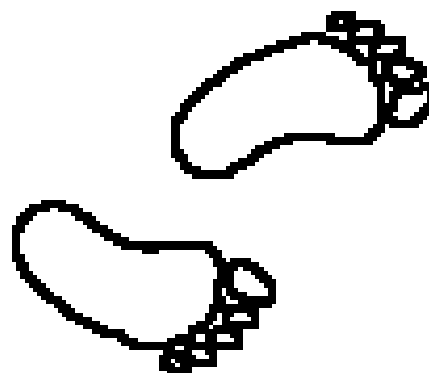


August / September
2005
Issue 14

The Next Step

REFORMING
ALLIANCE

Within the Uniting Church in Australia



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

Rev. Malcolm Richards – 10th July 2005

Malcolm Richards has been known to some of us for many years as he grew up in Campbell and in the same church many of us attended.

In the midst of their preparations to return to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) in Africa with the Church Missionary Society (Anglican), we were glad to welcome him, his wife Elizabeth and daughter Rebecca to our service on 10 July.

Elizabeth told us a little of what they will be doing and showed us some slides of the locality, colleagues, etc.. They will be located in Kindu, having previously been in Goma when they were working for CMS in Zaire, as the country was then known, some years ago.

Malcolm, in his sermon, asked 'What Good News?'. He had thought that in a country that had experienced so much recent turmoil and suffering that the people would be particularly receptive to a message of peace, love and forgiveness – a Good News message. In fact the information he has received back is that such a message is getting a largely negative response. Why?

As christians we accept God's forgiveness for all that is wrong in our lives but in accepting that forgiveness we also repent of our sins and aim, with God's help, to eliminate all the shortcomings from our lives.

Most Congolese people are enthusiastic about being forgiven, but much less so about repentance and changing their lives. Hate, born out of atrocities and the evil done to them, their families and friends, is very hard to let go of, so forgiving others and repenting of hate and the desire for revenge is a major hurdle for the christian message.

In our own society hate and revenge may not be such a life focus but we too have obstacles to faith. Many of us are focused on things like money, career, sport, good times, etc., all of which can take our allegiance away from God. We lose sight of and interest in God's good news.

As christians we make Jesus our Lord and King. Many of those around us are not prepared for such a challenge and all that involves.

Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.

ID

3rd & 4th Sundays in July

On 24th July Ted Dennis challenged us with Jesus' question "Who do you say I am?".

The following week we met again for a fellowship tea and some hymn singing.

ID

The Will of God will never take you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.

The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.

You can tell how big a person is by what it takes to discourage him.

Meetings

Business meetings are something that most of us attend with a degree of reluctance but that we also see as an organisational necessity.

Most of us have welcomed the informality of our fellowship and the minimal meetings that our structure has required. In order to ensure that the opinions of everyone in the fellowship are considered, however, it is necessary to meet and discuss matters of interest and importance. So it was that in early August many from our fellowship travelled to Spence and assembled at the McPhan's home for a meeting and meal.

After devotions, a financial summary was circulated and there was a brief mention of the possibility of the provision of some pastoral care. We decided to modify our name from the unwieldy 'Canberra Christian Fellowship in the Methodist Tradition' to 'Canberra Christian Fellowship' with 'in the Methodist Tradition' following in brackets as a comment when thought desirable, providing our enquiries suggested no other group was using that name. Ken McPhan will become our 'money man' and will investigate options in opening a bank account. The great need in Niger was raised and we agreed to donate \$500-00 through the Christian Blind Mission International to assist the people there.

Once our discussions were concluded and grace said, we began to sample the plentiful goodies that comprised dinner. I can report that no-one had any excuse to return home hungry, although some may have had good reason to visit the gym for a remedial workout the next day.

If meetings are necessary, I think we have found a very satisfactory format for them.

ID

Sunday 14 August 2005 – Rev. Paul Dudley

Sometimes things don't go as planned and so it was on the 14th August. Rev. David McDonald had been down to preach for us but discovered he was unable to do so. His fellow Crossroads Church pastor, Rev Paul Dudley, took David's place.

We discovered Paul had grown up as a Methodist, later attended a Baptist Church and later still an Anglican Church before training as an Anglican, commencing his ordained ministry in an Anglican Church and then moving to Canberra as a pastor at Crossroads (an independent church). Quite an ecumenical journey.

Paul's subject was "Two Ways" and was based on Psalm 1.

He commenced by telling us a little of his family (wife plus three daughters aged 6, 4 and 2). The girls have dreams of what they would like to do when they are older. At the moment they dream of being ballerinas. What are the secrets of succeeding in life?

Paul suggested that Psalm 1 gave the answer. It tells us that happiness comes by being selective in the advice we follow, not taking bad advice. By meditating on and following the Law of the Lord we find happiness, we succeed. Wickedness, in contrast, leads to condemnation and doom.

Success in God's eyes we find through Christ and we discover Christ if we delight in and meditate on God's Word.

In bringing God's Word to us, Paul needed to pause a couple of times due to the roar of aircraft flying overhead associated with the remembrance of 60 years since the end of World War II, however that did not in any way detract from his message. Perhaps in some ways it may have been a reminder of what can happen when people are misled and look for guidance or leadership in the wrong place.

During supper two F111 planes flew over and performed a spectacular 'dump and burn' manoeuvre which a number of us were able to watch. ID

Rev. Abraham Tang – The Three Secrets of Blessed Living – 28 August

Most of us like to hear secrets, so no doubt we were all on the edge of our seats when Abraham Tang announced early in his sermon that he was going to share three secrets with us – 3 secrets of blessed living. (Thoughts arising from Psalm 84).

Blessings come to us from God. They come as we make God our FOCUS, our HELPER and our source of HAPPINESS.

There are many distractions in this world, money, family, 'spirituality' (e.g. new age) etc.. We should remain focused on God and we will experience his kindness. 'One day spent in God's temple is better than 1000 days anywhere else'.

God helps us. Coming home and discovering burglars taking away her possessions, one lady parked-in the robbery van and ordered the thieves to sit and wait for the police to arrive. When asked about her courage in taking such unexpected action she replied 'God was with me'. One plus God is a majority.

God wants to bless us. As we put our faith in Christ, God's Holy Spirit produces in us the fruit of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. This is a great recipe for happiness and joy. ID

Coming Up

We meet at the Campbell Gospel Chapel, Chauvel St., Campbell

Bible Study every Tuesday at 2-30 pm at the Campbell Gospel Chapel, Chauvel Street.
(For further details, contact Joyce Hall – 6241 2085).

Sunday 11 September 2005 at 5 pm – Dr. Howard Bradbury

Sunday 25 September 2005 – Rev. Ron Peters (Communion Service)

Sunday 9 October 2005 – to be arranged

Sunday 23 October 2005 – Rev. Dr. Ross Kingham



Photo from Barnabas Ministries web site
<http://members.ozemail.com.au/~barnabasmin/Ross.htm>

Sunday 13 November 2005 – Rev. Warwick Brain

Sunday 27 November 2005 – Rev. Lawrence Coutts

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Need help with transport? If so, ask. Someone may be able to help.

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A friend is someone who thinks you're a good egg even though you're slightly cracked.

There's a difference between having an open mind and letting the wind blow through your ears!

True friendship is like sound health.... the value of it is seldom known until it is lost.

Genius may have its limitations, but stupidity is not thus handicapped.
