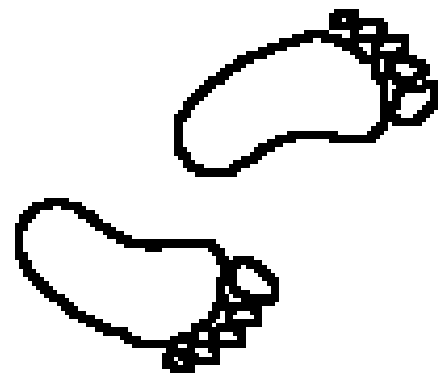


October 2010
Issue 46

The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

Samoan Event

Just a few days before it was to take place, we heard about a Samoan Methodist Church cultural afternoon being held to raise funds to strengthen their church and support its activities. Several of us were able to attend despite the short notice.

The Youth Group from the church did a wonderful job in singing, dancing and performing skits for close to four hours. They began by singing several numbers with religious or cultural themes. The standard of their singing was very high.



Both the young ladies and young men excelled in their performances

A 'Robin Hood' skit proved very popular with the younger members of the audience and a candle dance was memorable.

Unfortunately I only had a poor phone camera with which to take pictures, but I hope they can still give some feeling for the afternoon.

We were served up a generous and delicious meal as part of the afternoon.

It was wonderful to experience this Samoan event. ID



Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali

Bishop Nazir-Ali was brought to Australia from the UK by Family Voice Australia to speak about aggressive secularism and radical Islam.

Some of our people felt these were important issues they would like to know more about, so attended his breakfast talk at the National Press Club. He spoke on "Courage in a Hostile World".

The Bishop did not promote anti-muslim feeling, in fact he said that we, as Christians, are called on to love muslim people and to respect them, while still opposing their ideology.

The world is, in Islamic eyes, divided into those places where muslims are in the majority and those others where they are in the minority. Unless muslims can practise sharia law or participate in jihad (promoting Islam in some way, not necessarily by physical means) they should return to muslim majority places. That leads to a push for the adoption of some sharia law from people who don't want to move.

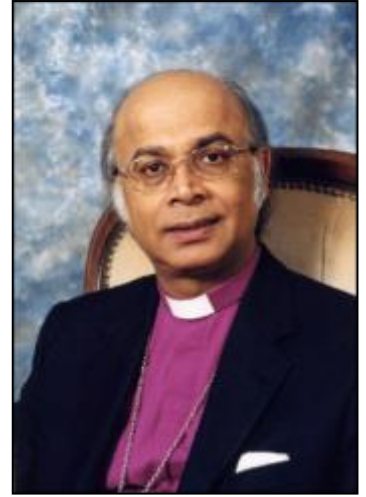
Immigration policy in many countries, like Australia, concentrates predominantly on economic criteria in determining who is able to come in. We should be much more focused on how immigrants will integrate into society.

A well functioning society needs everyone to speak the same language, although retaining a homeland language as well is fine. Society needs shared values and equality before the law. The law in our society is based on assumptions coming from a Judeo/Christian background whereas sharia law, demanded by many muslims, has very different assumptions: men and women are not equal - e.g. a woman's evidence is worth only half that of a man and is inadmissible without a man; muslims and non-muslims are not equal - e.g. a non-muslim cannot inherit from a muslim. Society needs the community to have a common loyalty. Despite misgivings and arguments with our political system, our community in general recognises the law making process and the authority that results. Muslims tend to owe a political allegiance to an Omam before the wider community.

A multicultural society can function well although multiculturalism offends leads to segregation with particular groups becoming very insular, functioning largely as a completely separate community.

Secularism is weakening our foundations by increasingly removing God from public mention and community recognition. Islam is increasingly visible and influential in our society.

The challenges of aggressive secularism and radical Islam are different, but together they are making great changes to our society that we may well regret when it is too late.



Operation Christmas Child

About 8 of the ladies met at Norma and Laurie's at 10.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 22nd September to pack the boxes. On arrival we found Norma and Laurie had their lounge room organised with various large boxes all sorted and named with ages and sex of the children to make our packing easier. There were many prettily covered boxes waiting for us to pack so we set to work and packed 72 shoe boxes – a mammoth effort. After the packing was completed we had lunch with Norma and Laurie. It was a great time of fun and fellowship and we thank Norma and Laurie for all their hard work.

