

Windows to the Kingdom

BUC theme for Lent/Easter 2023



The windows with their ideas about the Kingdom of God are all interconnected as represented by the web.

Jesus offered many glimpses into the nature of the Kingdom of God through the use of metaphors, similes and parables without giving a finite description. The following windows are illustrations of some of these glimpses.



Matthew 13: 31-32

31 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.

32 Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."



Matthew 13: 33

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."



Matthew 13: 44

44 “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.



Matthew 13: 45-46

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.
46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.



Matthew 13: 47-50

47 “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.

48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous

50 and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.



John 3: 3-5

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. ”

4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.

When walking along the beach at Kingston Park with the church walking group we noticed a baptism in the sea. This window has a photograph taken of that event.

In awe and wonder/ The natural world.



In our culture popular media encourages us to think primarily of self.

By opening ourselves to many possibilities and other points of view, to question and explore, and to respond in awe and wonder we also open ourselves to discovering the kingdom of God.

Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well.

John 4: 13-14

13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again,

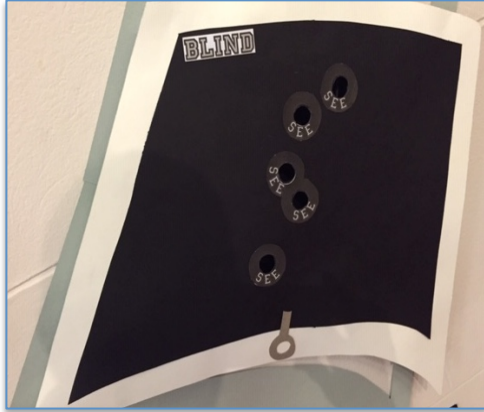
14 but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst.

Indeed, the water I give them will become in them **a spring of water welling up** to eternal life."

The little open figure understands this while the inward looking figure on the right misses this wonderful opportunity to drink of the eternal spring.



In connecting with the natural world we may glimpse the wonder and order of the Kingdom. In many ways we can be disconnected from the natural world. For example we go to the supermarket and buy packaged foods unaware of the source, the cycles and seasons of nature.



John Newton
Amazing Grace

“ ... was blind but now I see.”
This window helps us to focus on the small things. Through the peepholes in the closed blind there are four small objects from nature, a piece of blue gem stone, a leaf with insect infestation, a feather, a paper flower and a shell. The viewer is invited to examine each object. To look in awe and wonder at the detail, the colours, the patterns. To think about the before life of the object and the environment of which it was an integral part. In being open and aware we gain glimpses of the Kingdom.



When looking at the night sky with awe and wonder of the Universe and a sense of our connection with other bodies in Space, we have a glimpse and an appreciation of the immensity of the Kingdom. How does the way we treat and care for our special planet help obscure or enhance that vision?

Connection



The people on the inside of the window, ie the front, represent a culturally diverse group of people but they are not interacting with each other merely passing by. The group on the other side of the window are also culturally diverse but they are engaged in conversation, listening and speaking, learning from each other. In seeking and connecting with people in diverse groups we may well see, and get to understand, diverse views and perspectives of the Kingdom of God.



I found this “dry bones” of a nest on the garden path. When I looked at the shape that the birds had fashioned these twigs into, this natural wonder reminded of the cabling for energy and communication that is put into a modern house build. Invisible waves of communication are swirling all around us every day wherever we are. So here are people using the technology of our times, computers, phones, tablets. How can these often maligned tools help them and us see the Kingdom of God? They facilitate connection and at their best can facilitate interaction with a widely diverse group of people in widely diverse places and settings.



The web. Nature’s perfect example of connectivity.

In looking at the web in the window, or better still a web in your garden, or around your house, wonder at its beauty, its delicacy, its intricacy and using the power of the simile or metaphor what does it tell us about the Kingdom of God?

In human kindness and strength

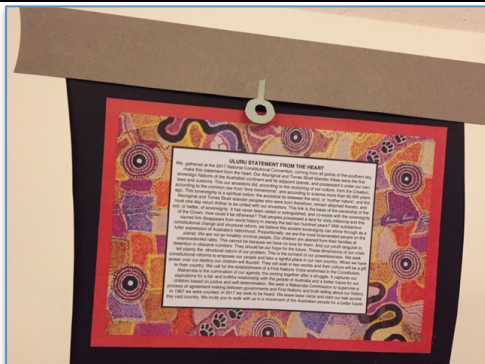


The Kingdom of God may be glimpsed in the most dire of situations. People put aside personal considerations and focus solely on helping others in trouble whatever the cost. This altruistic love for others a reflection of God's love is often evident in times of natural disaster, flood, fire, storm, volcanic eruption etc. This picture taken of a rescue of a young child in the aftermath of the recent earthquake in Turkiye.

Reconciliation

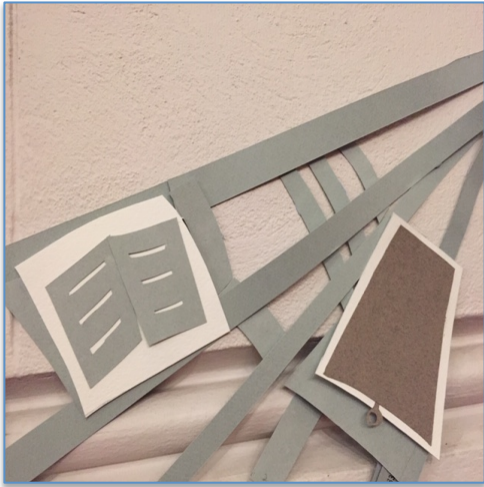


Where there has been injustice, intolerance, unfair treatment, vilification, abuse and disempowerment caused by the dominance of one person or group of people over another, reconciliation between these people or groups gives us a glimpse into the Kingdom of God. In this window the frame represents the barriers that have built up between these people, the hands coming from either side of the barrier. The firm handshake a sign of contrition and forgiveness and hopefulness for a future where both groups can live in mutual understanding and trust.



The Uluru Statement from the heart an extended hand of reconciliation arguably can be seen as a glimpse into the Kingdom.

Finally



The yet unopened windows remind us that there is more about the Kingdom that has not been revealed to us at this point of time. Perhaps we need to always remain open to new revelations, new glimpses of the Kingdom.