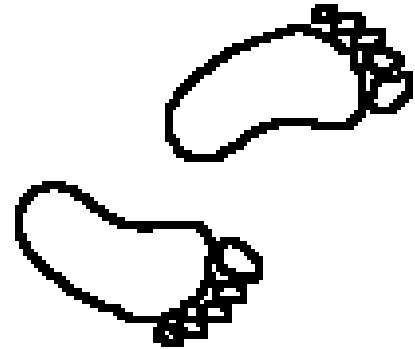


May, June 2012  
Issue 59

# The Next Step



Canberra Christian Fellowship  
(in the Methodist Tradition)

## 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Service

**Sunday 27th May at 5pm – Pastor Steve Prior – What is our purpose as a church?**



We invited both our Chinese Methodist and Tongan Wesleyan Methodist friends to our anniversary service. We were very pleased that the Chinese were able to come and sing, but disappointed the Tongans were called away to another event. We did understand. It is not everyday the Tongan community in Canberra has the opportunity to meet together with their King for a church service.

Steve thought an anniversary would be a good time to 'take stock'.

The book of Ephesians is about the Church so is a good reference point to discover how we are doing.

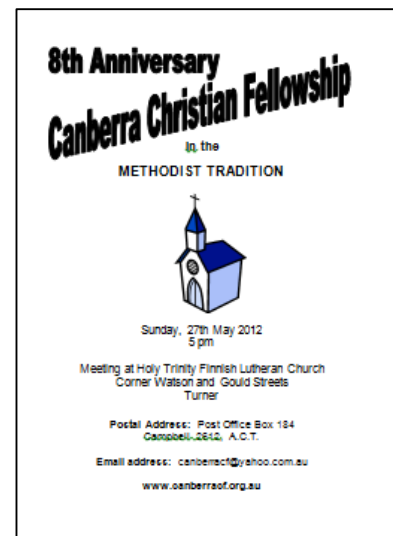
Reading Ephesians 1 it becomes clear that Jesus is central to the Church.

The Church is a product of Jesus' work and at the same time it is an agent for Jesus' work.

Steve identified four things that people in the Church should do:

1. Be united. The Holy Spirit unites us
2. Focus on God.
3. Persevere. When things 'rattle' our faith, we must stand firm and trust that God is in control.
4. Grow. We should attain the fullness of Christ.
  - Everyone has a part to play.
  - Speak truth with love.
  - Teamwork – support each other.

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The Chinese Methodist Choir

## Meeting

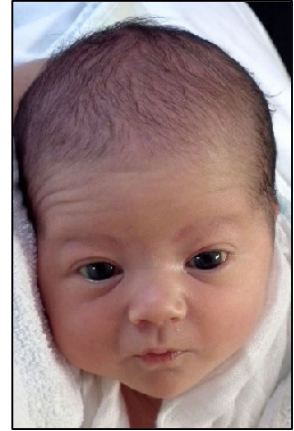
The 30th April, 2012 was a day destined to go down in history. On that day Ava was born to Carolyn and Derek.



Other events that day included one of our fellowship meetings. Perhaps unsurprisingly, both Derek and Carolyn were absent.

As tends to happen at meetings a number of matters were discussed. One such matter was microphones and speakers. A number of our people are finding hearing what is said in services increasingly difficult. We decided to speak with Zane with the intention of getting a microphone stand, lapel microphone and speaker.

Another topic of discussion was the proposed hymn festival at the end of July. It will go ahead and we will follow the service with a soup supper. There was support for the suggestion that our fellowship form a choir and sing as we did last year.



## Sunday, 29th April - Rev. Peter Nelson - Citizens of two Countries

### **Bible Reading - Philippians 3: 17 - 4: 1**

Paul really cared about the christians in Philippi. He wanted them to grow to christian maturity. He wanted them to follow the good example he and some others set in living a christian life, not copy those who just told them what they should do but didn't live it.

Christians are citizens of heaven and should live as such.

The Philippians were Philippian citizens but they also had Roman citizenship, just as Australians from Greece can be both Greek and Australian citizens. Dual citizenship may have some advantages but it can lead to tensions. Which soccer team should Greek / Australian citizens support in a match between the two countries?

As Australian / Heavenly citizens, we can contribute to Australian society but we must maintain heavenly standards, being guided by the Word of God. Tensions between allegiances will arise. Sometimes you will feel like a square peg in a round hole. Peter explained that when visiting the Institute of Sport as chaplain he can feel that tension as he focusses on the eternal heavenly prize while the Institute's focus is temporal gold, silver and bronze medal prizes.

