

Archetypes, Symbolism and the Role of Labyrinths.

Introduction.

Walking a labyrinth is a way of praying. It offers time and emotional space to find ourselves in God.

Archetypes.

What is an archetype? Jung's definition of an archetype: a figure – be it a daimon, a human being, or a process – that constantly recurs in the course of history and appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed.” (Artress, 1995: 150).

Jung described these archetypes as a phenomenon of the collective unconscious, governed by their own laws. Importantly they appear to be outside of the domain of the human psyche. (Artress, 1995: 150). They include figures that may be symbolic or not, spirals, trees for example. They may be geometric patterns or designs. Jung presented them as universal and free-floating forms of the collective unconscious. (Artress, 1995: 150). What seems to be important about archetypes is that we find meaning in them. Archetypal figures or designs are causes; they are recognised by our souls in some way.

It is important to note that the collective unconscious and the personal unconscious are not the same although the personal unconscious may express the collective form as dreams that we will sense are significant. (Artress, 1995: 151).

Of the many different archetypes are Gaia, in all her ‘mother’ forms; the Wise Old Man and from the Christian tradition, the cross, lighted candles; the Trinity, the Divine Child, the Mother, the Virgin. (Artress, 1995: 151).

Jung identified Christ as “the perfect symbol of the hidden immortal within the mortal man. It is this hidden immortal, with whom we connect in our unconscious minds, that either initiates or fulfils our search for the Holy”. (Artress, 1995: 151). Artress notes that the effect of the archetypes on individuals may be quite different. (Artress, 1995: 151).

The labyrinth is unusual in that it is an archetype that has a physical presence. (Artress, 1995: 151). The Labyrinth is also transformational in its function. Circles in the archetypal context represent wholeness and unity and convey the idea of being centred. (Artress, 1995: 152).

Archetypes are a way of becoming in touch with the transcendent. (Artress, 1995: 152).

Jung's explanation of archetypes:

The theory of archetypes evolved as an explanatory construct for the observed effects of the unconscious. It is admitted, however, that a true knowledge of the states and processes of the unconscious is not attainable since these phenomena are not directly observable. the psychology of the unconscious is compared to atomic physics in that both draw inferences about the nature of unobservable events from their observable effects.

On the nature of the psyche. Supplement. Jung In: *CW v. 8: The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (p. 226-234).

The archetype is important in revealing the contents of the unconscious. The examination of the dreams demonstrates that material from the collective unconscious is often projected onto persons in the immediate environment. **On the psychology of the unconscious. VII. The archetypes of the collective unconscious.** Jung In: *CW v. 7: Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (p. 90-113).

It is deduced that impulses from the unconscious, i.e., archetypes, are the *spiritus rector* of the human intellect. Opposed to the spiritual aspect of the psyche is the instinctual. Instincts are seen to be grounded in physiology and to provide the driving energy of the psyche. It is just such an instinctual drive that forces the archetypal contents of the collective unconscious into consciousness. The psyche is compared to the light spectrum to illustrate how it gradually passes from the physiology of instinct to the spirituality of archetypes. Only the representations of archetypes are mediated by the unconscious to the conscious mind as the archetypes themselves are at the ultraviolet end of the spectrum and are thus unknowable. It is concluded that both matter and spirit appear in the psychic realm as distinctive qualities of conscious contents. The ultimate nature of both is transcendental since the psyche and its contents are the only reality that is given to us without a medium. **On the nature of the psyche. 7. Patterns of behavior and archetypes.** Jung In: *CW v. 8: The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche* (p. 200-216). (Jung 2005; www).

Archetypes are like riverbeds that are always present. They can be found at anytime and when the water flows it finds them and flows along the existing bed. Jung makes the added explanation that their strength and significance is increased the more they are used. Using the analogy of the dry river bed, the more frequently the bed is used to channel the flow of water the more likely it is that the water will return to it when it flows. (Artress, 1995: 152).

Archetypes provide us with a way to integrate our spiritual existence with our souls. This is the way of transformation. (Artress, 1995: 153). If our spirits are who we are within ourselves, our souls are who we are relationally within the world. These two should not be separated and need to be meshed together for healthy balance. Their union takes place within us and it requires space. (Artress, 1995: 154).

This space is important. It can be damaged and if it does not function properly, we live unresolved lives. (Artress, 1995: 154). We need peace and quiet at regular intervals in our lives to allow our spirit and soul to stay in touch with each other. If we do not, we begin to live dishonest lives in that what is going on in the persona that we present to the world is not intimate with the persona that we are inside.

