

December 2006  
Issue 22

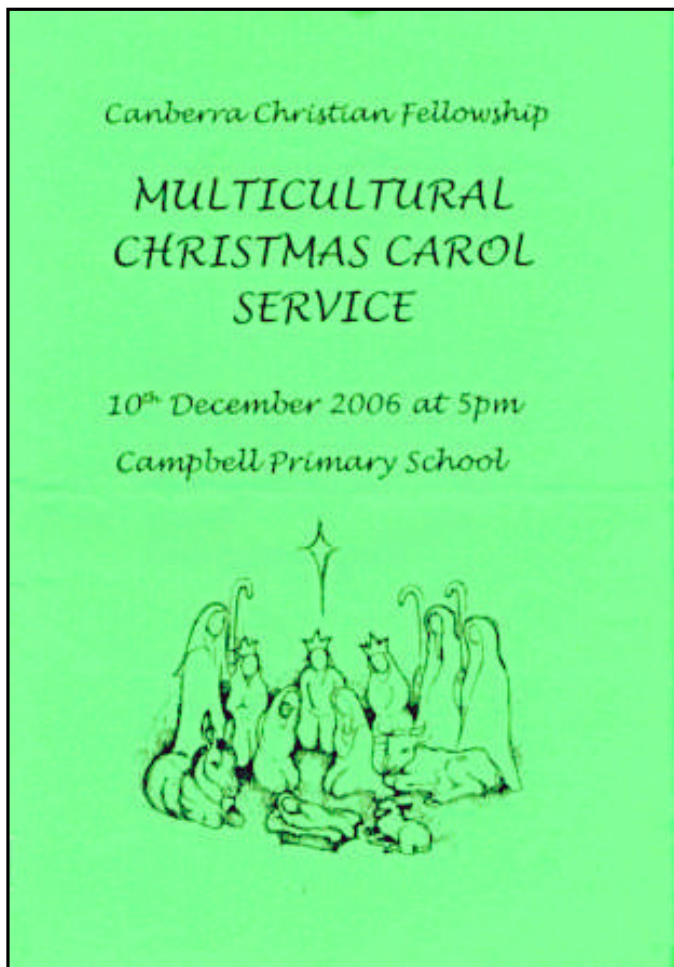
# The Next Step

REFORMING  
ALLIANCE

Within the Uniting Church in Australia



Canberra Christian Fellowship  
(in the Methodist Tradition)



Top Left: Rev. Abraham Tang giving the message,  
Above: Refreshments,  
Right: Antoinette explaining the significance of  
Christmas Tree decorations.

A number of messages expressing appreciation for the carols have been received in the last few days.



## Carolling in Canberra

Having held successful Multicultural Carol services in 2004 and 2005, the Canberra Christian Fellowship were hopeful of another wonderful evening in 2006. There was much encouragement during our planning and everything seemed to fall into place.

Finally the evening arrived and we were pleased to welcome around 220 – 230 people to the local primary school hall. Our goal was to present a mix of choirs from different communities and carols that everyone could sing together, followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship afterwards. We deliberately tried to avoid 'churchiness' which can put off non-church people while delivering a strong Christian witness and message.

The carols sung together had a real warmth and power and our choirs provided variety while reminding us



Top Left: **Congregation and musicians**

Above Left: **Papua New Guinea Cultural Group Choir**

Above: **Our musicians (piano not shown)**

Left: **Chinese Methodist Choir**

Below: **Reid Korean Choir**

that Jesus came for people everywhere. We had singers from the Chinese, Korean, Fijian, Philippino, Papua New Guinean and Tongan communities plus there were Indonesians with us too, although they didn't sing for us this time.

Our carols involved a lot of effort, but that effort resulted in an evening when people came together and remembered the true meaning of Christmas. It was gratifying to welcome a number of people there who had been attracted by our advertising or personal invitations.

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Top Left: **Fijian Methodist Choir**  
 Top Right: **The congregation**  
 Middle Left: **Papua New Guinea Cultural Group Choir**  
 Middle Right: **Philippino International Christian Group singer**  
 Bottom Left: **O'Connor Tongan Choir**  
 Bottom Right: **Refreshments**

Canberra Christian Fellowship's Multicultural Christmas Carol service featured choirs and songs from six Asia-Pacific nations; a talented ensemble of musicians; five carols sung heartily by a large congregation and small gifts to the children present – all to celebrate the birth of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Reverend Abraham Tang preached on the theme "Any room for Jesus?" Abraham noted that to some people Christmas means shopping; the exchange of gifts; a holiday; time with family, but for Christians the birth of Jesus remains paramount. Christians celebrate because Jesus' entry into the world brings joy and hope. Some churches have a crib with Jesus and his earthly parents surrounded by animals. We forget the smell of the stable and the cold on that Bethlehem night. Jesus – Creator and Sustainer of all things, Almighty God – was born in a manger as a baby because He loved us. The occasion for these events – the journey to Bethlehem, the town of David – was for the most bureaucratic of reasons: Caesar ordered a census to be taken to find out how much tribute (tax) he could levy on Roman subjects.

