

March 2010
Issue 42

The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

Sunday 28th February at 5pm – Mr. Laurie Hockridge – Harvest Festival

Joyce and helpers had been hard at work and we had a wonderful display of produce ready for our Harvest Thanksgiving service.

Laurie began his sermon by giving us some background information about celebrations of the harvest. He mentioned Sukkot, one of the three most important Jewish festivals, also known as the Feast of Tabernacles. This festival remembers the wanderings of the Jews in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land and God's provision for them.

Harvest Thanksgiving services in Christian churches are a relatively recent innovation, starting in 1843 in Cornwall. These services recognise our dependence on God and acknowledge it.

In times past if crops were not sown and harvested, people struggled to find enough to eat. It is quite easy to forget God and the processes He has provided for food production in this age of supermarket food availability.

Laurie reminded us of Jesus' words "*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.*" (John 6: 27 NIV). Jesus also said to his disciples, "*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.*" (Matthew 9: 37,38 NIV).

We need to be nourished in our spiritual lives as well as physically and recognise that God wants us to bring in a harvest of souls, not just grains and other foods.

We should prefer glorifying God's name before the gratification of our own appetites.

ID



**At left: Warren, June, Wendy, Howard, Isobel, Laurie, Dominica, Maurine, Alec, Ken, Jason (kneeling).
At right: Vince, Norma, Dinah, Ian (kneeling), Joyce (behind), Ruth, Jack, Shirley, Philip, Ian (behind hidden), Ted.
Photographer: Antoinette. (more pictures on page 7)**

PS By chance, a friend was visiting the Salvation Army at the time we were delivering all the fruit and vegetables from our display. She reports that it was made available just after we left and was greeted with a great deal of pleasure by those seeking assistance from the Salvation Army.

Prayer Points March 2010

Dear Friends,

The seminar held in the first week of March for last years Bible School graduates was a great success. We spent the first two days just listening to each of the participants as they told us what has happened since last July when they returned home. We were moved by stories of births and deaths, of amazing hardships, of false accusations against some of them. We were particularly amazed that despite all this they were continuing to work in their churches as best they could.

The system here is that when a person completes Bible School training they are sent home to work as an evangelist or full time lay church worker. If all goes well they would be selected to be ordained after a couple of years. The difficulty is that we are introducing something new. These graduates have had a higher level of training than previously and they have a lot more Bible knowledge and training in pastoral work. Consequently already existing evangelists are worried that there own chances of being ordained are reduced by these new evangelists on the scene. The reaction in some cases has been to make life as difficult as possible for the new graduates, in one case to the point of accusing someone of trying to poison the pastor.

This situation was not entirely unexpected but we are shocked at the level of opposition. Please pray for these 8 newly trained evangelists that they will have the courage to stand firm and to use what they have been taught.

Passport update:

In January we asked for prayer that our passports would be returned quickly from the capital. We still don't have them. We are a little anxious as we are due to travel to France in a couple of weeks to see our daughter who is expecting a baby at that time.

There is no post within the country so once the job of transposing visas into our new passports is done we will need to connect with someone travelling to Kindu from Kinshasa.

Electricity update

Yes it comes to our house a few hours a week but no we can't use it as it is less than 80 volts and barely makes a light bulb glow.

In Christ

Malcolm and Elizabeth

Prayer

Please Thank God

- That the seminar was a time of encouragement for all participants.
- For good rain and good crops
- That the Bible School program is relevant and meeting the needs of church workers.
- That Bishop Masimango's wife Naomi received good medical care in Goma and will be returning soon.
- Progress on the building of the Basoko church.

And Pray for

- Bible School students finishing their placement.
- The return of our passports.
- That church workers here will grow in Godliness and unity.
- Preparations for the start of the next Bible School term.



Laying the first foundation brick for the new Basoko church building



Malcolm showing last years graduates the commentary he has completed on the book of Romans in Congo Swahili.

SCRIPTURE UNION REGEN DINNER 2010

This year's dinner was markedly improved compared to the 2009 event. Our tables were in a better location closer to the main proceedings.

