

Dean's Letter, 5 November 2017

Dear Cathedral family

Today at our morning Eucharists we celebrate All Saints' Day – a day when we remember all who have stood bravely and faithfully for the faith and gospel of Christ, over the centuries, and who are seated in the heavenly places with Christ in glory (Revelation 4:1-11; Revelation 19:1). We are given these images of worship in heaven to lift our eyes beyond the daily struggles and heartaches to see what lies ahead. To get the bigger picture. To know that we are not alone. To strengthen our faith and trust in the Lord Jesus who has conquered evil and death.

And this evening we shall have our All Souls service – the commemoration of the faithful departed. This is a very special act of worship as we give thanks for loved ones who have died, and remember them in prayer. I am sorry to be missing it! But I leave this evening, by bus, for the annual Deans' Conference, taking place this year in Stellenbosch. I return (hopefully!) on Saturday morning.

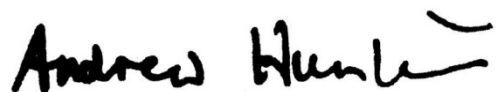
For many outside the church, outside the Christian faith, this may sound like so much nonsense. How do we know it to be true? What are the grounds for our belief? On one level, no one can “prove” the existence of God, or of anything beyond what we can actually touch or see or smell or hear. But on another level, there is a great deal that points to things beyond our immediate senses. It's a case of first causes. We see an aeroplane fly, and we know – even though it isn't there in front of us – that behind that flying aeroplane is years and years of research, experimentation, development, failure, success, and ultimately the aeroplane is able to take off and land, and travel immense distances. In the same way, we look at the creation – the world around us (not the ugliness and evil and destruction, but the natural world of beauty and wonder) and we know that it didn't just “happen”. There was a first cause.

Then the fact of the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ – not simply some mythical figure, but a historical figure. Part of history. In the world. And then we reflect on what we do know about Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible: the four separate accounts, reflecting the experiences of four writers, four communities, the memories and experiences of the first disciples. Eye witness accounts. Not legends pulled out of a hat.

And then there is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, coming down in power on the early church (Acts 2); the changed and transformed lives of the disciples, the spread of the good news of Jesus, the Christian communities that emerged. Not mythical. Not imaginary. But based on experience. First hand accounts.

We are not merely creatures of flesh and blood, you and I. We are people of imagination and wonder, able to appreciate beauty, to reflect, to philosophise, to think, to love, to create, to dream and vision. Indeed, we are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).

My love to you all

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.