The way to create space within us is to create space within our physical lives. Artress comments that we must make this space. If we have the space, something will happen

within it. (Artress, 1995: 155). Finally, the connection between the inner and outer worlds will find completion through the work of our imaginations. (Artress, 1995: 155).

Archetypes are part of what we might categorize loosely as symbols.

Symbols.

Symbols are not just signs. They are gateways to another world or another set of meanings that are reached through the symbol. (Spyker, 2004: 69). We become part of the new landscape when we are drawn through the symbol to what lies beyond. What sorts of things within the Christian world would we identify as symbols?

There are many and with varying levels of significance. The cross is a symbol, as is the mass. Icons are also symbols, as are any sorts of religious paintings or statues. Artress' list included the symbol of the Virgin, the Madonna and child.

The incomprehensibility of God and of our relationship with him can be transcended through symbols and imagery. The wisdom of the world cannot take us to the places that symbols and imagery can.

Archetypes have a dual function. They draw our soul and spirit together; they draw us into the landscape of Other. We are able to find unity within ourselves and we are drawn into the presence of the One from whom the archetype has come.

The role of symbolism within human spirituality.

Labyrinths were a common feature of churches and cathedrals built in the 12th and 13th centuries. Most are lost.

Historical.

At its most basic level the labyrinth is a metaphor for the journey to the center of your deepest self and back out into the world with a broadened understanding of who you are.

This is the classical or seventh circuit labyrinth. Seven circuits refers to the seven paths that lead to the center or goal. This is an ancient design and is found in most cultures. It is sometimes dated back more than 4000 years. Also known as the Cretan Labyrinth it is associated with the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. This design was found on Cretan coins.

Labyrinths have most likely always been used in a spiritual manner. They can create a heightened awareness of the human condition and aid psychological and spiritual growth. To build a labyrinth is to create a sacred space. To walk a labyrinth is to imbue it with power and meaning. The more a labyrinth is used the more powerful it becomes as a symbol of transformation.

The classical labyrinth has an association with Christianity. A cross is the starting point used to construct this labyrinth. The cross at the center can become the focus for meditation and the experience of the labyrinth. The classical labyrinth design is found in

many churches in Europe.

The Middle Ages showed a renewed interest in labyrinths and a design more complex than the classical seven-circuit labyrinth became popular. This was an eleven-circuit design divided into four quadrants. It was often found in Gothic Cathedrals but over time many of these eleven-circuit designs were destroyed or intentionally removed.

The most famous of these remaining labyrinths is at Chartres Cathedral near Paris, France. The labyrinth at Chartres was built around 1200 and is laid into the floor in a style sometimes referred to as a pavement maze. The original center piece has been removed and other areas of the labyrinth have been restored. (Johnston, 2005).

In the later medieval and renaissance period their spiritual significance appears to have been reduced. Labyrinths became a source of entertainment and amusement, used either to impress guests; and later, to provide them with a puzzle to solve. (Saward, 2002; 153). During the Enlightenment they were viewed as an antiquarian curiosity. In the 19th century, they were of interest in the areas of architecture and education. (Saward, 2002; 153).

Contemporary.

There has been renewed interest in the religious and spiritual significance of the labyrinth since about 1950. During the period of the 70's and 80's construction of labyrinths began to increase, although as this stage, Saward believes them to have had no overt religious or spiritual significance, but rather to be indicative of things to come. (Saward, 2002; 153-154). However, in the late 1990's, several labyrinths were built in South Africa that were a portent of things to come. (Saward, 2002; 154).

Interest escalated in the 1990's, with many hundreds being constructed in churches, retreat centres and other spiritual focussed locations particularly in America. In the late 1990's this interest was regenerated in Europe. All have been constructed out of a spiritual interest. (Saward, 2002; 154). In contemporary times walking of pavement labyrinths in particular has been associated with the death and resurrection rituals of the Easter celebrations. (Saward, 2002; 153).

The labyrinth was meant to be walked and its usage is increasing today. In the past it could be walked as a pilgrimage and/or for repentance. As a pilgrimage it was a questing, searching journey with the hope of becoming closer to God. When used for repentance the pilgrims would walk on their knees. Sometimes the eleven-circuit labyrinth at Chartres would serve as a substitute for an actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem and as a result came to be called the "Chemin de Jerusalem" or Road of Jerusalem. (Johnston, 2005).

In walking the Chartres style labyrinth the walker meanders through each of the four quadrants several times before reaching the goal. Expectancy is created as to when the center will be reached. At the center is a rosette design which has a rich symbolic value including that of enlightenment. The four arms of the cross are readily visible and provide significant Christian symbolism.

