

February
– March 2006
Issue 16

The Next Step

REFORMING
ALLIANCE

Within the Uniting Church in Australia



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)



Bible Study - Tuesdays at 2-30 pm



**<<<<< Left to Right: Ruth, Wendy,
Audrey, Marie, Howard**

**Left to Right: Keith, Claudia, >>>>>
Isobel, Nick, Marinus, Wilma, Rita**



The Tuesday Bible Study is led by Joyce Hall and caters for anyone who wants to meet with others to study God's Word and to learn from it.

They meet at the Gospel Chapel at 2-30 pm on Tuesdays.

The photos above were taken at their Christmas lunch held at Joyce and Ian's home.

Regulars Joyce, Ian, Ailsa and Pam are missing from the pictures.

ID

Ron Peters - 22 January - Guidance

An evangelist, visiting a small town, asked a local how to get to the Post Office and went on to explain he was going to preach on 'How to get to heaven'. The local responded 'How can you do that when you don't even know the way to the Post Office?'

Ron Peters used that little story to introduce his topic of 'Guidance'.

In life we have many choices and decisions to make. For example in deciding which church to join there are a number of things we can consider: Denomination; Style of worship, location; What I can contribute to the church?; What Biblical teaching is available?; What small groups can I join?; etc..

Some people are very good at making decisions but not so good at putting them into action. Some people make a decision or set a goal then do nothing, others take some small steps toward their goal while others succeed in taking big steps. We need to take a step at a time.

Divine resources for guidance include

- **P**assages of scripture
- **P**resents from God (gifts / talents)
- **P**rophecy
- **P**rovidence – provisioning He provides
- **P**rudence / common sense
- **P**eace of God

All these should be encompassed with **P**atience (although the person who prayed 'Lord, grant me patience, but hurry!' may have misunderstood the concept of patience).

Ron told the story of Dwight L. Moody who left home at 17 and gave his life to Christ at a revival meeting. When much of Chicago burned, including his home, his church and the YMCA, Dwight felt directed elsewhere by God. He went to England and preached. He had a considerable influence on the Cambridge Seven, seven enthusiastic Christian young men, who subsequently went to China to serve God there. One of those seven was the famous English cricketer C.T.Studd. Besides China, Studd served on the mission field in both India and Africa. ID

Ray Hughes - 12 February - Coping with Adversity

Early in our service we enjoyed the singing of the Tongan choir from the congregation that meets at O'Connor. Later we appreciated Ray Hughes teaching from God's Word for us.

Rev. Ray Hughes began his sermon by noting the abundance of sporting events currently vying for the attention of sports lovers.

Hurdles events were of particular interest. Some hurdlers seem to just glide over the hurdles on their way to the finish line while other competitors make hard work of it, knocking hurdles over or even being tripped up by them. No matter how each athlete manages the hurdles, in an event the obstacles are the same for each person; they are equitable.

Life presents hurdles for us all in the form of health issues, financial challenges, relationship matters, prejudice and numerous other ways. These hurdles are, unlike at athletic events, not consistent and some people seem to face a much greater range of much more challenging hurdles than others and far more often too. Job springs to mind as a Biblical example of such a person.

Job reacted to his circumstances in a variety of ways but he did not turn his back on God. In all circumstances we are able to interact with God. He is a faithful God who doesn't leave us isolated or alienated.

We have been placed in this world by a God who wants to know us. When we face difficulties we tend to focus on removing the problems and often ask God in our prayers to eliminate whatever is troubling us. That is usually not God's way, but He is always there to help us face the things that confront us. ID



Our congregation was a little slow in becoming aware of the **Jesus. All about life** campaign that was planned for the Canberra region. It didn't take us long, however, to agree we should support the campaign along with a great many other churches in our city and nearby.

We have registered to be a part of the Canberra campaign and made a donation to help meet expenses.

Jesus. All about life is a Bible Society initiative and the Canberra effort benefits from the experience gained in a recent media campaign run in South Australia.