On Sunday, 26th September Norma and Laurie brought all the packed boxes to church and a special dedication was held during the service. Pat Woods joined our service and dedicated the boxes and spoke passionately of the joy and message they give to the children who receive them.

RB



Pat (a box packer from way back) joined us for the service at which she dedicated our boxes. Pat and Norma with the boxes.

Well done to the packers, but well done too to all the contributors. Many people bought items during the year for use in the boxes. We pray each box will end up where God wants it and that it will deliver joy to whoever receives it.

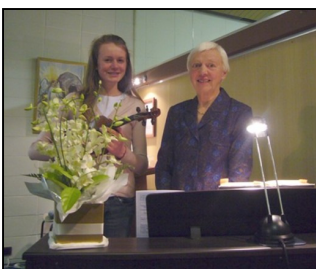
Meeting

September saw another of our fellowship meetings.

A meal together began proceedings, this time the bill of fare being pizza.

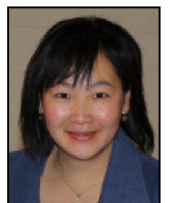
I cannot report on discussions in any detail as I was unavoidably a long way from home on the night of the meeting, however I'm told that the music for our services and Bible Studies were among the topics raised.

ID



Our musicians do a wonderful job. Antoinette (violin) played with Pam (piano) at our 26th September service. Pam kindly assists us on some occasions when our own pianists are unavailable.

Natasha (right) has often played for us and will be playing for us twice a month, sharing piano duties with June.



Bible Studies

The Friday afternoon Bible Study has been in recess for some time and is missed by those who attended. The evening study has recently concluded looking into Acts and its future is currently undetermined.

The Tuesday afternoon study is going well, however another study for those who are unable to attend on Tuesdays or who feel that that study is not for them could be of value. ID

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**** The Friday study group is Returning! It will recommence on Friday, 5th November and use the book "Witnessing: How to Give Away Your Faith" by Paul Little. ****

Friends in Finland

An e-mail letter was recently received from Matti and Ritva.

Dear Ruth and Howard and CCF,

We are dear friends so sorry that we have not had time to write earlier. When we got the keys of our new apartment to the hand, we left for shopping furniture. We went through all possible shops we could find here and nearby town. We had to live at our cottage a longer than beforehand we thought, because nowadays all furniture are made from order. Only yesterday we got the last furniture into our new home. Also our things have been stored in many places and we have been driving them to our new home.

That day when we came to Finland (7th August) it was + 32 degrees and that was really hot. We had possibility still to enjoy the heats of summer. Autumn has been very beautiful and warm. We get an incredible apple crop. The trees bend the weight of apples. We have tried already to give apples to the relatives and friends.

The Ritva has been working six weeks. She enjoys her work as a teacher among young people. The group of the philosophy has been very interested in its subject.

Matti has begun his work as pastor of the Awakened organization. He has kept revival meetings (the conventicles) and services already in many congregations.

Here in Nivala our friends organized to us homecoming conventicle. There were about 150 persons. The local choir had also been invited there to sing.

We have been heartily wished back and welcome to Nivala. The upper secondary school Ritva still has many former colleagues who have been happy about her return to the work there. Also the workers of the congregation of Nivala have been happy from the fact that Matti is back in Nivala even though he does not even work anymore of the congregation. The parishioners have asked Ritva to be a candidate to the election of church council.



Now our life begins to be normalized. We had last week visitors from Canberra. Pastor and his wife from Belconnen Lutheran church. Also pastor's mother from India was with them.

Many regards to everybody and Blessings of the God.

We love to read about how are you and news about CCF.

with best wishes

Ritva and Matti

Sunday 19th September at 5pm – Mr. Paul Avis – Real Hope

Paul began his sermon by giving us a brief glimpse into his past. He grew up as a Christian but at age 16, he heard someone speak about hell. He thought about all the bad things in his life, not known to anyone but himself and God. He was frightened, shivering in bed as he lay there thinking about it. Would he end up in hell? How could he know if God would let him in to heaven?