A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The Labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools. (Johnston, 2005).

Thomas Moore, in his text “Care of the Soul” made the point that our life journey in terms of the pathway that our soul travels, is unpredictable and meandering. It is not rational, and it is almost certainly never the straight-line journey of logic. (Moore, 1992: 259-260).

Walking the labyrinth is a soul journey. It is a right brain task. It involves intuition, creativity, and imagery. A labyrinth is not a maze. With a maze many choices must be made and an active mind is needed to solve the problem of finding the center. With a labyrinth there is only one choice to be made. The choice is to enter or not. A more passive, receptive mindset is needed. The choice is whether or not to walk a spiritual path. (Johnston, 2005).

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Labyrinth as a spiritual tool.

Symbolism is a way of connecting us to the mysterious, often the place where God’s guidance is found. The labyrinth acts as one of those symbols. Our interaction with the labyrinth is creative and mysterious. As we enter and walk through it, we enter the place of mystery. It is an opportunity to find God’s guidance. (Artress, 1995: 15).

The labyrinth is a tool for freeing up our fundamental constrictions. As a symbol it is friendly to us. It does not threaten; body prayer can take place as we walk. Walking the labyrinth stabilises our bodies and opens us up to receive. (Artress, 1995: 141).

God cannot be discovered through the rational mind. (Artress, 1995: 128). In a very real sense, the labyrinth is not rational and cannot be intellectualised. It is a tool of the spirit, reminding us that “there is a path, a process that brings us to unity, to the centre of our beings. In the simple act of walking the soul finds solace and peace”. (Artress, 1995: 128).

“Using the labyrinth as a tool for a walking meditation and prayer allows individuals to share a common space while going through an individuated experience. It breaks the isolation that so commonly accompanies the working through of intense emotions such as grief or catharsis. Labyrinth walking in retreat settings and pilgrimages offers the individual walker spiritual companionship and provides a visible metaphor for community and connection. Sharing the labyrinth path with other walkers gives a tangible illustration that one is not alone, either on the spiralling path or in life.”

“The lure of the labyrinth, as well as the magic of the maze, has ensnared humankind for thousands of years. As we progress into this new millennium, that fascination has certainly not abated – indeed it shows every sign of continuation.” (Saward, 2002; 169).

Practical work with labyrinth designs.

1. Trace the labyrinth shapes (back page) with a pencil or even your finger. .
2. Design a labyrinth pathway.
3. Are there ways that you could work with students to help them to design their own labyrinth paths and also construct the surrounding landscape, either indoors or outside?
4. What materials could be used to design a labyrinth path?
5. What kind of activities could be performed on the labyrinth? (suggestions have ranged from memorial services to music worship to ‘party’ occasions that involved games and bubble-blowing)
6. In what ways could labyrinths be used to build community among students/Christians/mix of non-Christians and Christians/older and younger students/families?

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Additional Information. (Johnston 2005, except where otherwise noted).
There is no right way to walk a labyrinth.

You only have to enter and follow the path. However, your walk can encompass a variety of attitudes. It may be joyous or somber. It might be thoughtful or prayerful. You may use it as a walking meditation.

Some general guidelines for walking a labyrinth are:

1. Focus: Pause and wait at the entrance. Become quiet and centered. Give acknowledgment through a bow, nod, or other gesture and then enter.
2. Experience: Walk purposefully. Observe the process. When you reach the center, stay there and focus several moments. Leave when it seems appropriate. Be attentive on the way out.
3. Exit: Turn and face the entrance. Give an acknowledgement of ending, such as "Amen."
4. Reflect: After walking the labyrinth reflect back on your experience. Use journaling or drawing to capture your experience.
5. Walk often.

There are many approaches to the labyrinth. One Christian approach to the labyrinth is based on the "threefold path" of Purgation, Illumination, and Union. These represent three stages in a labyrinth walk. (Leech, 1977: 157).

1. Releasing (Purgation). From the entrance to the goal is the path of shedding or "letting go." There is a release and an emptying of worries and concerns.
2. Receiving (Illumination). At the center there is illumination, insight, clarity, and focus. It is here that you are in a receptive, prayerful, meditative state.
3. Integrating (Union). Empowerment and taking ownership. The path out is that of becoming grounded and integrating the insight. It is being energized and making what was received manifest in the world.

There are three stages but one path, and it is different for everyone.

"Palms Up, Palms Down"

These three stages can be symbolized with a "palms down, palms up" approach to walking the labyrinth.