Some try to escape this tension by adopting a monastic life where they are cut off from worldly contact. This is escapism. Others attempt to blend in with everyone around them just claiming their faith as an added extra. This is a cop out. The tension between earthly life and our heavenly role will always be with us.

It can be difficult at times but we have some marvellous promises to fall back on.

Matthew 28: 20 "... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

1 Peter 5: 7 "Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

Romans 8: 35,37 "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."

2 Corinthians 12: 9 "... 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' ..."

John 14: 16,17 "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. ..."

John 14: 27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."



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## Chinese Mission

We were joined for this service (29/4) by Alfred Ng and his wife who have served as lay missionaries in China for 10 years. Alfred gave us a fascinating insight into some of the life, growth, work and witness of the Church in China.

The Chinese authorities welcome material contributions to their communities so that provides one opening for the Church. A medical clinic was needed so an offer was made to provide one. The only proviso was that Jesus' name be given to the clinic. The authorities balked at this but after some prayer the christians pointed out that the contributions of Rotary and other agencies were acknowledged in their projects. The authorities reconsidered. The clinic was built and is named the 'Jesus Christ faith, hope and love medical clinic'.

Only local people are permitted to discuss faith and beliefs with others. The local pastors have a very important role but often have a very low level of education or training. They need whatever assistance we can provide.

In Shang Zhen village an old man, about to die, had a significant and lasting witness. He was a christian and when the time came, wanted a christian funeral. In atheistic China this was just not permitted. He insisted and threatened to haunt his non-christian children if they went against his wishes. This worked as they with their animistic beliefs feared haunting spirits. There remained a problem with the rest of the 3000+ community. They believed a christian funeral would trigger disasters within the community. They wanted a guarantee there would be no disasters for 3 years, and they considered some relatively minor events as disasters. The small christian community acting in faith gave that guarantee. The man died and received his christian funeral. There have been no disasters in the two years since that time and the christians are praying that there will be none in the remaining year. What a witness with the whole community waiting to see what will result from the man's final act of christian witness!

Alfred works in the Duan region of China, Guangxi province, among the Yao Zu people. The christians have a vision of starting more than 100 churches in 5 years. The number of churches is growing steadily already. Churches are small and often very young in faith but that faith is enthusiastic and eager to grow. God is at work!



● Duan, Guangxi, China

## National Day of Prayer and Fasting - Oops

Last issue I listed Joyce, Ian, Marie and Alec as those who attended this event from our fellowship. I had intended checking whether my memory had got it right before printing that issue, but my memory failed and I did the printing before remembering to check.

I was wrong. Joyce, Ian and Marie did go, but Maurine was the other person, not Alec. Oops.

## Sunday, 6th May - Rev. Dr. Murray Earl - A Living Hope



Murray's sermon was a little different to normal. It was more a history lesson taken from 1 Kings 1 with a commentary on the passage from Murray as we read it.

The reading deals with the final days of King David; the actions of David's son Adonijah in seeking to succeed David as king; the intervention of Nathan the prophet and finally the anointing of David and Bathsheba's son Solomon as the new King.

To better feel the emotion and atmosphere of Solomon's anointing, we stopped to listen to Handel's music "Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet" which was written about this event.

Murray drew three lessons out of what we read.

- God can and does use any of us for His work - young people, older people, people with mixed motives, great men or ordinary people.
- God gives us time; time to fix things. God is patient but we should be warned, we must decide for or against Him eventually.
- God's plan is affected and effective. God works with us but He will work out His purposes with or without us. ID

## Sunday, 13th May – Mrs. Joyce Hall – God's power made perfect in weakness



Joyce focussed on 2 Corinthians 12: 9 '... "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.' for her sermon.

Peter believed in his own strength, claiming he would never desert Jesus, yet he denied Jesus three times. It was after he recognised his weakness that Jesus commissioned him

Paul suffered from 'a thorn in the flesh'. Surely he would be less effective doing God's work with the 'thorn'. Paul discovered the opposite was true. If we are weak we see more clearly that what God achieves through us is God's doing, not ours.

Jesus laid aside His Heavenly glory, power and authority when He became man on earth. He retained weakness, submission and obedience to God. Satan was defeated through God acting through Jesus' weakness.