- *Ninety percent of Australians will see the **Jesus. All about life** media campaign at least ten times at a cost of less than \$0.50c per person. ...*
- *The **Jesus. All about life** campaign will direct its message to three specific audiences*
Young adults,
Young families and
those approaching mid-life
Research indicates that these are three key times in a person's life when they are looking for answers, seeking guidance and looking for values.
- *The **Jesus. All about life** campaign will distribute 150,000 response books containing a Gospel of Luke, background to the Bible, answers to the key questions being asked by the community about Jesus, together with a section on how to become a Christian and find a local church.*

Aims

To promote the relevance of the Christian message for all Australians.

1. *Generate interest in the Christian message so that people will respond by asking for more information, resulting in changed lives.*
2. *Encourage an increase in the quality of commitment amongst Australian Christians as they become excited by the campaign and so encouraged to step out in faith in relationships in their workplace or socially. ...*
4. *Increase the number of people attending church and discipleship courses such as Alpha.*
5. *Generate a positive community response. ...*

Information above in italics was sourced from the www.jesusallaboutlife.com.au website.

ID

Friday Discussion Group

This group has been working through "The Purpose Driven Life" book by Rick Warren. As the blurb says "*The Purpose-Driven Life* is a blueprint for Christian living in the 21st century – a lifestyle based on God's eternal purposes, not cultural values."

By reading, discussing and examining the many Biblical references, we have gained insights into God's working in this world and with us.

The book has been used as part of the '40 Days of Purpose' programme that many churches have followed recently.

ID

In late January Rev. Rod James from South Australia spoke to us on 'Heresy, Controversy and Reformation in the Church Today'. There is not room for a report on that here but hopefully a report will appear in the next issue of "Gathered Together".

ID

We had some unexpected experiences on our 12 day motor bike safari. In our single bed in a mud hut we were feeling safe in a mosquito net when it started shaking— a rat had dropped off the roof beams and landed on our net. In another town we stayed in a derelict abandoned hotel with lots of resident bats. Imagine Elizabeth's surprise was when one flew into the bath. In the same town the wife of an evangelist had just been bitten by a snake and had not had any medical treatment. Her whole leg was badly swollen. We paid about \$20 for treatment— not much to save a life but beyond their capability.

In all the safari was eye opening. The level of need amongst ordinary people is overwhelming. We met whole villages with no access to health care or education, families still traumatised by the war, orphans with no support, and people just trying to survive.

Church life is getting back to "normal"- rebuilding churches and gathering people but many pastors are feeling discouraged. In our 560km trip we visited 3 Archdeaconries with a 2 day seminar at each. Elizabeth taught on "why would an all powerful loving God allow people to suffer?"- very necessary teaching out there right now! Malcolm gave a Biblical theology overview to help pastors understand the Bible as a whole - totally new for all and hopefully will lead to some better preaching.



PRAYER

Thank God

- for keeping us safe and healthy on our 12 day trip.
- that the referendum was peaceful and has prepared the way for elections to be held later this year.
- That we have been granted our 5 years residence visas

Please pray

- For Elizabeth learning to ride the motor bike
- That we will be good communicators as we teach and talk to church leaders.
- For the needs of DR Congo including aids education, health care
- For Bible School preparations

- We have had a drum of petrol flown in from Goma. This means less trips to town to look for petrol and no more worry about dirty petrol with shoe polish and kerosene added.
- The president visited Kindu before the referendum in December. He symbolically dug the first hole for the pylons to bring electricity here from 100km away. Work has come to a standstill as they have run out of poles.
- We have been able to buy beef in the markets. Cows are walked here from Bukavu about 500km and butchered one by one— just need to be sure how fresh the meat is as there is no refrigeration.

Working in Kindu

In January we worked not in Kindu but in the Diocese of North Kivu where CMS had missionaries from 1987-1996. We were asked to be part of a team teaching at a clergy conference. It was great catching up with some people we knew— "You taught me at such and such a seminar in 1989, I've still got the notes!"

Back in Kindu we rushed to prepare a Sunday School teachers' seminar for the local Archdeaconry. They have no resources so Elizabeth prepared a 20 week syllabus. We also taught them Swahili kid's songs that we used in Goma years ago.

