

*'The world is undergoing transition where everything is changing and nothing can be predicted.'* Bill Bishop 'The Big Short'

*'It's tough to make predictions, especially about the future'* Yogi Berra

Look at 5 trends and unpack them – how they affect how we live and think, feel and do church – reminded of quote from Os Guinness that *'every church is influenced and affected by its context and culture than it realises or will admit to.'* Looking forward to learning from you over the course of today....really enjoyed the reading and preparation over the summer – shaped our new teaching series for the autumn – will share sources and resources I have found helpful - but no expert – genuinely look forward to learning from you as we go through the day - heard the observation *'Catholics see the woods, Protestants see the trees, evangelicals see the branches'* – mind boggles what charismatics see!! So 5 trends – change – glocalisation – tribes – authenticity – and living for the 'gram.....

### **1) A change is a-coming....**

Listen to the words of former Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks,

*'There are moments in history, and we are living through one now, when something new is taking shape but we do not know precisely what...The results lie all around us: the collapse of marriage, the fracturing of the family, the fraying of the social bond, the partisanship of politics at a time when national interest demands something larger, the loss of trust in public institutions, the build-up of debt whose burden will fall on future generations, and the failure of a shared morality to lift us out of the morass of individualism, hedonism, consumerism and relativism. We know these things, yet we seem collectively powerless to move beyond them.'*

He wrote those words in January 2014 – before Scottish independence referendum, before Brexit, before Trump, before Boris Johnson as PM – imagine what he would write now?!!

Major seismic shift over last 40 years – for last 200 years, the ideas of the Enlightenment and progress were to the fore – as, in the words of Immanuel Kant, *'humankind's emergence from self-incurred immaturity'* began to shape how we thought and lived – and Scotland was at the forefront – David Hume, Adam Smith and groups such as

The Select Society in Edinburgh joined with other thinkers across Europe like Voltaire, Comte, Rousseau and others – science was the answer – (Radio 1 – science week – ‘with science, anything is possible’) - modernism proclaimed *‘to infinity and beyond’* ...literally!

*‘Everything that is not forbidden by laws of nature is achievable, given the right knowledge’* David Deutsch

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw three big stories battling with each other – fascism – communism and liberalism – WW2 saw off the fascist story – and post 1945, communism and liberalism were left to fight the Cold War – the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990 saw the end of Communism....the only problem was that for all the hope, optimism and promise of liberalism, there was still so much pain and suffering left – true there have been many achievements but three iconic events shattered the modernist dream – first the Challenger disaster – then the events of 9/11 and then, finally the financial crash of 2008 exposed the frailty of modernism and economic liberalism - the reality is that the world is still one of pain – 700 million people still live in extreme poverty around the globe – 1 million children die of pneumonia every year; ½ million children still die of diarrhoea or malaria each year too; and 300 million people are diagnosed as clinically depressed, with 800,000 people a year taking their own lives...we can travel further, faster, higher than any previous generation – but are more anxious, fearful and lonely than any previous generation. 25 years ago, Christian conferences and bookshops (remember them?!) were full of talks and books about something called ‘post-modernism’ – realised during the summer - this is it! *‘Modernism stripped of the dreams that made it bearable’*

Politicians are mistrusted and humiliated – from Trump to Corbyn, from Putin to May...Hollywood is beset by scandal and sexism; the banks and economies are humiliated while sports stars from cricketers to cyclists, footballers to athletes are found guilty of cheating, corruption and performance enhancing drugs....

We are living through 5 global crises – **social, economic, religious, political and environmental.....**

And the irony is that all this has happened at a time of huge global change – when individual freedom, personal happiness, self-definition and self-expression are the highest values in our culture..eg The First

Minister's Ted Talk in July – GDP not the only measure of a nation's success – happiness and health, not just wealth – and we would agree –at least with the ends if not the means!

