

March - May 2011
Issue 50

The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship
(in the Methodist Tradition)

School Chaplaincy is under attack

A High Court challenge threatens the existence of many of the 500 chaplains in state schools across Queensland... as well as the future of more than 2500 other school chaplains across Australia.

Australia's School Chaplaincy program is facing a constitutional challenge in the High Court as a Toowoomba man opposes the Commonwealth funding of chaplains in state schools.

This will have a direct impact on the care of kids in schools.

SU QLD, its school chaplains and supporters will fight this High Court challenge over the coming months.

What is the plaintiff's case?

The Plaintiff's arguments fall under three broad types:

1. That there is no federal constitutional power under which the Commonwealth has, or can, make payments for school chaplaincy. The argument is put several ways – that there is no specific federal power, that it is something within the power of the states and that chaplaincy does not involve an issue of national importance requiring national action.
2. That school chaplains funded under the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) are "officers of the Commonwealth" and that therefore the Commonwealth has imposed a religious test qualification on a Commonwealth officer, in breach of the constitution. Central to this is the requirement of the NSCP Guideline requiring "formal ordination, commissioning, recognised qualification or endorsement by a recognised or accepted religious institution or a state or territory-approved chaplaincy service".
3. That the parliamentary acts appropriating funds for chaplaincy are not worded widely enough to cover payments under the chaplaincy policy (ie a deficiency in the wording of the acts).

The Plaintiff is seeking declarations that the funding agreement is void and of no effect, that the appropriation acts did not, and cannot, authorise payments under the NSCP Guidelines and that the administrative authorisation for payments made to SU QLD are of no effect.

The Plaintiff is also seeking injunctions restraining payments to SU QLD under the funding agreement or NSCP Guidelines, restraining the Commonwealth from giving effect to the funding agreement and from entering into further such agreements.

The case relates only to the Darling Heights State School near Toowoomba. However, it may have implications for SU QLD's other agreements with the Commonwealth and for other school chaplaincy employers.

Importantly, the case says nothing about chaplains' access in schools. It concerns only whether the Commonwealth may fund school chaplaincy under the terms of the current NSCP Guideline.

Process and timing

- The Commonwealth and SU QLD will have until 25 February to file their defences to the claims made.
- After that the Plaintiff will have two weeks to file a response to the defences (ie until 11 March).
- The Commonwealth will then prepare and file, by 23 March, a draft special case for the full High Court to consider and rule on.
- The High Court has set aside May 10, 11 and 12 to hear the case.
- The decision of the High Court may not be known until late 2011 or early 2012.

from <http://supportschoolchaplains.com.au/> (a Scripture Union Qld. website)

The High Court date originally set for May has been postponed (information from email from SU A.C.T.)



If a man without a sense of smell declared that this yellow rose I hold had no scent, we should know that he was wrong. The defect is in him, not in the flower. It is the same with a man who says there is no God. It merely means that he is without the capacity to discern his presence.

Sir Ralph Richardson quoted in The Australian Reader's Digest, June 1988, P 129.

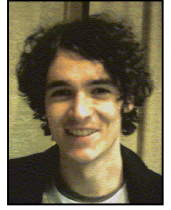


Sunday 20th February – Mr. Paul Avis – The Way, The Truth and The Life (John 14:1-14)

Life is a journey. As with any journey, it is good to know if you are going the right way.

Many people are aimless, directionless or troubled in their lives.

Jesus said we should not be troubled. He was going to prepare a place for us. The disciples did not understand Him. Jesus continued *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me."*



Jesus was talking of the way to heaven. Nothing (religion, good deeds, anything else) can get us there except for Jesus.

C. S. Lewis said "I believe in God as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else." Knowing Jesus enables us to see and understand more of life.

Jesus is the life. John 3: 16 reminds us that if we believe in Jesus, we will not perish but have everlasting life. He took our punishment, died and then in rising again, He took life, defeated death and offers life to us.

We should accept Jesus' gift of life and follow the way He has provided on our journey towards eternity with God.

Many don't know Jesus for who or what He is. We can share what we know with them.

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We were glad to welcome the following preachers during late February and March.



Sunday 27th February – Pastor Steve Prior

Sunday 6th March – Mrs. Joyce Hall

Sunday 13th March – Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan

Sunday 20th March – Rev. Dr. Murray Earl

Sunday 27th March – Mr. Michael Nott



We held a Harvest Festival service on the 6th of March at which Joyce Hall preached.

The atheist can't find God for the same reason that a thief can't find a policeman.