Bible School. There are various jobs which we are trying to do simultaneously. 1) Organize to **build it**— What design? Who will make the mud bricks and how much do they want? Where will we get the money from to build. 2) Organize fields to be planted so the students will have **food**. -Who will clear the forest and prepare the ground? Where will we get the plants from to plant? Who can we employ as guard and general overseer? 3) Work with and train the Bible School team in preparing a **new syllabus** using the principles of contextual learning. 4) **Finding students**. Getting application forms out to parishes (a new ideal) and getting clergy to hand them out!



Preaching for us must have been quite 'tame' for Malcolm compared with recent experiences.



Church being rebuilt using locally made and fired bricks. On the right is a kiln made of the mud bricks to be fired.

Eric Goudie



A good number of us have known Eric for many years through his active participation in the Reid Uniting Church. For a short time now Eric has, in addition to Reid, been attending our services and the Friday Discussion Group.

We were unable to contact him on Friday 17th March to arrange to pick him up for the Discussion Group and the next day learned he had been called home by the God he served throughout his life.

A kind and generous man, he will be missed.

ID

Warwick Brain - 12 March - Being Prepared

Last Sunday Warwick Brain preached a very interesting sermon in which he showed us how some of the happenings recorded in the New Testament are rooted in Jewish customs and experience. This gave us insights into the communion service that followed.



At the Last Supper that Jesus had with His disciples he broke the bread and gave it to them as a symbol of His broken body and the cup as a symbol of His shed blood. Jesus told us to eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Him. Some churches have shrouded the communion service in ritual, but it was never meant to be held in a temple, but in a home at a meal.

Warwick also drew the comparison between the Passover lamb, the blood of which was sprinkled on the doors of the houses of the Hebrews so that the angel of death would pass over that house and thus the first born sons of the Hebrews would be saved (Ex 12), and Jesus, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world by His sacrificial blood. We are saved from eternal death by faith in Jesus.

It was explained to us that in an extended Jewish family there would be the father's house and nearby the dwellings of his sons. "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you" (John 14:2). When a son became engaged to marry he would take a cup and in the presence of both families he would give it to the girl who was to be his bride, who was usually chosen by the families. If she accepted the cup she would become engaged to him and make preparations for her wedding, but she would not know the hour or the day, nor would the son, but only his father. Only the father knew the time and at that time the trumpet would be blown to let everyone know.

Warwick compared this with the statement "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father." (Mat 24: 36). We are to **be prepared** for the second coming of Christ.

When the girl accepted the cup from the young man, she accepted the responsibility to dedicate her life to her future husband. Our responsibility to Jesus is like that of the bride to her husband. We must be faithful to Jesus. We are to become more like Him. We must exhibit more and more those characteristics that Jesus showed to perfection : love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control (Gal 5: 22).

Howard Bradbury
17/3/06

Ron Peters mentioned cricketer / missionary C.T.Studd in his sermon in January. The verse below comes from C.T.Studd.

*Some wish to live within the sound
Of Church or Chapel Bell.
I want to run a rescue shop
within a yard of Hell.*

Coming Up

Bible Study

Tuesdays at 2-30 pm at the Gospel Chapel

All welcome - contact Joyce Hall (6241 2085) for more information

Discussion Group

Fridays at 2-15 pm at the Gospel Chapel

Discussing "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren

All welcome - contact Ted Dennis (62593487) for more information

Services

Sunday 26 March 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Phil Anderson

Sunday 9 April 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Jim Midgeley

Sunday 23 April 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Ray Hughes

Sunday 30 April 2006 at 5 pm – Pizza tea followed by a talk on the Sudan
Inland Mission, Ethiopia by Winston and Rae Newman

Sunday 14 May 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Ron Peters

Sunday 28 May 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Ray Hughes (2nd Anniversary Service)

Sunday 11 June 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Paul Dudley

Sunday 25 June 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. David McDonald

Sunday 9 July 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Abraham Tang

Sunday 23 July 2006 at 5 pm – Rev. Dr. Ross Kingham

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