Tim Keller helpfully identifies 7 popular narratives in our culture

- 1) identity – be true to yourself
- 2) freedom – be free to live as you want
- 3) happiness – reason for Pharrell Williams's song!
- 4) justice – morality may be relative but we are sold out for justice
- 5) science – IS all fact based – technology can tell us how to live
- 6) sexuality – our expression of it is an irreplaceable part of our identity – (tension in LGBTQI community – LG = sexuality is a given; BTI = choice)
- 7) history - people are moving away from religion

But have they ever been? True that Judaeo-Christian tradition shaped the West – changed our attitudes to women and children, slavery and health care, sickness and disease – no Christianity? No hospitals, hospices, orphanages, and ironically, no science! But there was no golden age of Christianity – Charles Simeon was the Nicky Gumbel of his day – mentored over 200 church leaders from base of Holy Trinity Cambridge in late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century – complained of being interrupted while he wrote sermons by people having sex in public outside his window – in city centre Cambridge! The Boston Globe may have had the eye-catching headline *'The Enlightenment had a good run'* in December 2016, just before Donald Trump's inauguration – but some would question how good that run really was....

### **Opportunities for the church?**

- a) Mark Sayers, in his new book 'Appearing Church', makes the point that what if this chaos is the presence of God messing up the secular myth? His take is that we are now the new heretics – the disobedient – on the wrong side of history – perhaps where the church always should be – being prophetic – on behalf of the weak, the voiceless and the powerless – and the challenge might be to see ourselves in exile – in Jeremiah, not Jerusalem – and to see what God might want from us as we *'seek the peace and prosperity of the city'* rather than bemoaning the loss of Christendom – he asks 'what if secularism is far less resilient and strong than we think?' He cites the examples in the past when, in

the midst of social and political chaos, God brought about renewal and revival – eg following the French and American revolutions, many historians say Britain was saved from its own revolution by the preaching of Wesley, Whitefield and the ensuing revival of faith -and the modification of behaviours!

- b) So who are the powerless and the voiceless we are being called to speak and act on behalf of? How does that change some of the rhetoric from EA, Care, Bethany, Open Doors, IJM etc?
- c) What might it mean to '*seek the peace and prosperity*' of the places we minister in and to?
- d) And if modernism was characterised by an emphasis on the Fatherhood of God, it may well be that the chaotic unknown that we inhabit lends itself more to the work of the Spirit, and the prophetic, which is a huge opportunity for churches like ours...
- e) How do we give people a realistic biblical eschatology? Heard recent assertion that Trump, Brexit etc are all about control – as people look to politics rather than religion for an eschatology
- f) How do we help younger people especially with a healthy theology of caring for creation deal with an increasing anxiety about climate change? Will be a bigger and bigger issue for young people who realise the reality of how desperate things really are with the environment....

## 2) 'Glocalisation' – the world is getting bigger and smaller...

In May, we went to Croatia on holiday – 4<sup>th</sup> year on the run – went to Dubrovnik, the set of Game of Thrones – saw tourists from UK, US, Spain, Italy, Russia, Japan, China – and for the first time – India – middle class – almost indistinguishable from each other, except by skin colour and accents – uniculture – all looked the same – same clothes!

In the last 20 years – seen a dramatic cloning of culture – outwardly at least – clothes, music, technology – now uniform – Starbucks looks slightly different in Edinburgh than Seattle but is still recognisable in Peking – likewise McDonalds – 25 years ago I went to the US and bought clothes – last week I came home after a fortnight's holiday in Washington and Baltimore – bought one shirt! Cheaper to buy it in Livingston! - at the same time, we have observed similar movements – for Trump read Boris Johnson – same fear, same isolationism, same desire to return to a pre-globalisation glorious past where Britannia ruled the waves – and again, it conflicts with the dream of the Enlightenment – up until fairly recently, the idea was that the future would look like a northern European city – Bonn or Berlin – clean, well-ordered, with great coffee shops, creative industries, great public transport and a new civil religion of tolerance and progressive values – and there has been increased urbanisation and wealth, for some – Edinburgh's population has increased 12% in the last 10 years – New York has 116 billionaires; London 51; Los Angeles 50. The world's wealthiest people – 1426 of them – are worth \$5.4 trillion = 2x the economy of the UK! .....70% of Scotland's population are in the cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Perth, Stirling and Dundee – what does that mean for the 'national church'? One person has said that to the West's economic losers, cities like Chicago and London are not so much magnets as death stars....