The CEO of Scripture Union, Craig Webber explained how all facets of SU worked with new initiatives such as forthcoming Church Workshops planned for 2010. Chaplaincy in schools has the opportunity to reach 14,000 students in ACT Government schools with 23 chaplains in 29 schools who are regularly sought by teachers to support children who need guidance in dealing with personal situations. Craig mentioned the money raised last year helped a few schools with extra days for chaplains to attend their respective schools.

The guest speaker for the evening was Barbara Holborow, OAM. Ms Holborow was a Children's Court Magistrate in Sydney for many years and spoke about a couple of situations from the courts of how children became abused by parents.

Ms Holborow certainly was passionate about the rights of children and is an ongoing supporter of organisations and individuals working with and caring for children and young people. It certainly made an impression on my thoughts and feelings about the most needy children.

Last year 320 people attended the dinner but there was a significant increase to 450 people this year. As the attendance had increased, the organisers had to open up the dividing wall between 2 rooms to accommodate the increased numbers. I am hoping that our fellowship will again support next year's dinner with my goal of 20 people attending.

WC

Scripture Union Regeneration Dinner – 23rd March

Warren was enthusiastically encouraging us to attend the SU Regeneration Dinner for some weeks, and I for one was glad he did. It turned out to be a very good evening.

The food was tasty and the speakers interesting.

Cameron Semmens, a poet, presented an 'enthusiastic black' version of the 23rd Psalm. I anticipated this with caution as modifying something as meaningful as the psalm and presenting it to entertain can easily trivialize it and hide what it is saying. This version of the psalm was entertaining but, most importantly for me, retained a real sense of what the psalm was saying and is about. Another 'timid, unsure man's' version also had that quality. Later Cameron presented a poem 'Wear Love' which I appreciated.

Chaplain Deb Horscroft spoke of being the chaplain at Amaroo Primary School. Her role is not one of proclaiming the Gospel but rather of caring, being there and helping. By getting to know the children, encouraging them and being ready to help if needed, she has been able to make a very considerable contribution to the school.

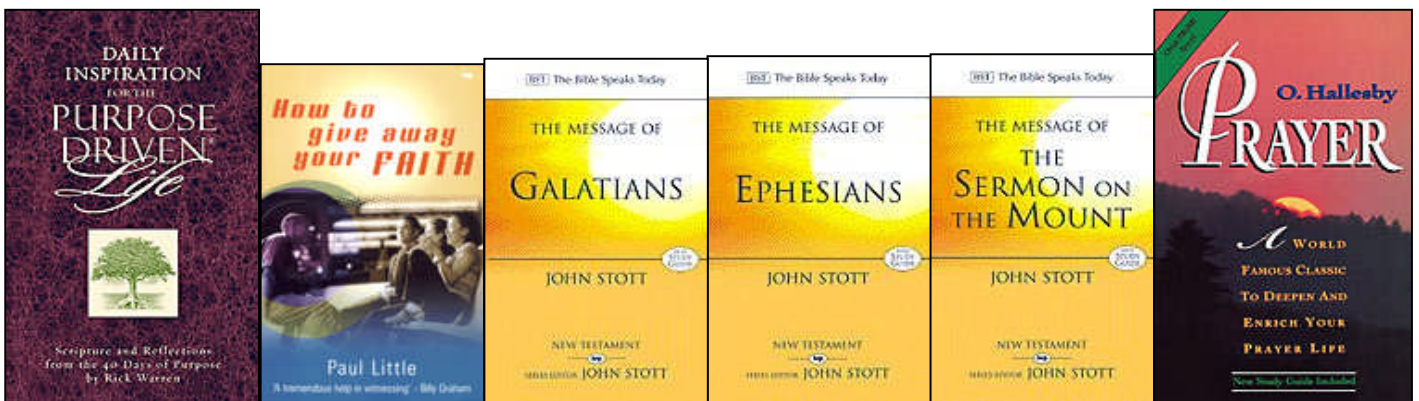
The Principal of Richardson Primary School spoke of the impact the chaplain there has made. She is an important part of the school community and fulfils a valuable role.

