

September 2009
Issue 36

The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

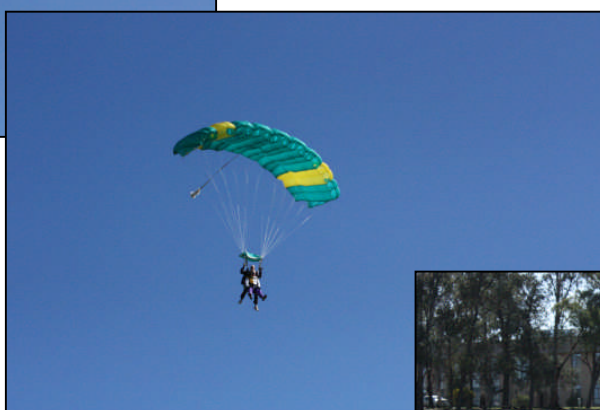
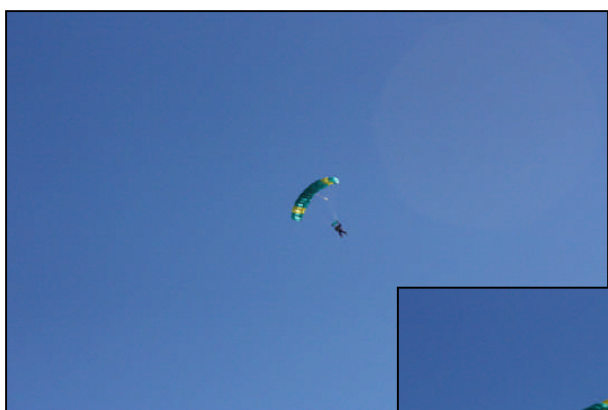
The quickest way back to earth

Just imagine – one morning you are sitting, enjoying a leisurely breakfast without a care in the world, mulling over the fact that the next day you will have notched up one more year of your life. Suddenly your peaceful existence is consigned to history as you discover, courtesy of your loving wife and daughter, that in a matter of moments you are to be transported to the very edge of space in a tiny plane and then even the little security such a miniscule plane offers will be taken away and you will be forced to take the shortest path available back to terra firma – straight down! One slight comfort will be given to you – you will be fitted with a parachute, plus a second person who supposedly knows what they are doing will be strapped into it with you.

This was the real experience of Vince just recently as he attempted to grow older gracefully, but was propelled into another year by plummeting through the air as the earth rushed up to meet him.

If Vince looks a shade greyer next time you see him, you can now hazard a guess as to why that is, but then again it could simply be that he has turned a year older.

ID



Sunday, 9 August 2009 – Rev. Bob Prior – What am I trusting in?

What does the expression 'have tickets on myself' mean?

To many people it means they have qualities or achievements that mean something and help to define who they are. Those 'badges of pride' are probably good things in themselves but not if we place our trust in them.

What can we trust in for salvation and righteousness?

We can totally trust in Jesus, however some people put their trust in Jesus plus something extra, perhaps being a 'good' person or having done 'good' things.

Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, (3: 1-9) makes it very clear that the suggestion that more is needed than trust in Christ alone for righteousness, is wrong. The ONLY righteousness that we can have comes to us through faith in Jesus.

The law which governed the lives of Jews is unable to provide for our salvation. It tells us we are sinners and need to do something about that, but cannot do anything itself.

Jesus gives us His righteousness, enabling us to be all that God requires us to be, when we trust in Him.

We should know Jesus, not just know about Him.

What does God want from us now?

Micah asks himself the question how should he (and we) come before God. Should he offer up religious observances, wealth, family? The answer he gives is "*To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*" (Micah 6: 8 NIV)

ID



Above: Bob chatting with Claudia



Right: After the service
Birthday boy Ted – for some reason he was given an Adelaide 'Advertiser' newspaper from 9th August, 1929, birthday girl Isobel and birthday boy Vince.

