

Holy Trinity Cathedral

Stained Glass Windows in Nave



*West windows 1 to 9 designed by **Shane Cotton***



*East windows 10 to 18 designed by **Robert Ellis***

When we set out to have these windows made, it was realised that the Cathedral had a unique opportunity to provide a set of windows that related to one another and provided a resource for teaching and understanding in the traditional pictorial manner.

The designers were required to meet a brief that set out to tell the story of God's redeeming actions with his people through history to salvation and new life.

This was to be portrayed in a New Zealand context – quite a task in 18 panels. The brief was therefore selective and specific about the subject of each panel.

Symbolism of New Zealand's cultures was required.

The windows are read in a semi-circular movement from the west (street) side of the nave. The journey begins at the Millennial window (Window 1) and culminates in the Baptistry window (Window 18) on the east side.

*The windows were made and installed by the Glassworks Studio of Suzanne Johnson and Ben Hanly
They were dedicated in 2004*

Text sources: Original notes in 2001 by Shane Cotton and Robert Ellis and an edited version by John Wilson.

Compilation further editing and photos: David Hopkins 2018.

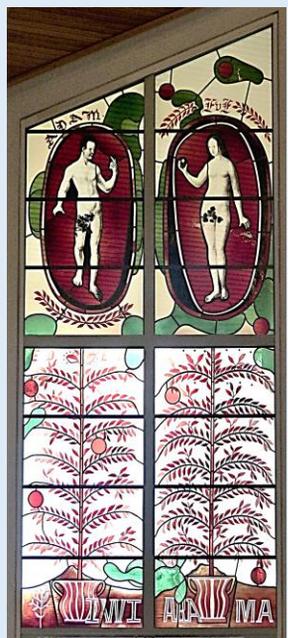
1 Millennial – The Holy Trinity – Continuity

- The theme is the Holy Trinity - Father Son and Holy Spirit.
- The globe (upper right) represents the Father shown in a circular form, symbol of perfection and eternity of life: “Who was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.”
- The Maori motif (top left) symbolises the coming together of Pakeha, Maori and Christianity. The two symbols form the letters I O – Supreme Being in Maori.
- The Son, Jesus, is depicted as the Lamb. Like the globe it is contained in a circular form. Symbols of the passion are used around the circular form.
- The Holy Spirit is alluded to through the white areas – the spiritual bonding of the Trinity. This flows to and from the representation of the Holy Spirit as a dove in Window 9.
- The Trinity is further represented in the base frieze of kowhaiwhai (painted ornamentation) pattern – Tokotorutanga.
- There is a sense of top and bottom, heaven and earth, hence the reference to the landscape and Toputurutangi (a translation of Trinity). The ‘rear view mirror’ form at lower left which floats off the land reminds us of Rangi and Papa. The spikes refer to numerical order.



2 The Garden of Eden

- The Adam and Eve figures are directly recognisable and are taken from the early German school of renaissance painting.
- The potted plant motif links colonial New Zealand through into the meeting house and back into the Church, a complete loop. (Reference – important art work found in the Rongapai Meeting House). An art construct is thus made of the biblical story itself.
- The total of four plants – two also in the next window – represent the people of the four corners of this land coming together.
- Each plant has seven stems, a reference to the seven days of creation.
- Connection to the land is in the lower frieze. The greenery above the landscape is an allusion to death / land.
- *Arama* is Maori for Adam. *Iwi* is Maori for Eve. *Ara Ma* is “White Path”.



3 The Expulsion from the Garden

- Divine Power is presented as a rotating force, top right, above the white rose.
- The rose represents purity and is symbolic of the fall. The white rose *without* thorns grew in Paradise in this form.
- The rose’s beauty and fragrance remind us of the splendour of Paradise.
- The white rose *with* thorns is symbolic of the expulsion and represents the Tree of Knowledge.
- Only after the fall did the rose take on its thorns – to remind us of the sins committed and fall from grace.
- Death is represented above the dark rose by the serpent.
- The two trees in this window are the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge.
- The Maori word Maturanga refers to knowledge and wisdom.



