

# Unmasked!

by James Henderson

**A**m I the only one to get confused when wearing a mask? A few weeks back I got very excited when one of my favourite coffee shops reopened and so I rushed into town to go there.

I had my face mask on when I ordered my flat white. I tried to pay by using my phone, but it would not process. What was the problem? My phone's security works by facial recognition and the mask obscured my face!

I felt flustered and peered intently at the phone, thinking at any moment it was going to allow me in. People in the socially distanced line behind me were sniggering as they watched, and I too began to laugh.

Masks have a fascinating history and were worn for all sorts of reasons, such as protection and entertainment, and they still are. I remember watching a movie which featured a masquerade, a party game during which people wore elaborate masks in order to conceal who they were.

The idea goes back to the theatres of ancient Greece and elsewhere, where actors would don a mask to get into character. Typically, they'd use a mask that featured a recognisable attribute of the role they were playing.

The famous Noh masks from Japan would demonstrate different emotional expressions, depending on the angle of view. Perhaps, if we're honest, we all try to put on

metaphorical masks to protect ourselves or to hide who we are deep inside.

Some years back a friend of mine, who knew I was a Christian, asked me about God. What is he like? Would he please come out from behind his mask and identify himself?

My friend was being sarcastic, but I had an answer. Jesus came, I said to him, to show us who God is, to reveal how God's main quality is love. It's something worth noting. If we want to know what God is like, how he thinks and how he cares for us, we look to the life of Jesus. God is not hidden behind some mask...

Jesus is God unmasked.

