

WE ARE SELLING THE FURNITURE!

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MUM'S PIANO

My dear old mum is 92 and one of her daily delights is to sit down at her piano and tinkle the ivories. It has brought her immense pleasure for decades and she says it also keeps her old brain and fingers working. So far it seems to be working!

The piano had to be tuned recently, and mum mentioned in passing that she has always regretted giving away her first piano to a family member who wanted to learn to play.

That old piano mum gave away had quite the back story. It originally belonged to one of mum's aunties. When she started working as a tayloress, that aunty was only a young teenager (young girls usually left school at around 13 or 14 years of age without completing their education, for that's how it was in "those days"). Her week's wages were five shillings (yes they were the days before Australia converted to decimal currency). After her living expenses took most of her weekly pay, Aunty Ruth would bank the shilling or so left over. Her goal was to eventually buy a piano for she had music and songs in her heart.

Many years went by and at long last Ruth had enough to purchase her beloved piano. I remember it well because mum always wanted my brother and me to learn to play it too, but alas, neither of us had a musical bone in our bodies.

Anyway, when Ruth died mum inherited that old Paling's piano and its quality, workmanship, and tone were superior to the one mum now plays. The disappointing thing for mum is that the person she gave that precious old piano to ended up having to sell it because it didn't fit in their new house.

The point I wish to make is that some unknown person got more than a great old piano. Oblivious to the many long years of dreams and sacrifice that Aunty Ruth invested in the first place to acquire it, they picked up part of our family's rich heritage.

And that story got me thinking: What one generation works hard for, dreams for, and sacrifices long for, the next generation may not fully appreciate and treasure — or worse, may even squander. It reminds me of ...

KING HEZEKIAH.

Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became King of Judah. His reign lasted twenty-nine years in Jerusalem ... and he did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done. Very few of Israel's or Judah's kings had such a glowing epitaph: He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him. For he clung to the LORD; and did not depart from following Him (2 Kings 18: 1-6).

Righteous man that he was, **Hezekiah** was still an imperfect man beset with Adam's mortal nature as we all are. So why are we still surprised to learn that when king **Sennacherib** of Assyria captured the northern kingdom of Israel and deported its people into exile that, under similar threat to his own Judean kingdom, **Hezekiah** panicked and was overtaken by a spirit of fear.

He does not seem to have sought Yahweh his God for this crisis, but relied on his own schemes to protect himself. With the invading army laying siege, **Hezekiah** cow-tailed to the Assyrians with the admission, "Withdraw from me; whatever you impose on me I will bear."

The upshot was that **Hezekiah** had to pay a heavy tribute to Assyria to avoid devastation. Initially paying the annual 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold levied on him didn't seem too onerous. Peace and security with life as usual could go on. But the ongoing yearly tribute monies began to drain the treasuries. So what did **Hezekiah** do to save his country and bail himself out?

And Hezekiah gave him all the silver which was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house. At that time Hezekiah cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the LORD, and from the doorposts ... and gave it to the king of Assyria (2 Kings 18: 15-16).

Hezekiah sold the furniture! Not only did he ransack the treasuries of his own house, but in desperation *he stripped the gold out of the Temple of Yahweh*. This was the gold which **King David** had dedicated to build the house of the LORD and a great part of which **King Solomon** had used to overlay the huge doors with. **Hezekiah** was selling what belonged to the LORD God and to His people!

We all know of stories of early pioneers being snowed in for weeks at a time and how to stop from freezing to death they had to start burning the furniture. Only reasonable and natural, right? Well, not when you are the king of Judah representing Yahweh. Not when the Almighty has vowed He has inscribed His Name in Jerusalem and His temple. Not when all the resources of the Eternal God

are Jacob's Help. Not when he had God's promise that if he walked faithfully before Him that his enemies would leave him alone!

THE BIG PICTURE HERE

Selling the furniture was a sign of unbelief. Selling the furniture was a disgrace to the Holy One of Israel. It gave the enemies of the true God an opportunity to boast against Him. Selling the furniture was also a sign of disregard for all the hard work, devotion and sacrificial service of previous generations. Which leads us to the big picture in our society at this very time ...

Who amongst us who revere the LORD God is not daily heartbroken at the state of our country? (This applies to any Western country with a Christian heritage.) Who amongst us is not saddened to see our leaders and our people deconstructing the values which in the past made us one of the most blessed societies on the earth? It feels like we are the proverbial Lemmings following each other over the cliff.

A CRICKETING MATE WROTE THIS TO ME

Here is a hard-hitting piece of humour a mate of mine forwarded to me. It expresses the sentiments even of many non-Christians;

I used to think I was pretty much just a regular person, but I was born white, into a two-parent household which now, whether I like it or not, makes me privileged, a racist, and responsible for slavery.