4 Slavery and Exodus

- The window portrays the journey into the wilderness.
- The repetition of the landscapes symbolises the passing of time, day and night, the life cycle and interaction of civilizations with the physical world.
- There is the struggle of man in the world – trials, tribulations and death.
- The motifs refer to events in Moses' life:
 - the plague of locusts
 - water from rock
 - quail
 - the burning bush
 - manna from heaven



5 The Law and Moses' Quest for Social Order

- At the very top of the window is Mount Sinai where the Ten Commandments were given.
- The uplifted hands are a symbol of blessing and triumph.
- The Ten Commandments gave order for society and are shown with the land as background – reference to the stone tablet on which the Ten Commandments were written.
- From this order more benefits evolved, for example, medicine and healing, represented by the serpent on the bronze rod.



6 Justice Peace and a Prophetic Vision for Society

- After the sacking of Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon God's people were directed to the light – the light of the nations: "A light for my path", "The guiding light of the world".
- The imagery is therefore light / vision – and the journey continues, hence the style is similar to Window 4.
- Top left there is a crucifix form of light-reflecting stones.
- The vigil of God upon the world is represented in the plant with leaves as eyes. The 'floating' oak leaf symbolises endurance.
- The XP monogram is a metaphor of light / enlightenment and can also be read as PAX (peace).
- The head of Jesus is silhouetted against a halo of light.
- The olive leaves symbolise nourishment of life – through light.



7 Exile – Restoration – Continuing Vicissitudes

- The four quadrants contain individual themes but all are connected.
- Upper right the suffering of Christ figure is prophetic and represents the sin and pain of a nation – the fall of Jerusalem and the Israelites' exile in Babylon.
- Lower left. Paradise revisited. A vision of a new earth, a new spiritual order, the path of light (the white area) as a guide for all nations. It connects from the white areas of journey from the previous window and is the manawa (heart, mind, breath) line within the kowhaiwhai pattern.
- “Kia marama” means “Let there be light”
- The same pattern is repeated in the quadrant above but this time in seedling or womb form – representative of new life.
- Lower right is the tree of Jesse, again continuity and connection are portrayed. The prophetic imagery refers to the crucifix image of Jesus.



8 The Incarnation

- The Godhead became human. Lamb of God – Jesus sacrificed.
- The swallow, upper right, is symbolic of the Incarnation of Christ.
- The goldfinch, which eats thistle and thorn, is symbolic of the crown of thorns.
- The ivy - symbolic of Christ's passion. The lamb – symbolic of the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- All this is summed up in the phrase: “*Ergo Sum via, veritas, et vita*”. “I am the way, the truth and the life”.
- The quadrants refer to the people of the land – Nga Hau e Wha – and refer also to the four plants in the garden of Eden windows. (Windows 2 and 3).



9 The Wilderness – John the Baptist – Jesus Baptism

- John in the wilderness; as symbolised by the locust, on which he fed.
- He is depicted standing in symbolic waters alluded to through waves of koru at his feet.
- The window ties in with Window 1 where the white alludes to the Holy Spirit and the spiritual bonding of the Trinity.
- The river Jordan flows from the Holy Spirit (represented as the dove) to Jesus, the Lamb.
- The repetition of the lamb image is deliberate and unifying. It is symbolic of Jesus and of John's attribution of him: “*Behold the Lamb of God*”.
- The river imagery is reinforced through the use of the Puhoro kowhaiwhai pattern, which is used on the hull of the waka (canoe) shown at the upper left. (Shown also in Window 17)



10 The Teachings of Jesus



- The window is based on the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus speaking of the lilies of the field.
- Top left panel: A Greek cross with archaic Greek letters. I and C are the first and last letters for Jesus, X and C the same for Christ. NIKAI means conqueror.
- Above the cross is an ancient symbol denoting Redemption and the Holy Spirit.
- Upper right depicts a landscape symbolising the Sermon on the Mount, with the sun symbolic of Christ.
- Centre left the Star of David, formed of interlocking triangles, is associated with the Holy Trinity. The centre of the Star in red and white signifies blood and water.
- The lower half of the window depicts the lily, symbol of purity and the Virgin Saints.
- The decorative frieze at the base is a formalised flower pattern from Polynesian Tapa designs and is completed in Window 18.