When we understand our 'nothingness' and hand it to God, He provides us with all we need to do all He requires of us.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." (Romans 8: 28)

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## Scripture Union Regeneration Dinner

This year our fellowship filled two tables at the SU Regeneration Dinner. We were well fed, entertained by the acclaimed group 'The Idea of North' and provided with information on Scripture Union activities by a number of speakers.

One speaker who particularly impressed me with her enthusiasm for the work she was doing told us of the SUPA (Scripture Union Primary Age) club she runs with some others at one southside primary school.

Towards the end of the evening we were invited to support Scripture Union (A.C.T.) work and / or the School Chaplaincy A.C.T. through our donations.

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On our table at the Regeneration Dinner, I found two pieces of paper with information that may be of interest to school chaplaincy supporters.

### School Chaplaincy ACT Breakfast Launch

School Chaplaincy ACT invite you to attend our complementary Breakfast Launch on Thursday 14th June 2012 from 7:30am-9:00am at the new SC ACT office complex, 32 Dallachy St (BBC Community Centre) Page 2614.

Opportunity to meet with chaplains and the CEO Peter James ...

To register attendance RSVP to: BBC Community Centre, 32 Dallachy St., Page 2614, A.C.T.

Phone: 02 61712022, E-mail: info@sact.org.au.

### School Chaplaincy ACT Weekly Prayer Walk

Join us during ACT school terms for weekly prayer and share walks. All ages and stages with a heart for prayer are welcome whenever you can make it.

Meet with us at 9:15am each Friday under the flags on lake end corner of Parkes Place past the National Library of Australia.

Bring your water bottle, loose change for a coffee before or after and join us in the bridge to bridge circuit.

You can walk alone, or in a small group and enjoy the opportunity to exercise your faith and fitness. Bring your own prayer buddies along.

Weekly prayer points will be provided along with an encouraging meditation to consider.

To register interest contact: Di - mobile: 0407 118387, E-mail: diannep@schoolchaplaincyact.org.au

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## Sunday, 20th May - Rev. Bob Prior - Brokenness can lead to usefulness



Matthew 14: 6-33 tells us of the death of John the Baptist, Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 and His walking on water.

On hearing of John's death, Jesus withdrew to be alone, but found a large crowd waiting for Him. He did not ignore them but healed the sick. The crowd needed food so Jesus took the little they had, blessed it and distributed it. There was plenty for everyone. Later Jesus approached the disciples who were in a boat on the lake by walking across the water. Peter also walked on the water towards Jesus but began to sink when he took more notice of the water and the stormy conditions than Jesus.

The story tells us that God is concerned about our needs and can meet those needs abundantly. Jesus provided for the needs of the crowd even though he had just heard of the killing of his cousin John.

Another thing we can learn is that even small insignificant things can be used by and bring glory to God. The loaves and fish were just someone's lunch yet were used to feed over 5000 people.

Having earlier witnessed the feeding of the crowd Peter and the other disciples were out on the lake in a boat battling the wind and waves. Peter was filled with enough trust and confidence in Jesus to walk towards Him across the water however he allowed his concentration to shift away from Jesus and he began to sink until Jesus reached out and caught him. Changing circumstances should not be allowed to shift our focus from Jesus or our trust from God.

Jesus told us "*No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*" (John 15: 4,5). Without Jesus we can achieve nothing of lasting value but when we are with Him He uses us and even our failings to achieve great things.

Recently Bob visited a woman being held for trial over a criminal matter. Bob had known her some years ago when she was an up and coming sports woman. Unfortunately she suffered in an accident and needed strong drugs as part of her treatment. She became addicted. The addiction led to associations with other addicts and eventually to crime.

The woman was pleased to see her unexpected visitor. She asked why she had experienced all that she had, but not in a complaining 'why me?' way - she recognised she had acted wrongly. She also spoke of her desire to help others avoid or journey out of the pitfalls she had experienced. Bob shared with her 2 Corinthians 1: 3,4 "*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*" Her experiences enabled her to relate to and help those experiencing similar things. Good was able to come out from bad. ID

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As part of his chaplaincy work, Bob was recently asked to act as an 'interview friend' for someone being interviewed by police about an horrific crime. Bob's role was purely that of an observer but the details of the crime made his stomach churn.

Bob asked that we pray that memories of the interview will pass from him and that in future he will have the wisdom to find out more about what is being asked of him and when to say no.

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## HOSPITAL BILL

You don't have to be Catholic to appreciate this one!!