"Palms down" symbolizes release or letting go while "palms up" indicates receiving. Enter the labyrinth and walk to the center with palms down and center your thoughts on releasing conflict issues and concerns in your life. When you reach the center turn your

palms up to be receptive to insight. As you walk out of the labyrinth keep your palms up to receive strength and guidance to make your insight manifest. As you leave the labyrinth turn to face the center and bring you palms together for a prayerful end to your walk.

Journey of Life

The most basic metaphor for walking a labyrinth is that of Life's Journey. Walk the labyrinth while mindful of your life. Envision your life's goal. Walk to your destiny and see what you learn. Pay attention to the sights and sounds. Do you feel lost at any time? If so, where in the labyrinth did it occur? What does that mean? Do you like one part of the labyrinth more than another? Why? What do the turns represent in your life? Do you resist some turns and like others. When you are outdoors notice subtle changes in the terrain – the ups and downs. Notice any synchronicities such as an overheard word or a bird's song. Consider all of your experiences in the labyrinth in relation to your life's journey. Walk alone and then journal your experience. Walk with a group and then share your experiences. What does the labyrinth teach you about your life?

Joy Walk

The labyrinth is often approached with a very serious attitude. It is walked in a slow, solemn, deliberate manner. This is certainly one appropriate way of walking, and I have found it to be very helpful at times. However, the labyrinth also needs to be used in a joyous manner. It can be a place of celebration. Children instinctively know this and almost always run the labyrinth once they enter it. A planned *Joy Walk* can enliven a labyrinth experience.

Examples:

Play a rhythmic music CD such as Mickey Hart's *Planet Drum*.

Give some of the participants children's musical instruments such as bells, rattles, tambourines, and drums.

Give some of the participants colorful scarves.

Give some of the participants small bottles filled with a bubble blowing mixture and a wand for blowing bubbles.

With the music playing the "bubble blowers" surround the labyrinth. Their task is to blow as many bubbles as they can to the labyrinth walkers who are making music or waving their scarves as they walk into and out of the labyrinth. When a walker completes the labyrinth, places are exchanged with a "bubble blower" who now takes the scarf or musical instrument and joyously walks the labyrinth.

People always have fun and lessons are learned.

One lesson is of spontaneous giving. The "bubble blowers" in their role want to insure that everyone has a good bubble experience while the musicians want to return music for the gift of bubbles. Everyone is giving to the others so that all will have fun.

Coloring the Labyrinth

A simple and quick experience for children and adults.

After having walked the labyrinth participants are given a box of crayons and a sheet of paper with a large labyrinth printed on it. They are asked to color the labyrinth in any manner that they wish. When finished the drawings are posted on the wall and each person explains the choice of colors. There are no right or wrong answers. Useful for learning how others view the labyrinth experience.

Below are the unedited impressions of Mercer University Orientation Assistants after walking the Labyrinth at Park Memorial Methodist Church in Macon, Georgia on March 28, 1999.

- Things aren't always what they seem.
- Take a second, closer look.
- New perspectives at each corner, gain insights.
- Twists and turns in life.
- Life has rocky and smooth spots.
- Long journey to turning point, albeit fleeting.
- People who literally go out of their way to help you.
- Never know when the last step comes...around the corner, etc. until it's upon you, so treat every step as if it were the last, make it count.
- Never ending--you end up where you started.
- There was no way to get lost, as long as you remember where you're headed.
- Life is a journey in which every day doesn't necessarily bring you closer--sometimes you're closer to your goal than others, sometimes you're further away, but ultimately you'll get to where you want to go if you stay focused.
- Beginning, middle (center) and end are connected with the same thing (God or whatever it means to you).
- Sometimes it seemed like you were in the same place you had been, but you weren't. (Life doesn't end once you reach the focus or center.)
- On the path, you pass people who have been where you are, other times you have been where others have been, but you're never at the exact same place at the same time.
- Many twists and turns around rocky journey of life.
- Center = life-changing experience.
- On the way out, may feel lost.
- Gain knowledge the whole way through.
- Always passing other people; could be life altering.
- Start = birth; center = middle; end = death, or at any point of your life.
- Must live life consciously.
- Candle = new generation, observing other people, recognition/approval from others going through already.
- Light at entrance and at first turn, but further in you go the darker it gets as you face the unknown.
- Stop, look around and see where you have been, others who are there now, what you've learned.

