is the way in which we - you guessed it - view the world. In this issue we consider how the Christian worldview engages life's biggest questions, as well as the most seemingly mundane aspects of our existence. C.S Lewis, the great 20th century writer, once said, "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." You might say that our third issue of Well Thought covers both the sun's rising and that which is clarified by its light.

As for the sun's rising, Reid Monaghan writes compellingly about the person and work of Jesus and the uniqueness of the risen Son. Scott Jones reviews his favorite film - almost certainly not one you'd expect - and how it reveals the human condition as understood through the lens of the Bible's overarching narrative.

As for that which the sun reveals, Mark Twombly shares his journey toward understanding how an all-knowing, all-powerful God controls even those parts of our stories that are hardest to endure. Ashley Clark shares how Christian faith compelled her to embrace a greater boldness in serving the needs of others. Dean Macke, our resident tech expert, considers the life and genius of Steve Jobs and what we might learn - and unlearn - from his example. Kathleen Macke reflects on the Christian virtue of hospitality by considering the best ways in which to serve those with gluten and other sundry allergies. Michael Casey, meanwhile, talks about how his tattoos are a part of his faith as well as a way of telling his story. Finally, Simon Clark, borrowing from his extensive experience traveling the world, writes about different cultures and how his faith has informed his ability to embrace that which is new and different.

We also have artwork from Matt Priestley and Mat Bellino - two very different artists with very different styles.

If you're inspired by what you read here, we'd love to have you tell your own story or share a story that's worth telling from the lives of those around you. Feel free to email us your ideas at WellThought@jacobswellnj.org. We need plenty more talented writers and artists to narrate the world around us through compelling words and images.

Enjoy this third issue. We hope you're challenged and encouraged by what you find in these pages.

For the Glory of God and the Good of Our City,



Scott Jones & Becky Garcia
Managing Editors

Well Thought

NOVEMBER 2013

Issue III

EDITORS

Scott Jones
Becky Garcia

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Simon Clark

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Brandon Rechten

CONTRIBUTORS

Mat Bellino, Ashley Clark, Simon Clark,
Scott Jones, Dean Macke, Kathleen
Macke, Reid Monaghan, Matthew
Priestley, Brandon Rechten,
Mark Twombly

MISSION STATEMENT

Jacob's Well is a Christian community
which exists for the glory of God and
the good of the city by extending hope
through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

CONTACT INFO

Mailing and Office:
2000 New Jersey 27
North Brunswick, NJ 08902

Phone:
(732) 354-1595

Email:
WellThought@jacobswellnj.org

Website:
www.jacobswellnj.org

Cover photo by Matthew Priestley

Jesus: Fully God, Fully Human

by Reid Monaghan

Jesus is not normal. Never was, never will be. In fact, he is the most startling, unique, mysterious, glorious, compelling, magnetic, loving and true person who ever lived. The wonder of Jesus Christ isn't that he was a great moral teacher. He was. The wonder of Jesus Christ is not that he was kind, loving and compassionate to the poor. He was. The glory is found in that God became poor and one of us. He desires to walk with us, teach us and lead us. The glory is that Jesus is worthy of worship because as the unique Son of God he gave his life for us. Some might make him too exalted and far away. Some might seek to bring him down from heaven and make him just a slob like one of us.¹ The Scriptures reveal to us both truths that Jesus was God and man.

He is man

In the Old Testament we are taught that the coming Messiah/Christ would be a human being (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6,7). Jesus fulfills this in every way. First, he was born into and grew up in a human family (Luke 1-2). Second, he exhibits the full range of human emotions in the gospels. He was tired, hungry, thirsty and in his humanity he had limited knowledge (John 4:6-7 and 19:28, Mark 13:32). Third, Philippians 2:6-8 clearly teaches that Jesus, though was in very nature God, humbled himself and became human. Fourth, He was tempted just as we are yet did not sin. (Matthew 4, Hebrews 4:15) Some erroneously teach that to be human means to be sinful. Yet we see Jesus fully human without sin. Finally, all the gospels record that Jesus bled and died on the cross. It is simple for us to understand Jesus was an historical human being, yet some question whether this man was truly God incarnate. The amount of biblical testimony to this second claim is actually massive in detail.

He is God

#1 He is clearly called God and divine names are attributed to Jesus

First, Jesus is called theos, the Greek word for God, in many places in the New Testament (John 1:1, John 20:28, Romans 9:5, Hebrews 1:8, Titus 2:13, 1 John 5:20, 2 Peter 1:1). Second, he is called the Son of God in the gospels. This is sometimes a misunderstood idea that many think precludes Jesus from being God. Philosopher Peter Kreeft makes the following observation that sheds light on how this title was understood. Kreeft writes: "Son of a dog, is a dog, son of an ape an ape, son of God, is God — Jews were Monotheistic, only one God—Son of God is the divine title of Jesus and everyone at his time understood this

title to mean just that."² Third, Jesus is called the Son of Man some 84 times in the gospels and this is his most used title for himself. This title represents the perfection of humanity in the person of Jesus in contrast to the sinful nature of humanity in Adam.³ It is also a direct reference to the divine figure in Daniel 7 of the Old Testament. Jesus used this to describe both his first and second coming. About his first coming

“Jesus is truly a complex person.”

he said, the Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for people (Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28). As to his second coming, in direct reference to Daniel 7, he tells the high priest at his trial that the Son of Man will come again on the clouds of heaven. At this he was accused of blasphemy because he had claimed to be God. Finally, Jesus is called LORD, kurios, which is used for Yahweh in Greek translations of the Old Testament (Philippians 2:11,