A man suffered a serious heart attack while shopping in a store. The shop assistants called an ambulance when they saw him collapse to the floor.

The paramedics rushed the man to the nearest hospital where he had emergency open heart bypass surgery ...

He awakened from the surgery to find himself in the care of nuns at the Catholic Hospital. A nun was seated next to his bed holding a clipboard loaded with several forms, and a pen. She asked him how he was going to pay for his treatment.

"Do you have health insurance?" she asked.

He replied in a raspy voice, "No health insurance."

The nun asked, "Do you have money in the bank?"

He replied, "No money in the bank."

Do you have a relative who could help you with the payments?" asked the irritated nun.

He said, "I only have a spinster sister, and she is a nun."

The nun became agitated and announced loudly, "Nuns are not spinsters! Nuns are married to God."

The patient replied, "Perfect. Send the bill to my brother-in-law."

## Sunday, 3rd June – Rev. Kevin Kim – Time is the Father's business

As he has so often done, Kevin sang for us, this time the hymn "And can it be ...", a hymn packed full of significant statements of faith.

In Acts 1: 6-8 we find Jesus' disciples asking about the restoration of Israel's kingdom. Jesus answered that they were to be His witnesses and God's plans or timings were not their business. Jesus was not a political saviour for Israel but had come as a spiritual saviour for the whole world.

The thing people tend to regret losing most is time, but we have little control over time. Proverbs 16: 9 tells us "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps."

Jesus should be our first priority. Our goal and focus is to live as witnesses of Jesus drawing on the power of the Holy Spirit.

We can rely on God's plan, His time line and His grace. ID



Above: Kevin singing

Right: Casseroles;  
Good food, good  
company;  
Desserts.



We shared a special meal with Kevin to thank him for his contribution to our fellowship. He is moving to Thornbury Uniting Church, Melbourne shortly.

Kevin,  
Kay,  
Wesley  
and  
Evangeline  
with most  
of those  
who  
shared in  
the service  
and meal.





**Campbell High School chaplaincy – Rev. Steve Lindner**  
**Racing Industry chaplaincy - Rev. Bob Prior**  
**Institute of Sport chaplaincy – Rev. Peter Nelson**  
**Airforce chaplaincy – Rev. Dr. Murray Earl**



Please remember Steve, Bob, Peter and Murray and their chaplaincy work in your prayers.

### Coming Up

#### Tuesday Bible Study

**Tuesdays at 2-30 pm. In recess for several weeks**  
 All welcome - contact Joyce for more information  
 Studying Luke

#### Friday Study Group

**Fridays at 2-00 pm at Alec's. Check when next study starts**  
 All welcome - contact Alec or Howard for more information

#### Weekend Monthly Study Group

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month at Vince and Dominica's, Wamboin.**  
 Next meeting – 11am, Saturday, 9th June.  
 All welcome - contact Vince or Dominica for more information  
 Studying "The Bible in 10"

#### Prayer Meeting

**3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month, usually at Marie's.**  
 Next meeting – 2pm, 18th June.  
 All welcome - contact Alec for more information

**Contacts**

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

E-mail: [canberracf@yahoo.com.au](mailto:canberracf@yahoo.com.au)  
 Website: <http://www.canberracf.org.au/>

TNS editor : Ian Denton – e-mail : [iancd@yahoo.com](mailto:iancd@yahoo.com)

### Services

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

- Sunday **10th June** at 5pm - **Pastor Paul Tabulutu**
- Sunday **17th June** at 5pm - **Mr. Laurie Hockridge**
- Sunday **24th June** at 5pm - **Mr. Ron Dawes (Leprosy Mission)**
- Sunday **1st July** at 5pm - **Pastor Mark Warren**
- Sunday **8th July** at 5pm - **Rev. Owen Chadwick**
- Sunday **15th July** at 5pm - **Pastor Paul Noble**
- Sunday **22nd July** at 5pm - **Rev. Dr. Campbell Egan**
- Sunday **29th July** at 5pm - **Rev. Peter Nelson (Mid-winter Hymn Festival)**



**Pastor Paul  
Tabulutu**



**Mr. Laurie  
Hockridge**



**Mr. Ron  
Dawes**



**Pastor Mark  
Warren**



**Rev. Owen  
Chadwick**



**Pastor Paul  
Noble**



**Rev. Dr.  
Campbell  
Egan**



**Rev. Peter  
Nelson**