I am a fiscal and moral conservative, which by today's standards, makes me a fascist because I plan, budget, and support myself.

I went to Grammar School and have always held a job. But I now find out that I am not here because I earned it, but because I was "advantaged".

I am heterosexual, which according to gay folks, now makes me a homophobe.

I am not a Muslim, which now labels me as an infidel.

I am older than 70, making me a useless dinosaur who doesn't understand Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat.

I think, and I reason, and I doubt most of what the 'mainstream' media tells me, which makes me a Right-wing conspiracy nut.

I am proud of my heritage and our inclusive culture, making me a xenophobe.

I believe in hard work, fair play, and fair reward according to each individual's merits, which today makes me an anti-socialist.

I believe our system guarantees freedom of effort - not freedom of outcome or subsidies which must make me a borderline sociopath.

I believe in the defence and protection of my nation for and by all citizens, now making me a militant.

I am proud of our flag, what it stands for, and the many who died to let it fly, so I stand during our National Anthem - so I must be a radical.

I'm just not sure who I am anymore!

Funny - it all took place over the last decade!

If all this nonsense wasn't enough to deal with, now I don't even know which toilet to use... and these days I gotta go more frequently!

As I say, this man is not a believer, but he captures the dismay of many at the state of our society today.

THE GREAT UNRAVELLING

Without exaggeration I have increasingly heard so many times over the last few years: "This is not the Australia I grew up in. Everything is being turned upside down, inside out. What's happening to our world? When we were kids, teachers were respected. People could leave their homes and even go on holidays without the need to lock their houses. Children could ride their bikes anywhere and parents knew the community was their own eyes and ears." You get the idea.

People used to have the idea that if you couldn't afford something, then you didn't acquire it until you had saved for it. Now, the credit card will do the trick. Instant gratification. Debt is normal. No worries, we can sell the furniture and stay on the same trajectory, at least for the time being.

Who would have thought we would have seen the wild scenes, particularly in some cities in the USA, where car loads of gangs pull up outside apartment stores to smash and grab all they can carry away? The Security Guards just stand paralysed and stare. Police don't even show up because the law in States like California says that if you don't steal more than \$999 then it's no crime! No charges will be laid.

Who would have thought we would hear a political party (the Democrats) in the 2024 USA presidential race advising wives to lie to their husbands about voting for Kamala Harris? Not to mention their calls for men to lie to other men about voting for Trump. No wonder the vast majority have no time for politicians.

Who would have thought the graduates of the [Australian Catholic University](#) just a couple of weeks ago would refuse to accept their degrees when they walked out *en masse* because the main speaker, [Joe de Bruyn](#), spoke up for Catholic values of a baby's right to life and also because of his anti same-sex marriage views. [De Bruyn](#) was being presented with an Honorary Degree by the [ACU](#). Here's a photo to prove how 'successful' the walkout was. When he started his speech the auditorium was packed ...



The glue that has held our largely Judeo-Christian Western societies together is dissolving in front of our eyes.

Who would have thought our Universities, once bastions of free expression and respect for open dialogue would now be places promoting “progressive orthodoxies”?

Who would have thought our tertiary institutions would become hotbeds to harass and threaten Jewish students and staff with violence? **Anti-Semitism** is not only on the rise, but has for the first time since WW2 become extremely threatening.

Who would have thought Jewish parents would send their kids to school not wearing their school uniforms for fear that they may suffer verbal, or even physical attacks? Jewish schools and synagogues now have security guards.

Who would have thought that there would be weekly marches in our streets with pro-Palestine banners and photos of terrorists with no enforcement of our anti-terror laws?

Who would have thought our Federal Government would allow thousands of Palestinian refugees into this country without thorough security checks, and on Tourist Visas to boot? We already know that Hamas supporters have been let in. Australia is one of the most generous nations on earth for genuine refugees; we punch way above our weight. But the latest influx seems to be for the political advantage of our Federal Labour Party wishing to shore up certain marginal seats by pandering to the Muslim vote. "Social cohesion" is the victim.

Who would have thought schools which once gave the essentials of the three "R's" could now have become places for gender-bending indoctrination of kids so tender and innocent? I mean, Drag Queens being given space to read their books to our beautiful children in our public libraries and some kindergartens and schools.

Who would have thought that primary age children would start their school days by learning to apologise for the sins of their colonial past? (When I was a child every school day started with an allegiance to the flag and our sovereign. My wife's school would also sing the hymn, [Faith of Our Fathers](#) to start each school day!)

Who would have thought we would see our modern generation tearing down statues of Captain Cook, defacing Queen Victoria (and in the USA we may include statues of Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, etc.)?

