

2018 NATIONAL SCIENCE WEEK THEME Game Changers and Change Makers

JESUS THE GAME-CHANGER*

If Jesus is the Game-Changer, what is the 'game' being changed?

- Everyone is called to love kindness, do justice and walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8).
- This points *towards* what it means to be truly human.
- In fact, it is another orientation, with other possibilities of life, to which we listen most carefully and are led by more persuasively, while maybe ensuring there is a place for God or the gods, unless we have come to see ourselves in a godless world. In any of its forms, this other orientation of individual and social life eventually comes to be established as an encompassing 'fiction'¹ more living us than being lived by us; a surrogate of true life, with its own economy, ecology and for some, even its own theology, that possesses, shapes, flavours and directs our living, as if it had a life of its own. In any of its form, this other orientation of individual and social life establishes a field of *dissonances* and *resonances* between the 'fiction' by which it lives and the life to which everyone is called by God.
- The 'fiction' is an idol and it has always been easy to prefer to worship 'idols' – "the work of our own hands" (Isaiah 2:8; Exodus 32:4.)
 - . Worshipping idols is the 'game' human beings have always played.
 - . Worship = 'worthship' = everything that shouts out where you find value or worth; i.e., where, and with whom, and on what, you spend your care - your time, energy and money.
- According to the Bible we become like what we worship and the worship of idols eventually damages our humanity (Psalm 115).
- In our society, we use the gift of our God-given capacities, especially in science, technology and the market, and the God-given earth to make a better life in many, many ways. This is what God wants for all (Genesis 1:26-28).
- But this has now turned into a dominant preference for an ever-increasing material success (GDP, living standards) with the earth merely as a resource and all this without reference to God – both in the way the world is understood, and actions undertaken.

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¹ One of the deepest, encompassing 'fictions' still informing life in Australia goes by the name, *Terra Nullius*. See, Frank Brennan, *Sharing the Country* (London: Penguin, 1991), 19. What other such 'fictions' can you identify?

- This dominant preference is the worship of idols according to the other Golden Rule: those who have the gold make the rules and the first rule is make more gold – whatever it takes.
- This dominant preference shapes our society and culture and informs how we use our God-given gifts and the God-given earth. The life that results is deeply ambiguous - *resonances* and *dissonances*. Our ways of being human go *with* and *against* the grain of being created in the image of God. It reflects the great good that God gives human beings by which much good is invented and enacted in ways large and small – the *resonances*. There are also much greater *dissonances* because we use God’s gifts to us for ends that go against the grain of what God wants.
- This dominant preference has also had the effect of threatening the wellbeing of the earth, our common home, and provoking a defiant reaction from the earth as a system that is out of our hands. This is not what God wants. Genesis 1.28 says the earth is given for the benefit of *all* humankind and Genesis 2.15 gives us the task of caring for the earth.
- This is the ‘game’ in which we now live and move and have our being. We have ‘lost the plot’ in key ways.

We only know how much we have 'lost the plot' when we find the 'true plot'. *

- The ‘true plot’, for each person and for all people, for the earth and for the whole created universe, comes from God, who has created this life-producing universe and who will bring it to completion in abundant life that does not perish.
- This God has spoken to human beings in many ways but at last has spoken to us by his Son (Hebrews 1.1-2), who entered the world in Jesus of Nazareth (John 1.1-14). Jesus is the heart of God’s ‘true plot’ for all things. (Ephesians 1.8b-10;3.7-12). Jesus opens the way into the ‘true plot’ (Mark 1.14-15; Matthew 11:25-27) and by his death and resurrection this is kept open for all things (Colossians 1.19-20). This is God’s ‘game’ changer.
- Jesus calls us all to follow him as the first preference in our lives, now being freed from idols and the old identities that go with them to serve God and each other, using all the gifts we are given, including science and technology, and a redeemed market, and so be able to be healed and to heal the earth we have wounded.
- We become ‘game-changers’ in the world, subverting the reign of idols, bearers of a different ‘game’.
- All this becomes a sign and foretaste of the still greater good that is coming from God.

Stephen Ames

* Just as we only know how much we have fallen short of the mark when the mark has been revealed or how and how much we have adjusted to our lack of health when we meet the truly healthy person.