1 Corinthians 2:8).

2 Certain attributes of God are used to describe Jesus

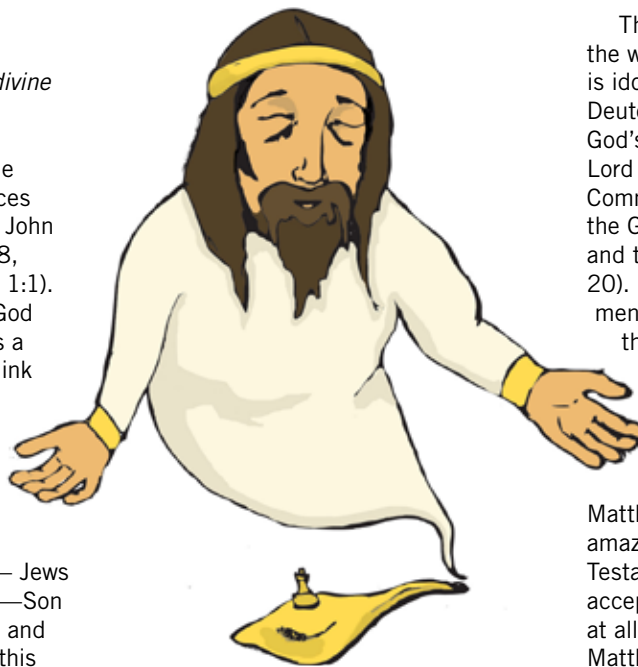
There are certain characteristics about God that theologians call his divine attributes. Some of these are directly applied to Jesus as well. Jesus is said to be unchanging (Hebrews 1:12, quoting Psalm 102:25-27, Hebrews 13:8) and all powerful (Philippians 3:20,21, Revelation 1:8) and eternal (Isaiah 9:6,7; Micah 5:2).

3 Jesus does the works of God

Jesus is said to be the creator and providential sustainer of all (Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 1:1-3). Furthermore, he is said to give eternal life and forgives sins that are against God (John 10:28, John 17:2, 1 John 2:25, Mark 2:5-12, Colossians 1:14, 3:13). Jesus' miracles also confirm his power over nature, disease and death itself.

#4 He is worshipped as God by monotheistic people

The Scriptures are clear that the worship of anyone or anything is idolatry and the deepest of sins. Deuteronomy 6:13-15 teaches us that God's people shall worship/fear only the Lord their God. Additionally, The Ten Commandments call us to worship only the God of the Bible and to reject idols and the worship of images (Exodus 20). Furthermore, the angels, various men and Jesus himself all understand that worship is exclusively for God (Angels in Revelation 19 and 22, Peter in Acts 10, Paul in Acts 14 and Jesus himself quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 to Satan during his own temptations in Matthew 4). So we find something amazing happening in the New Testament. Jesus is worshipped and he accepts worship without any hesitation at all (Matthew 2:11, John 9:35-39, Matthew 21:9-16, Luke 19:37-40 and



Matthew 28:9,10, 17). Even more amazing is that God the Father actually commands angels to worship Jesus (Hebrews 1:6) and Jesus will clearly be worshipped in Heaven (Revelation 5).

#5 He directly claimed to be God

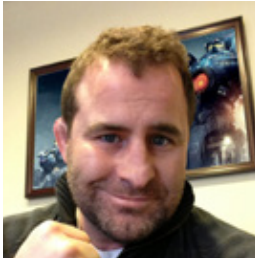
His own testimony is that he is the pre-existing great I AM of Exodus 3 (John 8:58), he is one in essence with the Father (John 10:30), he existed

with the Father before the world began (John 17:5) and he claims to be the divine Christ (Matthew 26:63,64). His enemies wanted him killed for blasphemy because he, a mere man, was clearly claiming to be God.

The Unique Glory of Jesus

Jesus is truly a complex person. In the New Testament he is at once a very human, human being. At the same time

he claimed to be God striding upon the soils of planet earth. He shares our humanity and lives with us by his Spirit as the divine, glorified and risen Savior. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—he shall reign forever and we shall worship him. He is worthy of all that we are. **WT**



Reid Monaghan - Reid spent years in campus ministry with athletes and then in local church ministry with young adults before sensing a call to help plant a missional movement of churches. He and his family moved to central New Jersey with a small group of friends to establish Jacob's Well, which launched in the fall of 2009. In addition to serving the Jacob's Well community, Reid's passion is to help others plant gospel-centered churches that are theologically driven and culturally engaged. He has been married to Kasey for 17 years and they have two girls and a boy rounding out the family.

¹ Lyrics by Eric Bazilian, One of Us, performed by Joan Osborne, 1995.

² Geisler and Hoffman, Why I am a Christian, Part 5, Chapter 13—Peter Kreeft Why I believe Jesus is the Son of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2001) 222-234.

³ Ben Witherington III, "The Christology of Jesus Revisited" in Francis Beckwith, William Lane Craig, JP Moreland, To Everyone an Answer – The Case for the Christian Worldview (Downers Grove, Intervarsity Press, 2004) 155

Well Approved by Scott Jones

In this recurring section, we will commend the best of the best - at least according to us - in the world of film, music, television and who knows what else. In so doing, we hope to provide a little enrichment through entertainment in all of our lives. These are, you might say, a few of our favorite things.

When I tell people that *There Will Be Blood* is my favorite film, I normally get a strange response. Either they've never heard of the film and assume, given the gory title, that it's some sort of horror flick. Or, if they know the film, find it a rather morose choice. However,

film ends with this same man declaring, "I'm finished", echoing the cry of Jesus on the cross – though on very different terms and toward very different ends. While the Biblical story moves from Fall to final Restoration, *There Will Be Blood* can be read as a counter-

or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." Plainview's choice is clear from the start. In fact, Jesus' words could easily serve as an epigram for the film.

Two scenes in particular resonate with this theme of the dehumanizing impact of success, power and money. After some initial success in mining, Plainview shifts his focus to the burgeoning oil trade. At the site of one of his first drills, an explosion leaves Plainview's adopted son irreversibly deaf. Plainview is initially concerned with the boy's wellbeing, clutching him fast to his chest as he runs from the fire. However, he soon realizes that there is money quite literally going up in flames. In a moment that sends chills down the spine of any parent who's chosen work over their children, Plainview escapes the boy's grasp and says, "I've got to deal with this now, I'll be back in a minute." Having dealt with the problem and clearly forgetting - ignoring? - the suffering of his son, Plainview turns to a colleague

“There rests in every human heart a certain competition. We want to know that we’re somebody and that often comes at the expense of others.”