Sunday 3rd April – Rev. Ray Hughes – Seeing More Deeply

Ray spoke briefly about Psalm 23 and observed that often people today blur the line between what they need and what they want. We often want our way into feelings of deprivation. What we choose to see matters.



In 1 Samuel 16: 1-13, we find Samuel at first hesitant to follow God's directions. He laid his concerns before God and God responded not in anger but by providing instructions as to how Samuel should proceed. God respects honesty and will show the way.

Samuel saw Jesse's sons differently to God. God looks into the heart of a person. We should aim to keep looking until we see what God sees.

John 9 tells the story of the man born blind. The Pharisees questioned him after his blindness was healed and challenged his statement that the man who healed him was a prophet. The man stuck to what he said despite the opposition and came to believe in and worship Jesus.

Challenges can often improve the clarity of our seeing.

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A great many of those who 'debunk' traditional...values have in the background values of their own which they believe to be immune from the debunking process.

C.S. Lewis

Sunday 10th April – Mr John Mann – The Lord Who Rescues



We were glad to have Don Frame from the Gideons visit us and tell us something of their work.

John Mann is also a Gideon and he preached for us. He took us through the life of King David and spoke of how God used David, remained faithful to him and of David's devotion to God.

Dear Friends,

... In the work both have had a busy time. Today we will go to become acquainted with the missionary work in Africa. We fly to Namibia and stay there Easter time.

Spring has come here. Nearly all the snow is away melted. ...

God bless you all

regards Ritva and Matti

Sunday 17th April – Rev. Kevin Kim – Two Aspects of Hosanna (Luke 19: 28-44)

As he has on a number of previous occasions when he has preached, Kevin sang for us before he began his sermon. This time he sang "Dying with Jesus".

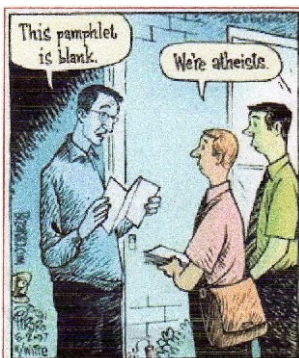
In the Easter festivities that surround us at this time of year, do we see the resurrected Jesus or just buns and chocolate eggs?

Christianity is not a religion of self mortification, but following Christ's example is an important message. The cross is a process, not a result.

Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem with hosannas. People saw Him as a political figure coming to lead them in their worldly struggles. In reality, Jesus came as a spiritual king, dedicated to following God's will, not to fulfil people's expectations. Jesus knew He was to suffer and die in our place, for our sins.

The cross is most important. As Christians we should recognise our part in Jesus' suffering and remember that what Jesus did enables us to participate in His victory and resurrection.

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This cartoon tickled someone's funny bone so was passed on to me to share.

It was found somewhere on the internet.

Campbell High School Chaplaincy – Rev. Steve Lindner



Please keep Steve Lindner, Campbell High School students, staff and families in your thoughts and prayers. It is some time since we have been able to meet with Steve but we hope to see him soon for a time of prayer for his chaplaincy work.

Commissioning for Malcolm Richards



Malcolm and Elizabeth Richards

On Sunday 22 May, Archbishop Peter Jensen will commission Malcolm Richards in his new role as General Secretary of CMS NSW & ACT. Recently returned from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malcolm Richards will be commissioned at the 10.30am service at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney. You are warmly invited to join us at this service as we welcome Malcolm into his new ministry.

Racecourse Chaplaincy – Rev. Bob Prior

Bob updated us on his chaplaincy work when he came to preach for us.

He asked us to pray for evangelical Christians who are prepared to go to the race tracks. There are opportunities!

There is someone in Tasmania. We need to pray the race clubs there will recognise the advantages having a chaplain brings them.

Race course chaplains are needed in Moruya, Goulburn and Wagga Wagga.

Bob told us of a lady who recently came to faith. Her family reported she was a 'different person' (in a positive way) after her decision. They tease her about her new found faith and she still faces struggles in life but God has made a positive impact in her life. Pray she will remain focussed on Him.



Sunday 24th April (Easter) – Rev. Bob Prior – The Most Important Truth of Easter

The Easter message is not one of death, burial or resurrection, but of all three together.

How do we know the events we remember at Easter are true?

Roman soldiers, familiar with crucifixions, not Jesus' friends, reported Jesus as dead. This was confirmed by a centurion sent to make sure. Jesus was speared in his side for added certainty.

Bodies of crucified criminals were normally discarded on the local rubbish tip, but Jesus' body was placed in a new tomb. The Jews, wishing to prevent any possible thought that Jesus might return from death, requested and were granted the right to arrange whatever security that they thought necessary for the tomb (Matthew 27: 62-66). In seeking to squash potential whispers they actually provided additional evidence when Jesus did rise from the tomb.

