

June 2009
Issue 34

The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

Anniversary Service – Rev. Peter Nelson and the Austral-Asian Choir

Around 50 people attended our 5th Anniversary service giving the church a comfortably full feeling. It was a wonderful service, enjoyed by us all, the only disappointment being that a good number of our people were unable to be there to share with us due to commitments elsewhere.

The Austral-Asian choir was a sea of smiling faces and they sang wonderfully – ‘Happy Birthday’ for our anniversary first then two anthems. Afterwards several of the choir told us how much they enjoy singing at our church.

Peter Nelson delivered an excellent sermon, as always, titled ‘A Great Birthday’.

We enjoyed a good time of fellowship over the meal, with our guests staying almost until we turned off the lights and locked the doors. They even took the opportunity to have a little practice using the piano.

It was a wonderful evening.

ID using comments and notes from MA



5th Anniversary Service

We were fortunate to have Rev. Peter Nelson preach for us at our Anniversary service. Also present were the Austral-Asian Church choir who sang for us.

Prayer Meeting

For some months the idea of having a regular prayer meeting has been mentioned by a number of different people. In May a Prayer meeting commenced. Held at Marie’s and led by Alec, it was well attended. The June gathering had smaller numbers present as jobs, injury and travel kept some people away, however the time spent together in prayer to God was time well spent. Matters brought before God ranged from concerns attracting world attention to thanks for, and requests for guidance and God’s continued presence with, our fellowship and its people.

The Prayer Meetings are currently scheduled for the 3rd Monday of each month at 2pm. Both meetings so far have been held at Marie’s. Keep your eyes on the weekly notices for details of future meetings.

ID

Old Friends Get Together

Back on 24th May, Rev. Ray Hughes visited us again to preach. Also present that Sunday were Jeremy and Jacqui Redgrove with Jeremy's mother Muriel.

Ray and the Redgroves knew each other from years ago at Reid Church. It was a good opportunity for them, and others of us who also share that Reid connection, to catch up with each other. We look forward to seeing them again soon.



Jacqui

Jeremy

Ray

Muriel

Sunday, 7 June 2009 - Rev. Bob Prior – Fighting the good Fight

For the first Sunday in June, we were again glad to welcome Rev. Bob Prior to our service along with his friend Theodore who came with him. Unfortunately Bob was unable to stay for the meal afterwards as he had to travel to Moruya in connection with his racecourse ministry.

Bob began by suggesting that God wants us to hate – to hate Satan, sin, temptation and all the things Satan does. God wants us to be prepared to fight “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Ephesians 6: 12 NIV). When the time comes, Bob would be pleased to have Paul's words as his epitaph “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” (2 Timothy 4: 7 NIV).

We are encouraged to let people see the good works we do so GOD will be glorified. Our desire should be for people to know and love the God we love. Satan hates people knowing the love of God which gives joy and peace.

The Christians' battle cry is “Let us worship God”. Satan tries to stop our worship and turn us away from God. We are the battlefield so we don't have a choice whether we become involved or not. What we can choose is if we have Jesus' help in fighting the battle. Our choices are the battle itself. God doesn't force us to obey Him and Satan cannot make us obey him.

With Christ on our side helping us make the right decisions, we can use the armour of God (Ephesians 6: 13-18 NIV) and share in God's triumph over Satan.

In following God, we don't have to be 'good enough' or 'smart enough', just willing. Then God can use us.

ID

Steve Lindner and Campbell School

Recently Warren received a message from Steve Lindner, the chaplain at Campbell High School, asking if he and I would visit the school so Steve could update us on his work there. As a result we met with Steve early this month.

Steve began by telling us of a program 'Seasons for Growth' that he will be running. It goes for 8 sessions plus 1 extra session and he has around 7 to 9 students participating. It deals with change, loss and grief.



He mentioned that an Anglican church hopes to run a Sunday youth program and link in with the school in some way. He is looking into how that can best be done.

There are two boys at the school that Steve particularly requested prayer for. One boy had a brother die in an accident earlier this year and Steve has been helping him. The other boy is hoping to contact his father who left the family around 11 years ago. His mother is happy for him to do so and Steve is helping him firstly locate his father and then will assist him to arrange a meeting if that is possible.

Steve has many discussions with students as part of his chaplain duties, but few of them progress to matters of a spiritual nature. He is praying that God will use him more in talking about faith and trust in God.

Our time together closed with prayer.

Steve values the support and prayers of our fellowship very highly and has asked us to meet with him regularly once a month so we can pray with him and bring prayer requests back to the whole fellowship. ID

Sunday, 14 June 2009 - Rev. Dr. Murray Earl – How we live

In the airforce occasionally 'warning orders' are issued. These orders are used to let people know that something will be occurring at a particular time in the future so they can prepare and be ready for the event when it happens. Murray likened 1 Timothy 4: 1-16 to a warning order.