- When you start something, somebody else is starting or ending something at the same time.
- Some people's journey is longer than others.
- You will walk with some and cross paths only at certain points with others.
- Somebody has already been there.
- There is a main/higher power leading you in and out.
- You will walk with/cross paths with someone who has already been there and knows what you are about to experience.
- Everybody is reflecting on/motivated by something different.
- It is a single path, with only a few major turning points, which you only notice upon reflecting back.
- You walk with people you never expected to walk with.
- You can be a stumbling block for other people even when you may not realize it.
- Some people move through the journey of life faster than others.
- People can be stepping-stones.
- People cross our paths, come and go in our lives.
- People move closer and farther away from God.
- Life is a big circle.
- Follow the path not the stones.
- People can get lost on the road of life.
- People conform.
- The candle: an invitation for other people to join your life.
- The candle was a light unto our paths.
- We have bumps along the road of life.
- Simple things can cause your life to go in different directions.
- No matter how complex life may seem, step back and it will all work out.
- Stay focused, don't let obstacles and distractions get in the way.
- Look forward, try not to look back.
- You may feel like you're going in circles but at the end you can look back and see where you've come from and what you've done.
- You get out of life what you put into it.
- On the journey through life, your life crosses paths with many others.
- Other people go through the same things you go through.
- Life is about choices; always remember to be open to situations and experiences.
- Take time to think about things (e.g., friends, college, tests, personal/religious beliefs, family).
- See how your path crosses that of others.
- The path is deceiving.
- You go back down the same paths you've already taken.
- You can learn as much by watching others and their experiences as you can from your own.
- Person in the middle stops and the others move around him/her. We all have our own place in the world.
- Very peaceful.
- Turns are ups and downs of life.
- Circle effect: you end where you started.

- Instinct tries to take over but the path is already made for you.
- Passing each other represents relationships.
- Room for more than one on the path.
- If you do something as an individual, it will be different than doing the same with a group.
- Things sometimes take more time than you expect them to.
- There are outside forces that guide you on your path--you are not alone.
- You choose your own pace.
- Everything is connected. The beginning is the end.
- In the beginning, you are unsure but as you go on it seems more clear.
- First impression is of complexity but it's simple in reality.
- There is a plan to follow.
- Confusion is brief yet intense.
- The goal seems plausible yet with unseen obstacles.
- Is the goal the middle or the whole?
- Symbolic middle and returning path; you feel more confident because it is familiar.
- Very peaceful, alone time.
- More close to the people passing.
- Briefly pass the people, no one at the same spot.
- People care about obstacles; compromise.
- Wonder about the thoughts of others.
- Uphill and downhill on the path.
- Obstacles on the path.
- Everyone is moving at a different pace.
- Be observant.
- End of path is the cross--end of life/God.
- Walking out = remembering = memories.
- Crossing other people's paths.
- Am I still on the right path?
- Life is a journey with a path or type of structure.
- Looking at the flowers.
- Learn from those in front of you.
- Come full circle (thoughts).
- Quicker pace, shifting of directions closer to the center.
- Wondering what everyone else was thinking.
- Sharp turns dealt with rocky parts of life/situations.
- Trying to follow a path and getting lost.
- Ignore all noise, stayed in tune with yourself.
- Quick turns with long, slow portions.
- Everywhere you've been relates to where you are and where you're going; you revisit where you've been.
- Hard to stay focused because of distractions (other people)
- You think you're going to the middle and then you realize that you are the farthest away.
- Everyone is at a different point in life.

Extra material. <http://www.angelfire.com/tn/SacredLabyrinth>. (Accessed 6.6.05).

Labyrinths have been around for over 4000 years and are found in just about every major religious tradition in the world. They have been an integral part of many cultures such as Native American, Greek, Celtic and Mayan. The Hopi called the labyrinth the symbol for "mother earth" and equated it with the Kiva. Like Stonehenge and the pyramids, they are magical geometric forms that define sacred space.

During the crusades, they were used to symbolically represent the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Today, labyrinths are being used for reflection, meditation, prayer and comfort. They are found in many sizes and shapes, and are created in sand, cornmeal, flour, painted on canvas, fashioned with masking tape or string for a temporary design, or built in a permanent fashion from stones, cut into turf, formed by mounds of earth, made from vegetation, or any other natural material.

There are three basic designs -- seven circuit, eleven circuit, and twelve circuit. The most common design found around the country today is the seven circuit. These seven circuit designs were found on pottery from over 2000 years ago. Chartres Cathedral at Chartres, France is a very famous example of an eleven circuit design. One of the most famous aspects of the cathedral in Chartres is the spectacular rose window over the great west doors. It has the same dimensions as the labyrinth and is exactly the same distance up the west wall as the labyrinth is laterally from the cathedral's main entrance below the window. An imaginary cosmic hinge located where the doors and floor intersect would, if closed, place the rose window directly on top of the labyrinth, thus the sparkling, colored light of the window and the darkness of the labyrinthine pilgrimage are combined.