Barbara Holborow OAM who is a former Children's Court Magistrate, was the guest speaker for the night. She obviously has a great passion for children and their welfare. She believes the welfare of children is a responsibility of us all, but there is a children's welfare crisis. Many children are surrounded by violence and are consequently violent themselves. Often children have no vision of where they are heading in life and there is no one there for them to talk to. A caring community that most of us enjoyed when we were young is not available to many kids as they grow up. Their lives are very difficult, but the kids are also very resilient. Barbara urged us to be there for children, to listen to them and hear them, to give them friendship and love.

One student spoke of his experience with a chaplain when his father died and there were one or two others who spoke briefly.

I believe it was a most worthwhile night.

ID



Friday Discussion Group

Back in mid-October 2005 a new Friday discussion group / Bible Study commenced. Very ably led by Ted Dennis, this group has attracted a varied assortment of participants. Besides a number of our own fellowship, we have regularly welcomed Wally from Cooma, Keith, Zacchaeus (the Fijian pastor), Koreans from Reid Church and on occasions others too.

In the four and a bit years the group has been meeting, studies have included "The Purpose Driven Life", "How to Give Away Your Faith", Galatians, Ephesians and The Sermon on the Mount (using study books by John Stott) and Prayer with Halleby's book to guide us.

Ted has put much effort into his preparations and we all have benefitted. The discussions have been thoughtful, insightful and rewarding.

Currently Ted feels unable to resume his leadership of this study so it is in recess until we sort out leadership for it or decide to discontinue it.

In the meantime, those of us who have benefitted so greatly from Ted's hard work and scholarly thought would like to offer him our thanks.

ID

Sunday 7th March at 5pm – Pastor Steve Prior – What being a Christian is all about



Steve told us that this week he wanted to get to the core of Christian living, to concentrate on everything a Christian ought to do.

To do this he looked at John 15: 1-15, the parable of the vine and the branches. In the story the vinedresser / gardener represents God and He tends the vine and prunes it to make it fruitful. The vine is Jesus. The Jewish people were often spoken of as God's vineyard but they only produced bad wild fruit. Jesus stated He was "*the true vine*". The branches are Jesus' followers – Christians. The purpose of the branches is to bear fruit.

If branches become disconnected from the vine they die. Our job as branches is just to stay connected to the vine - Jesus, or to 'abide' as the translation Steve used put it. We don't have to worry about producing fruit. That is the gardener's (God's) concern. All we have to do is maintain our relationship with the vine Jesus and the fruit will come.

As branches we may be subject to pruning, which is likely to hurt, but that will result in a more vigorous vine and more fruit.

Abiding in Jesus incorporates loving and obeying Him. To do that we must know Him.

ID

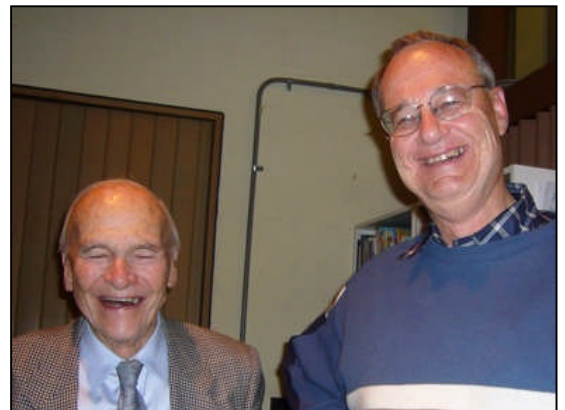
Sunday 14th March at 5pm – Rev. Bob Prior – The Message of Communion

Communion has been special to Bob for a long time, even before he came to faith.

In looking at Communion, Bob used the Bible readings Exodus 12: 21-28 and 1 Corinthians 11: 17-26.

Communion helps us focus on the central message of the Christian faith – the Cross, but why is the Cross and Communion so important to our life and worship?