11 The Miracles



- The design derives from the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand.
- The setting though is the New Zealand environment using unique flora and birds (generic representation), fish (terakihi and snapper) and woven mats and kits (kete). The twelve baskets represent the Biblical baskets of food collected after the miracle.
- At the top is an imaginary landscape with natural fauna such as punga and Piko Piko (common shield fern). The punga relate to sowing of seeds on stony ground compared to productive ground, which bears fruit.
- Surrounding the baskets are small cruciform shapes representing the words of Christ as they disseminated to the wider society.
- Comet, sun/moon and star icons signify aspiration and direction.
- The blue striations across the window represent streams of water, an important Christian element, originating from the rock in Window 10.
- The frieze in the lower border is Piko Piko fern.

12 The Agony of Christ / Crucifixion



- The design establishes the triumph of life over death – through Christ.
- The cross stands in a harsh barren landscape – Golgotha (“place of the skull”). It is emblazoned with a crown of thorns symbolising grief, tribulation and martyrdom. The fish symbol at the top was used by early Christians to recognise each other within an antagonistic society. INRI are the four initial letters (in Latin) of *Jesus of Nazareth – King of the Jews*. The green of the cross refers to the tree of life. The star of David, symbol of the Jews, is depicted on the right arm.
- Items associated with the crucifixion are at the base of the cross: Dice used by guards to gamble for Christ’s robe; Hammer and pincers used during the process of crucifixion – emphasising pain and suffering; Rope as a symbol of Christ’s betrayal by Judas - who later hanged himself - and of repentance.
- The large symbols in the sky are the initial letters of five Greek words meaning *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*. They are also from the Greek word for fish.
- The frieze is Celtic and a metaphor for the Garden of Gethsemane.

13 Resurrection

- The resurrection is portrayed through the supper at Emmaus when the risen Christ revealed himself to two of his disciples.
- The raised hands show the wounds of the crucifixion and are an act of blessing. The entwined green circles represent an early Christian symbol for the Trinity.
- The chalice symbolises Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and the consecrated wine of the Eucharist which represents Christ's divinity. The wings emanating from the chalice are symbols of divine mission.
- The seven crosses refer to the constellation of Pleiades, known to Maori as Matariki, symbol of rejuvenation and hope.
- The frieze is a kowhaiwhai pattern symbolising water as a purifying agent.

14 The Gospels. Rivers of Aotearoa: The Waikato

There were four sacred rivers: The Tigris, Euphrates, Pison and Gihon, believed to be the four rivers of Paradise flowing from a single rock. As such they were used as symbols of the four Gospels flowing from Christ. The gospels are represented through the next four windows as rivers, symbolic of the gospel being carried through New Zealand. These four rivers are symbolically equated to the four sacred rivers of the ancient world and are the Waikato, Whanganui, Waitaki and Clutha (Matou-au).

- This river, the Waikato, has its source in the rich volcanic plateau. The formalised landscape utilises traditional Maori Kowhaiwhai patterns including erupting volcanoes.
- The spheroid form at upper left is a galactic phenomenon representing the inexplicable nature of the universe. The theme of Alpha and Omega is repeated through the Nave windows
- A unique NZ tree fern is shown. Migrating birds emphasise the feeling of movement from north to south. The frieze uses a Coptic cruciform pattern.

15 The Gospels. Rivers of Aotearoa: The Whanganui

There were four sacred rivers: The Tigris, Euphrates, Pison and Gihon, believed to be the four rivers of Paradise flowing from a single rock. As such they were used as symbols of the four Gospels flowing from Christ. The gospels are represented through the next four windows as rivers, symbolic of the gospel being carried through New Zealand. These four rivers are symbolically equated to the four sacred rivers of the ancient world and are the Waikato, Whanganui, Waitaki and Clutha (Matou-au).