I've come to revere the movie because it's what you might call "revelation through darkness" at its finest. This enthralling epic is bracketed by two unmistakably Biblical images. In the opening scene a silver miner we'll soon know as Daniel Plainview – we are in southern California, late nineteenth century - experiences a devastating fall down a mine shaft after a failed explosion. It is a foreboding scene that predicts approaching devastation, an allusion to the primordial fall of humanity itself. The final scene in the

narrative from Fall to final Ruin.

In the opening scene, as Plainview gasps for breath after his fall, we get a foretaste of the sort of man we've come upon. With what little life he's got left in him, Plainview crawls over to the site of the explosion and notices a chunk of silver that's been exposed. His face lights up. At whatever expense to himself or others, Plainview is a man who relentlessly pursues success, power and wealth. Jesus once said, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other,



and says with delight, “What are you looking so miserable about? There’s a whole ocean of oil under our feet and nobody can get at it except for me!” In the background, the fantastic score – written by a member of the metal band Nine Inch Nails – pounds with ruthless fervor. It seems we are listening to the excited pulsing of Plainview’s increasingly darkened heart.

The second scene – one I’ve re-watched on YouTube many times – provides a glimpse into Plainview’s psyche. Plainview’s monologue – which the brilliant Daniel Day Lewis, who won an Oscar for the role, delivers with an equanimity that makes your skin crawl – serves as both a confessional and a threat. Plainview tells a man claiming to be his brother that, “I have a competition in me. I want no one else to succeed. I hate most people.” What he says next may be the climax of the film. Plainview continues, “I built up my hatred over the years little by little ... I can’t keep doing this on my own ... with these ... people.” Plainview says the last word as if it’s repulsive to even utter. In fact, he can’t help but laugh. The moment communicates so much that Lewis could have won the Oscar

for that line alone. It is at this point that we know Plainview’s humanity has long since been buried somewhere in the oceans of oil he now owns. Jesus’ warning once again resounds.

There rests in every human heart a certain competition. We want to know that we’re somebody and that often comes at the expense of others. We’d like to think we’re not as cold blooded as, say, Daniel Plainview. However, this film begs the question, “What if there was a whole ocean of oil under your feet and only you could get at it?” What if our secret desires to be wealthy, important, respected, influential, to be somebody, were buoyed by the resources to really do so? Would we, like Plainview, sink into ourselves such that we emerge unrecognizable?

I won’t give away the ending – which polarized critics and fans alike – but Plainview’s final act is one which seems to fit the trajectory that’s set for him from the start. Jesus dies with these same words on his mouth. However, Jesus’ death is one of self-sacrifice, the cosmic offer of forgiveness communicated through blood-stained hands. Jesus dies that humanity might escape this competition that tends

toward self-destruction. He rescues us, in many ways, from ourselves. As prophecy foretold, Jesus takes our hearts of stone – Plainview’s built up hatred over the years – and turns them into hearts of flesh. Jesus dies that we might live for something outside of our dark desires for superiority, for dominance, for more. Jesus, in a word, satisfies.

Toward the end of the film, Plainview sulks around a mansion which has all the ambiance of a medieval dungeon. Plainview is one among thousands of lifeless shadows that inhabit the cold estate. He has reached the pinnacle of human achievement yet he is utterly alone. The twisted competition present in every human heart pits man against himself and any threats whether human or otherwise. As such, in this broken world there will, indeed, be blood. This film begs us to consider if that blood will be shed in brutal, isolating enmity or in self-giving love. This film is, at once, about one man and yet gives insight into the hearts of all Man. It may not be cheery but then again, as Plainview reminds us, we’ve got to deal with it. **WT**



Scott Jones – *Scott lives with his wife Sara and son Drayton in Princeton. Scott works as a campus minister at Princeton University with an organization called Christian Union and is one of the elders at Jacob's Well.*

According to Plan by Mark D. Twombly

'A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?' (Proverbs 20:24 ESV)

George: It's not working Jerry. It's just not working. Why did it all turn out like this for me? I had so much promise. Every decision I have ever made, in my entire life, has been wrong. My life is the complete opposite of everything I want it to be. Every instinct I have in every aspect of life...it's all been wrong!

Jerry: If every instinct you have is wrong, then the opposite would have to be right.¹

Jerry: You know, I used to think that the universe is a random, chaotic sequence of meaningless events, but I see now that there is reason and purpose to all things. So, you see, it's all part of a divine plan.

George: And how does the baldness fit into that plan?²

Yes, life is full of disappointments, big and small. We struggle to see how each of our circumstances can possibly be part of a divine, grand plan.

In his book *According to Plan*, theologian Graeme Goldsworthy contends that the Bible can only be properly understood in the context of God's full redemptive purposes expressed in the whole of Scripture. He puts it this way: 'It is my deep conviction that every part of the Bible is given its fullest meaning by the saving work of Christ, who restores a sinful, fallen creation and makes all things new.'³ I would contend that, in a similar way, each circumstance in our lives takes on its fullest and truest meaning in the context of God's redemptive plan, the Gospel, initiated in eternity past and finding its culmination in eternity future.

In other words, the story has not yet completed; it's still unfolding.

One of the things I am trying to impart to my children as they launch into adulthood is that life is both much more difficult and much more satisfying than they might otherwise expect. I don't want them to be naïve, but I do want them to be hopeful.

If I may indulge you for a few moments, take a walk with me. I'd like to reflect with you about some of the most profound disappointments I've experienced in my life and what I've learned from them. I trust that as we do this together, two things will become clear. First, we all experience common types of circumstances. Second – and most important – we recognize that the story being written is not ultimately about us, but the One who gives reason and purpose to all things – and I would say joy and hope in all things.

