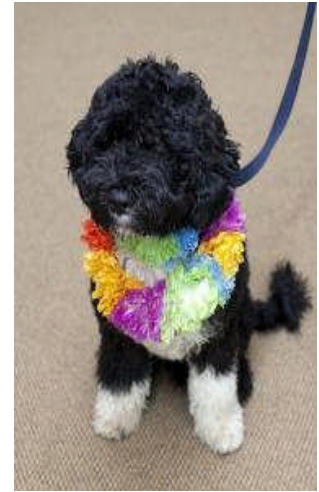


April 25th 2008



Dear Friends

Choice Architects

Barack Obama, when confessing family options for a White House pooch, disarmingly described himself as a 'Mutt'. 100 days in and we are beginning to assess his political pedigree. It would appear that bridging diversity may be his specialty! Left leaning politicians tend to be visionary in their aspiration for the state, whereas the opposition tend to favour paring back the nanny state in favour of personal choice by the citizen. In appointing his Chicago University colleague, Cass Sunstein, as his Public Policy Czar, Mr Obama reveals his intent to be a 'Visionary Minimalist' and a 'Paternalistic Libertarian'.

Sunstein and Thaler in their recent work observe that significant changes in public benefit can be achieved by small changes or *Nudges* in national policy. For example, dramatic improvement in the health of children can be achieved by positional arrangement of food in school canteens.

Indeed, the introduction of calorie labelling in restaurants recently came to the fore in our own media. (BK Whopper = 631 kcal, Medium Pizza = 1200 – 2000kcal). The strategy is to provide people with information that makes wholesome choices more likely. People who structure such alternatives are described as *Choice Architects*.

Within our denomination we have left or right leaning partisans. Some envision dramatic change, based on a high powered 'Über-Vicars' innovation and the furtherance of 'isms'. Others by contrast engage in legalist life-tinkering behaviours, swayed by creekly fads of the day.

How different might life be if we were to see ourselves as *Choice Architects*, people who arrange spiritual alternatives for people such that their acceptance and adoption of the Gospel is simply the obvious thing to do.

Joshua and Caleb, scouts of the Promised Land, made an assessment of the challenge facing the multitude. Where some saw giants, J&C regarded the incumbents as grasshoppers; they described Palestine as a land filled with milk and honey. Joshua's pitch to the nation was simple: *Choose this day whom you will serve*, then they offered the ultimate nudge of example and precedent, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*.

The faith of our Father optimises the liberty available to each of us. His suggested way of life is the obvious default, beyond which there can be no better destiny than His call to 'Serve'.

Thank you for being a Choice Architect on behalf of citizens embraced by Christ's love.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Victor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.