God uses people to be His agents here on earth but unfortunately Satan also uses people as his agents, often 'nice' people. Paul warns that some people will follow "deceiving spirits" and encourages Timothy to "train yourself to be godly".

In Ephesus there were followers of the gnostic heresy. Gnostics believed the material world to be evil and only the spiritual world to be good. The more extreme applications of this belief led some gnostics to withdraw from the world to the greatest extent they could (asceticism) and others to indulge themselves freely as it was an evil world anyway. Paul tells Timothy "everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." Both our bodies and our minds need to be disciplined.

Paul urged Timothy to not only teach the believers but to set an example for them. Murray likened the Church to a spiritual gym – a place where believers can learn about matters of faith and godliness, practice the things they learn within the Church community and go out from there into the world fit and ready to live their faith. ID

Malcolm and Elizabeth Richards

Malcolm grew up in Canberra and he and his family are known to many of us. He is currently working for CMS at Kindu in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He has preached for us several times during visits back home. The following is taken from their latest prayer letter

Dear Friends,

By the end of this month we will have finished teaching through the 3 year Bible School course and our first students will have graduated. Our 3rd years have certainly progressed in their skills and knowledge.

Together with the Bible School committee we have been holding interviews with people wanting to study in the next intake in September. We should not have any trouble finding the 15 students that we need. ...

We are very much looking forward to seeing our family in July although not so sure about a Canberra winter.

Elizabeth and Malcolm

Please Thank God,

- For the students who are completing their studies this month
- That Rev Masudi and Rev Anyasi who have been studying in Tanzania have arrived safely back in DR Congo
- For the faithfulness of the Bible School committee and especially for the Director, Rev Kibisa.

Please Pray

- That end of term exams and farewells all go well
- For the students as they travel long distances by foot and bicycle to return home
- For us as we prepare for a holiday needing to be ready for various seminars as soon as we return
- Our flights – the only airline coming to Kindu has been irregular and there are no reliable alternatives.



Another Birthday

When a group such as our fellowship reaches a certain size, it is logical to expect birthdays of members to crop up fairly regularly in our calendar. Not so long ago we exercised our vocal chords in wishing Warren a Happy Birthday and just a week later we had the opportunity for an encore performance as Ailsa prepared to celebrate a 'milestone' birthday during the coming week. After the almost obligatory jokes about the need for fire extinguishers and firebrigade attendance, Ailsa got down to the serious business of blowing out candles and cutting the cake.

Happy Birthday !



<<< Clockwise around table: Denis, Coral, Ted, Alec, Norma, Isobel, Ian and Carolyn watch as Ailsa cuts the cake.

Finnish Festival

What better time for a Mid-Summer festival than on the shortest day of the year in the depths of winter? For our Finnish friends it makes a lot of sense as they share in mid-summer celebrations with their countrymen in the northern hemisphere where it is indeed mid-summer.

Have you ever pondered on the subject of going out to dinner?

If you choose to visit a restaurant, you select what you want to eat and expect that you will get what you order. The food is prepared by the restaurant's chef and normally a good meal will result. The restaurant is rewarded when you pay the bill.

Sometimes you may be invited to someone's home for dinner. When that occurs, the meal served up is usually decided by your host(s) who is/are probably the cook(s) as well. In my experience such meals have been of a very high standard, however it is possible you will end up with burnt sausages on a barbeque. Dinner invitations have another aspect to them. You are there because someone values your company and wants to share some time with you in a relaxed, informal setting. It is an opportunity to get to know each other better in a home environment.

As I sat in the church with the evening's activities progressing around me, I had a VERY strong sense of being invited into a 'home'. We had been invited and we were sharing in our hosts' normal community activities. It was relaxed and informal and we could participate in and learn something of the lives and of what is important to people with Finnish connections in our community.



We enjoyed some singing, an item from a choir made up of children that attend the Finnish school, a young pianist's playing and skits that included Matti and Ritva as principal actors. The Finnish ambassador spoke and presented a prestigious Finnish White Rose award to a lady for her work in the Finnish – Australian community. Apparently she did not know she was to receive the award. There were hotdogs, plenty of different cakes and coffee and tea available afterwards and outside kids crowded around a bonfire burning in a 44 gallon drum toasting marshmallows. There was also a 'pine candle' – a traditional way fires are set. A log is split so that a fire can be lit inside the log. Because the log stands on its end, a chimney effect is created and the log burns from the inside out, minimising the effect of the Finnish wind and snow. ID

<< Children from the Finnish School preparing to sing

Korean service and 25th Anniversary

Have you ever played Chinese Whispers, starting with a message like "I'm bored. Come and see me and we'll have some fun." with that transforming into something like "The dog chased the cat round the yard then went to sleep." or something equally different to the original? That game illustrates the vaguaries of communication.