Joseph and Mary had been married for less than nine months – Mary was carrying a child conceived by the Holy Spirit. There was no room at the inn. Would you give up your place in a hotel for Jesus?, for a pregnant woman coming into labour?

Meanwhile, on the hillsides around Bethlehem, shepherds plied their low-status job in the cold night. It was to such as these that God chose to first reveal the Good News. Angels appeared; the shepherds were terrified. Scripture says two things cannot be overcome: death and sin. The angel announced liberation from both through the Saviour Jesus.

We need to involve Jesus at the centre of our lives. He is the friend who enters our house and we don't mind where he goes. With some guests we might be cautious – we wouldn't let them out of the living room, but with Jesus on the throne of our lives there is no-where in our lives that he cannot go.

Vince Lorimer

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## Letterbox Drop

To let the community know about the Carol service, we put up posters, put an ad. in the the "fridge door" and distributed leaflets in letterboxes. Thanks to all those volunteers who helped with these tasks

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It was Christmas and the judge was in a merry mood as he asked the prisoner, "What are you charged with?"

"Doing my Christmas shopping early," replied the defendant.

"That's no offence," said the judge. "How early were you doing this shopping?"

"Before the store opened," answered the defendant.

*From A Barrel of Fun, J. John and Mark Stibbe, Monarch Books, P 37.*

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## Filled with the Spirit of God

**12 November 2006 – Rev. Ray Hughes – Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

Jesus was not interested in rules. He attacked the Pharisees who followed man-made rules about ceremonial washing of hands before meals. He called them hypocrites because they found ways around following the commandments of God, such as honouring ones parents by making up their own rules. Their religion was all

about externals. Jesus quoted from the prophet Isaiah "These people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Is 29:13).

Jesus focuses on the heart. He is not so much interested in what we do with our lives (for example), but in why we do what we do. He looks inside at our motives and at our inner being (our heart). We need clean hearts. Jesus wants the kingdom of God to come into my heart and into your heart.



Relaxation time – Ray vs Rachel

JHB

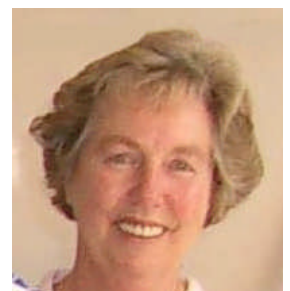
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## Bible Society Representative

Marie Allen has volunteered to be the Bible Society representative for our fellowship.

For information on what the Bible Society does, projects the Bible Society is undertaking and how you can support the Bible Society, please see Marie.

Please see her too for any Bible Society materials you might require.





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## **PEACE BE STILL**

**19 November 2006 – Rev. Paul Dudley**

Paul continued his occasional series on the Psalms, this week teaching us about Psalm 3.

He spoke of his children, afraid of the dark. For this is the theme of the Psalm: fear of the dark, of loneliness, fear, a man, a king stripped of dignity. This was the predicament of the Psalm's author, King David, fleeing from his rebellious son Absalom, surrounded by his enemies. They want to crush him; to strip the life from the Lord's anointed. David's enemies taunt him, saying that God will not deliver him (v2).

Yet David knows his God is a God who cares, who will look after him. David cries to his Lord; the Lord answers from His holy hill (v4). God is a shield, protecting David. God is the one who will lift up his head and give him glory. So David is confident enough to lie down and sleep (v5). "I am not afraid of the tens of thousands, drawn up against me on every side" (v6).

God is now a warrior. "Strike all my enemies" (v7). The fighting man David knows God will bring deliverance and great blessing. (v8).

The Psalm's account of a man persecuted; whose enemies taunt him; who cries out to his God foreshadows Jesus's death on the cross. "He trusts in God. Let God rescue Him." (Matthew 27: 42).

But God does raise Jesus up again and He is our great shield as well. We must be a people who spur one another on, who confess hope without wavering (Hebrews 10:23).

We look forward to many more visits from Paul. His next sermon will be on Psalm 4. I hope I will be there to listen to him preach on Psalm 150. But that will be a while yet.

Dominica Lorimer

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## **Operation Christmas Child**

This project is run by Samaritan's Purse, which is an international, non-denominational Christian organisation that delivers Shoe Box gifts to children. Millions of boxes are delivered to children in over 95 third world countries each year. Most of these children have never received any kind of gift before.

Here in Canberra, processing of boxes has just been completed and some 15,950 boxes have been forwarded. Gifts come to the centre, currently at Spence, from Canberra and all surrounding areas. From here they are packed into crates by many volunteers, (some from as far away as Griffith, Narrabundah, Jindabyne and Grenfell), and this year gifts from Australia will go to countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and others. Many of these gifts go to children in hospitals and orphanages.

Gifts are packed with love and prayers and maybe we as a congregation could help in some way in the future. What a privilege it would be to share the love of Jesus with those who are so much less fortunate than our children and grandchildren here in Australia.

Norma Hockridge

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## The Marks of the Church

26 November 2006 – Pastor Matthew Bolte

Matthew urged us to have a vision for what we can be – to know what we are aiming for. Often we know what we don't want, but are not so sure about what we do want.