Another more recent examples can be found at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and Christ the King Lutheran Church in Torrance, California. The eleven circuit, or Maltese design, octagonal in shape, can be found at Amiens Cathedral in France. The size of the design can range from a small design on a stone to over 40 feet in diameter. Many people make the mistake of thinking a labyrinth and a maze are the same. A maze has dead ends and many trick turns. A labyrinth has only one path leading to the center and back out again. There are no dead ends.

When you walk a labyrinth, you meander back and forth, turning 180 degrees each time you enter a different circuit. As you shift your direction you also shift your awareness from right brain to left brain. This is one of the reasons the labyrinth can induce receptive states of consciousness. It can also help to balance the chakras. Each person's walk is a personal experience. How one walks and what one receives differs with each walk. Some people use the walk for clearing the mind and centering. Others enter with a question or concern. The time in the center can be used for receiving, reflecting, meditating, or praying, as well as discovering our own sacred inner space. What each person receives can be integrated on the walk out. Your walk can be a healing and sometimes very profound experience or it can be just a pleasant walk. Each time is different.

The following information is supplied courtesy of Southlands Ministries, Sheffield Tasmania.

S u g g e s t i o n s f o r W a l k i n g t h e L a b y r i n t h

- While there is no right or wrong way to walk the Labyrinth, there are some practices that some might find helpful in preparing for their own journey. What follows are some suggestions for possible approaches to the experience.

Quiet the mind to be open to God

- Walk at your own pace. Labyrinths can be walked in many ways from joy, through abandonment, in quiet solitude or in repentance.
- Let worries, distractions and concerns go – open yourself to what God might seek to say to you.
- Take a journal with you to record your thoughts
- Be prepared to share with others if appropriate

Avenues of prayer

There are two generally accepted main avenues of prayer:

- **The path through silence.** This involves meditation, contemplation, or prayer that leads to the centre of our being and the place where God resides through his Spirit. It requires disciplined concentration, which is why this particular state is sometimes referred to as “resting in God.” In this sense, walking labyrinth helps quiet the mind.
- **The path through images.** Imagination also leads to the centre of our being. This requires focussing on appropriate images, such as Jesus, a lamb, light, a door, a meal, a meeting with God or with others.

Other methods

- **Path of Prayer** – As you move through each space on the labyrinth, pray for whatever comes to heart. Take note of what God brings to your attention. Become aware of what you need in your life. Take some time to reflect on the issues of prayer that came to you on your journey.
- **A Place of Release and Renewal** – Are you holding onto old resentments, fears, and/or a hardened heart due to past hurts? Walking the labyrinth can be part of the journey toward healing. Allow God to prepare you through the journey in to meet you in the centre – in your place of pain. Then journey out with God. Seek counsel or spiritual direction as a follow up to this part of your journey towards healing.
- **Asking a Question** – Often questions and decisions needing discernment arise in life. A move, a new job, a marriage? Allow the labyrinth journey of silence and prayer help you discern.

- **Use of Repetition** – Repeat a short word or prayer such as: Come, Holy Spirit, come or The Jesus Prayer at each place on the journey.
- **Reading scripture** – Pause, read and reflect on Scripture at each place. You can read sequentially through a book of the Bible or selectively through a particular topic.
- **Open Journaling Method** – Write date, time, place, and the things happening in your life. Continue to write, addressing what you need and seek a word from God.

Walking a Labyrinth

The term Labyrinth originates in Greek mythology where it was the maze like home of the Minotaur – a cruel bull-headed man on the Island of Crete. He was eventually slain by the hero Theseus.

Early Christians adapted the idea of the Labyrinth for their own purposes and the design appears in their churches and Cathedrals from the 4th Century AD. Labyrinths became popular in Medieval times and were commonly used in Christian devotion.

Christians used the Labyrinth as a prayer walk – much like a mini pilgrimage. Prayer walkers moved quietly through the path to centre where they spent time meeting with God and then walked out again. A Labyrinth is different to a maze in that it has no dead-end paths or choices to make. There is only one path to follow which takes you to the centre – the place of meeting or prayer.

Labyrinths come in many types. Some are circular and have the same path in as out. Others have stops on the way with places to reflect. Some have a different pathway to return to the starting place.

The walk at Southland is based broadly on the Labyrinth in use at St Paul's Cathedral in London. We have added a couple of additional points of reflection and made it much larger to fit in an outdoor environment rather than a Cathedral. Our Labyrinth is around 650m long and can take from 20 mins to several hours to move through if you take time to reflect and pray at each place.