- This river, the Whanganui, traverses a formalised landscape with town / city typically New Zealand.
- The letters IHS are based on the first three letters of the word Jesus. The banner shows a three-leaf form symbolic of the Holy Trinity.
- Geography and exploration are represented through the armillary sphere, a navigational device. The spherical shape is a symbol of God's power and imperial dignity. The anchor attached is a symbol for hope and steadfastness.
- The intricate web of stylised roads refers to communication and discovery. The symbol lower left represents Spring. The pattern at the base is of Pacific origin.

16 The Gospels. Rivers of Aotearoa – The Waitaki

There were four sacred rivers: The Tigris, Euphrates, Pison and Gihon, believed to be the four rivers of Paradise flowing from a single rock. As such they were used as symbols of the four Gospels flowing from Christ. The gospels are represented through the next four windows as rivers, symbolic of the gospel being carried through New Zealand. These four rivers are symbolically equated to the four sacred rivers of the ancient world and are the Waikato, Whanganui, Waitaki and Clutha (Matou-au).

- The unfurling banner is based on flags used by missionaries. The words *Rongapai* (Good News) were often emblazoned on the banners. Underneath the banner is an archaic symbol for Summer.
- This river, The Waitaki, incorporates two species of salmon, Quinnel and Atlantic, introduced to New Zealand in the 19th century. The double fish image repeats the motif in Window 11 – Pisces in Zodiac symbolism - as used in Christian art in the past.
- Behind the fish a linear network of shapes evokes processes of communication. The star represents divine guidance and favour. A Celtic symbol for the Holy Trinity sits above.
- The frieze is of Celtic origin and is the symbol for the Trinity.

17 The Gospels. Rivers of Aotearoa – The Clutha / Matou-au

There were four sacred rivers: The Tigris, Euphrates, Pison and Gihon, believed to be the four rivers of Paradise flowing from a single rock. As such they were used as symbols of the four Gospels flowing from Christ. The gospels are represented through the next four windows as rivers, symbolic of the gospel being carried through New Zealand. These four rivers are symbolically equated to the four sacred rivers of the ancient world and are the Waikato, Whanganui, Waitaki and Clutha (Matou-au).

- This river, the Clutha or Matou-au, is depicted in a varied set of ground colours and flows around the Chrismon symbol.
- The comet is a symbol of hope and aspiration. The banner continues from Window 16 and shows the Crusaders' (Jerusalem) cross and a Maltese cross within a circular form. Upper right is an elaborated, schematic form interpreted from early Christian Celtic crosses – referring to the origins of the early European settlers.
- A simplified compass form is shown above a pattern that appears on the prow of canoes and adjacent to an ancient symbol for Autumn. A kowhaiwhai pattern is shown lower left.
- The chevron design in the lower portion of the window is of Pacific origin.

18 Baptistry

- The central motif is an open, upraised hand bestowing a blessing on the viewer – a fitting backdrop to the Baptismal font. The tips of the fingers are embellished with the letters AROHA – Maori for love. A cross signifying Christian ethic sits in the palm of the hand.
- A dove covers the palm and the cross - *I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from heaven and rest upon him (John 1:32)* - in reference to Jesus' baptism by John.
- Behind the tips of the fingers the arabesques of the flowing river tide are terminated.
- Below the hand on the left is the ancient symbol for Winter, the final reference to the four seasons.
- To the right is the Alpha and Omega, emphasising again the cyclic nature of life. The lilies pick up the theme from Window 10 so that we are reminded of the fragile beauty of life and once again Christ's teachings through the parables. Lilies are associated with blessing and holiness in the Bible.
- In the upper areas the stars and other heavenly bodies represent the limitless nature of the Cosmos and the continuity of time.
- The large cross in space represents the endurance of Christianity and humankind.