By a happy mistake, our Fellowship recently experienced a communications breakdown when we publicised the Korean's 25th Anniversary celebrations as being on a particular Sunday, only to find when we got there to share in their celebrations that we were a week early. It didn't matter. We joined them for their normal worship service. Although the service was all in Korean (with the sermon translated) it was easy to sense God's presence and the praise and devotion directed to Him. The service was vibrant and joyful with plenty of music and good teaching. The sermon was based on Joshua 3:1-17 and titled "Set your feet in the Jordan". The Korean man sitting in front of me, knowing we didn't understand the language, found the Bible reading in an English language Bible and passed it back so we could join with them in reading the passage. I appreciated his thoughtfulness.

Afterwards we joined them for a meal.

It is hard to emphasise enough how welcome we were made to feel. They were glad to have us join them, and we were certainly glad to be there. Best of all, we get to do it again next week for the actual anniversary celebration. ID

One Week Later

For the second week running I made my way to Reid to celebrate the Canberra Korean Uniting Church's 25th Anniversary. Once again we were made to feel particularly welcome and there was a joy and reverence apparent in the service. After the service, we were treated to a Korean feast.

Rev. Kevin Kim preached on "The God of Jedidiah" using 2 Samuel 12: 15-25 as his text.

Names have meanings, for example Kevin Kim's Korean name means 'fertile land'. Many names stress characteristics, or desired characteristics, of a person. God's name was regarded as particularly sacred, so sacred that it was rarely spoken.

King David was a great king of Israel but he sinned when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then arranged things so that her husband would die in battle. Once his sin was pointed out to him and he knew that God's punishment included the death of his newborn son, David acknowledged his sin and pleaded with God for his son in his prayers. God's answer to David's prayers in this case was No and the baby died.

Lots of things in life are outside of our control. Bad things we have done cannot be changed and they can leave scars and consequences. In such cases the only thing we can do is trust in God and depend on Him. David knew he had sinned and he accepted he could not change anything that had already happened, including the death of his baby son. David continued to trust in God and God's love for him.

David and Bathsheba had a second son and named him Solomon, meaning 'man of peace'. Nathan the prophet told David "The LORD will call him Jedidiah." (2 Samuel 12:25 CEV). Jedidiah means 'received God's love'.

During the 25 years of the Canberra Korean Uniting Church there have been times when problems arose and there was pain and suffering. There have also been friendships and good things. We are all Jedidiah – we have all received God's love. We must thank God for His faithfulness to us and repent of our failings. ID



Thanks to Mr. Lee for the use of the photo

Coming Up

Bible Study

Tuesdays at 2-30 pm at Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Turner.
Currently in recess for 6 weeks
All welcome - contact Joyce Hall (6241 2085) for more information

Discussion Group

Fridays at 2-00 pm at Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Turner.
Currently studying "The Sermon on the Mount"
All welcome - contact Ted Dennis (62593487) for more information

Prayer Meeting

3rd Monday of each month.
Next meeting – 20th July at 2-00 pm at Marie's – Villagio, 18/36 Burkitt Street, Page.

Services

We meet at **Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Cnr. Gould and Watson Streets, Turner**

Sunday **28th June** at 5pm – **Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan**
Sunday **5th July** at 5pm – **Rev. Kevin Kim** (and the Korean Choir)
Sunday **12th July** at 5pm – **Rev. Don Purdey**
Sunday **19th July** at 5pm – **Rev. Ron Peters**
Sunday **26th July** at 5pm – **Mr. Allan Melmoth**
Sunday **2nd August** at 5pm – **Rev. Steve Prior**
Sunday **9th August** at 5pm – **Rev. Bob Prior**
Sunday **16th August** at 5pm – **Mr. Allan Windley** (Christian Blind Mission)
Sunday **23rd August** at 5pm – **Rev. Ray Hughes**
Sunday **30th August** at 5pm – **Rev. Peter Nelson**



**Rev. Dr.
Campbell
Egan**



**Rev. Kevin
Kim**



**Rev. Don
Purdey**



**Rev. Ron
Peters**



**Mr. Allan
Melmoth**



**Rev. Steve
Prior**



**Rev. Bob
Prior**



**Mr. Allan
Windley**



**Rev. Ray
Hughes**



**Rev. Peter
Nelson**

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