It was not long afterwards that God 'shouted' Romans 5 at him in answer.

Romans 5 tells us we have peace with God through faith in Jesus. Jesus died for us while we were sinners and so we have been reconciled with God. God has also poured out His love for us through the Holy Spirit whom He has given us.

God loves us not simply with an emotional love but a love that is active - a love that brought about Jesus' death.

Our salvation has nothing at all to do with our actions, it has already been accomplished by Jesus dying. God loves us, God is Love and His love has provided for our salvation. We have every reason to be confident for the future and to hope in the glory of God because of our risen saviour and Lord, Jesus. ID

Sun. 26th Sept. at 5pm – Pastor Mark Warren – Face Your Fear: How to Share the Gospel



Denis was chatting with Mark after the service at which Mark preached, when our photographer captured the moment.

On 26th September Mark Warren told us that he finds it difficult to share the Gospel - not sure what to say, it can be an embarrassing experience. I agree. Jesus said that the Gospel is like a great treasure, like a very precious pearl.

In 1 Thessalonians 2, Paul sets out certain principles that apply to sharing the Gospel. The first is that you should expect opposition - Paul had been run out of town. The second is that we should have true and pure motives as Paul had (v 3-6). Thirdly, Paul was not a burden to those he visited and loved them so much that he shared not only the Gospel of God but their lives as well. The Gospel must not be shared in an unloving way. We must "walk the talk". It is not sufficient to walk, you must talk. Why? Because it is the WORD of God that changes and converts. So we must speak up. Sharing the Gospel is scary. The Gospel is about calling people to live God's way. Go out trying to please God.

HB

Sun. 3rd October at 5pm – Rev. Ray Hughes – The True God, Eternal God, The Living God

Martin Luther, as a young, 23 year old priest, was going to celebrate his first mass. He knew the correct words to say but he trembled before God, thinking "*Who am I that I should address the eternal God.*" Today the sense of awe that Martin Luther had is gone.



"But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King." Jeremiah 10:10 NIV

God is true. God is a living God who made all things. He is the source of life. Only God is eternal. Jesus is the bread of life and we, if we feed on this bread will live forever (John 6:58). Rev Ray Hughes led us in the communion service that followed.

HB

Sunday 10th October at 5pm – Rev. Dr. Murray Earl – The Lord's Prayer

On October 10, the Rev. Dr. Murray Earl gave an excellent sermon on the Lord's prayer. The disciples saw Jesus in prayer and asked him to teach them to pray. It is really the "disciples prayer" used by all Christians everywhere – it brings all Christians together in every culture, language and denomination. It is set in the middle of life, the middle of the sermon on the mount, it is the ordinary prayer of the Christian - The prayer we should be bold to say.



It has two parts - the omnipotence of God and our responses. It tells us how to address God and how to live.

Our Father - the fatherhood of God which judges all families including the church family.

In heaven - our vision should not be just that of the earth.

Holy is thy name – the name of God is important. "I AM who I AM".

Your kingdom come on earth – the kingdom is manifest through us. A challenge for us! Yet nothing will stop the kingdom coming.

Give us today our daily bread – Food is always an issue. Do we have enough? The Lord's supper.

Forgive us our sins – one of the things that characterises the Christian faith against all others. We forgive because we have been forgiven. We won't understand unless we have been hurt ourselves. Forgiving helps us as much as it helps the one who is forgiven.

Amen – it is important because to say it means that we agree with it.

Can we live this prayer?

HB



The English Conversation Group that meets at the Korean Uniting Church in Reid, has been operating for a few weeks now. June (left at left) and Marie (centre at right) are seen here with Koreans keen to improve their English speaking skills.



Chaplaincies



We don't have any updates to share right now from either Bob Prior (the racing industry) or Steve Lindner (Campbell High).

Please keep them and the work they do in your prayers.

Bob will be preaching for us fairly soon and we are arranging another visit to the school to see Steve, so we should find out more of their activities and of matters needing prayer before too long.