The Labyrinth walk is best undertaken with plenty of time to spare. There may be things you want to write down either while on the walk or afterwards so have a journal handy. Take an outdoor chair, a jacket, sunhat and drink, maybe even something to eat – you are on a journey after all. Some people like to meet with a spiritual director either before or after their walk. This can be arranged through our Southland staff if needed.

The Labyrinth is in the paddock near the rear car park. The walk follows the path to the right of the gate.

The Southland Labyrinth

The Journey In

- **Silence**

Here I am invited to sit quietly and create a space in my life to meet with God. God is always present with me, but here I stop, and wait, seeking to become aware of the presence of God in the silence.

- **Noise**

In the moment I create time for God, all kinds of distractions and preoccupations crowd my heart and mind. There are external pressures, inner anxieties, tasks incomplete. Here I acknowledge these concerns, the noises in my heart and mind one by one.

- **Letting go**

If I am to be free to meet with God and receive something new, I need to empty my hands and heart from what occupies them. This is the place of letting go. I am invited to relax under the trees,.. to unwind,.. Laying my burdens down for a time while I journey on.

- **Relationships**

Deep in the core of my being are the places put aside for other people. I come to God as a person in relationship with others. These relationships sometimes bring me joy, comfort, support and encouragement. At other times they are draining, hurtful, and difficult. I don't always act as I should in relationship with the special people God has placed in my life. Here I pause and acknowledge the people, the joys and hurts that are a part of the 'me' I bring to God.

- **Invitation**

Here I receive a personal invitation from God. Look to the centre of the Labyrinth. The Creator of all invites me to come, to meet – to share time together - listening, speaking, praying, just being. “Come to me and I will give you rest”.

- **Me**

As I make the final journey to the centre, all I have to bring to God is me. Here I can put aside any other thing that stands between God and my self. Who I am is all I have. I bring my self as I am to God.

*** Holy Place – Be with God**

There is no agenda here – Accept whatever God brings to your heart as you meet with him. Stay as long as you need...

The Journey Out

- **Self – offering**

All I have to offer the world is my self. A person who is encountering God and is changing as a result. Here I stop to reflect that it is not others who must change but my self who is transformed by meeting God.

- **Command**

As I received the invitation 'Come' – God also gives me a command. 'Go'. Go to love. Go to serve. Go to give. I pause to hear and obey these commands afresh.

- **Others**

As I go, I move back into community. Who are the others God has placed around me? Who are those he is sending me back to? Stand in the centre of the circle of your relationships and quietly imagine each person standing around the edge of the circle.

- **Calling**

Is there a specific task that God is calling me to? A vocation he has given me that I must take up afresh? A challenge he is laying before me, that I need to accept?

- **Kingdom work, justice and peace**

I stand and look at the Island of Tasmania. Is there a place to which God calls me to work and an activity for me to do. How am I to see his kingdom come and serve his purposes of justice and peace?

- **Living Prayer**

At this last stop before re-entering the activity of life, I stop to ask God what I take with me from this walk into everyday life - Vision, commitment, revelation, help, comfort or a challenge? How am I going to live the encounter I have experienced here?

Staying at the Southland Centre

Information Sheet 2005

The following sheet is provided for individuals and group organisers who make enquiries or bookings at Southland.

Hosts: Sue and Jeff McKinnon live on site at Southland (currently inside the building) and will be your hosts during your stay. Contact them if you have any concern before, during or after your stay. Your hosts may not be able to be present at all times during your stay. Where they are unable to be present when you arrive or leave, they will make arrangements with you.

Their goal is to make your stay as pleasant and profitable as possible.

Bookings: Please confirm all bookings including dates, arrival and departure times, numbers and conference needs (rooms, facilities etc). Please do not assume that rooms or facilities will be available without noting these at the time of booking. Please advise us *ahead of time* of any special needs.

Other Guests: Please note that other guests may be present during your stay. Please respect their need for privacy and quiet. Normally you will not be accommodated with folk who are not a part of your group.

Guest Key: Usually each group or individual has access to a guest key so you can leave the Centre at will with access upon return. We recommend all doors and windows are locked whenever you leave the property.

Location: The Centre is located at **69 High Street**, Sheffield (note: this is not our postal address) close to the shops and services with great country walks and panoramic views. Sheffield is just one hour from Launceston and about 50 minutes from Burnie.

Parking: Plenty of off-street parking is available, including much undercover.

Accommodation: Southland currently sleeps 17-23 people (depending on family groupings) in twin-share in eight well heated, large bedrooms. An addition bedroom (an extra 2-3 beds) will also be available soon. Most beds have quality mattresses. Half of the bedrooms have en-suites. The dining room can seat 24 or more people. A pillow and a bedspread are provided on each bed.