I tend to roll negative. I tend to be the 'glass is half empty' guy. A typical

evening in my home growing up would end with me going on a negative rant about something and my Dad saying firmly, 'Mark, go to bed!' Similar evenings in our home with our children these days look all too familiar to me. I mention this because, if I am honest, my difficulties can be exaggerated in my own mind beyond their actual reality.

Exhibit A: Freshman year of high school. After growing up as a Navy child living all over the country, we had settled into my parents' childhood community in Connecticut. At this point my parents, sisters and I had come to faith in Christ, and were blessed with loving extended family and friends. I had excelled in academics (especially math), music (trombone) and sports (cross country) and had every reason to believe I would continue to do so. Long story short, I crashed and burned. By the end of the year, my only 'A's' were in band and gym. I missed several weeks of school with an undiagnosed illness. I ruptured my Achilles tendon, and I was overcome with anxiety that I just couldn't shake. Worst yet, I thought, we were about to move to New Jersey. I was not optimistic!

Exhibit B: Freshman year of college. Coming to New Jersey was a 'God thing' in many ways. Our family thrived being part of a vital church community and campus ministry at Rutgers, and I thrived spiritually, academically, and musically. I thought the worst was behind me, a 'blip' on the radar screen so to speak. I was wrong. Having started strong that Fall semester, I had delusions of perfection for the Spring. I took on too much, and crashed and burned again – at least, that's how I

processed it emotionally.

Looking back, I could see what appeared to be a recurring pattern of depression and anxiety that would reach debilitating levels for me. I began to wonder if it would ever be over, this side of eternity.

Exhibit C: The first two years of marriage. These years were a whirlwind. Within two years we experienced the death of my Mom by ovarian cancer at age 47, the premature birth (six weeks early) of our first child, Lauren, her diagnosis and treatment for cancer (retinoblastoma), the remarriage of my Dad in the middle of all of that, and the premature birth (5 weeks early) of our second child, Luke, while we were visiting family out of state. I was spent. I was disoriented. I began to ask myself what was going on and how my life could have gotten so off track from what I had envisioned.

Not long after this my pastor took me aside and encouraged me with how he saw God molding and shaping me through these circumstances to be more like Jesus. This was an immense and unexpected encouragement to me. I began to seriously consider that my perspective may be well out of line with reality!

Exhibit D: Success disguised as failure. I had just taken a new position at the company I had started my career with. As the project leader for a particular project, I was deeply and personally invested in its success. I was quite anxious throughout and dejected at the end, thinking it had been quite the failure. The leadership team told me, 'Mark, that was the best implementation we have ever had for this type of project!' And they were serious.

Hold the phone – what was going on? Now I knew that my perspective was not only wildly out of sync with reality, but in this case was the exact opposite of it. God impressed upon my heart how little I could trust my emotions. The Scriptures say that ‘Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.’ (Proverbs 28:26 ESV) This was no longer hyperbole for me – I believed it.

The Scriptures tell us that ‘God causes all things to work together for good’ for His children, and that good is that we would be ‘conformed to the

image of His son’, Jesus (see Romans 8:28-29).

In the first century the Apostle Paul prayed for the believers in the city of Colossae that they would ‘be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.’ (Colossians 1:11-12) In other words, God demonstrates something of His power and nature through us in how we endure challenging circumstances and challenging people. He demonstrates these things to us

and to others in ways that ‘pleasant’ circumstances just can’t. This is His plan.

These days I like to sit and just think of the redemptive flow of history, right down to my own life. I see a God who loves so much that he is absolutely relentless to save people and transform them to be like Him. This is of ultimate blessing to us and to others, and can fill us with joy and hope, if we could just see it – if we could just see Him. Perhaps there is more to this than you and I can see. Perhaps – no, for sure - it is all going according to plan. **WT**



Mark D. Twombly - Mark is a follower of Jesus Christ, a Program Manager in the telecommunications industry, and loves things to be planned and organized! A graduate of Rutgers College with a B.A. in Mathematics, his interests range from sports (from football to disc golf) to history, politics, and philosophy. He and his wife Betty and their six children have attended Jacob's Well since the fall of 2009.

¹ ‘Seinfeld’, episode 86, ‘The Opposite’

² ‘Seinfeld’, Episode 10 – ‘The Apartment’

³ Graeme Goldsworthy. According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible (Kindle Locations 34-35). Kindle Edition

Well Told: Leaving a Mark

by Simon Clark photos by Brandon Rechten



Few things are as personal as a tattoo. Like them or loathe them, tattoos act as a permanent symbol of a person's beliefs, loves, hobbies, and character - as well as who they are and who they want to be. At the same time, tattoos continue to be seen as unprofessional and even sinful in certain circles. Can attitudes change? Jacob's Well member Mike Casey kindly agreed to sit down with Well Thought and share his own experiences of expressing his faith through his ink.

So Mike, when did you first get a tattoo?

My first tattoo was the fall of '07 – it's the one under my right arm, the Chi Rho. It's funny, that's a pretty sensitive spot to get your first one, so after that nothing seemed so bad.

Wow. Your tattoos are pretty striking. Where do the designs come from?

The artist's name is David Quiggle (davequiggle.com). He runs the art department for a music label called Face Down Records, and he's a part time tattoo artist who sells his art online. And on top of that he also runs a clothing company called Black Rose district.

So how'd you hear about him?

A friend of mine showed me the ten commandment series and I knew right away when I saw them that they were my next set of tats.

So you have the ten commandments tattooed?

So, as of now I have six of the ten on



my left arm – I plan on getting the other four on my left calf. Right now I have two, three, four, nine and ten.

Out of order! Why those ones?

I just liked the art for each one.

And who actually does them?

Chuck DeNise, he's the owner of Revolver in New Brunswick (revolvertattoo.com). The way we met was a friend of a friend made a recommendation and I've been going to him for six years now.

So apart from the Chi Rho and the commandments, what else do you have?