As Christians, our foundation and focus is Jesus, not tradition. If we are ever tempted to think of the Canberra Christian Fellowship as the culmination of our efforts, we should remember there are always opportunities to bring glory to Jesus and that anything we have done so far is only a step along the way.

God's Word will guide us as it did the disciples. After the resurrection, Jesus opened the disciples minds to understand the Word of God and He sent the Holy Spirit to instruct us in the scriptures.



**Pastor Matthew Bolte (right) with Warren Clendenning after the service**

- Jesus believed the scriptures and helped the disciples understand them. We need to understand them too.
- Jesus wanted the disciples to believe, preach and live the resurrection, so He gave many proofs He really was alive before He ascended to heaven. We must believe.
- Jesus spoke to the disciples about the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom of God, faith can move mountains, but in the Kingdoms of man, men plan and strategise. We need faith.
- Jesus told the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit. If we try to do God's work using our strength alone we will fail, we need to wait for the Holy Spirit too.
- Jesus will be back. Until then we have a job to do – to witness for Him and to make disciples.

We have Hope! We have God's work to do!

We should look forward to what God has in store for us, not dwell on the past.

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## **Tuesday Bible Study lunch**



**Enjoying the Tuesday Bible Study 2006 breakup lunch at Hall's are: Keith, Claudia, Marenas, Wilma, Howard, Ian, Joyce, Isobel, Audrey, Marie, Matthew and Wendy. Ruth was taking the photos and Ailsa was unable to attend.**

### **Newsletter – Malcolm and Elizabeth Richards - DR Congo - 11 December 2006**

Dear Friends,

We are now back in Australia and looking forward to our daughter's wedding in a week's time. We have been reflecting on our last 15 months in Kindu – apart from health problems, lack of variety in our diet, living with solar power and generators that break down regularly, there have been some great highlights and we are looking forward to returning in January and getting into the work planned for next year. We have really enjoyed the bible school team that we work with and Bishop Masimango has given us every support. We certainly have had great opportunities to train and teach a variety of people.

#### Election Update

The new president has been sworn in following the announcement of the election results. We were in Goma on the night of the provisional announcement and 10 minutes later were surprised to hear gunfire starting around town. Once we realised the gunfire was an expression of happiness and excitement we stopped feeling worried. In the East of DR Congo the news has been generally well received by the majority but not so in the west where the majority support the losing candidate. Miraculously the losing candidate has accepted the results.

#### Life in Kindu

We had a bright green snake crawling through the grass roof of church only a metre from Elizabeth's head.

Rain rain rain rain... Last year the rainy season never took off and we thought Kindu's rain wasn't really as advertised. This year it has rained night and day. The river has risen by metres in a matter of weeks.

New Airlines have started to fly to Kindu. Having been left behind by the UN we left Kindu for Goma on a commercial flight. One day we might get out by road!

#### and what of Bible School?

We left it a couple of weeks before the end of term in the capable hands of Rev Kibisa and the team. The last week was exam week including the six we left for them.

Bishop Masimango is determined that the Bible School building will be finished by our return.....

#### Prayer and Praise

Thank God for:

- Safe travel returning to Australia
- Being able to finish all the work we needed to do before we left DRC
- A successful election in DRC

Pray for:

- Refreshing time in Australia
- Bible School students returning home for a break and preparing for their 3 month parish placements
- Health issues to be sorted out in Australia
- DR Congo—that opposition will accept the election results and for cessation of rebel activity near Goma
- Completion of Bible School building

Bibles from MAG. As we were passing through Goma on the way out of Congo we bought and arranged transport for 120 Bibles! Thank you from the pastors and evangelists who will now have a bible!

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## Coming Up

### Bible Study in recess until February 2007

**Tuesdays at 2-30 pm** at the chapel, 17 Chauvel St., Campbell

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

### Discussion Group in recess until 2007

**Fridays at 2-15 pm** at the chapel, 17 Chauvel St., Campbell

Discussing Galations

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

## Services

**Saturday 16 December 2006 at 7 pm – Carols at Campbell  
Campbell Gospel Chapel**

**Sunday 17 December 2006 at 5 pm – Dr. E. Dennis**

**Sunday 17 December 2006 – Crossroads Family Carol Service  
Stage 88, Commonwealth Park,  
Rev. Paul Dudley  
6-30 pm – 7-30 pm Picnic Tea  
7-30 pm – 9-00 pm Christmas Cracker**

**Sunday 24 December 2006 at 5 pm – Mrs. Joyce Hall**

**Sunday 31 December 2006 at 5 pm – Dr. E. Dennis**

**Sunday 7 January 2007 at 5 pm – to be advised**

**Sunday 14 January 2007 at 5 pm – to be advised**

**Sunday 21 January 2007 at 5 pm – to be advised**

**Sunday 28 January 2007 at 5 pm – Rev. Ron Peters**

**Sunday 4 February 2007 at 5 pm – Rev. Kevin Kim**

**Sunday 11 February 2007 at 5 pm – Rev. Ray Hughes**

**Sunday 18 February 2007 at 5 pm – Rev. Ross Kingham**

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## Contacts

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

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