What did Jesus' death achieve? God's standard is absolute perfection and no one but Jesus has achieved that or even come close. We are MADE perfect through God's grace when we trust Jesus to take our sin. Jesus' death was a sacrifice of atonement. His blood bought our salvation just as the blood of sacrificed lambs on doorposts saved the Jews in Egypt from death at the passover.

What about His resurrection? Unlike other religious leaders who have died and stayed dead, Jesus came back to life on the third day. We have a living God! The resurrection was a victory over death. We can enjoy a daily living relationship with a loving God. We are not alone. In giving us the 'great commission' (Matthew 28: 19,20) Jesus said "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*". We are not sent out to fend for ourselves in God's service, God takes us out.

The promises of Jesus are available to everyone but realised only for those who trust in Jesus.

Easter has brought us into a new relationship with God. ³⁴ *Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died— more than that, who was raised to life— is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.* ³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?* ³⁶ *As it is written:*

'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'

³⁷ *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* ³⁸ *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

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April seems to have been the time for birthdays for many of our fellowship. We have celebrated quite a few after our services.

The Indonesians were with us one Sunday and after we all sang Happy Birthday they sang an Indonesian birthday song.

A couple of weeks later we were celebrating again and this time Kevin Kim sang in Korean for the birthday celebrants and Fanny, just back from Taiwan, sang a Chinese version of Happy Birthday.

Sunday 30th January at 5pm – Dr. Howard Bradbury – Jesus, The Only Way To God

We enjoyed a visit from our Tongan Wesleyan Methodist friends at this service. They sang during the service and during supper got out the guitars again and sang another half dozen songs. One song I felt was particularly meaningful included the words "Forget about yourself, concentrate on Him and worship Him".



In this world there are many anxious and troubled people. The answer to anxiety and trouble is trust and faith, but trust and faith in what?

Jesus said "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.*" In the Old Testament, Exodus 3: 14, God identifies Himself as "I AM". In Jesus' statement, the Jews would have recognised Jesus' identification of Himself with God.

Mark 7: 13,14 tells us "*Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.*". Jesus is that narrow way.

Jesus is the truth. In speaking with Pilate He claims "*You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.*" (John 18: 37)

Following Jesus leads to fullness of life - right now and in eternity.

Many people regard all the different religions as interchangeable, each providing a pathway to God. On examination this can be seen to be foolish. While each religion may have elements of good in them, they have contradictory claims, beliefs and goals.

God has spoken to us uniquely in Jesus. Jesus is "*the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through [Him]*".

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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

Plans for the next study or activity are still being formulated.
All welcome - contact Vince / Dominica for more information

Friday Study Group

Fridays at 2-00 pm at Alec's.
Study using the book "The Scriptures, the Cross and the Power of God" by Tom Wright
All welcome - contact Howard for more information

Prayer Meeting

3rd Monday of each month, usually at Marie's.
Next meeting – 2pm, 16th May.
All welcome - contact Alec for more information

Services

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

Sunday 15th May at 5pm – **Pastor Steve Prior**

Sunday 22nd May at 5pm – **Mr. Ron Dawes (Leprosy Mission)**

Sunday 29th May at 5pm – **Rev. Peter Nelson (7th Anniversary service with Fijian choir)**

Sunday 5th June at 5pm – **Rev. John Turton**

Sunday 12th June at 5pm – **Rev. Ray Hughes**

Sunday 19th June at 5pm – **Mr. Zane Edwards (Bible Society)**

Sunday 26th June at 5pm – **Pastor Mark Warren**

Sunday 3rd July at 5pm – **Pastor Mark Warren**

Sunday 10th July at 5pm – **Rev. Rachel Tonga (and Tongan choir)**

Sunday 17th July at 5pm – **Rev. Dr. Murray Earl**

Sunday 24th July at 5pm – **details later**

Sunday 31st July at 5pm – **Rev. Peter Nelson (Mid-winter Hymn Festival)**



**Pastor Steve
Prior**



**Mr. Ron
Dawes**



**Rev. Peter
Nelson**



**Rev. John
Turton**



**Rev. Ray
Hughes**



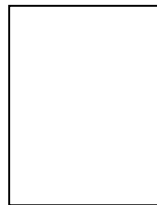
**Mr. Zane
Edwards**



**Pastor Mark
Warren**



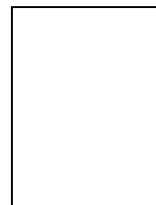
**Pastor Mark
Warren**



**Rev. Rachel
Tonga**



**Rev. Dr.
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**Rev. Peter
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