On my right arm I have a half sleeve – this wasn't always my intention, but I think of it now as Revelation 5:5. It says, 'Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals', and then they turn and see a lamb. The piece I have is of a lion and the slain lamb, and the Greek reads 'Behold the lamb!' And

on the back there's a hand holding the scroll with seven seals. Pretty much the whole piece is things having to do with Jesus. On my left arm I have a lamp – symbolizing that the word is a lamp to my feet. The theme I was going for with my left arm is 'God's word.'

And you have your kids' names too, right?

Oh yes! The boys' names are in Hebrew, and my daughter's is in English in a pretty script.

It's a lot. What's next?

I'd really like to get a chest piece in the summer of an angel with the wings spread open, and in the wings are eyes, and there'll be a banner beneath it saying Soli Deo Gloria – it's Latin, literally meaning 'The glory of God alone.'

And your wife's OK with that?

I've talked her round to it!

Excellent. One last question - It's fair to say that some Christians don't think it's right to get tattoos. Do you have anything to say to that?

I definitely see it as a cultural significance and not a religious one. I'm very familiar with the bible verses – or rather the bible verse – that forbids getting tattoos, but I see those verses as talking about a particular time and place, when tattoos meant worshipping other gods. If people looked at the verse above it they'd see that you're not supposed to shave your head either, so does that mean bald guys are sinning? Tattoos today are body art and I think they really speak of the person – they're ways of showing little bits of you, really.

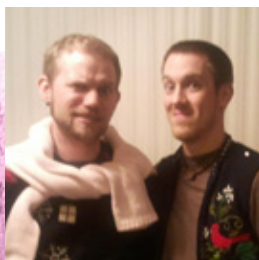
My getting tattoos has opened the door for me to share the gospel with my tattoo artist. When you're getting a tattoo you're sitting in a chair for anywhere from two to four hours, so

you talk about anything and everything. Over the last six years Chuck and I have grown a meaningful friendship. It's one in which I've been able to share my faith and beliefs with him. He's OK with

it, he feels what's good for you is good for you, but he definitely knows where I stand. It positions me in a place where I can pray for him and continue to be a light. **WT**

Simon Clark - Simon has been living in New Jersey for almost two years now, after he moved here from Britain, via Japan. He currently lives in Old Bridge and works as a writer in Warren. You can read more things by him, including short stories and various thoughts about writing, on his website - www.simonpclark.com

Brandon Rechten - Brandon is a graphic designer by day, a photographer by night and a few other things by accident. If he were a superhero he would gain his powers from gummy bears and his Kryptonite would be the song How to Save a Life by The Fray. You can check out his work at brandonrechten.com.



The Least of These

by Ashley Clark

I like to think I'm a brave person - I like to imagine that if I were faced with some situation where I had to risk my own life to save a child from a charging rhino or save a puppy from a burning building, I would (though not if it involves spiders. If someone's life is in danger from spiders, they're on their own.) I hope most of you would agree that in such situations you'd leap into action. However, most of us will never face such dramatic examples; instead we face hundreds of smaller situations that we often don't even recognize as moments where we can serve people.

We all struggle with different things that hinder us from doing what is right. Some of us are shy; some of us are selfish; some of us are apathetic. I struggle with a fear of awkwardness – I will go way out of my way to avoid a potentially awkward situation. However, a very strange experience I had while I was living in Japan taught me that I needed to stop fearing and worrying about what people think of me.

Japanese hot spring spas (onsen) are common throughout the country. They are places where people of all ages go to relax at the end of the day or to hang out with friends. They're usually gender segregated because clothing is not allowed in the hot springs. On one evening visit I noticed an old woman lying in one of the shallow pools, her head resting on the edge and her eyes closed. "Wow," I thought, "she looks really relaxed. Like someone threw her there," and I walked on past. A few minutes later I noticed my friend Erin watching the old woman with concern. She asked if I thought the woman looked all right. I looked and saw the woman hadn't moved at all since I first noticed her, but she seemed to be breathing. "I'm sure she's fine," I said. In fact, I had no way of being sure, but I didn't want it to be my problem if something was wrong. The back of my brain knew something was wrong, because in a very crowded onsen that woman had been the first thing I'd noticed when I walked in – but I ignored that. There were a lot of people around and I made the mental excuse that if something was wrong, someone else would do something about it. I also justified it with the fact

that if she wasn't all right, my Japanese vocabulary wasn't good enough to help her out.

Erin, however, really thought the woman looked bad and, being infinitely braver than I, she went over to ask the woman if she was okay. I tried to act casual. Being the only American girls there already meant that we got strange looks from everyone.

It turned out that the woman was not okay by any means; she wasn't even conscious. To make a long story short, we recruited the help of a few women, lifted the old woman out of the pool and called an ambulance. Erin was able to do some basic first aid and by the time the ambulance arrived, the old woman (who had begun to turn a purplish color and foam at the mouth) started to regain consciousness and was mumbling weakly. The paramedics arrived and took her away. About a week later we found out that she had recovered just fine.

A happy ending for all, but it really taught me that I need to work on being braver and less selfish. I was totally willing to ignore a situation that might have been (and, it turned out, was) dangerous, simply because I didn't want to risk embarrassment. Yes, it would have been really embarrassing if I'd shaken the woman awake only to find out she was just having a nice nap – but I was more concerned with remaining inconspicuous and unembarrassed than I was with making sure a person was not in danger.

Now, maybe you're thinking that I couldn't have known she was in danger. Or that I should give myself a break since nobody else was helping. But

that's exactly what Jesus taught his followers not to do as Christians. We should love others as ourselves – this means not putting our own fears before someone else's wellbeing. I helped, but only once someone else had taken the first step. Had I been alone, I wouldn't have moved.

Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?" The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25: 37-40)

According to Jesus there is no such thing as "somebody else's problem." It is very easy to convince ourselves that someone else will deal with it, or even to think "I couldn't do anything to help even if I tried." It won't always be such a dramatic situation – it can be the little things like being willing to listen to the stranger on the bus even when we really just want to nap, stopping to buy some food for the homeless person on the street even if we are running late, or asking the lonely looking person at the park if they're all right even if it could be awkward.

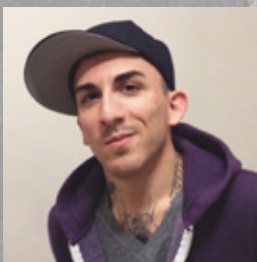
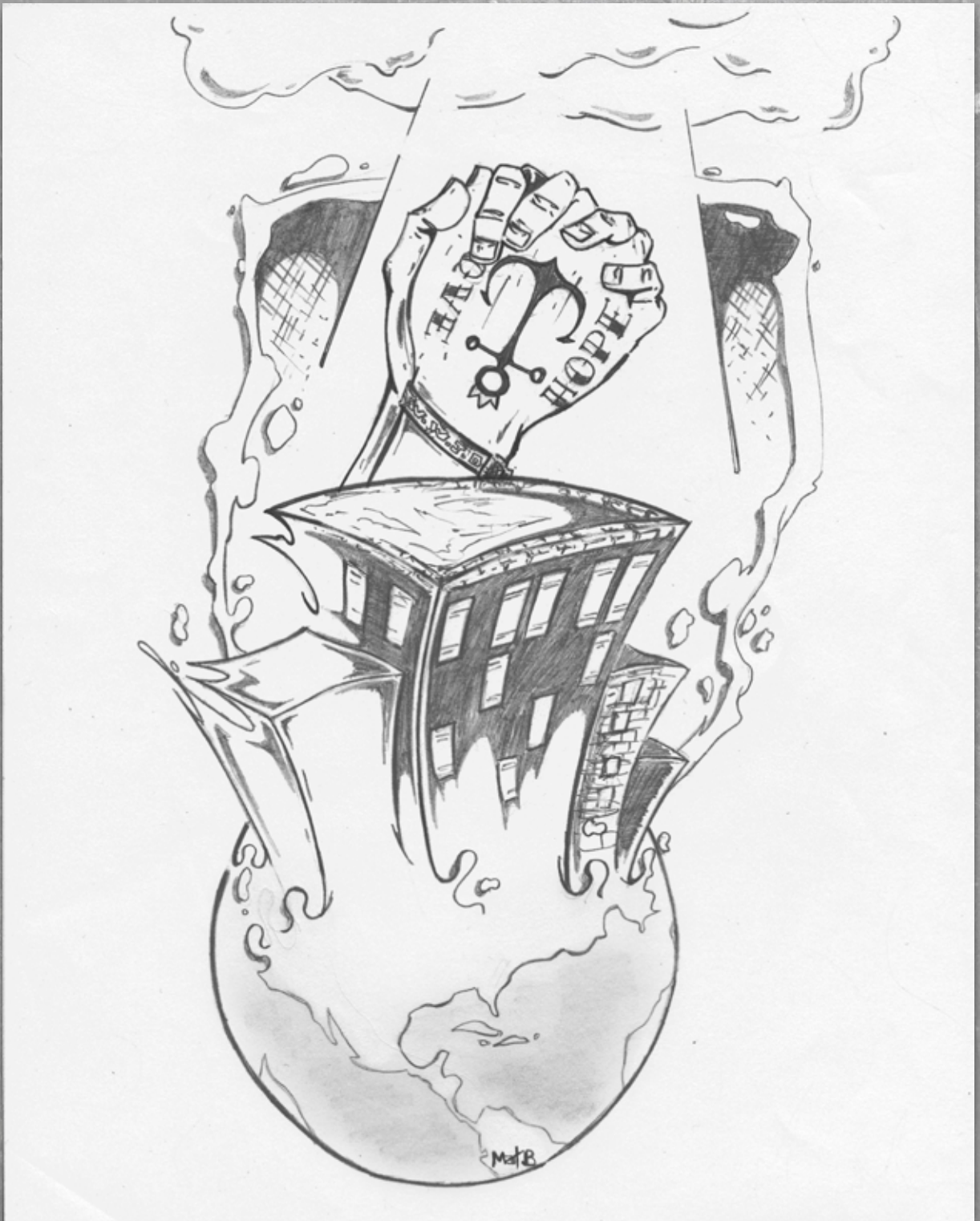
We can't act on every situation where something possibly could be wrong. However, at times we will feel moved to action – it's so easy to ignore, but if we are listening for it, we'll know we're being called to something. In those moments we must put ourselves away and put on Christ.



Ashley Clark – Ashley works as an editor in New York City, and previously worked as a missionary in Tokyo, Japan where she lived for three years before moving back to New Jersey to get married.



Matthew Priestley - Matthew has lived in Cranford, NJ with his wife and kids for the past year, and he works in New York City as a fashion photographer. He grew up in various states and (somehow) finished his finance degree (what?) at Arizona State in Tempe, Arizona. Despite his height, he is horrible at basketball but can for sure get that thing off of that shelf for you.



Mat Bellino - Mat lives with his wife Ana in Staten Island. When he's not reading comic books or exploring the tri-state area with his wife, he enjoys running his own art business from home.

Think Different

by Dean Macke

Steve Jobs is hailed as a brilliant, business-savvy, gainful man and is exalted for his technological genius for several reasons. Under his leadership, Apple, Inc. rebounded from a company on the brink of bankruptcy to an extremely profitable company now viewed as the innovator and leader in technology. In addition, the Apple products produced under his leadership were revolutionary such that they disrupted stale markets and created new markets. Beginning with the colorful iMac that infiltrated schools, to the iPod that brought portable music to the masses, to the iPhone and iPad that many people feel they cannot live without, many of Apple's products under Steve Jobs were revolutionary. No one can deny that Steve Jobs has had a tremendous effect on the computer industry and therefore on our lives, and we can learn about humanity from Steve Job's leadership style and product design at Apple.