And one of the results of social media, that we will look at in more depth later, is FOMO – the Fear of Missing Out – see it in the Brexit vote in the Labour heartlands and Tory shires of middle England – in the Trump supporters of the rust belt of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia – and yet it seems we are addicted to it – tests reveal that people giving up social media – their happiness levels increase 40% in 5 days – yet we still tweet, post, click – as if we are addicted to it – and many people are....

Other side effects of glocalisation and urbanisation – obesity among the poor – *'This is the first society in history where the poor people are fat'*

Chris Rock...bizarre to see it spreading in China and India now, as their economies overtake the West...

But increased focus on the consumer has influenced the church – consumerist model of discipleship – not *‘what can I give?’* or *‘how can I serve?’* but *‘what do I get?’* – what Mark Sayers calls P.A.C.T. – the Passive Aggressive Consumerist Trap...see it in church every week, especially cities...eg *‘I want to be part of a church that speaks out on social justice issues...but it’s just that I am not going to do anything - but if you don’t preach about it, I am going to send you aggressive emails reminding you that we should be speaking out – but I am not going to serve on the Care Van ..and, sorry I couldn’t make that 9am Saturday morning prayer meeting about justice because I had 4 contact hours at Uni on Friday and needed some me-time....and am I a regular at church? Oh, yes...how often do I come? Twice a month’* – more spending power – more mobility – more possibilities – less resilience = less commitment – encouraged **and** disheartened to realise this is a global problem in churches – from Portland to Melbourne, from LA to London, from Aberdeen to Edinburgh...*‘Oh and by the way, I left your church 6 months ago to go to Hillsong/Destiny/Vineyard/P’s and G’s/C3/Central/King’s/Rehope/C7 – delete as appropriate – because the music/coffee/student work/youth work/children’s work/teaching/worship/leader/single girls/guys are better there!’*

For many people in our churches, their model of discipleship is not as an athlete, soldier or servant but that of the shopper.....Tesco ergo sum – *‘I shop therefore I am’* As Mark Sayers says, *‘we have the same sanctimonious old lady in church but now she is 24 and wearing a cool top and jeans..’*

### **Challenge for the church?**

- 1) To challenge the consumer mentality in many of our churches – and within ourselves!
- 2) To see other churches and Christians as colleagues, not competitors
- 3) To see ‘our citizenship is in heaven’ – Philippians 3:20 – with all that that implies and means Very easy for me to say how pleased I am about Catalyst Church Aberdeen or Destiny in Glasgow or Gas St in Birmingham or HTB in London– their growth – their impact – their church planting – their innovation. Easy – they are in

Aberdeen, Glasgow, Birmingham or London – not in Edinburgh!  
Much harder for me to say I am cheering on Central with Karl  
Martin – or Destiny with Pete Anderson – or to say how excited I  
am by the arrival of a new Vineyard church in Edinburgh or  
Hillsong beginning in Edinburgh – that’s much more challenging  
because it is much more threatening and has an impact on us! On  
me!

And the root of that? My insecurity as a leader – my response of  
comparison and competition – my failure to focus simply on what God  
has called me to do – and not to compare or compete – to get on with  
**my** task – **my** race – **my** calling – and not worry about Central or  
Destiny or the Vineyard or even Hillsong! With 95% of the Scottish  
population attending no church at all, more than enough to go round.

‘Chariots of Fire’ film – true incident involving Liddell’s rival in 100 Metres  
– Harold Abrahams – loses a race to Liddell – scene following the race  
where he is inconsolable – sulks – repeats one phrase over and over – ‘*I  
looked across, I looked across*’ – nearing the finishing tape, he is  
distracted by Liddell and looks across – and loses the race because of it.

The apostle Paul later wrote – ‘*One thing I do – forgetting what is  
behind, and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to  
win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*’  
(*Philippians 3:13-14*)

- 4) Increased urbanisation will have implications for denominations  
like mine, the SEC, and the C of S – with claims to be a ‘national’  
church – what will it mean for the small, rural church in  
Auchtermuchty or the Black Isle – more support for Filling  
Stations?

