

First in a series of four special issues written by men about men and masculinity



Follow the leader

Andrew Lyon *reflects on* Luke 14:25-33

Being a leader is highly prized. Leaders are in charge, at the head of the pack. They make decisions and set the agenda. A good leader has vision and the ability to communicate it, inspiring others to follow where he or she leads. Whether in business or daily life, many of us aspire to be leaders. Psychologically that's not surprising; such people get paid more, have higher social status and garner respect from their peers.

The need to lead is almost primal in many men; society has taught us that we are supposed to be alpha males, to earn the most money, throw ourselves into punishing careers and control the environment around us.

But Jesus calls us to follow. He asks us to give up everything we have – including our families – and follow him. It's a hard calling for anyone, but perhaps particularly difficult for men. To submit willingly to another man, to call him Lord, to give up everything and follow him runs counter to everything we have been taught.

Jesus talks today about the cost of following him. It's not only that it may separate us from the people we love, but the cost will also be psychological. What happens to my masculine identity when I submit to Jesus as Lord, who requires total commitment and obedience? What will my mates say? Maybe that's where true strength of character comes in. 😊

Heavenly Father, this is a difficult prayer to pray. But help me to lay down my own priorities and also my pride, and follow where Jesus leads me, obey where he instructs me, and trust when he calls me. Through Christ, my Lord. Amen.

Charles Fuge Lowder

Priest Charles Fuge Lowder is commemorated tomorrow. Richard Greatrex looks at his life and legacy.

Born in Bath in 1820, ordained priest in 1844, Charles Lowder was deeply influenced by the Tractarian movement during his time at Exeter College, Oxford. He worked initially as a curate for Anglo-Catholic parishes in Pimlico and the East End where he

experienced first-hand the violence of both public and legal reactions to "High Church" ceremonial practices.

Lowder's strength was as a "slum priest", living among local people, slowly gaining their respect and confidence. For him, mission wasn't a short-term programme but a lifetime of growing in faith together. His single-room mission in Wapping grew into a temporary iron church, until in 1866 he oversaw the building of St Peter's, London Docks. Remaining in post throughout the East End cholera outbreak, Father Lowder, as he came to be known, won the love of his parishioners, who turned out in force to mourn with great sadness when he died in 1880, worn out by his work. 😊

“ Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power.

Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865), sixteenth President of the United States of America

Men and masculinity in the Bible

Cain and Abel, and Lamech
by Trevor Dennis

Let's be honest. The Bible's almost entirely written by men; it sees things through men's eyes, and women play the bit parts, and not enough of them, either. Worse, the God of the Bible seems to prefer to engage with men, and it says little about women's spirituality. That said, it hardly lets men off the hook. Its stories have barely begun, when in Genesis 4

a man kills his brother out of jealousy (Cain and Abel), and then another man, Lamech, boasts to his wives of his violence. Genesis 1 ends with, "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good." But then Genesis 6:12 says: "God saw that the earth was corrupt". Why such devastation? Because of the violence of men. The Bible is full of tales of the violence of men. A sobering thought. Thank God it's not the end of the story! 😊

Trevor Dennis is an Anglican priest, author, teacher and scripture scholar, who is passionate about opening the world of biblical scholarship to a wider audience.

Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish

Interim Moderator: Rev June Freeth 721449

Locum Minister Rev Martin Prentice **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.

Intimations

Tuesday - 8pm – Choir in the kirk hall

Thursday – 10am – 12noon Community Café in the kirk hall

Blue Door – The kirk has a week in The Blue Door in January. It would be great if folk can gather and store their items for sale. There have already been some donations from the community, so if anyone has spare storage space, please speak to Carol or Nicol.

Readings:

Philemon 1-21

Luke 14:25-33

Hymns

Hymn 484 Great God your love has called us here

Hymn 551 In heavenly love abiding

Hymn 402 Take up your cross

Hymn 522 The Church is wherever God's people are praising

Hymn: 533 Will you come and follow me

Doxology Hymn 786

May the God of peace go with us, as we travel from this place

May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.