Emotional Connection

Steve Jobs understood the power of emotions and the deep need of humanity to feel emotionally connected. He bucked the traditional approach of his competitors that attempted to appeal to the technical mind by highlighting specifications, processor speeds and cores, amount of RAM, etc. Apple chose not to talk about specifications but instead appealed to emotions and experience. For Steve Jobs, it was about how the product felt in your hand, how much fun you could have with it and not just what you

(Eco, September 2013) and entire communities built around this idea (e.g. cultofmac.com). As such, it has also had a polarizing effect. For many, the Apple logo revives a strong feeling of repulsion and some have devoted significant time to trying to destroy the brand.

Seeking for satisfaction

Steve Jobs also understood that we are all striving to find satisfaction in our lives, to fill a void. "Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to

something this complicated," he once said, "it's really hard to design products by focus groups. A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them." (BusinessWeek, May 25, 1998)

Steve Jobs also knew that the products Apple produced, as powerful as they were, could not truly fill the void. "The problem is I'm older now, I'm 40 years old, and this stuff doesn't change the world. It really doesn't. I'm sorry, it's true. Having children really changes your view on these things. We're born, we live for a brief instant, and we die. It's been happening for a long time. Technology is not changing it much — if at all." (Wired, February 1996).

Steve Jobs was aware that as humans we would seek after emotional connection and our own satisfaction. He built products that attempted to provide them for us, but he knew that the human attempt to create satisfaction for our desires are at best temporary.

Steve Jobs was a remarkable man and created a company that continues to produce great products. So go ahead, wait in line for days, spend your money on the latest iPhone. Just know that, even according to its creator, it will not provide your deepest needs or fulfill your desires no matter how rich the emotional experience. **WT**

“Steve Jobs understood that we are all striving to find satisfaction in our lives, to fill a void.”

could do, but how you could do it. For example, when Steve Jobs unveiled the iPhone at the launch event in 2007, his focus was not on what parts make up the iPhone, but the experience one gets when using an iPhone.

One can see how successful he was at creating this emotional connection by observing people waiting in line for days simply to behold one of the devices. Because of the emotional connection created by the devices, Apple customers are extremely loyal. There have been claims that Apple is a religion because its followers are so loyal. There have been articles written comparing Apple to the Catholic Church

do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't settle (Stanford Commencement Speech, 2005)."

Yet he knew that each person cannot fill the void themselves. He saw the approach of other companies who would ask user groups what new features and functionality they would like in the next release of a product. At best this produced incremental changes in devices, not innovative ones. He believed the inspiration for the next change, the next thing to satisfy the user, needed to come from an outside source with a revolutionary mind. "For



Dean Macke – Dean has been working in technology since 2000 and currently works as a Solution Consultant for Adobe Systems. He and his family live in South Amboy and lead a Missional Community there.

Hospitality and Dietary Restrictions by Kathleen Macke

Hospitality can be defined as the ability to welcome strangers and entertain guests, often in your home, with great joy and kindness so that they become friends (theresurgence.com, Spiritual Gifts: Hospitality, July, 2009). According to the Bible, hospitality is to be extended to include one's family (1 Tim. 5:8), friends (Prov. 27:10), and even strangers (Lev. 19:34). Although some people are given hospitality as a spiritual gift, we are all called to welcome people into our homes and make them feel comfortable with the ultimate goal of building relationships.

In most cases, feeding people is a significant – and often the central – aspect of being hospitable. Who does not love going to a party or a get-together centered on food? Well, unfortunately, for a person with a dietary restriction going to such a gathering can be a source of angst and stress.

So how do you host a person who has a dietary restriction? How do you handle all the dietary dos and don'ts? For those without a dietary restriction, navigating this uncharted territory can be tough and downright overwhelming.

After eating a gluten-free diet for over 8 years and having a daughter with severe allergies, I've accumulated some tips to help make hosting people with dietary restrictions less stressful while also accommodating the one being served.

First, start by having an open dialogue about dietary restrictions. Go ahead and ask the question when inviting them. This will help your guest feel welcomed and will remove any risk of preparing a dish your guest can't eat. If your guests have a restriction, work together on creating the menu. They will be able to help you create a menu that will work for everyone and will feel

comfortable attending without feeling the need to bring a "backup meal".

If you're hosting a large get together where you aren't preparing the food - a wedding, retreat or conference for example - provide the name and number of the kitchen or restaurant manager, so people with dietary restrictions can contact them directly to discuss any issues and/or arrange a meal.

When arranging a gathering where many people are bringing food, keep track of who brought each dish. If a dietary restriction arises, introduce that person to the person who brought the dish. This also helps to facilitate fellowship between guests.

Another easy tip is to ask the person to contribute a dish. This way they know they'll have something they can eat and will like. You should also consider having your recipes, as well as food labels, available in case they have a desire to ensure you've adhered to their dietary restriction. This is extremely relevant to those who suffer from severe allergies. For someone with a peanut allergy, providing the label can provide a comfort that the dish you have made is safe for them.

As a last resort, you can make

what you had planned but modify one serving of it by removing the problem ingredient. For example, grill one piece of meat without the sauce or put the nuts or croutons on the side of the salad.

Now let's specifically address gluten... I heard of a Missionary who returned to the United States after being away for several years and when he was asked what had changed since he left, his answer was, "Gluten!" More and more people are eating gluten-free and you likely have at least one friend who eats gluten-free.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. Gluten is in many things, including most breads, pastas, desserts and is often found in soups, casseroles, and sauces.

If you want to cook for your gluten-free friend here are some tips and tricks to make it easier:

Meat, vegetables, fruits, beans, rice, corn and potatoes are naturally gluten free so using these as a foundation is a good start.

Many store-bought items and sauces contain gluten. Look at the ingredients and stay away from wheat, barley, rye and modified food starch.