Lounge Facilities: Our large lounge can accommodate the above numbers. A smaller lounge seats up to 14 people. Large wood heaters keep the two lounges and dining areas warm.

Conference Facilities: Available at no extra charge are a whiteboard, an overhead projector, a video player and monitor, an electric piano. Please provide your own whiteboard/overhead markers and transparencies. Photocopying can be made available for a fee subject to *prior negotiation* with staff.

Telephone and Internet Access: Mobile phone coverage is available in Sheffield. Landline telephones are available in the public areas of the Centre. These can be used by guests for a fee. Internet access is normally not available. If internet access will be necessary please discuss this with staff prior to your stay.

The Office and Storerooms: For confidentiality and legal reasons the office and storerooms are not normally available to guests. Please ensure your party respects this.

Prayer Room: Our designated prayer room, still being renovated at the rear of the property, is available for individual and group times of solitude. Mid-week visitors are invited to join the Community in their prayer times Tuesdays-Fridays at 7am.

Library: Southland has one of the most extensive Christian resource libraries in Tasmania with about 10,000 books plus audio-visual resources, magazines and articles. Books can be borrowed free of charge on a sixty-day loan period. A separate sheet detailing the sections of the library is available on request.

Meals: Groups can be self-catered, partially-catered or fully-catered. Fully catered includes three meals and two refreshment breaks. We have a fully equipped commercial-standard kitchen. Breakfast and tea/coffee-making provisions are included in overnight fees. Please advise us *ahead of time* of all meal numbers and any special needs (an additional fee may need to be applied in some instances).

Kitchen: Please do not use kitchen and pantry supplies without prior agreement of staff. Please only use the guest section of the fridge.

Washing Up: Catered meals are washed-up for you. All other meals and refreshment breaks should be thoroughly cleaned up including wiping-up and putting away.

Sessions: Southland staff can, *by prior arrangement*, provide input in sessions. An additional fee normally applies.

Outdoors: Our gardens have been significantly developed in 2004. An outdoor labyrinth is available by arrangement.

Things to Do: Our staff can advise on the wide range of recreation activities available to your group including: the murals, great picnic spots, short nature walks, Cradle Mountain National Park (50 minutes away), Mt Roland, steam train rides, golf, local museums and much more! A visitor information folder is available at the Centre. Feel free to ring staff prior to your visit to get details so you can better plan your time.

Fees: Self-catered stays in 2005 cost just **\$18 per person** per night (continental breakfast and tea/coffee-making provisions included) and **\$32 per couple** per night. Fully-catered stays in 2005 cost just \$31.50 per person per night and \$59.00 per couple per night. Fees are payable at the time of your visit or, by arrangement, you can be invoiced. Early payment greatly assists our cash flow and is very much appreciated. Southland does not currently have card facilities.

Cleaning: Guests are asked to clean their en-suite or bathroom and vacuum their room prior to departure. Cleaning items are located in each en-suite, toilet and bathroom. Groups are also asked to vacuum public areas used.

You need to bring: A warm sleeping bag or sheets and blankets, a pillow slip, towel, warm clothing (most of the year) and personal requirements. Limited emergency linen and blankets are available.

Why not drop in for a coffee and a look around? Contact *Jeff and Sue McKinnon* on 6491 1714 to arrange a convenient time.

Need More Info?

The Southland Centre
PO Box 148 (69 High St)
Sheffield, Tas, 7306
Ph: 6491 1714
E: jeff.mckinnon@vision.net.au

Southland Ministries provide an interdenominational service to the churches of Tasmania including consultancy, mentoring and Bible teaching. Our ministry is consciously built upon a life of prayer in community. The Centre is a place of prayer and learning. A wide range of courses and activities are held at the Centre and around the state. Contact us if you would like to regularly obtain our Calendar, Newsletter or emailings.

Other sheets outlining Southland Ministries and ACOM are available upon request.

Currently our staff includes: Tim Dyer, Sue & Jeff McKinnon and David Hetherington.

Ministries Offered By Southland

Pastors Days

Christian Impact Courses *(available in local churches or local areas)*

- Being There for Others – pastoral care
- A Noble Task - eldership
- Reaching your Aussie Neighbour – evangelism

Church Consultancies

Australian College of Ministries *(.acom.tas)*

Pastors Retreats

Mentoring & Supervision

Mentor Training & Mentor Exchanges

World Awareness, World Concern, World Action

Taize Evenings

Colonies of Heaven – Celtic retreats

Quiet Days & Prayer Days

Rave Review