Fellowship Meeting / New Members

A bit after 6pm on Monday, 10th August, many from our fellowship gathered at Bradbury's for a pizza tea which was to be followed by a general meeting. The pizzas arrived not too much later and after grace everyone tucked in.

The meal finished, we started on the meeting part of things.

We were very glad to welcome Derek and Carolyn as members.

The matter that attracted most discussion was the use or non-use of the song "Now unto Him ..." to close our services. Some members find it particularly meaningful and are enthusiastic for its use, others feel it duplicates the benediction pronounced by the minister or tends towards the ritualistic if it is sung every week. We will continue to use it, however the preacher and whoever is playing the piano will have some bearing on its use on any particular Sunday. One comment that closed that discussion I felt was particularly wise. 'The Devil rubs his hands in glee when he sees Christians disagreeing over such relatively unimportant matters'.

For some time there has been informal chat about a possible regular evening social / study group. This potential group was mentioned in the meeting, which proved enough stimulus for a commencement date to be set. The plan is to meet weekly on Thursdays at Vince and Dominica's.

ID



Our new members

Christian Blind Mission afternoon

A good contingent from our fellowship attended the Christian Blind Mission lunch on Saturday, 15th August. We were treated to 3 hymns sung by former opera singer, now farmer, Les Andrews. He certainly has a good voice and great talent.



Allan Windley spoke about his recent visit to Uganda and gave us a fascinating insight into the work CBM does and supports there. We saw pictures and videos of people who have been helped who had disabilities ranging from cleft palate, deafness, eye problems or bone disease through to club feet.

One goal is to train local people to do as much of the work as possible, however people with special skills from better resourced countries still play a significant role. One plastic surgeon who was using his skills to help sufferers of cleft palate was told that if he set up practice back in London, he would be a millionaire within three months, largely through administering botox to people wanting to rid themselves of wrinkles. He believed he was of more use where he was.

We eventually left, having enjoyed a two course meal together, with a better appreciation of the work CBM does. ID



In addition to speaking at the CBM luncheon, Allan (left) also took our service the following evening.

Right – L to R : Alec, Pam, Vince, Linda (Allan's wife), Howard and Ailsa after our service.



An older bloke came out of a shop to find a policeman writing out a parking infringement ticket. He approached the policeman and suggested the policeman should be a bit charitable, give a pensioner a break and tear up the ticket.

The policeman's response was to complete the ticket and start to write one out for bald tyres. This prompted another protest.

A ticket for another infringement resulted.

Protests followed by additional tickets continued for some minutes.

Finally the man made his last protest adding that he had to go now to catch his bus.

Joke told at the CBM lunch

Bible Society Bike for Bibles

Allan and Luke Melmoth began their ride on 17th August with Robyn also making the trip as one of the cooks.

Reports received to date include:

After 3 days of riding (around 380kms) completed. : We are now camped at Southern Cross and head to Coolgardie today. We appreciate your prayers and support to us. We have felt your prayers with us as we have travelled. It has rained every [day] here in WA but each day of riding has been fine and sunny, with massive tail winds, (which has helped the riders greatly). The group on a whole is very diverse in personality but we are gelling well.

Day 5 : Yesterday was a harder day but still rewarding in lots of ways. It rained for most of the ride, by morning tea time Luke was blue. But both he and Allan continued to ride and made it all the way to Norseman. Last night and tonight was stayed in the Norseman recreation centre ... We are bunked down on the squash courts with only just adequate shower and toilet facilities. But praise God we have a place to stay.

Day 10 : The last 4 days going over the Nullabor have been hard and rather isolating. Travelling long distances over nothing and seeing no towns or people for so long. We have been out of mobile coverage most of those days also. So all of this has made us feel like we are in a different country. But the end of the Nullabor is near and the end of the longer riding days too.