There are many gluten-free



substitutes that you can buy. For example, pasta by Tinyada®, soy sauce from La Choy®, bread from Udi's®, cream of mushroom soup from Progressive® and deli meats from Boar's Head® are all tasty gluten-free alternatives. In fact, many major brands provide gluten free options include Betty Crocker®, Bisquick®, and the major cereal brands like Chex®.

You can find substitutes for most items. For example, cornstarch can replace flour as a thickening agent, corn tortillas can replace flour ones, rice noodles can replace flour noodles, and Bob's Red Mill® provides several gluten-free alternatives to other ingredients, as well.

If you are planning to go out to a dinner, there are many restaurants that offer gluten-free menus including Bertucci's®, P.F. Chang's®, Pizzeria Uno®, Olive Garden®, Carrabba's®, as well as smaller places like Papa Gnahe in Matawan for baked goods and Edison Pizza in Edison, Naked Pizza in Red

Bank and Pizza Fusion in Princeton.

Finally, here is an easy gluten-free peanut butter cookie recipe (makes 3-4 dozen):

2 cups..... peanut butter
1 cup white sugar
1 cup brown sugar
4 eggs (beaten)
1 1/2 cups..... chocolate chips
1 1/2 cups..... nuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees, and grease a cookie sheet.

Combine first four ingredients and mix until smooth. Fold in chips (and nuts).

Spoon dough onto cookie sheet

Bake for 19 minutes or until

lightly brown.

Let cookies sit for 5 minutes on cookie sheet before removing.

Enjoy!

No matter the reason for the life-style choice, people with dietary

restrictions should be welcomed in and fed in a way that makes them feel comfortable and that they belong. A little effort to accommodate a dietary restriction goes a long way and will be greatly appreciated! From personal experience, for someone to care to make an effort to accommodate my gluten-free dietary restriction makes me feel loved and welcomed. **WT**



Kathleen Macke - Kathleen is married to Dean and is a stay-at-home mom of three little girls. She has a passion for fashion, decorating and entertaining. Kathleen has attended Jacob's Well since 2010 and co-leads the Hospitality/Connect Team with her husband.

It's Not What You Know... by Simon Clark

Nobody can escape the culture they're raised in. Whether it's your accent, your politics, or even smaller things like the foods you consider edible and the animals you think of as pets, our worlds are shaped by the culture we grow up in. Culture itself can be all-encompassing, affecting our worldview, our relations, our beliefs, and our habits. Knowledge, too, is linked almost intrinsically to the cultures we're exposed to, and the things we consider facts can turn out to be surprisingly subjective.

Examining the things we think we know can reveal a bias (not always negative) and a way of thinking that's almost subconscious and innate. This is cultural assumption; the beliefs and practices we've lost sight of questioning. It's important to be able to distinguish universal truth from habit, however.

Assumptions take many forms. As a non-American living in the United States, I'm often exposed to others' assumptions. They drop names and cultural references – Mr. Rogers, Pabst – that lose all meaning to me because they're not grounded in anything I know. It works both ways, too. My references to Mr. Blobby, Noel Edmunds, and the 9 o'clock watershed mean nothing here. It's easy to clairfy these things, though - to Google for appropriate explanations, and move on.

continues, but did you realize there was debate at all?

What color means 'go' at a traffic light? Green, of course - unless you're speaking Japanese, in which case the answer is blue, though Westerners would still see green. It's a bit confusing - Japanese only developed a distinction between the two colors later in its development, and the two markedly separate shades (to the Western world) are still somewhat interchangeable in Japan if the mood strikes.

How about this – who's the Pope? Surely, as in Highlander (arguably Sean Connery's greatest film) there can be only one? Well, no. Westerners might assume so – Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church – but there are plenty more. Pope Theodorus II is the Coptic Pope of Alexandria. Pope Theodore II

message of the Bible. The world is changing at an incredible rate, and cultures are colliding. As a wealthy, Western Christian, it can be easy to confuse being a Christian with being an American, or a Brit, or wearing a suit, or supporting a particular political party. What, though, are you assuming about faith, and about Christians? Do you take it as a fact that Christians should go to church on Sunday? In a culture that considers Sunday a non-work day, that's fine. What about cultures that have never treated Sundays as special? What about cultures that don't have Sundays, that don't work on a seven-day week? Jesus is still real to Christians in those places. Do you assume Christians should never drink, or that Christians should all be vegetarian? Why? Personal beliefs are one thing, but imposing regimes that spring from your culture, rather than your Christ, is nothing short of foolish.

Every day as Christians and as human beings we make judgments based on our own experiences and our own worldview. The important thing, I think, is to be able to recognize where culture stops and God starts. Jesus is a conservative and a radical at the same time, and trying to make him fit into our neat little worlds is a bad idea.

Galatians 3:28 puts it best.

There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

We are all one. So, enjoy your culture, whatever it is – but remember that it's yours, and that God is so much bigger. **WT**

“Our worldview is filled with things we would never really think to question.”

Cultural assumption goes deeper than this. Beyond pop culture, geography, and history (What do you mean you don't know the last time England won the World Cup? Everyone knows that. Everyone!), our worldview is filled with things we would never really think to question. How many continents are there? More than you might think. Or less, actually. There might be four. Or seven. Or five. It depends on where you've been taught; Spanish speaking countries tend to prefer six, while China, India, and the English speaking world settled on seven. Friendly debate

is the Greek Orthodox Pope. For more than 40 million Christians, Francis has nothing to do with Popery (or possibly Papery. I suppose it doesn't matter to a Coptic).

And, of course, there's the classic – how many planets are there? Less today than there were when I learned this useful acronym: My Very Easy Method Just Speeds Up Naming ... Planets? I'll have to rethink that now, I suppose. Planet Pluto is gone, because knowledge and facts are malleable .

For Christians, it has never been more important to cling to the



Simon Clark - Simon has been living in New Jersey for almost two years now, after he moved here from Britain, via Japan. He currently lives in Old Bridge and works as a writer in Warren. You can read more things by him, including short stories and various thoughts about writing, on his website - www.simonpclark.com

