

April - May 2006  
Issue 17

# The Next Step



REFORMING  
ALLIANCE  
Within the Uniting Church in Australia

Canberra Christian Fellowship  
(in the Methodist Tradition)

## The King is Coming (Rev. Jim Midgley), Palm Sunday, 9 April

"The King is coming" is taken from a song written by Mr and Mrs Gaden. "Blest is the King who comes in the name of the Lord" (Luke 19:38). The entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is an enacted parable. Jesus was re-enacting the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech 9: 9-10) and by so doing he was proclaiming himself to be the Messiah. The ordinary people were very excited and welcomed him gladly because their King had come, but the religious authorities were against him.

Jesus was saddened at seeing the city of Jerusalem and he wept over it. Jerusalem was the capital of God's world. The Jews were God's special people whom He had chosen to evangelise the world, but their leaders did not welcome the King. Jesus knew that forty years down the track the city would be destroyed by the Romans.

Pilate asked the crowd whether they had a king, to which they answered "our only king is Caesar". The Jews said "his blood be on us and on our children" and they have suffered to this day.

Today is not much different from 2000 years ago. We are not a Christian country. We are overrun by people who have lost their faith. Not even church people accept Jesus fully. The Lord seeks our action not just our words. If we are more interested in excitement rather than truth, darkness instead of light, then we are doomed.

Jesus still comes to us today. He comes in truth and life to be the Lord of our life. May we accept Him into our hearts!

Howard Bradbury

**"OUR CHURCH IS PRAYER CONDITIONED."**



**"Make your eternal reservations now --- 'smoking' or 'non-smoking'?"**



**"God answers knee-mail."**

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## **Good Friday Service - To you is it nothing ...? (from hymn 188 MHB) - Dr E.Dennis**

**Readings: OT - Isaiah 53:1-7, Gospel - Mark 15:25-39, Epistle - Heb. 10:11-25.**

What is "good" about Good Friday, the day the Saviour died? Perhaps the name is a corruption of "God's Friday", the day when the greatness of God's love to us was shown on the cross. "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." (2 Cor. 5:19) - that indeed makes it good!

But what have I done that is so terrible that anyone, let alone Jesus, should have to die? Jesus (Matt. 22:36) stated the greatest commandment was to Love God. My great sin was to not love Him. Whenever we ignore or belittle Him, or are casual, heedless towards Him we violate that greatest commandment. And only He could make it right.

The hymn writer asks, "To you is it nothing that Jesus should die? ... Come, see if there ever was sorrow like His." And what sorrow!

To each one comes the questions: To you is it nothing that Jesus:

- endured the agony of Gethsemane,
- was betrayed by all His friends and supporters,
- was stripped, beaten, spat upon, humiliated,
- felt He was abandoned by God (Why have You forsaken me?),
- should die?

How can I respond to this love? What better than that old Methodist Covenant Promise?

### **Covenant Promise**

*I am no longer my own, but Thine. Put me to what You will, rank me with whom You will; put me to doing, put me to suffering; let me be employed for You or laid aside for You, exalted for You or brought low for You; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily yield all things to Thy pleasure and disposal.*

*And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You are mine, and I am Thine. So be it. And this Covenant which I make on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.*

from sermon notes

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## **Dazzled (Rev. Ray Hughes), 23 April**

In this service we were greatly blessed by the singing of the Fijian AOG mens choir, then Rev. Ray Hughes preached on the resurrection.

Jesus had repeatedly told his disciples that he would die and rise again, but they had not believed or understood him.

In John's gospel we have a first hand account by John of what happened. We read that on seeing the empty tomb "he saw and believed" (John 20:8). Peter and John were both there and part of their ongoing responsibility was to be witnesses to this amazing event. Death was the final enemy and God, through the resurrection of Jesus, broke the power of death.

We each need to look to areas of darkness in our own hearts, such as anger and resentment, and bring these to God. The thing we must hold onto is hope.

Ray led us in a communion service and his ministry was greatly appreciated by all.