2 more weeks to go (Day 18) : Robyn [had] her Birthday on Wednesday ... Allan and Luke played a small trick on Robyn on Wednesday morning. The night before they filled up the cook trailer with balloons and had the camera ready in the morning when Robyn opened the trailer for breakfast. It was a fun sight. ... Thank God that 2 people have joined the team, 1 will ride and the other will help with the cooking. ... Amazing Scenery around South Aust. and across the Flinders Rangers, it is a nice reminder that God is with us. Tomorrow is our rest day in Burra, Its good it is a Sunday and we will go to a Burra Church together as a team ... Praise God for the many men and women across Australia who have given up time and resources to help support us as we have come to their town.

Wednesday 16th September (Day 27) : the riders reach Yass and the following day travel to Goulburn. It might be a good opportunity to cheer them on their way as that is only down the road for us.

The ride will finish on **Saturday 19th September (Day 30)** in Sydney after 4029 km.



Thursday Evening Group

After discussing the desirability of an evening study group for some months, a small group finally got together on the third Thursday of August.

Vince and Dominica were our hosts and Dominica had done some preparatory work in choosing a study book for us to use. We looked at the introduction in the book, read some passages from the Gospel of John that will be covered and then broke for a light meal.

Thank you to Vince and Dominica for their hospitality and to Dominica for the delicious soup.

We look forward to future gatherings.

ID

Austral-Asian Church celebrations



Only a part of the crowd at the Dinner

Over the last few years we have come to know a number of people from the Austral-Asian Church in Isaacs quite well, so it was a pleasure to be invited to join with them for their church's 25th Anniversary celebrations.

Twelve of our people were able to attend their dinner on the Saturday night. Before eating, there was a service in which several of the church people passed on memories from the 25 years of the church's history. The meal itself was delicious with all sorts of things to try. Two large birthday cakes were quickly reduced to crumbs by the large number attending.



The Order of Service

We were again well represented at the Sunday Service. As people welcomed, led the singing, spoke, read the Bible, preached and translated, I remembered Ron Peters mentioning signs of a healthy church during a sermon not many weeks ago. He suggested that a church is healthy when the people use their God given gifts in God's service. To me the Austral-Asian Church looked very healthy.

Rev. David Tse, Senior Pastor at Central Baptist Church in Sydney (and the 1st fulltime minister at the Austral-Asian Church) was the preacher. His message was that we should look for God's calling and purpose for our lives and use the gifts we have been given in God's service. We should not be lazy. Work is a gift, not a punishment.

We also need to balance our looking back with looking to the future.

The Austral-Asian Church is looking forward, with a new congregation recently formed in Gungahlin.

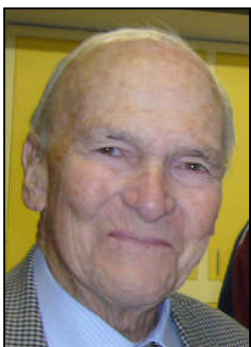
We congratulate the Austral-Asian Church on all it has achieved in God's service over the last 25 years and ask God's blessing on them for the next 25 and beyond. We are grateful for the friendships we have formed with them and hope they will continue and grow.

ID



Derek, Ian and Vince with Austral-Asian Church pastor Peter Nelson at their 25th Anniversary celebratory dinner

Getting to know Alec



When you reach a venerable age such as something very close to 90, it seems quite likely that during the course of your life you will have seen, done or experienced some things that are worth recounting. So it is with Alec.

Ballarat was where Alec entered this world, son to a returned ANZAC and his wife. His early years were spent on a soldier settlers block in the Victorian mallee where good seasons were greatly outnumbered by seasons that produced poor crops. Despite the hard work and disappointing results, these years were remembered by the family with fondness due to the community spirit that existed.

Alec's family returned to Ballarat, where Alec and his friends had fun exploring and messing around in old mining tunnels. They later moved to Stawell. On completing his schooling, Alec became a student teacher before enlisting in the airforce. He had no desire to

march up and down hills, so combined with an interest in flyers and flying, the airforce seemed a natural choice.