Sunday 17th October at 5pm – Pastor Steve Prior – Let's Get Together: God's Promise of a New Covenant



Covenants are serious special agreements that were often sealed by blood.

In the Old Testament we can find a number of covenants God made with people. Each covenant contains several elements: salvation; blood sacrifice; a blessing; a promise; and a sign or seal.

God instructed Noah on what he should do to avoid the destruction that was coming; after the flood Noah offered up a sacrifice to God; God blessed Noah and his sons; God promised a flood would never again destroy all living beings; and the sign of this covenant is the rainbow.

Exodus 6: 6-8 tells us of God's promise to free the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt. He was to be their God and they were to be His people. The laws God gave the Israelites were His requirement of them; God did free the people from Egypt; Sacrifices were made to honour God and to cleanse the people of their sins. Unfortunately the Israelites were not able to keep their side of the bargain for long. They kept forgetting God, focussing on themselves and sinning.

In Jeremiah 31: 31-34 we can read of God's remedy. He will make a new covenant and put His laws in people's minds and write them on their hearts. He will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.

Hebrews 9 contains a discussion about the covenants and we discover that the shedding of Jesus' blood provided a complete and sufficient sacrifice to cleanse us of our sins enabling God's forgiveness.

Under the new covenant, we are saved through Jesus' actions; He was the sacrifice; we have a promised eternal inheritance; and the Holy Spirit is with us.

God is our God and we are His people. Let us focus on Him and let The Holy Spirit work in and through us. ID

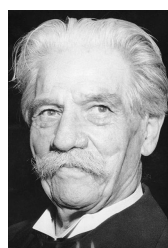
Sunday 24th October at 5pm – Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan – The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Pharisees excelled at practising religion. They knew God's laws and they were precise in their observance of them. They were good and devout people. Their problem was that they knew it.

Tax collectors in New Testament times were much disliked. Because they collected taxes on behalf of a foreign occupying power they were looked down on and even hated since they often took more than was due.

The Pharisee in Jesus' story displayed his self-righteousness and self focus whereas the tax collector was truly humble and repentant before God.

Jesus explains in Luke 18: 14 "I tell you that this man [the tax collector], rather than the other [pharisee], went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."



In finishing, Campbell used the story of Albert Schweitzer to illustrate the point. While quite young, Albert became very accomplished in the fields of philosophy, theology and music. He could have continued in any of those disciplines at the highest level but instead chose to study medicine and then work in Africa among the sick there. In his hospital he didn't act like a great man bestowing his favours on patients, but rather displayed a genuine interest in and care for all those people he was treating as well as everyone else around him.

Albert was happy to humbly serve his fellow man away from the limelight using the talents he had, but he became known for that self sacrificing work he did anyway. ID

Coming Up

Tuesday Bible Study

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

Tuesday Evening Group

The study of Acts has finished and plans for the next study or activity are still being formulated.
All welcome - contact Vince / Dominica for more information

Thursday English Conversation Group

Thursdays at 3-30pm at Canberra Korean Uniting Church, Reid.
All welcome for conversation with Koreans trying to improve their English - contact June for more information

Friday Study Group

Fridays at 2-00 pm at Holy Trinity Finnish Lutheran Church, Turner.
"Witnessing: How to Give Away Your Faith" by Paul Little
All welcome - contact Howard for more information

Prayer Meeting

3rd Monday of each month at Marie's.
Next meeting –15th November 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 31st October at 5pm – Rev. Peter Nelson

Sunday 7th November at 5pm – Rev. Bob Prior

Sunday 14th November at 5pm – Mr. Zane Edwards

Sunday 21st November at 5pm – Hymn Singing

Sunday 28th November at 5pm – Mr. Peter Bentley

Sunday 5th December at 5pm – 7th Annual Multicultural Carols

Sunday 12th December at 5pm – Rev. Kevin Kim

Sunday 19th December at 5pm – with the Finnish people for their Carols

Sunday 26th December at 5pm – details later



Rev. Peter
Nelson



Rev. Bob
Prior



Mr. Zane
Edwards



Hymn Singing



Mr. Peter
Bentley



Multicultural
Carols



Rev. Kevin
Kim



Finnish
Carols



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