### 3) You are not of my tribe.....

Third trend in society – and in the church – increased tribalism – amplified by social media - *‘as a result, we now live in a giant feedback loop hearing our own thoughts about what’s right and wrong bounced back to us by the television shows we watch, the newspapers and books we read, the blogs we visit online, the sermons we hear and the neighbourhood we live in.’* Bill Bishop

Increasingly divided as a society – echo chamber of social media – 80% of US counties in the 2016 Presidential election gave either Donald Trump or Hilary Clinton a landslide victory! Saw it in EU referendum too – polarised public opinion –

‘Divergent’, Veronica Roth’s utopian novel that my teenage daughter devoured – *‘Faction before blood. More than family, our factions are where we belong’.*

Tinder –‘the coming together of Left and Right to pull the world apart!’

We are more sorted – more divided – and more lonely...these counter-enlightenment movements are populist – tribalist rather than cosmopolitan, authoritarian rather than democratic, contemptuous of experts – nostalgic for an idyllic past rather than hopeful for a better future...see it in Trump’s ‘fake news’ –serious news = defined as ‘what’s going wrong’ – non economic issues playing a bigger role in elections – Clinton ‘It’s the economy, stupid’ – now? CBI and TUC unite to condemn No Deal Brexit and economic threat – ignored by Brexiteers! The EU referendum essentially asked ‘WHAT DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE EU?’

Tribalism is behind Make America Great Again and Xi Xi Ping’s China dream – and Brexit – no global vision or responsibility – logical extension of self expression, self fulfilment and move from market economy to market society –

Implications for the Scottish church?

- a) Increasingly tribal – people go to churches – and conferences – where they hear speakers they agree with – within evangelicalism, some go to Keswick – others to New Wine; these pictures – one from Keswick, the other New Wine -spot the difference! some do Alpha, others do Christianity Explored; youthworkers go to tribal conferences – worship leaders do the same; church planting is done by tribe and preference rather than through strategic



- Kingdom generosity...Christians become increasingly isolated within their own 'truth bubble' ie '*church as I like it*' quickly becomes '*church as it should be...*' with one consequence being that 'I want the church in my new city to be like my old church' – remember being approached in late 1990's and being asked, by a parent of a student, if I could make P's and G's more like HTB...
- b) Increasingly driven by feelings and perceptions within a tribe – listen to the words of theologian Scot McKnight '*Contemporary Christianity has increasingly displaced the Bible as its foundation for knowing what to think and how to live, and supplanted it with experience, desire and preference. In other words, it has surrendered its heart to personal freedom.*' – desperate need for informed theology – amazed by School of Theology over last 5 years, seen nearly 500 people go through Saturday classes in Theology 101, Ethics, Apologetics, Biblical Studies...from a variety of church backgrounds and streams...members not always as tribal as their leaders!
- c) They used to like Jesus but not the church – title of Dan Kimball's book in 2007 – but now? Remarkable to observe growth of Sunday Assembly – atheist church – since 2013, 480 congregations have grown – now have annual conference called Wonder – like GLS, LC20, Spring Harvest and New Wine without the rain!) – shocked to see they have copied the church – corporate singing, times of quiet, announcements - just like church – done badly! And the groups are very homogenous – people just like me! Opportunity for the church – EVERYONE is welcome – diverse group of people- in 2014, a report from the Social Integration Commission concluded that football matches and churches were the two places people were most likely to meet people different to them...Matthew Taylor, the Chair of the Social Integration Commission said, '*Institutions play a huge role in determining how and with whom we interact. Our research shows that, perhaps contrary to perceived wisdom, activities such as attending a place of worship or a sporting event can bring people from all sorts of backgrounds together.*'
- d) Opportunity of apologetic of ecumenism! Not institutional ecumenism but local, relational – particularly powerful in Scotland with our history!!
- e) To be places that embody reconciliation – not tea parties in response to Brexit (!) as suggested by C of E – but real dialogue and listening, including other faiths and none...