Southern Rhodesia was where Alec's flying training took place, such as it was, and he soon headed to the tactical reconnaissance squadron near El Alamein for operational work while still getting the hang of simple things like taking off and landing. Flying Hurricanes, Alec undertook several roles before he ended up in Corsica flying a Spitfire.

The war entered a new phase for Alec on 29 June 1944 when his plane was hit by ground fire, he was forced to bail out and was captured near Bologna. Interrogation and confinement followed. Alec found that by singing hymns, reciting poetry and scripture during his confinement, he was able to reduce his depression and stay sane. Eventually he was sent to north compound Stalag Luft 3 Sagan. 'The Great Escape' that has become well known through book and film had occurred there just a few months previously. Prisoner Of War camp life was not easy with the tensions resulting from many men confined in a relatively small area, barely adequate food supplies and uncertainty for the future. There were however some lighter moments and Alec remembers attending the theatre, a performance of "The Importance of Being Ernest" produced and acted by prisoners.

On the whole, with some exceptions, the prisoners were treated reasonably. One guard had been a university Professor and he just wanted the war to be over so he could return to his job.

The POWs knew what was happening in the war courtesy of a radio they had hidden, so by January 1945 they knew the Russians were approaching. Towards the end of that month the prisoners were ordered to prepare to move out of the camp. At first by foot and later in cattle vans, the POWs moved to Malag Nord, a camp near Bremen from which they had a first class view of the bombing of Bremen and Hamburg. Another march took the prisoners to an area near Lubeck. The end of the war was close and some German troops tried to surrender to the prisoners, apparently believing they would get a better deal from the British than the Russians.

Finally the 51st Highlander Armoured Division reached the prisoners and it was not too long before they were back in England. More time elapsed and then Alec was back in Australia. While still in England, Alec wrote to the young lady, Margery, he had gone to school with, taught with and from whom he had received one of only three letters while a prisoner. He proposed marriage but had to wait until he got home for a reply. The reply was "yes" and they were married a month later.

The war over, Alec studied psychology at university, taught at High School for a time then rejoined the RAAF as an education officer. This was at the time of the Korean War. For over twenty years Alec stayed with the RAAF, moving through the ranks and undertaking a number of roles. He later wrote, *"Like most servicemen I know, I hated war and despair at man's stupidity in resorting to this horror to settle disputes. Yet the reality is that the powerful will continue to try to dominate the weaker and we must be prepared to defend ourselves, while at the same time making peace with justice our primary aim."*

Following on from service life, Alec became a counselling psychologist at the Canberra College of Advanced Education / University of Canberra for ten years. Retiring from that position, Alec became a pastoral assistant for his church and for ten years a chaplain at Canberra Hospital.

While a look at Alec's wartime experiences and more recent employment makes an interesting story, there is obviously much more to Alec than that. In his younger days Alec played Australian rules football and cricket to a good country league level and in later years enjoyed tennis until his supply of playing partners dwindled due to ageing and infirmity. These days he swims three times a week and goes walking.

Alec enjoys music, having broad tastes although light classical is his preference. Theological books comprise some of his reading matter with adventure and travel books also making an appearance on his bookshelf. He enjoys writing and also chess, which was a way to pass time in POW camp. Again finding playing partners is now difficult.

As we know Alec is an enthusiastic and committed Christian.

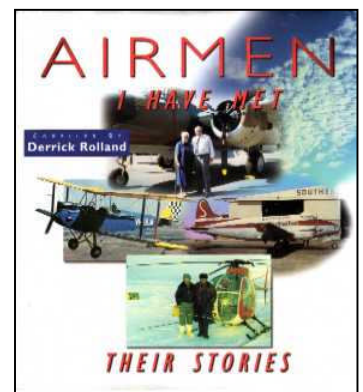
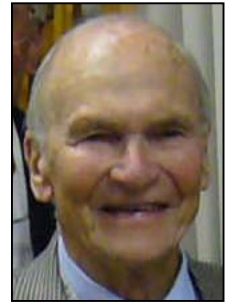
Having grown up in a Christian family, he found faith for himself when he was 13 and the Church of Christ minister 'took him under his wing'. He was a believer but there was not a lot of substance to his faith. Embroiled in the war he found his faith fragile and by the end of the war he was no longer sure of his beliefs. Even though he largely lost sight of his faith during this period, he found that it often surfaced and niggled at him