- The Jews celebrated the Feast of the Passover every year. It was a time when they remembered their departure from Egypt. God had sent plagues upon the Egyptians to help persuade them to allow the Jews to leave, but the Pharaoh refused. Finally God said that every first born, man and animal, would die. To protect the Jews from this fate, He told them to place blood from a lamb above and at the sides of their doors, and He would not harm them. He would pass over their houses. God's judgement did come to the Egyptians but the Jews, by placing their faith in God and doing as He instructed, were not harmed and were able to escape that land. Jesus' last supper with His disciples, which communion remembers, was the passover meal. Jesus' blood would provide salvation from God's judgement under the new covenant just as an animal's blood had under the old covenant.
- The Jews celebrated the passover to remember what God had done for them in the past. Jesus broke bread, saying it was His body and telling us to remember Him when we broke bread. He also said the "*cup is the new covenant in my blood*". Under the old covenant, blood sacrifices were required for cleansing and forgiveness, but these had to be repeated as people kept sinning. Jesus Himself was the blood sacrifice under the new covenant but His sacrifice was sufficient for all people for all time. He made complete payment for all our sins. In Egypt the Jews had to daub their doorways with blood, trusting in what God had told them to do for God's judgement to pass over them. Similarly we need to put our faith in Jesus' blood to avoid God's judgement – Jesus has already taken the punishment due to us. When we drink from the communion cup, we should remember Jesus and how His blood was spilt for us and cleanses us. Communion should be a time of remembrance for us but also a time of witness to others as we proclaim our faith through the communion meal.



Alec sharing a laugh with Bob Prior after the service



- God has made it very clear that He one day will sit in judgement over us (Romans 2: 5). Every one of us is subject to that judgement and deserving of the punishment He delivers (Romans 3: 23). The only escape from God's judgement occurs because God "*accepts people ... because they have faith in Jesus Christ. All of us have sinned and fallen short of God's glory. But God treats us much better than we deserve, and because of Christ Jesus, he freely accepts us and sets us free from our sins. God sent Christ to be our sacrifice. Christ offered his life's blood, so that by faith in him we could come to God.*" (Romans 3: 22-26 CEV).

The cross is central to the Christian faith, but there is more Good News. "*Christ died for our sins ... he was buried, ... he was raised on the third day*" (1 Corinthians 15: 3,4 NIV). We have a RISEN Saviour and Lord.

ID

Vince, Theodore, Derek and Carolyn after the service

How NOT to do your hair in the morning

Although not known for her radical fashion statements, June turned up for church sporting green hair with a red streak down the centre. Not to be outdone, Ken had gone from a neat, short back and sides style to a stark, shaved head look.

Of course there was a reason behind this apparent radical departure from normality. Ken and June knew of a young girl diagnosed with Leukemia. As a gesture of support and assistance, they joined a fund raising effort to help Leukemia patients and support cancer research. I understand the girl is now in remission, however funds are still

needed for research and to assist other patients. ID



Left: Ken & June sporting their new hairstyles.

Right: June with preacher Bob Prior who shaved his head some years ago for a similar cause.



Racecourse Chaplaincy – Rev. Bob Prior



Bob gave us a brief update on his racecourse chaplaincy work when he came to preach for us.

He began with a prayer point. As the result of some difficulties faced by one Canberra church, including sickness and a resignation, Bob has been asked to assist that church by doing some preaching and to help the leadership through this difficult time for them. He has made clear that his racecourse chaplaincy role is what he believes God is asking of him, however he will assist them as he can. He asks for prayer that God will give him wisdom in properly using his time.

Bob has been unable to visit Goulburn or Moruya recently although he expects to visit both courses this week.

He has been praying that he might find a way of using friendships he has built up to generate opportunities to present and explain his faith. As a result he sent a text message to all his racecourse contacts saying 'Running the race of life without God is like running a race with no jockey – you can't win.' Bob has not received any requests that such texts not be sent, but has found that the text message has generated at least some discussion amongst those who received it. ID

Campbell High Chaplaincy – Rev. Steve Lindner

Last year Steve Lindner was at Campbell High two days a week. This year he is there on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Two days are supported by Scripture Union using government chaplaincy funds and the additional day is funded by the school itself.