#### 4) **Authenticity....**

By 2020, Gen Z will occupy over half of all workplace jobs in the UK – and they think/behaviour differently – paradoxes – want to make a difference in the world but are apathetic about it too – *‘For Gen Z, a career is not just about making money. It’s about making an impact on the world’* – true –but that observation comes from Huawei!

Gen Y,X and Z are enjoying an extended adolescence – where major decisions are deferred but they want money to be able to make their mind up! Important to recognise that while some are doing this out of choice, others are unable to buy a house or start a family NOT out of choice but because they can’t afford to buy a house or, because of their need to work, have put off having a family out of financial necessity – Had more conversations with couples wanting to talk through the ethical questions around fertility treatment in last two years than previous 25 put together....Frustrating as a church leader – and parent! Students (and sons!) start courses and think nothing of *not* finishing!! But they do value the *‘sharing economy’* – where in the words of Louise MacDonald, the CEO of Young Scot – *‘We have moved from the age of collaboration to the age of co-design.’* Really important a few weeks ago – young people at Soul Survivor involved in choosing the name for the replacement festival in 2020 – being asked again to vote..

But with Gen Z comes a frailty – in the UK, half of all cases of mental illness now develop before the age of 15 – 25% of girls in the UK are clinically depressed by the age of 14 –married to Head of CAHMS in Lothian NHS!

Grateful to the insights of Christian Selvaratnam, leader of G2 in York and until recently Alpha in England. He shared these impressions of Gen Y recently - Profile of Gen Y...

1) *extended adolescence - major decisions, beliefs, - deferred until later - interesting mix of passion and lack of clarity - challenge and opportunity - malleable so an opportunity - easier to shape and mould - children , youth, students and younger adults - 4 groups that flow into each other -*

2) *committed to churches built by them not for them ...need to be in on the ground floor - different way of leading - create framework and compass - eg Alpha - (James G) - need to build it and own it - looking for responsibility - not abdication*

3) *discover truth in more complicated ways - different generations see trusted ministers differently - over 40's prefer it - under 35's don't care about dog collar for example - figure it out for themselves - looking for authenticity - cynical of official truth...and institutions - ask lots of questions -*

4) *passionate about God but know less Bible knowledge - harness their passion but help them with exegesis and exposition - get each to help the other - across the generations - fast track them - give them opportunities - work on basics of Bible reading - emails.....*

5) *more spiritually and theologically honest - Millennials will express them - interactive engagement - almost pick and mix - being more honest! Helps in evangelism though - more discursive -*

Christian has developed a theory which I think is correct –

In the 1950's-80's – we presented **Christ** – introduced them to the **Community** and then gave them a **Cause**

1990's – 2000's – we introduced them to the **Community** (Alpha) – then **Christ** = then the **Cause**

Now? **Cause** – **Community** - and then **Christ** – different way of thinking about evangelism, mission, social justice and transformation, and discipleship....

### **Opportunities for church - Top tips**

Me? Platform – parameters – permission –

Developing leaders Bob Wallington Six principles -  
Three tightropes and three safety nets

- 1) experience reality of leading in a real context - serving yes but with real responsibility- involved in vision and planning
- 2) give them vision that releases vision in them- they love big picture stuff
- 3) when releasing them, give them external environment as well as internal environment eg another church? Another context?

Safety nets? Make mistakes?

4) mentoring and accountability- held by the church and coached - knowledge of acceptance

5) intentional training - invest in them

6) culture of meaningful encouragement- respond well to feedback

## **So**

A) double up - can someone do it with you? Get younger leader to lead service with someone - simple mentorship - contrive opportunity - rehearse them -

B) look for people with potential - raise new leaders up - ask staff team - who should we be asking to do stuff?

C) take more risks - how daring is your church? - manage your own bias - use other people to spot people for different gifts -

D) intentionally spot women and have strategy for doing so -

E) take time to do so - different use of time - often hidden - church don't always understand

F) use different terminology? Do people associate words with roles? Use what helps people - stylistically different - identify a blockage and solution - word and vocabulary -

G) 'natural leaders' - people who do it naturally at work or in culture or friendship groups -

H) easier to add skills than character - when you ask for help, who shows up ? we appoint on competency, but dismiss on character – why don't we put a higher premium on character?