Alec is a firm believer that God places people in your path to help you along in your Christian journey. For him, one of those people was his wife. Although his faith was weak, he was drawn back into the Church through her influence and he began again reading the Scriptures and reexamining his beliefs. There are others too that he could name who had a significant influence on him in his faith journey.

Today he sees no real alternative for himself to living a Christian life.

His wife Margery has now passed on but their two children are living in Canberra and there are grandchildren and great grandchildren as well.

ID



Further reading: Rolland, Derrick (comp.), *Airmen I Have Met: Their Stories*, Derrick Rolland, Bright Victoria, 1999, pp. 167-180.

Sunday, 23 August 2009 – Rev. Ray Hughes and PNG Choir



Top left : The Papua New Guinea choir singing during the service

Above : Ray Hughes with Deveni

Left : Ian, guest, Hahanme, Howard



A highlight of our service this week was the visit of our Papua New Guinea friends. We enjoyed their singing and chatting with them over the meal after the service.

Living The Life God Gives Us

Ray used 1 Kings 21: 1-21 for his text – the story of Ahab and Jezebel and their dealings with Naboth.

Ahab had all he needed however he was not content and wanted more. Jezebel's scheming eventually got

Ahab what he wished for but there were also consequences for him to face.

We need to be satisfied with who we are and what we have. We can find true purpose for our lives in God.

Ray concluded with a tale of three sisters to illustrate the dangers of greed.

One of the three sisters discovered a very large amount of treasure buried in their back yard and shared the news with the other two. All three sisters became quite upset, so much so that four men from next door came to see if they could be of assistance. The sisters showed the men the find, describing the treasure as a "soul-taker" and declared their fear of it and their desire to have nothing to do with it. The men were more than happy to deal with the problem and share the treasure between themselves, laughing at the women's fear. It was a big job digging up the treasure so while two men dug, the other two went for some food. The two diggers, amazed at their good fortune, allowed greed to enter their thinking and agreed a fortune shared between four was only half as good as a fortune shared between two. When the other two men returned, the diggers surprised them and killed them. Before unearthing the last of the treasure, they stopped for a quick bite to eat to restore their strength, but unfortunately for them, the food shoppers had had similar thoughts and had poisoned the food. When the sisters returned they found all four men lying dead. The fortune in treasure had indeed proved to be a "soul-taker".

ID

Sunday, 30 August 2009 – Rev. Peter Nelson and Austral-Asian Choir

On 30th August we enjoyed an outstanding church service with items of song by the Austral Asian Church Choir and then Rev. Peter Nelson gave us an excellent sermon entitled "Why do I believe in God?". He said that God is the wonderful creator of everything from the human brain to the yellow wattle blossom. God inspired the different authors of the 66 books of the Bible written over 1600 years. The Old Testament has 61 predictions which point to the coming of Jesus, all of which came true. Jesus came to reveal to us God the Father, to die on the cross for us all, to be raised by God and to give us eternal life with Him, if we believe and repent of our sins. God and Jesus, His only Son, will never let us down.



HB

Below are some excerpts from Malcolm & Elizabeth Richards' latest newsletter from DRC, Africa.

HOTLINE FROM THE RICHARDS

Dear Friends,

We are back in Kindu after a great break in Australia catching up with family followed by a hectic couple of weeks in Goma where we ran a trauma healing seminar for over 30 people from different churches and denominations.

This past week, together with Bishop Masimango, we have been teaching at the Diocese of Kindu annual pastors' conference.

The last Bible School term finished well and the new graduates are beginning their work as lay pastors (evangelists). We are about to get into preparations for the new bible school year which starts at the beginning of September. Once again there will be 3 courses running— for the new first years, for students in their third and final year and for wives of third years.