Who would have thought we would live to see the day when men who can't make it in sports against other men, can now identify as female and compete in women's teams? It's an ugly sight seeing a misguided hulk who claims he is a woman trapped inside a man's body smashing women playing football and causing serious injuries.

Who would have thought our farm lands would be sold off to foreign entities putting our food security at risk? Worst of all ...

Who would have thought we would rip millions of the unborn from their wombs even to full-term? And should they have the misfortune to survive this violent assault, they are left unattended in some jurisdictions to whimper out their first breaths until dead. The laws of our land have more regard for the rare green tree frog than for a human being! One of the sins which God frequently warned He would not forgive His people for was the **shedding of innocent blood**. Murder of the unborn is defacing the image of the Creator whose image our babies reflect.

If ever there was a generation wildly jettisoning the furniture of all the hard-fought for liberties and values of previous generational legacies, it's what we are seeing now. We are quickly descending into anarchy. The moral compass is shattering. Once people knew they were going to stand before the Judge of all the earth. They knew Unseen eyes were watching. They knew their deeds were recorded by the Eternal God. Now the Almighty One is snubbed, mocked, and ignored.

But God is not mocked. Whatever a man [or generation] sows, that will he also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption ... (Gal.6:7-9).

Who can argue that our increasing natural disasters, spiralling and out of control national debt, and breakdown in our social cohesion, are not indicators and warnings that God is letting us reap the whirlwind of our sins. Going woke, we are going broke. Not only is the furniture being pawned off, but the very building itself is being torn down.

WHY DID THE GOOD KING HEZEKIAH HAVE TO SELL THE FURNITURE?

When we read the catalogue of the previous works of kings prior to **Hezekiah** it becomes painfully obvious that he inherited an increasingly dubious generational past. Although Yahweh had treated each king on his own merits — forgiving their sins once confessed and repented of — it still becomes obvious that the sins of each generation began to pile up. The general trend was a spiral downwards into godlessness, oppression, anarchy, with the occasional 'uptick' when a good man became king.

However, there finally comes a point of no-return. The train has left the station and the brakes are showing signs of malfunction. So, does it seem unfair that **Hezekiah** seems to have copped the accumulated results of the sins and unfaithfulness of previous kings and generations of Israel and Judah?

Even after **Hezekiah's** own pride and unbelief towards the end of his life became obvious, and God sent him prophets to warn and to discipline him, finally the dam wall's cracks could barely hold back the tide of God's wrath. The last straw seems to have been when **Hezekiah** let the ambassador of Babylon see all of the treasures of his kingdom. **There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show him.**

So **Isaiah** was summarily sent to announce to the king, **"Hear the word of Yahweh: 'behold, the days are coming when all that is in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD.** [More than the furniture is about to go!]

And they shall take away some of your sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.’ “

Then **Hezekiah** said to **Isaiah**, “The word of Yahweh which you have spoken is good!” For he thought, “Is it not so, if there shall be peace and truth in my days?” (2 Kings 20: 16-19).

Can you believe what your eyes have just read? **Hezekiah** has just been told that God’s judgement is about to fall heavily on his kingdom for his unbelief. You might think he would have humbled himself before the LORD God.

Even wicked **King Ahab** who had done more evil than any king of Israel humbled himself for days with sackcloth and ashes after being told of God's coming judgement. And God took notice of his pleas for mercy and so mitigated His wrath. Surely the good king **Hezekiah** would have found the same mercy if he had done similarly? But no. He thinks, “Whew. That’s not so bad. At least *my* eyes won’t see all this future calamity!”

Similarly I think of our elected representatives who seem to not think about how their accumulated decisions will be felt by future generations. Such short-sightedness. One has only to think about the Queensland State elections when our Premier announced just weeks before the 2024 election that he was giving 50 cent train fares for everybody and “free” school lunches for every child in the State schools. He admitted this would cost billions and that the State budget would go into the red for years to come. No worries. Just as long as we can get through the next little season and I am re-elected! Future generations can pick up the tab! Selling the furniture is perfectly acceptable to get out of a present pickle.

However, this is no time for smugness. For what is true of the nations and generations is also true of the so-called churches, and every individual.

These are days to examine our own walk with the Lord, so let’s make it personal. Am I, are you, adding to the glory of **the house of the LORD** by our winsome and holy lives? Last year’s victories and works done in union with our Lord are no guarantee we are currently on track to enter the kingdom with joy and confidence. Yesterday’s fellowship with the Lord of glory can’t be carried over for today. We need oil for our lamps today.

I had no idea how far my meditations on simple things like pianos would take me, but it seems to me that the furniture is flying out the door on a conveyor belt! Let us call on the Name of our merciful God while it is still called ‘today’. May God give us grace to align our lives with His coming Kingdom’s everlasting values.