I) look for dangerous wild cards - problem passionate people?!

J) Tap into young people's passion for social justice, care for creation, and their desire to make a difference in the world! Interesting hearing the story of the founder of Bike for Refugees – charity in Edinburgh committed to recycling bikes for refugees new to Edinburgh – came from going to Calais, and seeing Jungle Camp, and realising he was part of a worldwide international network that wanted to make a difference - sounds a lot like the church!

## 5) 'Living for the 'gram....clicks against humanity

Increasingly we live in a culture where people look to different places for truth, direction and information...in October 2017, a Palestinian worker posted a photo one morning on Facebook, with a bulldozer behind him. The Facebook algorithm mistook the word 'Ysabecktum' (Good morning) as 'Ydbachum' (attack them) – he was arrested by Israeli security forces before an Arabic speaker had read the post – bulldozers had been used by terrorists to attack Israeli settlers...released once the mistake was realised. No one had checked – because it was on the internet, it must be true...

We have moved from a manufacture economy to an information economy – from liberal capitalism to digital or surveillance capitalism – where we have become the harvest, or at least our data has! We are no longer clients or customers – we are the crop! Listen to these chilling words from Reed Hastings, the CEO of Netflix

*'At Netflix, we are competing for our customer's time, so our competitors include Snapchat, You Tube and sleep..'* (Let that sink in for a minute!!)

Look at this picture of a recent software conference in California – their aim as a company is to turn customers into fanatics, products into obsessions; employees into ambassadors; and brands into religions! Chilling!!

See it in politics where truth is manipulated and ignored – Donald Trump labels 'serious news' as 'what's going wrong'; Brexiteers accuse Leavers of Project Fear ; Trump made a speech in Feb 2017 suggesting that Sweden's history of welcoming refugees was at the root of a violent attack in a place called Rinkeby, even though nothing had actually happened....two days later, several dozen masked men attacked police officers in Rinkeby, and Russian TV crews apparently appeared offering to pay immigrant young people to make trouble in front of the cameras...8 month before his election, Trump's tweetstorms were estimated to have gained him \$2 billion in free media coverage...saw it in his tweets about the so called 'Squad of 4' – 4 non-white Democratic congresswomen and about the Baltimore congressman Elijah Cummings – clever targeted distractions as people no longer talked about the conditions in the detention facilities that the 4 congresswomen had visited or the testimony by Trump's lawyer that Cummings had

presided over... Trump claims to have coined the word 'fake' as in 'fake news' – a claim both ironic and fake!!

### **So what are the opportunities for the church?**

- A) We have a culture with a great desire for structure and order – who are searching for honesty and a way out of fear- they are keenly aware of their need, desire for community, the increase of anxiety and fear, desperate for resources for resilience and looking for an answer to the problem of pain and suffering – they also want to rediscover adventure and creation – so struck that when we approached Edinburgh City Council to see what we could do to offer help to the Syrian refugees coming to the city, their response was *'you can help them to rediscover beauty'*...
- B) We have a culture that is increasingly able to multitask – to use technology for good rather than evil – who are amazingly creative and innovative –adaptable and flexible – need to harness that energy and ability – real formational and discipleship challenge – how do we use social media in a positive way? How do we help people realise what they are giving *attention* to? Android, the mobile operating system, sends over 11 billion notifications to its 1 billion users – every day! In the screen age, our devices are our new disciple-makers. But who are they calling us to follow? Recent report published by Barna, World Vision and Alpha – Faith for the Future – looking at Millenials – *'The typical young adult gets 3,000 hours of screen time annually. Spiritual content makes up for 291 hours of input. We are doing dial-up ministry in a wi-fi world.'* Challenge? *'Be a pastor of peace and peacefulness in digital Babylon.'* Mark Sayers – how can we help our church members to do this?
- C) Power of incarnational mission – our culture is increasingly **ex**carneate – whole discussion about church on the internet – opportunity for us to model something local, authentic, relational and personal