Steve has been running weekly "Tough Talk" sessions as he did last year. This group, which attracts 24 or 25 mostly Year 10 students, gives them the opportunity to raise questions or issues that are on their minds for discussion. As those who attend are a somewhat diverse group, it is quite a challenge to keep them engaged. They recently discussed anger and in the near future a singer, songwriter, musician will visit the group.



Last year a Thursday lunchtime group was begun, led by a university student Nicky. This group has continued this year and is proving successful with from 12 to 28 students going along.

The school is considering running a breakfast club on Thursday mornings during Term 2. While this is a school initiative, there could be the opportunity for local church people to become involved and support the breakfast club if they are interested.

Steve is grateful to God for opportunities that have arisen for him to have meaningful discussions with students and some staff. He asks that we pray he will have wisdom in talking with people and providing support when needed and that he will increase his knowledge and understanding so as to better fulfil his role.

One great opportunity came recently when he was invited to participate in a SOSE (Studies Of Society and the Environment) class. The class was discussing helping poor and homeless people. Steve's contribution was to explain the role of religion in providing such care. The time he had was very limited however it allowed him to mention the participation and motivation of Christian people in helping others and the example of Jesus that they follow. ID

Sunday 21st March at 5pm – Rev. Kevin Kim – Don't be Deceived

It was a great pleasure to once again welcome the Reid Korean choir to our service and Kevin Kim to our pulpit.

A number of people commented to me afterwards how well the choir sang and they were equally appreciative of Kevin Kim's singing. As he has done several times before he sang for us before beginning his sermon. This time it was "I, the Lord of sea and sky, ..." with the chorus "Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I



have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart." which he invited us to sing with him for the last chorus.

Kevin pointed out that often the strong take advantage of and deceive, for their own advantage, the weak, the people in fact that they should be helping. Unfortunately men have a tendency to shy away from repenting for their wrongdoings and instead try to shift the blame to others. It may be easy to say Satan made me do it, and Satan's evil influence is a big problem, but a bigger problem is our own evil desires. We can make it easy for ourselves to succumb to Satan's temptation by not reading the Bible or praying regularly. Faith in God is the only power that can give us victory over worldly desires. Faith does not lead to God doing what we want, but rather us following His

leading and doing as He wants. We would be foolish to place our hope in a changing world, but we can put our trust in a non-changing God.

We need to be on our guard. It is easy to be deceived. *"for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness."* (2 Corinthians 11: 14,15 NIV).

Wealth, health, beauty and other desired aspects of life do not last. We should not be deceived into chasing after them. We should build up our faith in the God we can depend on.

Our evening finished with some delicious soups and bread rolls we were able to share together. ID



Ritva, Matti, Kevin Kim, Dinah and Howard

More pictures from our Harvest Festival



Coming Up

Bible Study

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

Discussion Group

Fridays at 2-00 pm at Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Turner.
Currently in recess

Wednesday Evening Group

Wednesdays at 6-30 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 – 19th April at 2-00pm
All welcome - contact Alec for more information

Services

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

Sunday **28th March** at 5pm – **Rev. David McDonald**

Sunday **4th April** at 5pm – **Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan** – Easter
Guest soloist – Mrs. Katherine Warren

Sunday **11th April** at 5pm – **Rev. Steve Estherby** – Family Voice Australia

Sunday **18th April** at 5pm – **Rev. Ray Hughes**

Sunday **25th April** at 5pm – **Pastor Mark Warren**

Sunday **2nd May** at 5pm – **Rev. Abraham Tang**

Sunday **9th May** at 5pm – **Rev. David McDonald**

Sunday **16th May** at 5pm – **Rev. David McDonald**

Sunday **23rd May** at 5pm – **Rev. Kevin Kim** – Church Anniversary



**Rev. David
McDonald**

**Rev. Dr.
Campbell
Egan**

**Rev. Steve
Estherby**



**Rev. Ray
Hughes**

**Pastor Mark
Warren**

**Rev. Abraham
Tang**

**Rev. David
McDonald**

**Rev. David
McDonald**

**Rev. Kevin
Kim**

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/>

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