TRAUMA HEALING IN GOMA

Goma is situated at the foot of a live volcano, which is constantly smoking and putting clouds of vapours into the air. The town, now nearing a population of a million is rapidly being rebuilt after the volcanic eruption of 2002 that destroyed most of the town. The population is constantly changing as floods of refugees from surrounding areas pour in when rebel activity forces their evacuation.

With the printing of the SIL Trauma Healing book in Congolese Swahili it was decided to hold the first seminar to teach people to use the book in Goma where churches are desperately trying to help congregations and people affected by trauma. While we were in Goma a fire in the slum area destroyed 500 houses and many lives were lost.

LIGHTNING STRIKES

The morning we left Kindu to start our journey to Australia we were woken by a loud thunderstorm. As we were making breakfast lightning hit our house. We started to assess the damage— the battery operated radio on the bench next to where Malcolm was standing was smouldering-, a small fan, Elizabeth's mobile phone and charger, an inverter all were damaged, various lights had blown... As we left for the airport we had no idea whether the solar panels on our roof had been hit.

On our return we found a pawpaw tree and another large tree in the garden had been destroyed

We were able to replace most of the items that were damaged

while we were away. It seems the solar panels are fine. We thank God that no-one was hurt.

Everyone here believes that lightning is always sent by someone— usually a form of witch craft to take revenge. We wonder who people suspect sent it to us and why?



All the pastors and wives in Kindu wore outfits of the same material to a celebration day.

The whole seminar was planned in co-operation with SIL who provided a large part of the funding. We both taught at the seminar together with a Congolese pastor from a Brethren church who was also involved in the translation of the book.

There were also last minute changes of venue as Hillary Clinton wanted the room we had booked!

The participants were grateful for the teaching and for the books. They now need to take the teaching to their own churches and to train others.

Campbell High News – from Chaplain Steve Lindner

Some great news! Nicola (from St. John's Anglican, Reid) and I launched our first lunch time group last Thursday and had 14 students attend. We mainly played some games and got to know each other better and this week we plan to do a 10 minute 'God-spot' which Nicola will take.

Thanks for all your prayers, they're making a difference.

I will be going away with Campbell High on their central Australia trip from 21 Sept. until 1 Oct.

The Gospel in A.C.T. Schools Workshop



Recently an invitation was received to a workshop to discuss sharing the gospel with children and young people in A.C.T. schools. Scripture Union, Christian Religious Education and World Vision were all involved. Warren went along. He reports :-

The workshop was very worthwhile. There will be more held throughout Belconnen and southside. All presenters gave a good presentation of their various topics, showing where they were headed. Prayer is very important but all groups stated that volunteers were needed to carry on the various programs.

World Vision has commenced a mentoring program in primary schools, which could be a very worthwhile avenue to follow up. Even though it doesn't target high schools (e.g. Campbell HS) our fellowship might want to think about branching out "along that track". It was good to catch up with Steve (Campbell HS chaplain) on the day, but unfortunately I didn't get much of a chance to discuss things more with him. WC

20th December – Finnish Carols

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church will be unavailable for our use on Sunday, 20th December as the Finnish people will be holding a Finnish Carols evening.

As we have been invited to join with them, this will take the place of our service on that date.

More information will be passed on as we receive it. Their carols will commence at 5pm, our normal service time.

