

### **5. Parliamentary democracy**

There was no parliament or democracy in Jesus' time. Democracy is based on the will of the people. Jesus was very popular among the masses and they helped protect him. The rulers "looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet." (Matthew 21:46) Yet Jesus was aware that there were inappropriate applications of public support and he avoided these. "After the people saw the miraculous sign that Jesus did, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself." (John 6:14-15). Jesus would only use a legitimate path to power (Philippians 2:5-11)

### **6. Equality of men and women**

Jesus treated men and women equally. He had both male and female followers (Luke 8:1-3), and taught both men and women (Luke 10:39). He healed men and women (Mark 1:29-34), cast demons out of them (Matthew 12:22; 15:22), and raised both males and females from the dead (Luke 7:15; 8:54). He used men and women as heroes in his parables (Luke 15:1-10), and applied male and female similes to himself (John 10:14; Luke 13:34). Jesus is never recorded as making a negative statement about a woman.

### **7. A spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play**

Jesus did not discriminate between rich and poor, patriot and traitor, Jew and Gentile, young and old, righteous and sinful, or male and female. Among his disciples were the rich man, Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the ruling Sanhedrin (Matthew 27:57) and the poor formerly blind beggar Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52), the patriotic

zealot Simon (Matthew 10:4) and the Roman-collaborating tax-collector Matthew (Matthew 10:3)

Jesus healed the daughter of a Jewish synagogue ruler (Luke 8:41), the servant of a Roman centurion (Luke 7:10), a Samaritan leper (Luke 17:18) and the daughter of a Phoenician woman (Matthew 15:22). He raised the adult Lazarus (John 11:44) and a little girl (Luke 8:41) from the dead. He allowed a prostitute to wash his feet while eating at the house of a self-righteous Pharisee (Luke 7:37). No-one was excluded from his social contact.

### **8. Compassion for those in need**

Jesus commonly showed compassion. "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:35-36) . "When Jesus ... saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick." (Matthew 14:14) He said: "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. (Mark 8:2) "Jesus had compassion on [the two men] and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him. (Matthew 20:34)

### **9. Pursuit of the common good, not power**

Jesus taught his disciples: "Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:42-45). Rather than seeking self-satisfaction, Jesus chose the path of sacrifice and suffering for others.

# ***The Christian Basis of Australian Values (Part 1)***

**How key  
Australian values  
originate from  
the teaching and  
example of Jesus**

# Australian values have been built on the teaching and example of Jesus

## THE AUSTRALIAN CONSTITUTION

The preamble to the Australian Constitution states that "humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, [we] have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth."

## THE FOUNDING FATHERS

Edmund Barton, the first Prime Minister of Australia, spoke of the need to base the Constitution on Christian foundations "because we are Christian community."

Sir John Downer, early Premier of South Australia and their delegate to the Constitutional Convention declared that "The Commonwealth will be from its first stage a Christian Commonwealth."

Sir Henry Parkes, the Father of Federation, stated that "we are pre-eminently a Christian people – as our laws, our whole system of jurisprudence, our Constitution – are based upon and interwoven with our Christian belief."

Quoted from Bernard D'Abbrera "God versus Allah III" in *Quadrant* Jan-Feb 2012 p.94-97

## PRAYER TODAY

Today the Parliament begins each sitting with: "Almighty God, we humbly beseech Thee to vouchsafe Thy blessing upon this Parliament. Direct and prosper our deliberations to the advancement of Thy glory, and the true welfare of the people of Australia. 'Our Father, which art in Heaven: Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.'" (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4)

## SOME KEY AUSTRALIAN VALUES

This is the statement required to be signed by those applying for visas to Australia:

*"Australian society values respect for the freedom and dignity of the individual, freedom of religion, commitment to the rule of law, Parliamentary democracy, equality of men and women and a spirit of egalitarianism that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, fair play and compassion for those in need and pursuit of the public good."*

### All of these are found in the life of Jesus

#### 1. Freedom:

Jesus spoke about freedom. He announced: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke 4:18-19)

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free...If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (Jn.8:31,32, 36)

#### 2. Dignity of the individual:

Jesus treated all people with dignity. He mixed equally with all people including sinners (Lk.7:34), rich people like Zacchaeus (Lk.19:1-10), poor people like blind Bartimaeus (Mt.10:46) and he touched lepers (Luke 5:13) Women were included among his followers (Lk.8:1-3). His enemies complained about Jesus: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." (Luke 15:1-2).

If you want to learn about Jesus  
go to [www.mylanguage.net.au](http://www.mylanguage.net.au)

#### 3. Freedom of religion:

Jesus invited all kinds of people to follow him: "Come, follow me" (Matthew 4:19; 9:12) was often on his lips. But he also allowed people to leave his religion. After one sermon, many disagreed with him. "From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him." (John 6:66) Jesus allowed them to leave. He did not threaten them nor attempt to execute them for apostasy.

#### 4. Commitment to the rule of law:

Jesus paid the unpopular temple-tax even though others did not. "After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"

"Yes, he does," he replied. When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes--from their own sons or from others?"

"From others," Peter answered. "Then the sons are exempt," Jesus said to him. "But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours." (Matthew 17:24-27)