Howard Bradbury

## **ETHIOPIA – AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **Summary of Talk by Rae and Winston Newman 30/4/06**

Rae and Winston shared with us many of their experiences while teaching in Addis Ababa for the first 6 months of 2005. They had gone to Bingham Academy as volunteers to cover a shortage of staff. The school caters for Years K-12 students who are children of missionaries, diplomats, government aid workers and some Ethiopians.



However, being in Ethiopia gave them many opportunities to help some of the local people. Winston helped Bingham students build and paint furniture for a school library at the Mother Theresa AIDS Orphanage, which looks after 300 children. Rae established a composting system for residents at Bingham Academy and taught the gardeners at the school valuable lessons in planting and caring for plants.



**Rae teaching girls at Fistula Hospital**

Rae also held a weekly class in embroidery for nurses' aides at the Fistula Hospital and spent one day each week teaching girls at Desta Mender, a rural village annexe of the Fistula Hospital where fistula patients who can't be fully restored go to be rehabilitated.

They also told of several individuals they were able to help. There was Ijigaiyu, a single mother who was given an electric cooker to help her earn an income. Her 15 year old son, Demissie was deaf and they were able to obtain a hearing aid and batteries through a remarkable series of "chance" encounters. With gifts from friends in their church, they were able to help Lemma, a Christian who has started a school for some of the poorest children in his neighbourhood, trying to finance the school out of his own meagre resources. Another man, Meritu and his wife have decided, as their Christian ministry in a small village, to adopt 8 AIDS orphans. Rae and Winston were able to pass on some funds from family to help them house and look after these children.

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**Rae with Ijigaiyu and her electric cooker**

In summing up, they invited us to consider taking up similar opportunities to "Make our wrinkles count", to use the title of the brochure of SIM, the organisation with which they went to Ethiopia.

## Jesus the true vine, (Rev. Ron Peters), Mothers' Day, 14 May

There were two differences in our service today from our normal services. The first is that we had a childrens talk by Dr Ted Dennis which encouraged the children present and gave the adults plenty of food for thought. A second difference is that Rev Ron Peters gave each of us a copy of a passage from the Bible (John 15: 1-17) and asked us to think about the various themes that run through this marvellous passage. Then Ron asked us to point out some of the themes. There were many points made, too many to summarise here.

Jesus gave us a word picture of himself as the vine and we as the branches.

He said (v 16) "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last".

(v 17) "This is my command: Love each other."

It is unusual to be commanded to love each other, but Jesus commands us to love each other. Ron asked us several questions.

"What is a barrier to maintaining a connection with God?" Selfishness, anger, sin.

"How can we strengthen the connection with God?" By praying, trusting and obeying, by doing something good in His name.

"How do we connect with others?" By hospitality, through our kindness, by being interested and praying for them, by doing something together.

We are to reach out in love to others.

Howard Bradbury

## Jesus, All About Life

**Sunday 28 May at 2pm till 4pm at St Matthew's Anglican Church**, Corner of Lauren Street and McBryde Crescent, Wanniasa (Ph. 6231 7347) - This will be a wonderful time together to thank God for his direction with the campaign.

The main thrust of advertising is now over but we are still getting requests for response packs from enquirers primarily due to bonus ads being screened on WIN television at the rate of 5 or 6 a day. These will continue over the next few weeks.

However, we have been given another marvellous opportunity to advertise, this time in Canberra cinemas while the Da Vinci Code movie is screening. Advertising will take place from 18 May through to 8 June when most people will see the movie.

Since the Canberra Region Campaign commenced on 5 March, 2006 & As at the 19 April 2006, **497 packs** have been **requested**.

### Campaign Finances

To date we have received \$142,000, which is getting closer to our estimated \$150,000 needed for the campaign.

**Please continue praying for our region and the mobilisation of Christians who are sharing their faith with those they meet and pointing people to the gospel of Jesus.** The campaign is far from over with WIN television ads still running and cinema advertising about to start.