Coming Up

Bible Study

Tuesdays at 2-30 pm at Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Turner.
Currently studying 2 Kings
All welcome - contact Joyce for more information

Discussion Group

Fridays at 2-00 pm at Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Turner.
Currently studying Prayer
All welcome - contact Ted for more information

Thursday Evening Group

Thursdays at 6-00 pm at Vince and Dominica's, Campbell.
Currently studying John
All welcome - contact Vince / Dominica for more information

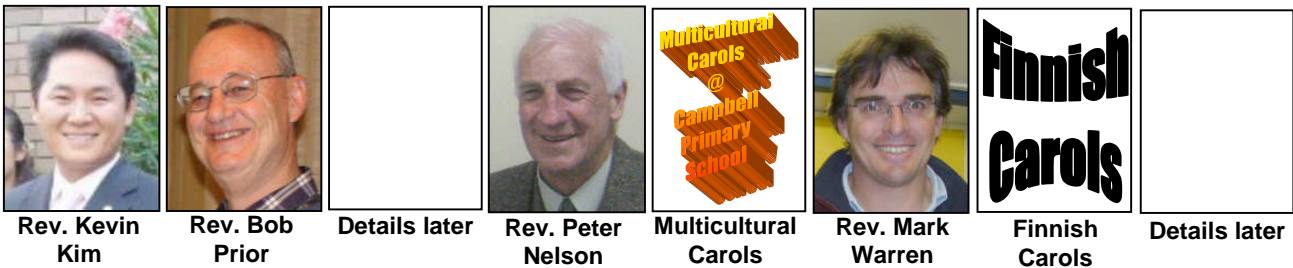
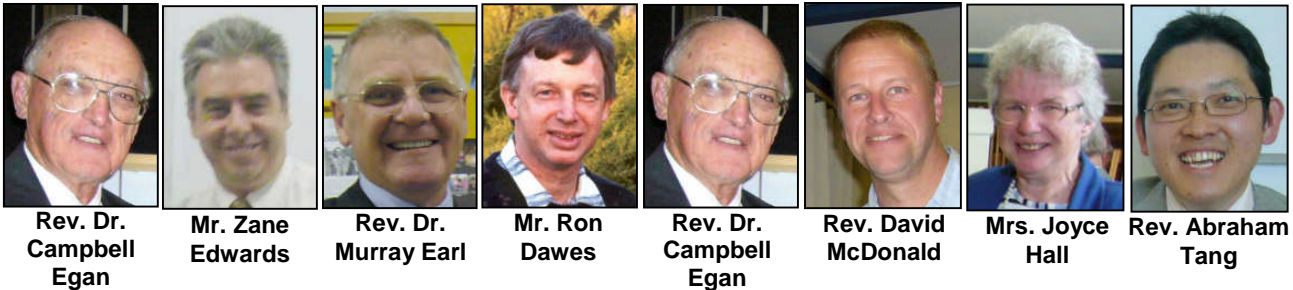
Prayer Meeting

3rd Monday of each month at Marie's.
Next meeting – 21st September at 2-00 pm
All welcome - contact Alec for more information

Services

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

- Sunday 13th September at 5pm – Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan
- Sunday 20th September at 5pm – Mr. Zane Edwards
- Sunday 27th September at 5pm – Rev. Dr. Murray Earl
- Sunday 4th October at 5pm – Mr. Ron Dawes (Leprosy Mission)
- Sunday 11th October at 5pm – Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan
- Sunday 18th October at 5pm – Rev. David McDonald
- Sunday 25th October at 5pm – Mrs. Joyce Hall
- Sunday 1st November at 5pm – Rev. Abraham Tang
- Sunday 8th November at 5pm – Rev. Kevin Kim
- Sunday 15th November at 5pm – Rev. Bob Prior
- Sunday 22nd November at 5pm – details later
- Sunday 29th November at 5pm – Rev. Peter Nelson
- Sunday 6th December at 5pm **at Campbell Primary School Hall** – Multicultural Carols Service
- Sunday 13th December at 5pm – Rev. Mark Warren
- Sunday 20th December at 5pm – Finnish Carols Service (in place of our own service)
- Sunday 27th December at 5pm – details later



Contacts

Canberra Christian Fellowship
P.O. Box 184
Campbell 2612
A.C.T.

E-mail: canberracf@yahoo.com.au
Website: <http://www.canberracf.org.au/>

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

TNS editor : Ian Denton – e-mail : iancd@yahoo.com
Principal photographer : Antoinette