The contact for the Jesus. All about Life project is:

Rob Keating

Phone: 6231 5387

Mobile: 0428 315 387

Email: robstmatts@gmail.com



from the "Jesus, All About Life" newsletter and Progress Summary

## News from Malcolm and Elizabeth Richards in DR Congo

Dear Howard and Ruth,

Thankyou for your letter. We hope the anniversary of Canberra Christian Fellowship is a time of rejoicing. How has the church been going?

We have just had a 2 week break in Goma and are hoping to return to Kindu on a UN flight tomorrow – we were bumped off Fridays flight as UN staff have priority so there is always uncertainty with travel. We have bought a second hand 4wd while we've been here and it was flown to Kindu today – we have heard it arrived safely.

...

Please pray about the Anglican church here in Goma – a senior minister has rebelled against the authority of the bishop and is using soldiers to support him against other Christians in the church here.

Elizabeth and Malcolm

## *Our lives in Kindu, DR Congo*

- ◊ The last week in Kindu has had temperatures well into 40's. It is supposed to be the rainy season but no rain for weeks now.
- ◊ In the last week we have disposed of 2 large rats and one 30cm snake from our sitting room.
- ◊ Washing up liquid in a local shop costs twice as much as a carving knife.
- ◊ We thought our leading youth group days were over but we were recently asked to restart and run the local youth group. We have agreed to do it for a limited time while we train other people to continue. At the last meeting we asked everyone to tell us their name and favourite food. The answers all included rice (not surprising as not much else available).
- ◊ One 23 year old makes mud bricks to pay school fees. He is paid \$3 for 5 days work and has to miss school to do it. He has 2 weeks to find \$15.



The site for the new Bible School. The "Berea" Bible School is being built on a large concession over the other side of the river next to where the Bishop Peter Dawson Pastoral Centre is currently located.

## *Starting a Bible School*

Every step takes longer than we would expect.....

For example:

- We need 22,000 fired mud bricks. The people making them can't start without a shelter for the machines and bricks (to prevent rain damage)

The shelter is half built but lacks a roof.

Tarpaulins are the cheapest option but need to be flown here from Goma.

Finally having bought tarpaulins they couldn't be fitted until the end of a funeral as the person entrusted with them lent them out.

- We are trying to organize fields to be planted for food.

Having paid people to clear the ground, the plants were not all available. Now the plants are available it is too overgrown and needs clearing again and the planting team says they want more money even though they didn't finish the job last time.

## *Prayer and Praise*

Thank God for answered prayer:

- ◊ Our boxes of books have started to arrive
- ◊ Parcels received via Rwanda
- ◊ Seminar on healing wounds of trauma went well
- ◊ Over 60 applicants for the bible school.

Please pray for

- ◊ Health and safety as we travel to conduct interviews for Bible School candidates
- ◊ Wisdom for bible school committee as select 25 students
- ◊ Thomas who has taken on job of overseer of development of bible school site
- ◊ Country of DR Congo
- ◊ That we find a suitable car in Goma this month

**Q:** What should a good sermon be about?

**A:** About God ... and about 10 minutes!

One beautiful Sunday morning, a pastor announced to his congregation: "My good people, I have here in my hands three sermons.-a \$1000 sermon that lasts five minutes, a \$500 sermon that lasts fifteen minutes, and a \$100 sermon that lasts a full hour. Now, we'll take the collection and see which one I'll deliver."

**Preacher:** Can everyone hear me at the back?

**Voice from the back:** Yes, but I wouldn't mind changing seats with someone who can't.

## 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 28 May 2006 at 5 pm** – Rev. Ray Hughes (2<sup>nd</sup> 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** – arrangements to be advised

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

**Sunday 30 July 2006 at 5 pm** – Pizza tea and fellowship time

**Sunday 13 August 2006 at 5 pm** – Rev. Abraham Tang

**Sunday 27 August 2006 at 5 pm** – Rev. Ray Hughes

## Contacts

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